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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

898

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

June 13, 1956

DATE

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	REC'D	OTHER
	ARA-4	REP-2 RM/R-2 OLI-6 P-1
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SUBJECT: The IX National Congress of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).

Summary: The CTC IX National Congress was an impressive demonstration of unity and of Mujal's control of Cuban labor. Voting was generally in a proportion greater than 100-1 in favor of the platform. Early in the Congress a unity declaration was issued signed by the CTC executives and the secretaries of the federations. Cofiño and Rubiera's signatures to this declaration was the signal that despite their harsh attacks on Mujal of earlier in the year, they would support him at the congress. Mujal's report attacked Trujillo and Communism; declared the CTC was apolitical and acknowledged Batista's fairness to the movement; justified intervention of recalcitrant unions; made a call to government and opposition for national unity and peace. It was splendidly received, even its critics conceding its excellence. About 450 resolutions were passed by the Congress. They included an appeal to the government and the opposition for peace; demands for an investment plan, sugar harvests of at least 5,000,000 tons, self-sufficiency in agriculture, creation of a petroleum development institute; and opposition to indemnified dismissal, wage cuts, and mechanization at the expense of jobs. The slate of candidates headed by Mujal won the elections by more than 2000-1. Their term in office and the period between congresses was lengthened from two years to four. Mujal explains confidentially that he hopes through this mean to check attacks on the CTC for a time and that he believes a congress will be necessary before the four years expire. Communist influence was entirely absent from the Congress. Smaller, less expensive national congresses have been proposed. An evaluation of the congress is offered dealing chiefly with national and CTC politics, organizational weaknesses evident from the Congress, and CTC philosophical weaknesses.

* * *

Background:

The IX National Congress of the CTC, held in Habana from April 27 to May 1, was a triumph for the established leadership of Secretary-General Eusebio MUJAL and a convincing demonstration of the essential unity of the Cuban labor movement. Beyond that it cannot be claimed that the Congress achieved, or revealed about the Cuban movement, anything very constructive. However, it should be said in extenuation of

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what might be taken as the exiguous results of the Congress that large convocations of its kind are not expected to achieve very much in Cuba and that in the present politically roiled and divided state of the country what has just been indicated as the Congress' achievement actually amounts to something considerable.

The Congress was attended by some 2,768 delegates said to represent 1,581 local unions. It passed 450 or more resolutions. It reelected virtually the same leadership as has led the CTC during the past three years and extended ~~their~~ terms of office--and the period between national congresses--from two to four years.

A Caveat:

It would be well to bear in mind in reading this report that the amount of support the delegates demonstrated for Mujal and his proposals cannot be taken as an accurate index of his support among the rank and file of the country's workers. The delegates for the most part came from among the leaders of the unions or were chosen with their support. Mujal has control of large part of the union leaderships. Some forty unions were intervened at the time of the Congress. The Congress was bound to be composed for the most part of partisans of Mujal's. It is most unlikely that the rank and file of the CTC membership would vote for Mujal and his measures in a proportion of a 100-1 or greater, which the Congress did everytime it cast a vote.

Nevertheless, this caveat must be tempered with the appreciation that, whether he handpicked the delegates or not, Mujal commanded a greater percentage of the votes cast at the congress than it had been expected that he would just a few months before, that the votes were being cast for him by the men who actually run the unions and conduct their negotiations, that Angel COFIÑO, Vicente RUBIERA, and other powerful labor leaders who had been opposing him violently in public were sitting in the Congress directing that the votes of their unions and federations be cast for Mujal, and that those few leaders, such as Pablo BALBUENA and Jorge CRUZ Pérez, who went to the Congress to oppose Mujal all out, were hardly able to marshall one union in the whole island to support them.

Foreign Fraternal Delegates:

Fernando ~~PEREZ~~ ^{the} Salina attended the Congress as fraternal delegate from/Venezuelan Confederation of Workers in exile; Juan DIAZ from the Mexican Confederation of Workers. Serafino ROMUALDI was at the Congress on April 29 as AFL-CIO fraternal delegate. The usual fraternal messages from abroad were received and read.

Credentials Challenge by Cruz Pérez:

During the day of the 27th the credentials committee worked. That night it rendered its report to the plenary of the congress, and the occasion provided the first ~~and~~ clear opportunity for a demon-

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stration of the strength of the Mujal forces. Jorge Cruz Pérez, who until the time of last December's sugar strike had been Secretary-General of the Camaguey Provincial Federation of the CTC and was removed from that position for his backing of the strike "rebels", rose to move that the name of each delegate to the Congress be read off so that his credentials might be publicly considered, a process that might well have taken days. More than 2000 delegates filled the orchestra and overflowed into the balcony of the Workers' Theater of the CTC headquarters, where the Congress was held. As if to a man they whistled their indignation. POMAR Soler, who was presiding, brought the meeting to order and put Cruz Perez' motion to a vote. It attracted no more than half-a-dozen votes. The next day Cruz Perez announced to the papers that he was leaving the Congress since he enjoyed no "guarantees".

Unity Declaration Issued Early in Congress:

Also on the night of the 27th, Mujal issued to the press a statement declaring the CTC's unity and solidarity, which had been signed by the Secretaries of the national industrial federations and the other members of the Executive Committee. The significance of the document, as Mujal took pains to draw out for the benefit of the Congress in his report to it the next day, lay in the fact that Angel COFIÑO and Vicente RUBIERA were signatories to it. (See Embassy Despatch No. 630 of March 1, 1956). This document, of about 1200 words, dwelt almost entirely on unity and cooperative effort but used that theme principally to deliver a lecture to the country. The statement ended with the slogan: "Every effort for the country; that is the obligation of all Cubans".

Mujal's Report:

Mujal's report to the Congress was effective, even if short on concrete detail, and was very well received by the delegates. After greeting the foreign delegates, he saluted Cofiño and Rubiera by name as signers of the unity document. He then denounced the dictatorships of the Americas (there was no doubt here that he was not including the Batista government among these) lamenting that fraternal delegates from some countries could not be present at the Congress. His next statement made newspaper headlines, and prominent ones, although it had nothing to do with labor: Mujal charged that from "true" reports he knew that Trujillo had planes with the Cuban flag painted on them, with which he could attack this country. (As the Department knows, this story was months ago given to the Embassy by an army general on instructions from President Batista).

Mujal then said that he was reporting fully to ORIT so that it might support the boycott that Cuban workers would put into effect against Dominican products. (He has never actually announced making such a request to ORIT or even calling the boycott, but at any rate at this early stage of his report this declaration served

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to start the Congress cheering his words wildly.)

Mujal related again the efforts of the CTC on behalf of the Cuban sugar quota in the United States market, emphasizing AFL-CIO support for those efforts.

Mujal dealt with the importance of the anti-Communist fight in and outside of Cuba and asserted that it was the mass of the workers, inspired by a democratic outlook, that had thrown Lazaro PENA out of the CTC leadership.

Mujal said that it had to be acknowledged that the financial affairs of the unions were not always properly conducted and said he would propose to the Congress that a firm of public accountants be hired to set up a uniform accounting system for all the unions.

Taking up the problem of racial discrimination, Mujal declared that in the CTC all workers had the same chance regardless of color and that the organization would not cease to fight discrimination wherever it existed.

He criticized purchases of foreign products that are available from native sources, such as tinned citric fruit juices. (Even United States bread and bakery products are now being imported from Miami by air for sale fresh in Habana, although the Cuban product is excellent.) On this point he said that the Cuban people were not disposed "to defend their economy".

Mujal then dealt with the political attitude of the CTC, insisting that it had remained apolitical. Citing charges that the CTC had subjected itself to the government, he asserted: "I deny this roundly, because General (note: not "President") Batista has maintained a policy of absolute independence with respect to the CTC". He then went on to protest against the denial of permission by the authorities to hold union meetings, but he declared that this was the work of the military commanders, not of the Government itself.

Mujal then discussed the thorny question of the intervention of the unions. He took full responsibility for the policy of intervention when unions or leaders acted in disregard of CTC policy and directives. By way of illustration he maliciously, but justifiably, cited the intervention of the Habana Provincial Federation of the Electric Plants Workers when Oscar SAMALEA, he said, had committed "the serious fault" of indiscipline. All present appreciated and relished the fact that this was a slap at Cofiño, who had requested intervention of the Federation and ~~had~~ so recently attacked Mujal on the score of other interventions. He justified the measures taken by the FNTA and CTC after last December's sugar strike and charged that José María DE LA AGUILERA had called last September's bank

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strike without consulting the CTC or the Bank Workers Federation.

Immediately after discussing the question of intervention Mujal alluded again to the signing of the unity declaration by Cofiño and Rubiera, which was, it may be regarded, by way of rubbing their noses in the dirt a bit. He added that many CTC leaders had made mistakes but that the way to correct those mistakes was through harder work and a firmer line, not by creating internal cleavages and feuds, these being sterile of positive results.

Mujal's closing remarks divided headline honors with his allegations about the Dominican Republic. Every Cuban was responsible for the country's present difficult situation, he said, and it was necessary to call a halt to personal ambitions and to arrive at a common understanding that would give a rebirth to tranquility and restore peace to the country. Without an understanding between government and opposition the country could only sink.

Mujal's report was applauded and cheered by the delegates. Short as it was in detail and in treatment of concrete problems when compared with reports to national congresses of union leaders in some other countries, actually by Cuban standards it was quite outstanding in these respects. Couched in reasonably clear Spanish, consistently sticking to its point, but delivered in the ringing and fervid tones affected by public speakers here, it struck just the right note for his CTC audience: in content it was superior intellectually to most speeches or reports rendered in Cuba; it was perspicuous; but it did not fall below the acceptable and indispensable standards of fieriness. The comments of the delegates to each other indicated that the report was received as "brilliant".

Discussion of the Report:

Discussion of the Secretary-General's report in the CTC Congress takes the form of five twenty-minute speeches against it, followed by five twenty-minute speeches supporting it. Any of the CTC secretaries or Bureau of Direction may step in to comment upon or refute points made by the speakers.

It was probably indicative of the composition of the Congress, although also of the effectiveness of Mujal's report, that for a while it appeared that only four delegates would volunteer to speak against it. It was significant that all who spoke against the report acknowledged its excellence and clarified that the exceptions they were taking were limited and specific.

Aguilera Opposes Wheedlingly and Unsuccessfully:

José María de la Aguilera was the first speaker against. As the Embassy will report in its next periodic labor despatch, he seems to feel these days that he is about at the end of his tether in bank labor activities and to entertain as his sole remaining

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desperate ambition getting back the job that he had for going on twenty years and lost as a result of leading the illegal and unauthorized bank strike of last September. Aguilera made himself a bit ridiculous by in effect pleading for Mujal's mercy. He called the CTC his mother but begged for a mother's comprehension. Mujal's report he termed brilliant, and he otherwise fawned over Mujal's attributes as a great labor leader. The delegates scoffed and shouted at Aguilera's performance and tried to shout him down when he proffered only praise of Mujal's report where he was supposed to be criticizing. Aguilera was sunk, so far as the Congress was concerned, merely on the basis of his own performance. But to make things worse for him, Jesus ARTIGAS, Financial Secretary of the CTC, who had led the intervention of the Habana Bank Workers' Union, got up to answer him, completely demolished what few points he had made, and with a review of the whole Habana Bank Workers' question exposed the manner in which Aguilera had been motivated by personal ambitions and had acted absolutely contrary to CTC indications.

Rodrigo LOMINCHAR and Pablo BALBUENA, leaders of the Prío Auténtico Comisión Obrera Nacional were the only other two speakers of weight against Mujal's report. Lominchar, who has a solid record of leadership and achievement both as politician and trade unionist in the sugar industry, initially aroused protests by calling Mujal's report brilliant and saying he was 80% in favor of it. In effect these very pro-Mujal delegates wanted to know what there was to be said against Mujal by people who had been bitterly and sweepingly attacking him for many months; they were fed up with "unity" manifestos and fawning speeches by these people when the time had come to lay the cards on the table. Lominchar, however, won some measure of respect from the audience by his seeming sincerity and logical presentation in pleading for the end of suspensions and interventions. It was unfortunate for his case that FNTA Secretary-General José Luis MARTINEZ got up later in the proceedings and referring to his speech, "clarified" that Lominchar had once requested the intervention of the Central Isabel.

Balbuena, who was to head the only slate presented to the Congress against the Mujal candidacy, dwelt on the intervention issue, spoke of lost "conquests" under the Batista government, asked how there could be talk of dictatorships in the Congress when workers like Marco Antonio HIRIGOYEN could not be present, and asked that certain sections of the CTC constitution be read, which would demonstrate that interventions were not permitted. Mujal interrupted him to read sections that clearly showed interventions were permitted.

"Pepito" PEREZ Gonzalez, of the Bureau of Direction and Minister without Portfolio, felt called upon to answer some of these politically loaded charges of Balbuena's. He reminded Balbuena

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that some time ago, under an Auténtico government, Balbuena had himself acted as interventor of an Habana union. He represented that the government could not be considered a dictatorship when a "free and sovereign" congress like that of the CTC could be held, and, moreover, when the assassins of "Pipi" HERNANDEZ were quickly captured, whereas, by way of contrast, those of Mauricio BAEZ, under an Auténtico government were not.

Hector CARBONNEL, one of the other two critics of the report, was loudly exclaimed against when he insisted in acknowledging a large area of agreement between his own views and those of Mujal and drew a loud laugh when somewhat naively--he is a young man--he regretted that so many leaders who had attacked Mujal and the operations of the CTC in press, radio, and TV were nowhere in evidence at the Congress.

Regarding the five defenses of the report, little requires to be said except for that of Samuel POWELL. A declared Auténtico and a Grau candidate for senator in the last elections, Powell was able with great effect to point out that he left his politics out of CTC affairs and then to praise the report for its review and its recommendations. Regarding the mention that had been made of Hirigoyen, he pointed out that Mujal had subsidized him abroad and at home (since March 10, 1952).

The vote on the report was in the neighborhood of 1900 to 10.

A House for Goliath:

Mujal proposed that the Congress vote the purchase of a house for the Maritime Workers' leader Gilberto GOLIAH, who had been ill some months of a fatal cancer. The proposal was approved by acclamation. Since that time Goliath died, but not before his federation had contributed \$8,000 and various others made up some \$4,000 more for a house in which his family now lives. The practice of buying properties for union leaders is common in Cuba. Especially as applied here the practice is a questionable one but hardly more so than in our own country. Moreover, Goliath was a poor man.

The Commissions:

The evening of the 28th and the day of the 29th were given over to the work of the Congress commissions. There were seven of these, as follows:

- Commission 1. Problems of Organization
- Commission 2. Salaries, Prices, and Cost of Living
- Commission 3. Social Legislation; Complementary Laws and Ministerial Resolutions.
- Commission 4. Politico-Economic Analysis
- Commission 5. Agrarian Problems
- Commission 6. International Relations of the CTC
- Commission 7. Matters not Included in the Agenda.

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The Commissions prepared resolutions for the Congress. They work rather curiously in the CTC. Any delegate is privileged to walk into any commission, take part in its deliberations, and vote as part of it. "Packing" a commission thereby becomes a feasible and even common-sense operation. The commissions turned out about 450 resolutions for the Congress to act upon.

The Resolutions:

Almost all of the 450 or so resolutions were read out, usually in condensed form and rapid-fire fashion, to the Congress which passed them with a wave of cards and an acclamation. Some of the more important resolutions were the subject of a presentation from the platform.

The content of the most important of the CTC resolutions was summed up by the newspaper Diario Nacional (May 3) as follows:

An appeal to the government and the opposition for national peace.

Plans in favor of investment (in order to create) new opportunities for employment.

Opposition to wage cuts.

Opposition to mechanization resulting in job reductions.

Steps to be taken toward a sugar crop of more than 5,000,000 tons annually.

An agricultural plan looking towards self sufficiency.

Protection of Cuban industrial production.

Penalties for racial discrimination.

Opposition to Indemnified Dismissal.

Simplification of the legal process in labor questions.

Creation of the National Institute for the Development of the Petroleum Industry as provided in the draft of Congressman F. Vidal Mendez.

There is attached as an enclosure to this despatch a further and more extensive summary from Diario Nacional of resolutions passed by the Congress. The paper overlooked, however, a number of resolutions on the Dominican Republic and Generalissimo Trujillo, the most significant one of which proposed an ICFTU-ORIT boycott of shipping in and out of the Dominican Republic.

Of the mass of the 450 resolutions not covered by the Diario Nacional summary, it should be observed that for the most part they all too clearly and painfully reflected the preoccupation, almost obsession, of the bulk of Cuban labor (but certainly not only of Cuban labor) with: 1.) the immediate gain to the exclusion of the larger, longer-range advantage; and 2.) the power of government

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freely to grant benefits or at least to create the conditions from which benefits will result. (In respect of this second point it is only fair to speculate that while in Cuba and other Latin American countries reliance on government for labor advances is carried to unhealthy extremes, in the United States the power of government to promote the interests of labor has been, and probably still is, comically underestimated or at least ignored by labor itself.)

The resolution on national peace called on the government and opposition to "apply a formula of mutual compromise in order to come to a decorous understanding that would permit Cubans to find a solution for our national problems through peaceful ways". The Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Industrialists were, according to the resolution, to be invited to join the CTC in approaching the government to see what could be worked out. Asked later by newspapermen how far the CTC intended to go in carrying out this resolution, Mujal explained that the CTC had no intention of taking Cosme de la TORRIENTE's place and gave to understand that the resolution was just a resolution.

The resolution on the sugar crop was largely the work of Felix PEREZ Gil, of the FNTA, now on the staff of the Plantations Office here in Habana, who does much of Mujal's brain work in sugar. Pérez Gil gave as an example of what was contemplated by the resolution a crop of 5,100,000 tons that would average out at a price of 3.8977 cents in the following manner: 2,550,000 tons would be sold on the United States market at an average price of 4.80 cents; 2,320,000 tons would go on the world market at 2.80 cents, and 230,000 tons on the local market at 2.75 cents. Cuba would have to get the International Sugar Agreement changed in order to permit sales at less than 3.25 cents on the world market.

The resolution on increasing investment in Cuba was very general in its terms and can hardly be taken as marking any significant step towards the achievement of its objective. The CTC merely offers "to collaborate in a plan that would promote the development of new industries in Cuba..."

Elections and a Four Year Term:

Two slates were presented to the Congress for the election of CTC officers till the next National Congress. One was headed by Mujal and consisted with only two exceptions of the incumbents; the second was headed by Príista Pablo Balbuena, who in a few words handsomely acknowledged to the Congress that he had been given every democratic right and "guarantee" during its session. Interestingly enough, the Balbuena slate, like the Mujal, included Jesus Artigas, the incumbent, as candidate for Financial Secretary. The Embassy inclines to believe that this inclusion of one of Mujal's closest collaborators in the anti-Mujal slate must be an indication of how difficult it was to get people for that slate.

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The vote in favor of the Mujal slate was about 2100 to 20. A list of those elected is transmitted as an enclosure to this despatch. The only changes in office were the substitution of Facundo POMAR Soler for Marco Antonio HIRIGOYEN in the Bureau of Direction and of Alfredo HAYDAR Mata for Mario MENDOZA (an Hirigoyen lieutenant) as Secretary of Propaganda.

Just before the elections (which took place at the closing session of the Congress, on May Day) it was moved and carried that the period between Congresses and the CTC terms of office should be extended to four years in place of two.

This measure did not seem a very sensible one in view of all the attacks that have been made against the CTC recently as run by one man, etc., and the Embassy suspected that it may have been put through in order to impart a bit more stability to the CTC in case there were any sudden political changes in the near future. Inquiry of Mujal elicited the explanation that he had thought the measure advisable in order to stop selfish attacks on the CTC, especially from the suspended sugar leaders and Congressmen Conrado BECQUER and Conrado RODRIGUEZ. If it appeared that there would not be another CTC Congress and new elections for a long time, these men and others like them might stop their agitation. But, Mujal said, there would probably have to be another CTC Congress in two or three years. Almost certainly there would have to be one if there was a change in government.

It should be remarked that there has been no criticism of the extension of the terms of office and of the period between congresses. Probably with the Congress over and the "unity pact" signed, no one sees any advantage as yet in once more taking up the attacks on Mujal.

Communist Influence at the Congress:

There was absolutely no evidence during the CTC Congress of Communist influence at work in its deliberations or in any other way among the delegates. One delegate (Amado HERNANDEZ of an Habana barbers' union) was not admitted because of his known Communist affiliation. If there was any other Communist among the delegates, he was not a widely-known one. Nor was there any evidence of the influence of Communist propaganda in delegate reaction to speeches or resolutions. "Peace", the nuclear bombs, world labor "unity", trade with iron curtain countries, etc., were simply not issues that in any way concerned the CTC Congress. There is, of course, the question of how much Communist influence there still remains behind Minister without Portfolio Pérez Gonzalez and his government Workers' Bloc, but judging by surface developments that Progresista Party Bloc is a militantly anti-Communist crusading body. If it is involved in Communist penetration schemes, they are very deep ones and affect all Cuba's public life and not just the

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CTC, whose IX National Congress must certainly have reflected less evidence of the existence of Communism (except when some speakers attacked it) than just about any important labor congress that could be held in the world today.

Financing the Congress:

For more than a year Mujal has been complaining in private of the difficulty of holding the IX National Congress (which, of course, should have been held a year ago) because of the government's refusal to lend its "economic assistance". Mujal would explain that the cost of holding a CTC congress was in the neighborhood of a quarter of a million pesos, the peso being at par with the dollar. This sum is spent for the travel and keep of the delegates and for advertising. The advertising takes the form of placards and of large, expensive announcements in leading newspapers. These latter are probably calculated to impress government, politicians, employers, and not least CTC officers and members themselves with the potential and the importance of the CTC.

Mujal has now clarified personally to the Embassy that the CTC financed the Congress through mortgage bonds on the Workers' Palace. He claims that at the last moment Minister of the Presidency Andres DOMINGO came through with a \$10,000 offer of assistance which he, Mujal, turned down with the equivalent of a polite sneer. (The question of the compulsory checkoff and whether the CTC's income is actually feeling the effects of that legislation will be discussed in the Embassy's forthcoming periodic labor report.)

Plan for Smaller Congresses:

A few weeks before the meeting of the IX Congress Financial Secretary Jesus Artigas made the proposal, publicized widely, that the Congress consist of the Executive Committee and a dozen representatives from each of the 33 industrial federations. There were some protests by anti-Mujal elements charging an attempt to gag the membership, control the congress, etc. The proposal was not carried out.

From a talk with Mujal the Embassy infers, however, that the Artigas proposal is far from dead. It looks very much as if any extraordinary congress that may become necessary between now and the next scheduled congress of the CTC four years hence (and it has already been reported that Mujal thinks such an extraordinary congress will probably have to be held) will take the abbreviated form proposed by Artigas. It would in fact be little more than an extended National Council of the CTC.

Matanzas and the Congress:

The tragic and abortive attack on the Matanzas garrison of Sunday, April 29, which led the government to suspend constitutional guarantees for 45 days, occurred in the middle of the CTC Congress.

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It was, of course, to be feared that the CTC Congress would be suspended by the authorities. The morning and the afternoon of the 29th the Commissions had been working. (The attack took place between noon and one in the afternoon.) When the Congress plenary met again that evening, Mujal quickly had a resolution put through which continued the incumbents in their CTC offices in the event of the IX Congress being suspended or terminated by the authorities. However, the Minister of Labor quickly informed the Congress that it would be permitted to continue its sessions with complete freedom.

Proceedings:

A Proceedings of the IX Congress will be printed, giving all speeches, resolutions, and pertinent data. Such a record of the VIII Congress was not printed, although it had been for some or all of the earlier CTC Congresses. Copies of the Proceedings will be forwarded to Washington when they are circulated.

Resolutions on Trujillo:

Since the typing of the section of this despatch on the Congress resolutions, those dealing with the Dominican Republic and Trujillo have been incorporated in a petition to ICFTU and ORIT. The petition includes a severe attack on the Trujillo dictatorship. It was transmitted to the Department with the Embassy's despatch No. 902 of June 14, 1956.

Evaluation: Political and Union Politics.

The IX CTC National Congress threw considerable and accurate light on the present situation of the CTC. As has already been noted, it reflected the firm position of Mujal at the top of the CTC and the essential unity of the Cuban labor movement. It brought out, also, the manner in which the CTC, with Mujal as its Secretary-General has been able to come through the testing period since March 10, 1952, when General Batista overthrew and replaced the Auténtico administration, which had ruled Cuba for eight years and under which the present CTC leadership had risen. The Congress also revealed certain weaknesses of the Cuban movement.

Although it is true that much of the opposition to Mujal was not represented at the IX Congress, the spirit of unity that reigned there seemed palpably to be genuine and to reflect a quiet and natural determination on the part of the Cuban labor movement to demonstrate its fundamental solidarity before the country and before its critics. Such an inference was most strikingly to be drawn from the speeches to the Congress of Lominchar and Balbuena, who for all their generous concessions to the platform by no means attended the Congress in the same compromising and imploring temper as Aguilera. Lominchar and Balbuena maintained their opposition but by their attitudes conveyed that they realized that at this important moment CTC unity and CTC power had to be made clear to the

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country.

Erstwhile critics Cofiño and Rubiera cut sorry figures before the delegates. The contrast between their roles at the Congress and the attacks that for so long a period before it they seemed to be threatening to make there all too clearly demonstrated to the delegates that Cofiño and Rubiera had been interested chiefly in preserving their power positions within the CTC. When Cofiño spoke to the Congress, at the closing May Day ceremonies, he was received with a tumultuous and prolonged barracking. Rubiera stayed off the platform the entire Congress through, and on May Day, when he should have addressed the Congress, Gonzalez Tellechea spoke for him, explaining to the jeers of the delegates that Rubiera was ill. In a conversation that will be reported upon in the Embassy's next periodic report, Mujal indicated to the Embassy that while he is feeling charitable enough towards Rubiera, he may cause Cofiño considerable difficulty in the next year or year-and-a-half. For the purpose of evaluating the IX Congress, however, the important thing is that the very powerful and strongly organized Electric Plants and Telephone Workers Unions were solidary with Mujal every step of the way.

Conrado Rodríguez and Conrado Becquer and Senator Rolando MASFERRER's Movimiento Sindicalista Radical were not in evidence at the Congress. The two Conrados had, of course, been safely boxed following the sugar strike and their own hunger strike. The MSR had prudently decided to be absent, or at least not to present itself as a force, at the CTC Congress. Nevertheless, it appears probable that both the Conrados and Masferrer will try to assert and demonstrate their strength at the forthcoming FNTA National Congress. The Conrados are supposed to get a hearing at this Congress and reportedly the MSR has been making some progress among the sugar workers. It appears likely that the FNTA Congress is going to be a much livelier and divided affair than was the IX CTC Congress.

Between the Workers' Bloc of the President's Progresista Party (BOP) and Mujal there was seemingly complete identity of action and purpose at the IX National Congress. This was, of course, no surprise. It has to be reported, however, that the BOP has been steadily continuing its organizational efforts among the individual unions, apparently in complete harmony with Mujal; and its continued quietness means merely that the BOP is not interested in attacking the CTC leadership, not that it is growing weaker or inactive. Chiefly through ex-Communist Julian SOTOLONGO of Camaguey, the BOP, also, will play an important role in the FNTA Congress.

Marco Antonio HIRIGOYEN was in jail, on charges of plotting, for a month and a half till just before the CTC Congress. His

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plans for the Congress were thus effectively frustrated. His chief lieutenant, Mario MENDOZA, was defeated for election as a Congress delegate from his Habana Market Workers' union by BOP. Hirigoyen, once more with financial assistance from Mujal, and because the government, on Mujal's recommendation, blinked at the fact that he is under indictment, left Cuba with his family, ostensibly to resume residence in the United States.

Relations between the CTC and the Batista government, the IX Congress confirmed, have settled down to a harmonious, largely cooperative, but entirely unsentimental accomodation. There was no criticism of the government by the Congress except such as might be implied in certain routine bread and butter resolutions about wages, "gains", etc., which would no doubt have read just the same had the friendliest of Auténtico governments been in power.

Mujal acknowledged that the Batista government had given considerable help and been consistently fair to the labor movement, but Minister "Pepito" Pérez González was virtually alone in really eulogizing the President. Nor did the President come, or seek to come, to the Congress. (Mujal pointed out recently to the Embassy that for all his wanting to be acclaimed by the crowds, Batista shows no desire to be hailed by the unions in public demonstrations.) It was remarked above that Mujal consistently referred to Batista as "General" not "President". The Embassy will quizz Mujal on this point but for the present offers the opinion that Mujal must be the victim of a quirk of conscience or spirit. In conversation with the labor officer he consistently speaks of "we" or "us" Auténticos, although of course, Auténtico leaders as such act as if they would not be seen in his company. That he was an Auténtico senator and an Auténtico leader seems to mean something very special and personal to Mujal.

Evaluation: Organizational Weaknesses.

The IX Congress reflected weaknesses in the CTC organization, program, and work on which the Embassy has had occasion to comment before. Many of these weaknesses are traceable in large measure to the fact that the CTC is so much a one man organization with that one man trying to do most of the work personally.

Despite the election of a long list of secretaries for such matters as legal affairs, sports and youth, accidents, social assistance, etc., and the numerous resolutions passed on these and kindred matters, the fact is that the CTC does virtually nothing on any of these topics. The secretaryships are largely filled proportionately from among followers of the most important union leaders. Many of the incumbents scarcely go to the offices assigned them as secretaries. To the degree that

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these secretaries enjoy Mujal's confidence, they are employed as his troubleshooters, intervening a union here, settling a quarrel there, looking to some negotiation with an employer elsewhere. Mujal, himself is too much involved in a myriad day-to-day problems to bother with education, youth, or long-ranging propaganda programs.

In part, of course, Mujal's conduct of his office is dictated by Cuban conditions. Where so much is done by influence, by accomodation, through politics, Mujal has constantly to be in personal contact with the President, Ministers, employers, army and political leaders, courts, police, etc; or he has to detail able and trusted lieutenants of some prestige in their own right to do these things for him.

Notwithstanding what has just been said in extenuation of the CTC's organizational weaknesses, it would seem that a movement with the resources that the CTC enjoys requires only some application and some planning to work out and staff a full rounded program of auxiliary and service activities in benefit of the membership and of the work of the organization. That the CTC and its officers know that such a program should and can be worked out the very existence of the secretariats and the passage of the resolutions referred to amply testify. It may be that Cuban ways being what they are, Mujal is not very keen to establish secretariats and departments that might operate with some degree of independence.

Evaluation: Weaknesses in CTC Outlook.

The resolutions of the IX Congress in themselves gave little encouragement to hopes that the CTC is adopting a broader view of its own and the national interest. The specific pronouncements on mechanization, on sea trains and ferries, on indemnified dismissal revealed the movement as still zealously dedicated to "saving the job." This is natural to organized labor, of course, and especially to a movement with unemployment of the proportions of that in Cuba. On the other hand there was a striking lack of mention in the resolutions of the CTC's organizational problems, of the opportunity offered by the compulsory checkoff to increase membership, of how the revenue from the checkoff should be spent, or even of what ought to be done to insure its collection.

The IX Congress resolutions, however, betokened no increased militancy on the part of the CTC as regards "saving the job." Resolutions of the kind mentioned above have always been passed by CTC Congresses. And, as Mujal so candidly admitted in respect of the appeal for national peace, most of the resolutions will remain scraps of paper.

Notwithstanding these reservations, Mujal's statement regarding the willingness of the CTC to cooperate with investors, as well as the resolutions on this subject, must be taken seriously. The CTC undoubtedly will cooperate with new investors, and Mujal has

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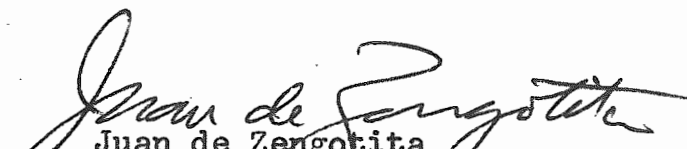
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intimated in the past that the problem of legally guaranteed job tenure, with the obstacle it presents to investment, might be overcome through special agreements with new investors.

In the final analysis, however, and despite all its talk and arm waving on the problem of new investment, the CTC shows no signs of taking an initiative to encourage such investment. Given its resources and its influence in Cuban life, there can be no question but that the CTC could both directly and indirectly--through pressure on the government--do more than it is doing in this direction.

It has of course to be acknowledged that during the past four years Mujal and his collaborators have had their hands full, first preserving their own and the CTC's position after the overthrow of the Auténtico administration and then fighting the attacks against themselves launched from within and from outside the CTC as the time for the IX Congress approached. Possibly now that Mujal's and the CTC's position in relation to the Batista government has been stabilized, that another CTC congress is supposedly four years away, and if the compulsory checkoff is enforced, Mujal will be able to do more about broadening the view of the CTC and developing educational, publicity, and other services for the membership.

For the Ambassador:


Juan de Zengotita
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures: 

1. Summary from Diario Nacional.
2. Officers of Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).

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SUMMARY FROM DIARIO NACIONAL FOR MAY 3 OF CTC IX NATIONAL CONGRESS
RESOLUTIONS (HABANA, APRIL 27-MAY 1, 1956).

GENERAL DEMANDS

Drafting of plans that will favor investments in Cuba for the purpose of creating new sources of work.

Minimum salary of \$90.00 per month instead of the present \$60.00.

The creation of a Technical Commission to study the establishment of mechanization in working centers in order to prevent harm against workers.

Measures to obtain sugar crops of more than 5,000,000 tons beginning in 1957 on the basis of increases in our sales and not in prices.

Steps to amend Article 20 of the Sugar Convention of London to reduce to 2.80 cents per pound the minimum level of sales instead of the 3.25 per pound at present in force.

Increase of the merchant marine.

Development of an agricultural plan for the purpose of growing in Cuba various products that are at present imported and that can be grown on our soil.

Making it compulsory to use in bidding for State works Cuban products that can substitute those that are imported, establishing penalties for infringers.

Regulation of the importation of artificial sweeteners.

The increase of national tourism.

Full opposition to mechanization of the tobacco (cigar making) industry for national consumption.

Distribution of lands and assistance in their planting through BANFAIC.

The promotion of agricultural and industrial development of the country through agricultural protection.

The repudiation of any changes in the social legislation and of severance pay after dismissal.

The creation of the Institute of Defense and Propaganda of Products of the National Industry to combat clandestine trade, dumping, poor quality and the evasion of fiscal and labor laws.

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Penalties against racial discrimination.

A more rapid processing of cases involving labor matters.

The enactment of a law establishing Christmas bonuses in all work sectors.

The definition of employment, unemployment and sub-employment in Cuba in accord with the actual local situation.

State loans with low rates of interest for peasant farmers.

A credit of \$20,000,000 for shipping companies that acquire merchant ships for registry in Cuba.

Reopening of the only bottle factory in Cuba - at Palatino - through BANFAIC credits.

SPECIFIC DEMANDS

The creation of a textile-acetate factory in Cuba.

Coordination of transportation.

Derogation of Law-Decree No. 2134 of 1955 that allows port mechanization.

Opposition to ferries and sea-trains.

The approval of the bill providing for the opening and closing of Commercial Establishments.

The unification of radiocommunications.

The enactment of an Aviation Retirement Fund.

The enactment of a Tobacco Coordination Law to rehabilitate the industry.

The payment of tobacco accumulation bonuses.

Amendment of the Workmens Compensation Law.

Establishment of a tax against foreign newspapers, magazines and printed matter to nourish the Graphic Arts Retirement Fund.

Penalties for persons failing to carry out decisions in labor matters.

Enforcement of the right of lawful strikes.

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The enactment of the Actors' Retirement Law.

Participation of FNTA (National Sugar Workers Federation) in the Sugar Institute.

Protection of the national textile industry.

Prohibition against the importation of assembled bodies (trucks and busses) and the creation of assembling plants in Cuba.

The solution of the problem of Autobuses Modernos.

Steps to be taken with Ferrocarriles Occidentales for the restoration of certain rights.

Regulation of the Sector of Medicine (clinics, sanitoriums, laboratories and wholesale drugs establishments).

The application of salary tariffs and social laws at undertaking establishments.

A wage of \$8.00 per day or \$230 a month for brewery workers.

The fixing of interest rates on the deposits of electric current consumers to be used for hospitals and charity establishments.

The termination of the construction of the National Theatre.

The restoration of variety shows at moving picture houses. (First run houses).

The affixing of official price lists at food stores.

The strict fulfillment of the sanitary ordinances at all slaughter houses.

The operation of Workers Cooperatives as provided by Law-Decree No. 1379 of 1954.

The creation of the National Institute for the Development of the Petroleum Industry.

Regulation of the work of waitresses at bars, cafes and clubs, granting them the benefits of the social laws to prevent their deviation into vice.

The setting of quotas for slaughtering cattle by provinces.

Prohibition against transporting cattle on trailers.

The creation of the National Cattle Institute.

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The enactment of the Musicians Retirement Fund.

Regulation of juke boxes and musical apparatus in public establishments.

Prohibition against the use of official musical bands at private events.

Amendment of the Chauffeurs Retirement Law.

Prohibition of a sole concern to handle highway transportation.

Compulsory start of repairs at sugar mills in October.

Support of CRIC (Commission Regulating the Shoe Industry).

INTERNAL CTC DEMANDS

The acquisition of a newspaper and a radio broadcasting station for CTC.

The organization of a Workmens Compensation Insurance Company operated by CTC and its federations; using the profits therefrom to establish union schools.

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Officers of Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) Elected at IX National Congress, Habana April-May, 1956.

BUREAU OF DIRECTION

Angel COFIÑO García
Ramón LEON Rentería
Francisco AGUIRRE Vidauretta
José PEREZ González
José L. MARTINEZ Alvarez

Facundo POMAR Soler
Vicente RUBIERA Feito
Javier H. BOLANOS
Eusebio MUJAL Barniol

SECRETARIES

Secretary General
Secretary of Organization
Secretary of Finance
Recording Secretary

Eusebio MUJAL Barniol
Modesto BARBEITO Peñalver
Jesús ARTIGAS Carbonell
Raúl VALDIVIA Pérez

(During Valdivia's absence at the ICFTU Plantations Headquarters in Brussels Pedro DOMENECH Camué is Acting Recording Secretary).

Delegate to Official and Employer

Organizations

Secretary of Correspondence
Secretary of Foreign Relations
Secretary of Juridical Affairs
Secretary of Culture
Secretary of Social Aid
Secretary of Internal Relations
Secretary of Propaganda
Secretary of Political Economy
Secretary of Social Affairs
(Gesty formerly spelled his name HASTIE)
Secretary of Statistics
Secretary of Youth and Sports
Secretary for Organization of Unemployed
Secretary of Union Education
Secretary of Accidents and Prevention

Juan Evangelista RAMOS
Guillermo MESTRE ~~Fernández~~
Ignacio GONZALEZ Tellechea
Calixto SANCHEZ Whyte
Manuel SIMPSON Smith
Mercedes CHIRINO Chapotín
Isidro ESTEVEZ Herrera
Alfredo HAYDAR Mata
Manuel ZORRILLA Pérez
Reinaldo GESTY Gamayo
Gilberto GALAN Vazquez
Samuel POWELL Claret
Antonio TORRES Torres
Abelardo IGLESIAS Saavedra
Rolando LEONARD Díaz

Note: The above officers along with the Secretaries of the Provincial Federations and a representative of each of the industrial federations make up the Executive Committee.

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