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CD NO. [REDACTED]

COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 2 Feb 1949

SUBJECT Election of New Directorate of Confederation of Colombian Workers

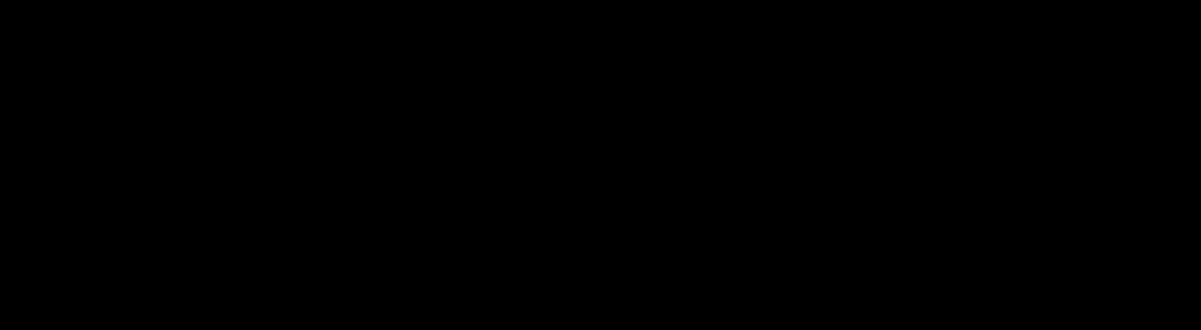
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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



1. The VII General Plenum of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Colombia (CTC) will meet during the last week of January 1949 in Bogota. A new Directorate for the CTC will be elected and plans will be made for the calling of the X National Labor Congress.
2. The Central Executive Committee of the Partido Comunista de Colombia (PCC) has directed all Departmental Committees to send representatives to visit all labor leaders in their department before the opening of the Plenum. Labor leaders are to be advised that if the present PCC members, Pedro J. Abella, Carlos Arturo Aguirre, and Victor Julio Merchan, are re-elected to the Directorate, or if other PCC members are elected, the Party will immediately begin a far-reaching program for the benefit of the working classes of the country.
3. The program would be carried out by the presentation of the following demands by a great number of the labor unions:
 - a. Immediate increase in wages based on the constantly rising cost of living.
 - b. Effective implementation of the profit-sharing decree to operate to the benefit of the workers.
 - c. Houses for workers built in accordance with modern standards of sanitation.
 - d. Establishment of elementary and technical schools, day schools and nurseries for the children of workers, night schools for the workers, and rural schools.
 - e. Adequate assistance for workers and their families, paid by the Government.
 - f. Establishment of a Labor Bank with Government capital in Bogota and branches in all departmental capitals. This bank would make long-term loans with no interest to the workers.
 - g. Establishment in each departmental capital of a commissary for food, clothing, medicine, tools, etc., to be sold at cost and on credit to the workers.

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- h. Parceling and distribution of large, uncultivated haciendas to the farm workers. In addition, the Government should send agricultural experts to instruct the workers and to furnish the necessary seeds.
- i. Insurance for the workers against old age, death, sickness, and accidents.
4. It is reported that the two Communist factions in Colombia are cooperating to a certain extent in preparation for the Plenum. The PCC is depending to a large extent on the influence wielded by Abella, Aguirre, and Merchan as members of the Directorate of the CTC. They also hope to gain the support of the labor unions of the Department of Cundinamarca. The leader of this union, Ventura Fuentes Vanegas, is a PCC member.
5. The activities of the Partido Comunista Obrero (PCO) are under the direction of Jesus Villegas Palacio, who hopes to regain the position of Secretary General of the CTC. Villegas held this position for five years prior to December 1947. The PCO is believed to have the support of the Bavaria Syndicate, the Federation of Construction Workers, and certain unions affiliated to the Federacion Nacional de Transportes Fluvial, Maritimo, Portuario, y Aereo (FEDENAL).
6. Other groups will pledge their support to candidates outside these two factions. Parmenio Zapata has advised that delegates from his Federacion Nacional de Carreteras will vote for Caitanist-Liberal candidates. Carlos H. Pareja has expressed his intention to propose certain candidates for election to the CTC Directorate in order to gain support among the labor unions for his own candidacy for the House of Representatives in June 1949. Diego Montana Cuellar has the same intention since he also hopes to be elected to the House of Representatives. Montana Cuellar has been assured the support of many of the important petroleum leaders in the country, particularly those in the Barrancabermeja area.
7. The labor leaders in Colombia agree that Pedro J. Abella will be replaced as Secretary General of the CTC. He has been accused of neglecting his work and of devoting his time to Communist activities. It is expected that the Ministry of Labor will do everything possible to bring about the election of men experienced in labor matters and to eliminate all politics, particularly extreme leftist tendencies, from the Directorate of the CTC.

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