

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Cuba

DATE DISTR. 18 MAY 1949

SUBJECT CON-CONI Activities Prior to CON Labor Congress

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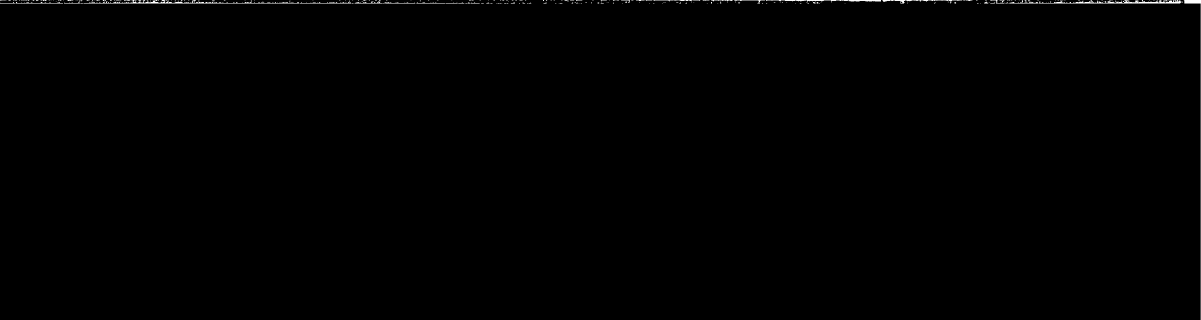
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Francisco Aguirre, Comision Obrera Nacional leader and alternate Secretary General of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), convened the CTC National Council on 12 March 1949, at which time it was resolved that the Sixth (biennial) Congress of the CTC would convoke on 27-29 April.\* The following developments brought to a climax many months of negotiation among the various labor groups, undertaken at the request of the government in order to bring about a united non-Communist labor front at the Sixth Congress of the CTC. According to source, the Comite Obrero Nacional Independiente (CONI) has no chance to regain any real labor strength. The CON congress should solidify anti-Communist labor groups and if it receives the support of the federations over which CONI still claims control, may actually achieve almost complete anti-Communist labor unity.

Comite Obrero Nacional Independiente (CONI)

- C-2 1. During the last days of March and the beginning of April the influence of Angel Cofino's CONI fell rapidly. CONI lost control over several of the federations which it had claimed and found its control weakened in its main source of strength, the telephone and electrical federations.
- 2. Until mid-April, CONI persisted in its efforts to create a separate CTC. It sent out form letters to workers' organizations attacking the forthcoming Aguirre congress in the name of the Asociacion Libertaria de Cuba, and its plans received press attention.
- 3. On 6 April 1949, Cofino asked Union Insurreccional Revolucionaria (UIR) officials to join CONI in the creation of a new CTC. UIR officials answered that they could not put their syndicates in such a dangerous position nor did they care to abandon their present position merely because of a whim of Cofino. As a result of a meeting with Aguirre a few hours later, UIR officials recommended to all its syndicates that they participate in the Aguirre congress.
- 4. One of the five federations claimed by CONI is the Federacion Nacional de Trabajadores de Transporte Aereo. In order to combat CONI in this field, CON organized a Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Transporte Aereo which CONI claimed was a "paternal syndicate". The Minister of Labor, however,

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recognized CON's new group and admitted it to the CTC.

5. The transport congresses which convened in December and February, the latter a CONI victory, were declared void by the Minister of Labor.\*\* As a result, CON has emerged the victor through its gains in the transport federation since the February congress.
6. The Federacion de Mataderos and the Federacion de Ganadores, two of the five over which CONI claimed control, have decided to attend the CTC Congress convoked by CON.
7. On the eve of the CON-sponsored congress, Cofino's CONI retained only nominal control of two federations, electrical and telephone. The rank and file of these two groups decided to attend the April congress if possible.

Comision Obrera Nacional (CON)

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8. The congress has not received much publicity in certain sections of the press because of the resentment of the Cuban press organization against Aguirre over his actions when he was Minister of Labor. Many newspapers not only look upon Aguirre as a former enemy, but have treated the congress lightly since Cofino's brother-in-law, Orlando Puente, is Secretary to the Presidency.
  9. CON has increased in power with great rapidity and 2500 delegates were expected to attend the April congress. In view of CONI's rapidly decreasing power, CON has made no comments as to what it is willing to concede CONI in the event of a merger. CON previously scoffed at CONI's aspirations for equal representation on the CTC Executive Committee since CONI is bound to lose out and will accept any condition. It cannot be assumed that CONI will be given a position of any importance on the new CTC Executive Committee.
  10. Principal aspirants to the CTC Secretary Generalship were Francisco Aguirre representing the Federacion Gastronomica, Emilio Suri Castillo of the sugar federation, Pablo Balbuena of Federacion de Cinemategraficos, and Marco Hirigoyen, ARG, representing the transport workers.
  11. Senator Eusebio Mujal of CON has succeeded in collecting about \$100,000 by direct assessment of members and companies. CON is still faced with further financial trouble since it must defray the expenses of the May Day parade which will bring the total expense to more than \$200,000.

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