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COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN CUBA

Cuba is becoming the center of Communist activity in Latin America. A hemisphere peace conference under the auspices of the Communist-front World Peace Council is being planned for Havana in May or June, and the Communist hand is also evident in the "Friends of Cuba" societies being formed in most Latin American countries. Communist bloc propaganda continues its active support of Castro, and Cuba's economic, labor, and cultural contacts with the bloc are increasing.

Representatives of seven Latin American affiliates of the Communist-front World Peace Council (WPC) met with Soviet and French WPC members in Havana from 9 to 12 March to plan a hemispheric peace conference there in May or June. Such a conference would implement plans made by Latin American Communists meeting in Moscow at the time of the Soviet 21st party congress in early 1959 to strengthen the "peace movement" and to promote a "peoples' congress."

Communist leaders from several other Latin American countries attended the plenary session of the Cuban Communist party (PSP) in early March. During the meeting, the PSP announced its support for the "week of solidarity with the struggles of the Latin American peoples" which the Communist-infiltrated Cuban Labor Confederation has called for later this month.

Cultural and propaganda activities by the "Friends of Cuba" societies being formed in most Latin American coun-

tries are promoted through the Cuban Casa de las Americas, run by the pro-Communist wife of the minister of education. Castro's subsidized press agency, Prensa Latina, cooperates in these efforts. The societies attract leftist, non-Communist groups who still see Castro as a hopeful example, but they are in effect Communist fronts.

The Sino-Soviet bloc continues its active support of Castro, particularly in the propaganda and economic fields. The New China News Agency, TASS, and other bloc news sources promptly report Castro's anti-US charges, reflecting the close ties established with Prensa Latina during February. A Polish foreign trade representative reportedly will soon be in Cuba to discuss steel plants and other industrial installations acutely desired by the Castro regime. East Germany has signed a trade agreement with the Cuban National Bank, and the Czechs are already active commercially in Cuba.

bloc countries also reflect labor and medical contacts as well as invitations and offers of assistance to a Chinese Communist theatrical troupe and to Soviet ballet dancers.

The charges made by Cuban workers on 14 March of abuse and bad working conditions at

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the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay followed a marked increase in reports that Castro plans a formal demand for evacuation of the base. The training and arming of student, worker, and peasant militia units and the

organization of youth brigades seem to have been speeded up, and the US Embassy reports that the Castro government has received at least 20 shipments of arms and ammunition.

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OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

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PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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PART III

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS