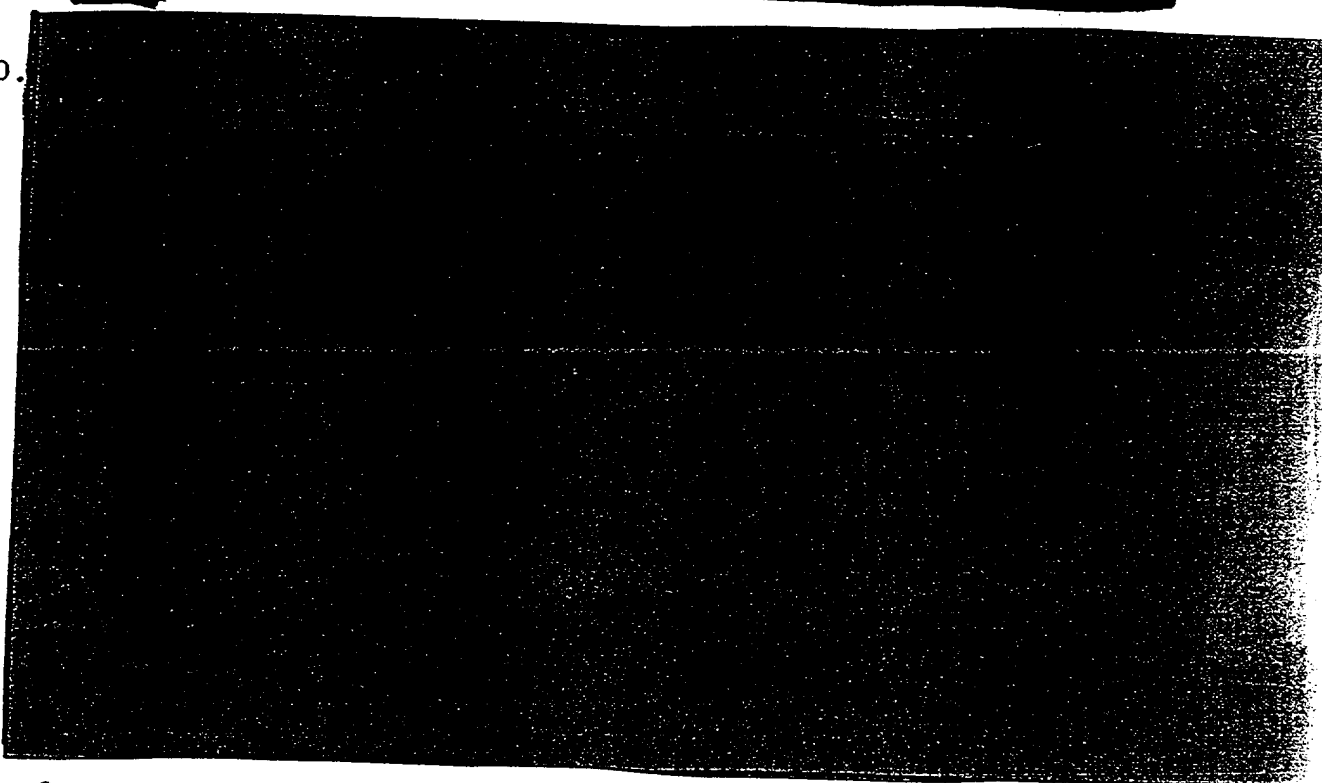


LATIN AMERICA

9. Castro Regime Sponsors Election of Another Communist Labor Union Head: On 29 May, Fidel Castro and other high Cuban officials attended the Congress of Construction Workers at which a Communist secretary general was elected while the candidate of Castro's 26th of July Movement stepped aside. This is another of the unions where moderate leaders who resisted Communist domination were purged by Jesus Soto and other pro-Communists who now run the Cuban Workers' Confederation with the blessing of the Castro government. The union has been a focal point of unrest and dissatisfaction in recent months, but the embassy reports that it now appears to have been brought into line and that apparently no move was made to protest the railroading of a slate acceptable to the regime.

Castro spoke for three hours at the construction congress, appearing unusually cocky and confident and reiterating his recently announced intention of organizing 80,000 Cubans of 14 to 18 years of age into youth labor brigades. The embassy comments that this is another example of the growing trend in Cuba to reorganize the social structure into tightly knit groups under the direction and control of the government.

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