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## MEXICAN LABOR WELCOMES ARRIVAL OF BATISTA

MEXICO CITY. (MLN) -- The close bonds of sympathy and mutual support -- between the peoples of Mexico and Cuba were symbolized here on Sunday, February 5, in a public meeting organized by the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers) in honor of Colonel Fulgencio Batista, chief of the Cuban army and "strong man" of the Cuban government, at present in this country as the guest of the Ministry of National Defense.

Although the meeting was prepared by the CTM, other organizations, including the PRM (Party of the Mexican Revolution), participated. The chief speaker was Vicente Lombardo Toledano, general secretary of the labor organization, who arrived here from his recent visit to Cuba just in for the celebration.

In view of the fact that Mexican labor has in the past severely -- criticized the Batista regime in Cuba, its present friendliness to him has caused a certain amount of confusion here which the reactionary -- press is utilizing to "demonstrate" the alleged insincerity of the CTM leadership, thus providing the curious spectacle of the most anti-labor and anti-democratic groups in this country berating the labor movement for being friendly to Batista on the grounds that he is not a "revolutionary".

As is well known, the development of Cuban politics during the -- past year has produced a decided shift in the balance of power in that country, and Batista, whose sole support formerly came from the most -- conservative elements in Cuba and from the army which he controlled, -- is now frankly basing himself on the democratic forces in the country.

The result of this change in recent months has brought with it the legalization of the Cuban trade unions, which had been living a precarious underground existence since the general strike of 1935, together with the resumption of press freedom, liberty of political activity, -- and serious preparation for the many times postponed Constituent Congress.

Evidence of the new state of affairs is to be found in the holding of the Unification Congress of the Cuban trade unions last month, which resulted in the formation of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, affiliated with the Confederation of Latin American Workers and an applicant for admission into the Trade Union International.

In his address of welcome to Batista, Lombardo Toledano emphasized the increasing importance of the democratic development of Cuba--and the growing alliance between the democratic forces of all the Latin American countries, up to this time chiefly expressed by the Confederation of Latin American workers, which embraces the labor movement of practically all the nations of Central and South America.

His speech was in reality a species of catechism directed at Batista, implying that the labor movement of both Cuba and Mexico, as well as of the rest of the Latin American countries, would stand with him as long as he continued to guarantee the liberties and needs of the Cuban people.

"We of today," Lombardo said, "are different from the man of the past in that we are no longer romantics merely rendering formal diplomatic homage to the representative of the Cuban people. We are here to encourage him and to tell him that the destiny of Cuba is the destiny of Mexican people; that we wish to continue the struggle on the side of the whole Continent, on the side of France, of England, of all people that conserve the forms of democracy."

"The Cuban workers," he concluded, "have charged me with the mission I am now fulfilling, of saluting you in their name. Welcome to this country, which is struggling to contribute towards the maintenance of democracy in the world. In the name of the people of Mexico, of the people of Cuba, and of all the workers of Latin America, I salute you. I promise you that the CTM will be always at the call of the Cuban democracy."

In his reply to Lombardo's speech, Colonel Batista gave a brief resumé of the principal events in Cuba since the revolution against Machado in 1933 and of the efforts of the government he has directed to improve the social and economic conditions of the island. Throughout his address, he emphasized his own origin as a "man of the people" and expressed his satisfaction over the recent unification of the Cuban labor organizations in a national trade-union center.

He denounced the infiltration of fascist emissaries and propaganda in Latin America, speaking of the necessity of a continental defense against fascism and imperialism and warmly praising the efforts of the Roosevelt administration in the United States to promote better understanding and better relations among all the American nations in defense of the democratic heritage of the New World.

"If at any time the independence or the rights of Mexico should be endangered," he concluded, "the people of Mexico may be sure that in Cuba they have a friend prepared to help them in every way."

Other speakers at the meeting, which was held in the main square of Mexico City, before the National Palace, were representatives of the Federation of Government Employees, the National Committee of the CTM, the Mexican Army, and Luis I. Rodriguez, President of the PRM.

#### FASCIST LEADERS RELEASED BUT MEETINGS STOPPED.

MEXICO CITY. (MLN) -- The four fascist agitators responsible for the meetings and riots reported in the last number of MEXICAN LABOR NEWS, who were arrested and held for examination by the authorities, have since been released (on February 1) but continue to be subject to the orders of the Federal Court in the capital, pending further investigations of the circumstances in the case.

This action of the authorities is generally taken for the present against the four ringleaders of the fascist gang unless their continued activities provide fresh reasons for proceeding against them.

On the day of their release, Ossorio, Mena Brito, Coss, and Luis del Toro announced that they would hold a meeting again on the following day in the same downtown street where the previous meetings had developed into street battles. The Federal District authorities, however, complying with the instructions of the new Governor of the District, have refused permission for such meetings.

Supported by ex-general Iturbe and ex-Colonel Bolívar Sierra, the leaders of the so-called Mexican Constitutional Democratic Front, the fascists have protested against this "invasion of their right to freedom of speech."

The authorities base their decision not to allow additional meetings on the grounds that the former demonstrations were plain instances of incitement to riot and rebellion against the government.

The leniency with which the guilty leaders have been dealt appears to indicate a desire on the part of the administration not to aggravate the growing bitterness of the present political struggle by providing martyrs to the enemies of the government.

#### POLITICAL PARTY UPHOLDS AUTONOMY OF MEMBER GROUPS.

MEXICO CITY. (MLN) -- The PRM (Party of the Mexican Revolution) upheld on February 1 the right of its constituent organizations to make their own decisions as to the candidate they will support for the presidency of Mexico, independently of the later action to be taken by the party itself.

The question arose when the groups of supporters of General Francisco J. Múgica challenged the right of the National Peasant Confederation to hold its own Convention at the end of this month to choose the candidate who will receive peasant backing in the campaign, on the ground that as a member of the PRM, the Confederation was forbidden by the statutes of the Party to engage in "electoral" activities until after the Party itself has announced its candidate.

In its reply to the protest, the National Executive Committee of the PRM states that the Confederation is violating no statute of the Party in sounding the sympathies and tendencies of its own members.

"If the Central Executive Committee," the statement says, "ignoring the duties which it should perform, should attempt to monopolize all electoral activities, thus depriving the worker and peasant organi

zations of their right to share in them, it would be overriding the will of the masses, undermining the civic spirit of our people, and endangering their social conquests by placing the Party in an obviously undemocratic position".

It is thought here that the protest of the Mígica group stems - from the fear that the pending meeting of the Peasant Confederation - will damage their candidate's chances, as the indications point to - the winning of peasant support by another of the present entries in - the presidential race. As the PRM itself will not hold its Convention until November, it is obviously to the interest of the candidate to - prevent any of the mass organizations making their choice beforehand, so that the interval can be employed for propaganda in their behalf - among the peasant and labor groups.

The National Peasant Confederations is going ahead with its plans for its convention to be held in the city of San Luis Potosí. At the same time, the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers) has announced - that its Special National Council, called for the same purpose, will open in this city on February 20. Five hundred delegates, representing all the national, state, and local unions affiliated with the CTM, are expected to gather for the Council, which in addition to the question of the presidential campaign, will discuss a number of other urgent - matters affecting the labor movement.

#### CARDENAS FIRM ON OIL EXPROPRIATION.

MEXICO CITY. (MLN) -- "The Mexican government will not retreat a single step in the question of the oil expropriation," President Cárdenas declared here at a dinner for the officials of the National Confederation of Veterans of the Revolution.

The Mexican President reiterated his confidence that the problem would be solved with benefit to the national economy. The organization of the industry is proceeding on firm bases and is making continual progress, he asserted. There has been no necessity thus far to seek the aid of foreign technicians, but their services would be utilized - should such a step appear advisable.

In the sale of Mexican petroleum, the President added, the government has sought to give preference to the democratic countries, but - in behalf of the health of the national economy, it is prepared to - sign contracts, as it has already done, with other States, although - such agreements have been for short periods, as the government is confident that the United States and the other democratic nations will - eventually reach an understanding with Mexico.

This statement has been reinforced by the publication here of the original questions and answers in the interview with the President recently secured by W. R. Knickerbocker. In view of the fact that certain newspapers in Mexico City were publishing a garbled version of the - interview immediately translated from its various installments as they appeared in the Hearst press in the United States, the government press bureau has made public the verbatim questions and answers.

To a series of questions connected with the oil controversy, - President Cárdenas replied:

"The matter of the petroleum expropriation has ceased to be a -- theme of current interest to the people and the government of Mexico. The legality of the procedure is no longer discussed, Compensation -- will be paid in the terms established by the law, within a period of ten years, and its amount will be fixed by the Commission charged with evaluating the properties.

"What is of interest today is the question of whether or not ---- there are American or English companies willing to acquire Mexican -- petroleum, before the Government decides to enter into long-term agreements with other countries."

In answer to the question as to whether the expropriation of the oil industry was an initial step in a general program of expropriation of foreign properties, the President said:

"The expropriation of the interests of the oil companies was due to their refusal to obey the laws of Mexico and not to a general policy of expropriation." adding that "the fears (expressed by mining interests in Mexico) are the result of the campaign carried on by newspapers in the service of the oil companies. The future of the foreign mining companies can be of great benefit to them if with fairness and good faith they collaborate with the government of Mexico instead of continuing their association with the petroleum interests which were liquidated as being undesirable for the country."

The Department of National Economy, it was announced on February 6, has sent to the expropriated oil companies the inventories of the properties which have thus far been terminated and will continue to furnish the balance of the inventories as rapidly as they can be drawn up. The companies, the announcement states, will have full opportunity to defend their interests in the judicial proceedings to determine the value of the properties as soon as the inventories have been completed.

(Although invited to do so by the Mexican Government, the oil companies have thus far refused to take part in the formulation of the inventories on the ground that such action would constitute a tacit acceptance of the expropriation, the legality of which they are challenging in the Mexican courts.)

Considerable interest has been aroused here by the news on February 8 that President Roosevelt had personally conferred with the Mexican Ambassador in Washington on the oil question. It is reported that Donald R. Richberg, counsel for the Standard Oil Company, will shortly come to Mexico to initiate negotiations with President Cárdenas -- for a solution of the controversy.

Patrick J. Hurley, said to be representing the Sinclair interests, was recently in Mexico and interviewed the President. Although publicly he stated that he was here merely on a "pleasure trip," it is -- thought that he also began discussions with the Mexican government to settle the oil conflict and he is expected to return to this city shortly.

Mexico's position in the controversy remains exactly what the President and other officials of the administration have repeatedly defined it to be: the Mexican government would prefer to reach an un-

derstanding and a settlement of the problem with the democratic countries and dispose of its oil in those markets, but if those countries refuse to come to an agreement, Mexico for its part will refuse to sacrifice its own national interests and the welfare of its economy by refraining from selling oil to any country prepared to buy it.

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