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Denunciation

Labor & Students' United People Federation

Summer 1989

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scanned from A Mayor, Summer 1989, vol. 1, number 2, page 15

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Tabor trans.

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In the so-called Proletarian State of Cuba one is condemned and shot merely on the basis of suspicion of the intent to form independent unions. We are not making this denunciation to demand that fate take pity on us. We do not believe in fate; on the contrary, we firmly believe in Humanity and in the unavoidable right of the internationally exploited class: The Working Class.

This denunciation is not only a sentence against the despicable fascist State, but is also intended to wake up those sleeping consciences which have not yet committed themselves to the cause of the exploited.

Persecution, imprisonment and assassinations have been the destiny of trade union activists and of the working class in general since the beginning of the proletariat in Cuba up until our own times. The death sentence ordered by the Popular Tribunal in April 1983 of the young (19 to 26 years old) workers: Carlos Garcia Diaz, Angel Donato Martinez and Benito Garcia Oliveira is convincing proof of the extreme cruelty of the totalitarian Castroist State against the working class; it also demonstrates how the system acts to confuse and disinform all those who are concerned with the abuses against the workers on the island. These five youths,

condemned to pay the supreme penalty by shooting, accused of industrial sabotage and the intention to form an independent union, are now serving long sentences, after smuggling information to the outside and having their death sentences commuted. Their wives also faced sentences for association, concealment and conspiracy. Caridad Pavon, alias "la Gallega" (the Galician), feminist leader of the syndicalist group known as the Zapata Movement (for its Zapatist-Magonist call for a true agrarian revolution, agricultural collectives and agrarian unionism), mysteriously appeared, dead, in a cell of the Department of State Security (located in Villa Marista) while undergoing interrogation. The official report of the case called it a suicide. (It is worth noting that at the moment of detention, before being placed in cells, prisoners are meticulously examined, including body searches.)

In 1981, the railway worker Omar Villavicencio, 24 years old, was shot in the province of Camaguey, after having been transferred from the Combinado del Este prison in Havana, naked and exposed in a "kennel" or Black Maria (subhuman cell used to transport prisoners) to the site of his assassination. The young worker activist had been a prisoner for two years, held incommunicado in a "Death Rectangle" (an installation housing regular prisoners and those condemned to death) in the Combinado del Este prison, awaiting his execution on charges of industrial sabotage. In that same year, another worker activist, the agrarian worker Emilio Relova Cardulis, was assassinated in front of the execution wall.

In 1982, the first effort of the agro-syndicalist movement was carried out in the town of San Jose de las Lajas in Havana Province. Two of its activists, the peasants Ramon Toledo Lugo and Armando Hernandez Gonzales, were shot. The rest of the peasants active in the union movement, the brothers Daniel, Carlos and Jorge Cardo, Jesus Varela, Israel Lopez Toledo and Timoteo Toledo Lugo, were sentenced to 30 years in jail. The wives of Ramon Toledo and Armando Hernandez were also sentenced.

In 1984, the agrarian worker Ramon Vera Chaviano, active defender of peasant rights, was executed in Havana for sabotage.

In 1986, the union activist Rafael Aquino Limonta, worker in the Ron Caney factory of Santiago de Cuba, was executed, on the grounds of intending to organize a labor strike.

In 1987, in the month of February, the railway workers Ernesto Llanes Sotolongo and Efrain Montero Quezada were executed in Camaguey, adding still more to the list of those assassinated in defense of the workers rights.

In a recent report sent to the outside world, we publicized the terrible working conditions of those who work under the totalitarian Cuban State.

Eighty percent of the factories and industries presently operating in Cuba use the same machinery, production systems and systems of industrial safety that they used when they were operating as private enterprises more than 30 years ago. The lack of maintenance, the speedup the workers are subjected to, and the few safety measures for the workers summarize the working conditions to which our workers are exposed.

In the last 7 years, more than 5,000 accidents have occurred in MINAZ (the National Ministry of the Sugar Industry) in Santiago de Cuba alone, with a balance of 21 killed as a consequence.

In the city of Sancti Spiritu, 9 workers recently died owing to an explosion in a fireworks factory operating under poor working conditions.

The factories and industries enumerated below are palpable examples in which the workers are exposed to great danger with little safety measures and under subhuman production conditions, which, aside from affecting the ecology, contaminate the areas in which they are located:

1. Factory of Chemical Fertilizers CUBANITRO, district of Versalles, province of Matanzas.
2. Rayonera, Versalles district, Matanzas province.
3. Textilera Ariguanabo, Havana province.

4. Soap, Perfume and Chemical Detergent factory (the old Crusellas plant), district of El Cerro, Havana province.

Various factories located in the districts of La Lisa and Puentes Grandes in the Marianao region 'drain their water and wastes in the Almendares River, in a deliberate and unconscionable manner, in the same way as when they were exploited by the former capitalist companies, contributing to the ecological disaster of the region. The contamination of the waters of the Almendares River has brought about the almost total extinction of its aquatic fauna and flora.

The CUBANITRO and RAYONERA factories, in the Versailles district of Matanzas province, not only affect the health of the workers who work in them, owing to the escape of toxic gases and the drainage of poisonous substances, such as arsenic and various acids, but also contribute to the ecological catastrophe of the region. Specifically, the chemical fertilizer factory, CUBANITRO, in its plants, Arsenic Plant and Acid Plant, emits toxic gases that rarefy the atmosphere in a densely populated area, as well as dumping wastes contaminated with poisonous substances into the Bay of Matanzas, causing an enormous ecological disequilibrium. The flora of the surrounding area has been affected, revealing eroded and arid terrain, even in the semi-swamp zones, owing to the constant dumping.

Since the previous report, citing the terrible working conditions of the workers, reached the outside world, the director of the State Committee on Work and Social Security, Francisco Linares, has organized secret meetings with directors of the C.C.P.C.C. (Central Committee of Cuban Communist Party), state functionaries and the national leaders of the state Central Workers Union of Cuba, with the purpose of deciding what measures and attitude said committee should take in the face of these exposes.

For free unionism, for free initiative, for self-management, for human rights, for direct democracy of the workers and for the protection of the ecology!