



Havana-Miami, July 24, 2017

Richard Trumka  
Presidente AFL-CIO  
815 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President,

We are writing to you to express our disappointment and surprise at the fact that Cuban Communist leader Victor Lemagne Sánchez was cordially received at the headquarters of the AFL-CIO by the Executive Vice-President of that federation, Tefere Gebre, and the International Director, Cathy Fiengold, on July 10, 2017.

Such visit, until this moment irrelevant and confined to communism-leaning, pro-Cuban regime groups, and with no relevance in the trade union and political life of the United States, was institutionalized and enhanced by the meeting held at the AFL-CIO in Washington. This propaganda maneuver was thus given undeserved and unfair importance, which surely does not represent the majority sentiment of American workers and their organizations, and the traditional principles of freedom, autonomy, and union independence, that have always guided the AFL-CIO and made it a bastion of global democratic trade unionism.

As you know, the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), the only union federation allowed, is one of the most important operative arms of the Government and the Communist Party of Cuba. The relationship of the CTC with this sole Party is organic and subordinate, meaning that it is an instrument of an oppressive State that systematically violates the most basic and fundamental human and labor rights of the Cuban people and workers.

Víctor Lemagne Sánchez is an official of that regime. Consequently, the AFL-CIO did not receive a union leader, but an oppressor co-protagonist of the worst indisputable violations of the fundamental rights of Cuban wage earners.

We wish to think that this event was due to an open-door policy of the AFL-CIO, and not a deliberate act of the International Department and its Director in support of the Castro dictatorship.

We must add that Lemagne Sánchez –also a member of the National Assembly of People's Power– is the Secretary General of the official National Trade Union of Hotel and Tourism Workers (SNTHT), an oppressive instrument that compulsorily organizes workers in the hotel and tourism industry.

Discriminatory, oppressive labor relations and political and racial harassment characterize this industry, the one with the largest share of foreign capital, and the major source of foreign currency in the Island.

Convention 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) of the International Labor Organization (ILO) –a convention considered fundamental– is violated in all its parts and essence, openly and daily. Some jobs are linked to the race of the aspiring worker, and workers are selected and supervised under strict and sectarian political criteria of loyalty to the regime.



Draconian disciplinary regulations are imposed to regulate the relationships and communications that workers may have with foreign tourists. From the most insignificant conversation to the acceptance of any gift, gratuity or recognition from a tourist to a worker, are closely watched. These actions are punished with warnings, illegal deductions from wages, suspensions, dismissals and even jail.


We have allowed ourselves to such specifications in order to reaffirm that the union led by Mr. Lasagne Sánchez is the main instrument of all abuses and violations described. The Cuban Independent Trade Union Association (ASIC) has many documented cases of these ignominious violations, which we place at your disposal.

We must affirm, fraternally but firmly, that this meeting held last July 10 at the AFL-CIO headquarters was a real door slam in the face of all the activists who fight for freedom of association, social justice and democracy in Cuba, and place many of their hopes in the international solidarity that can be exercised by free and democratic trade union organizations like the one you preside.

We are deeply concerned that events such as this one obstruct the AFL-CIO's urgently needed support for the ASIC Complaint to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association (Case No. 3271), on violations of Convention 87 committed by the Cuban Government.

Fraternally,

  
Joel Brito  
Director  
GIRSCC

  
Iván Hernández Carrillo  
General Secretary  
ASIC