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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name BLACKWELL, MORTON: FILES

Withdrawer

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File Folder WHITE HOUSE OUTREACH WORKING GROUP ON
CENTRAL AMERICA (5)

FOIA

F08-0004/01

Box Number ~~9076~~ 9090 A

KRAUSE

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gt 9/28/10

Doc No	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
1	LIST	RE BRIEFING ATTENDEES	3	ND	B6
2	LIST	RE BRIEFING ATTENDEES	14	ND	B6

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 26, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY

THROUGH: Jonathan Vipond, III

FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MB*

SUBJECT: Invitation to Hispanic Evangelicals

Attached is a draft mailgram which I propose be sent over your signature to the Hispanic evangelicals.

MCB:jet

1 Attachment a/s

(Proposed Mailgram to Hispanic Evangelicals)

I AM PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO ATTEND A SPECIAL WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ON U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY AND OUR CENTRAL AMERICAN POLICY TO BE HELD AT THE WHITE HOUSE'S OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM #450, ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1983 BEGINNING AT 4:00 p.m.

THE BRIEFERS WILL BE AMBASSADOR OTTO JUAN REICH, SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR PUBLIC POLICY ON LATIN AMERICA, DEPARTMENT OF STATE; MAJOR OLIVER NORTH, STAFF MEMBER, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL; AND MR. KERRY PTACEK OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY. IF YOU DESIRE TO TAPE REOCDR OR VIDEO TAPE THE BRIEFING, PLEASE ADVISE MRS. THOMANN WHEN YOU RESPOND.

PLEASE NOTIFY MRS. JOYCE THOMANN, OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON, (202) 456-2657 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE CONCERNING YOUR PARTICIPATION. IT WILL BE NECESSARY THAT YOU PROVIDE HER WITH YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND DATE OF BIRTH AS WELL.


CORDIALLY,

FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR PUBLIC LIAISON

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 29, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: MARY ANN MELOY
FROM: Morton C. Blackwell 
SUBJECT: Briefing for Hispanic Evangelicals on
Central America

I believe the attached are self-explanatory. You will note that the last sentence in the second paragraph advises the attendees that they may either tape record or video tape the briefing. Hand-held tape recorders would be difficult to prohibit. I would, however, appreciate your checking with White House Communications to secure their approval before we advise the invitees that they may bring video taping equipment. In order to facilitate consideration of the matter, I am enclosing a copy of those few invitees who might bring video equipment. Because we need to get the mailgrams out as soon as possible, I would appreciate your advising me of their decision as soon as possible.

MCB:jet

Attachments a/s

cc: Faith Ryan Whittlesey

Selection from

Total list
210 invitees

Invitation List for Hispanic Evangelical Briefing -

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404/886-6332

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301/262-1749

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(continued . . .)

Hispanic Evangelical Invitation List - Continued

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6. Gus Reyes (Republican)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 19, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY

THROUGH: Jonathan Vipond, III

FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MB*

SUBJECT: White House Outreach Meeting of
August 17, 1983

Enclosed are materials which were distributed by groups at the last Outreach meeting.

The talk which Sam Dickens gave (that you missed hearing) is set out in his "Conclusions" and "Analysis and Findings" portion of his printed testimony.

The "Declaration on Central America" and the press release are very interesting and largely, I believe, were the result of our Outreach efforts. With the exception of Cesar Gaitan, Assistant Secretary General, Nicaraguan Workers Union in Exile, all signators to the Declaration have attended our Outreach Meetings regularly (Guillen, Macias, Perez) and Dr. Lacayo's wife has been present when he has been out of the country/area.

We are trying to get Cesar Gaitan as a speaker for next Wednesday's meeting at which we will distribute the White House Digest on suppression of free labor unions in Nicaragua.

MCB:jet

Enclosures

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
August 19, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: DOUGLAS RIGGS
FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MR*
SUBJECT: Outreach Working Group Meeting of
August 24, 1983

Attached is an advance copy of our next White House Digest. It has already been cleared for printing, but has not yet been printed on the White House Digest masthead. We are planning to release this paper at our Outreach meeting of August 24th and are now in the process of confirming the credentials of a Nicaraguan "Labor Leader in Exile," prior to asking him to speak to the Outreach Group.

As you may be aware, Ambassador Vernon A. Walters will be our principal speaker. He is OUTSTANDING.

It seems to me that this meeting might be "THE" Outreach meeting most suited for inviting selected union leaders to attend.

In any case, I suggest you prepare a cover letter and send the paper, when printed, to your best large list of union leaders. How about inviting them in your cover letter to call you if they, or their representatives, would like to be invited (each Wednesday) to briefings by our White House Outreach Working Group on Central America?

MCB:jet

Enclosure

cc; Faith Ryan Whittlesey

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 18, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY
THROUGH: Jonathan Vipond, III
FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MB*
SUBJECT: White House Digest #6

I believe the attached are self-explanatory.

We need to get this new Digest over to Dick Darman today so that we will have it ready for distribution on Wednesday, August 24th.

MCB:jet

Enclosures

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 18, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: RICHARD DARMAN
FROM: Faith Ryan Whittlesey
SUBJECT: White House Digest #6

Attached is a memorandum from Mr. Kimmitt noting that the White House Digest paper, "Nicaraguan Repression of Labor Unions" has been coordinated with State, Defense, and CIA and suggesting changes to the text.

All changes have been incorporated, and a "clean copy" of the proposed Digest paper is attached.

We propose to distribute this paper at our Wednesday, August 24th meeting of the White House Outreach Working Group on Central America, and would appreciate your assistance in that regard.

MEMORANDUM

5520
Add-on

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

August 16, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR FAITH WHITTLESEY

FROM: ROBERT M. KIMMITT *RMK*
SUBJECT: White House Digest Paper: Nicaraguan
Repression of Labor Unions

The subject Digest paper has been coordinated with State, Defense, and CIA. Suggested changes are reflected in the attached text.

Attachment

Nicaraguan Repression
of Labor Unions

NICARAGUAN REPRESSION OF LABOR UNIONS

In Communist countries throughout the world, trade unions serve not to advance the interests of the workers, but to serve the political interests of the rulers. They serve not to organize strikes but to forbid them; not to improve wages and benefits but to restrain them; not to bargain collectively on behalf of the workers but organize the collective submission of the workers to their employer -- the state.

This same path is being pursued by the ~~new~~ Communist leadership of Nicaragua. The primary purpose of labor unions in today's Nicaragua is to assist in the forced transformation of society along the lines determined by the Sandinista leadership.1/ Existing independent trade unions are being harassed, their members blacklisted, threatened, and sometimes

jailed. Most of the unions and most of the union members in the country have been ^{PRESSED} ~~herded~~ into Sandinista labor confederations subservient to the government. These confederations have surrendered hard won contract concessions and have forced lower pay and inferior working conditions on their members. Strikes have been forbidden, collective bargaining has become a farce.2/

REDUCED TO OBJECTS

Edgard Macias, who was Sandinista Vice-Minister of Labor before he was forced to seek asylum for criticizing the regime, has summed up the situation well:

"Thus the Nicaraguan workers have been reduced to being objects...the workers cannot choose, free of fears, either their labor union, or their central labor organization, their ideological option, [or] their political party."3/

Immediately after the revolution, the Sandinistas formed two large labor confederations -- the Sandinista Workers Central (CST), for non-agricultural workers, and the Rural Workers Association (~~ACT~~ ^{ATC}) -- to replace the Somocista labor organizations and to compete with the two leading democratic labor confederations, the Nicaraguan Workers Central (CTN) and the Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS), both of which opposed the Somoza dictatorship.

At first, the CST, the Sandinista non-farmworkers confederation, worked for traditional labor goals -- better wages, better working conditions.

LABOR "DISCIPLINE"

But by late 1980 it had shifted its emphasis toward ~~/~~ organizing political support for the government and enforcing government economic policies. It endorsed Sandinista policies blocking wage increases and forbidding strikes. The Sandinista Ministry of Labor participates in all collective bargaining negotiations and must approve all final agreements.4/ The CST

cooperates with the Ministry's policy of revising labor agreements to deny workers wage and benefit increases previously secured -- even when the employers are willing to maintain the original, costlier contracts. It pressures members into taking an active role in "defending the revolution" and into joining the Sandinista militia.5/ The ACT similarly adheres to Sandinista labor policies.6/

In 1981 the CST joined the Moscow-led World Federation of Trade Unions, and since has signed friendship and cooperation agreements with the Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions. It receives technical and training assistance from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

"RECRUITMENT"

In spite of their refusal to pursue their members' interests, the Sandinista confederations are overwhelmingly the largest in the country. Workers who refuse to join and labor leaders who refuse to affiliate with Sandinista labor organizations are subjected to punishments ranging from harassment, unemployment, threats, and official denunciations all the way to arrest, destruction of personal property, and beatings. In Macias's words:

"the [Sandinista front] and its central organizations unleashed a war against all other central organizations, using all of their resources including the Ministry of Labor, the army, the militias, and the manipulation of the right to a job... against the CTN and... the CUS."7/

"PERSUASION FIRST"

Government favoritism toward Sandinista labor organizations is the simplest method of persuasion.

The Sandinista unions have access to official government communications outlets, which are used to promote the Sandinista unions as well as to attack the independents. Also the

Sandinista unions have the use of government buildings, meeting places and offices free of charge.8/

The Ministry of Labor has, in effect, a veto over the workers' choice of unions. It expedites agreements between workers and Sandinista unions while interfering with those between independent unions and workers.9/ In some cases it has even forcibly removed members of legitimately elected unions from their workplaces. In other cases it has created dummy pro-Sandinista unions, enrolled a few workers in them and arbitrarily designated the dummy unions as the bargaining agents for enterprises at which a majority of the workers belong to independent unions.10/

Workers have been denied social benefits or jobs11/ -- especially in nationalized enterprises12/ -- for not belonging to a Sandinista labor organization. And, as mentioned, when an independent union does reach a favorable settlement for its workers, the Ministry of Labor can void the agreement, thus severely punishing the workers for their choice of unions.

TWO WORLDS

Leaders of the independents have repeatedly been denied the right to carry on the normal activities of a free trade union. They have been forbidden to hold normal meetings, to collect dues, to bargain without government intervention, to hold seminars, to organize, or to leave the country without the explicit approval of the Council of State.13/

To quote Macias again:

"There are two different labor worlds in Nicaragua: On one side the workers who are protected and privileged by the FSLN, and on the other side those who...belong to the "second class" labor unions and for whom life is much harsher."14/

But, short of real terror, perhaps the Sandinistas' most potent weapon is political intimidation. In a totalitarian society, expressions of disapproval from the government transmit fears that we as free people find it difficult to comprehend.

Since coming to power, the Sandinistas have loudly and consistently labeled the independent unions "counter-revolutionary," "destabilizing," and "conspiratory."15/

The charges are false -- the independent trade unions were in the vanguard of the opposition to Somoza. But the charges mark the independent unions as enemies of the ruling clique, which is sufficient to frighten many workers away.

Even so, outright terror and repression of the independents has been common all along. From the start of the CST organizing drive, CST representatives -- in reality Sandinista activists with little or no trade union experience -- would arrive at union meetings accompanied by armed militiamen, whose very presence intimidated the workers into favoring the CST in affiliation votes.

GOVERNMENT MOBS

Government directed mobs have attacked the homes of union officials and painted their properties with denunciations. Union property has been destroyed by the police.16/ Articles favorable to the CUS or the CTN have been censored from the newspapers.

Union meetings have been disrupted and broken up by mobs. Independent trade union organizers have been threatened by the police, the army, and Sandinista organizations, and sometimes jailed. The CUS headquarters in Chinandega and Esteli were taken over by the local police and Sandinista groups.17/ It is dangerous even to protest these activities, for critics of government policy face prosecution.18/

CORINTO

The case of the stevedores union for the key strategic port of Corinto is illustrative of Sandinista labor practices. Immediately after the revolution, when unions were affiliating en

masse with the CST, the Corinto stevedores union did so as well, though even the original affiliation may have been a result of heavy pressure, including the arrest and detention of the secretary general of the union.

The stevedores were soon dissatisfied. In early 1983 they moved to disaffiliate from the CST. In mid-March the unions' executive board voted to switch the stevedores to the CUS. The Sandinistas responded by sending militia to occupy the union's headquarters. The all-powerful Ministry of Labor voided the executive board's decision, ruling that only a two-thirds vote of the membership could effect the switch.

A "WELCOMING COMMITTEE"

But the Ministry avoided an immediate vote by trumping up charges of corruption and forbidding any elections until the charges were "investigated." Eventually elections were scheduled in June. But on May 21, when CUS officials came to Corinto to meet with several hundred stevedores, they were attacked and forced to flee by a Sandinista mob, some of whom were armed and wearing militia uniforms.19/

The Sandinistas then packed the June 1 assembly with hundreds of non-members of the union. The bona fide union members voted overwhelmingly for the CUS, but the government recognized the CST as the victor and now there are two organizations purporting to represent the workers. Since the vote, ^{At least six union leaders} ~~nine members~~ ^{were later} ~~of the stevedores union have been arrested.~~ ^{20/ The Government refused.}

to give an explanation for the arrests. Although some were later released, the union claims that many activists subsequently lost their jobs.

Though Corinto is a classic example it is far from the only one:

In August 1981, the President of the CTN, Juan Rafael Suazo Trujillo was abducted by a group of thugs identifying themselves as "members of the young forces against reactionaries." He was forced into a car bearing government license plates and pistol whipped. His abductors called him a

check spelling

traitor and an agent of the CIA, told him the beating was small punishment for his crimes and let him go.21/

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4. Op. Cit., "Labor Trends;" p.15.
5. Ibid, p.6.
6. Ibid, p.8.
7. Op. Cit., Macias; p.13.
8. Op. Cit., "A Union Report"
9. Op. Cit., "Labor Trends;" p.16
10. Op. Cit., Macias; p.6.
11. Verbal report from Latin American area advisor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor.
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19. State Department Cable, Managua 2268, unclassified paragraphs 2, 3, and 4.
20. Confederation of Central American Workers: Press release; June 13, 1983; San Jose, Costa Rica. Also cable from American Embassy, Managua, 3294, July 29, 1983, unclassified.
21. Op. Cit., "A Union Report."
22. Ibid
23. Ibid
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. Op. Cit. Macias; p.12.

NICARAGUAN REPRESSION OF LABOR UNIONS

In Communist countries throughout the world, trade unions serve not to advance the interests of the workers, but to serve the political interests of the rulers. They serve not to organize strikes but to forbid them; not to improve wages and benefits but to restrain them; not to bargain collectively on behalf of the workers but organize the collective submission of the workers to their employer -- the state.

This same path is being pursued by the Communist leaders of Nicaragua. The primary purpose of labor unions in today's Nicaragua is to assist in the forced transformation of society along the lines determined by the Sandinista leadership.¹ Existing independent trade unions are being harassed, their members blacklisted, threatened, and sometimes

jailed. Most of the unions and most of the union members in the country have been pressed into Sandinista labor confederations subservient to the government. These confederations have surrendered hard won contract concessions and have forced lower pay and inferior working conditions on their members. Strikes have been forbidden, collective bargaining has become a farce.2/

REDUCED TO OBJECTS

Edgard Macias, who was Sandinista Vice-Minister of Labor before he was forced to seek asylum for criticizing the regime, has summed up the situation well:

"Thus the Nicaraguan workers have been reduced to being objects...the workers cannot choose, free of fears, either their labor union, or their central labor organization, their ideological option, [or] their political party."3/

Immediately after the revolution, the Sandinistas formed two large labor confederations -- the Sandinista Workers Central (CST), for non-agricultural workers, and the Rural Workers Association (ATC) -- to replace the Somocista labor organizations and to compete with the two leading democratic labor confederations, the Nicaraguan Workers Central (CTN) and the Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS), both of which opposed the Somoza dictatorship.

At first, the CST, the Sandinista non-farmworkers confederation, worked for traditional labor goals -- better wages, better working conditions.

LABOR "DISCIPLINE"

But by late 1980 it had shifted its emphasis toward organizing political support for the government and enforcing government economic policies. It endorsed Sandinista policies blocking wage increases and forbidding strikes. The Sandinista Ministry of Labor participates in all collective bargaining negotiations and must approve all final agreements.4/ The CST

cooperates with the Ministry's policy of revising labor agreements to deny workers wage and benefit increases previously secured -- even when the employers are willing to maintain the original, costlier contracts. It pressures members into taking an active role in "defending the revolution" and into joining the Sandinista militia.^{5/} The ATC similarly adheres to Sandinista labor policies.^{6/}

In 1981 the CST joined the Moscow-led World Federation of Trade Unions, and since has signed friendship and cooperation agreements with the Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions. It receives technical and training assistance from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

"RECRUITMENT"

In spite of their refusal to pursue their members' interests, the Sandinista confederations are overwhelmingly the largest in the country. Workers who refuse to join and labor leaders who refuse to affiliate with Sandinista labor organizations are subjected to punishments ranging from harassment, unemployment, threats, and official denunciations all the way to arrest, destruction of personal property, and beatings. In Macias's words:

"the [Sandinista front] and its central organizations unleashed a war against all other central organizations, using all of their resources including the Ministry of Labor, the army, the militias, and the manipulation of the right to a job... against the CTN and... the CUS."^{7/}

"PERSUASION FIRST"

Government favoritism toward Sandinista labor organizations is the simplest method of persuasion.

The Sandinista unions have access to official government communications outlets, which are used to promote the Sandinista unions as well as to attack the independents. Also the

Sandinista unions have the use of government buildings, meeting places and offices free of charge.8/

The Ministry of Labor has, in effect, a veto over the workers' choice of unions. It expedites agreements between workers and Sandinista unions while interfering with those between independent unions and workers.9/ In some cases it has even forcibly removed members of legitimately elected unions from their workplaces. In other cases it has created dummy pro-Sandinista unions, enrolled a few workers in them and arbitrarily designated the dummy unions as the bargaining agents for enterprises at which a majority of the workers belong to independent unions.10/

Workers have been denied social benefits or jobs11/ -- especially in nationalized enterprises12/ -- for not belonging to a Sandinista labor organization. And, as mentioned, when an independent union does reach a favorable settlement for its workers, the Ministry of Labor can void the agreement, thus severely punishing the workers for their choice of unions.

TWO WORLDS

Leaders of the independents have repeatedly been denied the right to carry on the normal activities of a free trade union. They have been forbidden to hold normal meetings, to collect dues, to bargain without government intervention, to hold seminars, to organize, or to leave the country without the explicit approval of the Council of State.13/

To quote Macias again:

"There are two different labor worlds in Nicaragua: On one side the workers who are protected and privileged by the FSLN, and on the other side those who...belong to the "second class" labor unions and for whom life is much harsher."14/

But, short of real terror, perhaps the Sandinistas' most potent weapon is political intimidation. In a totalitarian society, expressions of disapproval from the government transmit fears that we as free people find it difficult to comprehend.

Since coming to power, the Sandinistas have loudly and consistently labeled the independent unions "counter-revolutionary," "destabilizing," and "conspiratory."15/

The charges are false -- the independent trade unions were in the vanguard of the opposition to Somoza. But the charges mark the independent unions as enemies of the ruling clique, which is sufficient to frighten many workers away.

Even so, outright terror and repression of the independents has been common all along. From the start of the CST organizing drive, CST representatives -- in reality Sandinista activists with little or no trade union experience -- would arrive at union meetings accompanied by armed militiamen, whose very presence intimidated the workers into favoring the CST in affiliation votes.

GOVERNMENT MOBS

Government directed mobs have attacked the homes of union officials and painted their properties with denunciations. Union property has been destroyed by the police.16/ Articles favorable to the CUS or the CTN have been censured from the newspapers.

Union meetings have been disrupted and broken up by mobs. Independent trade union organizers have been threatened by the police, the army, and Sandinista organizations, and sometimes jailed. The CUS headquarters in Chinandega and Esteli were taken over by the local police and Sandinista groups.17/ It is dangerous even to protest these activities, for critics of government policy face prosecution.18/

CORINTO

The case of the stevedores union for the key strategic port of Corinto is illustrative of Sandinista labor practices. Immediately after the revolution, when unions were affiliating en

masse with the CST, the Corinto stevedores union did so as well, though even the original affiliation may have been a result of heavy pressure, including the arrest and detention of the secretary general of the union.

The stevedores were soon dissatisfied. In early 1983 they moved to disaffiliate from the CST. In mid-March the unions' executive board voted to switch the stevedores to the CUS. The Sandinistas responded by sending militia to occupy the union's headquarters. The all-powerful Ministry of Labor voided the executive board's decision, ruling that only a two-thirds vote of the membership could effect the switch.

A "WELCOMING COMMITTEE"

But the Ministry avoided an immediate vote by trumping up charges of corruption and forbidding any elections until the charges were "investigated." Eventually elections were scheduled in June. But on May 21, when CUS officials came to Corinto to meet with several hundred stevedores, they were attacked and forced to flee by a Sandinista mob, some of whom were armed and wearing militia uniforms.19/

The Sandinistas then packed the June 1 assembly with hundreds of non-members of the union. The bona fide union members voted overwhelmingly for the CUS, but the government recognized the CST as the victor and now there are two organizations purporting to represent the workers. At least six union leaders were later arrested. The government refused to give an explanation for the arrests. Although some were later released, the union claims that many activists subsequently lost their jobs. 20/

Though Corinto is a classic example it is far from the only one:

In August 1981, the President of the CTN, Juan Rafael Suazo Trujillo was abducted by a group of thugs identifying themselves as "members of the young forces against reactionaries." He was forced into a car bearing government license plates and pistol whipped. His abductors called him a

traitor and an agent of the CIA, told him the beating was small punishment for his crimes and let him go.21/

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