

October 23, 1962

**Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 23
October 1962**

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Summary:

The letter discusses a speech made by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Cuban Minister of Industry, in which he addressed the Young Communists' Union. He emphasized the need to improve the solidarity among the communists and the necessity of work (trabajo is mentioned in the speech six times) to improve the country. Boissevain notes that while the Young Communists were motivated to harvest coffee berries, almost all of them are on guard duty.

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C U B A:

Politics.

The speeches of Dr. Ernesto Guevara, Minister of Industry, are worth listening to because he does not mince words. If the hard truth needs to be told then "Che" will tell it.

In the past days he addressed the Cuban Youth Movement, since then changed by Fidel Castro into the "Union of Young Communists" ["Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas"], on the second birthday of this organization, with a speech that was only rarely interrupted by applause.

He described the task of the U.J.C., was of the opinion that its members ought to have showed greater initiative, turned against sectarianism and other faults of the past, pointed out weaknesses, amateurism and childish romanticism and then the Argentine medic flogged their more than mediocre labor performance. In the succeeding sentences of his argumentation the word "trabajo" ["work"] appeared six times. Now we all know that the U.J.C. was drummed up to harvest the coffee berries. The city was full of billboards with a drawing, representing a happily smiling figure reaching for the last berry of a bush with the caption: "so no berry is lost."

Where are then these professional coffee pickers, one would be inclined to ask? They are on guard duty! A short while ago the women's union was called upon to help pick coffee: the U.J.C. had not been able to pull it off on their own.....

23 October. Reflections on labor performance in general have by now become academic because of the general mobilization proclaimed yesterday. Moreover the airport is closed, one hopes temporarily, so that it is impossible to ascertain when these lines will reach Your Excellency.

The Ambassador,
G.W.Boissevain.