RR-88-112

1988

UU ISA LEN BAS FBA CAW
:PM-HUNGER STRIKE
UNCONFIRMED REPORT SAYS 68 POLITICAL PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA: MAR 6: REUTER - SIXTY EIGHT POLITICAL PRISONERS AT THE COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON TO THE EAST OF HAVANA HAVE BEEN ON A HUNGER STRIKE SINCE FEBRUARY 3, ACCORDING TO A HAND-WRITTEN PRESS RELEASE DELIVERED TO SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES HERE BY FOUR FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS.
THE REPORT OF THE HUNGER STRIKE COULD NOT BE CONFIRMED. A CUBAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL: WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE REPORT ANSWERED: +NO COMMENT.+
THE SIXTY-EIGHT PRISONERS MAKE UP THE TOTALITY OF THE REMAINING SO-CALLED +PLANTADOS+ IN CUBAN JAILS. THE +PLANTADOS+ REFUSE TO WEAR PRISON UNIFORMS OR TO TAKE JOBS FOR WHICH CUBAN PRISONERS RECEIVE THE SAME PAY AS WORKERS ON THE OUTSIDE.
ACCORDING TO THE PRESS RELEASE: THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS DECLARED IN PROTEST AGAINST STATEMENTS MADE LAST MONTH IN GENEVA BY PAOLO PARRA AND AMANDA CASTELLO OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION AGAINST TORTURE. THE TWO SAID THAT DURING A RECENT VISIT TO CUBA WHERE THEY VISITED JAILS AND SPOKE TO DISSIDENTS THEY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED ON THE CARIBBEAN ISLAND.
IN A SEPARATE THREE PAGE HAND-WRITTEN DOCUMENT WHICH THE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS SAID HAD BEEN TAKEN OUT OF THE COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON SECRETLY: PARRA AND CASTELLO WERE CALLED +PAWNS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM.+
THE DOCUMENT: APPARENTLY SIGNED BY ALL SIXTY EIGHT +PLANTADOS+ DEMANDS THAT THE RECORDINGS: FILMS AND OTHER RECORDS GATHERED BY PARRA AND CASTELLO DURING THEIR VISIT TO COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON BE MADE PUBLIC.
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:PM-HUNGER STRIKE 2HAVANA
THE THREE PAGE DOCUMENT WAS DATED MARCH 4 AND WAS ADDRESSED TO ARMANDO VALLADARES, CHIEF OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE DENUNCIATION COMES ONLY DAYS BEFORE A U.S.SPNSORED RESOLUTION WHICH ACCUSES CUBA OF HUMAN RIGHTS' VIOLATIONS IS BROUGHT TO A VOTE IN THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN GENEVA.
A WESTERN DIPLOMAT WHO READ BOTH THE PRESS RELEASE AND THE THREE PAGE DOCUMENT NOTED THAT THE DOCUMENT WAS DATED MARCH 4 , WAS S IGNED BY ALL SIXTY EIGHT +PLANTADOS+ AND DOES NOT MENTION A HUNGER STRIKE. THE PRESS RELEASE, ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND IN A DIFFERENT HANDWRITING, SAID THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE HAD BEGUN ON MARCH 3.
THE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO VISITED THE OFFICES OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES IN HAVANA ARE JUAN RODRIGUEZ, MARIO MORAGAS, REINALDO BLANCO AND YANEZ PELLETIER. ALL OF THEM DESCRIBED THEMSELVES AS +EX-PLANTADOS+. THEY SAID THE PLANTADOS ARE HELD IN SEPARATE CELL BLOCKS AT THE COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON AND THAT MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN IN JAIL FOR TWENTY YEARS OR MORE.
ACCORDING TO CUBAN OFFICIALS, MOST OF THE PLANTADOS SERVED IN THE POLICE FORCE OR ARMY OF FORMER CUBAN DICTATOR FULGENCIO BATISTA OR WERE SENTENCED AFTER THE REVOLITIONARY VICTORY IN 1959 FOR +COUNTERRVOLUTIONARY AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES.+
THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAS ACCUSED ARMANDO VALLADARES, THE HEAD OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE U.N HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN GENEVA OF HAVING SERVED IN THE POLICE FORCE OF THE BATISTA REGIME AND OF HAVING BEEN A MEMBER OF A COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION IN 1960 WHICH USED BOMBINGS AND SABOTAGE TO OVERTHROW THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT LED BY FIDEL CASTRO. VALLADARES SPENT MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AS A +PLANTADO+ IN CUBAN JAILS BEFORE BEING RELEASED AT THE BEHEST OF FRENCH PRESIDENT MITTERAND. VALLADARES AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAVE DENIED THE CUBAN ACCUSATIONS.
IN A THREE HOUR INTERVIEW GIVEN TO A U.S. TELEVISION NETWORK LAST MONTH, CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO SAID THAT THE VERY EXISTANCE OF +PLANTADOS+ WAS PROOF OF THE TOLERANCE OF THE CUBAN PRISON SYSTEM. +IN FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, ITALY, SPAIN, THE UNITED STATES AND EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WHEN SOMEBODY REFUSES TO PUT ON A PRISON UNIFORM, IT IS PUT ON BY FORCE,+ HE SAID.
CASTRO ALSO SAID THAT +WE WOULD HAVE NO OJECTION+ TO A VISIT TO CUBAN PRISONS BY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS. HE ADDED, +BUT WE WILL NOT ALLOW THEM IN UNDER PRESSURE.+ (NOSOSTROS NO LO HARIAMOS BAJO PRESION)
==REUTER/LEM
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REUTER 1904

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RNR 122
AM-CUBA-STRIKE
CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS CLAIM 68 ON HUNGER STRIKE
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, MARCH 6, REUTER - SIXTY-EIGHT POLITICAL PRISONERS OF THE COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON EAST OF HAVANA HAVE BEEN ON A HUNGER STRIKE SINCE FEB. 3, ACCORDING TO A HAND-WRITTEN STATEMENT DELIVERED TO INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES ON SUNDAY.
THE STATEMENT WAS DELIVERED BY FOUR SELF-DESCRIBED FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS. A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL DECLINED COMMENT.
THE 68 PRISONERS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN THE STRIKE INCLUDE ALL OF THE SO-CALLED PLANTADOS OR "FORGOTTEN ONES" IN CUBAN JAILS. THEY REFUSE TO WEAR PRISON UNIFORMS OR TO TAKE JOBS FOR WHICH PRISONERS RECEIVE THE SAME PAY AS WORKERS ON THE OUTSIDE.
ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT, THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS CALLED TO PROTEST REPORTS MADE LAST MONTH IN GENEVA BY PAOLO PARRA AND AMANDA CASTELLO OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION AGAINST TORTURE.
THE TWO SAID THAT DURING A RECENT VISIT TO CUBA THEY VISITED JAILS AND SPOKE TO DISSIDENTS AND CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED IN THE COMMUNIST ISLAND-NATION.
IN A SEPARATE THREE PAGE HAND-WRITTEN DOCUMENT WHICH THE FOUR MESSENGERS SAID HAD BEEN SMUGGLED OUT OF COMBINADO DEL ESTE, PARRA AND CASTELLO WERE CALLED "PAWNS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM."
THE DOCUMENT DEMANDS THAT RECORDINGS, FILMS AND OTHER EVIDENCE GATHERED BY PARRA AND CASTELLO DURING THEIR VISIT TO COMBINADO DEL ESTE BE MADE PUBLIC.
THE DOCUMENT, DATED MARCH 4, WAS ADDRESSED TO ARMANDO VALLADARES, CHIEF OF THE U.S. DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.
VALLADARES SPENT MORE THAN 20 YEARS AS A "PLANTADO" IN CUBAN JAILS BEFORE BEING RELEASED AFTER FRENCH PRESIDENT FRANCOIS MITTERAND INTERCEDED.
THE DOCUMENT AND ANNOUCEMENT OF THE HUNGER STRIKE WERE DELIVERED TO NEWS AGENCIES ONLY DAYS BEFORE A U.S.-SPONSORED RESOLUTION, ACCUSING CUBA OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, IS BROUGHT TO A VOTE AT THE GENEVA-BASED U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.
ACCORDING TO CUBAN OFFICIALS, MOST "PLANTADOS" SERVED IN THE POLICE OR ARMY UNDER FORMER CUBAN DICTATOR FULGENCIO BATISTA OR WERE SENTENCED AFTER FIDEL CASTRO SEIZED POWER IN 1959 FOR "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES."
IN A THREE-HOUR INTERVIEW GIVEN TO A U.S. TELEVISION NETWORK LAST MONTH, CASTRO SAID THE VERY EXISTENCE OF "PLANTADOS" WAS PROOF OF THE TOLERANCE OF CUBAS PRISON SYSTEM."
"IN FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, ITALY, SPAIN, THE UNITED STATES'

COMMUNISM."

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REUTER 1808
