



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

4382

May 9. 1942

In reply refer to
Eu 800.00B O'Connor
Quintin/1

CONFIDENTIAL

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of the Navy, and encloses for his information a copy of a strictly confidential despatch from the American Consul at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, British West Indies, with enclosures, concerning the possible subversive activities of one Quintin O'Connor.

A copy of the despatch has also been forwarded to the Secretary of War.

Enclosure:

From Consulate,
Trinidad, no. 865,
April 22, 1942.



*Base file
labor*

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C. H. Hall, Jr.
American Consul

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Trinidad, B.W.I., April 22, 1942

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

TRINIDAD

FEDERATED WORKERS' TRADE UNION

101 Charlotte Street,
Possible subversive activities in Trinidad.
Fort of Spain.

Trinidad, B.W.I.

19th April, 1942.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State
American Consulate,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of
a letter from the Trinidad Federated Workers' Trade
Union, dated April 18, 1942, together with its enclos-
ures, and a copy of a memorandum prepared at the re-
quest of the Consulate by Mr. J. C. Holmes of the
United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, indica-
ting possible subversive activities by one Quintin

O'Connor. The Intelligence Section, Trinidad Base
Command, and the Office of Naval Intelligence, United
States Naval Operating Base, have been informed.

The Mr. Fields referred to in the last paragraph
of the memorandum is undoubtedly Dr. Henry Fields, the
American Investigator who recently visited this Colony.

Respectfully yours,

C. H. Hall, Jr.
American Consul

Enclosures:

1. Copy of letter from Trinidad Federated
Workers' Trade Union, dated April 18, 1942
with its enclosures.
2. Copy of memorandum by Mr. J. C. Holmes.

A true copy of
the signed origi-
nal. *mmma*

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CHH/*mmma*

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COPY

**FEDERATED WORKERS' TRADE UNION
TRINIDAD**

FEDERATED WORKERS' TRADE UNION

Port of Spain,

101 Charlotte Street,

Port of Spain,

Trinidad, B.W.I.

18th April, 1942.

The Honourable the
Acting Colonial Secretary,
Government Buildings,
Port of Spain.

Dear Sir,
Mr. Henry Hall,
American Consulate,
15, Queen's Park West.

I have been directed to protest vigorously against the brutal fascism exercised upon the workers employed at the American Base in different parts of the Island.

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter and a statement sent by the above-named Union to the Acting Colonial Secretary of Trinidad and Tobago.

We will be very grateful if you could forward the enclosed documents to the appropriate Department in the United States of America.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) Quintin O'Connor

General Secretary.

We desire to state that we are on behalf of the Government to immediately act in this matter as we cannot look at the continuation of such brutality without making our vigorous protest and public condemnation.

We have not been treated in this way up to the British Government and we are still under the British Flag and expect every possible protection.

I am forwarding to you a public statement read by me at two public meetings held by this Union on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th instant, and I am instructed to ask you to kindly forward this letter together with the statement to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The statement and a copy of this letter will be sent to the American Consulate and to all our members may help stop this existing brutality.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) Quintin O'Connor
General Secretary.

A true copy of the signed original.

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C O P Y

TRINIDAD

FEDERATED WORKERS' TRADE UNION

101 Charlotte Street,

Port of Spain,

Trinidad, B.W.I.

14th April, 1942.

The Honourable the
Acting Colonial Secretary,
Government Buildings,
Port of Spain.

Dear Sir,

Ill-treatment of Workers at American Base:

I have been directed to protest vigorously against what is considered brutal fascism exercised upon the workers employed at the American Base in different parts of the Island.

We have been consistently receiving reports that the workers are being beaten on their heads with truncheons without justification and that if they resist, revolvers are pushed in their bellies and they are sometimes kicked by their bosses.

The marines or soldiers are called when a worker is alleged to commit an offence and all these fascists ask is "where is the man" and start beating him without any just cause.

We are prepared to submit evidence not only written, but should Government or anyone else desire, we can bring witnesses to give evidence before any Board or Committee.

We desire to state that we expect you on behalf of the Government to immediately make inquiries in this matter as we cannot look at the continuation of such brutality without voicing our vigorous protest and public condemnation.

We have not been treated in this way up to the present by the British Government and we are still under the British Flag and expect every possible protection.

I am forwarding to you a public statement read by me at two Public Meetings held by this Union on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th instant, and I am instructed to ask you to kindly forward this letter together with the statement to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The statement and a copy of this letter will be sent by us to the American Consulate and to all who we consider may help stop this existing brutality.

A true copy of
the signed original.
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Yours faithfully,
(Signed) Quintin O'Connor
General Secretary.

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C O P Y

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Comrades and Fellow Workers: To-day we stand facing the greatest enemies of humanity, and the British and American Empires are shaking at their foundations. Never was there greater need for unity and a clearer picture of the whole situation. The enemies are not only very powerful in material strength, but their propaganda machine is second to none. Today in this Island of ours we have been invaded by believers in brute force and primitive justice. Our workers on the bases are being ill-treated by the Americans, their heads are being broken without just cause. Ill-treatment of the native is the order of the day, and primitive justice the remedy for all alleged offences no matter how slight their nature.

We are being told that we are fighting a war for justice, for World Freedom and for Democracy. Sad to relate, the Americans have not brought Democracy here, instead their methods are those of brute force, and the head of a worker is broken at the slightest provocation, and if the worker shows any further signs of resistance, a revolver is pushed in his stomach.

Negro haters are employed at the Bases, men who believe negroes are dogs to be brutally kicked, men who get drunk and then want to beat up negroes. We cannot have an ally fighting a war for freedom and committing acts worse than slave owners, we must cry out aloud against this inhumanity, and regardless of whether we are shot or interned, we denounce the beating up of workers on the bases as acts worthy of Hitler and the Japanese.

It may be said by those who hear me that I am a 5th Columnist or that I am speaking against the war. I challenge any man to love his Country and his countrymen more than I do. The enemies of victory and the 5th columnists are those who are beating the workers and bursting their heads; every time a blow is struck at a worker, a severe blow is also struck at victory, and a beaten and bleeding worker will hate those who beat him and believe that they are just as Hitler.

The Japanese and the Germans are spreading propaganda all over the world to the effect that the Americans and the British hate the coloured races of the world, and the surest way to establish such propaganda and to ensure defeat is the way our workers are being treated at the bases. We must face the fact that today the task of the democracies has been made difficult in the Far East, because of the native populations going over to the Japanese. There must be some cause for this, and will the native population of Trinidad and Tobago help the Americans if we are invaded or will they help the invader as in Burma?

Surely if the brutal methods of the Americans are continued, they will alienate the good feelings the workers had for them when they first arrived here, and brutality may go to such an extent that these workers will become the enemies of their employers and be an easy prey to the fascist propaganda. Now is the time for the greatest possible united effort, and any damage to the morale of the workers on the

bases/

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bases may mean the death to many in this country, if by brutalising the workers we hinder the completion of the bases.

We demand a stop to this fascism at once, we demand justice for our people, we demand no discrimination on the bases; we solemnly affirm our belief that men cannot say they are fighting for justice when their rule is brute force and injustice. We have not and are not treated thus by the British, and have our rulers abandoned us to these enemies of the workers?

We desire the victory of the allies over Fascism, we hate Hitler and the Japanese, and will give our last drop of blood in a war that is truly for freedom and justice. We are allies of Russia and we want victory together with Russia.

Long live the allies fighting for democracy.
Long live the heroic people of Russia and China.
Down with Hitler and all the enemies of democracy.
Down with all who act as Hitler.

A true copy of
the signed original.
WMA

WMA was organized the Union of Shipyard and
Stewards and was actively engaged in recruiting union
members from the United States Navy yards for the
Maritime Trade Union. He and his associates held frequent
public meetings and deliver the usual type of inflammatory
speeches in which they extol their listeners to join the
Union in order that they may protect themselves from
discrimination, brutal treatment in the hands of
foremen, the U. S. Marines and Navy, starvation wages,
deplorable working conditions, etc. They also recall the
present state of affairs in the fact that the workers are
not properly organized and defended their rights. At
the end of each meeting, those in attendance are urged to join
the Union -- 50 cents initiation and dues of 12 cents a week.
The meetings are held with people with knowledge of
unions and the workers are urged to join the Union and
the workers are urged to join the Union and the workers are
urged to join the Union. The meetings are held with people
with knowledge of unions and the workers are urged to join
the Union and the workers are urged to join the Union.

According to the witnesses, WMA is a very active
and is active in recruiting union members from the
United States Navy yards for the Maritime Trade Union.
He and his associates held frequent public meetings and
deliver the usual type of inflammatory speeches in which
they extol their listeners to join the Union in order that
they may protect themselves from discrimination, brutal
treatment in the hands of foremen, the U. S. Marines and
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C O P Y

It is noted throughout the file on Port of Spain. His associates constantly address him as "Trinidad, B.W.I. Worker".
MEMORANDUM - The Union of the South April 22, 1942. Republic
 as the driving example which the colored people of Trinidad should follow.

Re: QUINTIN O'CONNOR, Ge. Sec.

Federated Workers Trade

Union of Trinidad

INFORMATION CONCERNING

O'Connor has been arrested in connection with strikes and on several occasions a fine which was suspended pending a six month period of good behavior.

The following information was furnished by Capt. Rumbelow, Security Officer of the Colonial Police, Trinidad and should be treated as strictly confidential in that it was requested that under no circumstances should the fact be revealed to O'Connor or any other Union member or official that this information was furnished by the Colonial Police.

It is interesting to note that the Colonial Police file O'Connor, Colored (Creole) is believed to be a native-born Trinidadian and first attracted notice locally in 1938 when he lost his employment as a clerk in a hardware store for participating in Trade Union activities during working hours. Since that time he has devoted his entire time to politics and Trade Union work and organization. He calls himself a Socialist but is believed most probably to be a Communist inasmuch as he has been in continuous correspondence with leading Communist officials in England for the past several years.

Respectfully,

O'Connor first organized the Union of Shop Assistants and Clerks and is now actively engaged in recruiting union members from the United States Base workers for the Federated Workers Trade Union. He and his associates hold frequent public meetings and deliver the usual type of inflammatory speeches in which they exhort their listeners to join the Union in order that they may protect themselves from unfair discrimination, brutal treatment at the hands of white foremen, U. S. Soldiers and Marines, starvation wages, unbearable housing conditions, etc. They even recently blamed the present water shortage on the fact that the workers have not previously organized and demanded their just rights. At the end of each meeting, those in attendance are urged to join the Union -- 50 cents initiation and dues of 12 cents a week. The meetings are held under permits which must presently be obtained from the Government when twenty or more persons are expected to attend and the meetings are apparently monitored by the Colonial Police. Good order usually prevails and the attendance at the frequent meetings seems to range from 75 to 150 persons.

According to the voluminous file which is maintained on O'Connor and his activities by Colonial Police he is responsible for most of the small amount of subversive activities now present in Trinidad. He is described as a ranting orator who preaches disaffection and who thrives on arrests and summonses. In a speech during which he blamed all of the misfortunes and social ills of the "workers" on the "wrong administration" of Trinidad he is credited with saying "I don't care who hears me because I am speaking Creole - this is no big English talk. I don't want to speak English because I am not an Englishman. I shall never be one. Join the Union, friends, and let's fight alone like the mighty Red Army of Soviet Russia, our Democratic friends."

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It is noted throughout the file that O'Connor and his associates constantly address their listeners as "Comrades" and point to the Union of the Soviet, Socialistic Republics as the shining example which the colored people of Trinidad should follow.

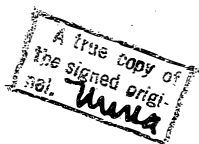
O'Connor has been arrested twice for obstruction in connection with strikes and on both occasions was given a fine which was suspended pending a six months' period of good behavior.

E. M. Mitchell, president of the Federated Workers Trade Union of Trinidad is colored, is Deputy Mayor of Trinidad and is active in speech-making along the same lines as O'Connor although probably not considered so radical.

It is interesting to note that the Colonial Police file reflects that one Gomes, an associate of O'Connor, referred in several speeches to a long conference he had had with a Mr. Fields whom he described as an American official from Washington. He told his audience that he fully outlined the case of the native workers relative to discrimination and injustice at the hands of the Americans to Mr. Fields.

Respectfully,

(Signed) J. C. Holmes



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Enclosure

Enclosure

1. Copy of letter from Trinidad Federated Workers' Trade Union, dated April 12, 1942 with its enclosures.
2. Copy of memorandum by Mr. J. C. Holmes.

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