

Authority NND 78085

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TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL, RECIFE

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Classification Control:

Date: November 11, 1966

ACTION: Amembassy Rio 521 From Recife 597

FOR LABOR ATTACHE. NORTHEAST LABOR AND THE ELECTIONS. NORTHEAST LABOR'S REACTION TO THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS LARGELY DEPENDS UPON WHETHER THE WORKERS ARE UNION-MEMBERS OR UNORGANIZED, OR WHETHER THEY ARE URBAN OR RURAL. THE SCOPE OF WORKER REACTION TO THE ELECTIONS IS RATHER NARROW. THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AMONG THEM - THE URBAN UNION-MEMBERS - VIEW THE ELECTION AS SYMBOLIC. THE UNORGANIZED RURAL WORKERS, MOST OF WHOM ARE ILLITERATE AND INELIGIBLE TO VOTE, ARE APATHETIC OR UNAWARE THAT AN ELECTION IS ~~XXX~~ BEING HELD.

Pol-14-

2. WHILE UNION LEADERS HAVE BEEN ENTREATED BY ARENA TO DRAW SUPPORT FOR ITS CANDIDATES, THAT AFFORDED THEM BY UNIONIZED WORKERS WILL BE INFINITELY SMALL. URBAN UNION MEMBERS WILL UNIFORMLY VOTE FOR MDB CANDIDATES, SOLELY TO REGISTER THEIR DISCONTENT WITH THE REVOLUTION'S TREATMENT OF LABOR. THE MAIN ISSUE TO THEM, AS IN THE REMAINDER OF THE COUNTRY, IS DECLINING REAL INCOME AND THE GOB'S RESTRICTIVE WAGE POLICIES. WHILE THE WELL-INFORMED AMONG UNION MEMBERS EXPECT TO CHANGE VERY LITTLE BY THEIR VOTES, THEY HOPE TO DEMONSTRAT TO THE WORLD AND THEIR DEEPENING DISAFFECTION WITH THE REVOLUTION.

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3. UNORGANIZED URBAN WORKERS WILL ALSO VOTE MDB, ALTHOUGH NOT WITH SUCH UNIFORMITY. THEY ARE ALSO UNHAPPY ABOUT THE STATE OF THEIR WAGES, BUT THEIR VOTE WILL NOT BE A PROTEST. THESE WORKERS WILL VOTE FOR INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES, ALTHOUGH ONLY A FEW ARENA MEN WILL APPEAL TO THEM.

4. RURAL WORKERS, ORGANIZED AND UNORGANIZED, REMAIN A QUESTION MARK. BOTH GROUPS, LONG APATHETIC TO THE ~~EXX~~ GOVERNMENT, ARE NOW EVEN LESS INTERESTED. FOR THEM, THERE IS LITTLE TO BE GAINED WHATEVER THEY DO. RURAL UNIONS, MORE POORLY ORGANIZED THAN THEIR CITY BROTHERS, DEMONSTRATE LITTLE GROUP DISCIPLINE. RURAL WORKERS' VOTES WILL THEREFORE NOT FOLLOW ANY PATTERN, BUT WILL REFLECT THE STRONGEST AND MOST RECENT INFLUENCE ON THEM, BE IT EMPLOYER THREATS, BRIBES, AN OCCASIONAL STRONG LEADER, RECOGNITION OF A NAME ON THE BALLOT. THE PROBABILITY IS THAT THE BACKLANDS WILL GO ARENA. THE NEXUS OF FACTORS FAVORS IT. THE MDB HAS FEW REPRESENTATIVES AND NO MONEY OUTSIDE THE CITIES. ARENA IS THE GOB AND IS OMNIPRESENT. ARENA CANDIDATES HAVE MORE MONEY AND ARE BUYING RURAL VOTE. THE THREATS OF EMPLOYER SUPPORTING ARENA WILL BE EFFECTIVE.

5. FOR LABOR, THE ELECTIONS WILL OFFER LITTLE SATISFACTION. THERE ARE NO LABOR LEADERS RUNNING FOR OFFICE. SINCE CONGRESS

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IS WEAK AND NEITHER PARTY PARTICULARLY REPRESENTS LABOR, THE
ELECTION OF EITHER ARENA OR MDB CANDIDATES TO CONGRESS WILL
NOT IMPROVE THE WORKERS LOT. A VOTE OF PROTEST, FOR NORTHEAST
LABOR, WILL REPRESENT ALL OF THE ELECTIONS LIMITED VALUE.

BLOOM

ECON:TRumme/lfw

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