

The Labor Movement in the "PANCHITO Gómez Toro" Sugar Mill, Formerly "San Isidro" in Quemado De Güines

Mario Eleuterio Dorta Plier

Department of Social Sciences, Central University "Marta Abreu" of Las Villas, University Headquarters of Quemado de Güines, Villa Clara, Cuba

Email address:

mariod@uclv.edu.cu

To cite this article:

Mario Eleuterio Dorta Plier. The Labor Movement in the "PANCHITO Gómez Toro" Sugar Mill, Formerly "San Isidro" in Quemado De Güines. *International Journal of Science, Technology and Society*. Vol. 9, No. 1, 2021, pp. 32-36. doi: 10.11648/j.ijsts.20211001.14

Received: November 9, 2020; **Accepted:** November 24, 2020; **Published:** March 12, 2021

Abstract: The article deals with the organization and development of the labor movement in the central sugar factory "Panchito Gómez Toro", formerly "San Isidro", since its foundation in 1932, where the maximum sugar leader Jesús Menéndez Larrondo intervenes. Its workers and members were faithful to the principles of solidarity and unity of this union to this day, allowing them to conquer their rights and demand from the employers the possibility of constantly improving their economic, labor and social living conditions. As vanguards in the struggles of this sector, the workers of "San Isidro" contributed to the July 26 movement of the territory many exponents in which the Commander of the Revolution Víctor Bordón Machado stood out. With the revolutionary triumph on January 1, 1959 and its nationalization on October 21, 1960, where the industry passed into the hands of the workers as social socialist property, they have achieved the distinction of National Vanguards on several occasions, an expression of that roots of struggle. With empirical methods it was possible to evaluate descriptive informative results of the main actions of the San Isidro workers in the middle of the 20th century, they were also useful methods that allowed to deepen through the analysis the results that appeared in the witness documents that appear in the central's records. Finally, the article contributes to the registry of the heritage of local history on the municipal sugar industry and the struggles of its workers for economic and social reasons.

Keywords: Differential Sugar, (FNTA: National Federation of Sugar Workers), Strikes, Protests

1. Introduction

The Cuban sugar sector was and has been the vanguard in the struggles for the emancipation of workers and their socio-economic demands manifested throughout its history, especially since the first decade of the 20th century in which the Cuban proletariat was consolidated from a national awareness rooted in the fighting traditions of our people. The founding of the first organizations such as the CNOC (National Workers Confederation of Cuba), the FNTA (National Federation of Sugar Workers) demonstrated the role of the working class in social transformations. The organization of sugar workers sets a standard by forming the majority class of our main economic line: sugar production.

The old province of Las Villas, of which Villa Clara is part today, stood out for being one of the largest sugar producers in Cuba and the one that has maintained that tradition. For

this reason, it has been the vanguard in organizing and fighting for the demands of the workers in this sector. Its top leader was Jesús Menéndez Larrondo, illustrious son of Encrucijada, an expression of Cubanness, honesty, courage and courage in defense of just causes, representing the sugar sector in the second half of the 20th century.

As part of the organizational process of this sector in Quemado de Güines in 1932, the union was founded in this sugar mill, the "San Isidro" by Jesús Menéndez and from this date the revolutionary work in this territorial sector continues to be consolidated, which is He manifested in the processes of stoppages, strikes and demands of his workers until he concluded with the support of his workers in the last stage of the revolutionary struggle and national liberation in which the July 26 movement plays a leading role. This movement had its founding nucleus in which San Isidro workers were integrated, led by the commander of the Revolution Víctor Bordón Machado. The importance in the founding history

and the role of the struggles of this sector of workers are expressed in the present work; which constitutes a tribute to the workers of "Panchito Gómez Toro". [1]

2. The Labor Movement as a Process in the Central San Isidro

2.1. Background of the Labor Movement in Quemado de Güines

In the Neocolony stage, the labor movement in the municipality was closely linked to the development of the sugar industry and its objectives were aimed at demanding better working conditions, since they had to work long hours for a paltry salary.

Starting in the 1930s, the Quemadense workers began to organize. The founding of the PCC marked the beginning of a new stage, superior to the labor movement. Starting in 1933, a small group of 5 or 6 comrades led by Pedro Luis Sáez, a union leader from the central San Isidro, began to organize in Quemado de Güines. The group was very dispersed, the orientations directed at the provincial level. In 1938 they began to reappear with more organization and their number of members increased with the incorporation of workers from the central Resolution. The management was integrated by: President: Ramón Cueva.; Secretary General: Secundino Morales. Organizer, Mario Mayor. Responsible for peasant work: Raimundo Ascui. [2]

2.2. Foundation and Consolidation of the Sugar Union in the Central San Isidro

In 1932, the prominent union leader for the rights of sugar workers "Jesús Menéndez Larrondo" visited the central, creating the union; being its founders among others: Luís Torres and Miguel Pérez Ruiz. At that time the sugar workers worked a twelve-hour day of continuous work. In later years, Jesús Menéndez continued to visit the mill, and even worked as a purger on the sugar floor for seven days. At that time, the existing centrifuges were with blades and the effort that a man had to make was inhuman; so the prominent union fighter finished his work with his hands full of yagas. In another of his many visits he was a driver and also achieved success. We can also say that it gave point to many of the cooked masses in the pan area. [3]

2.3. Main Struggles, Stoppages, Protests and Strikes of the Workers of the Central

In the 1930s, the demands of the workers of the central began, which is closely related to the increase of a revolutionary consciousness in Cuban society in general, which is manifested in the actions carried out by the workers of the San Isidro of the time. This awareness has its final point with the organization of the union of the central in 1932, which is consolidated and allows the workers to make qualitative leaps in their demands and demands on the employer. These actions are manifested in a chronological order in which they stand out:

2In 1933, the workers organized a protest and in it they elaborated a plan of demands that were:

1. Eight reales de Jornal Minimum
2. Eight hours of work
3. Do not retaliate against workers and leaders present at the protest.

This plan of demands was obtained in 1934 due to the tenacious struggle, supported and founded by the union leader of Cuban sugars, Jesús Menéndez.

April 9, 1934, the colonists strike due to the claim for participation in the nuclei. During these years the president of the Association of Settlers of this municipality was Fernando Ruiz Sierra. The union leadership of the central supported this strike.

In 1948 a strike took place where a part of the workers took the town hall (house of the municipal government) and a stop was assigned at the mill. This was called the "Superproduction Strike", as the workers requested better wages and work. With this protest they will achieve the objectives that they set out to do.

Precisely this year, on January 22, the irreparable loss occurred due to the murder of the sugar leader Jesús Menéndez Larrondo by a hired thug named Tabernilla at the railway station in the town of Manzanillo in the Oriente province. The workers of the plant sent a telegram of condolence to the relatives of Jesús and for this fact thirteen workers of the plant are imprisoned.

In 1950 a protest was produced by the sugar producers with the objective that they would be paid the sugar differential, where the administrator refused; but the intervention of Eusebio Mújica who was the secretary general of the CTC and Sury Castillo, representative of FENETA and also for the valuable help and cooperation of colleagues Mario de la Torre appointed delegate of the government and worker of the sugar floor and Felix Dulzaides, chemist on duty; The case was taken to Santa Clara and the payment of the aforementioned differential to the workers was achieved. Along with this management, it was possible to acquire a line spark to replace the storks and also fans for the centrifugation area, which was extremely hot.

On March 22, 1952, just 12 days after the military coup on March 10, the general strike took place, better known as "The Parada with a full crop." It originated with the objective that they would be considered the payment of the second sugar differential. It takes place at night, when the worker Inocente León, who was in the milling plant area, decided to turn off the power and stop the plant with all the equipment full. The plant was stopped in these conditions for approximately seven days. Before the strike occurred, comrade Mario de la Torre, who worked in the factory, had gone to Havana to meet with the president of the republic, Fulgencio Batista, with the aim of granting himself two days at the end of the harvest. After some conversations and already aware of the mill's shutdown, the president tells him that he will not pay, that the first lady of the republic, Mrs. Martha Batista, will, that thanks to her kindness the workers of San Isidro will charge the days to have. It should be noted that the payment

of the differential and the days of having is achieved not thanks to the kindness of Martha Batista but to the strength and unity of the sugar workers who showed a more solid revolutionary conscience.

The stoppage caused great losses to Mr. Bequiristáin, owner of the plant, as several tons of sugar were spoiled and as a result of this, 16 workers were expelled from work and imprisoned, which are listed below:

Wilfredo Morales Rivero; Juan Ibáñez; Felipe Bolaños; José Ramón Bolaños; José Ramón Santana; Erasmo Peraza; Juan Rodríguez; Orlando Pérez Bidot; Antonio Medina de la Cruz; Miguel Pérez; Héctor Hernández García; Mario Acevedo France; Evelio Daniel Villavicencio; Gervasio Morejón, Orestes Castellón, Esteban Rivero.

The comrades mentioned above were kept in prison for thirty days, after which they were released due to the procedures carried out by comrades Mario de la Torre and Conrado Rodríguez, members of the industry union.

We should also point out that in addition; Five colleagues were expelled from the center, not being allowed to work in any other workplace until the Revolution triumphed.

December 26, 1955, there was another workers uprising. A group of workers, including those from San Isidro, decide to take the Quemado de Güines church by storm and stay there all night, they removed the electricity from the town and rang the bells, achieving the concentration of the town around it to proclaim the Quemado de Güines town of general mourning and for this they placed black tiles on the doors of the houses. These demonstrations were organized with the incorporation of other sectors. The objective of these activities was to obtain the differential of \$ 7.31 to be paid to the workers of the plant, money that was owed to him and did not want to be delivered by Mr. Beguiristáin. For this reason, the strike is called the "\$ 7.31 strike."

During the strike process, the sugar leader Heriberto Espino is assassinated. Others who stood out in the events: Conrado Béker and Conrado Rodríguez. In addition, some union leaders were arrested, such as: Manuel Álvarez, Agustín López and Mario de la Torre. Lucio Vidal and Tete Sabina were also present.

Days after the strike of \$ 7.31 in January 1957 there was a stop at the plant for an hour, which was general throughout the island of Cuba and constituted a form of union and protest of all sugar workers for the imprisonment of the students of the University of Havana, among whom were Fructuoso Rodríguez and José Antonio Echeverría. [4]

2.4. Contributions of Workers from Central San Isidro to Mov-26-7 in the Territory

The Cuban sugar sector was the vanguard in the struggles for the emancipation of workers and their socio-economic demands manifested in the revolutionary processes, especially from the first decade of the 20th century. The creation of the first national labor organization (CNOC) the sugar sector was present in it. When the attack on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks took place, several young people from this sector were present and

who later founded, organized, militarized and consolidated the July 26 Movement.

In Quemado de Güines was not the exception and a group of workers from Central San Isidro joined the first nucleus organized and commanded by Víctor Bordón, a worker there along with other workers who shed their generous blood for the independence of the Homeland; Among them Mario Acevedo Francia, who was assassinated for his revolutionary activities in the central street of Quemado de Güines on November 4, 1957 by the henchmen of Batista, Evelio Daniel Villavicencio, who fell in combat in the assault on the rural guard barracks in Rancho Veloz during the events of the General Strike on April 10, 1958 in the Sagua region; Before that, he had taken up arms with the movement under the orders of the current commander of the revolution, Víctor Bordón Machado.

On April 8, 1958, the rebel troops led by Víctor Bordón attacked the Quemado de Güines rural guard barracks and as a reprisal for that regime, five revolutionaries were taken from their homes and murdered, among whom was the comrade "Félix Dulzaides."; prominent fighter and leader of the union movement of the central San Isidro. On this occasion, there is also a stoppage of the mill in rejection of the murders committed by the oppressive regime. [5]

2.5. Trade Union Organization After the Triumph of the Revolution

On January 1, 1959, with the definitive triumph of the Revolution, a new path was opened for Cuban workers and among these, those who worked in the sugar industry stand out in our municipality, signifying the end of downtime and the guarantee of work for all eliminating the social injustices that were committed in that society.

The Revolution made the San Isidro available to the workers on October 21, 1960 with its nationalization, turning it into socialist social property, which changes the meaning of the worker and a new connotation when feeling owner of the industry, committed to complying with the working day and the defense of the principles of the proletarian revolution, for this reason the new trade union organization was created in 1960 and integrated as follows: [6]

Secretary General: Inocencio A. López Díaz

Members: Fidel Clavero; José P. O'rrelly; Humberto Arredondo Lombara; Manuel Álvarez Morales; Joaquín Ruíz; Alejo Pérez; Alejo Arredondo Luján; Felipe Bolaños

In 1984, with the structure of the Agroindustrial Complex, the Trade Union Bureau was organized as follows:

General Secretary: Alfredo Pérez Finalet

Organizer: María Trujillo Corcho

Education: Humberto Cobo

Disclosure: Manuel Álvarez

Labor and social affairs: Mario Chávez

Organization and work: Ramiro Hernández

Finance: Ubaldo Álvarez

Sports and culture: Nelson González

Members: Humberto Elva Díaz; Genaro Panizo; Luis

Rodríguez; Tomás Martínez.

2.6. Contribution to the Proletarian Internationalism of the Workers of Panchito Gómez Toro

Major: Jesús Gilberto Durán. Internationalist martyr. He fell in combat on April 12, 1976 in the People's Republic of Angola.

Worthy representative of the sugar workers in Villa Clara. His participation in the sugar sector was ephemeral before the triumph of the Revolution, recognized as a cane picker in the fields of San Isidro to help his peasant family. When the Revolution triumphed, he joined the process by passing courses in the militia schools of Matanzas and joining the FAR in 1965. There he reached the rank of Major. He was the founder of the AJR and the UJC and a member of the PCC. Due to his attitude, he was called to carry out a mission in the People's Republic of Angola in December 1975 where he fell in combat. [7]

2.7. Honors and Decorations

El Panchito Gómez Toro is a pioneer in the province by creating the Agroindustrial Complex modality and organization model under the conditions of the socialist sugar company. Its workers with their efforts have achieved the status of National Vanguard in several consecutive years, an expression of unity, productivity and expression of a sense of belonging, example and spur for the other workers of this union in Cuba and the other sectors of the proletariat in the Burned territory.

1. Flag 50th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution.
2. Acknowledgment for having complied with the Raw Sugar Production Plan in the last 10 harvests.
3. National recognition for being the Industry with the lowest consumption of water in the production process.
4. Recognition for the results maintained in the energy indices.
5. Distinction of the National Vanguard Collective in harvests 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2018
6. Hugo Sánchez Award for technical excellence.
7. Recognition for maintaining the Cuban Brand and the Certificate of Conformity for the Crude Sugar product
8. Recognition for the best comprehensive maintenance work.
9. Certificate of recognition for contributing to improve environmental management in our territory.
10. Recognition for the work carried out in protecting the Environment.
11. Banner 65th Anniversary of the creation of the CTC.
12. Álvaro Reynoso 2009 National Award for Technical Excellence expressed in sustained economic results.
13. Collective with sustained results FIDEL AMONG US ON THE 90 ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH. Year 2016.
14. Collective APRIL 9. 60 ANNIVERSARY. Year 2018
15. 80th Anniversary Flag of the CTC. Year 2018. [8]

3. Materials and Experiments

The historical sources used were provided by the documents that appear in the archives of the municipal historical museum of Quemado de Güines, territorial documentary testimonies, interviews with union leaders of the central and 50-year-old workers; as well as sources of popular orality.

4. Conclusion

The organizational process of the sugar sector in Quemado de Güines began in the 1920s and ended in 1932 when Jesús Menéndez founded the union in the "San Isidro" plant. As of this date, it is consolidated until concluding with the support of its workers in the last stage of the revolutionary struggle and national liberation for the July 26 movement, led by the commander of the Revolution, Víctor Bordón Machado.

With the nationalization of San Isidro and becoming "Panchito Gómez Toro" on October 21, 1960, the dreams for which the union leader Jesús Menéndez and the workers of this sector fought came true, turning their workers into their main owners, creators of material and spiritual wealth and who have demonstrated it with the conquest of the condition of National Vanguard on several occasions, the support in the fulfillment of internationalist missions and collaboration of their best representatives in other sister lands.

References

- [1] Villa Clara Sugar Plants. (1981) Social Editorial. DOR Department. Santa Clara. Cuba.
- [2] Hernández G (2015) Local History. Burning of Güines. Digital document. P. 28.
- [3] Trujillo, E and S, Roque (1981) Reference work. History of the sugar industry in Quemado de Güines until 1960.
- [4] Rodríguez C. (1985) Monograph. Central Panchito Gómez Toro. Archive. Historic museum. Burned of Güines.
- [5] Dorta, G y M, Dorta., (2010) Multimedia History of the sugar industry Panchito Gómez Toro. Optional thesis to the title of Bachelor of Primary Education. Computer specialty. ISP Félix Varela. Villa Clara. Cuba.
- [6] Rodríguez C. (1985) Monograph. Central Resolución. Archive. Historic museum. Burned of Güines.
- [7] Collective of authors. (1998) History of the province of Villa Clara. Provincial publisher. P. 216.
- [8] Testimonials. Interview with Ramón Suárez Bello. Founder of Mov- 26/7 in the territory Dtr. of CAI Panchito Gómez Toro at the time of its foundation.
- [9] Francisca López Civeira: Cuba 1899-1959. Six decades of history. Editorial Pueblo y Educación. Havana. 2007.
- [10] López Civeira, F.(2000) The revolutionary process of the 1930s. Editorial Félix Varela, Havana, 2000.
- [11] López Civeira, F. (1998) Cuba and its history, Editorial Gente Nueva, Havana, 1998.

- [12] Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. Letter with edge Volume I Editorial Social Sciences. Havana 1983.
- [13] Julio Le Riverend. The Republic. Dependence and Revolution. Havana. Editora C. S., 1975.
- [14] Selection of Readings Part I, (1st., 2nd. Parts) The Cuban Revolution 1953-1980. MONTH.
- [15] Central Report to the First Congress of the PCC. Editorial Social Sciences. Havana 1978.