

DOCUMENT NO. 002  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X  
EX DECLASSIFIED  
DATE 8/10/79 BY [ ]  
CLASS. AUTHORITY: 1989

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RQM/OIS  
27 May 1954

REPORTING ON GUATEMALA BY NEW  
YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT SYDNEY GRUSON

1. After more than a year in Guatemala as a correspondent for The New York Times, Sydney Gruson was expelled from the country at 20 hours' notice on 2 February 1954, by an order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guillermo Toriello.
2. This incident occurred soon after Toriello's appointment as Minister, a post he was recalled from Washington to take and assumed officially on 20 January 1954. Between 20 January and 2 February the Guatemalan denunciation of an alleged US-sponsored plot against the Arbenz government occurred, and there was agitation in the Guatemalan Congress against foreign intervention and foreign press representatives.
3. The reason for Gruson's expulsion, according to a spokesman in the Foreign Ministry, was that he "had systematically distorted the true facts about Guatemala and had injured the national dignity." Reference was made in particular to Gruson's despatch which appeared in the New York Times of 6 November 1953. That despatch appeared under the heading "Guatemalan Reds Increase Powers" and opened with the following statement:

"The emergence of the Communists to a position of dominance in Guatemala has continued during the past six months. It is evident that from the United States point of view the situation here will go on getting worse.

"Recent developments have been along two lines. On the one hand they have shown an actual growth of Communist influence and on the other they have brought the Communists into far more open admission than ever before of their real position."

The article then went on to analyze the situation and closed with a reference to editorial comment in the Guatemalan independent newspaper El Imparcial to the effect that "whenever there was friction between any of the revolutionary parties the conflict always was resolved in favor of the Communists aided by a 'powerful invisible hand.'

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"What superior design safeguards the Communist Party and is speeding the fatal process ... [of communist advance?]", the editorial asked. "Perhaps it won't be long before the facts themselves remove the veil."

At the end of this quotation, Gruson then commented, "Attempting to answer this question the observer is forced to the conclusion that President Arbenz Guzman has become a prisoner of the embrace he so long ago gave the Communists."

4. This last line apparently gave special offense to the Guatemalan Government and was one of the main reasons for the decision to expel the correspondent.

5. Gruson went from Guatemala to Mexico and from Mexico was assigned by The New York Times to cover the Tenth Inter-American Conference at Caracas, opening 1 March 1954. His reports from the Conference showed the same characteristics as his general reporting from Guatemala. They generally were written from a "liberal" point of view, striving for objectivity by what seems almost a conscious "fifty-fifty" treatment. At times a paragraph giving US interest and point of view is followed by a paragraph giving Guatemalan point of view, one after the other, in mathematically-balanced succession. In virtually every article referring to Guatemala Gruson characterized the country with some descriptive phrase mentioning Communist influence such as "where Communist leaders have gained considerable influence within the government." He gave full and favorable reports on the statements of Mr. Dulles at the Conference and on the aims and efforts of the US delegation. Other of his reports dealt with the state of mind and desires of the Latin American delegations. Out of twelve reports from the Conference, Gruson devoted two in large measure to the statements made by Guatemalan Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello and the reactions to his speech at the Conference. These reports presented Toriello in a favorable light, as making his case with vigor and receiving applause at the end lasting "a minute, almost twice as long as that given Mr. Dulles ... when the Secretary warned that international communism should be treated as a danger to hemisphere peace."

6. Gruson returned to Mexico after the Conference. When the strike situation developed in Honduras, Gruson's replacement in Guatemala, The New York Times correspondent Paul Kennedy, was transferred to Tegucigalpa,

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leaving a vacancy in Guatemala. Gruson then succeeded in returning to Guatemala on 20 May 1954. His reentry was authorized personally by Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello.

7. Since his return to Guatemala Gruson's reporting has dealt almost exclusively with the Guatemalan point of view and with Foreign Minister Toriello's statements regarding the Guatemalan position on arms purchases and denial of complicity in the Honduran strikes.

8. On 21 February 1954, from Mexico City, Gruson's wife, Miss Flora Lewis, published an article in The New York Times Sunday Magazine entitled "Communism in Guatemala: a Case History." This study is quite objective in approach and historically accurate, allowing for journalistic compression.

9. The Charge d'Affaires of the American Embassy in Guatemala stated at the time of Gruson's expulsion that Gruson "was considered one of the most objective reporters on Guatemalan affairs." On the other hand, a radio and news commentator on Latin American affairs present at Caracas characterized Gruson as a "Fabian Socialist" who "unwittingly and inadvertently" had written "for publication in US newspapers what the Communists have wanted him to write."

10. A comparison of Gruson's reports on Guatemala with current reporting by other special correspondents does not set his work apart as showing strong "leftist" or "pro-Guatemalan" bias in the extent to which he quotes Guatemalan official statements or dwells upon the resurgence of "anti-Yankee" sentiment in the area.

11. It is possible that Gruson originally was planted in Guatemala by pre-arrangement with Communists there, then was expelled in a calculated effort to give him an appearance of non-complicity. Available circumstantial evidence, however, does not make this seem likely.

12. Nevertheless it can be concluded from the evidence in hand that Gruson felt a professional journalist's natural compulsion to return to the country from which he had been expelled, and that he did so by making a deal with Guillermo Toriello, in which Gruson promised to bend over backward to give Guatemala and its Foreign Minister full and favorable treatment

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in his reporting. It seems quite likely that the basis for this deal was laid during the Caracas Conference, when Gruson's reports on Toriello undoubtedly gave pleasure and satisfaction to Toriello, and when Toriello was making every effort to ingratiate himself with the press generally. Since Caracas, Toriello probably has been Gruson's principal source.

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