

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
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SEP 28 1954

Chief, CI  
Att. of Communist Operations Officer,  
Chief of Station, Guatemala

Priority

The Communist Story of Guatemala

1. Over 50,000 documents confiscated by the Guatemalan Anti-Communist Committee were reviewed by the PHILIPPI team, and only a small percentage of the documents were autostated (2095) for immediate Headquarters use. Approximately 50,000 have been forwarded on microfilm. This latter material for the most part is of secondary importance but when pieced together does demonstrate the "Communist story" in Guatemala.

2. In an effort to give Headquarters a field opinion of some Communist aspects contained in these documents, the following remarks are being forwarded. It must be stressed that the conclusions are those gathered after only two months of work on the various phases of PHILIPPI. However, it is felt that they may be worthy of consideration should a rush request for a summary of PHILIPPI documents be required by Communist staffs of our organization.

3. The obvious conclusion which can be drawn from the above statistics (in paragraph one) is graphic confirmation of overwhelming evidence of low-level material - and lack of really important documents - found by the PHILIPPI team. However, given the time which the Communist leaders had at their disposal for complete document destruction, it is amazing that such a bulk was collected. Despite the almost total lack of documents which could have indicated direct Soviet direction to the highest Government leaders or could have shown detailed underground networks within the country or ties with other Communist Parties, the great mass of low-level documents does still paint out the "Communist story" of Guatemala and Central.

4. The PHILIPPI team will have the final judgment on the value of these documents to the organization. It is felt that the PHILIPPI team, in the past, has been one of the lowest

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to highest levels of their organizations a Chinese labor trip method of discipline embodied in constant requests, criticisms, "scoldings," and praise, the few trained Communist leaders were successfully manipulated large labor, educational and political segments. Since no army correspondence has ever been made available to the Committee, it is to be surmised that to a lesser extent with many compliant army officials a similar technique was developed, coupled with large cash payments. Such dedicated disciplinary methods are given time and time again in many documents; and, in a Latin country, where discipline is mainly a figure of speech, it paid off handsomely for the Communist leaders.

5. The extent to which the Communists ruled Guatemala cannot be underestimated. As explained, the organizational controls were strict, and in the latter stages there was little effort made on their part in worrying about crossing channels of command if the need was called for. A Communist labor boss would order the nominal chief of the Army to make changes suitable to the labor chief; a private secretary to the President would authorize spending large sums of money for confidential purposes; an educational chief would decide the nominations to international Communist congresses for a personal friend and secure Government financing through the President's office; mere police chiefs could expect to obey orders from any important Communist functionary no matter what his official Government position - if any - would be.

6. The general question arising from these conditions is: What was the position of Jacobo when confronted with these events? The following is clear: Jacobo knew in considerable detail what was taking place in Guatemala. What is not clear - his main - from an almost complete lack of his personal correspondence - is his actual position; was he merely a tool of his enemies and, with his peculiarly twisted, stubborn mentality, afraid to step what had been set in motion for solving personal motives; were Jacobo and his left-hand side well-reinforced with the conviction that the people who surrounded him were following the best pattern to help his country? In the latter evidence has been found that both were early recipients of elements of Marxism; what or how was Jacobo's informative purposes (as clearly shown.) The events do indicate that their strategy for the Communist's success went beyond a leader's acquaintance.

7. Finally, since the document is a secret, it is to be noted that the information is not to be disseminated, contained in the

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Communists it was a happy combination to have bright young men, embittered by a long dictatorship and desperately eager to listen to those who offered a complete change from anything that had been known in the mountain-bound, conservative Guatemala. The Communist siren call was responded to with a fervor which the Church had never shown them. During the ten-year period of correspondence it is obvious that the Communists made constant gains in placing and passing their bright young men until each in his own way was a commander of some important segment of the Guatemalan Government. Outwardly in 1954 the Communist-controlled AMEZ machine should have been secure and comfortable, with the knowledge that no possible factor or combination of factors inside the country could upset them.

8. Another important question to be answered, then, is: now, if the Communists were in such complete control, did they collapse in 1954 with only such a token show of force? Basically it must be assumed that they never quite trusted their illiterate masses, which in their collective muteness were primarily responsible for the Communists' dominant position. The Communists, as did the landowners, knew all along without wanting to admit it, that the vast bulk of the Guatemalan people had not accepted this "new revolution"; the change was too much, the paternal system after centuries of duration could not be eradicated so quickly, especially with just the merest of benefits which were actually received by the masses. This revolution also did not fit into the religious pattern of peasant life - another disturbing factor.

9. The Communists' keystones of power were the great mute mass of people, a tooth-and-nail army, and a small but effective group of dedicated organizers. Of these factors, the people were by far the most coveted by the Communists; and, to repeat, they were the ones in whom the Communists had the least trust. This can be pointed out dramatically by the great masses of furious and frantic cables between the Communist leaders and their lackeys in the departments, requesting aid and offering all-out armed peasant support of the Government. The fact that no such support ever materialized must have been the deciding factor in the final decision to leave the Government - therefore a real blow had ever been struck.

10. ... can eloquently document the general remarks

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which have been developed above. Certain conclusions from the downfall of the Communists in Guatemala should be of value in other parts of the world, provided the circumstances are similar to warrant comparison.

AK/jok

Francis T. Gylkes

23 September 1954

Distribution:

Case 4

Files 1