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By KJ NARA Date 4/21/88

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TO : MR. - Mr. Cabot

DATE: April 2, 1953

FROM : MID - Mr. Fisher *lg*

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.3
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SUBJECT: Communist Influence in Guatemala.

By KAN/FOK, NARA, Date 8-26-88

Background

Following upon the Guatemalan revolution in 1944, which saw the displacement of the military dictator General Ubico, a regime took over with a program of radical political reform. During the Administration of President Juan Jose Arevalo (1945-51) there was an indiscriminate tolerance of elements which included a number of Communists, Guatemalan and foreign, who steadily infiltrated to positions of influence in the pro-Government parties, the Congress, organized labor, intellectual groups, the official press and radio, the Social Security Institute, and the Agrarian Reform Administration. This has continued up to the present, tolerated and frequently connived in by the chief executive. Though the Communists are relatively few, their influence is far out of proportion to their numbers. Their basic tactic is militant support of the Arevalo-Arbenz reform program, whose aims coalesce with many of their own limited objectives.

Penetration of the Political Parties

Until June 21, 1951, it was the habit of the regime to deny that there were any Communists in Guatemala, and they worked through the principal pro-Government parties, PAR, RN and FPL. The Communist Party was formally launched at a large public meeting held on June 21, 1951 to celebrate the first anniversary of the publication of the newspaper Octubre, which carried the emblem of the hammer and sickle and the slogan "For the establishment of a Great Communist Party". A number of Government officials (including the Secretary of the Presidency Salguero) and party leaders of other political parties supporting the Government attended the meeting, which was held in a theater made available gratis by the Government. It was announced that Jose Manuel Fortuny was Secretary General of the party. Fortuny was a former PAR leader and deputy in Congress and a former member of the National Electoral Board.

Listed among the members of the Central Committee of the party was Alfredo Guerra Borges, former editor of the official newspaper Diario de Centro America, from which position he resigned the year before to

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join the staff of Octubre. Victor Manuel Gutierrez, head of the labor organization Confederación General de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CGTG), and Carlos Manuel Pellecer, Secretary of Disputes of the CGTG, were named to the Central Committee of the Communist Party after Gutierrez returned from a trip to Moscow at the end of 1951 and dissolved his small Partido Revolucionaria Obrero de Guatemala (PROG).

In December 1952, the Communist Party of Guatemala changed its name to Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo (PGT), but remained unchanged in its aims and leadership. The purpose of the change was obviously to facilitate legal registration as a political party, which was accomplished a few days later despite Article 32 of the Constitution which prohibits political organizations of "foreign or international character". The PGT formed part of the pro-Government "Democratic Electoral Front" with FAR, RN, and FRG, which engaged in the Congressional elections in January 1953. Among the candidates which it supported were Fortuny and Pellecer.

Although with the emergence of the PGT there is now an open Communist Party, the pro-Government parties harbor an unknown number of crypto-Communists and fellow travelers. Their influence is seen in such actions as the following:

The four PGT members of Congress were joined by fifteen others in June 1952 in signing a "Declaration of Solidarity with the Korean People". In the Congressional Session which opened March 1, 1953, Victor Manuel Gutierrez was re-elected to the key post of Chairman of the Agrarian Reform Committee, and Jose Alberto Cardoza, PGT, was re-elected to the key post of Chairman of the Committee on Revision of the Labor Code. The Congressional appointee on the three-member National Electoral Board is Alfonso Orantes, a fellow traveler or crypto-Communist who attended the second plenary session of the Communist Party in Guatemala in December 1952.

The Secretary General of PAR, the strongest and most radical of the pro-Government parties, is Alvaro Hugo Salguero. Salguero is a former Secretary of the Presidency with a record of pro-Communist activities. The Secretary General of RN is Jaime Diaz Rozzotto, who is now Secretary of the Presidency and an avowed partisan of Communist causes. He attended and addressed the second plenary congress of the Communist Party in Guatemala in December 1952. The co-Secretary General of FRG is Roberto Alvarado Fuentes who attended the Vienna Peace Conference two years ago while

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