

# Cuba Won't Become Another Guatemala, Declares Arbenz

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"The story of Guatemala will not be repeated in Cuba", Jacobo Arbenz, ex-president of Guatemala, declared in an interview for The Worker.

"Since 1954", Arbenz explained, "when the popular democratic Republic of Guatemala was overthrown by the North American imperialists — the United Fruit Company — and the U. S. State Department, the world has changed considerably, and the Cuban Revolution, learning from the mistakes of Guatemala, has developed certain features and characteristics which make it impossible for U. S. imperialism to invade Cuba now and overthrow this glorious people's revolution."

"In the first place", he said, "the Cuban revolution completely dissolved the old army of the latifundists and the dictators, and created instead a new revolutionary, popular army based on the Rebel Fighters. This was one of the big mistakes of Guatemala, which failed to do this, so that when the invasion came, the old army leaders betrayed the people and sold themselves into the service of the U. S. embassy."

"Second", continued Arbenz, "the old police force in Cuba was disbanded, and a new revolutionary police force based on the workers and peasants was created.

## PEOPLE ARMED

"Third, the whole Cuban nation is being armed to defend the revolution. All over Cuba you can see the workers, peasants, and students joining the militia, drilling, and receiving arms."

This was not done soon enough in Guatemala, and when the invasion came Arbenz gave the order to issue arms to the people, but this order was sabotaged by the old army officers.

Other features of the Cuban Revolution, according to Arbenz,

● The Agrarian Reform, which has given the land to the peasants.

● Industrialization, which will make the country economically independent and prosperous.

● The nationalization of important basic industries, which up to now have been under the control of U. S. imperialists "who were sabotaging the economic development of the country and creating a serious danger for the Cuban revolution."

● The development of friendly diplomatic and commercial relations with all countries, especially the socialist lands. "U.S. imperialism has always kept Latin America as a backyard reserve, preventing free exchange with the rest of the world, and forbidding relations with the socialist countries." Guatemala had no relations with the Soviet Union; but the new trade agreements with People's China, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia are of immense benefit to the Cuban people, supplying to Cuba new industrial plants in return for Cuban sugar.

"Even more than this trade, the generous and spontaneous offer of assistance on the part of the Soviet Union in case of aggression against Cuba, is a supreme example of the solidarity of all the peoples of Latin America with the Cuban revolution. The First Congress of Latin American Youth, which took place recently in Havana, was a glowing expression of this support," and "undoubtedly will result in the speeding up of the revolutionary process in all the other Latin American countries."

"A most important feature of the Cuban revolution", continued Arbenz, "is that it has smashed the theory of 'Geographic Fatalism' once and for all." According to this theory, the small and weak countries of Latin America, situated so close to the all-powerful U. S., could never dream of achieving their real liberation from North American imperialism.

Cuba has destroyed this incorrect theory, and has shown that "a people with inspired leadership, with unbreakable unity, with a firm determination to struggle and to achieve victory, and with the support of a powerful international solidarity (especially the backing of the Soviet Union) can achieve victory over the mighty giant of U.S. imperialism", even though Cuba is only a tiny island of only six million people just 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

Arbenz recalled how the U.S. imperialists threw the label of "communism" at Guatemala, just as they are doing now with Cuba in order to overthrow the government that was trying to carry out a mild program of Agrarian Reform. At that time, Guatemala did not have any trade relations, nor even diplomatic relations, with the Soviet Union.

At the meeting of the Organization of American States in Caracas in 1954, the representative of Guatemala was the only one who voted against the "anti-communist declaration", which was in reality a reaffirmation of the discredited Monroe Doctrine. "Guatemala recognized this declaration as being against the best interests of the people of Latin America. Also, the government of Guatemala could see that the principle of anti-communism was always being used by U. S. imperialism as an instrument of oppression against the people of the colonial, undeveloped, and exploited nations."

## VAIN EFFORT

Arbenz recalled how the Guatemalan ambassador to Washington kept trying to prevent relations between the two countries from deteriorating — a hopeless task. Henry Cabot Lodge was intimately connected through family ties with the United Fruit Co. John Foster Dulles was on the board of directors of United Fruit Co. The Guatemalan ambassador asked Eisenhower directly for assistance to deal with who would be the next president to Eisenhower, referring him to