

*Return to*

SECRET

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A Successful Communist Infiltration of GovernmentPreface:

In 1955 the scattered remnants of the Guatemalan Communist Party regrouped, after the collapse of the Communist-dominated nationalist government of Guatemala, led by President Jacobo Arbenz. One of the first items of business taken up by the Guatemalan Communist Party was a very exhaustive investigation and analysis of the events which culminated in the collapse.

In this process of "self-criticism and criticism," the ex-Secretary General of the Guatemalan Party, Jose Mamel Fortuny, was severely criticized and censured for weaknesses and mistakes. It is apparent that this effort was intended to saddle him personally with much of the responsibility for the catastrophe which befell the Party.

A formal inquiry was carried out by the Party, and Fortuny was given the opportunity of presenting his "self-criticism" to support the Party's charges. However, the statements he produced were considered generally unsatisfactory by the Party, since they contained not only his admissions of guilt on certain charges, but also his defense of his own actions and attitudes on what he considered to be the most serious charges of political failure and deviation.

Copies of the documents of the Party concerning this inquiry have been found in the possession of a representative of the Party residing illegally in Guatemala. The attached excerpt from Fortuny's main defense is presented as a particularly enlightening expose of the position held and activities carried out by a key figure in the Guatemalan Communist Party during the period of emergency. It is a very revealing statement that shows clearly the results that can be attained when a Communist Party, in a campaign of unity-of-action and collaboration with a nationalist movement, concentrates much of its cadre membership on the infiltration of the governing group. In particular, it shows how much political influence on both domestic and foreign affairs actually can be gained by an individual Communist, who in fact occupies no official position and bears no official responsibilities, when he concentrates with the Party's agreement and aid upon developing personal influence over a senior

SECRET

SECRET

government official. While it highlights this topic of influence, it should also be recognized that such a relationship gives excellent opportunities for political espionage as well.

This technique appears to be of particular importance for study at present in those areas where national liberation movements and nationalist governments are targets of the current Communist campaign to capitalize on the dynamic forces of nationalism.

-2-

SECRET

SECRET

Introductory Note: In the first section of this document, Jose Manuel Fortuny acknowledges his improper behavior (excessive drinking and improper conduct with women), his lack of qualification for the position of Secretary General of the Party, and the effects of his ill health on his work. He then tries to defend himself against charges that he had been irresponsible, defeatist, vacillating, and lax in his actions during the period of the crisis of the Arbenz Government.

He refutes these charges as follows:

"When the Army summoned Colonel Arbenz on 8 June and the first plane of the mercenary invaders dropped the first leaflets on the capital, I renewed my activity, with the Party designating me as its main link with President Arbenz and recommending that I aid him in every way possible.

"In accordance with these decisions, I remained at the President's side as much as possible, counteracting the intrigues, the charges, and the proposals continually made against and to him by some of the political leaders of the national bourgeoisie and certain officials of the Cabinet; I gave detailed and up-to-the-minute information to the Party on the developments in the struggle, the decisions made, and the steps to be taken on behalf of the government; I passed on the Party's suggestions to the President and gave him my own opinion when there was not enough time to consult the Party. I thus remained with President Arbenz until the end, when he relinquished the Presidency, and later on, when he took refuge at the Mexican Embassy and when he left the country to go into exile.

"I thus engaged in a series of tasks for President Arbenz which took up all my time, from 1000 to 1100 hours of one day until 0400 or 0500 hours of the next. These tasks included the following: The elaboration of the replies which we were suggesting that the President should make to the Army elements which had given him the 8 June ultimatum; the elaboration of the details of the tactics to be followed to maintain the Guatemalan delegation to the UN in the Security Council sessions; the elaboration of the diplomatic communiques to be transmitted from the Chancellery to the Security Council and the U.S. (and Latin

-3-

SECRET

SECRET

American) embassies; replying to hundreds of telegrams of solidarity from abroad; giving attention to the more important telephone calls; attending various informal meetings of certain officials as well as the last general meeting, at which the Chief of the Armed Forces himself explained the military situation; assisting in the drafting of the last addresses made by President Arbenz, including the one in which he made his 'renunciation'; constant petitioning to have the people furnished with arms; the adoption of security measures for the President; the elaboration of the plans to arm the people, when the arming was approved finally and too late; and various other activities, including that of obtaining cash funds for the Party.

"It would seem that my making this report is useless, because certain comrades, to my way of thinking, have gone a little too far in their criticism of my behavior. My work alongside President Arbenz in the most critical days of the struggle against the foreign intervention made me forget altogether what took place at the meetings with Comrade Alejandro and the comrades of the Secretariat involving a criticism of my personal behavior and an explanation of my actions, which resulted in my being temporarily relieved of my duties.

"Comrade Pellecer, for example, has written letters left and right, including some to comrades in other Parties, in which he gave all sorts of opinions about me, most of them incorrect. I only had the opportunity to read one of these letters and rather rapidly, but among the various impassioned comments he made in it was the statement that I and one of my brothers had become panicky and that this feeling had spread to President Arbenz. This is entirely false. My female companion (sic) could testify, in the first place, as to my attitude toward my brother who is referred to here, and to the fact that I reprimanded him for showing fear. My brother's conduct is his responsibility and not mine. If I had grown panicky, I would not have remained with President Arbenz until the end and would have given more attention to more of my personal documents than I was able to--I would have salvaged at least my property deeds; I would also have made my companion panicky, but she can testify, now that she is in a better condition to be a competent witness, what my actions were like during those dramatic days. I even submit the testimonial of Colonel Arbenz himself, of Major Martinez, or of all those who were aware of my calmness or of my behavior at President

-4-

SECRET

SECRET

Arbenz's side. I, therefore, contradict Comrade Pellecer's accusation as well as others he has made which are not pertinent here because they do not concern my personal conduct. On the contrary, certain comrades in the Party leadership can testify that in those days I was guilty more of overconfidence and optimism than was warranted under such circumstances.

"Other comrades, in referring to the circumstances surrounding my temporary release from my duties in the Party, surmise that my behavior was due to defeatist vacillation on my part. I cannot accept this accusation either, because it is not compatible with the truth. I expressed on several occasions my feeling that I was not the person to be given the duties of Party Secretary General and did so long before the situation in Guatemala gave any warning of the imminent imperialist intervention. I said on various occasions that the Secretary General should be a militant with qualities like those of Comrade Silva Jonama, for example. Moreover, I confess in all frankness that when the American imperialists' propaganda shouted to the high heavens that a shipload of arms from 'behind the Iron Curtain' had reached Guatemala, I did not correctly judge the extreme gravity of the situation, thinking that 'the worst' had taken place in Caracas and that if the American imperialists had not openly intervened then, neither would they do so when the arms reached Guatemala, and I even told this to President Arbenz. It was long before that time that my personal conduct started to give way to excesses because of my drinking; similarly, it was long before then that I told myself that certain comrades were not being objective in their appraisal of the situation in our country. It cannot be said that when I was faced at that time with the imminence of the foreign intervention, the renewal of the struggle in our country, and the violence of the anti-Communist campaign, I decided to capitulate by leaving the Party leadership. On the contrary, because of the way in which I lent my services to the active struggle in June, I could prove, in accordance with my actions at that time, that I fully intended to fight to the end and that I did not foresee defeat--which was also one of our mistakes--but felt certain that victory was ours.

"Finally, I cannot accept the responsibility for one other thing, because it is not true and because accepting it would make me guilty of a gross irresponsibility. I am speaking of the criticism of certain comrades who wish to believe that my opinions

-5-

SECRET

SECRET

had a major influence in the decisions taken by President Arbens. It has been said that looking at events subjectively as they affected me personally, I influenced the President to adopt the course of action which he thought was the most correct. This too is false.

"It is true that President Arbens and I are on very intimate terms, that we had a very close friendship, that I became known as one of his 'best friends,' and that we even went so far as to converse about intimate private matters, but this should not imply that I went so far as to confide to him the confidential deliberations of the Party nor that I told him about the internal questions of our organization. At the time my case was taken up by the Secretariat, as I indicated above, it is true that I confided to him the fact that I felt very tired, that I was ill, and that it was for these reasons that we had decided on releasing me from duty to take care of my health, but I did not go any further; indeed, it was not in my province to inform him about everything that had been said during the meeting with the Secretariat. I did not in any way discourage him; on the contrary, I told him that I felt that in this way, the Party leadership would be better off, since it would not have to put up with a person who, because of illness, was not producing much work. At the time, the President expressed his concern over my health and even placed his own doctor at my disposal.

"There are many facts, too numerous to mention here, which prove that the circumstances of my temporary release from duty as Secretary General could not have influenced the decisions made at that time by the President. The factors which determined his decisions, his extreme confidence at the start, his hopes, and his later discouragement when the Army vilely betrayed him were far different ones. I will, however, cite two facts, or rather appraisals. The President became aware of the Army's betrayal as soon as the members of the Chief of Staff and National Defense Ministry handed him the sheet of questions which the international press described as an 'ultimatum,' that is, on 8 June. If it were true that he had been influenced by my erroneous personal conduct or my appraisals of the situation, what better opportunity could I have had than then to give up my post? And how else could one interpret the next-to-the-last address he made to the nation, in the elaboration of which I played a major role? Did that address have any indication of the decision or decisions he adopted? We shall not consider here whether or not there was

-6-

SECRET

SECRET

wisdom in the decision to ban the popular demonstration of 18 June, the decision not to make any changes in the command of the Army, the decision to rely too much on the Chief of the Armed Forces, the decision not to arm the people, the decision not to take adequate steps to control the chiefs of the operations in the battlefield, or the decision to resign. What is important here, however, is the fact that neither my personal conduct nor the circumstances which led to my temporary separation from the CC Secretariat had anything to do with the above-mentioned omissions, errors, or inadequate measures, as far as influence is concerned.

"Furthermore, did not the decision to take the matter before the UN Security Council indicate a major decision made by President Arbenz himself? Where then was my defeatist influence? And what about the steps taken to arm the people, to censor the press, and the arrest and liquidation of many conspirators? Did they not show a determination to fight to the end? Again, where was my defeatist influence? And do you think that President Arbenz was unaware of the Party's determination and of the fact that I shared in the decisions made by the Party's leaders?

"No. By evaluating the factors in the defeat of the democratic regime from the point of view of my personal influence on the President, we would be abandoning our way of approaching the facts, we would not be considering the actual conditions of the struggle in Guatemala or comprehending the action of the forces defending our country or the magnitude and extent of that struggle. It would also mean overlooking the class relationships of the main personalities who directed the final acts of the Guatemalan democratic government. Neither would this mean taking into account (on the contrary, it would be flagrantly contradicting) the evaluations which we made in the recently elaborated document in which are examined the causes of the defeat of the Guatemalan democratic regime, the errors, defects, and weaknesses of the Party, the democratic forces, the political leaders of the national bourgeoisie and of all of us who, by our equivocations and omissions, were partly responsible for not creating the ability to offer a much greater armed resistance to American imperialism.

"Comrades: I acknowledge my mistakes and assume my responsibilities, but it is not my duty to acknowledge those mistakes I did not commit nor those responsibilities for which I am not

-7-

SECRET

SECRET

liable. I accept just criticism of my conduct and mistakes, but I would be serving our Party and the democratic cause of Guatemala feebly if I accepted the responsibility for things I did not do."

-8-

SECRET