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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM ^F 134
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Chief, WHD

[] (JMWATERFALL)

2003

7 July 1954

Communist Matters
Honduran Communist Activities

References: []-1, []-2, []-11, []-16, []-22, []-30

1. Attached is a memorandum containing miscellaneous notes regarding Honduran Communist activities, to supplement the data contained in referenced reports.

2. The information in the attached memorandum was furnished orally by Identity B of []-029. Copies of the memorandum have been furnished to the Embassy and to the Army Attaché.

Earl G. Knox

Attachment - 1
Evaluation: C-3

Distribution:
2-Headquarters
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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES REGARDING HONDURAN COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES

1. The expenses of the group of Honduran Communists who visited Guatemala City in June 1953 were paid by the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo. While in Guatemala, the Honduran Communists discussed in detail the situation in Honduras with the Guatemalan Communists who made recommendations as to the action which should be taken in Honduras. The Honduran Communists recognized these "recommendations" as identical with "instructions". During the visit of the Honduran Communists to Guatemala, the need for strikes to obtain better conditions for the Honduran workers was discussed. At that time, the Guatemalan Communists "recommended" local strikes to achieve gradually better working conditions for the workers. In April 1954, Rigoberto PADILLA met in San Salvador with members of the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo and a general strike of workers was agreed upon.

2. During the early phases of the strike, the Communists were in complete control. A group of Communists was in El Progreso during the early phase of the strike, advising the Communist-controlled Central Strike Committee. Three members of the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo, Max SALAZAR and Mario SILVA Jonama, Guatemalans and Ventura RAMOS, Honduran, were also present in El Progreso during the early part of that period. The real Communist leaders in El Progreso during that period were Rigoberto PADILLA and Dionisio BEJARANO. A very important Communist influence in the decisions reached by the Communists at that time was Juan Manuel ZUNIGA, a Honduran who had been in exile in Guatemala for some time and who returned to Honduras under the assumed name of Juan ORDONEZ. All actions of the Communists, such as Francisco RIOS and César Augusto COTO Umaña, on the Central Strike Committee, were agreed upon in advance by the Communist group in El Progreso. This Communist group held regular meetings, most of which lasted far into the night.

3. During the early phase of the strike, the Communists in El Progreso were convinced that the opportunity had presented itself for establishing a Communist dictatorship in Honduras. The Communists seriously believed that this could be accomplished. They expected to receive additional arms from Guatemala, which did not arrive, as well as money which the FFTU promised to send via Mexico, which also did not arrive. When the Communists in El Progreso learned of the U.S.-Honduran military assistance agreement, they considered that this development negated their possibilities of establishing a Communist dictatorship at the time.

4. The action by Government authorities at the beginning of June 1954 in arresting César Augusto COTO Umaña and other Communists completely broke the Communist control of the strike. Some of the Honduran Communists in El Progreso went into hiding while others went to Guatemala.

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5. One of the principal recommendations made by the Guatemalans to the Honduran Communists in June 1953 was that the Communists attempt to gain control of the Partido Democrático Revolucionario Hondureño (PDRH) and the PDRH be made into a party "of the working class". Since that time, the Honduran Communists have been very active in the PDRH. A Communist fraction of approximately thirty members has been endeavoring to guide the PDRH along the lines recommended by the Guatemalan Communists.

6. Guatemala has been the country to which the Honduran Communists looked for guidance and support. They are now looking to Mexico. It is expected that most of the Honduran Communists who were in exile in Guatemala will go to Mexico. It is also further expected by the Honduran Communists that with the defeat of Communism in Guatemala, the international Communist movement will turn its eyes to Honduras which is considered "ripe for Communist development". Honduran Communists have received word that they may expect the arrival in August of Communists from Mexico who will give the Honduran Communists further instructions. It is expected that during the next two or three months Honduran Communist activity will be negligible, but after that "cooling off period" the Communists will become very active in endeavoring to make Honduras, rather than Guatemala, the Communist stronghold in Central America.

7. While the number of militant Communists in Honduras is small, the Communists realize that even a small militant minority can achieve a great deal by championing popular causes. For example, the very small Communist militant minority was able to organize and completely control the general strike of workers during the strike's initial phases.

8. The most important of the Honduran Communists were believed to be located as follows as of 1 July 1954:

Rigoberto PADILLA, in hiding, believed to be in El Progreso area.
Jose PINEDA Gomez, in hiding, fugitive from justice, believed to be in El Progreso area. His wife reportedly is endeavoring to arrange for his travel to Mexico.
Mionisio BEJARANO, last known whereabouts, Guatemala.
Ventura RAMOS, last known whereabouts, Guatemala.
César Augusto COTO Umaña, in prison in Tegucigalpa, charged with "rebellion" for his activities in general strike of workers.
Lector SEVILLA Chirinos, last known whereabouts, Guatemala.
Juan Manuel ZUNIGA, last known whereabouts, Guatemala.
Francisco RIOS, whereabouts not known. Reportedly in hiding. Authorities looking for him with warrant for his arrest on charges of "rebellion" for activities in general strike of workers. Last known whereabouts, Tela.

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Gustavo ANDARA Bulnes, in prison in Tegucigalpa, charged with "rebellion" for his participation in student demonstration of 23 June 1954.

Rodolfo ROSALES Abella, in prison in Tegucigalpa, charged with "rebellion" for his participation in student demonstration of 23 June 1954.

Oscar MONCADA, in prison in Tegucigalpa, having been arrested on 23 June 1954 in connection with the student demonstration. The Caristas reportedly are protecting him from being charged with "rebellion", and it is expected that he will be released on bail. Other Communists have become suspicious of Oscar MONCADA because of the reported Carista interest in him.

Antonio FAJARDO, in jail in Puerto Cortes, awaiting trial, for participation in incidents in Puerto Cortes on 27 April 1954.

Antonio MADRID, Jr., last known whereabouts, Guatemala.

Ramon ROSA Figueroa, Jr., last known whereabouts, Guatemala.

Leon Adalberto CUSTODIO, in Tegucigalpa, reportedly endeavoring to arrange travel to Mexico.

José María PALACIOS, who had been residing in La Esperanza, has been in hiding in the Tegucigalpa area, and is reportedly endeavoring to arrange travel to Mexico.

Francisco CARDONA, in Tegucigalpa prison, awaiting trial for "rebellion" in connection with activities in general strike of workers.

Juan B. CANALES, free on bail in Puerto Cortés.

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