

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

4 June 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/P

SUBJECT : Probable Cause of Fortuny's Temporary Retirement  
as Secretary General of the Guatemalan Labor Party

1. The probable cause of Fortuny's temporary retirement as Secretary General of the Guatemalan Labor Party (PCT) was his being called to Europe or Moscow for consultations in view of the rapid developments affecting Guatemala during the past few weeks. The PCT probably decided that the situation was just too hot at present to be without a titular leader for even a short time during Fortuny's temporary absence, so his deputy was appointed to hold his place. A temporary retirement also gave Fortuny a chance to have a cover story of illness and a reason for going to Europe.

2. The two reasons for Fortuny's removal speculatively advanced in a RQM memorandum of 1 June 1954, Subject: Fortuny/Alvarado Monzon, can both be discarded as entirely unlikely and probably false. The first reason advanced was that Fortuny's removal may well be the result of internal Party dissension between Fortuny and Victor Manuel Gutierrez. If this were the reason, Fortuny would not have been replaced by his closest associate, his deputy and generally his stooge -- Bernardo ALVARADO Monzon. He would have been replaced by someone closer to Gutierrez, since, if this theory were correct it would have been Gutierrez pressure causing the ouster.

3. The second reason advanced was that the PCT agreed to oust Fortuny at Arbens' insistence in an effort to remove the stigma of Communism from the government. If this were true it would be unthinkable to replace the number one Communist with his deputy the number two Communist. The only conclusion is that this is not a likely and is probably a false hypothesis.

[ SD/DDP ]