

~~SECRET~~

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

1 June 1954

2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, RQM/OIS

FROM :

[]

SUBJECT :

Fortuny/Alvarado Monzon

1. The departure of Jose Manuel Fortuny from the Secretary Generalship of the PGT, Guatemala's Communist Party, removes from a position of power one of the top Communist theorists and the Communist leader closest to President Arbenz. There is no indication that the ousting of Fortuny will significantly weaken the Communist position, but his departure does provide the opportunity for another confidante, Communist or non-Communist, to fill the breach.

2. The reasons for Fortuny's removal are still speculative.

a. They well may be the result of internal Party dissension, for it is well known that Fortuny is a Communist theorist who has sometimes disagreed on practical issues with Victor Manuel Gutierrez (Communist labor leader) and with some of the international Communists in the PGT.

b. It is also possible that the PGT agreed to oust Fortuny at Arbenz's insistence in an effort to remove the stigma of Communism from the Government and from the close circle of Presidential advisers.

3. With respect to point (a) above, Communist penetration has become so widespread and the Party organizations so closely knit that Fortuny may be considered expendable at this time. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that such a serious division arose between Fortuny, the political leader, and Gutierrez, the labor leader, that a show of strength was called for and the labor forces won. There is even the remote possibility that Virgilio Guerra, seasoned labor leader, carried tales to Moscow on his current trip behind the Curtain, alleging that Fortuny had not carried out in good faith the instructions he received from Moscow on his trip there in December 1953.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

4. At this point the cause of the removal is not as significant at its probable effects. There is no reliable indication that Party strength or influence in the Government (aside from the important advantage of Fortuny's intimacy with the President) will decline sharply. The appointment of Bernardo ALVARADO Monzon as Fortuny's successor indicates that "business as usual" will be the theme. Alvarado, one of Fortuny's closest associates

has had ten years of experience in Communist affairs and has emerged as No. 2 leader of the Party. He appears to be in good standing with other Party leaders, and can be expected to take control effectively though his role will be less conspicuous than Fortuny's. Alvarado Monzon is listed as an alternate and therefore probably will succeed Fortuny as a member of the all-powerful Democratic National Front, the real policy-making body of the Government, composed of the PAR, FRQ, RN and the Communist Party.

5. On balance the major loss to the Communist cause and the greatest opportunity for gain on the non-Communist side centers about Fortuny's closeness to President Arbenz. The Arbenz-Fortuny relationship dates back to the 1950 presidential campaign, one year after Fortuny's grand tour of the "People's Democracies", where he probably received instructions for political action. At any rate he vigorously entered the campaign activities and soon made himself an indispensable supporter and aide of Arbenz. He held political meetings and stumped for Arbenz. When Arbenz became too worn out by the pressures and tensions of the campaign, Fortuny wrote speeches which he handed to Arbenz to deliver as the latter was rising on the platform. At one time in the campaign when Arbenz did not make a public appearance for three weeks Fortuny delivered speeches for him. Since that time Fortuny has been a kind of post for Arbenz to lean on. It is reported that he dines with Arbenz in private once or twice a week. The loss of Fortuny's easy access to Arbenz, therefore, will be a serious one to the Communist cause. Alvarado Monzon is not known to be a friend of the President. Nor is Victor Manuel Gutierrez, although he has been invited to certain large official gatherings.

6. In conclusion, Arbenz may be looking for a reliable confidant to succeed Fortuny. Aside from the personal qualifications required for such succession, an Army officer probably would be in the best position to win the confidence of the President.

Attachments:



4

PAGE (S)

DENIED IN FULL