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Security Information

HGG-A-529

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL

Chief of Station
2003
Chief of Station, Guatemala

DEC 2, 1953

Operational

ESSENCE Activities

References: 1) HGG-A-411 3) HGG-A-478
2) HGG-A-476

1. The following paragraphs contain a brief summary of ESSENCE operational developments which may be of interest to Headquarters:
 - a. Through (ESSENCE) the station provided approximately \$800.00 for printing of campaign literature for the municipal elections which took place 20-22 November 1953. Aside from the publicity which such literature may have aroused for anti-Communist candidates, Donald O. HEDIGER reports that the support has helped ESSENCE personnel to establish their leadership role among the various anti-Communist groups.
 - b. ESSENCE has submitted a report which states that anti-Communist materials are now being distributed in 350 towns and fincas throughout the country. His report includes a list of persons in each department, village, and finca responsible (to ESSENCE group) for distributions in each area.
 - c. Harrassment of ESSENCE pegadores (posting crews) continues intermittently, both in the capital and in the departments. Pegadores recently arrested in the capital were charged with vagrancy. They were released after paying small fines. In the departments the pegadores were released without paying fines. Both HEDIGER and ESSENCE report that this harrassment is evidence of the impact that propaganda materials are making. ESSENCE also claims that the arbitrary police action in arresting legally documented posters has caused further criticism of the government. ESSENCE has reported that organized crews, equipped with ladders, scrapers and blow torches, are now employed to deface or remove anti-Communist materials. In some cases the ESSENCE crews reported that they were followed around town by opposition crews that removed or defaced the materials as quickly as it was posted. Although these tactics have hampered (ESSENCE) activities it is believed that disseminations to date have been reasonably successful. Distribution of leaflets and other types of non-posted materials are not, of course, effected by government or Communist counter-measures of this sort.

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- d. On 11 November 1953 use of the stamps provided by Headquarters to mark paper money was initiated. It is expected that it will take some time to observe reactions to this operation since ESSENCE sub-agents will not be able to mark great numbers of bills. (See HGG-A-360 and HGG-A-361).
- e. Colored slides based on the Communist skull (HGG-A-411) have been prepared for use in theaters during intermission periods. Distribution has been made to departmental and capital city theaters and according to HEDIGER's reports the reaction has been favorable. To date the first class theaters in Guatemala City have not cooperated in showing these slides. ESSENCE claims that this is due in part to the delicate state of negotiations between theater owners and government officials regarding the controversial 20% tax recently imposed on foreign films. ESSENCE hopes to expand the number of theaters already cooperating in this matter.
- f. The anti-Communist record entitled "José Stalin Murió en Corea" is being used on a daily 15 minute radio program (7:15 to 7:30, Monday through Saturday) independently organized and sponsored by the Comité de Estudiantes Universitarios Anticomunistas (CEUA). The copy of this record was supplied to CEUA by the station. Additional copies have been requested in a separate communication. (Note: This program is not the regular ESSENCE radio program which the station will sponsor beginning January or February 1954. Planning is going forward and appropriate support materials have been requested from Headquarters in a separate communication).
- g. In a report dated 25 November 1953 HEDIGER reported that the Communist skull motif had been altered by the Communists and distributed in leaflet form as a counter-propaganda move. The hammer and sickle which appears on the regular skull item employed by our organization was replaced by a \$ dollar sign. The leaflet was 7 1/2" x 11" in size and folded to make a leaflet 5 1/2" x 7 1/2". The skull with \$ dollar-sign comprised the outer cover. When unfolded the leaflet revealed an octopus whose head was marked "anticomunismo" with a smaller skull and dollar sign between the eyes. Each of the tentacles, outstretched toward a figure of a man holding the Guatemalan flag over a small outline map of Guatemala, contained short slogans: Frutera - IRCA - E.E., dictadura, opresion feudal, acuerdos de Bogota de Washington, intervencion extranjera. The body of the octopus was represented as being safely situated in the U.S. The back of the leaflet contained the heading "El anticomunismo significa" and a list of slogans such as: venta del país a las compañías yanquis, uso ilegítimo de la religión, etc. Only one copy of the leaflet is available at this time and cannot be submitted as an enclosure until counter measures (described below) have been taken.

Upon receipt of the Communist leaflet HEDIGER immediately authorized preparation and printing of a countering item employing the same format but with the original anti-Communist skull item on the front. The slogans on the tentacles and on the back of the leaflet will be substituted by appropriate anti-Communist slogans (e.g., venta del país a rusia for venta del país al las companias yan-uís, etc.).

ESSENCE sub-agents report that the Communist counter-attack material was prepared by the Tipografia Nacional at government expense for the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT).

Again, it is believed that this Communist reaction is evidence that the anti-Communist activities of ESSENCE are having the desired effect.

George L. Tranger

1 December 1953

GLT/cmh

Distribution:

3-Cash

1-Files