

RS#09: Source 5 - "Arbenz Pits Reds Against U.S.?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1/11/1954

The following article appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, a newspaper that was heavily influenced by the United Fruit Company. *The Christian Science Monitor* sent reporters and editors to Guatemala on trips paid for and sponsored by the company. United Fruit Company arranged for press events in Guatemala to illustrate their issues with land reform and President Jacobo Arbenz. A former United Fruit official stated years later that these events were a "serious attempt [by United Fruit] to compromise objective [impartial] reporting' of newsmen."

"Arbenz Pits Reds Against U.S.?"

By a staff writer on Latin-American Affairs for *The Christian Science Monitor*

Many Latin Americans have viewed with askance [suspicion] U.S. concern over Communism in Guatemala. Somewhat removed physically and psychologically, from the ideological world struggle, they contend that the U.S. is exaggerating the threat and that worthwhile reforms are being fostered by the present government (in Guatemala). They are inclined to assume that attacks on that Central American Economy come from 'imperialistic' sources in the United States.

Therefore it is significant to record the views of a Latin American of undoubted liberal background who recently made a visit to Central America-staying about a month in Guatemala.

Arbenz Wields Power

Closely affiliated with labor and student affairs in Latin America this observer represents groups that have in some cases have been critical of the U.S. attitude toward Guatemala. He writes as follows from Central America: "The situation in Guatemala is really paradoxical [uncommon]. While economic and social reforms are being carried out in a democratic climate and with a view to economic development within capitalism and free enterprise, politics seem to be very much infiltrated and influenced by Communists."

"But the political power of the Communists among the mass of the people appears to be very weak. The true political power is in the hands of President Arbenz and the army-Above all, the former. It may be the complacency of the President which makes possible the Communists' relative influence in the press and foreign policy of the country. My impression is that if the President wanted to, he could end in 24 hours the influence and apparent importance of the Communists."

"However, what I believe Arbenz is doing is to play the Communists against the U.S.: to the end of fomenting [instigating] anti-Communist hysteria in order that the United States loses control and take some decisive step against Guatemala. Should this occur it would create a very bad impression in Latin America (whatever may have been its origin) and then Russia would certainly get worth-while propaganda ammunition against the United States in this part of the world."