

# The Death of Francisco Arana: A Turning Point in the Guatemalan Revolution

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In the late morning of 18 July 1949, several armed men sped from Guatemala City in two cars. Near a small bridge, the Puente de la Gloria, they waited for Francisco Arana, Chief of the Armed Forces of Guatemala. They did not have to wait for long. As Arana and his three companions approached the Puente de la Gloria, 'there was, on the other side, a grey Dodge, because of which, seeing that it was impossible to cross the bridge, Col. Arana stopped the car'.<sup>1</sup> A brief shoot-out ensued. Arana lay dead. There was no investigation of his murder. His assassins were never apprehended.

Arana's death was the turning point of the Guatemalan revolution. It eliminated Guatemala's strong man, a conservative colonel who had intended to be his country's next president, and it opened the door to the election of Jacobo Arbenz, the communists' friend, who implemented Guatemala's first agrarian reform and who was overthrown by the United States in June 1954.<sup>2</sup>

Controversy still surrounds the murder. Were the assassins members of the upper class, who had finally lost patience with Arana's refusal to launch a coup? Or was the murderer Jacobo Arbenz, the man who gained most from the death of Arana? Was Arana the victim of a power struggle

<sup>1</sup> 'Statement of Lt. Colonel Alberto Bone Summarizing Statement Made by Mr. Palacios J., Chauffeur of Colonel Arana, Concerning Events Associated with Arana's Death', p. 2, enclosed in 'Intelligence Report' no. IR-77-49, 28 July 1949, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

<sup>2</sup> On Arbenz's agrarian reform, see James Handy, "'The Most Precious Fruit of the Revolution": The Guatemalan Agrarian Reform, 1952-54', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 68, no. 4 (1988), pp. 675-705, and Piero Gleijeses, 'The Agrarian Reform of Jacobo Arbenz', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1989), pp. 453-80. Arbenz's relations with the communists are examined in Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States* (Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

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among military factions? Was he defending Guatemala's democracy or was he plotting against it? The answers are critical to an understanding of the Guatemalan revolution, yet an aura of mystery envelops them.

In fact, the evidence needed to reconstruct the events surrounding Arana's death is at hand. There are US documents in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and in Suitland, Maryland; first-hand accounts are buried in the Guatemalan press; and there are the protagonists. Some are evasive: Juan José Arévalo, who was President of Guatemala at the time, has said that Arana's death 'will remain a mystery forever'.<sup>3</sup> Others are willing to remember. The degree of consensus between men who were on opposite sides of the political spectrum is striking. For example, Ricardo Barrios Peña, an upper-class Guatemalan who was one of Arana's closest advisers, and José Manuel Fortuny, a communist who was Arbenz's friend, agree about why Arana died and who killed him. The inside stories of the protagonists flesh out the incomplete reports of the embassy and the press. Together, these sources provide a coherent account of the murder of Francisco Arana.

Arana played a decisive role in the overthrow of Federico Ponce, whose demise, on 20 October 1944, marked the beginning of the Guatemalan revolution. (Ponce had hoped to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, Jorge Ubico, the dictator who had ruled Guatemala until June 1944.) Arana's emergence as a leader of the revolution was, as the US embassy reported, 'something of an accident'.<sup>4</sup> He joined the plot only in its late stages, and only at the insistence of Major Carlos Aldana Sandoval, an organiser of the revolt who lost his nerve at the last moment. Arana was, however, a commander of the Guardia de Honor – Guatemala's most powerful military unit – and he fought with bravery and imagination. Civilians participated in the insurrection against Ponce, but it was the army that spearheaded and controlled the revolt.<sup>5</sup> And it was the army

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Arévalo. On other occasions, however, he has stated that he will reveal the truth in his memoirs, which will be published posthumously. 'De Juan José Arévalo a Carlos Manuel Pellecer', *El Imparcial* (hereafter, *El D*), 9 Sept. 1982, p. 2. See also Mario Alvarado Rubio, *El asesinato del coronel Arana* (Guatemala, 1983), pp. 33–6, 41–8, 65–127.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Affeld, 'Confidential Biographic Data: Francisco Javier Arana', 4 April 1945, p. 1, Record Group (RG) 84 General Records (GR), Box 217, National Archives at Suitland (NA-S).

<sup>5</sup> On the plot and the fighting, see: *Revista de la Revolución* (Jan. 1945); *Revista Militar* (Jan.–Feb. 1945), pp. 3–7; *Stadium* (April 1945), pp. 36–9; US Embassy dispatches and internal memos 20–4 Oct. 1944 (particularly all of Box 107, RG84 GR, NA-S). See also: Juan José Arévalo, *El candidato blanco y el huracán: 1944–1945* (Guatemala: EDITA, 1984), pp. 297–327; Rafael Arévalo Martínez, *Ubico* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1984), pp. 299–343; César Augusto Silva Girón, *12 horas de combate* (Guatemala: Oscar de León Palacios, 1981); José Zamora Alvarez, *Las memorias de Andrés* (Guatemala:

that controlled the three-man junta that replaced Ponce. The junta consisted of one upper-class civilian, Jorge Toriello, and two officers, Major Arana and Captain Arbenz.

Within the officer corps, Arana and Arbenz were perhaps equal in prestige, but not in power. Not only was Arana Arbenz's senior in age and rank, but Arbenz's military career had been as a professor at the military academy, a post that gave him status but no troops. In the summer of 1944, Arbenz had been one of the initiators of the conspiracy against Ponce. But he plotted as a civilian, having resigned from the army in early July to protest at Ponce's takeover.<sup>6</sup> During the uprising, Arbenz and Arana fought with equal distinction. But Arana led the Guardia de Honor. As a result, he became the senior member of the junta. The junta promised free elections for a constituent assembly, a Congress, and a president. In December 1944 Juan José Arévalo, a charismatic professor, was elected president in a landslide victory.

Arévalo had first met Arana and Arbenz in the Presidential Palace a few days after the fall of Ponce. 'The first to appear was a blond and blue-eyed young man, wearing a blue suit and a narrow red tie', Arévalo later wrote.

He greeted me respectfully ... I had come, I told him, to meet and congratulate the two officers, Arbenz and Arana. The young man smiled and said: 'I am Arbenz, Doctor Arévalo ...' Then Arana appeared. He was a man of average height and wide girth; a leather belt below his navel cinched his paunch ... His round face was expressionless, his eyes were evasive, and his smile was fleeting. His handshake was limp ... When we were introduced he looked at me carefully and formally expressed his pleasure to meet me. He accepted my congratulations. But his reaction was not like that of Arbenz.<sup>7</sup>

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Editorial del Ejército, 1975), pp. 73–121. The best press coverage of the fighting was provided by *El Imparcial* (*El I*) in its issues of 21–4 Oct. 1944. Retrospective press accounts of the plot and the fighting include: 'Genesis de la Revolución', *Nuestro Diario*, 27 Oct. 1944, p. 8; *El I*, 20 Oct. 1945, Special Supplement, Section 3; 'Tengo pruebas de que Córdova fué todo un patriota, declara Silverio Ortiz', *El I*, 8 June 1946, p. 1; 'Revelaciones de Jorge Toriello', *La Semana*, 9 Oct. 1970, pp. 15–21; 'Que pasó el 20 de octubre?', *El Gráfico*, 20 Oct. 1973, p. 7; Ricardo Alberto Pinto Recinos, 'Lo que yo sé del "20 de Octubre de 1944"', *La Hora*, 25 Oct. 1984, pp. 2, 11. Interviews with the following officers who participated in the revolt were particularly useful: Barrios Peña, Paz Tejada, Lorenzana, Mendoza.

<sup>6</sup> Arévalo Martínez, *Ubico*, pp. 299–300; María Vilanova de Arbenz, letter to her parents, 7 July 1944 (author's files); Wardlaw to Department of State (DOS), 21 Dec. 1950, NA 714.11. Since June 1944 every document in the Decimal Files of the National Archives has been identified both by its decimal number and by its date (in this case: 714.11/12–2150). Since I include the date of the document separately, I do not use the full citation except in those rare instances where it differs from the actual date of the document.

<sup>7</sup> Arévalo, *El candidato*, pp. 327–9.

Had Arana had his way, Arévalo would not have become president. After the fall of Ponce, Arana urged Arbenz and Toriello first to postpone the elections, then to disavow the results. He wrote to Toriello in a personal letter dated 26 April, 1947: 'Don't forget what a hard time you had – the discussions, the arguments – convincing me to accept this situation [the election of Arévalo], which I never wanted because I knew that it meant handing the revolution over to civilians who would reap the benefits of what we, the military, had accomplished.'<sup>8</sup>

After Toriello indiscreetly published this letter, Arana issued a terse statement to the effect that, since the armed forces were apolitical, he would remain silent.<sup>9</sup> The damage had been done: Arana's letter to Toriello, noted the US Embassy, 'quite frankly indicates ... his belief that the government should not have been turned over to the civilian elements'.<sup>10</sup>

Toriello and Arbenz demanded that the duly elected Arévalo be allowed to assume the presidency, and Arana finally agreed, but he exacted a price: the new constitution must guarantee his dominant position in the military. After two private meetings with Arana, President-elect Arévalo had little choice but to agree.<sup>11</sup> The 1945 constitution, prepared by an assembly dominated by Arévalo's supporters, established a new military position, patently absurd in an army of a few thousand men. Henceforth, there would be a Chief of the Armed Forces, largely free of civilian control and more powerful than the Minister of Defence: the constitution stipulated that 'Military appointments shall be made by the Chief of the Armed Forces, through the Minister of Defence'. His term would be six years. Unlike any other appointed official, he could be removed only by Congress, and then only if he had broken the law.<sup>12</sup> Upon Arévalo's

<sup>8</sup> Arana to Jorge Toriello (26 April 1947), *El I*, 29 April 1947, p. 9. See also 'Carta abierta del Sr. Jorge Toriello al Jefe de las Fuerzas Armadas', (25 April 1947) *El I*, 29 April 1947, p. 1; Toriello, 'Comentarios a la carte que recibí', (26 April 1947), *El I*, 29 April 1947, p. 9. On Arana's reluctance to hand the presidency to Arévalo, see also Affeld, 'Memorandum for the Record', 26 Jan. 1945, RG84 GR, Box 134, NA-S.

<sup>9</sup> Comunicado del Jefe de las Fuerzas Armadas coronel Francisco J. Arana', *El I*, 30 April 1947, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Donovan to Secretary of State no. 2440, 12 May 1947, p. 2, NA 814.00.

<sup>11</sup> Lt.-Col. José Luis Cruz Salazar, 'El ejército como una fuerza política', *Estudios Sociales*, no. 6 (April 1972), p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> See articles 149–61 of the 1945 Constitution (quotation, Art. 157). According to Cruz Salazar, the creation of this post was the result of Arana's pressure on Arévalo. Cruz Salazar served as intermediary in two secret meetings between Arana and Arévalo (interview with Cruz Salazar). Arévalo refused to comment, beyond saying that Cruz Salazar's account was 'largely correct' and that the decision to create the post of Chief of the Armed Forces was taken without him; 'in fact I wasn't even consulted' (interview with Arévalo; see also, Arévalo, *El candidato*, pp. 384–6 and 610–4). Col. Lorenzana confirmed Cruz Salazar's account (interview with Lorenzana).

inauguration Arbenz became the Minister of Defence; Arana, the Chief of the Armed Forces.

The son of lower middle class parents, the thirty-nine year old Arana was 'of mixed Spanish and Indian blood', an Embassy official observed, 'with the latter strain somewhat in predominance'.<sup>13</sup> He had ascended from the ranks. He was 'not a "crusader" in any sense of the word'.<sup>14</sup> The US military attaché succinctly captured his personality:

EDUCATION: Little culture or polish ...

MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS: Above average in general intelligence. Has initiative and a good intuitive grasp of the whole picture.

EMOTIONAL NATURE: Courageous and steady. Stolid Indian type.

PERSONALITY TRAITS: High ambition and tenacity of purpose. High sense of responsibility ...

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS: A good mixer, liked by superiors, equals and juniors. Has high qualities of leadership ...

LOYALTY: Loyal under normal conditions.

POLITICAL VIEWS: Strongly nationalistic. Slightly pro-American.<sup>15</sup>

Arana's Guatemalan contemporaries concurred.<sup>16</sup> 'He was intelligent, canny like a peasant, and he could be charming', a political foe remembers. A poor speaker in public, he was 'persuasive in small groups'.<sup>17</sup> He might have lacked a formal education, but he was intellectually curious and well-read by the pitiful standards of the Guatemalan officers, particularly those *de línea*. Generous with his friends, convivial – he excelled at telling jokes – he was considered a 'good fellow' who had some charisma.<sup>18</sup>

This 'good fellow' was now the most powerful man in the Guatemalan army, and the army was the most powerful institution in Guatemala.

In March 1945 an Embassy official mused: 'Time alone will tell whether Arana possesses the capacity to fill his role as intended, rather

<sup>13</sup> Affeld, 'Confidential Biographic Data: Francisco Javier Arana', p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Woodward to Secretary of State, no. 2426, 24 April 1945, p. 2, RG84 GR, Box 134, NA-S.

<sup>15</sup> Lt.-Col. Morgan, 'Lt. Col. Francisco Javier Arana', no. 313-46, 13 Sept 1946, p. 1, RG84 GR, Box 217, NA-S.

<sup>16</sup> The portrait of Arana is based on: (a) US documents, particularly embassy reports; (b) interviews with Guatemalans of different political sympathies, notably Cols. Lorenzana and Mendoza, Lt.-Col. Cruz Salazar, Maj. Paz Tejada, Lt. Montenegro, and Charnaud, Galich, Fortuny, and Barrios Peña; (c) works by Guatemalans, particularly a series by a well-informed if partisan friend of Arana, Manuel María Avila Ayala, 'La muerte del coronel Arana', *La Hora*, 14 articles, 27 July – 13 Aug. 1954. An apology for Arana that includes some useful information is Alvarado Rubio, *El asesinato*. For biographical data, see Manuel Octavio Zea Carrascosa, *Semblanzas: Ministros de la guerra y de la defensa nacional de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional, 1971), pp. 279–80.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from interview with Galich.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Paz Tejada.

than using it... to handpick the next candidate for the Presidency.' There was an undercurrent of uncertainty in Embassy dispatches about Arana: 'Arana has sufficient of the phlegmatic Indian strain to give him the laconic dignity, fearlessness and astuteness which seem frequently to be qualities that gravitate into positions of dictatorial control in the Latin American melting pot.'<sup>19</sup>

On 16 December, 1945, while cavorting in the countryside with a young US journalist, President Arévalo drove his car into a deep ravine. It seemed at first that he would be incapacitated for a long time.<sup>20</sup> Fearing that Arana might exploit the situation to seize power, a group of leaders of the Partido Acción Revolucionaria (PAR) – the government's party – approached him. A secret deal was struck: the *Pacto del Barranco* (Pact of the Ravine). In exchange for Arana's promise to refrain from a military coup, these leaders pledged, in writing, that the PAR would support his candidacy in the November 1950 presidential elections. Arévalo, who in fact recovered swiftly, reluctantly endorsed the arrangement.<sup>21</sup>

The US State Department did not learn of the *Pacto del Barranco* until 15 January, 1947: this 'highly secret political information... explains Arana's unwillingness to join any movement to overthrow Arévalo. Arana does not want to incur unpopularity with his strongest supporters,

<sup>19</sup> Quotations from Affeld, 'Confidential Biographic Data: Francisco Javier Arana', p. 2, and Woodward to Secretary of State, no. 215, 19 June 1945, p. 4, RG84 GR, Box 134, NA-S. For early expressions of this uncertainty, see also: Col. Devine, 'Intelligence Report' no. R75-46, 5 March 1946, RG319 Decimal File (DF), Box 1621, NA-S; Lt.-Col. Morgan, 'Intelligence Report' no. R135-46, 29 April 1946, RG319 ID 26044, NA-S; Col. Devine, 'Intelligence Report' no. R254-46, 11 July 1946, RG319 DF, Box 1893, NA-S; Donovan to Secretary of State, no. 1553, 16 July 1946, RG84 Confidential File (CF), Box 14, NA-S; enclosure no. 1 in Donovan to Secretary of State, no. 2075, 2 Jan. 1947, NA 814.00; HQs Panama Canal Department, 'Weekly Intelligence Summary', no. 255, 21 May 1947, RG319 ID 371556, NA-S.

<sup>20</sup> For press accounts of the accident, see particularly *La Hora*, 17 and 18 Dec. 1945, p. 1 and *El I*, 18 and 19 Dec. 1945, p. 1. The press demurely overlooked the presence of the young lady: this was during the political honeymoon and Arévalo was a married man. US Embassy reports were less discreet: 'The young woman is understood to have been Miss Lynn Cady Schnider, an American citizen who is rumored to have been very closely acquainted with President Arévalo. It is understood that Miss Schnider was not seriously injured and that she departed from Guatemala for Mexico or the United States on December 21, 1945' (Woodward to Secretary of State, no. 965, 29 Dec; see also Woodward to Secretary of State, no. 927, 18 Dec. and Woodward to Secretary of State, no. 945, 22 Dec. All 1945, NA 814.001).

<sup>21</sup> The existence of the pact is mentioned only by a few writers, notably: Mario Efraín Nájera Farfán, *Los estafadores de la democracia* (Buenos Aires, 1956), pp. 105–6; Manuel Galich, *¿Por qué lucha Guatemala?* (Buenos Aires, 1956), p. 201, and Francisco Villagrán Kramer, 'Los pactos políticos en la historia contemporánea', *Prensa Libre Domingo*, 12 July 1987, p. 11. My sources include interviews with Galich, Charnaud, Fortuny, Monteforte Toledo, Barrios Peña, and Paz Tejada who, upon succeeding Arana as Chief of the Armed Forces in August 1949, found the pact itself in a drawer of Arana's desk (among the signatures was that of Galich).

the political party and liberal elements in the country, nor does he wish to endanger the institution of a six-year presidential term. This agreement is written and is known only to a very few people in Guatemala and is not known to anyone at the American Embassy.<sup>22</sup>

Left alone, Arana might indeed have remained content in his role as the heir apparent. But Guatemala's upper class sought a champion to protect them from the revolution.

Arévalo's six-year term was marked by the unprecedented existence of a multi-party system, by the development of urban trade unions, and by nearly unfettered freedom of the press. Yet democratisation had clear limits: illiterate women could not vote, and the vote of illiterate men had to be public; the Communist Party was proscribed, and several communists and labour activists were deported; trade unionism in the countryside was severely restricted – first legally, later *de facto*.

In the cities, unionisation was accompanied by labour laws that brought significant benefits to the lower and middle classes. But these reforms did not extend to the countryside, home to eighty per cent of the Guatemalan people. There the government's failure even to plan an agrarian reform programme overshadowed its timid attempts to improve the peasants' plight.

The administration parties – the PAR, the Frente Popular Libertador (FPL) and Renovación Nacional (RN) – enjoyed a massive majority in Congress throughout Arévalo's term.<sup>23</sup> In age and social extraction, the

<sup>22</sup> Williams, 'Guatemalan Politics – Agreement between Arana and PAR', 16 Jan. 1947, NA 814.00.

<sup>23</sup> Created in November 1945 by a merger of the FPL and RN, the PAR continued to exist when the FPL and RN split, eighteen months later. Until 1949, when it was crippled by internal strife, the FPL was the largest of the three parties. Increasingly resistant to social reforms, it competed with the more centrist RN for Arévalo's affection. To the left of both stood the PAR, which was more sympathetic to organised labour, locked in a bitter feud with the FPL, and ever more distant from Arévalo.

Arévalo and the administration parties were urged forward by a combative labour movement of two rival confederations, the Federación Sindical de Guatemala (FSG) and the Confederación de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CTG). By early 1950 the FSG and the CTG claimed approximately 90,000 members. While many of their unions existed on paper only, the number of effectively organised workers still ran into several tens of thousands; most were blue and white collar urban workers. While important differences separated the leaders of the FSG and the CTG, they were able to join together to press their demands on an often reluctant government.

There is no comprehensive study of the administration parties in the Arévalo period. Important primary sources can be found in the *Guatemala Transcripts*, particularly boxes 68 and 69. Despite a marked bias, reports from the US embassy are valuable, as are some special US Government studies, notably a 117-page analysis by the State Department's Office of Intelligence and Research ('Guatemala: Communist Influence', no. 5123, 23 Oct. 1950, NA). Among secondary sources, the most useful are: Edwin Bishop, 'The Guatemalan Labor Movement, 1944–1959', (unpubl. PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1959, pp. 109–29; Ronald Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala*

'leadership of the three parties was similar: middle-class urban youth. It was the first time that the middle class had wielded power in Guatemala, and it was the first time that a Guatemalan government had adopted significant measures in favour of urban labour. The Guatemalan upper class was alarmed: any concession seemed dangerous. The US military attaché reported: 'the conservative elements attribute labor unrest to communism, look with horror on social reforms and reflect that it was easier to do business, easier to make money, and easier and safer to live during the dictator era'.<sup>24</sup>

With an ardour that blossomed as their hostility to Arévalo deepened, the members of the upper class began their humiliating courtship. They flocked around Arana, whom, in happier circumstances, they would have shunned as a parvenu. They invited him to their parties and their country estates. They showered him with praise, seeking to 'use him as an instrument of disruption'.<sup>25</sup>

Arana's drama had begun. He had no desire to sully his hands with a military coup – he wanted to retain his cachet as the democratic hero of the uprising against Ponce. He was not a violent man, as long as he could secure what he wanted by other means, and the *Pacto del Barranco*, Arévalo's repeated assurances and his own military power seemed to guarantee that he would be president in 1951 – a president elected by an admiring populace, not a usurper ruling by force.

Yet Arana was not immune to the charm and the flatteries of the elite. Lacking strong views on political and social affairs, he would not have complained about the Government's modest reforms had it not been for

1944–1954 (New York, 1959), particularly pp. 218–35. Interviews with Fortuny, Galich, Charnaud, Bauer, Paiz, and Capuano were of particular value.

The best sources on organised labour in the Arévalo years are Bishop, 'Guatemalan Labor', pp. 9–129 and Archer Bush, 'Organized Labor in Guatemala, 1944–1949', unpubl. MA Thesis, Colgate University, 1950. María Eugenia Ramos Guzmán de Schmoock, 'El movimiento sindical en el decenio revolucionario (1944–1954)' (Guatemala, 1978), pp. 21–119, taps some sources not used by Bishop and Bush. Arcadio Ruiz Franco, *Hambre y miseria* (Guatemala, 1950), which covers the early stages of the labour movement, is a classic. Neale Pearson, 'The *Confederación Nacional Campesina de Guatemala* (CNCG) and Peasant Unionism in Guatemala, 1944–1954', unpubl. MA thesis, Georgetown University, 1964, pp. 1–40, focuses on the countryside.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted from Col. Devine, 'Alleged Communist Penetrations', no. 104–46, 29 March, 1946, p. 2, RG84 CF, Box 14, NA-S.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from Rivera to Ambassador and Donovan, 9 May 1946, RG84 CF, Box 14, NA-S. This is confirmed by the sources listed in note 16 above, including Arana's adviser Barrios Peña, a prominent member of the upper class. See also: FBI, Hoover to Neal, 19 July NA 814.00; FBI, Hoover to Neal, 30 July, NA 814.00; Lt. Col. Morgan, 'Lt. Col. Francisco Javier Arana', no. 313–46, 13 Sept., RG84 GR, Box 217, NA-S. All 1946.



the shrill protests of his new upper class friends. He wanted their approval, but he did not want to antagonise the administration parties and the labour unions – the foot soldiers who would deliver the vote in the 1950 presidential elections. Caught between these contradictory desires, his behaviour was inconsistent. He grumbled to his friends about the Government's radicalism and labour's excesses ('What they are doing is unconscionable; I disapprove'), and occasionally he was outspoken to members of the Government and to US officials ('The present situation ... [is] intolerable').<sup>26</sup> But these complaints rarely – very rarely – translated into action. Arana was openly defiant on only a few occasions: in September 1947, for instance, he hid a right-wing plotter in his house and he demanded that several labour leaders be deported. As a rule, he did not actively oppose the Government's policies, and, whatever he may have said behind Arévalo's back, 'he visited the President in his house, in a respectful manner'.<sup>27</sup>

Arana's grumblings, his occasional defiance, and his ties to some of the Government's most bitter foes bred suspicion among administration politicians and labour leaders. For his part, Arana began to doubt their commitment to his presidential aspirations. In the November 1948 Congressional elections he ran his own slate of supporters. It was an inept effort, directed by men, like Ricardo Barrios Peña, who were more adept at plotting than at running a campaign. The outcome has been described by Clemente Marroquín Rojas, the most brilliant of Guatemala's right-wing journalists:

In 1948 half the Congress was up for re-election... Colonel Arana lent his support to several candidates, but he chose undistinguished individuals who were virtually unknown; worse, he gave his money away indiscriminately, both to his friends and to his enemies – more than \$30,000 from the Defence Ministry went to his enemies. Not one of Arana's candidates... was elected to Congress.<sup>28</sup>

This futile attempt further strained Arana's relations with the administration parties. A few days before the elections the Guatemalan Congress overwhelmingly approved an unprecedented resolution that was clearly intended as a rebuke to Arana. It stated that 'The Legislature has learned that some members of the army have been interfering in the Congressional campaign'. Arana responded promptly with a curt

<sup>26</sup> Quotations from interview with Barrios Peña and from Donovan to Secretary of State, no. 1529, 8 July 1946, p. 2, NA 814.00.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from interview with Galich. On the September 1947 incident, see HQs Panama Canal Department, 'Weekly Intelligence Summary', no. 273, 25 Sept. 1947, pp. 7–8, RG319 ID 0400768, NA-S.

<sup>28</sup> 'Ya no pierdan su tiempo, señores Finqueros', *La Hora Dominical*, 1 June 1952, p. 1. On this period, an interview with Barrios Peña was also particularly useful.

statement that ‘can only be interpreted as a sharp rebuff’, explained the US Embassy.<sup>29</sup> A few days later, the Embassy added:

Concurrent with increasing political activity in connection with the forthcoming Congressional elections are persistent reports of a possible early revolutionary attempt to be headed by Colonel Arana... While much of this talk is believed to be within the realm of speculation, it seems clear that recent political developments have distinctly cooled the relations between President Arévalo and Colonel Arana on one hand, and Congress and Colonel Arana on the other. The President is said to be annoyed by the ‘Arana-for-President’ movement which has been launched by several independent groups in Guatemala City recently, probably with the encouragement of Arana. One informant of reliability reports that Arana approached a leading citizen... urging the latter to organize a political party to espouse Arana’s candidacy in 1950... Many observers believe that he much prefers to gain his ends through democratic elections, but that he is determined by any means to succeed Arévalo...

With the foregoing as background it is difficult not to attach greater significance to current rumors that Colonel Arana has reached the end of his patience with the present “revolutionary” government, and is seeking the right opportunity and a reasonable excuse for a military coup d’état. Although the Embassy believes that Arana sincerely desires to preserve constitutional government, and hopes to become President by means of the ballot, it must be admitted that all indications point to his having personal ambitions, as well as personal antipathy toward the extremism which all too frequently is identified with the Arévalo regime. For this reason, one may not rule out the possibility that the force of political developments may turn his ambitions in revolutionary channels.<sup>30</sup>

After his electoral fiasco, Arana still sought, through a combination of veiled threats and suasion, to secure the support of the leaders of the government majority and they, too, wanted to avoid an open break. In early 1949, for instance, Arana twice approached José Manuel Fortuny, the leader of the radical wing of the PAR. In Fortuny’s words, Arana asked, ‘Why don’t you and your friends like me? I’m not a man of the right’. Fortuny responded: ‘We are not against you. We appreciate the role that you played in the revolt against Ponce. It’s just that you have no sympathy for labour.’ He avoided stating categorically that the PAR would not support Arana. The party, he claimed, had not yet made a decision.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Quotations from ‘40 diputados firman punto resolutivo’, *EI I*, 4 Nov. 1948, p. 1 and Wells to Secretary of State, no. 561, 10 Nov. 1948, p. 1, NA 814.00/11-1248. For Arana’s response, see ‘Proceder del Congreso causa extrañeza a Arana’, *EI I*, 8 Nov. 1948, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Wells to Secretary of State, no. 564, 12 Nov. 1948, NA 814.00. See also: ‘Crisis between Col. Arana and President Arévalo May Result in a Coup d’état by the former’, enclosed in Wells to de Zengotita, 5 Nov. (A); Wells to de Zengotita, 5 Nov. (B); Wells to de Zengotita, 15 Nov.; Wells to de Zengotita, 19 Nov.; Patterson to Secretary of State, no. 462, 26 Nov. All 1948, RG84 GR, Box 192, NA-S.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Fortuny.

The faltering minuet that had begun with the *Pacto del Barranco* was drawing to a close. The hostility of the PAR and RN toward Arana was obvious. Within the FPL, the most conservative of the administration parties, only the faction led by Mario Méndez Montenegro still supported Arana. Some of them were motivated by loyalty; others, by opportunism. Their reasoning was, chided a critic, 'The man with the weapons will win; it's best to back the winner; we're for Arana.'<sup>32</sup> But in April 1949 the FPL held its first national convention and the *aranistas* were soundly defeated.<sup>33</sup> They bolted from the party and created the FPL Ortodoxo. In the following weeks, recalls an observer sympathetic to Arana, 'in almost all the departments of the republic the dissidents began to organise Arana's supporters. This premature campaign caused a lot of tension'.<sup>34</sup> He was not a candidate, Arana explained to inquiring journalists, but he would run, should the people of Guatemala so demand.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, writes another friendly witness, 'many complained that his behaviour was dishonorable because he was, in fact, running a presidential campaign while he was still Chief of the Armed Forces, and he was funding it with government money... Throughout the country one saw army jeeps carrying *aranista* propaganda... and Arana himself would appear in uniform... in order to open branches of the FPL Ortodoxo'.<sup>36</sup>

Yet Arana's electoral chances appeared increasingly slim. The FPL Ortodoxo lacked popular appeal; the administration parties were hostile, as was the labour movement. When some members of the powerful railway union declared their support for Arana's candidacy in January 1949, they were promptly rebuked by their leadership and by the country's two labour confederations.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, interest was growing in the government camp about the possible candidacy of Lieutenant-Colonel Arbenz, the Minister of Defence, who seemed to be sympathetic to labour and respectful of the constitution.

The first overtures towards Arbenz had taken place in September 1947, after the discovery of both a right-wing conspiracy to overthrow the Government and an attempt by a few individuals to create a Communist Party. Directing his anger only at the 'subversives' of the left, Arana had

<sup>32</sup> 'FPL define su postura', *Nuestro Diario*, 11 June 1949, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> For the convention, see the issues of *Nuestro Diario* and *El I* of 31 March and of 1, 2 and 4 April 1949. See also Wells to Secretary of State, no. 179, 5 April 1949, NA 814.00, and 'Realizada la Convención del Frente Popular Libertador', *El Libertador*, 16 April 1949, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Nájera Farfán, *Los Estafadores*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>35</sup> See, for instance, 'Arana no gusta de camarillas', *El I*, 1 April 1949, p. 1 and 'Opinión que tiene Arana', *Nuestro Diario*, 11 June 1949, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Avila Ayala, 'La muerte del coronel Arana', vi, *La Hora*, 2 Aug. 1954, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> 'Una rama del SAMF proclama la candidatura del coronel Arana', *Nuestro Diario*, 12 Jan. 1949, p. 9; 'SAMF ajeno a los grupos políticos', *Nuestro Diario*, 13 Jan. 1949, p. 7.

demanded that the Government deport several labour leaders whom he considered particularly dangerous. Arbenz, who was usually reserved when non-military matters were discussed in the cabinet, clashed violently with Arana. His intervention limited the purge. A few days later, several PAR leaders sought a meeting with Arbenz to become better acquainted with the colonel who had sprung to the defence of the labour movement.<sup>38</sup>

By mid-1949 many PAR, RN, and labour leaders had privately decided to back Arbenz. In a country in which the military was the most powerful institution, only a military man would have any chance of defeating Arana, and in their opinion Arbenz was 'the most progressive officer'.<sup>39</sup> It never came to a vote. On 18 July 1949 Arana was killed.

Some authors imply that the assassins were from the upper class: 'Many of Arana's "friends" felt that they would profit from his death in that he had obstructed several *coups* against Arévalo, thus casting a shadow on his "loyalty". His murder would at one stroke remove him and cast blame and subsequent public revulsion on Arbenz.'<sup>40</sup> This reasoning defies logic. Arana was the elite's only hope of seizing power. Arévalo had faced a plethora of plots, perhaps as many as thirty. Not one threatened him because not one had the support of either of the army's major factions, led by Arana and Arbenz.<sup>41</sup> Arbenz would not plot against Arévalo. Therefore, the elite's only hope was Arana – a live Arana; not a martyr but a caudillo who could lead a revolt. And while it is true that Arana had withstood many pleas to overthrow Arévalo, his scruples had weakened as his electoral chances had waned.

One evening in September or October 1948, Captain Carlos Paz Tejada, a respected young officer, was invited to dine with Arana. They spent the

<sup>38</sup> Interviews with Charnaud and Fortuny, two PAR leaders who met with Arbenz. For the Government's reaction and the debate in the Congress, see particularly *DCA* and *El I*, issues of 16 Sept. to 2 Oct. 1947. For Arbenz's demeanour in the Cabinet, see Memo Conversation (Hill, Silva Peña), 28 Dec. 1953, enclosed in Krieg to Fisher, 29 Dec 1953, NA 714.00; also helpful were interviews with two Cabinet members, Charnaud and Osegueda. For Arbenz's role in limiting the purge, see also Roque Dalton, *Miguel Marmol* (San José, Costa Rica, 1982), pp. 518–20.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with Charnaud (quotation), Fortuny, Guerra Borges. See also Bishop, 'Guatemalan Labor', pp. 126–7.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas and Marjorie Melville, *Guatemala – Another Vietnam?* (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 59. See also Susanne Jonas, 'Guatemala: Land of Eternal Struggle', in Ronald Chilcote and Joel Edelstein (eds.), *Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond* (New York, 1974), p. 156, note 8 and Richard Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin, 1982), pp. 59–60.

<sup>41</sup> As the former president himself remarked, 'Some were family affairs, concocted behind closed doors; the police would arrive and cart them away. Others were military affairs. Tangay, for example, entered from Mexico and seized several villages in the department of San Marcos; the local police hauled him in before the army arrived'. (Juan José Arévalo, 'La revolución le enseñó al pueblo que se puede luchar', 7 *Días*, 22 Oct. 1988, p. 9.)

evening at a country estate, the Quinta Samayoa. Also present were leading *aranista* officers and Ricardo Barrios Peña, the scion of one of Guatemala's most illustrious families and a close adviser to Arana. After listening to bitter denunciations of the Government by Arana and his friends, Paz Tejada made an impassioned plea to the Colonel not to become another Ubico. Barrios Peña told Paz Tejada a few years later: 'You took the wind from our sails. We were about to launch the coup'.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Barrios Peña stresses, 'We already had Paco [Arana] convinced'.<sup>43</sup>

In the late spring of 1949, senior *aranista* officers, on Arana's instructions, assembled one night at the Guardia de Honor: Arana would come, he had promised, to lead them against the Government. They waited until dawn, but Arana did not appear. He had spent the night, they later learned, drinking with Arévalo in the Presidential Palace.<sup>44</sup>

Arana knew that if he were to launch a coup, he would succeed. True, Arbenz had many supporters within the officer corps; there were also minor cliques that retained their independence and many officers who remained indifferent. But Arana had used his authority as Chief of the Armed Forces to place his supporters in key positions. They controlled the Guardia de Honor and the Base Militar, the two important military units in the capital. *Aranistas* were the commanders of each of the country's seven Zonas Militares. The sole *arbenzista* officer in command of troops was Colonel Francisco Cosenza, the head of the minuscule air force. The police force, under Arévalo's brother-in-law Colonel Víctor Aldana Sandoval, was not *aranista*, but, poorly armed and poorly trained, its power was negligible. And Arévalo's Presidential Guard consisted of only a few men under a loyal officer.

What held Arana back was not fear of defeat, but his 'inner conflict'.<sup>45</sup> As long as he hoped that he could reach the presidency by more respectable means, Arana could not bring himself to launch a coup. This explains why, at the Quinta Samayoa, he was moved by the plea of Paz Tejada, an officer with much prestige but little power.

By July 1949, however, Arana could dally no longer. Facing the opposition of the administration parties and labour unions, and unable to create a strong *aranista* party, he would need the army to deliver the peasant vote. Yet his control of the military was threatened.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Paz Tejada.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Barrios Peña, who confirmed Paz Tejada's account and added a wealth of details.

<sup>44</sup> Interviews with Lt. Montenegro, who was at the Guardia de Honor, and with Col. Oscar Mendoza, whose brother, Col. Miguel Mendoza, was one of the senior officers who spent the night at the Guardia de Honor waiting for Arana.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Col. Mendoza.

The constitution stipulated that a military officer could be elected president only if he retired from active duty at least six months before election day; Arana would have to step down as Armed Forces Chief by May 1950. His successor would be selected by the Guatemalan Congress from a list of three names submitted by the Consejo Superior de la Defensa (CSD), an advisory body composed of 23 officers. (Ten were members *ex-officio*, the others were elected every three years by all active duty officers.)<sup>46</sup> The 1946 elections for the CSD had attracted little attention, but by the spring of 1949 the CSD had acquired unforeseen importance. For it was obvious that the Guatemalan Congress, if offered the opportunity, would appoint a non-*aranista* as Chief of the Armed Forces. From Arana's perspective, therefore, it was imperative that the CSD submit the names of three *aranista* officers. Arana lacked a clear majority within the CSD, but elections were scheduled for early July 1949.

Through May and June 1949, 'a quiet tug of war was waged' within the CSD: ostensibly at issue were the rules for the forthcoming elections. The *aranistas* wanted to ensure that the commanders of the *Zonas Militares* and the unit commanders had as much influence as possible over the ballot. Their opponents wanted to ensure that the vote would be secret and free. The outcome of an unfettered ballot among the more than 700 active duty officers was unpredictable. As a witness recalls, 'the situation within the officer corps was confused'. The discussions inside the CSD grew increasingly acrimonious.<sup>47</sup>

As election day approached, Arana convoked an extraordinary session of the CSD. Arana and Arbenz, both members *ex-officio*, participated. 'It was an extremely tense session', recalls the president of the CSD, Paz Tejada.<sup>48</sup> Arbenz remained cold, impassive, arguing points of law. No agreement was reached, beyond the decision to postpone the elections until late July.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> See arts. 131/6, 152, 156 and 161 of the 1945 Constitution.

<sup>47</sup> Quotations from Clemente Marroquín Rojas, 'Los lobos se han ido', *La Hora*, 14 July 1954, p. 4 and from Avila Ayala, 'La muerte del coronel Arana', VIII, *La Hora*, 5 Aug. 1954, p. 4. My sources for this struggle include interviews with two members of the CSD: Maj. Paz Tejada (President) and Lt.-Col. Paiz Novales; with Arana's adviser Barrios Peña; and with María de Arbenz and Fortuny. Avila Ayala, 'La muerte del coronel Arana', VIII and IX, *La Hora*, 5 Aug. 1954, p. 4 and 6 Aug. 1954, p. 4 is a very useful source. See also Galich, *¿Por qué lucha Guatemala?*, p. 203.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Paz Tejada.

<sup>49</sup> See 'Prórroga en las elecciones del Consejo Superior de la Defensa', *Diario de Centro América (DCA)*, 13 July 1949, p. 1 and 'Elecciones del Consejo de Defensa prorrogan', *Nuestro Diario*, 13 July 1949, p. 7. The rumour later spread that the elections for the CSD had taken place in the week before July 18 and had been won by the *Aranistas*. See Wells to Secretary of State, no. 311, 18 July 1949, NA 814.00 and Alvarado Rubio, *El asesinato*, pp. 29–30.

On Friday 15 July came the anti-climactic denouement: in a session of the CSD, the *aranistas* suddenly accepted their opponents' demands. The elections would not be supervised by the local commanders; instead, teams of officers would be sent from the capital to oversee the vote in the different Zonas Militares; they would bring back the ballot boxes; each commission would include both *aranistas* and *non-aranistas*. The elections would begin in three days.

That same Friday, Arana suddenly replaced Colonel Cosenza, the *arbencista* commander of the Air Force, with one of his men, Colonel Arturo Altolaquirre Ubico. His order was promptly executed even though it had not been issued through the Defence Ministry, as required by the constitution.<sup>50</sup> The following morning, as Paz Tejada expressed his surprise at the unexpected turn of events within the CSD to Arbenz ('They gave in without a struggle'), Arbenz replied: 'They don't care any more. They've made up their minds to go for a coup.'<sup>51</sup>

Arbenz was right. 'Arana had tired of waiting, of arguing, pleading and threatening', his adviser Barrios Peña explains. He had been, or so he believed, exceedingly patient, listening to his own scruples rather than to his friends' advice. He had accepted rebuffs from upstart politicians who had conveniently forgotten that it was he who had overthrown Ponce in 1944, thereby enabling them to embark on their profitable careers. Their impudence was now imitated within the CSD by a clique of officers without troops. To be sure, Arévalo continued to reassure him of his presidential prospects, but the facts belied the president's promises. It was time to act. On the afternoon of Saturday 16 July Arana went to the Presidential Palace and confronted Arévalo in his office.<sup>52</sup>

Had he launched a straightforward coup, Arana would have succeeded. But over-confidence and the lingering vestiges of his 'inner conflict' led him along a more tortuous path. He still longed to be a properly elected president. Instead of toppling Arévalo, he delivered an ultimatum: Arévalo must dismiss his cabinet and replace his ministers with those of Arana's choice. Arbenz and his followers would be retired from the army. If Arévalo complied, he would be allowed to complete his presidential term. If he refused, he would be deposed.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Mario Monteforte Toledo, *Una democracia a prueba de fuego* (Guatemala, 1949), p. 23; Wells to Secretary of State, no. 311, 18 July 1949, NA 814.00; 'Entrevistamos al coronel Altolaquirre', *La Hora*, 3 Oct. 1962, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Paz Tejada.

<sup>52</sup> An interview with Barrios Peña (quoted) was a valuable source for this paragraph and the next.

<sup>53</sup> No one witnessed this conversation between Arana and Arévalo. My major sources are interviews with Barrios Peña, Galich, Charnaud, María de Arbenz, Fortuny, Guerra Borges, and Cols. Lorenzana and Mendoza. See also Marta Cehelsky, 'Habla Arbenz', *Alero*, Sept.-Oct. 1974, p. 120.

Arévalo asked only for a few days' time so that he could implement the changes in an orderly manner. Arana consented. The ultimatum would expire at 10 p.m. on Monday 18 July (the day the elections for the CSD were to begin). Arana left triumphant. Arévalo, remarks Barrios Peña, 'wilfully deceived Arana'.<sup>54</sup>

In vain had Arana's advisers pleaded with him before he went to the Presidential Palace that he should forego complicated games and simply seize power. In vain did they argue, after he returned from the palace, that he could not rely on Arévalo's promises. In vain did they stress 'that in a coup d'état there's no time for talk – you act or you fail'.<sup>55</sup>

Arrogance and wishful thinking blinded Arana. He believed that Arévalo, lacking the means to resist, would capitulate. He believed that Arbenz, who could count only on officers without troops, would acquiesce in his own dismissal, just as he had acquiesced to the removal of Colonel Cosenza. The departure of Arbenz and senior *arbenzistas*, Arana concluded, would clinch his control of the military; Congress would be cowed, and Arévalo would be in his pocket. Who would then dare resist his presidential ambitions? He would be a constitutional president, not a *golpista*. This Arana predicted, on the afternoon of Sunday 17 July, to his sceptical friend Barrios Peña in the latter's estate in the Department of Escuintla, a few hours from the capital. 'It was the last time I saw Paco; he was sure that he had won.'<sup>56</sup>

Arévalo had no intention of giving up so easily. While the details vary according to the informants, the main lines of what took place within the Government are clear. After Arana left, Arévalo summoned Arbenz and other key aides and informed them of the ultimatum. They readily agreed that Arana must be sent into exile. The next day, while Arana dallied at Barrios Peña's estate, the Permanent Committee of the Guatemalan Congress met in secret session and voted unanimously for Arana to be dismissed. At the request of his friend Arévalo, Cuban President Carlos Prío Socarrás agreed to give Arana asylum in his country. Colonel Cosenza would fly the disgraced plotter to Havana.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Quoted from interview with Barrios Peña.

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Col. Mendoza (quote) and Barrios Peña.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Barrios Peña.

<sup>57</sup> The main sources for this and the two subsequent paragraph and the next are interviews with Galich, Charnaud, Fortuny, María de Arbenz, Paz Tejada, Monteforte Toledo, Cols. Lorenzana and Mendoza. See also Cehelsky, 'Habla Arbenz', p. 120; Canuto Ocaña (a pseudonym of Clemente Marroquín Rojas), *La 'Carta Política' del ciudadano Juan José Arévalo* (Guatemala, 1965), p. 33; Carlos Manuel Pellecer, 'Dos yanquis más contra Guatemala', vi, *El I*, 2 Sept. 1982, p. 2; Silverio Pérez, 'Los oscuros acontecimientos de hace 37 años', *La Hora*, 21 July 1986, p. 4. Pellecer's account in 'Dos yanquis' is indirectly confirmed by Arévalo in his 'De Juan José Arévalo'.



A formidable problem remained: how would these bold decisions be enforced? The Government's hope was to seize Arana without warning, and even then the likely response of the *aranista* commanders would be a military uprising. No clear plan of action emerged, only the decision that somehow, somewhere, Arbenz would capture Arana the next day, Monday 18 July.

It was Arana himself, on Monday morning, who gave the Government the help it needed. Appearing unexpectedly at the Presidential Palace, he told Arévalo that he was on his way to El Morlón, the Presidential chalet on the shores of nearby Lake Amatitlán, to seize a cache of weapons that was hidden there.

The previous spring, with Arana's grudging consent, Arévalo had provided weapons to Dominican exiles seeking to free their country from the Trujillo dictatorship.<sup>58</sup> Some of these weapons had been seized by the Mexican authorities while the exiles were in Cozumel, Yucatan. In early July the weapons were returned to the Guatemalan government, and they were placed at the small air base of San José. On July 14 the Chief of Army Intelligence told Arana that the weapons were hidden at El Morlón.<sup>59</sup> But Arana's attention was focused on his ultimatum to Arévalo, not on a paltry cache of arms.<sup>60</sup> He took no steps to seize the weapons for three days. Then, on the morning of the 18th, he went to see Arévalo.

Arévalo says now that '... on the 18th Arana and I did not quarrel, much less exchange insults'.<sup>61</sup> But at the time he told his aides that Arana had spoken to him 'in an abusive and very threatening manner', that the Armed Forces Chief had upbraided the president as though he were a disrespectful student, alternating threats with sarcastic remarks about Arévalo's propensity to hide weapons. Whatever the true tone of the conversation (and Arévalo's private account at the time is more credible than the public disclaimer of a much-changed Arévalo three decades later), Arana announced that he was on his way to El Morlón to recover the weapons.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> On Arévalo's assistance to the Dominican exiles, see Piero Gleijeses, 'Juan José Arévalo and the Caribbean Legion', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1989), pp. 133-45.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Col. Lorenzana, Chief of Army Intelligence.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Barrios Peña. The sources listed in note 57 above believe that Arana did not mention the arms that were in El Morlón when he saw Arévalo on 16 July.

<sup>61</sup> Arévalo, 'De Juan José Arévalo'. Arévalo was responding to Pellecer's statement, 'The conversation between the two was heated. The colonel... raised his voice and insulted and threatened the president'. (Pellecer, 'Dos yanquis', VI, *El I*, 2 Sept 1982, p. 24.)

<sup>62</sup> Quoted from interview with Galich. The other sources are those listed in notes 53 and 57 above (with the exception of Barrios Peña and Pérez).

The real reasons for Arana's visit to Arévalo can only be surmised. Arana knew that the arms stored at El Morlón – 200 rifles without ammunition – in no way altered the balance of power; nor did he anticipate any resistance to his 16 July ultimatum. Furthermore, he had no need to go in person to El Morlón or, for that matter, to inform Arévalo of his whereabouts. Arana, an 'impulsive' man whose patience was exhausted, went to the palace to flaunt his power and hurry the humbled president into the swift execution of his ultimatum.<sup>63</sup>

Once again, Arévalo deceived Arana. He raised no objection to Arana's decision to go to El Morlón and even suggested that the Commander of his Presidential Guard, Colonel Felipe Antonio Girón, go with him.<sup>64</sup> Arana left the Presidential Palace savouring another apparent victory. He drove to El Morlón accompanied only by his driver Francisco Palacios, his aide Major Absalón Peralta, and Girón. A colonel who knew him well recalls that 'Arana was very sure of himself. He knew that the officers in command of the troops were loyal to him. He never imagined that Arbenz and Arévalo would stand up to him, and his confidence was reinforced by the fact that he was accompanied on his trip to El Morlón by Arévalo's Chief of Staff'.<sup>65</sup>

Upon Arana's departure, Arévalo contacted Arbenz. Now was the time. On Arbenz's orders, several armed men sped from the capital in two cars to intercept Arana as he returned from El Morlón. They were led by the Deputy Chief of the Police, Lt. Colonel Enrique Blanco, and by a PAR Congressman, Alfonso Martínez, who was a retired army officer and a close friend of Arbenz.<sup>66</sup>

Arana's business at El Morlón was swiftly concluded. According to his driver, they had found the chalet locked: 'After blowing the horn several times, a man appeared from the garden, and they went to one of the boathouses where a red truck loaded with rifles was found.' Soon Colonel Juan José de León 'appeared with an army truck and two or three soldiers... and Colonel Arana said to him "You already know what I ordered you"'. Leaving de León at the boathouse to load the weapons, Arana and his party began the return trip to Guatemala City. But as they reached the Puente de la Gloria, the grey Dodge was blocking the road.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> This is also the interpretation of Barrios Peña (quoted) and Cols. Lorenzana and Mendoza, two officers close to Arana.

<sup>64</sup> My sources disagree as to who initiated this suggestion.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Col. Mendoza. See also Alvarado Rubio, *El asesinato*, p. 49.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Lt. García, Arbenz's aide, who was with him at the time; interviews with María de Arbenz, Guerra Borges, Fortuny, Charnaud, Galich, Paz Tejada. See also Pellecer, 'Dos yanquis', vi, p. 2 and Cehelsky, 'Habla Arbenz', p. 121.

<sup>67</sup> 'Statement of Lt. Colonel Alberto Bone Summarizing Statement Made by Mr. Palacios J., Chauffeur of Colonel Arana, Concerning Events Associated With Arana's Death', quoted at pp. 1–2, enclosed in 'Intelligence Report' no. IR-77-49, 28 July 1949, FOIA.

After the ambush, three men lay dead: Arana, his aide Peralta, and Lt.-Colonel Blanco; others were wounded, including Arbenz's friend Alfonso Martínez. Did the ambushers open fire, without warning, as Arana's driver has claimed? Or did Peralta fire first, after Blanco had told Arana that he was under arrest and an argument had broken out? There is no definitive proof, but even some of Arana's friends believe that 'the order was to capture Arana, not to kill him', that 'his death was accidental'.<sup>68</sup> Peralta and Blanco 'first traded insults, then shots'.<sup>69</sup>

News of Arana's death spread through the capital in a matter of hours. The Guardia de Honor rose in revolt.<sup>70</sup> For more than twenty-four hours the battle raged in the city. The rest of the country waited in tense expectation. More than once on the 18th Arana's supporters seemed close to victory, but several factors were against them. Their intended victims had struck first, killing their caudillo and forcing them into a hasty reaction. While Arbenz led the loyalist forces with sang-froid and skill, no one rose to lead the rebels. Lt. Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, possibly the most able of Arana's officers, was in Mazatenango, overseeing the elections for the CSD; he lacked the nerve to return to the capital.<sup>71</sup> The Commander of the Guardia de Honor, Colonel Juan Francisco Oliva, had been summoned by Arbenz to the Defence Ministry less than an hour after Arana's death; unaware of what had happened, he went, and was arrested. Another *aranista*, Colonel Gabino Santizo, the Commander of the Base Militar, sided with the Government. A few days later, with his customary

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See also 'Francisco Palacios hace sensacionales declaraciones', *Diario Latino*, San Salvador, 27 Aug. 1949, p. 1. <sup>68</sup> Interview with Col. Lorenzana.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Col. Mendoza. Also useful were interviews with Barrios Peña, Paz Tejada, Galich, García, María de Arbenz, Fortuny, Guerra Borges, and Charnaud.

<sup>70</sup> There is no definitive account of the fight. Following Arana's death, the Government suspended publication of all newspapers, except the official *DCA*, which provided only sparse coverage. Upon resuming publication on 1 August, the other newspapers wrote little on the subject. Coverage by the foreign press and by the US Embassy was superficial.

The government's version of the fighting was first outlined in 'Mensaje del Gobierno de la República a la ciudadanía', *DCA*, 22 July 1949, p. 1, and then in *Una democracia*, a 47-page pamphlet written by the President of the Guatemalan Congress, Monteforte Toledo. Useful information is included in Bush, 'Organized Labor', IV, 11-4; in Tomás Sierra Roldán, *Diálogos con el coronel Monzón* (Guatemala, 1958), pp. 44-6; and in Pellecer, 'Dos yanquis', VII, *El I*, 3 Sept. 1982, p. 2. For an excellent series of articles by an *Aranista* officer, see Col. Ricardo Alberto Pinto Recinos, 'La rebelión de la Guardia de Honor, el 18 de Julio de 1949', *La Hora*, 18 June-4 July 1985. Particularly helpful were interviews with the following officers: García Lorenzana, Mendoza, Montenegro, Paz Tejada; and with the civilians Barrios Peña, Galich and Charnaud.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Paz Tejada, who was with Castillo Armas at the time. See also Carlos Cáceres, *Aproximación a Guatemala* (Culiacán, Mexico, 1980), pp. 46-7.

eloquence, Arévalo told the people of Guatemala about the dialogue that, he said, had taken place between Arbenz and Santizo at the outset of the revolt: ‘Colonel Arbenz got in touch with... Colonel Gabino Santizo, a loyal soldier who immediately swore, “My duty is to defend the Government and the Constitution, and I guarantee you that all my commanders and officers will do their duty”.’ The truth was more tawdry: Santizo had been bought for \$75,000. That afternoon, while the *aranista* officers at the base watched in sullen passivity, a group of loyalist officers arrived from the Defence Ministry ‘to place themselves under Santizo’s orders’, as the official story gently stated – or, more truthfully, to take control of his troops.<sup>72</sup>

Nevertheless it was hours before the Base Militar stood solidly on the Government’s side, and in the meantime Arbenz had only the police, the tiny Presidential Guard, and loyal officers without troops. There were only a few weapons to arm the growing number of civilian volunteers.

The rebel officers squandered their advantage in ill-planned and poorly-led attacks. Such were the incompetence and the disarray that effective command of the Guardia de Honor was assumed by a civilian, Mario Méndez Montenegro, the leader of the *aranista* FPL Ortodoxo – Méndez Montenegro was brave, but untrained in military matters. Meanwhile ‘some of the rebel colonels... were busy drinking’.<sup>73</sup>

By dawn on 19 July the government was winning. The Presidential Palace and the Police Headquarters, the main targets of the rebels’ attacks the previous day, were in government hands. Loyal officers were now firmly in control of the Base Militar. The Air Force was also loyal: on Arbenz’s orders, Colonel Cosenza had arrested the officer whom Arana had appointed as his successor and had resumed command. Civilian volunteers, mainly labour union members, had swelled the government ranks; they were armed with weapons from the Base Militar and the arms depot at Fort Matamoros, a small army barracks which Arbenz had seized during the night. Loyal officers, and the cadets from the military academy, hurriedly trained the volunteers.

By late morning, soldiers from the Base Militar and armed civilians began

<sup>72</sup> Quotations from ‘Mensaje del Gobierno’, p. 1 and from Monteforte Toledo, *Una democracia*, p. 19. A Guatemalan officer has written tactfully that on 18 July 1949, ‘the freedom of action of the Commander of the *Base Militar* was neutralized’, without explaining how this was accomplished (Cruz Salazar, ‘El ejército’, p. 86). Interviews with María de Arbenz, Paz Tejada, Guerra Borges and Fortuny were particularly informative on this. See also Clemente Marroquín Rojas, ‘Los lobos se han ido’, *La Hora*, 17 July 1954, p. 4. Santizo had a long pedigree as an *aranista* plotter; he was one of the officers who were at the Quinta Samayoa in late 1948 (interview with Paz Tejada), and who later spent the night at the Guardia de Honor waiting for Arana (interview with Col. Mendoza).

<sup>73</sup> Quoted from Pinto Recinos, ‘La Rebelión’, iv, p. 2.

to attack the Guardia de Honor. The Air Force's venerable planes strafed the rebel barracks and dropped a few bombs which rarely exploded. Even though the planes caused little physical damage, they deepened the rebels' demoralisation. Through the Papal Nuncio, at 1 p.m., the rebels sought negotiations: desultory conversations ensued between representatives of both sides at the Salvadorean Embassy; the government demanded unconditional surrender; the fighting resumed. At 5 p.m. the white flag was raised at the Guardia de Honor. The rebellion of the *aranistas* had collapsed with approximately 150 dead and over 200 wounded. In the words of an enemy of Arbenz, the rebels' ineptitude 'and the skill of the Minister of Defence determined the outcome of the battle'.<sup>74</sup>

It remained for Arévalo to explain to the people of Guatemala the circumstances of Arana's death. On 21 July he declared five days of 'national mourning'.<sup>75</sup> Then, in a lengthy communiqué, he spun his tale. Arana, Arévalo stated, was not entirely blameless. Waylaid by the lure of the presidency and by self-seeking sycophants, 'each day that passed he linked himself more and more closely with the political circles hostile to the president'. But Arana had resolutely resisted their entreaties that he overthrow the government. This refusal had cost him his life.

Arévalo did not name Arana's assassins, but he impugned the conservative opposition – the murderers were 'reactionaries' who had finally realised that the colonel would never lead a coup d'état. Arana's death, the communiqué concluded, was a grave loss 'for the nation, for the army, for the government and above all for his friend, President Arévalo'.<sup>76</sup>

Before its publication, notes a PAR leader, 'the official communiqué... was discussed in the cabinet; it was opposed by Arbenz, Foreign Minister Enrique Muñoz Meany and Carlos Aldana Sandoval, Minister of Public Works'. These three asserted that Arévalo should tell the true story of Arana's death. But they 'lost the argument'. Arévalo insisted on his version which, he explained, would avoid further inflaming passions; the other ministers agreed with the President.<sup>77</sup>

The next day, the official *Diario de Centro América* praised Arévalo's communiqué and drew a moral lesson: 'Its eloquence has calmed us and given us the gift of truth, which comforts us... Honesty seems defenceless, but it possesses a hidden weapon: truth, which always triumphs.'<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Quoted from Cruz Salazar, 'El ejército', p. 86.

<sup>75</sup> 'Duelo nacional por la muerte del coronel Arana', *DCA*, 21 July 1949, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> 'Mensaje del Gobierno', p. 3 ('The official communiqué on Arana's death was written entirely by Arévalo.' Arévalo, 'De Juan José Arévalo').

<sup>77</sup> Pellecer, 'Dos yanquis', VIII, p. 2. As already noted, Arévalo indirectly endorsed Pellecer's account in 'De Juan José Arévalo'.

<sup>78</sup> 'El gobierno dice al pueblo la verdad' (editorial), *DCA*, 23 July 1949, p. 3.

Few Guatemalans agreed; few were so naive as to believe that Arana had been killed by his conservative friends. This contradicted both common sense and widely-known facts. It was no secret, for instance, that Alfonso Martínez had been wounded at the Puente de la Gloria and that Martínez was close to Arbenz, not to the conservative opposition. Thus, the rumours and speculation surrounding the death of Arana took root.

At a massive rally in support of the administration, a prominent PAR leader, Carlos Manuel Pellecer, flatly contradicted the official story, alluding to Arana's disloyalty and to the true circumstances of his death. The government 'rejects and officially condemns' Pellecer's declarations, a senior official announced the following day, on Arévalo's instructions. Pellecer was fired from his post in the Ministry of Education. 'You were right to tell the truth', Arbenz later told him.<sup>79</sup>

Why did Arévalo choose to cover up the facts? Perhaps he honestly believed that his tale was the best way to restore domestic peace. Or perhaps he was keeping his options open: perhaps he believed that the *aranistas* would one day regain power and that it was therefore not in his interest to malign their fallen hero.<sup>80</sup> Or, perhaps, as Arbenz speculated years later, 'Arévalo played a very dirty trick 'on me'.<sup>81</sup> For the residue of the official communiqué tarred Arbenz: in the absence of a plausible alternative and in the presence of the President's avowal of Arana's loyalty, speculation centred on the theory that Arana had been killed by *arbenzistas* in a showdown between military factions. As a key adviser to Arana muses, 'Arévalo was very wily. He shifted all suspicion on to Arbenz'.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Quotations from 'El Gobierno desapueba el discurso del profesor Carlos Manuel Pellecer', *DCA*, 25 July 1949, p. 1 (quoted at p. 7) and Pellecer, 'Dos yanquis', VIII, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Since the late 1960s, Arévalo has spent most of his time in Guatemala, where the friends of Arana are indeed again powerful. He has received honours and privileges, and avoided dangerous controversies. His lack of candour in July 1949 has served him well.

<sup>81</sup> Interviews with María de Arbenz, Fortuny (quoting Arbenz), and Guerra Borges.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Barrios Peña. In the years that followed, first as President, and then in lonely exile, Arbenz remained silent. Shy, introverted, with a strict personal code of honour, he respected his promise not to speak out unless Arévalo agreed; the longer his silence, moreover, the more awkward a sudden reversal. On one occasion, recalls his wife, he tried to convince Arévalo 'to give a full and public account of the circumstances of Arana's death'. It was in Montevideo in the late 1950s, in one of the two ex-presidents' rare encounters during the years of exile. But 'Arévalo said that it was better not to discuss it and changed the subject' (interview with María de Arbenz). Only in 1968, three years before his own death, did Arbenz finally state what had happened to Francisco Arana in those distant days of July 1949. Cehelsky, 'Habla Arbenz', pp. 119–22.

Others did not wait so long. In July 1950 the communist weekly *Octubre* wrote that 'prior to July 18... Arana was ready to seize power', but it provided no details. ('El 19 de Julio de 1949: Un Gran Golpe al Imperialismo', *Octubre*, 19 July 1950, p. 1, quoted

Arana's death and the defeat of his followers alarmed US officials. Arana had been the 'only positive conservative element in [the] Arévalo Administration', a State Department official lamented on 19 July. A cable from Ambassador Richard Patterson on 20 July reads: 'Regardless responsibility [of] assassination, end result eliminates important moderate elements Government and strengthens Left materially.' The following day he warned: 'Consensus... [is] that developments forecast sharp leftist trend within [the] government.'<sup>83</sup>

Arbenz was now the strongest man in the military. US officials did not know him well, but the sympathy they had expressed in 1945 for this 'highly idealistic' officer had given way to wariness and distrust.<sup>84</sup> No one suggested that he was a communist but, cabled Patterson on 22 July 1949, 'Arbenz is... identified with the more radical fringe of the Arévalo regime'.<sup>85</sup> US officials soon reassured themselves, however, that this identification was shallow: self-interest would drive Arbenz into Washington's arms. He was just 'an opportunist with no deep-seated leftist convictions... Since he wants to be President and is clever, his best

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at p. 3). That same year, the communist leader Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez told a labour congress that Arana had died in an armed confrontation with 'Police Coronel Enrique Blanco, who had a warrant for his arrest because he was plotting to overthrow Arévalo... Therefore, comrade delegates, Arana was not assassinated: he died resisting arrest'. (Gutiérrez, 'Informe rendido por el Secretario General ante la Novena Asamblea Confederal de la CTG', not dated, p. 2, *Guatemala Transcripts*, Box 15.) Information on the true circumstances of Arana's death was also provided in a 1956 book by Manuel Galich who, as Secretary General of the FPL, had played a key role in July 1949. (Galich, *¿Por Qué Lucha Guatemala?*, pp. 201-4.)

<sup>83</sup> Quoted from: Siracusa, 'Guatemala Situation', 19 July; Patterson to Secretary of State, no. 324, 20 July; Patterson to Secretary of State, no. 327, 21 July 10 a.m. All 1949, all NA 814.00. For US views of Arana, see also: Col. Devine, 'Intelligence Report' no. 52-46, 6 Feb 1946, RG319 General File (GF), Box 1582, NA-S; Donovan to Secretary of State, no. 1538, 10 July 1946, RG84 CF, Box 14, NA-S; HQs Panama Canal Department, 'Weekly Intelligence Summary' no. 262, 9 July 1947, RG319 ID 382208, NA-S; HQs Panama Canal Department, 'Weekly Intelligence Summary' no. 265, 30 July 1947, RG319 ID 388826, NA-S; Donovan to Secretary of State, no. 2601, 12 Aug. 1947, RG84 GR, Box 177, NA-S; Wells to Secretary of State, no. 2757, 12 Dec. 1947, NA 814.00B; Wells to de Zengotita, 15 Nov. 1948, RG84 GR, Box 192, NA-S; Wells to de Zengotita, 19 Nov. 1948, RG84 GR, Box 192, NA-S; Wells to Secretary of State, no. 175, 1 April 1949, p. 1, NA 814.00.

<sup>84</sup> Affeld, 'Confidential Biographic Data: Francisco Javier Arana', quoted at p. 2. See also: Woodward to Secretary of State, no. 2426, 24 April 1945, RG84 GR, Box 134, NA-S; Col. Devine, 'Alleged Communist Penetrations', no. 104-46, 29 March 1946, RG84 CF, Box 14, NA-S; Donovan to Newbegin, 1 Aug. 1946, NA 814.00; Enclosure no. 1 in Donovan to Secretary of State, no. 2075, 2 Jan. 1947, NA 814.00; US Embassy Guatemala, 'Re: Guatemala Political' 26 Feb. 1947, p. 6, RG84 GR, Box 176, NA-S; HQs Panama Canal Department, 'Weekly Intelligence Summary' no. 262, 9 July 1947, RG319 ID 382208, NA-S.

<sup>85</sup> Patterson to Secretary of State, no. 385, 22 July 1949, p. 1, NA 711.14.

bet is an alliance with the United States'. Over the ensuing months, through the presidential elections of November 1950 and into the first weeks of the Arbenz presidency, this remained the US view.<sup>86</sup> In February 1951, the Embassy informed the State Department that the communists 'are probably seeking to strengthen themselves against the possibility of finding themselves in disfavor with the ... [Arbenz] administration'.<sup>87</sup> The United States could not have been more wrong: even in 1949 Arbenz had stood to the left not only of Arana but also of Arévalo; as he assumed the presidency, he was the communists' friend.

Many of Arbenz's critics have used the death of Arana to cast aspersions on the origins of his administration, suggesting that he came to power ruthlessly and undemocratically.<sup>88</sup> But the story of Arana's death has its origins not in a power struggle between officers, but in Arana's lack of respect for democracy – as he revealed in his letter to Toriello and as the State Department noted in its comments on the *Pacto del Barranco*. In the summer of 1949, Arana concluded that he would never win the presidency in fair elections; he was determined to gain it nevertheless. The assertion that he was the victim of a struggle between military factions is merely a convenient cliché. The struggle was between Arana and the constitutional government of Guatemala. On the side of the constitutional government stood President Arévalo, the Guatemalan Congress, and Defence Minister Arbenz. Arana did not fall to Arbenz's ambition: he fell to his own ambition. He died as a plotter.

<sup>86</sup> Patterson to Zemurray, 11 Aug. 1949, Patterson Papers, Box 5, Truman Library (quote). See also: Siracusa to Wise, 29 July 1949, NA 814.00; Siracusa to Patterson, 3 Aug. 1949, RG84 GR, Box 216, NA-S; Patterson to Secretary of State, no. 417, 3 Aug. 1949, NA 711.14; Wells to Secretary of State, no. 433, 11 Aug. 1949, NA 814.00; Wells to Secretary of State, no. 435, 12 Aug. 1949, NA 711.14; Patterson to Miller and Patterson to Siracusa, both 12 Aug. 1949, RG84 GR, Box 216, NA-S; Wells to Department of State (DOS), no. 395, 31 March 1950, NA 611.14; CIA, 'Guatemala', SR-46, 27 July 1950, pp. 45–6, Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File, Intelligence File, Box 261, Truman Library; Wells to DOS, 15 Nov. 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, II: 922–5; Wells to Clark, 22 Jan. 1951, NA 714.00.

<sup>87</sup> Wardlaw to DOS, no. 839, 16 Feb. 1951, p. 2, NA 714.00.

<sup>88</sup> See Theodore Geiger, *Communism versus Progress in Guatemala* (Washington, D.C., 1953), pp. 13–14; Nájera Farfán, *Los estafadores*, pp. 105–11; Carlos Samayoa Chinchilla, *El Quetzal no es rojo* (Guatemala, 1956), pp. 132–4; L.A.H.A [Luis Alberto Hurtado Aguilar], *Así se gestó la Liberación* (Guatemala, 1956), p. 41.



## APPENDIX ON ORAL SOURCES

The written record – both US and Guatemalan – relating to the death of Arana is incomplete. Much that transpired was not recorded at the time, and, with few exceptions, the protagonists had neither volunteered their accounts nor had they been interviewed previously. I interviewed some people for one hour; others for many hours, in interviews that spanned ten years. This allowed me to check and cross-check their stories, and to probe more deeply as I learned more. Of course memory is treacherous and men lie. No one is entirely reliable. But what is very striking is that even though I always conducted my interviews individually and even though I never divulged the content of any interviews, both the friends and the enemies of Arana concurred in their broad outlines of events and in most details. Furthermore, their recollections dovetail with the written accounts. Therefore in the footnotes, when a fact or interpretation was stated by more than one person, I have listed all those who volunteered the information. Unless otherwise stated, the position given for each informant is that held on 18 July 1949.

### LIST OF INTERVIEWEES WITH PLACE AND DATE OF INTERVIEW

- Arévalo, Juan José: President of Guatemala, 1945–1951.  
Guatemala City: 25 Aug. 1979.
- Barrios Peña, Ricardo: Adviser to Colonel Francisco Arana.  
Guatemala City: 8 Sept. 1982.
- Bauer Paiz, Alfonso: A leader of the Frente Popular Libertador (FPL), a party that supported the Arévalo administration.  
Managua, 26 Nov. 1982.
- Capuano, Ernesto: A leader of the FPL.  
Mexico City: 11 Aug. 1981; 7 Aug. 1982.
- Charnaud MacDonald, Augusto: A leader of the Partido Acción Revolucionaria (PAR), a party that supported the Arévalo administration.  
Mexico City: 12, 15, 18, 23 Aug. 1982.
- Cruz Salazar, José Luis: Lieutenant-Colonel, Guatemalan Army.  
Guatemala City: 20 Aug. 1978; 6 Sept. 1982.
- Fortuny, José Manuel: A leader of the PAR and Secretary-General of a clandestine communist organisation.  
Mexico City: frequently in Aug. 1980, in Aug. 1981 and in Aug. 1982.
- Galich, Manuel: A leader of the FPL.  
Havana: 25 Aug. 1980; 11 Jan. 1981.
- García, Amadeo: Lieutenant, Guatemalan Army and an aide to Arbenz.  
Guatemala City: 8, 18, 24 Aug. 1978; 24 Aug. 1979.
- Guerra Borges, Alfredo: A leader of the PAR and a member of a clandestine communist organisation.  
Guatemala City: 9–13 Jan. 1973; 22 Aug. 1979. Mexico City: 10, 14 Aug. 1982.
- Lorenzana, Roberto: Colonel, Chief of Army Intelligence, Guatemalan Army.  
Antigua, Guatemala: 20, 23 Aug. 1978.

- Mendoza, Oscar: Colonel, Guatemalan Army.  
Guatemala City: 6 Sept. 1982.
- Monteforte Toledo, Mario: A leader of the FPL. President of the Guatemalan Congress.  
Guatemala City: 13 Oct. 1988.
- Montenegro, Manuel Antonio: Lieutenant, Guatemalan Army.  
Guatemala City: 7 Sept. 1982.
- Osegueda, Raúl: Minister of Education.  
Guatemala City: 3, 5 Sept. 1982.
- Paiz Novales, Ernesto: Lieutenant-Colonel, Guatemalan Army.  
Guatemala City: 8 Sept. 1982.
- Paz Tejada, Carlos: Major, Guatemalan Army.  
Mexico City: frequently in Aug. 1980, in Aug. 1981, and in Aug. 1982; 22 Apr. 1988.
- Vilanova de Arbenz, María: Wife of Defence Minister Jacobo Arbenz.  
San José, Costa Rica: 4-5 March 1982; 13-15 June 1984; 14-17 May 1986; 12-13  
Aug. 1989.