

There are, of course, ideological affinities and historical and personal ties between some revolutionary groups in the region and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The Soviet Union has consistently expressed solidarity with the revolutionary movements there and has maintained varying levels of contact with and support of them. However, the outlook of those leftist forces which come to power tends to be one in which self-interested nationalism generally balances and often dominates transnational or international loyalties. The advantages which the Soviet Union can draw from these affinities are, all other things being equal, not substantial. But US pressure on these governments, in conjunction with the regional heritage of repeated US intervention to sustain or to re-establish conservative and co-operative regimes, induces radical regimes to seek assistance and protection wherever they may be found. The United States effectively establishes conditions in which the dictates of both nationalism and self-interest reinforce those of ideological affinity in creating and expanding opportunities for Soviet penetration.

1. Guatemala

In late October 1944, General Federico Ponce, the shortlived successor to General Jorge Ubico's 14-year dictatorship, was overthrown by a three-man junta dedicated to the establishment of a democratic constitutional structure. Juan José Arevalo rapidly emerged as the leading contender for the presidency and was overwhelmingly elected on the basis of a programme designed to strengthen and consolidate democracy and to offer poorer Guatemalans a measure of social justice through agrarian reform, education, and the protection of the rights of labour.²⁵ On the whole, Arevalo's approach to the critical question of land reform was cautious and slow, since he sought to avoid alienating major landowners, whether foreign (for example the United Fruit Company) or indigenous. Although he broadened the availability of credit and expertise to small farmers, established mechanisms whereby those holding ambiguous titles to land could legalize them, enacted legislation to force fallow land into productive use, and began the re-distribution of lands of German residents and Nazi sympathizers which had been confiscated during World War II, no new lands were confiscated and no substantial land reform undertaken. Despite his efforts to avoid internal polarization and the alienation of the United States, his enactment in 1947 of a labour code none the less provoked considerable hostility within the business sector.

²⁵ S. Schlesinger & S. Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), p. 37.