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The Third International And South America

1. Introduction

The effect of the Third or Communist International (CI) on South America has not yet been studied sufficiently and the existing bibliography is quite general in scope. Certain works are based on the CI's world-wide orientation, as reflected in the resolutions of its congresses, documents, etc. These works evaluate the undisputed influence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on the Third International. They also assess the way in which the development of the Soviet Union's national and foreign policies were reflected in the Comintern's directives to South America. Other studies concentrate on the local Communist parties. While, on the one hand, this segmentation has frequently resulted in one-sided or superficial interpretations which fail to give a reliable account of a phenomenon which, from the point of view of the international Communist movement's general development, was more than the sum of its parts, on the other hand, the local Communist parties' origin, development, and positions cannot be explained exclusively by the central organization's global orientations, nor by how these were influenced by the Soviet Union's politics.[1]

While the Comintern was active, Soviet foreign policy was strongly influenced by the policies of the international Communist movement. Certainly the CPSU played a leading role in this movement, but the influence of the regional South American Communist parties' perceptions and practices on the movement's general evolution and on the USSR's politics themselves has not yet been examined satisfactorily. The history of Communism in South America cannot be separated from the countries' individual histories, their economic, social and political conditions, nor from the articulation of the particular characteristics of each country's Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The vicissitudes of these processes must be viewed in accordance with the rapid changes precipitated by the juncture of world and regional conditions. The history of the subcontinent between the two wars was marked by profound social changes and by an accentuated economic and political instability which was influenced by the following factors: the weakening of ties with traditionally hegemonous European powers, particularly Great Britain; an increase in the United States' diplomatic and economic influence; and the emergence of strong nationalist tendencies. Already in the thirties, in view of the rapid rise of Hitler's Germany and Fascism, the history of South America and the regional Communist movements was strongly determined by the interplay of blocs which would later become Second World War alliances.

All these factors, whose complexity is self-evident, should be taken into account in any attempt to describe concisely the development of the Communist movement in South America from the time of the Russian October Revolution up to the forties.

2. Periods of the Communist Movement in South America

In a first attempt, we can differentiate six stages in the development of the Communist movement in South America. In order to define these, it is important to keep in mind the aforementioned foreign and national factors which affected each of these stages to a greater or lesser degree.

The first can be labelled the *Foundation Stage*, extending from the time of the Russian Revolution up to the Fifth Comintern Congress, from 1918 to 1924. From a historical perspective this first period is marked by all of the following: the consequences of the First World War, the triumph of the Bolshevist revolution, the expectations and eventual failure of the spreading of the revolution to the rest of Europe, the founding of the Third International, the Russian Civil War, the War Communism, the NEP, Lenin's death, and the power struggle

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[1] The most remarkable general studies on Communism in Latin America are: Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick, 1957); Manuel Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista y la Revolución Latinoamericana 1919-1943* (Caracas, 1987); Rollie E. Poppino, *International Communism in Latin America. A History of the Movement 1917-1963* (London, 1964). In addition, refer to Hugo Moreno's article "L'Internationale Communiste et l'Amérique Latine entre les deux guerres", *Amérique Latine*, 21 (1985). On the USSR's influence in Latin America refer to Stephen Clissold, *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-1968. A Documentary Survey* (London, 1970).

in the Kremlin.

From a regional perspective, the following events and issues constitute the setting which led to the emergence of the first Communist parties: the crisis caused by the First World War, the beginnings of industrialization and ensuing production changes, the rise of labour and popular struggles, and the growing presence of the United States. The parties emerged in the southern part of the continent, in countries with the greatest degree of capitalist development: Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil.

These countries had a relatively developed standard of urbanization and had experienced great migratory waves from Europe. Immigrants made up the main working class contingent which had settled on the banks of the Río de la Plata. From their home-countries they had brought the practical experience and ideological traditions of the European movement, and from their ranks emerged Latin America's earliest trade-union and political labour organizations. Even though the labour sectors' positions on the First World War and the Russian Revolution would result in internal divisions, which led to the formation of Communist parties, the Communist movement has its roots in the internal structure and development of pre-existent forces.[2]

In their first stage, towards the end of the First World War and in the immediate post-war period, the parties experienced increased labour struggles as well as internal conflicts in the process of defining their positions towards the Third International and of establishing their organizational structures and executive teams.

An important phenomenon contributing to the Communist parties' initial development and strength was the powerful impulse the European revolutionary processes gave to the spread of Marxism among Latin American intellectuals. As for Argentina, we can refer to the socialist José Ingenieros, who actually subscribed to positivist ideas, and to the 1918 university reform movement, some of whose initiators ended up as Communists. In Peru, José Carlos Mariátegui emerged. He separated himself from the student movement which eventually became the populist Aprism. He would later form the initial Marxist core of Peruvian Communism.[3]

At the time, the Communist parties played a secondary role in the trade-union movements, except in Chile. Even so, the events occurring in Russia affected these movements. For example, the Argentinean Federation of Workers (*Federación Obrera Regional Argentina*; FORA), directed by anarcho-syndicalists, and some Uruguayan trade unions who shared the FORA's political tendencies, supported the Russian Revolution. They considered joining the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), headquartered in Moscow, of which the Chilean Federation of Workers (*Federación Obrera Chilena*) was already a member.[4]

Between 1924 and 1929 a second stage of South American Communism developed. This could be described as one of *Crisis and Consolidation*. From an international viewpoint, the following developments served as a general framework for the parties' internal political orientations: the relative stabilization in the world, the triumph of Stalin's theory of "Socialism in only one country", the elimination of internal party conflicts, particularly in relation to Trotsky, and the spreading of Communism to colonial and semi-colonial regions. As for regional developments, during these years the parties suffered from the increased rivalry between

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[2] For the development of the labour movement in Latin America, see Victor Alba, *Historia del Movimiento Obrero en América Latina* (Mexico, 1964); and Carlos M. Rama, *Historia del movimiento obrero y social latinoamericano contemporáneo* (Montevideo, 1967). With regard to the labour movement and the development of Socialism in the Rio de la Plata region, cf. Julio Godio, *Historia del movimiento obrero argentino, 1880-1910* (Buenos Aires, 1973); Rubens Iscaro, *Orígen y desarrollo del movimiento sindical argentino* (Buenos Aires, 1958); Francisco Pintos, *Historia del movimiento obrero del Uruguay* (Montevideo, 1960); Richard J. Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890-1930* (Austin, 1977); and José Ratzer, *El movimiento Socialista en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1981). Iscaro and Pintos were important Communist leaders.

[3] For information on Jose Ingenieros, see the aforementioned works of Walter and Ratzer. With respect to the impact of the university reform movement, cf. Alberto Ciria y Horacio Sanguinetti, *Los Reformistas* (Buenos Aires, 1968). Mariátegui's beliefs are revealed in his book, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (Santiago de Chile, 1955).

[4] Comité Central del PC Argentino, *Esbozo de Historia del Partido Comunista de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1947), pp. 48-49; Eugenio Gómez (ed.), *Historia del Partido Comunista del Uruguay hasta el año 1951* (Montevideo, 1990, first published in 1961), pp. 41-46, 60; Eduardo Viola, *Recabarren* (Buenos Aires, 1971), p. 268.

the USA and Great Britain as well as from their own countries' institutional fragility.

After the Fifth Comintern Congress, which advocated the Bolshevization of the parties, a South American Secretariat was set up, headquartered in Buenos Aires, with direct representation from four parties and a representative from the CI's Executive Committee (ECCI). In 1928 after the crisis and reorganization of its CP, Argentina's executives played a leading role in that Committee. Victorio Codovilla, especially, would be influential in Moscow's central organizations as the chief South American Communist advisor at the Kremlin. Early in his political career Codovilla seems to have been discovered and supported by the Japanese-born Comintern member Sen Katayama. Together with the Hindu M.N. Roy, they established the *CI* headquarters in Mexico, travelling extensively throughout Latin America.[5]

The 1928 Sixth Comintern Congress signified a pivotal time for the evolution of Latin America's southern movement. Bukharin's leadership in this world-wide organization confirmed the Trotskyist defeat. Bukharin influenced the region through Jules Humbert-Droz, the ECCI representative who was actively involved in the local parties' policy line discussions. At this Congress the CI discovered South America. In the beginning this region had brought up the rear of the world-wide revolution, particularly in relation to Communist activities in the USA, the most developed country of the hemisphere. But now, with the failure of the European revolution, the escalation of social struggles, the instability of the region, and the importance and expansion of regional Communist groups, it gained a new position among the Comintern's priorities. Only in relation to other centres of revolutionary unrest, particularly in the East, did it still seem that South America was of secondary importance. The development of Communism in China, the failure of the 1927 insurrections, and the break with the Koumintang prompted the CI debates on the characteristics of national movements and its acceptance of, or confrontation with, them in the context of the anti-imperialist struggle.

These debates influenced the contents of the first Latin American conference which took place in Buenos Aires in 1929.[6] At this conference the socio-economic characteristics of the region's countries were debated, especially of those countries which the Ecuadorian leader Ricardo Paredes differentiated from colonial or semi-colonial countries by labelling them "dependent", the same term with which Lenin had characterized Argentina in 1916. This conference defined the nature of these countries' revolution as "democratic-bourgeois, agrarian, and anti-imperialist", a definition adopted earlier by the 1928 Argentinean CP Congress.[7]

The agrarian question came up as the key regional issue. Invariably, one of the most difficult points for the CI had been to find a common ground for the coastal cities' labour movements, linked to the world market, and the peasants from the interior, especially those from the Andean zone.

The debate on the racial issue, which came up after the Peruvian leader Mariátegui presented his theories, revealed the complexity of this problem. Mariátegui affirmed the relationship between anti-imperialism and the Socialist revolution. With regard to the racial problem, Mariátegui connected the indigenous Indian issue to the land issue, particularly in those countries in which the indigenous Indian population constituted a majority. His theories were criticized by the Comintern's regional executives who considered this racial question similar to the one created by the existence of other national minorities, i.e. European immigrants.

The conference polemics on the anti-imperialist struggle and Anglo-American rivalry in the region - issues repeatedly stated as a priority - signified both a step forward in the definition of a clear theoretical basis and an attempt to specify the uniqueness of South American issues. These issues influenced all subsequent vicissitudes of the Communist movement in the region and Latin America's political evolution. One outcome was, several decades later, the Cuban revolution.

Paradoxically, it was at this time that the policies of the so-called "third period" took the upper hand

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[5] Emilio J. Corbière, *Orígines del comunismo argentino* (Buenos Aires, 1984), pp. 147-175; Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 51-52, 72-73, 78; Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 33.

[6] Cf. Secretariado Sudamericano de la IC, *El Movimiento Revolucionario Latinoamericano. Versiones de la 1era Comunista Latinoamericana, junio de 1929* (Buenos Aires, 1930); *and La Importancia de la Primera Conferencia Comunista Latinoamericana. Resoluciones Adoptadas por la misma* (Buenos Aires, 1929).

[7] Caballero, *La International Comunista*, p. 87; CC del PCA, *Ezbozo de Historia*, p. 64. For the Argentinean CP's definition of the character of the revolution, see: Rodolfo Puiggrós, *Las Izquierdas y el Problema Nacional* (Buenos Aires, 1973); Jorge A. Ramos, *El Partido Comunista en la política argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1962); and Otto Vargas, *El marxismo y la revolución argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1987). These constitute three different versions of this theme.

both in the CI and in the region. Stalin, opposing Bukharin's theory on the stabilization of capitalism, initiated land collectivization in Russia. He did this at a time when, facing the world crisis and renewed rivalry between the main industrial powers, the USSR feared a new assault and anticipated possible wars. Thus, urged on by these issues, the rise of Fascism, and the growing anti-communist sentiment in certain Social Democrat sectors, the CI initiated the "class against class" policy, labelling Social Democracy as "Social Fascism".

In South America this viewpoint was loudly voiced until 1934, leading up to a third stage of growing *Isolation*. In this stage, the united front's influence was limited to unaffiliated labour sectors in competition to the reformist and populist forces: Yrigoyenism in Argentina, Battlism in Uruguay, Grovism in Chile, Aprism in Peru, and Lieutenantism in Brazil. This stage was characterized regionally by the economic crisis and the resulting instability, and by military and repressive coups which greatly hindered Communist activities. The South American Secretariat of the CI was dissolved in 1930, and its publication *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* (The South American Correspondence) ceased to appear. As a result an underground South American office without official headquarters was formed. It was headed by the "ex-Zinovievist" August Guralskij. These changes symbolized the Bukharinists' and Humbert-Droz's break from the course pursued by the regional movement. The new organization reaffirmed sectarian trends and this was reflected in the document sent to all the regional CP's in 1932, deepening the separation from reformist and nationalist forces.[8] All this happened at a time when the regional crisis was ending and important economic, social and political changes were taking place: the process of industrialization, the development of the working class, and the emergence of nationalist working and middle classes tending to conform to populist movements.[9]

The fourth stage began with the Communist movement's general change of direction as a reaction to the rise of Fascism. This took shape during the Seventh Comintern Congress and with the new *Popular Front* policies. Prior to the World Congress, in 1934, a conference of Latin American leaders re-introduced the struggle against imperialism as top priority and discussed the delineation of the strategy and tactics needed for an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution. This renewed priority was based on existing Comintern debates on current international events: the popular front in France, the insurrection of Asturias in Spain, and the Japanese invasion of China.[10]

The Seventh Congress endorsed an "anti-imperialist front" policy for the colonial, semi-colonial, and dependent countries, establishing its link to the world-wide top priority given to the anti-Fascist struggle. The internal organizational result of this new policy was the reform of the statutes, offering greater autonomy to the local Communist parties. This in turn resulted in a period of significant increase of Communist influence in the southern part of the continent.

In addition, the Latin American Communists' contribution to the international brigades fighting in Spain was significant. But perhaps from a political viewpoint, because of his future influence, the Argentinean leader Victorio Codovilla represented a key element in the development of Communism in Latin America. As of the early thirties, this high Comintern official was one of the chief advisors of the Spanish CP. Codovilla's experience and political influence would be decisive for the policies adopted by the Argentinean CP in the forties.[11]

The development of the new popular front policy was accompanied by changes in the executive teams which during the preceding period had advocated "sectarian" trends. At the same time and within the settings of anti-fascist policies and the struggle against internal repression, the way was cleared for political tendencies favouring democracy's claim over anti-imperialism. In this way the prospects of an alliance with the anti-fascist and liberal sectors of the traditional elite increased. These tendencies served to outline the task in sectors of the community which, without denying their Fascist or pro-Nazi tendencies, continued to be the Western Democratic powers' main support in Latin America, especially the Anglo-Saxons. The current nationalist parties, on the other hand, perceived the latter as Latin America's main oppressors.

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[8] The South American Bureau's document was called *La lucha por el leninismo en America Latina* (Buenos Aires, 1932).

[9] See Caballero, *La Internacional Comuniste*, pp. 55-59.

[10] *VIIème Congrès Mondial de l'International Communiste* (Paris, 1929).

[11] Victor Alba, *El Partido Comunista en España. Ensayo de interpretacion historica* (Barcelona, 1979), p. 134; Dolores Ibárurri, *El Unico Camino* (Mexico, 1963), p. 191.

In the twenties and thirties the processes of industrialization, the development of an internal market economy, and the growing complexity of social structures favoured the emergence of a new type of nationalism and populism. This occurred in a setting in which both the traditional Anglo-North American economic rivalry and the local oligarchies' political need to control these processes was intensified. This caused greater institutional instability and severe restrictions on democratic rights. The activities of the small group of Fascists and Nazis were an additional, and equal or even greater, factor.

Of course, these populist tendencies were supported by the way in which both the Communist movements and the Soviet government appraised the Roosevelt administration's democratic and anti-Fascist policies. The South American popular front's "anti-imperialist front" slogan was replaced, little by little, by a new formulation of "National anti-Fascist Unity" which viewed the North American government and its "good neighbour" policy as an additional possibility for regional and foreign alliances.

These positions were already reflected in the 1938 Second World Youth Congress which took place near New York and was organized by the North American Communists. Young leaders of the Comintern and of the Latin American Communist parties, as well as representatives of other political movements of the continent, participated in this congress. The congress expressed the left-wing's adherence to Roosevelt's anti-Nazi policies, contrasting with England's conciliatory position in the year of the Munich Pact. Some time before the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1939, a conference of the continent's Communist parties was held and included the Chilean and Venezuelan CP's participants as South America's representatives. Fascism became the principal enemy again and the North American government's policy of cooperation was supported.[12]

With the outbreak of the Second World War, these tendencies were restrained by a brief stage of *Neutrality*, the fifth of our time periods. This was due to the German-Soviet Pact and the Soviet government and Comintern's definition of the War as an imperialist one. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Accord, here as elsewhere, deeply affected the Communist ranks, especially those party groups strongly supportive of the previous period's Democratic alliances. The Comintern's official position was disclosed in a report by Earl Browder, Secretary General of the North American CP. Before this, the Central Committee (CC) of Argentina's CP had discussed an alliance with France against the Nazi offensive.

All South American Communists submissively accepted the CI's general position of neutrality in the War. At the same time, the issue of the imperialist powers' rivalry in the region was developed, without differentiating between individual political regimes. In 1940, an important Argentinean Communist leader published a book against English imperialism. At the same time the Uruguayan CP launched public campaigns explaining the Soviet position on the War.[13]

Some parties tried to conceal these incidents, considering them to be prejudicial to their wartime internal alliance policy. For example, the 1948 "official history" of the Argentinean CP simply does not allude to the political positions of the 1939-1940 period.

With the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, the policy of the *National anti-Fascist Union* was nevertheless taken up again and thoroughly enforced. The policy of this sixth and last stage of our time-chart was similar to the one proposed by countries occupied or directly threatened by the Axis: to procure the establishment of as wide a front as possible, excluding only the pro-Fascist and pro-German sectors. This ranged from left-wing members to those allied with the traditional oligarchies who years ago had been the Communists' main enemies.

Because each country found the establishment of these fronts obstructed by the traditional dominant classes with their Nazi-like tendencies and their fear of social change and popular anarchy, certain parties reacted by attacking the purely monopolistic Anglo-Saxon sectors which opposed the anti-Fascist unity. Others strengthened their policies of conciliation with the liberal wing of the oligarchy which caused resentment among middle-class, though not necessarily pro-Nazi, nationalist movements as well as among new and rising populist forces.

This latter orientation, predominant among South American Communist Parties, was reinforced by theoretical and political developments within the Comintern itself. They were embodied explicitly in Browder's

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[12] Interview with Ernesto Giudici - at that time Giudici was a member of the Argentine CP's executive and attended the New York Congress; Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 102-104.

[13] The aforementioned book, written by Ernesto Giudici, was entitled *Imperialismo Inglés y Liberación Nacional* (Buenos Aires, 1984). For more on the neutrality stage, refer to Ramos, *El Partido Comunista*, pp. 136-144, and Gómez, *Historia del partido*, p. 132.

formulations. He and the majority of Latin American Comintern executives - Codovilla, Ricardo Martínez from Venezuela, Blas Roca from Cuba - brought about a change in attitude towards the North American monopolist middle-class. Their arguments were based on the USA's political adherence to the camp of democracy and their progressive role in the economic development of Latin American countries. This rekindled old debates, dating from the twenties, on the role of the United States in Latin America.[14]

Politically, the diplomatic and strategic policies delineated by the Soviet Union and the Communist movement at the Teheran conference influenced even the policies of local alliances. For example, when the Comintern's dissolution in June 1943, decided on by its central departments, was made known, it was received as a confirmation of the anti-Fascist policy of unity. In addition, many Latin American leaders were actually able to reduce the role previously played by the Comintern in the Communist movement's development in South America. Their obvious intention was to help dissipate old ghosts which could hinder the policy of alliance. Certain parties, like the Colombian CP, changed their names to less provoking ones. Almost at the same time, the Cuban CP changed its name to the *Partido Socialisto Popular*. These were all manifestations of a political orientation which culminated in 1944 with the North-American CP's auto-dissolution.[15]

The influence of so-called "Browderism" on South American Communism was profound and had far-reaching effects on each country's internal policies. What still needs to be investigated is the type and degree of internal resistance it generated, its influence on the decisions of the Comintern's central departments, and its relation to the Soviet government's politics. Still, during the last two years of the War, with the CI already dissolved, the South American Communist parties again manifested different political nuances.

Of course, these divergencies were also expressed in the debates of the international Communist movement, especially in Moscow where the movement's diplomacy sought to reach out to Latin America's new nationalist movements, even at times when it seemed to oppose these. The discussion reached its peak with the French Communist leader Jacques Duclos' famous April 1945 letter criticizing Browder's "revisionist theory" of Imperialism and Browder's subsequent expulsion from the North American CP in May 1946.[16]

These five stages marked the birth and development of the South America's Communist movement and of the Comintern's regional departments there. As can be noted, and is confirmed later on when we review each party separately, the history of the South American Communist parties was not in any way linear. The central CI organs were no doubt of major importance during the first stages, but their relevance was lessened afterwards because of local conditions and the strengthening of individual parties. It can also be pointed out that even though the changes in the parties' political lines generally complied with directives from Moscow, the divergent trends and the theoretical and political discussions within and between the Communist parties confirms that disagreement did exist. The influence of Communism on the working-class and popular movements of every South American country was not, at that time, simply the consequence of the CI's campaigns. As we will notice later on, the active presence of the different parties in their country of origin, as well as the national and social characteristics of these same countries, had a lot to do with it.

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[14] Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 195-206. For "Browderism", see Maurice Isserman, *Which side were you on? The American Communist Party during the Second World War* (Middletown, Conn., 1982) and Joseph R. Starobin, "Origins of the Cold War", in E. Hofman and F. Fleron (eds.), *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York, 1980).

[15] Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 211-213. Among the parties trying to attenuate the value of the Comintern's work is the Argentinean CP whose "official history" only devotes one footnote to the Comintern's dissolution: see CC del CPA, *Ezbozo de Historia*, p. 107. On the other hand, the Uruguayan CP emphasizes this dissolution and justifies its past activities: Gómez, *Historia del Partido*, pp. 166-167. In addition, refer to *Treinte años de lucha del Partido Comunista de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1965). For the North American CP, see Isserman, *Which Side*, pp. 217-221.

[16] Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 195-211; Starobin, "Origins of the Cold War", pp. 285-286.

3. The Communist Parties of South America

a) Argentina

The Argentinean Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Argentino*; PCA), the oldest on the subcontinent, was founded on January 6, 1918 as the International Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Internacional*). It was a dissident faction of the former Socialist Party whose leadership practiced a reformist parliamentarism of Bernsteinian origin. It neglected trade-union action, leaving it in the hands of anarcho-syndicalists and anarchists. With respect to the War, the Socialist leaders predominantly supported intervention with the Anglo-Saxon and French as allies. The leftist opposition, on the other hand, raised the revolutionary Marxist flag, supported internationalist and anti-war positions, and defended the Russian Bolshevist campaigns. The new Party considered itself a co-founder of the CI as it had participated in its First Congress, represented by the Italian Socialist Party's delegation.

The majority of the Socialist youth and workers' groups, mostly from Buenos Aires and Córdoba, joined the new Party. The Communists worked within the two existing central trade unions to make them join the RILU. In spite of not succeeding, they found support in important branches of both centrals. This was at a time of escalating labour and rural struggles which culminated with the so-called January 1919 *semana trágica* (tragic week), the violent repression caused by the Buenos Aires metal workers' strike, and the 1921 Patagonia strikes that ended in the massacres of workers and rural peasants. From the beginning, Party members were involved with electoral campaigns and secured representatives in Buenos Aires' legislative council and deputies in the interior provinces. For almost half a century, Victorio Codovilla and Rodolfo Ghioldi were the principal Party leaders.[17]

Up to the late thirties there were intense struggles within the PCA with respect to its party line and orientation and these reflected, in part, those of the international Communist movement. In the early twenties the extreme left-wing group of "chispistas" which opposed any program of immediate reforms, was separated from the PCA. In 1928 on the contrary, the group led by José Penelón, the founder of the Party, voiced reformist beliefs and opposed the predominant CI line. In the early thirties, under military and conservative governments, members were persecuted, the Party was banned, and its newspapers were shut down. The resulting sectarian politics were applied to the populist and reformist sectors, only ending around 1935.[18]

The popular front policy, locally defined as anti-imperialist and anti-Fascist, allowed the PCA to oppose Augustín P. Justo's conservative and fraudulent regime and to bring about a significant rapprochement between his Party and those democratic parties which also opposed the government: the Radical, Socialist, and the Demo-Progressive parties. Meanwhile the Party's influence in important and active trade unions such as those of construction workers, meat workers, metalworkers and wood workers grew significantly.

The internal popular front policy was combined with an intense activity in support of the Spanish Republic. This support was considered the principal party task and was consistent with the world-wide struggle against Fascism. It also afforded the Communists a greater influence among such social sectors as the intelligentsia and influential members of the more liberal sector of the upper classes.[19]

The new Communist tactic in the electoral field expressed itself in 1938 with support to the radical opposition candidate Marcelo de Alvear and, later, in the hopes placed on the possibility of political change

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[17] CC del PCA, *Esbozo de Historia*, pp. 19-26, 41; Corbière, *Origenes del comunismo*, pp. 24-56; Ratzer, *El movimiento socialista*, pp. 93-146.

[18] CC del PCA, *Esbozo de Historia*, pp. 50-64.

[19] CC del PCA, *Esbozo de Historia*, pp. 81-86; Hiroshi Matsushita, *Movimiento Obrero Argentino 1930-1945. Suo proyecciones en los origines del peronismo* (Buenos Aires, 1983), pp. 163-180; Mario Rapoport, *Los partidos de izquierda, el movimiento obrero y la política internacional, 1930-1946* (Buenos Aires, 1988), pp. 13-16; Mónica Quijada, "Relaciones Hispano-Argentinas, 1936-1948. Coyunturas de Crisis" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alcala de Henares, Madrid, 1989), pp. 161-291. Juan José Real's testimony is interesting. He was a fighter in Spain and editor-in-chief of the Argentinean CP's *Esbozo de Historia*. He was expelled from the PCA in 1952. See his book *Treinte Años de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1976), pp. 68-72.

presented by the election of President Roberto Ortiz. Although he emerged fraudulently from the conservative coalition, Ortiz showed reformist intentions and sympathy for the Allied cause. In its account of this, the "official history" of the PCA records an internal struggle against "right-wing opportunists " (*opportunistas de derecha*). They supposedly diffused the independent Party politics and campaigns among the working class for the sake of winning over the liberal middle-class sectors.[20]

The brief *Neutrality Stage* coincided with the implementation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and isolated the Party again from other political forces. Following this stage, the alliance strategy, in the framework of a policy dominated by the National Anti-Fascist Union (*Unión Nacional Anti-Fascista*) was again taken up and expanded. The Party, together with all the traditional political parties and the banned liberal right-wing leaders, joined the Democratic Union (*Unión Democrática*). In this way Peronism, characterized as pro-Nazi, could be opposed directly. The latter movement emerged from a nationalist and industrialist military current which had taken over in the 1943 coup d'état. In a short period of time, it was able to organize an extensive grass-roots worker's movement to confront the traditional oligarchy. Its development and 1946 electoral triumph reduced the left wing's influence in the popular sectors and greatly diminished the PCA's importance in Argentina's trade-union movement and politics.[21]

b) Brazil

The rise of Communism in Brazil is a special case. The Communist Party of Brazil (*Partido Comunista Brasileiro*; PCB), having emerged from the anarchist movement, was founded in 1922. It joined the Third International during the Fourth Congress. At that stage the principal leaders were Octavio Brandão and Astrojildo Pereira. The Party was a product of its anarchist origin, internal strife, and problems of party line orientation. Its formation was influenced by leaders of other Latin American countries and by the CI. The Party excluded anarchist trade-union groups and, later, a Trotskyist current which was able to significantly influence trade-unionism.[22]

The 1930 revolution was led by Getulio Vargas who was supported by the famous nationalist and vaguely socialist military revolutionary group "*lieutenants*" (tenientes). This group had led various rebellions in the twenties, including the famous 1924 Prestes column. The revolution was not supported by the Communists although the Party did debate the political consequences of the "lieutenants" movement. The San Pablo Committee even proposed a convergence with this rebel movement, but its members were expelled from the Party.

Luis Carlos Prestes, already of almost legendary fame, was nevertheless co-opted by the PCB, bringing to it his immense popularity and his influence with the military. Prestes had contacts with the Argentinean CP in Buenos Aires and later traveled to the Soviet Union to take up a position in the ECCI. Even so, he claimed he had not joined the PCB until his return to the country in 1934, a statement referring to Comintern activities outside the local Communist parties.[23]

Prestes's return to Brazil coincided with the adoption of the popular front policy which formed a broader political group, the National Liberating Alliance (*Alianza Nacional Libertadora*). Rodolfo Ghioldi and Arthur Ewert, important Comintern members, played a leading role in the Alliance's thwarted insurrection. The rebellion's greatest strength was the military sector that was influenced by Prestes and the support of the PCB-led political coalition. However, it was routed and violently repressed by Vargas who had turned right-wing with

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[20] CC del PCA, *Esbozo de Historia*, pp. 87-89; Ramos, *El Partido Comunista*, pp. 133-135.

[21] Mario Rapoport, *Política y Diplomacia en la Argentina, las relaciones con EEUU y la URSS* (Ph.D. dissertation, Buenos Aires, 1987), pp. 22-24, 120-131.

[22] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 93-95; Astrojildo Pereira, "A Formação do PCB", in *Ensaios Históricos y Políticos* (Sao Paulo, 1979), pp. 41-161, and id., *Construindo o PCB, 1922-1924* (Sao Paulo, 1980); Octavio Brandão, *Combates e Batalhas. Memorias* (Sao Paulo, 1978); Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 78-79.

[23] Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 166-167.

the founding of the "New State" (Estado Nuevo).[24]

After the Brazilian president changed to a new political direction in 1937, the Brazilian Fascist movement, Integralism (*el integralismo*) was outlawed and suppressed. This changed the PCB's assessment of Vargist nationalism, in spite of Prestes being imprisoned. Vargas ceased to be the chief enemy, and the Party changed to a policy of confluence with the government. This intensified during the Second World War when Vargas sided resolutely with the Allies. Towards the end of the War, the PCB politics differed from that of other parties. Prestes maintained his policy of alliance with the Vargism in power. Early on, he identified the USA as Latin America's principal enemy and opposed the right-wing Brazilian sectors which, with support from Washington, strove to displace the president. On this point he opposed the policies adopted by the Argentinean CP during this period. Prestes polemic against Codovilla on whether colonel Peron was fascist or not is well-known. The Brazilian leader criticized the Argentinean CP's negative characterization of Peron and even expressed his sympathy for this Argentinean leader.[25]

c) Uruguay and Paraguay

In Uruguay the Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de Uruguay*; PCU) was a direct extension of the Socialist Party. In 1920, the PCU joined the CI, and in 1921 it changed its name and became the Communist Party. The minority which opposed this change was expelled and re-established the Socialist Party. In this way the local Communist movement inherited an important trade-union section from Socialism in competition with anarcho-syndicalism.[26] The Uruguayan Communists participated in the democratic elections of the twenties and thirties and developed several united front organizations.

During the first half of the thirties, while sectarian tendencies predominated in the Party, president Gabriel Terra's coup d'état led to a repression of the Communists. Although their Party activities were restricted, they were not banned. Later the implementation of the popular front policy and solidarity with the Spanish Republic increased the Party's influence. At the same time the Party expelled a large Trotskyist segment.[27]

During the *Neutrality Stage*, the PCU adopted an activist policy with public campaigns clarifying the Soviet position in relation to the War. The USSR's entry into the War brought about a new turning point, expressed by a complete adherence to the Allied cause. The principal result was the full unification of the trade-union movement in which the Communists were very active. Moreover, the Party completely supported the government's foreign policy, and Montevideo was converted into a refuge for Communists and left-wingers from such neighbouring countries as Argentina where they were being persecuted. During the War, the PCU's electoral influence increased and it won a Senate seat for the first time in 1946. During this time its principal leaders included: its founder, Eugenio Gómez, who was expelled in 1956; Francisco Pintos; Julia Arévalo; the youth leader, Rodney Arizmendi.

When the War ended the PCU, unlike the Argentina CP which had been won over by "Browderism", began suggesting that its country's reactionary factions were supported by capitalist sectors. It claimed that the capitalists had sided with the Allies in the fight against Nazism only because of "imperialist antagonisms". In this way the PCU criticised those capitalist factions as well as the United States, the new hegemonous power.[28]

Paraguayan Communism, on the other hand, has a shorter history, emerging late as a result of the limited political weight of its urban working class. In the twenties only anarchist trade-union organizations existed, some of which were sympathetic to the Russian October Revolution. At the same time a group of young intellectuals led by Odilio Barthe declared itself Communist. In 1928 a Paraguayan representative participated

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[24] Ronald H. Chilcote, *The Brazilian Communist Party. Conflict and Integration, 1922-1972* (New York, 1974), p. 148; Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 163-178; Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 109-114.

[25] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 112-120; Pablo Neruda, *Confieso que he vivido. Memorias* (Buenos Aires, 1974), pp. 422, 477; Mario Rapoport, *Política y Diplomacia*, pp. 22-25.

[26] Gómez, *Historia del Partido*, pp. 38-53.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-65, 70-78.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

in the Sixth Comintern Congress, but it was only towards 1934 that the Paraguayan CP held its first national conference. Meanwhile, the Communists competed against anarchism in the development of trade-union organizations and opposed the Chaco War against Bolivia. Because of this they suffered a severe repression, including the imprisonment of their principal leaders: Barthe, Creydt, and Kaner.

In the forties, under Higinio Moriñigo's dictatorship, the Communists remained underground. In exile they initiated national unity committees in support of the anti-Fascist cause and called for civil rights for Paraguayans. In 1944, as a repercussion of the international wartime alliances between the USA, USSR, and Great Britain, Moriñigo legalized the Paraguayan CP again. This only lasted for a few years since the new realities of the Cold War excluded the Communists from Paraguayan public life. The consequence of this situation was that the importance of the Paraguayan CP always remained limited in Paraguayan politics.[29]

d) Chile

In Chile, the existence of organized Socialism came later than in the countries of the Río de la Plata. It was only in 1912 that Emilio Recabarrén founded the Socialist Workers' Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero*), with an ample trade-union base and radicalized working-class positions. The unique characteristics of the Chilean social structure, a large working class concentrated in the mining areas, partly explain the Socialist Party's initial stage of radicalization and its 1921 joining of the CI, en bloc. The new Communist Party of Chile (*Partido Comunista de Chile*; PCCh) grew spectacularly under Arturo Alessandri's presidency, but suffered hard repressive blows in 1925 and later under Carlos Ibañez's military government. Because of this repression, major internal dissidence emerged, opposed to the policies of the Comintern's Latin American bureau. This opposition crystallized into a faction, the Hidalgo-Mendoza group, which came close to the Trotskyist opposition on an international level.[30] In 1931 the official Chilean CP - the Party was already divided - tried to take over the military barracks, setting off the terrible repression known as "tragic Easter" (pascua trágica). By the following year a military coup, led by Marmaduke Grove and other colonels of radicalized nationalist ideology, had established the so-called Socialist Republic (*la república socialista*) which was supported by the Trotskyist faction and other left-wing groups. Meanwhile, the official Chilean CP, in keeping with the general political positions of the period, characterized the new rulers as "Social Fascists" (*socialfascistas*). It stayed independent in the movement, without supporting the regime. The experience lasted only a few months, up to the restoration of the traditional power. By the following year, the Socialist Party of Chile (*Partido Socialista de Chile*; PS) had been founded. Together with the dissident Communist faction, the PS organized a "left-wing bloc" (*block de izquierdas*") from which the PCCh remained apart.[31]

Subsequently, the Party turned to a policy of popular front and joined the rest of the left wing. Encouraged by the PCCh itself, this left wing expanded, incorporating the radical faction which was represented by bourgeois and middle levels. It achieved the 1938 electoral triumph of Aguirre Cerdá, the PCCh's candidate. He was a defender of the anti-Fascist cause and had been given preference over the more leftist-oriented "Grovism".[32]

With the start of the Second World War and the PCCh's adoption of a "neutralist" position, serious disagreements came up in the front. In particular, the clearly pro-Allied Socialists demanded that the Communists be excluded. The Communists, however, did well electorally and for the first time surpassed the socialist parliamentary representation. The PS, on the other hand, split into factions and the PCCh became the principal leftist force. With the German invasion of the USSR, the unity of the popular front was consolidated and its activities crowned with the 1946 triumph of the radical Gonzales Videla. He appointed three Communists to his first cabinet. The PCCh reinforced its standing in the trade-union movement. This situation took a dramatic turn

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[29] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 149-153.

[30] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 177-178; Viola, *Recabarren*, pp. 264-272. For an "official" version, refer to Hernán Ramirez Necochea, *Origen y formación del Partido Comunista de Chile* (Santiago, 1965). See also Julio César Jobet, *Recabarren, los orígenes del movimiento obrero y del socialismo chileno* (Santiago, 1955).

[31] Viola, *Recabarren*, pp. 273-275; Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 183-189.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 189-193. Cf. Ramirez Necochea, *Orígenes y formación*.

in 1947 when, as a result of the Cold War, Gabriel Gonzáles Videla changed his policy and expelled the Communists from his government. He then banned the PCCh.[33]

e) Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia

Peruvian Communism has the same origin as the anti-imperialist and populist American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*; APRA) movement, led by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. The revolutionary ferment among Peruvian students surfaced in the twenties and this student group became linked with the trade-union movement. Under Augusto Leguía's dictatorship, the exiled Haya de la Torre founded the APRA whose Paris representative was Eudocio Ravines, the future founder of the Communist Oarty of Peru (*Partido Comunista del Perú*; PCP). Haya de la Torre was in Moscow for the Fifth Comintern Congress and talked with the Soviet Party leaders. He kept his nationalist reservations with regard to Communism, which he considered an exclusively Russian phenomenon. Even so, he attended the 1928 anti-imperialist Congress in Brussels which was organized by the CI.

During this same period in Peru, José Carlos Mariátegui, who had converted to Marxism during a stay in Europe, founded the review *Amauta* (*Indian Sage*). This publication was directed to his followers, with the goal of founding a Peruvian Marxist Party. Julio Portocarrero, a trade-union leader, participated in Moscow's Fifth RILU Congress and established contacts with the Comintern which supported the goals of this Marxist group.[34]

This is how the Socialist Party of Perú (*Partido Socialista del Perú*) was founded in 1928, with Mariátegui as secretary general. The Party adhered to Marxism-Leninism without pronouncing on its affiliation with the Comintern. In the 1929 Latin American Communist Conference of Buenos Aires, the Party was criticized for keeping the Socialist "cover". Even so, it was only after Mariátegui's death in 1930 that the Party became Communist, with Ravines as its new leader. The PCP's influence in the trade-union movement increased, especially after the overthrow of the dictator Leguía. Yet it soon encountered strong competition with Aprism which had the support of anarcho-syndicalist labour sectors, students, and huge numbers of Indians from the interior. The PCP then labelled the APRA "Social Fascist", while the latter accused the Communists of being Moscow's appendages. In 1934 both parties were banned and a year later, with the new popular front's policy, the PCP appealed to the APRA to forge an anti-imperialist union. Its proposal was rejected even though it had won the approval of several APRA leaders. With Communist support, president Manuel Prado came to power in 1939 and the PCP was able to extend its influence in trade-unionism and politics. Even so, in 1942 Ravines and Portocarrero, accused of being Trotskyists, were expelled from the Party which maintained the pro-Allies policy. This process continued under the 1944 establishment of a Unified Workers' Central (*Central Única de Trabajadores*), directed by the Communist Juan Luna, and a formation of a Democratic Front which included the Aprists and supported President José Luis Bustamente's 1945 election.

In Ecuador, political life is concentrated in the cities of Quito and Guayaquil, with a negligible industrial workers' population compared to the vast Indian peasant population which the Communists had tried to organize and direct since the founding of the Party.

What was to become the Ecuadorian CP was founded in the mid-twenties, in 1926, as the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*; PS) by a group of intellectuals, including its future leader Ricardo Paredes. They grouped around the newspaper *La Antorcha* (The Torch), influencing the leftist sectors of the liberal youth.

The PS published *La Vanguardia* (The Vanguard) and followed a course of solidarity with Communism. The "group of friends of Lenin" (*grupo de amigos de Lenin*), headed by Paredes, was founded within the Party and it managed to have its own newspaper. From 1927 to 1928, Paredes traveled to Moscow and participated in the Sixth CI Congress. The PS was admitted to the CI as "associate member", and the youth of the Party adopted the name Communist Youth (*Juventud Comunista*). Finally, in 1931, the Party converted into a Communist Party, even though a dissident sector re-established the PS in 1933.[35]

After a brief period of enmity between the two organizations, the Ecuadorean CP called for a united

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[33] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 192-204, 216-218.

[34] Moreno, "L'International", pp. 37-38; Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 97-98, 113-120.

[35] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 184, 234-239, 343-346.

front in 1934. It formalized a political alliance between Communists, Socialists, and Liberals which continued for several years and opposed both the conservative faction in power and the influence of the Church. The Ecuadorian CP's strength came from the trade unions and the indigenous organizations. In 1944 Paredes organized the Federation of Ecuadorian Indians (*Federación de Indios Ecuatorianos*). A national trade-union central was founded in the forties, despite the prevailing repression. It was directed by Communists and Socialists with the support of Lombardo Toledano's Latin American Workers' Central (*Central de trabajadores de America Latina*; CTAL). Meanwhile, opposition to the conservative regime increased, leading up to the 1944 Communist-supported revolution which brought Velazco Ibarra to the presidency.

In Bolivia the process was more complex. The Communist Party of Bolivia (*Partido Comunista Boliviano*; PCB) was founded as late as 1949, even though Communist groups had been active since the twenties. Around 1926 such groups existed in the main cities and some were active within anarchist organizations. In addition, a Socialist Party, close to Communism in ideology, was set up but was heavily persecuted. It dissolved when its leader, Gustavo Navarro (Tristán Maroff), was deported.

When the Chaco War against Paraguay broke out, the left-wing and labour movement were especially repressed by the government since Communist cells supported the front's revolutionary propaganda. The anarchists, on the other hand, promoted individual desertion. It was in exile, especially in Argentina, that groups of workers and intellectuals were formed which would later found the Left-wing Revolutionary Party (*Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria*; PIR), PCB's predecessor. They also founded the Revolutionary Workers' Party (*Partido Obrero Revolucionario*; POR) which was Trotskyist and a major rival of the Communists in Bolivia.[36]

During the thirties a process of unification of trade-unions took place, led by Maroff's followers and supported by Communist cells. In 1940 the PIR was founded, uniting various groups. It proclaimed to be Marxist but denied its connection with international Communism. In a short time the PIR gained control of the Unified Worker's Central (*Central Obrera Unificada*). During the same period, in 1938, the POR had been founded. It joined the Fourth International, and initiated important activities among the miners.

In the same way, the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*; MNR), directed by the young economist Victor Paz Estenssoro, greatly extended its influence among the workers during this period. The MNR's influence among the miners and the peasants permitted the triumph of the 1943 revolution that brought General Gualberto Villaroel to the presidency, with Víctor Paz Estenssoro as minister. Initially the PIR supported the new government and initiated negotiations with it. Later, however, the two came into opposition, no doubt due in part to the fact that the PIR's principal leader, José Antonio Arze, who lived in the USA, was teaching at a school for North American CP executives. The United States government, at the time, accused the Bolivian revolution of being Fascist and linked it with the Argentinean military dictatorship. This opinion was shared by Communists from Argentina and other countries. Some members of the international Communist movement, however, adopted a different position towards Bolivia's National government. One of these was Lombardo Toledano who seemed to back it.

Nonetheless, the PIR contributed to the coup d'état that overthrew Villaroel who was executed in 1946. This alienated the labour support. It also caused the future dissolution of the PIR which re-appeared later as the Communist Party of Bolivia.

f) Colombia and Venezuela

The origins of the Colombian CP (*Partido Comunista de Colombia*; PCC) date back to the twenties. In 1924 Silvestre Savisky, a Russian immigrant, arrived in the country propagandizing the Russian Revolution, and he formed a Communist group. Out of this group were to emerge important Columbian leaders who would later play significant roles in other political organizations, especially in the Liberal Party.

Communist groups, including workers from the banana plantation zones, Calí and Medellín, organized the 1925 and 1926 worker's congresses together with anarcho-syndicalists. This is how the National Workers' Central (*Central Obrera Nacional*), was formed. Its trade-union majority, whose leader was the Communist Torres Giraldo, was affiliated with the RILU. The Revolutionary Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Revolucionario*; PSR) emerged from the 1926 trade-union congress. It was Communist oriented but not affiliated with the Comintern. Torres Giraldo pushed for membership to the CI and he attained this in 1927 when the PSR was accepted as "associate member". Giraldo was then able to get elected to the Executive of the RILU. Another

[36] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 148-151, 212-215, 220-228, 253-255.

Communist and future Liberal politician, Uribe Marquez, became a member of the ECCI.

The PSR rose in influence among workers. It published various newspapers and, along with anarcho-syndicalists, directed the extensive 1928 banana pickers' strike. Those who worked in the banana plantations zone were: Augusto Durán, future Party secretary; Rabate, a French Communist; and Joseph Zack Konfedder, a North American Communist - the latter two sent by the Comintern. The struggle ended with a massacre of workers. As a result the PSR suffered a loss of influence.

Because of these events the Moscow CI secretary, Dmitri Manuilsky, and various Colombian leaders met and recommended that the PSR become a Communist party. This became a reality during a July 1930 conference. The PCC, severely persecuted in its own country, concentrated its efforts on the workers' movement and on work with the Indians. It even put forward an indigenous peasant as presidential candidate for the 1934 elections.

Even though the Liberals in the government seemed to be left-wing and reformist oriented, the PCC did not form a political alliance with them, accusing them of being in league with the Terra Lieutenants' oligarchy. This situation did not last long, because around 1936 the popular front was launched and an alliance with the Liberals in the government became possible. Together they formed a united trade-union central, the Trade-union Confederation of Colombia (*Confederación Sindical de Colombia*), the future CTC, which was one of the 1938 CTAL founders in Mexico.

The period of anti-Nazi alliance implied a stronger collaboration with the Liberals than had existed in the preceding period. Following the example of its Cuban and North American comrades, the PCC changed its name to the Socialist Democratic Party (*Partido Socialista Democrática*; PSD;). It obtained a Senate seat and various representatives to Congress. The rise of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, the liberal and very popular anti-"traditional oligarchy" leader, brought about a decline in Communist influence. The Party attacked Gaitán in the 1946 elections, calling him Fascist. The loss of influence gave way to an internal party struggle in the PSD, directed against Durán who was accused of Browderism. Around 1947 the Party suffered a major split.[37]

The Venezuelan CP (*Partido Comunista de Venezuela*; PCV), on the other hand, emerged during the 1928 student revolt against Juan Vicente Gómez's dictatorship. When the movement was repressed, an exiled group headed by Gustavo Machado founded the Venezuelan Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Venezolano*) which became a CI popular front organization in Latin America. Gustavo Machado had been in Nicaragua and had been Augusto Sandino's representative in Mexico. Rómelo Betancourt, also in exile, contributed to the formation of the Costa Rican CP and became the future leader of the Democratic Action Party (*Partido Acción Democrática*; PAD) which competed with the Communists.

In 1929 Machado joined a military putsch against Gómez, led by General Rafael Urbina and they captured the island of Curaçao. This revolution was then suppressed. Two years later, in 1931, a group of students, left-over followers of the "generation of '28", founded the PCV. A PCV delegate attended the 1935 Seventh Comintern Congress which accepted the Party as a full member.

Despite the continuation of the López Contreras dictatorship, the death of Gómez in 1935 facilitated the opposition's activities. The National Democratic Party (*Partido Democrática Nacional*) was founded. An alliance was developed between Communists led by Juan Bautista Fuenmayor and the brothers Eduardo and Gustavo Machado, and non-Communists led by Betancourt. Because of the differences between these two groups, the Communists separated in 1937 and began to work openly through the PCV, competing in trade-union activities work and gaining control of various trade unions, especially the oil workers' trade union.

After the period of *Neutrality* during which the PCV had followed the directives from Moscow, the PCV reunited with Betancourt and his PAD in 1941. It supported Rómulo Gallegos's candidature against General Isaias Medina, the regime's candidate. Soon after and because of wartime alliances, Medina liberalized his politics and allowed the legalization of both the PAD and the Communist organizations legalized under the name Popular Union (*Unión Popular*). Along with the change of name, the latter changed their attitude towards Medina, becoming his allies and participating in his government. However, the Machados and a group of trade-union leaders, executives of the Popular Union, opposed this pro-Medina policy while Juan Bautista Fuenmayor supported it, which led to the 1945 Party split. This revealed how much the PCV was influenced by the Browderist-style Democratic alliance policy. Later, Fuenmayor self-critically admitted his error in having given

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[37] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 243-250. Cf. also *Treinte años de lucha del Partido Comunista de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1965).

such great support to General Medina. Notwithstanding, the PCV re-unified in 1946.[38]

4. Documentary Sources and Bibliography

The documentary base necessary for a study of the Communist movement in South America includes a very diverse and fragmentary list of local and international sources. The impossibility, up to now, of accessing the Moscow Comintern and Soviet Department of Foreign Affairs archives constitutes a gap which, without detriment to the possibility of a prompt solution, strengthens the need to resort to a scrupulous search among the most diverse sources, especially local ones.

The problem of the scarceness and lack of continuity of each country's sources, both of the political documents and Communist parties' press, is due to the difficulties involved in the particular history of each party. The frequent banning and repression the parties experienced decimated many party and private archives. At the same time, because of the mainly clandestine and secret nature of their activities, a great part of them must be inferred from other types of secondary sources: memoirs, private correspondence, state documents, police archives - with the resulting need for a sharpened critical analysis.

The "official" and "semi-official" histories elaborated by each party and by Communist leaders and intellectuals were usually written subsequent to the decades of the CI's activity and are an essential starting point. These histories should also be examined critically, taking into account that the point of view of the predominating political tendencies and personalities at the time of their publication affected the resulting versions of each party's past: support, oversights, emphases, and errors. Even within these limitations, they constitute a source for events, names, political attitudes, activities, and internal struggles which, in contrast to other materials, present us with a useful approximation of the facts. In this way, the histories of the following regional Communist parties represent starting points, or near approximations, for the analysis of the movement as a whole: the Argentinean, 1947; the Uruguayan, edited by its principal leader after his expulsion for Stalinism, 1961; the Chilean, written by Ramirez Necochea, 1965; the Colombian, 1965; the Peruvian, written by Jorge del Prado, 1968; the Brazilian, found in the works of Astrojildo Pereira and Octavio Brandão; the Venezuelan, written by Juan Bautista Fuenmayor; and the Paraguayan, written by several of its leaders.[39]

Other valuable source are the party political newspapers. Unfortunately, the individual countries' main libraries do not always have these documents available, partly because they are difficult to obtain and partly because of lack of interest. The following newspapers can be mentioned for their importance to the political development of the respective parties: *La International* (The International), *Orientación* (Orientation), the Argentinean *La Hora* (The Hour), the Uruguayan *Justicia* (Justice), the Peruvian *Amauta*, the Chilean *El Siglo* (The Century), etc.

The only complete collection of *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* (The South American Correspondent), the Comintern organ in South America, is found in Milan in the Brazilian labour movement's historical archive. It forms part of the archives of Astrogildo Pereira which are of great importance for any study of the Brazilian CP. *La Correspondencia*'s immediate extension, the *Revista Communista* (Communist Review), was the theoretical organ of the South American Secretariat. Important, as well, are all the articles on the region, often written by important leaders of the local Communist parties for internationally distributed publications of the Comintern: *International Press Conference*, *World News and Views*, *L'Internationale Communiste*, *The Communist International*, etc. These are substantial sources for the study of the regional parties' political orientations and activities. Of course, from a more general standpoint, the main documents of the CI, and particularly those referring to colonial and dependent countries, should not be overlooked. In this respect, the different Comintern Congresses are obvious sources, as are the CPSU's and opposition leaders and groups' publications and documents.

Other essential documents to be consulted include those which refer to the Latin American labour

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[38] Alexander, *Communism*, pp. 253-259; Caballero, *La Internacional Comunista*, pp. 190-194.

[39] CC del PCA, *Esbozo de Historia*; Gómez (ed.), *Historia del Partido Comunista del Uruguay hasta el año 1951*; Necochea, *Origen y formación del Partido Comunista de Chile*; *Treinte años de lucha del Partido Comunista de Colombia*; Pereira, "A Formação do PCB", and id., *Construindo o PCB, 1922-1924*; Brandão, *Combates e Batalhas*; Jorge del Prado, *40 Años de Lucha* (Lima, 1968); Juan Bautista Fuenmayor, *Viente años de Política* (Madrid, 1968).

movement, partly influenced by Communism or in which the Communists played an important role. These include the League of Latin American Workers (*Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina*) and documents which emerged from the Latin American trade-union conferences, such as the 1929 one.

Other primary, but difficult to access, sources are the local Communist parties' own archives and those of their leaders or ex-leaders. The most important available archive is the above-mentioned one of Astrojildo Periera. On the other hand, a little-used source is that offered by oral history, profiting from the leaders and militants who are still alive.

The officially published party political documents are easier to obtain. Edited at the time as pamphlets and books, or re-printed as part of the works of important leaders - often with omissions - these documents synthesize opinions, positions, and orientations of important periods. Similarly, the CI South American Secretariat's publications are indispensable, as in the case of the First South American Communist Conference held in 1929 in Buenos Aires. The trade-union journals, reflecting the Communist party line, the parties' own cultural and intellectual magazines and those of similarly-minded sectors also represent a valuable and, in the existing bibliography, little-used source. It permits a reconstruction of both the Communist influence on different levels of society and its policy of alliances. Also relevant are the documents of internal opposition and other left-wing groups.

Memoirs of party leaders and of famous people of that period, biographies, and even novels on the lives and political activities of Communists contribute not only facts which can be verified against other documentation, but also evidence of the vision, cultural trends, and ways of thinking which formed part of the history of the regions's Communist movement. These include the memoirs of Jules Humbert-Droz and Eudocio Ravines,[40] and Pablo Neruda and Jorge Amado's famous novels.

The national and foreign governments' archives also provide a necessary source. The Washington DC National Archives particularly stand out for their wealth of information and accessibility, especially all the State Department documents which refer to South America and contain abundant information on Communism and closely monitor its activities. These archives include many intelligence files, especially of the FBI and OSS, precursor of the CIA. These documents, although very distorted at times, contain confidential facts and information otherwise unobtainable. The British, French, and several other European archives often also have useful information. The archives of the individual South American countries, less accessible and organized, are still insufficiently tapped.

The repercussions of the Communist parties' and labour movement's politics as well as how these were perceived by other political groups and by the local ruling classes can be gathered from the national and foreign newspapers of that time.

Some of these, for example the Buenos Aires *Crítica* (The Critic) (with the widest circulation of the time), also expressed the opinions of the Communists in the editorial committee, even though the paper itself had a very different political line.[41]

Access to much of the information is facilitated by the existence of specialized archives, though still very general or fragmented, such as the United States' Hoover library, the aforementioned archives of Milan, the London Marx Memorial Library, and the Amsterdam Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, among others.

A beginning and general basic bibliography on the South American Communist movement should include at least the following works: Victor Alba, *Esquema Histórico del Communismo en Latinoamérica*, 1960; Robert Alexander's complete, although one-sided and somewhat antiquated book *Communism in Latin America*, 1957; Rollie Poppino, *International Communism in Latin American*, 1964; Boris Goldenberg, *Kommunismus in Lateinamerika*, 1971; and the more recent and well-documented, if schematic and with important gaps, work of Manuel Caballero, *La Internacional Communista y la Revolución Latinoamericana*, 1987. This list does not include those works which examine the history of the Third International and the regional labour movements. Michel Löwy, Robert Paris, Stephen Clissold, Luis Aguilar, Jose Aricó, Hugo Moreno, and others have written illuminating books and articles on the Marxist and Communist influence on the region.

As concerns the history of the South American Communist parties, the works by the following authors

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[40] See Jules Humbert-Droz, *"L'oeil de Moscou" à Paris (1922-1924)* (Paris, 1964); Eudocio Ravines, *The Yenan Way* (New York, 1951).

[41] See Helvio I. Botana's books *Memorias. Tras los dientes del perro* (Buenos Aires, 1977). The author is the son of Natalio Botana, the famous founder and, up to his death, editor of the paper *Crítica*.

merit mentioning: on Argentina - Rodolfo Puiggrós, Jorge A. Ramos, Emilio J. Corbière, and Otto Vargas; on Brazil - Ronald Chilcote and John W.F. Dulles; on "Mariateguism" (*mariateguismo*) and its relation with the Comintern - Flores Galindo; on Chile - A. Barnard and P. Drake; and several articles on other parties in the region.

In spite of all this, an integrated and up-to-date work, based on both general documents and on the particular history of each local CP, on the Third International and the South American Communist movement is still lacking. Caballero's work is a useful first approximation.

The many difficulties include accessing the material, the very secrecy of many of its activities and events making the material unreliable. In addition, and paradoxically, there is the abundance of events, the variety of political positions, and the wealth of direct and indirect documentation. As we have seen, South America was not just on the sideline of either international Communism or the continent's political evolution. A new and solid reconstruction of the South American Communists' past can be an indispensable contribution towards a better understanding of the development of the political and social movements in our turbulent twentieth century.

Translated by Bernadette van Houten