

**Sandra Pujals, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras / Katya Vladimirov, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia (US):
Lenin's Muchachos. A Database of Comintern and Front Organizations' Personnel in Latin America, 1919-1943.**

Abstract

The present article is a preliminary report based upon the statistical analysis of a database on the personnel for the Comintern and other front organizations in Latin America between 1919 and 1943. The database is part of an ongoing research project, under the title "*Su Casa Es Mi Casa: The Caribbean Bureau of the Comintern and the Charting of a Soviet Caribbean, 1930-1936.*" Although the research project focuses on Comintern activity within the Caribbean region, the database will include information on Comintern personnel in Latin America, both natives and foreigners. In terms of the specific goals of the database, several questions particularly informed the assessment, namely the relationship between center and periphery, the participation of Latin American communists in the Comintern, and the issue of a generational divide.

Introduction

The present article is a preliminary report based upon the statistical analysis of a database on the personnel for the Comintern and its front organizations in Latin America between 1919 and 1943.¹ The database is part of an ongoing research project on the Comintern in Latin America and the Caribbean carried out by Dr. Sandra Pujals of the Department of History at the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras, with the collaboration of Dr. Katya Vladimirov of the Department of History and Philosophy at Kennesaw University, Kennesaw, Georgia. This project has been financed in part by a two-year grant from the Institutional Research Fund (FIPI) of the College of Graduate Studies and Research (DEGI) of the University of Puerto Rico. In 2006, Sandra Pujals was also a recipient of a short-term grant from the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C. for a preliminary investigation of sources at the Library of Congress, which holds a digitized archival fund of approximately twenty million pages from the Comintern archive in Moscow.² Her first article on Comintern archival sources for Puerto Rico has already been published, while a second one on the Caribbean Bureau of the Comintern is in progress.³ Katya Vladimirov has developed several electronic filing systems for the purpose of historical analysis of statistical information. She is

¹ We would like to thank the College of Graduate Studies and Research of the University of Puerto Rico and the *Kennan Institute of The Woodrow Wilson Center* for their financial support of our research. We are also indebted to a number of scholars whose encouragement and feedback have made our work possible: James Earl Haynes, Ronald Bachman, and Inés Flores at the Library of Congress, and Isabel A. Tirado, Richard Stites, David Goldfrank, and Rex Wade. Finally, our special acknowledgement to Shakira Acevedo, and Damaris Marrero for their excellent work in research and database processing.

² The database for the Comintern archives at the Library of Congress is one of the most outstanding projects of its kind for the institution, and the most significant source available at the LOC. A short discussion on the digitized archive, and the INCOMKA project that made it possible, is included further ahead in this article.

³ Sandra Pujals, "*¿Una perla en el Caribe soviético?: Puerto Rico en los archivos de la Komintern en Moscú, 1921-1943*" (A Pearl in the Soviet Caribbean?: Puerto Rico in the Comintern Archives in Moscow, 1921-1923), *Op.Cit.*, *Revista del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico* (Journal of the Center for Historical Research of the University of Puerto Rico), num. 17 (2007).

currently working on a database for the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union up until its liquidation in 1991.

The project on the Comintern in the Caribbean is comprised of several tasks: research, development of a database, and statistical analysis of the database. The research part of the project, under the title "*Su Casa Es Mi Casa: The Caribbean Bureau of the Comintern and the Charting of a Soviet Caribbean, 1930-1936*," focuses on the organizational activity of the Comintern's Caribbean Bureau, and is primarily based upon the documentation of the Comintern archives for that entity, available in digitized form at the Library of Congress. This digitized archival source is the product of the multinational initiative of the International Committee for the Computerization of the Comintern Archive (INCOMKA), between the Library of Congress, the Federal Archival Service of Russia (*Rosarkhiv*), and a number of archival institutions throughout the world. The INCOMKA database allows free and easy access to millions of pages of Comintern files for a significant variety of subjects and institutions connected to international communism or radical activity world-wide, between 1919 and 1943. This cyber-archive, available at the Library of Congress since 2004, can be also accessed in certain libraries and archival depositories in Europe, including France, Germany, and Hungary. Along with a well-organized index of files, the database provides direct access to the documents from a computer work-station equipped with a printer, which makes it possible for visiting scholars with limited time for research to continue working with printed copies of documents at home.⁴

The second part of the project involves the development of a database for individuals connected to the Comintern, its front organizations, and/or radical movements in Latin America. Although the study on the Caribbean Bureau focuses on organizational activity in that region alone, the database will include biographical information on both Latin Americans and foreigners connected to the Comintern or any of its front agencies, such as the International Red Aid (*Socorro Rojo Internacional*) and the Anti-imperialist League throughout a much broader, Latin American geographical scope. Much of the personal details for the individuals included in the database are supplied by Lazar JEIFETS', Victor JEIFETS', and Peter Huber's biographical dictionary, *La Internacional Comunista y América Latina, 1919-1943: diccionario biográfico*.⁵ Research in progress may also contribute additional data, particularly for Comintern agents in the British and French West Indies, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic during the 1930's, whose names are rarely mentioned in the JEIFETS'/Huber dictionary. While the Comintern's Caribbean Bureau had a very limited impact on the communist and radical trade union activity in these localities, it most likely provided the foundations for a radical culture, and more eclectic political and trade union movements in the region after 1945.⁶

⁴ There are numerous publications discussing the INCOMKA project and the digitized Comintern archival files. See, for example: Ronald D. Bachman, "The Comintern Archives Database: Bringing the Archives to the Scholars," <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/comintern/comintern-article.html>; John Haynes, "170,000 Names for the INCOMKA Database of the Comintern Archives. The Result of International Cooperation," *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies*, IX (2003), no. 16. For a discussion on the archives' Latin American documentation, see: Svetlana Rosenthal, "Latin America in the Comintern Archives," *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies*, IX (2003), no. 16. Additional information is also available through the Library of Congress' European Reading Room website: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/comintern/comintern-project.html>

⁵ Lazar JEIFETS', Victor JEIFETS', Peter Huber, *La Internacional Comunista y América Latina, 1919-1943: diccionario biográfico*. Geneva; Moscow: Instituto de Latinoamérica de la Academia de las Ciencias e Institut pour l'histoire du communisme, 2004.

⁶ In the island of Puerto Rico for example, evidence from the Comintern archives indicates that Alberto E. Sánchez, president of the *Partido Comunista Puertorriqueño*, between the mid 1930's until its liquidation in 1944, may have been one of the representatives sent from New York (with a short

In terms of the specific goals of the database on Latin America, several questions particularly informed the assessment, namely, the relationship between center and periphery, the matter of membership of natives and their position in the Comintern structure, and the issue of demographics and the generational dynamics involved. The inquiry on the center/periphery issue examines the possible interrelationship between the two poles, evaluating whether or not the Comintern's power structure was strictly pyramidal in authority and leadership. While new research relying on Comintern archival material points to a degree of autonomy under certain circumstances, a general panorama supported by statistical evidence has not been available until now.⁷ The comparative analysis of membership in terms of the ratio between local and foreign communists also contributes a new angle to the center/periphery debate. On the other hand, the element of demographics as a catalyst for change and conflict within the Comintern structure, a matter already pointed out in regards to the Communist Party of Spain during the Spanish Civil War for example, may afford a more vivid and human vision to an otherwise dry and impersonal history of the agency.⁸ Lastly, the database also provides a historical space for a demographic element hardly considered in the discussion: communist women. The statistical evidence on this issue serves as a framework for the examination of the role of women in international communism, opening the way for the definition of guidelines for gender as a new research option in the study of the Comintern.

Lenin's *Muchachos*: Comintern Personnel in Latin America.

A few days before his assassination in 1940, Leon Trotsky, one of the original founders of the Comintern, pondered pessimistically on the transformation of that institution, underlining the questionable moral and revolutionary caliber of its new breed of members. "In the initial

soujourn in Moscow) to organize activity in that island at the beginning of the 1930's. The Jelfets and Huber biographical dictionary does not include any information on this individual. See: *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (RGASPI) f. 500 (*Karibskoe Buro Secretariata Latinskoj Ameriki*), op.1, dd. 1-2. After the liquidation of the PCP, Sánchez became member of the *Partido Popular Democrático*, the populist party that negotiated an autonomous constitution and government under United States federal sovereignty in 1952. See: Georg Fromm, "La huelga de 1934; una interpretación marxista (II)", "En Rojo", *Claridad*, 1-7 de julio de 1977, p. 4. See also: "Do Partido Comunista Portorriquenho ao IV Congresso do Partido Comunista do Brasil, Novembro 1954," http://www.marxists.org/portugues/tematica/1954/congresso_pcb/mensagens_pcs/porto_rico.htm, and "Documento confidencial del FBI sobre la reunión del MPI en julio de 1960": <http://www.preb.com/FBI/MPI1960.htm>. On Sánchez's participation in the constituent assembly for the new government of Puerto Rico see: "Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado, 1952" <http://www.rootsweb.com/~prsanjua/ela-1952.htm>. See also: Margaret Stevens, "Bolshevik current in the black Caribbean Sea, 1929-1937," <http://www.africanstudies.uct.ac.za/postamble/vol22/Stevens.pdf>; and Manning Marable, "Remembering George Padmore," *Race and History* 2000, http://www.raceandhistory.com/Historians/george_padmore.htm.

⁷ According to the leading work on the Comintern in Latin America by Manuel Caballero, the participation of Latin American communists within the structure of the Comintern was limited, since the institution operated under centralized Soviet control. Manuel Caballero, *Latin America and the Comintern, 1919-1943*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. New research on Latin America has already proven otherwise. See, for example: Jürgen Mothes: "Lateinamerika. Komintern-Politik gegenüber einer Großregion. Thesen zur Problematik regionalgeschichtlicher Studien, zur Ausgangslage der Forschung und mit einem KI-Literaturbericht. Teil 1", *The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Comintern, Communism and Stalinism*, 5-6 (1994/95), p. 42-61; Barry Carr, "From Caribbean Backwater to Revolutionary Opportunity: Cuba's Evolving Relationship with the Comintern, 1925-34," in Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe ed., *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-1943*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. 234-253. For the discussion on the center/periphery issue from a European perspectives see: Mikhail Narinsky y Jürgen Rojahn, *Center and Periphery: The History of the Comintern in Light of New Documents*. Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 1996.

⁸ Tim Rees, "The highpoint of Comintern influence? The Communist Party and the Civil War in Spain," in Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe ed., *International Communism and the Communist International*, pp. 143-167.

stages of the Soviet regime,” Trotsky recalled, “the boldest and most unselfish revolutionists in different countries joined the October Revolution and the Communist International. Of this original revolutionary strata that proved in action its loyalty to the October Revolution ... literally, not a single person remains. Through interminable expulsions, economic pressure, direct bribery, purges, and executions, the totalitarian Kremlin clique has transformed the Comintern completely into its obedient tool. The present leading tier of the Comintern, as well as its constituent sections, comprises people who did not join the October Revolution but the triumphant oligarchy, the fountain head of high political titles and material boons.”⁹

While perhaps more academic in their rhetoric, many historians are no less cynical in their portrayal of the internal fragmentation of the organization, and the ethical and moral decay within this multinational ideological enterprise. For example, according to Peter Huber, a large percentage of local communists were admitted into the Executive Committee (ECCI), the institution’s core administrative structure, after 1935, which consequently gave them access to benefits and services, including food, products, and free trips.”¹⁰ In the case of Latin America, Manuel Caballero has also pointed out that the fact that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union provided not only guidance and leadership, but also funds, complicated the relationship between Moscow, the Comintern, and the local communist parties, which operated as “sections” of a supposedly “global” communist party, with headquarters in the Soviet capital. “Thus,” Caballero explains, “the confusion between ‘professional revolutionaries’ sent by the Comintern and the functionaries of the Narkomindel – the People’s Commissariat for Foreign affairs – was normal, not to say deliberate.... In those conditions..., the ‘agents from Moscow’ (as well as the ‘gold from Moscow’) were not mere legends.”¹¹ Finally, as Eric Ching and Jussi Pakkasvirta suggest, the relationship between the Soviets and the local communist parties in Latin America was much like a marriage of convenience, where loyalty and faithful adherence to ideology were not always a priority. In order to extract benefits from Moscow, local communists probably molded and articulated their agenda in a way that was both pleasing and attractive to Comintern officials.¹²

Aside from the romantic, nostalgic testimonies, and a variety of abstract arguments concerning the character and personality of the Comintern, the personal data of the organization’s agents and local communist leaders is rarely taken into consideration in its historical context.¹³ Whether courageous knights or Machiavellian Soviet crooks, the social element that gave life to an otherwise arid and somber bureaucratic structure remains somewhat of a mystery within the history of the Comintern. The database project for Comintern personnel in Latin America will contribute an organized biographical record for individuals involved in radical activity in the region. This cyber-archive catalogues the data

⁹ Leon Trotsky: “The Comintern and the OGPU”, Fourth International, November 1940, pp. 148-163. See also: “*Kominternovskii aspekt vnutripartiinoi bor’by v VKP(b) v seredine 20-kh godov*,” in A. Iu. Vatlin, *Komintern, pervyie desiat’ let*. Moskva: Izdatel’skii Tsentri ‘Rossiia Molodaia’, 1993, pp. 56-80.

¹⁰ Peter Huber, “Structure of the Moscow apparatus of the Comintern and decision-making,” in Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, eds., *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-1943*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. 41-63, p. 52.

¹¹ Manuel Caballero, *Latin America and the Comintern, 1919-1943*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 33-34.

¹² Erik Ching and Jussi Pakkasvirta, “Latin American Materials in the Comintern Archive,” *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2000): 138-149.

¹³ The historical significance of the Comintern’s membership has been pointed out by several scholars: Jane Degras, *The Communist International, 1919-1943*. London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1956-1965, 3 vols; F. Svatek, “*Gli organi dirigenti dell’Internazionale comunista: loro sviluppo e composizione (1919-1943)*”, *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 1-3 (1977); V. Kahan, “The Communist International 1919-1943: the personnel of its highest bodies,” *International Review of Social History* 21 (1976), pp. 151-185.

according to a number of parameters and questions related to fundamental issues concerning the history of the organization, particularly in Latin America. Results may thus serve as solid, quantitative evidence for arguments that are still controversial and widely debated, such as the role of the Soviet Union in Comintern activity, or the participation of Latin American communists in the political arena of international communism.¹⁴ In terms of its historiographical significance, the database is expected to include biographical information for approximately two-thousand individuals, both native and foreign, a figure that suggests the level of communist activity and the potential extension of Comintern agencies' organizational network in the area. One of the main goals of the database on the personnel for the Comintern and affiliated agencies in Latin America is, therefore, to inform the debate through quantitative feedback, thus contributing a more structured foundation for a historiography that is still a work in progress.¹⁵

Preliminary analysis and conclusions.

This section discusses the preliminary results of the quantitative analysis contributed by the database, according to the data supplied by four hundred biographical files that served as a sample for this first, experimental study. These observations are in no way conclusive, since they are based upon limited data for a small portion of the workforce examined. In addition, the database itself is still under scrutiny, and has been subjected to a number of technical revisions in order to assure its accuracy and reliability. The discussion that follows has been divided into several sections, according to the parameters or questions analyzed in the charts.

Generational aspects.

Any organization is comprised of a fluid community. Such structures must, at certain stages of their evolution, undergo a process of "circulation" of its members, an organizational "life cycle" so to speak. Associations change with time. They grow, mature, and age just as its members. At some moment in this organic process, they recruit new elements, sometimes even substantial numbers of a specific social group, either by necessity or in response to internal and/or external circumstances. Occasionally, the organization may even replace the original community entirely. Therefore, the history of such a variable organizational structure

¹⁴ One of the earliest works to document the development of the Comintern and its relationship with the Soviet Union was Olga Gankin's *The Bolsheviks and the World War: The Origins of the Third International*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1940. See also: Milorad Drachkovich and Branko Lazitch (eds.), *The Komintern: Historical Highlights*. New York: Praeger, 1966. Recent discussions based upon Comintern archival material include: Bernhard H. Bayerlein, "Re-reading Anew...The History of the Comintern and the Communist Parties of Latin America in Contemporary Studies. A Review of Some Contributions of the X Congress of the Federation of Latinoamericanists and Caribbeanists (Moscow, June 25-29, 2001)", *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online*, 16, 2003, p. 43; Erik Ching, "The Intersection of the Local, National, and International in the First Communist Parties in Central America, 1925-1935," *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online*, 16, 2003, p. 47; Erik Ching, "In Search of the Party: The Communist Party, the Comintern, and the peasant rebellion of 1932 in El Salvador," *The Americas* 55, no. 2 (October 1998): 204-39; Barry Carr, *From Caribbean Backwater*; Erik Ching, "Una nueva apreciación de la insurrección del '32." *Tendencias* (San Salvador) 3, no. 44 (Sept. 1995): 28-31.

¹⁵ A recent discussion on the historiographical significance of biographical material is included in: Kevin Morgan, Gidon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Agents of the Revolution – New Biographical Approaches to the History of International Communism in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Bern, Berlin, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004. See also Serge Wolikow's comments on the new methodological possibilities for research, including quantitative analysis of archival data, in view of the proliferation of archival sources available. Serge Wolikow, "Historia del comunismo: Nuevos archivos y nuevas miradas", in Elvira Concheiro et al., eds., *El comunismo: Otras miradas desde América Latina*. Mexico, D.F.: Editorial UNAM, 2007, p. 30.

must, by definition, also respond to that mercurial, internal evolution. The historical periodization, stages of development, transformation, or immutability of an institution must be also considered in view of matters related to youth, maturity, and aging of the people that make up the structure. The social composition of membership and its evolution are, thus, essential foundations for a comprehensive panorama of the stages of development for the Comintern, particularly when the issue of evolution has itself come into question.¹⁶

The statistical analysis of the preliminary data for this project suggests that in Latin America, the personnel for Comintern agencies, front organizations, communist parties, and local, radical groups connected to the Comintern could be divided into two distinct generations: an older and a younger age group. As the chart 1 "Year of Birth" indicates, the demographic group of "elders" was born between the years 1887 and 1890, while the "young" generation consisted of those born between 1901 and 1905. In terms of its organizational significance, this demographic aspect implies that, in general, the "elders" probably began their revolutionary careers, or at least their professional participation in radical activity, at around the time of the founding of the Third International in 1919. At the time, they may have represented an up-and-coming, young group challenging the dominant vestiges of the Second International, or local radicalism's power structures monopolized by older Latin American socialists and anarchists. By the early 1930's however, this group had in turn become the older, mature generation, confronting a new and youthful contending lot. Most likely, the older faction's maturity was complemented by experience, leadership positions, and status, either within the organization, or in the local radical scene. As a result, the demographic trend may have also given way to a generation gap, internal conflicts, and a power struggle within the communist community, a situation that has been observed elsewhere as well.¹⁷

¹⁶ Discussion on periodization is one of the core issues on the debate concerning the history of the Comintern. For the most, approaches vary according to perspectives on the nature of communism and the Soviet Union. Works on the matter include: Matthew Worley, *In Search of Revolution – International Communist Parties in the Third Period*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004; Kevin MacDermott and Jeremy Agnew, eds., *The Comintern: A History of International Communism From Lenin to Stalin*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997; Kevin McDermott, "Recent Literature on the Comintern: Problems of Interpretation," in *Center and Periphery*, Narinsky and Rojahn (eds.), Amsterdam, 1996; Nicholas N. Kozlov and Eric D. Weitz, "Reflections on the Origins of the 'Third Period': Bukharin, the Comintern, and the Political Economy of Weimar Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 24, no. 3 (July, 1989), pp. 387-410; E.H. Carr, *Twilight of the Comintern, 1930-1935*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.

¹⁷ For example, Tim Rees points out that the generational issue among members of the Communist Party of Spain may have been an important catalyst for developments inside the party during the Civil War: Tim Rees, "The highpoint of Comintern influence? The Communist Party and the Civil War in Spain," in Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe ed., *International Communism and the Communist International*, pp. 143-167. In addition, data on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for the same period also suggests that a new generation born within the years 1900-1904, began to replace party elders: *Tsentralnyi komitet KPSS, VKP(b), RKP(b), RSDRP(b): Istoriko-biograficheskii spravochnik*. Moskva: Parad, 2005; S.A. Mesiatz, *Istoria vysshikh organov KPSS*. Moscow: Otkrytoe obshchestvo, 2000.

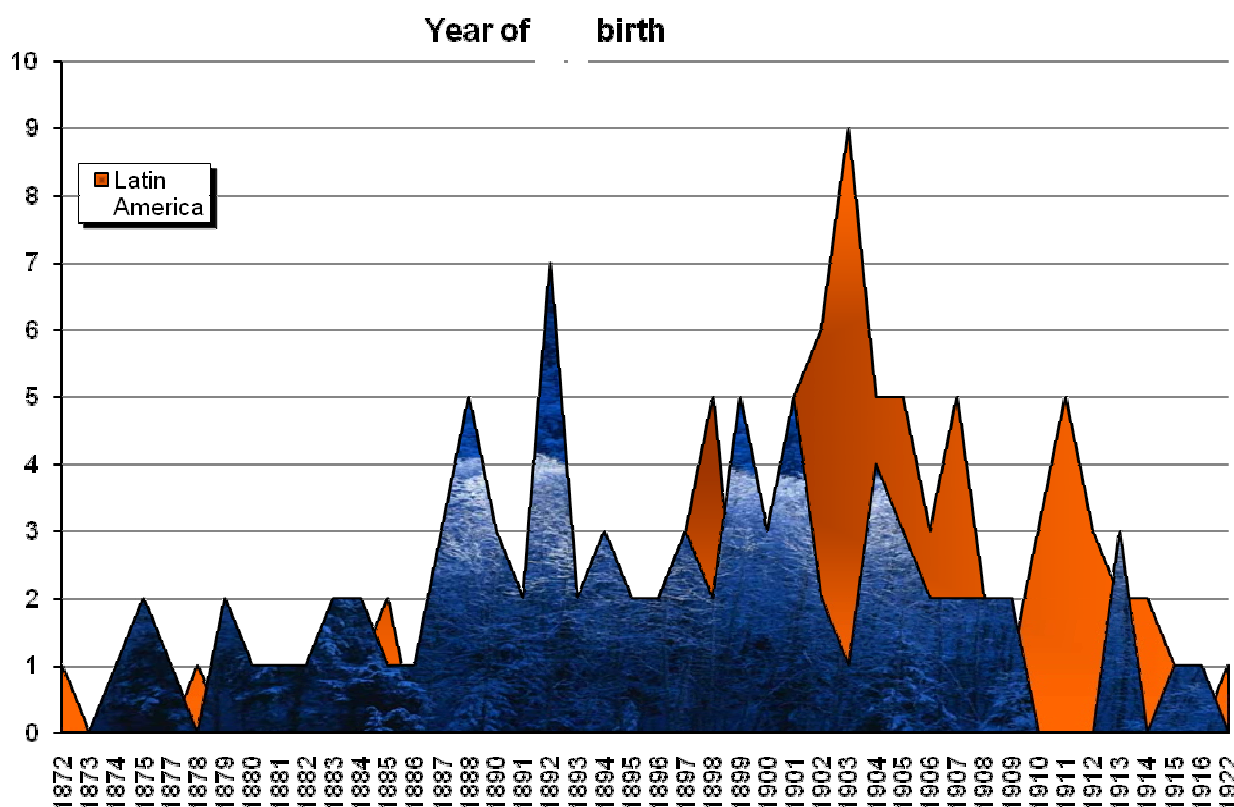


Chart 1

National context

According to the traditional historiographic perspective, the lack of a Latin American presence in the upper administrative levels of the Comintern organizational network helps explain the failure of the Comintern's venture in the region. Many of the local communist parties there were founded by foreign Comintern emissaries during the 1920's.¹⁸ In addition, there had not been an authentic Latin American representation in Comintern meetings and congresses up until 1928, and delegates for the zone were usually foreign Comintern leaders involved in the area, such as the Indian Manabendra Nath Roy, or the Japanese Sen Katayama. Several Latin Americans had become leaders in middle management positions within the bureaucratic structure, such as the Venezuelan militant, Ricardo Martínez, who was one of the leading figures in the Caribbean Bureau (1930-1936).¹⁹ However, these local

¹⁸ Donald L. Herman, *The Comintern in Mexico*. Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1974; Kiran Saxena, "Manabendra Nath Roy: su búsqueda de libertad en México," en E.A. Uchmany (ed.), *México-India: similitudes y encuentros a través de la historia*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica; Ispat Mexicana, 1998; Barry Carr, *El PCM y el Komintern a fines del Cardenismo*. México: 1988; Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in 20th Century México*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992; Daniela Spencer, *El triángulo imposible: México, Rusia y Estados Unidos en los años veinte*. México: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social - Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 1998; John Patrick Haithcox, *Communism and nationalism in India; M.N. Roy and Komintern Policy, 1920-1939*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971; Lazar JEIFETS (Kheifets), "Michael Borodin: The First Comintern Emissary to Latin America (Part 1)", *The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Komintern, Communism, and Stalinism* 2, nos. 5-6 (1994-1995): 145-49; (part 2) 3, nos. 7-8 (1996): 84-88.

¹⁹ See for example: Enrique Castro Delgado, *Hombres Made in Moscú*. México: Editoriales Mañana, 1960. Castro Delgado was a member of the Communist Party of Spain, (PCE), and worked several years for the Comintern in Moscow during the second half of the 1930's. His experience during the period of the Stalinist purges, and the repression of some of his comrades of the PCE turned him into

communists acted somewhat as apparatchiki, Soviet civil servants, representing Moscow's institutional interests and directives, rather than a native agenda. Aside from a few exceptions, the presence and participation of Latin American communist leaders in the central structures of the Comintern, or within its affiliated organizations has been characterized as limited and not very influential.²⁰

On the other hand, the statistical information provided by the database, at least according to this initial examination, suggests that Latin American participation in a number of Comintern agencies was significant, and that the Soviet, particularly Russian, presence in the organizational structure of the communist movement throughout the region was actually very weak.

Origins

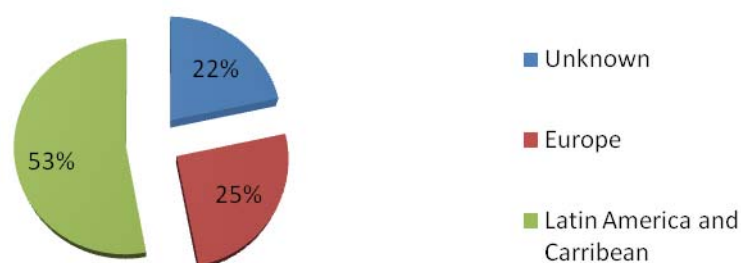


Chart 2

According to the chart 2 "Origins" approximately fifty-three percent of workers affiliated with one or more of the agencies connected to the Comintern in Latin America, were themselves Latin American. The rest of this category (chart 3 "Ethnicity") is divided into a number of foreign nationalities, with each group holding just a small percentage of participation.²¹ Although indirectly, this preliminary assessment appears to support recent historiographical studies, which underscore the local communists' control of the movement during the highly radicalized period between the late 1920's and the middle of the 1930's in Latin America, especially in the Caribbean and Central America.²²

a staunch anti-communist. See also: Enrique Castro Delgado, *La vida secreta de la Komintern, o cómo perdí mi fe en Moscú*. Madrid: Ediciones y Publicaciones Españolas, 1950.

²⁰ Caballero, *Latin America and the Comintern, 1919-1943*, pp. 25-75.

²¹ Certain aspects remain somewhat of an obstacle in the definition of the data concerning nationalities and countries of origin. For example, Soviets with a Jewish background will sometimes identify themselves as either "Jewish" or nationals of a territory, according to their sense of self-identity. In other cases, migration also impedes precision, as in the case of the Italian-born, Argentinian leader Vittorio Codovilla, and the Polish-Jewish, Cuban communist Flavio Grobbar. Unfortunately, such details challenge the veracity of the data, for which a margin of error has been established to counteract the potential inaccuracy.

²² Barry Carr, *From Caribbean Backwater*; Erik Ching, *Una nueva apreciación*; Bernhard H. Bayerlein, *Re-reading Anew...*; Erik Ching, *The Intersection of the Local*, p. 47; Erik Ching, *In Search of the Party*.

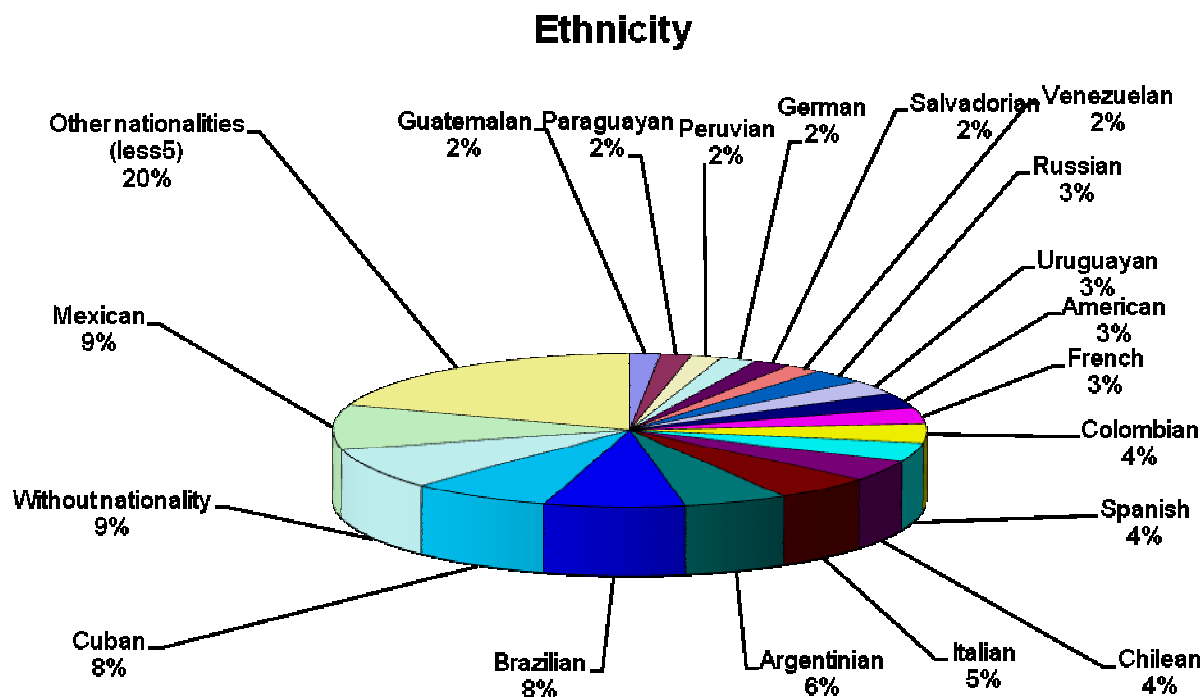


Chart 3

Education and Professional Status

The quantitative data points to a significant educational level for a considerable sector of the radical population related to Comintern activity in Latin America, both foreign and national. The chart 4 "Education" below indicates that more than thirty-nine percent of the individuals involved in enterprises related to international communism were college graduates, a particularly interesting detail in the case of Latin America, where the level of education of the personnel in most political, social, and economic institutions at the time was substantially low. Ironically, it might have been more likely for a young, Latin American college graduate to find a "work opportunity" inside the radical network, than in other areas of a Depression-stricken economy. In addition, educational level and professional status also seem to have been connected. Most probably, educated personnel were assigned to management and leadership positions where oral and written skills were a must.

Education

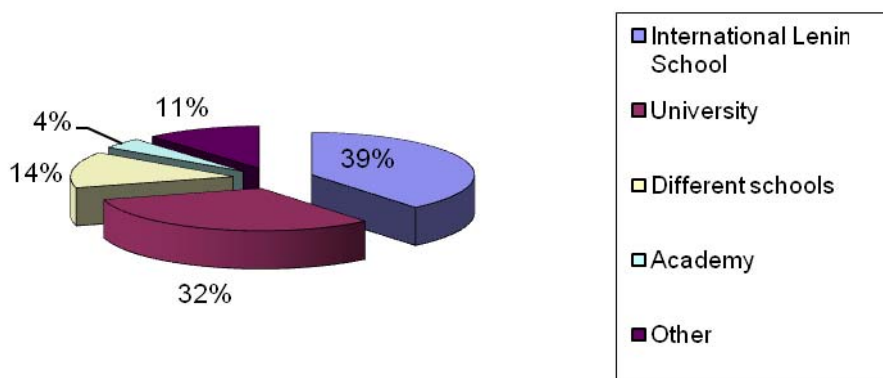


Chart 4

Gender Issues

During the first decade of the Comintern's organizational life, outstanding female revolutionaries, such as Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai, held important leadership positions within the central agencies of the institution. However, feminine participation in the Comintern network has been practically ignored in the discussion concerning the history of international communism.²³ The quantitative data provided affords several observations on gender that can serve as foundations for further research. For example, it suggests an active female presence during the early period of the Comintern's organizational life between 1922 and 1924. Following this period, chart 8 "Women entering organization" below records a significant decline in female membership up until the liquidation of the organization in 1943. In addition, the data suggests that between ten and twenty percent of the individuals involved in radical and/or communist activity in Latin America were women, although not necessarily native (See the chart 3 "Ethnicity").

In connection to this issue, the quantitative data provides details of the gender issue in the history of the Comintern that would be otherwise very difficult to distinguish. Agencies of international communism in Latin America in general, included a sizable population of Russian women. In fact, while the majority of the male personnel for the Comintern and affiliate agencies in Latin America seem to have been natives of the region (See the chart 5 "Men and Ethnicity"), the female population in the radical network was predominantly foreign, particularly Russian (See the chart 6 "Women and Ethnicity").

²³ For recent research on this aspect, see: Bernhard H. Bayerlein, "Zu Aufbau und Destruktion einer Fraueninternationale. Das Internationale Frauensekretariat der Komintern und die Frauenabteilung des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale", *International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online*, 20, 2007, 20, p. 102-104.

Men and Ethnicity

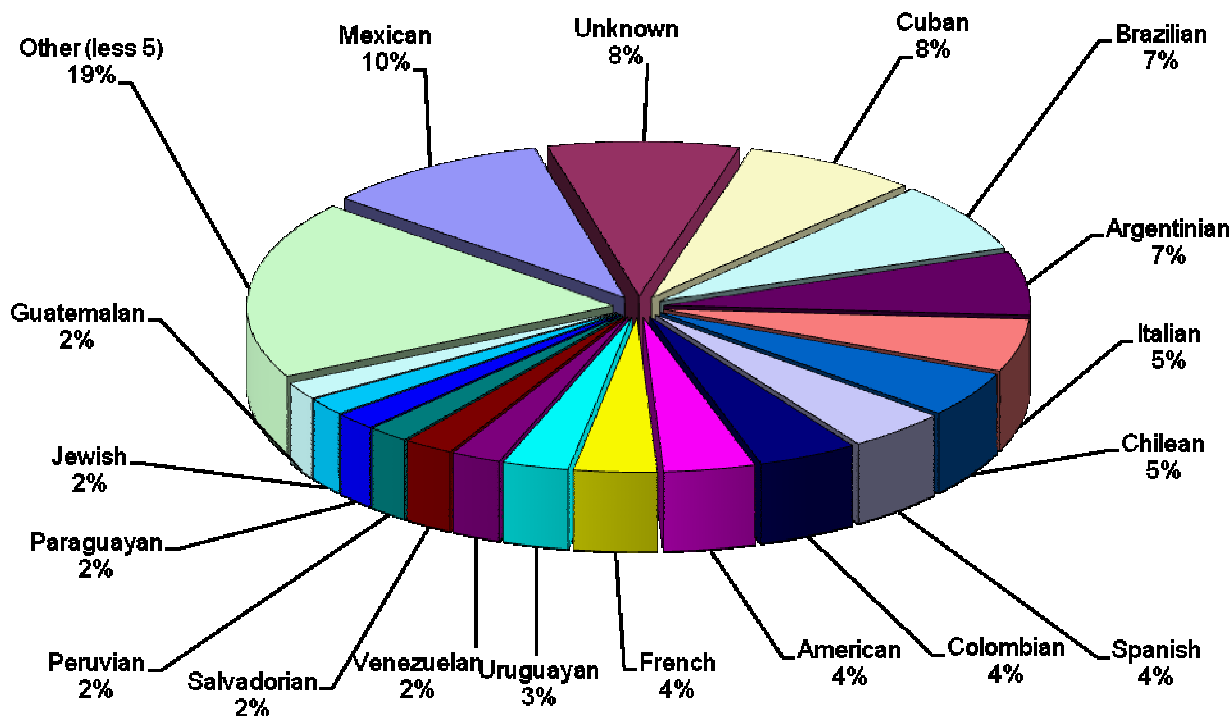


Chart 5

Women and Ethnicity

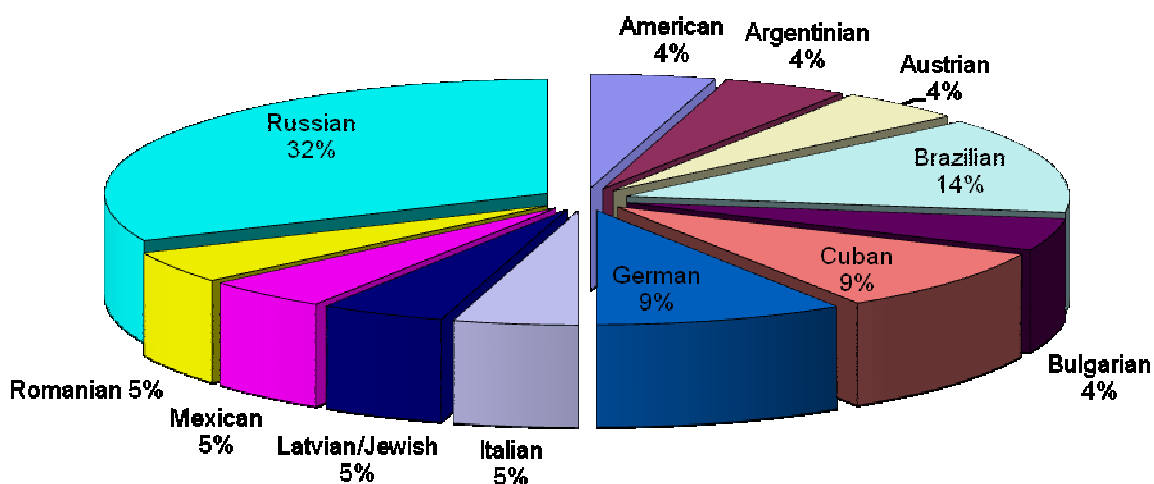


Chart 6

Factors of gender pertaining to age are also indicative of the particularities involved, while also suggesting the possibility of a study based upon contrasts between male and female cadres in the communist domain. For instance, women seem to have entered the Comintern sphere at a much younger age. As analysis indicates women when they entered the Comintern or affiliate organizations were on average nineteen years old, while men were in general, three years older.

There are a variety of possible explanations for this. Women might have been more prone to radicalism in view of local, cultural mores, or matriarchal traditions. Women might have also had more reasons to enter the radical movement at a younger age in view of the particular severity of their economic and social conditions. Furthermore, the personal experiences of some of the Latin American female leaders suggest that they also got involved in the movement in view of their romantic relationship with radical leaders, as was the case with the wife of the Cuban revolutionary Rubén Martínez Villena, and that of the wife of the Venezuelan leader Guillermo Machado.

Women entering the organization

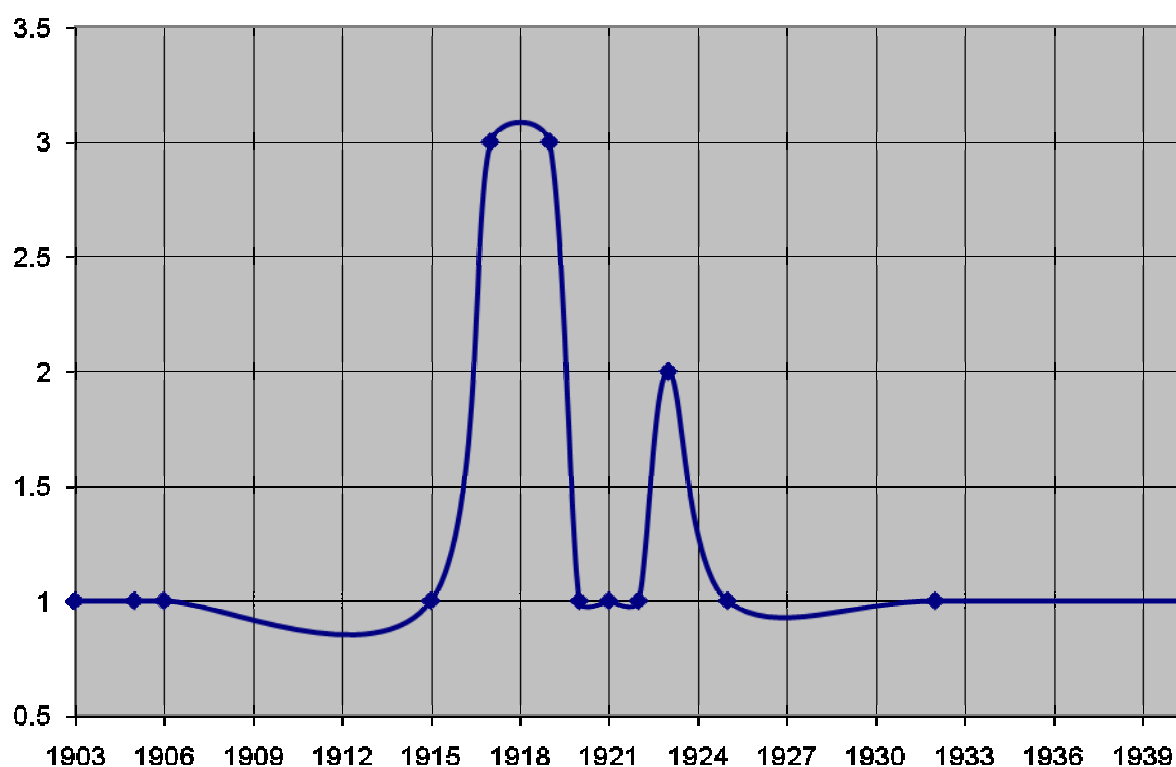


Chart 7

Finally, the chart 7 “Women Entering the Organization,” indicates that participation in the activities of the Comintern and its agencies was apparently more attractive to women from the onset of the organization in 1919. The majority of the women entered the movement in the first half of the 1920’s, while numbers dwindled in the next decade. On the other hand, while male membership during the 1920’s did not experience a substantial growth, the organization saw a significant increase in its male population during the 1930’s.