
STUDY

**ASPECTS OF FINANCIAL AID TO CHILEAN
COMMUNISM FROM THE USSR COMMUNIST
PARTY DURING THE COLD WAR ***

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This article provides hitherto unknown information concerning the aid provided by the USSR Communist Party (CPSU) to its Chilean counterpart between 1950 and 1973. In their research, the authors managed to gain access to reserved documents which reveal the existence of a “systematic and permanent” financial relationship between the Chilean Communist Party and the Soviet CP. Although during the period examined, the Chilean Communist party was an entity with stable structures and its own indisputable and autonomous social base, this economic aid assured the systematic and long-term operation (payment of wages, rent, etc.) of a collectivity based on “professional revolutionary” cadres. This direct and regular collaboration with the Chilean Communist Party, the

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authors argue, was a factor in domestic Chilean politics: as well as ensuring the articulation and functioning of a party machine, it engendered in party activists a sense of belonging to a global movement.

The authors were also able to gain access to certain parts of the diaries of the Soviet Ambassadors to Chile during the *Unidad Popular* period, and photocopy reports on the Chilean situation prepared by Soviet political scientists. This documentary material provides an account not only of who on the Chilean political left were the interlocutors with the USSR, but also what the Chilean left's perceptions and expectations were in relation to the USSR, and vice-versa. These papers, together with photocopies accrediting hard currency contributions from the USSR to the Communist Party of Chile (signed by L. Brezhnev, B. Ponomarev, M. Suslov and other members of the Soviet leadership) are included in "Chile in the Archives of the USSR" *supra* in this edition of *Estudios Públicos*.

The external factor in national political conflicts during the 20th century

Several years have now elapsed since the end of the so-called short 20th century, thus baptized by the Russian historian Yuri Afanasiev and his famous British colleague E. Hobsbawm. That period, between the first world war and the Russian revolution on the one hand, and the fall of the Soviet Union and its system of "real socialism" on the other, was seen as the struggle between communism and capitalism, when the *raison d'être* of each side was defined in terms of its opposition to the other, on the basis of given ideological assumptions. This ideological dichotomy, perceived by both bands as a sublime expression of the struggle between good and evil, cut across domestic political processes in most countries of the world, as well as the organization of the international system. As never before in history, domestic political processes, even in peripheral countries far from the scenarios of globally significant decision-taking, were closely associated with the ideological contest at the international level. Political messiahs and proselytism outside national borders, international policies of different hues and varying degrees of cohesion, practices in support of political and ideological bedfellows from the centers of ideological blocs at the world and regional level—all of this is an inextricable part of the history of the evolution of the global system throughout this turbulent 20th century.

Chile has been no exception in this context. Perhaps to a greater extent than neighboring countries, the most relevant political expressions in 20th century Chilean history have been associated with the main intellectual currents originating in Europe which have been played out on the world stage during the course of the century. Political actors and civil society in Chile during the post-war era started out from an implicit or explicit recognition of the importance of domestic political processes in the cold-war scenario.

Contending international forces —the external factor— had their importance in Chile's political evolution during this century, in the form of a real presence as well as in the imagination of Chilean society. At different points in time its various expressions have been the subject of political research and/or journalistic and historical study, starting with the North American Congressional Hearings in the 1970s on covert operations in Chile¹, until the recent publications of research in North American and German archives by a Chilean magazine². One of the most controversial issues, and one which always arouses great interest and speculation in this field, was the financial and material aid directly received by various Chilean political actors. The publications mentioned above, as well as the opinions of certain relevant players following the closure of the historical period in question, have made it possible to form an idea about the real dimensions of North American aid to Chilean political actors, as well as its dynamics and structure. However, there was lack of reliable information about the corresponding Soviet presence, the existence of which was an open secret, but whose forms and dimensions remained unknown and therefore subject to profound conjecture. The recent opening up of the Soviet archives has enabled this controversial topic to be partially elucidated.

Archives of the former USSR

The documents used in this article come from the Center for the Conservation and Study of Contemporary Historical Documents (the Russian initials are RTsJIDNI) and the Center for Contemporary Document

¹ Report of the Commission of the US Congress (known as the Church Commission) which investigated covert operations undertaken by North American Intelligence in Chile. *Covert Action in Chile* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, December 18th 1975).

² Magazine *Qué Pasa*, supplements 1997-1998.

Conservation (TsJSD), which form part of the archive system of the Russian Federation. The first of these is the former archive of the Marxism-Leninism Institute of the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) which maintains the documentation corresponding to the period running from the appearance of the first socialist groups in Russia, in the mid-19th century, until the death of Stalin in 1953. The files of the Communist International (Comintern) were handed over to this archive for conservation following its dissolution in 1943. The second is the former archive of the current documentation of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party, geographically located in one of the buildings in the Central Committee complex. This brought together documents relating to Soviet political history that reflected the daily activity of the party's Central Committee, as well as those that were elevated to this Soviet directive body by other institutions in the country during the period 1953-1991.

Both archives remained absolutely secret and inaccessible to national and foreign researchers until the beginning of the 1990s. In the atmosphere of chaos and power vacuum caused by the USSR's terminal crisis in the second half of 1991 and early 1992, all Soviet archives were opened up, and this moment was seized upon by researchers and journalists who produced the first dramatic publications based on these archives.

However, already by the end of 1992, as the new government of the Russian Federation became institutionalized, archiving activity came under stricter control through specific legal provisions and, true to the country's bureaucratic traditions, extra-parliamentary provisions. The new state archives law establishes a 30-year reserve period, after which all documents become public. Despite this, various institutions, primarily those related to the country's external activities, claimed the right to apply the legislation according to their own criteria on the grounds of Russia's national interest. Thus, most of the documents relating to the activities of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU and other similar organizations were once again put "off-limits" to researchers.

This situation posed a credibility problem for publications based on the opening-up that had occurred in 1991-1992. The renewed inaccessibility of the documents used enabled detractors to question their veracity, and certain unscrupulous writers to undermine historical truth.

These are the conditions under which we had to begin the task commissioned by the *Centro de Estudios Públicos*. Firstly, we carried out a detailed review of all "open" documents relating to the links between the

USSR Communist Party and the Chilean political left during the “short 20th century”, searching meticulously through the former archive of the Marxism-Leninism Institute (RTsJIDNI) for documents relevant to the topic of this article, among numerous papers of various types referring to the period 1922-1953. Apart from this, the nucleus of the documentary basis of this article is comprised of documents belonging to Collection 89 of the former archive of the Central Committee of the CPSU (TsJSD). This collection, comprising documents from various conservation funds, was compiled in 1992 to be presented in the legal process against the Soviet Communist Party in the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. Once this process was concluded, the documents remained open to researchers. However, the remaining archives of contemporary Russian history were then closed once again. As a result of three research stays in Moscow during 1997 and 1998, we nonetheless managed to gain exceptional access to some documents which recount important elements of the relationship between the Chilean left and the USSR. Some of these documents are included in “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, *supra*. These fragmentary documents of a still secret history, were complemented by interviews with Soviet protagonists who agreed to share their memories.

Soviet foreign policy: Between the interests of the State and the interests of the Revolution

To understand the rationale of Soviet aid to Chilean political actors, and its place in Soviet foreign policy, certain antecedents need to be taken into consideration.

In the first place, it has to be stressed that from the very moment of the October Revolution in 1917 until the final days of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, Soviet foreign policy was characterized by an ambiguity arising from a combination of pragmatic and ideological considerations. On the one hand, it was a territorial state, inherited from imperial Russia which as such had to construct its relations with other existing territorial States, independently of their political and economic regimes. This policy in Soviet ideological language was called “peaceful co-existence”, and its real weight in the determination the USSR’s international behavior grew steadily through out its history. But, on the other hand, the Soviet Union can not be conceived separately from its messianic self-perception as “the first socialist State on Earth”, “the bulwark of socialism” which it was assume would be followed by all peoples of the planet. At the moment of

taking power, the Bolsheviks perceived their own revolution as the preamble to European and world revolution, and although subsequently it was accepted that other nations would not immediately follow Russia, the fomenting of “Worldwide Revolution” was put forward as one of the priority goals of Soviet international policy. To bring this about, in 1919 the Communist International (Comintern) was set up, intended to create, “educate” and support Communist parties throughout the world in favor of “world revolution”. The contradiction between these two orientations of Soviet international policy did not take long to manifest itself. On the one hand, as a State with its own national interests, the USSR aspired to establish and develop diplomatic and commercial relations with governments of “capitalist” countries. On the other hand, in support of world revolution it fomented and supported political forces working for the overthrow of such governments, at first always through armed struggle.

Although the second of these orientations began to weaken over time, especially following the dissolution of the Communist International in 1943, the “priority” and “special” relations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) with “brother parties”, apart from inter-state relations, remained in existence till the disappearance of the Soviet Union. It is worth noting that as from the mid-1950s (following the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which had put forward the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism) these relations with certain national political actors, where bilateral diplomatic relations existed in between, gave priority support to action within existing political systems. When there were no diplomatic relations with the country and its political regime was classified as “dictatorship” (under a variety of names, ranging from “Oligarchy” to “Fascist”), Soviet policy (perhaps with some quasi-romantic yearning for the founding myths of the October Revolution) targeted its support on the political forces that were working towards the overthrow of the regime in question.

As regards the directives, dynamic and priorities of the Soviet Union’s formal inter-state relations with various countries of the world, there is a wide-ranging bibliography (more or less ideologically loaded, and with greater or lesser consideration for the complex relations between the two guiding forces in the Soviet international presence, mentioned above). In what follows we will focus on the second of these, i.e. on the Soviet Union’s relations with non-state actors within national political systems in non-socialist countries, and above all on the ways they operated, as applied to the case of Chilean-Soviet relations.

Relations between the CPSU and foreign communist parties belonging to the so-called Communist movement during the period under analysis (1950-1970), had a political-ideology dimension, based on the implicit recognition of common ultimate goals and the acknowledgement by the brother party of leadership by the USSR and its Communist Party. Hence also there was a recognition of the support it had to give to Soviet policies before national and international public opinion, and the consideration that it should concede to the "experience" and "opinions" of the Soviets in drawing up its own political orientation. In turn, the opinion of the "brother party was taken into consideration in forming the country image of the USSR both for domestic purposes of the Soviet Union and for the International Communist movement, and also, up to a point, in developing Soviet policies towards that country.

On the other hand, this political and ideological unity rested on the multifarious and efficient material and financial support that the CPSU provided to "brother parties". This support included both monetary contributions in convertible currency (despite the USSR suffering a constant scarcity thereof), as well as various policies of cultural cooperation (provision of newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, films, photograph exhibitions, etc., which publicized not only the USSR as a nation, but also communism as an idea and "real socialism" as an experience). This was mixed up with the propaganda work of those parties, as well as various incentive systems for party militants and "friends" (journeys to the USSR on various exchange programs, holidays, medical treatment, study scholarships, etc.).

Of this material and financial aid, only cash contributions and some of the invitations and scholarships came officially and directly from the CC of the CPSU. The rest was formally administered by unions, as well as youth, women's, artists' and writer organizations, cultural institutes, friendship associations etc., earmarked for homologous organizations linked to favored parties. Recently in the Gorbachov era these Soviet organizations began to establish their international contacts outside the sphere of "brother parties"; before that, even invitations to foreign public personalities were made exclusively with the consent or recommendation of their country's CP.

Given that the costs of a large part of this cooperation were calculated in rubles and at artificial Soviet prices (including journeys in Soviet planes, stays in the USSR, production of propaganda material in Soviet firms, gifts of equipment, etc.) it is difficult to express its value in units of international currency.

One of the few cases where one can operate with exact figures, therefore, is direct financial aid. This form of relationship between the CPSU and other communist parties dates back to the time of the founding of the International Communist (Comintern), and during its existence this type of aid was effected under its auspices.

“Moscow gold” in Latin America in the era of Comintern

The oldest experiences of the Communist International in Latin America date back to 1918 and are associated with the figure of M. Borodin (Gruzenberg). This was one of the founders of the Mexican Communist Party, a Russian Jew who emigrated to the United States in the years prior to 1917, sent by the Bolshevik leadership with a certain quantity of gold objects and precious stones (supposedly from the Romanov family) to found the first Communist groups in the United States (along the way he founded them in Mexico)³. In the 1920s, financial aid from Comintern reached South America, among other channels, through “Yuzhamtorg” a Soviet foreign trade company with headquarters in Montevideo, run by I. Krivitski⁴. Companies owned by A. Hammer of the United States were one of the channels for transferring funds to the North American Communist Party, and through it to many other communist parties in the Western hemisphere.

The first mention of monetary contributions from Comintern to Chile relates to the end of 1920 (under the Ibáñez government) and the early 1930s, and were used to finance the reorganization of the CP and the FOCH, as well as document publishing, maintenance of printing presses and party officials⁵. The remittances were not regular, but aimed at specific objectives and generally related to the presence of Comintern agents in the country. Weekly and fortnightly financial reports sent by the South American Bureau to Moscow in the early 1930s on certain occasions speak of some US\$ 400-500 for Chile (the figures of “assistance” to the Argentine and Brazilian CPs, considered by Comintern as the most important CPs in the region, are usually triple these amounts). For this

³ *International Newsletters of History on Communism, Stalinism and Comintern*, N° 5-6, Cologne, 1995, p. 63.

⁴ G. Besedovski, *K termidoru (Towards the Thermidor)* (1997), pp. 159-160.

⁵ These issues are analyzed in greater detail in the research project carried out by Olga Uliánova and Alfredo Riquelme, “Comintern and the Chilean Left: Impact of a Global Project on a National Political Culture”, financed by FONDECYT, (Eugenia Fediakova also collaborated on this project).

study, however, it is important to stress the emergence of a style, of a tradition in the international links of Chilean political actors⁶.

On the other hand, the Chilean Communist Party, one of the oldest Communist parties in the region, and one of the strongest in the non-socialist world at this period of time, was not seen by Comintern as a strategic “ally”. Instead one might talk of a lack of real interest and an underestimation of the Chilean CP by the Communist International. Chile in the documents of Comintern is a country that gets mentioned at the end of the list, among other things, in an almost ritual manner. The Venezuelan historian M. Caballero, a student of the topic “Comintern and Latin America”, speaks of Chile as “the unloved son of the International”. Our latest research on the basis of archive documents confirms his hypothesis regarding this period. And yet, contributions did come to Chile from Comintern, and, within the scale of national policy and in the hands of a political player rooted in certain particularities of Chilean political culture, they became relevant (quite apart from any specific protagonistic plan of the International).

In 1943 the Communist International ceased to exist. The last contacts the Chilean CP had with this organization date from April 1941 (two months before the German invasion of the USSR). We do not know the contact mechanism between the Chilean CP and the USSR during the war, it is still a topic for investigation. The telegrams of Soviet news agencies in Spanish were received and published in the newspaper *El Siglo*⁷. However, we now know of the presence of Soviet agents in Argentina during those years, who, among other activities, managed to carry out acts of sabotage against ships loaded with wheat for Germany that set sail from Buenos Aires and blew up in the open sea. Nevertheless, these acts by Soviet agents were carried on outside local Communist structures.

After the dissolution of Comintern, some of their functions, including the operative links with foreign Communist Parties, international

⁶ It should be pointed out that at the time of the crises and break-up of the Chilean CP (at the end of 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s) the South American Bureau of the International made the supply of material aid conditional on putting an end to the quarrel. Internal party unity was defined, thereby assuring, in fact, with the help of its envoys, the unity of various communist groups as the basis of the “bolshevized” party, the recipient of aid from the International to the perpetual exclusion of other groups considered to be dissident. (RTsJIDNI, Fund 495).

⁷ The Comintern news agency (and later of the Soviet State), “Supress”, was managed during the war by the Austrian communist journalist F. Glaubauf, who figures formally as the accredited Moscow correspondent of the Chilean newspaper *El Siglo*. In the 1930s he had been in Chile as an envoy of the International. (Interviews with I. Joroshava, daughter of F. Glaubauf, Moscow, August 1997).

information and other things, were transferred to the Central Committee of the CPSU. An International Information Department was set up, whose real head was the Bulgarian G. Dimitrov. The “technical” department of Comintern which was in charge of passports (falsified when necessary) and similar items, and the clandestine transfer of communist militants to and from Moscow, was also transferred to the Central Committee, although subordinated to the KGB. Following the Krushchev reforms this would become the only KGB unit to work within the Central Committee of the CPSU. Even the person leading this department until August 1991 had previously fulfilled the same functions in Comintern⁸.

Aid for international communism becomes institutionalized

However, not all was continuity in relations between the USSR and the International Communist movement. As the fomenting of “world revolution” began to drop to the second rank of Soviet foreign policy, and although “brother parties” in capitalist countries continued to be a factor of great importance in it, relations with the International Communist movement took on an increasingly institutionalized and routine nature. As well as “emissaries from the International” and purges directed from Moscow, the extraordinary contributions sent to Communist parties for specific ends became a thing of the past (generally referred to as the “final and decisive battle” in the Russian text of “The International”), specifically approved each time by the leadership bodies of Comintern or the Soviet Communist Party.

In its place, as from 1948 the so-called “International Union Fund for Aid to Worker Organizations of the Left” was set up with initial headquarters in Bucharest to provide financial support to communist parties in “capitalist countries” (henceforth referred to as the “Fund” or the “International Fund”), and this began to hand over certain sums in convertible currency annually to Communist parties. Supposedly, the money came from the whole “socialist camp” and the aid was provided in its name. However, a large part of the fund’s annual budget came from the CPSU, and a lesser part, up to 1950, from the Chinese Communist Party.

As regards the communist parties of European socialist countries, their contributions were smaller, and among other things there were numerous letters explaining why they had not provided the contribution they were committed to, due to one domestic problem or other, which

⁸ Interview with A. Sosnovski, Moscow, August 1997.

reveals their scant interest in paying the “revolutionary tribute” and participating in what they saw as global policies of Soviet interest. The tenor of relations between the CPSU and ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe is revealed by the fact that the size of contributions from each donating party were set by the Central Committee of the CPSU and “proposed” to the parties involved. Only in relation to the Chinese CP was there mentions of the need to “discuss” the amounts proposed with the Soviet ambassador in Peking. The distribution of the money was also proposed by the CC of the CPSU on the basis of petitions by the parties and in accordance with Soviet criteria.

To give a single example of the bureaucratic decision-making mechanism in the CPSU Central Committee, we will consider papers relating to 1962, for which we have the complete set of documents including a proposal for the formation of the fund and a proposal for its distribution, made by the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and taken up to the CC Secretariat, together with the project of resolution and approval, along with letters from foreign parties requesting special consideration for their situation—all of these, for reasons of utmost secrecy or established tradition, presented in hand-written manuscript form by the Secretary of the CC responsible for international affairs.

In 1962 the International Fund had grown to the sum of US\$ 11,795,000, of which US\$ 9,445,000 were provided by the CPSU, whereas the Polish Unified Workers Party, the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the Rumanian Workers Party and the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party each provided US\$ 400,000, the Bulgarian CP US\$ 350,000 and the Unified Socialist Party of Germany US\$ 200,000. Contributions from Eastern Europe were set according to an assessment of their economic situation and the stability of their domestic political regimes. Thus, the smaller quota paid by Bulgaria is explained by its status as an agrarian country on the road to industrialization. As for East Germany, its lower contribution that year was probably due to the domestic political problems being experienced in 1962, which implied a need for greater resources from the Unified Socialist Party of Germany for domestic purposes.

Especially noteworthy (as also is the case in the documents relating to certain earlier and later years) was the fact that the Chinese CP did not pay its contribution, which should have amounted to US\$ 2,500,000⁹. This was the period in which relations between the USSR and Popular China had worsened considerably, but open rupture had not yet occurred. So the

⁹ TsJSD., F89, O38, D5, p. 1.

Chinese CP continued as a member of the International Communist movement with full rights and obligations.

The money of 1962 was distributed between 66 parties and organizations. For the following year, 1963, a fund of US\$ 14,651,000 was proposed with a CPSU contribution of US\$ 9,600,000 and contributions from the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe going up from US\$ 400,000 to US\$ 500,000. This rate of growth of the Fund from year to year is characteristic of the Krushchev era and the early years of the Brezhnev period. Requests for money for the following year was always accompanied by an account of the previous year, where an increase in the number of destinations was used as an argument for seeking a general increase in the Fund's budget.

The USSR Communist Party's contribution came from a special reserve account held by the Central Committee at the State Bank of the USSR, for which, in the Central Committee resolution regarding the formation of the International Fund for each following year, indications were given to the State Bank Board to hand over the committed sum to B. Ponomarev, Central Committee Secretary and Head of the International Department of the Central Committee.

We now turn to documents that reflect the distribution of the funds collected. According to the report on the distribution of funds in 1962, the Communist Parties of Italy and France stand out in first place among beneficiaries with US\$ 5,200,000 and US\$ 1,500,000 respectively. These influential European communist parties headed the list of beneficiaries throughout the International Fund's history, receiving much greater sums than any other party. In fact, these parties used to receive approximately 40% of all "aid" provided by the CPSU to the International Communist movement, which clearly indicates the Soviet policy priority within this movement. It is symptomatic that the trend was not reversed even in the period of sharp ideological conflicts between the CPSU and these parties over the issue of Eurocommunism.

In 1962, the next beneficiaries on the list were the communist parties of Austria and the United States, which received US\$ 400,000 each. Chile, which had appeared on the list in the mid-1950s, on this occasion was in 14th place, with the the local CP receiving US\$ 150,000 from the Fund that year¹⁰.

For the following year, 1963, the Communist Party of Chile requested a considerable increase in aid from the CPSU. The document put to the meeting of the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat does not state

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 4.

the explicit reasons, but we can assume it related to the electoral campaign that was to take place in 1964. From the US\$ 150,000 obtained in 1962, the Chilean Communist Party requested a rise to US\$ 500,000 for 1963. The Central Committee of the CPSU did decide to give more aid to the party, but only raised the figure to US\$ 200,000¹¹.

The proportion between the increase in aid requested and the amount actually provided is characteristic of this sphere of relations between the CPSU and communist parties that were beneficiaries of the Fund. It reflects the expectations of communist parties regarding the economic potential of the USSR, its possibilities and willingness to invest in this type of aid, as well as the skill of national communist leaders, in this case in Chile, in dealing with the allocation of resources in the deficit economy of the USSR, where the strength of pressure from the soliciting country counted along with the old oriental wisdom that to obtain a camel with two humps you have to ask for one with three.

Moreover, the fact that the International Department of the CC raised the Chilean Communist Party's request at the meeting of the Central Committee Secretariat also implies that it agreed with the need for the increase, so it was aware of the Chilean political conjuncture of 1963, as well as certain expectations with regard to this (although not necessarily counting on victory for its "friends"). It also took advantage of this argument in the competition for resources vis-à-vis other sections of the Central Committee, in charge of other spheres of Soviet policy.

Chronicle of systematic and constant aid to the Chilean Communist Party

Below we provide a synopsis of the workings of the mechanism for providing material aid from the USSR to foreign communist parties, as seen from the Latin American and Chilean perspective, and of the amounts received by the Chilean Communist Party in the years up to 1974, expressed in current dollars of each year¹². Table N° 1 shows the amounts

¹¹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D5, p. 12.

¹² The form of the documents is interesting. In the Comintern era, each fund assignment was justified in a different way on the basis of concrete situations (each of them, supposedly, would bring the day of world revolution nearer), so it is difficult for there to be two similar documents. However, in the period analyzed we find documents that are absolutely identical in form, first scrupulously copied by hand, and then with the values (these were always different) entered on a form. The reiteration of the form was called upon to highlight continuity and "political "stability", the key concept in the private political discourse of the Brezhnev era. Meanwhile, changing values reflect the real fluctuations of Soviet political interests.

the Fund provided to the Communist Party of Chile between 1955 and 1973 (for the years for which we were able to access the information), together with their equivalence in 1997 dollars. Table N° 2, on the other hand, shows the total amounts the Fund distributed to communist parties and kindred organizations in the International Communist Movement between 1952 and 1973, as well as the amount of the Soviet Communist Party's share in the Fund.

As regards the amount of aid assigned by the Fund, one thing needs to be made clear. In our conversations with the protagonists of Soviet international life in those years, we repeatedly heard opinions regarding the "poverty" and almost "beggarliness" of Soviet aid to communist parties around the world. That also was our initial perception when taking possession of the documents containing the figures. However, the mere conversion of 1960s values to those of today changes the panorama enormously (see Table N° 1). On the basis of this conversion, both the general budget for Soviet aid to the International Communist movement and the quotas of each party assume a different quantitative significance.

As well as this, one should not forget the objective differences in the value of international currencies and their purchasing power in industrialized European countries and in Latin America, that were even greater at that time than they are today. Although the figures mentioned leave it quite clear what Soviet priorities were (mixing here its interests as a great power and as leader of the International Communist movement), the different "operating capacity" of these contributions might mean that the Chilean Communist party would be able to do much more with US\$ 100,000, for example, than its Austrian or North American counterpart with US\$ 400,000.

It would be logical to assume that these circumstances were taken into consideration in drawing up the list of beneficiaries of Soviet aid. However, what draws one's attention is that this was never mentioned in the written documents of the period, nor in the recent conversations that we held with the protagonists of these events. Consequently, one has the impression that in allocating funds the only thing that carried weight was the Soviet perception of the value of foreign currency, i.e. the perception of a huge country used to operating and thinking (even in the present chaos of its inheritors) in categories with many zeros, but at the same time lacking international currency.

We now return to the documents.

1950: The International Union Fund for Aid to Leftist Worker Organizations was set up, together with the Rumanian Union Council. This

TABLE Nº 1: AID PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE USSR TO THE CHILEAN COMMUNIST PARTY*
(in US dollars)

Year	Amount assigned to the Chilean CP	Equivalence in 1997 dollars**	Position of Chile on Fund list
1955 ¹	5,000	30,585	–
1956 ²	–	–	–
1957 ³	20,000	114,351	–
1958	20,000	111,820	–
1959	–	–	–
1960	50,000	271,017	–
1961	100,000	536,185	–
1962	150,000	795,691	14
1963	200,000	1,046,031	17
1964 ⁴	(?)	(?)	(?)
1965	275,000	1,399,022	10
1966	300,000	1,480,721	9
1967 ⁵	(300,000)	(1,445,882)	(?)
1968 ⁵	(300,000)	(1,386,090)	(?)
1969 ⁵	(300,000)	(1,312,100)	(?)
1970	400,000	1,655,219	4/6
1971 ⁴	(?)	(?)	(?)
1972 ⁴	(?)	(?)	(?)
1973	645,000	2,102,666	5

* Aid in convertible currency provided to the Communist Party of Chile by the International Union Fund for Aid to Leftist Worker Organizations. This Fund was set up in 1948 and a large part of its annual budget came from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Not included here is aid provided through channels other than the Fund. (See Chile in the Archives of the USSR", A, *supra*).

** deflated by the North American CPI.

¹ First appearance of a Latin American country on the list.

² Chile does not figure on the list as a destination.

³ First mention of Chile as a "planned" destination.

⁴ Unable to gain access to documents for that year.

⁵ Estimated figure. For this year it was not possible gain access to documents relating to the Fund's destinations, but access was possible to documents on how the Fund was made up. Due to the routine nature that the Fund acquired in this period, and given that total amounts of the Fund were maintained, one can assume that the quotas to destinations also were maintained at least in similar ranges to those in 1966.

⁶ The number 4 corresponds to Chile's place on the list of beneficiaries: the number 6 to the relative value of the amount received (See "Chile in the Archives of the USSR", A, Nº A-3 *supra*).

Source: Documents from the archive TsJSD, Center for the Conservation of Current Documentation, Moscow, which contains documents of the former archives of the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party.

established as its “constituents” and donors, governing communist parties in socialist countries (both European and Asian), while its beneficiaries could be different “worker” organizations in capitalist countries, according to needs. The headquarters of the new organization was established in Bucharest (Rumania). The founding document of the Fund is a resolution of the CPSU Central Committee, notwithstanding its supposed international nature¹³.

1951: Control of the Fund’s activities was carried out personally by Stalin¹⁴, in whose name reports were sent during the first year the organization’s operations. The recipients of much of the aid were the communists of Italy and France.

1952: The total amount collected came to US\$ 2,500,000 of which the CPSU provided US\$ 850,000. Iron Stalinist control over Eastern Europe ensured a share-out that was relatively proportional to the burden of the Fund between donors. The size of the contribution by Popular China enables one to talk of a twin-headed leadership of the International Communist movement in that period. A letter to Soviet Ambassador Roshin in Peking states that the Chinese contribution had to be agreed with Mao. Also, in a letter to “Comrade Stalin” the destinations of aid are justified: in the first place, European Communist Parties, especially the Italian Communist Party and its regional branches (Trieste, etc.), as well as Israel, India, Japan¹⁵.

1953: The total amount proposed was US\$ 3,425,000 of which the USSR provided US\$ 1,300,000 and China US\$ 1,000,000. Attached is a memorandum from Suslov, Ideology Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, reporting that the CPSU contribution was fully taken up in aid to the Communist Parties of Italy and France¹⁶. There is not a single Latin American Communist Party among the destinations¹⁷. The compliance reports issued a year later state that the monies were insufficient and that the CPSU had to put up a further US\$ 1,200,000 so that its total contribution in fact amounted to US\$ 2,500,000¹⁸. The beneficiaries were concentrated in Europe and Asia, and the only American communist party favored was that of the USA.

1954: Once again the increase in total Fund volume was considerable. An total of US\$ 5,000,000 was proposed. Perhaps due to the

¹³ TsJSD, F89, O38, D22-23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D18.

size of the increase in contributions, or maybe as this was the first year without Stalin and the beginning of the “thaw”, there is talk of a need to agree amounts with donor CPs¹⁹. This is the only time that an observation of this kind appears in all the available documents. This same year mention is made of the decision to hand over the Fund’s monies for safe-keeping to the USSR State Bank²⁰.

1955: The general budget of US\$ 5,000,000 was maintained for all communist parties in the capitalist world as a whole, of which US\$ 2,900,000 was provided by the CPSU and US\$ 1,000,000 by the Chinese Communist Party. The new proportion between Soviet contributions and those of the other socialist countries became institutionalized. Again we find a letter to the Soviet ambassador in China to agree that country’s contribution. The top destinations were European CPs, as well as India, Iran, Israel²¹. However, in the report on the budget outcome, made at the end of the year, new destinations appear, including for the first time the Chilean CP, which received US\$ 5,000 —a donation that had not been planned in a regular way²², but which represented a response to the moment by the Soviet CP to a request formulated by Chilean Communists. It is the first mention of a Latin American CP among destinations.

Luis Corvalán tells in his memoirs, in the chapter entitled “The Party’s Money”, that the request for financial support was formulated by then Secretary-General of the Chilean Communist Party, Galo González, on his arrival in Moscow, where also he met Luis Corvalán. The Soviet response was immediate and Galo González himself brought back the money provided, which according to Corvalán himself “was not such a small amount at that time”, “comfortably packed in the lining of his jacket”²³. What is not stated in these memories is that a couple of years later, the Chilean CP would begin to receive regular annual contributions from Moscow financed by the Fund.

1956: For the first time another Latin American CP appeared on the list: the Uruguayan CP with aid of US\$ 20,000²⁴. Chile was absent that year. Nevertheless, we know about the participation of the Chilean delegation, headed by Luis Corvalán, in the famous XXth Congress of the

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D18.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D28.

²² *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D33.

²³ Luis Corvalán, *De lo vivido y lo peleado. Memorias* (1997), p. 108.

²⁴ TsJSD, F89, O38, D19.

TABLE 2: INTERNATIONAL UNION FUND FOR AID TO LEFTIST WORKER ORGANIZATIONS * (in US dollars)

Year	Amount destined to the Chilean CP	Position of Chile on the Fund list	Total of Fund approved	Total of Fund accounted for	CPSU contribution approved	CPSU contribution accounted for	N° of Fund beneficiaries
1952	—	—	2,500,000	—	850,000	—	—
1953	—	—	3,425,000	4,700,000	1,300,000	2,500,000	—
1954	—	—	5,000,000	—	—	—	—
1955	5,000	—	5,000,000	—	2,900,000	—	—
1956	—	—	5,500,000	—	3,000,000	—	—
1957	20,000	—	5,500,000	6,140,000	3,150,000	3,700,000	—
1958	20,000	—	6,800,000	7,128,000	—	3,900,000	—
1959	—	—	9,000,000	—	4,750,000	—	—
1960	50,000	—	9,050,000	—	4,750,000	—	—
1961	100,000	—	10,500,000	—	5,500,000	—	—
1962	150,000	14	11,050,000	11,795,000	6,200,000	9,450,000	66
1963	200,000	17	14,650,000	15,550,000	9,600,000	13,200,000	—
1964	(?)	—	—	15,750,000	—	13,200,000	—
1965	275,000	10	15,750,000	15,721,660	13,200,000	—	72
1966	300,000	9	15,750,000	—	13,200,000	—	69
1967	(300,000)	—	—	—	14,000,000	—	—
1968	(300,000)	—	16,550,000	—	14,000,000	—	—
1969	(300,000)	—	16,550,000	—	14,000,000	—	—
1970	400,000	4(6)	16,550,000	—	14,000,000	—	34
1971	(?)	—	16,550,000	—	14,000,000	—	—
1972	(?)	—	16,550,000	—	14,000,000	—	—
1973	645,000	—	—	16,550,000	14,000,000	—	—

(continue)

(continue)

Notes

- ^{*} This Fund was set up in 1948 to help parties and organizations of the International Communist movement. A large part of its annual budget came from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (CPSU) and, to a lesser extent, until the end of the 1950s from the peoples Republic of China. See documents in "Chile in the USSR", A. *supra*.
- 1 No Latin American country appears on the list of beneficiaries.
- 2 It was decided to keep the Fund's money at the State Bank of the USSR.
- 3 The difference between the CPSU contribution approved and actually carried out corresponds to the fact that the Chinese CP did not make its contribution of US\$ 2,500,000, which was finally covered by the USSR.
- 4 It is noted that the Chinese PC did not make its contribution of US\$ 2,500,000.
- 5 It was not possible to gain access to documents on the Fund's destination for this year.
- 6 In the planning for 1965, the Chinese CP is not mentioned.
- 7 Estimated figure. For this year it was not possible to gain access to documents relating to the Fund's destinations, but there was access to documents on the make-up of the Fund. Due to the routine nature that the Fund acquired in this period, and given that the total amounts in the Fund were maintained, it can be assumed that the quotas to destinations also were maintained, at least in similar ranges to those of 1966.
- 8 The number 4 corresponds to the place of Chile in the list of beneficiaries, the number 6 to the relative value of the amount received.

Source: Documents of the archive TsSD (Center for Conservation of Current Documentation), Moscow, which contains the papers of the former archives of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

CPSU, held that year, where the possibility was raised of a peaceful road to socialist revolution. In that same year, two months after the return of the Chilean delegation from Moscow, the possibility of achieving socialism by peaceful means in Chile was mentioned for the first time²⁵.

1957: The total budget assigned to the Fund was US\$ 5,500,000, of which the CPSU provided US\$ 3,150,000. For the first time there is mention of difficulties of ensuring Chinese participation in the Fund²⁶, a sign of the worsening relations between the two “real socialism” empires, following the beginning of the de-Stalinization campaign in the USSR. The later report shows that real expenses were US\$ 6,140,000²⁷. This same year several Latin American CPs appeared on the list, although with minor contributions: Mexico, Argentina, Chile. This might be interpreted as the beginning of a consideration of Latin America in the foreign policy of the USSR at the non-state player level. It coincides, in turn, with the activation of Soviet-Latin American relations at the level of inter-state relations, according to other documents available and interviews with veterans of the Soviet foreign service.

The Chilean CP received US\$ 20,000 this year²⁸. We might point out that this is the first mention of the Chilean CP as a “planned” destination for CPSU contributions in the postwar period. Certainly it was due to the re-establishment of direct and regular communication at the party-leadership level, as a result of the multiple visits by Chilean communist leaders to the USSR in the first half of the 1950s, mostly invited by Soviet unions, and the participation by the Chilean CP delegation in the XXth Congress of the CPSU in 1956. Moreover it was a pre-election year in Chile and, simultaneously, the year in which the Chilean CP was on the point of regaining its legal status.

1958: The Chilean CP received US\$ 20,000,000 of the total Fund budget of US\$ 7,128,000 (of which US\$ 3,900,000 had been put up by the CPSU)²⁹. Donations to other Latin American parties are in the same proportion. The majority destinations, which received more than half of the funds collected, were as always the CPs of France and Italy.

1959: The total Fund budget went up again, rising to US\$ 9,000,000, of which the CPSU provided US\$ 4,750,000³⁰. The Soviet

²⁵ Luis Corvalán, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D29.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D29.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D34.

share, although important, was still not the only decisive one, being counterbalanced by Chinese participation in the Fund. Chile did not figure among the destinations this year³¹.

1960: The Chilean CP received US\$ 50,000, a considerable increase in its quota, perhaps in recompense for the lack of support the previous year³². The total amount shared out was US\$ 9,050,000, of which the CPSU contributed US\$ 4,750,000³³.

1961: The Chilean CP received US\$ 100,000³⁴, twice the previous year's figure, whereas the total in the Fund went up by only a little more than 10% to reach US\$ 10,500,000. The Soviet Communist Party contribution was US\$ 5,500,000³⁵.

1962: As we mentioned in the previous section, this year the Chilean CP received US\$ 150,000 of a total Fund of US\$ 11,795,000, of which US\$ 9,450,000 was provided by the USSR, and it occupied 14 place in the list of beneficiaries³⁶.

1963: The Chilean CP received US\$ 200,000. But despite the 33% increase in its quota, it moved down to 17th place on the list of beneficiaries. The overall Fund meanwhile grew by 31% to US\$ 15,500,000. First place among destinations was occupied by the Italian CP with US\$ 5,000,000, second was the French CP with US\$ 1,500,000 and third the communist party of Indonesia with US\$ 1,000,000³⁷.

1964: For this year (Krushchev's last year) there is no information available. The papers for this year have not been "opened" for some reason. Initially we assume that, given the prevalence of the continuity factor in the Funds activity, its amount could be estimated at between US\$ 15,500,000 and US\$ 15,750,000, and the quota assigned to Chile would be between US\$ 200,000 and US\$ 275,000.

We might point out that the early years of the 1960s (the second half of the Krushchev era) show the greatest historical rates of growth of financial aid to the International Communist movement. This fact can be interpreted as a sign of renewed revolutionary expectations in the Soviet leadership and in its maximum leader of that time, as a result of the Cuban Revolution and the greater historical *rapprochement* between independent nationalist movements and communists in Asian and African countries.

³¹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D2.

³² *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D3.

³³ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D37.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D6.

The Cuban Revolution, in turn, undoubtedly acted as a catalyst for Soviet-Latin American relations, even at the inter-party level, despite differences between Cuba and the USSR in their appreciation of the prospects of “Latin American revolution”. Precisely these differences and the appearance of competition on the field among the Latin American left, represented by movements inspired in Cuba and supported by it, it seems that the Central Committee of the CPSU paid more attention and gave more support to its faithful allies on this continent.

1965: The Chilean CP received US\$ 275,000 and rose to number 10 on the list. This time the increase was not linked to any specific political conjuncture, representing instead the greater weight of the Chilean CP in the International Communist movement, from Moscow’s point of view. The total amount of the Fund grew hardly at all to US\$ 15,750,000³⁸.

1966: Slowly and gradually, the Chilean CP improved its relative position in the eyes of the CPSU, and was now obtaining US\$ 300,000 rising one more rung on the ladder to 9th place (see copy of the original document “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 1-2, *supra*). The total amount of the Fund was held frozen, compared at the previous year’s level of US\$ 15,750,000³⁹. This is the first sign of the arrival of the Brezhnev era in relations with the International Communist movement. The voluntarisms and expectations of the Krushchev era were left behind. The aid procedure to “brother parties” now acquired an increasingly ritualistic and routine nature.

1967-1969: For these three years we do not have information on the contributions received by the Chilean CP. Documents showing the distribution of funds in those years were not open to researchers. Maybe they were considered unnecessary and repetitive by the keepers of the archive, because the main interest of those in charge of opening up the archive was to provide researchers, and primarily the tribunal which in 1993 judged the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Russia, with documents that reflected various aspects of their activity. From this standpoint, fluctuations in the share-out of funds was not as important as the overwhelming contribution to the Fund made by the CPSU.

Meanwhile, from the available documents we know that the Fund’s total patrimony amounted to US\$ 16,500,000 in 1968 and US\$ 16,550,000 in 1969⁴⁰. The CPSU contribution did not vary in the three years (1967,

³⁸ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D10.

1968 and 1969), remaining constant at US\$ 14,000,000⁴¹. It should be pointed out in those years there were increasing difficulties in ensuring the participation of “minor partners”. An eloquent demonstration of this is the disappearance, as from 1969, of any mention in the Fund of the “Rumanian Union Council”⁴².

Consequently, the aid received by the Chilean CP in those years can only be estimated on the basis of the dynamic of the behavior of the Fund as a whole, and from the increase recorded between the quotas received in 1966 (US\$ 300,000) and in 1970 (US\$ 400,000), the year in which Chile came to occupy 6th place on the list of beneficiaries.

1970: The Chilean CP this year received US\$ 400,000, a record sum up to then (see original document in “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 1-3, *supra*). One detail stands out when looking at the manuscript sheets of the aid distribution resolution for this year: while the sum approved for the Chilean CP puts it in sixth place on the list, graphically it appears in fourth position. This is the only time in the Fund’s existence (according to available documents) that order reversals of this type have occurred in such a highly ritualized procedure⁴³.

Considering that involuntary errors in documents revised by hundreds of people is simply outside the range of possibilities, we are left with two hypotheses to explain this situation. It could be that the situation in Chile was discussed at the meeting of the CC Secretariat of the CPSU, mentioned above, in terms of fourth place, due the importance attributed to the prospects of this country’s CP of in the light of the 1970 elections, but that financial aid was considered in the terms indicated above, in view of the size of the country and its third –world situation (the three CPs that precede it in the list are all European). But in our judgment, it is more likely that the amount initially proposed for Chile by the International Department of the CPSU really put this country’s CP in fourth place among beneficiaries of material aid from the CPSU, a situation that may have been reversed at the last moment, perhaps at this very same meeting of the secretariat.

In turn, it is worth mentioning here that Luis Corvalán states in his memoirs that at Allende’s suggestion, the Chilean CP solicited, through O.Millas, US\$ 100,000 for the presidential campaign. “The reply —the former Secretary General of the Chilean CP indicates— which was negative, seemed to us so terrible and unrepresentable to our candidate that

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D12.

we decide to use our own reserves to provide him US\$ 100,000 ...in the name of the Soviet Communists”⁴⁴. Nevertheless, it is interesting that the Chilean CP is in a position to provide US\$ 100,000 at one go for Allende’s campaign from its “own reserves”. On the other hand, these words reflect the fact that Allende and the CP were expecting that donation. Otherwise the negative response would have not been perceived as “so terrible and unrepresentable”. On the other hand, within the Soviet logic, such a procedure seems completely justified, as we have seen the contribution to the Chilean CP that year went up by exactly US\$ 100,000, with everything handed over from party to party “for the purposes it deemed appropriate”, and the transfer of a given sum to the left wing party candidate comes across as a decision by the local CP, based on its assessment of the political situation in the country and its relations with its allies. Moreover, the CPSU did not explicitly finance campaigns, nor accept different destinations to the ones organically established.

1971-1972: Once again the information is incomplete; data are missing on the distribution of the Fund in 1971 and 1972, so one can only talk of amounts received by the Chilean CP at the beginning and end of the period. We do not know, therefore, about monies received by the CP during the initial years of the *Unidad Popular* government. On the other hand, we do know that the amount received in 1973 was US\$ 645,000, so it can be estimated that the 1971 and 1972 contributions would have been between US\$ 400,000 and US\$ 645,000. Moreover, the total size of the Fund in those years remained at the same level as in previous years: US\$ 16,500,000⁴⁵, of which the CPSU continued to provide US\$ 14,000,000⁴⁶.

1973: The Chilean CP received US\$ 645,000 (see original document in “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 1-4, *supra*), and is the fifth beneficiary of the Fund measured in terms of aid received, immediately following the CPs of Italy, France, USA and Finland, countries of clear Soviet political priority, quite apart from their CPs’ own weight in the latter two cases⁴⁷. The contribution received shows the growing importance of this small distant Latin American country for Soviet political ideology. The increase in aid to the Chilean CP during the third year of Salvador Allende’s government is even more notable, if we take

⁴⁴ Luis Corvalán, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁴⁵ TJSJ, F89, O38, D13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D38

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D39-40

into consideration the stagnation of the total amount assigned for helping the international movement during the Brezhnev era.

Finally, among this year's documents, it is worth mentioning the Protocol of the session held by the CPSU CC Secretariat, on November 13th 1973, regarding the creation of the Chilean Communist Party Bureau in Moscow —assigning installations, maintenance costs and wages, and the creation and financing of the Solidarity Committee with Chilean democrats (see document in “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 1-5, *supra*).

The decline of the colossus

For later years there are no documents on the distribution of funds assigned. Amounts expressed in dollars hardly changed, whereas the real value of the dollar in those years gradually fell. The gradual distancing of European countries from these “big brother” policies led to an increase, also gradual and for a long time almost imperceptible, in the Soviet contribution.

Between 1974 and 1976 the total Fund amounted to US\$ 18,400,000⁴⁸, and the CPSU contribution went up to US\$ 15,000,000⁴⁹. The number of destinations also went up: whereas in 1970 there were 34, by 1976 there were 82⁵⁰.

After a slight increase in 1977, Fund volumes did not change until 1979:⁵¹ the total budget amounted to US\$ 18,700,000, with the CPSU contribution being held at US\$ 15,000,000⁵². Attempts by the Eastern European parties to end their participation in the Fund were intensified. In 1978, for example, Ceaucescu reported that the Rumanian CP, the Fund's former “flag bearer”, was unable to make its contribution, which was covered in the end by the CPSU⁵³.

As result of a similar reticence by European Socialist countries, the total Fund budget attained in 1980 (US\$ 19,000,000) could not be maintained⁵⁴. In later years, 1981-1985, the total fell to US\$ 18,350,000⁵⁵, while the CPSU contribution was held at US\$ 15,500,000⁵⁶.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D42-43.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D45.

⁵² *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D43.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D44.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D48-51.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D47.

At the beginning of the Gorbachov government, as in Krushchev's time, there was again a considerable increase in total amounts assigned to aid to the International Communist movement, coinciding with the initial Gorbachov discourse reclaiming the roots of the Russian revolution and trying to reconquer the International Communist movement⁵⁷. There then followed an abrupt fall in such aid, accompanied by its public questioning, both in the framework of a reorientation of USSR foreign policy and a redefining of its place in the world, and this was reinforced by populist programs of a nationalist type calling for a cutback in the country's overseas spending. In these same years the crisis in the "socialist system" led to the entire burden of material maintenance of the international communist movement being shifted to the USSR.

Thus, in 1986 the total Fund budget increased for the last time, to reach US\$ 20,350,000, with the Soviet participation rising to US\$ 17,000,000⁵⁸.

In 1987 there was a slight drop in the total Fund, while the Soviet participation rose still further to US\$ 17,500,000. When approving the budget for this year, the Central Committee Secretariat decided to maintain the Fund for 1987, and then "transfer it to other channels"⁵⁹.

It should be remembered that 1987 was a key year for the Gorbachov reforms: the decision was taken to get out of Afghanistan, there were important achievements on nuclear disarmament policy, inter-state relations with Western countries attained unheard of levels, while the USSR leadership acquired a clear vision about the depths of the crisis the country was living through. In addition, press commentary appeared, awakened by *glasnost*, questioning the maintenance of ideological allies abroad to the detriment of solving social problems inside the country.

⁵⁷ According to Anatoly Cherniaev, adviser to Gorbachov on international issues, in 1986 after an absolutely ritualistic meeting of the "International Communist movement" in Moscow, and also following contacts by Gorbachov in (1984) with the leadership of the Italian CP at the funeral of the secretary general of the Italian Communist Party, E. Berlinguer, this notable dialogue occurred between Gorbachov and Vadim Zagladin member of the Central Committee of the CPSU and one of his closest collaborators:

Gorbachov: So what shall we do Vadim? Are we going to close the Communist movement down or keep it going?

Zagladin: Better "to carry on".

Gorbachov: OK. But for that we need to have our project in the Communist movement. The CPSU has not had one for a long time...

(A. Cherniaev.), *Sheft let f Gorbachovim (Six years with Gorbachov)*, 1993, p.20).

⁵⁸ TsJSD, F89, O38, D52.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D53.

For 1988, the CPSU assigned 13,500,000 “foreign currency rubles”⁶⁰ (the dollar measurement disappeared). It proposed “discussing with participating parties” their contribution possibilities. Within the CC of the CPSU, Dobrynin, CC Secretary and in charge of international problems insisted on continuing with established aid practices, as evidenced by a report signed by him attached to the proposals for making up the Fund the following year⁶¹. In practice from that year on money came only from the Soviet CP.

1989: The CPSU assigned an amount of 13,500,000 million “currency rubles” in “aid to parties and movements”. The head of the international department, Falin, argued for the need to continue with this aid, alluding to the fact that it is a long-established practice to which “brother” parties are accustomed and would not be able to survive if it were suddenly cut⁶².

1990: For this year, the last in the history of these practices, the CPSU assigned US\$ 22,000,000 in aid to parties and movements. The decision was taken on the basis of explanations and arguments put forward by the the party’s International Department⁶³.

The changes experienced by the Soviet political system in those years helped to bring to an end the eternal duality of Soviet foreign policy. The “new political mentality” of Gorbachov pointed in this direction, on which he based his foreign policy doctrine, as well as a rapid political *rapprochement* with old adversaries. Moreover, the growing non-communist opposition used the slogan of “secret CPSU international expenses”, holding these up as one of the causes of the country’s economic crisis. The messianic conscience which, based on the self-perception of a great power, implicitly approved various policies of economic aid to third parties, gave way to a questioning of its self-attribution of the world’s destinies and excessive concern for those assumed to be suffering from the social problems of the country. In 1990 not only financial aid to Communist parties came to an end, but also support for regimes of “socialist outlook” in the third world and, less relevant from the economic standpoint but significant for the Chilean case, the maintenance of communist structures in exile abroad on USSR territory was ended.

⁶⁰ The official exchange rate in the 1980s was approximately 0.6 currency rubles per dollar.

⁶¹ TsJSD, F89, O38, D54.

⁶² *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D55.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, F89, O38, D56.

**“...entrusting the transfer of funds to
the State Security Committee...”**

Finally, a few words on the means of transferring the amounts described above to beneficiary communist parties. In the case of the main beneficiaries of Soviet CP aid —the Italian and French Communist parties and those of other European countries— private companies were set up in destination countries, owned by the parties but set up in the names of militant entrepreneurs or reliable sympathizers, which exported goods and services to the USSR or undertook more complex multilateral operations with their participation. As a result of these operations, the corresponding funds entered their accounts, with very little possibility of national controlling bodies being able to discriminate between trade profits and political donations.

Another channel for getting the agreed aid to its destination, which predominated throughout the history of relations between the Soviet CP and its Latin American counterparts, was the payment of cash. This was handed over by residents in Soviet external intelligence (KGB) to people indicated by the local CP. It is not by chance that the annual resolutions of the CC Secretariat of the CPSU concerning aid allocations to “brother parties” invariably ended with the phrase: the transfer of funds is entrusted to the State Security Committee of the USSR. By order of Comrade ...(followed by the name of the current KGB chief: Andropov, Chebrikov, Kriuchkov)⁶⁴.

The retired KGB general, N. Leonov, a resident of several Latin American countries, later head of the analytical department of the KGB and finally head of Soviet Foreign Intelligence, states in his memoirs that this function was not to the liking of the KGB officers, not because they were in disagreement with practice of giving aid to the world’s communist parties, but because they considered it distracted them from their more direct tasks (understood, apparently as those which, in defense and preservation of USSR state interests, were aimed at counteracting the action of their North American “colleagues” and for which local CPs, it seems, were considered of little importance), and due to the danger such functions implied, given the parties’ low level of security equipment and counter-intelligence, and the consequent likelihood that the agent would fail in his mission⁶⁵.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* F89, O38, DD 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56.

⁶⁵ N. Leonov, *Lijoletie (Difficult times)* (1995), p.96.

It has to be stressed that from 1990 on, and more strongly in 1990-1991, the CPSU undertook a campaign to invest funds abroad through “friendly companies” belonging to communist parties or militants of that persuasion in various countries. This time it was an attempt to safeguard the assets of the CPSU itself from eventual expropriations, which did indeed take place after August 1991.

Other forms of aid

In these pages we have not analyzed other forms of financial aid to foreign Communist parties practiced by the CPSU. We repeat that the constant convertible currency deficit in the Soviet Union, together with the almost total absence of a notion of costs in the domestic economy, made the Soviet organizations in charge of cooperation policy (undertaken mainly through the network of the International Communist movement) try to divert requests for aid into forms that did not involve foreign currency expenses, trying as far as possible to translate them into supplies of goods of Soviet manufacture, or else services (medical, educational, editorial, even tourist) provided on USSR soil. The absence of compatible calculation systems makes their exact monetary evaluation impossible. We will try below to carry out a mere enumeration of the most usual items of “non-monetary aid” to help the reader make some type of comparative analysis, taking into account the pattern supplies and/or services provided.

Thus, journeys to the USSR due to official invitations from different Soviet organizations (agreed with the “brother party”), under an “everything-included” regime, according to our estimations may have amounted to ten per year at the end of the 1950s and early 60s, and up to several hundred by the end of the 1960s and early 70s⁶⁶. Higher education scholarships began to be provided from the beginning of the 1960s (not necessarily to militants of the Chilean CP, but with the consent of the party) at a rate of about 50 per year on average for courses of 5 to 7 years’ duration, and in 1970-1973 about 80 to 100 per year for short technical courses⁶⁷. Travel for rest and medical treatment purposes was reserved for top rank party leaders, and did not go beyond three to five people per

⁶⁶ They included travel fares, lodging, food, official transport, interpreter services, travel inside the country, etc., generally with a duration of one to four weeks.

⁶⁷ These included travel fares, study fees, student residence, medical care, vacations within the USSR, as well as a “stipends” equivalent to the wage of a Soviet professional just starting out.

year⁶⁸. In turn, cultural institutes offered free courses in Russian, ballet, music, etc., as well as talks on the “Soviet reality”, cinema cycles, exhibitions and free distribution of publications in Spanish.

In general, this amounted to a range of cooperation policies called on to create or strengthen the “country image” in terms of the set of cultures comprising the Soviet Union, which was confused and mixed up with the image of “real socialism”, i.e. with the materialization of the social ideal for which allied national parties were struggling.

To this one would have to add certain specific forms of ideological-organizational aid to brother parties, called on in turn to ensure the ideological unity of the movement. In the first place, there were cadre courses, generally of short duration (3, 6 or 10 months), organized for adult, juvenile and union militants by the Lenin International School (Party School, Institute of Social Sciences attached to the CC of the CPSU), the Komsomol School, the Union School (Higher School of the Union Movement). In these intensive courses, given in Moscow in a huge variety of world languages, militants of different ages and backgrounds were inculcated with the foundations of Marxism in its Soviet interpretation, together with certain organizational work principles and habits developed by the communist movement, and in general, in an uniform way for CPs throughout the world. It is worth stressing that from the mid-1950s these courses expressly excluded military training, and focused exclusively on political indoctrination. We do not know the exact number of Chileans who underwent these courses during the period under study, but even estimating that there were three to ten people per promotion, the total number is quite considerable.

Another channel of “Soviet aid”, and also for maintaining the unity of the movement, were texts emanating from the USSR that were distributed and administered in Chile by the CP. It should be stressed that the communist culture of the 20th century was a culture that was rooted in the word. Theoretical texts and literature from “socialist realism” received a treatment worthy of sacred scriptures and the life of the saints. Communist militants, without class distinction, were good readers, but for most of them the world of literature was represented exclusively by these texts. As militants of those years recall, nearly all texts used in the “formation of communist cadres” within the country corresponded to Soviet authors, published both in the USSR and in Chile.

⁶⁸ These included travel fares, lodging, complete medical treatment in institutions reserved for the high Soviet nomenclature, vacations in “rest homes” or “dachas”, reserved for the same rank of Soviet society.

This form of aid was brought about via the free distribution and gift of texts by various Soviet cultural cooperation organizations (which might then be distributed freely or paid for among militants and sympathizers), as well as through contracts, apparently commercial ones, between Soviet state firms exporting books, magazines and similar articles, and publishing houses and book shops of the local CPs, involving both sale and reprint of Soviet publications in the country (see document in “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 1-1, *supra*, where dollar loans are mentioned for commercial propaganda purposes). The same happened with Soviet information telegrams that were handed over to CP news agencies with the right to subsequent commercial distribution. Available documents also confirm the existence of this practice in the case of Chile.

As part of this same line of aid, the first offices of the Soviet press agency “Novosti” (APN) were run in the 1960s by journalists recommended by local CPs in various Latin American countries including Chile. The first APN agency in Chile in the 1960s was run by a CP journalist⁶⁹. The impossibility of separating the promotion of the USSR country image from communist propaganda enables this to be interpreted as Soviet aid to the local CP and in turn simply as paid work undertaken by Chilean citizens for a foreign news agency.

From the Soviet point of view, in the case of Latin American countries these joint ventures (to which one might add the organization of tours by Soviet artists as well as incipient tourism to the USSR by firms owned by leftwing militants), had mainly an ideological and political objective, i.e. promoting the image of the USSR, and to a lesser extent that of helping “friends”, and it was practically never the intention to obtain benefits in economic terms.

The analysis made here attempts to define the channels, procedures and destinations of Soviet political aid during the period studied. Although aid from the International Fund constituted the nucleus of the links between Chilean political actors and the socialist camp led by the USSR in that period of the cold war, it does not account exclusively for the whole phenomenon. Research still needs to be done into similar policies applied autonomously by other socialist countries, especially the GDR and Cuba.

Cuba’s interest in Chilean events was considerably greater than that of the main power in the communist bloc, although the island’s precarious economic and financial situation ruled out any possibility of financial aid in hard currency, similar to that provided by the USSR. Publications existing

⁶⁹ Interviews with K.Kachaturov, Moscow, February and August 1998.

in this regard point to educational courses and the provision of weapons as the main forms of Cuban support for the revolutionary movement on the continent, and its main counterpart groups and parties that had sprung up in the wake of the Cuban revolution favored the armed route to revolution.

On the other hand, the great support provided by the GDR leadership to the Chilean left after 1973 enables one to infer a degree of *rapprochement* in the earlier period, even more so when, on “ideological cooperation” matters, East Germany traditionally had had a greater participation than other European socialist countries.

A more complex case was possible “political aid” from the governments of Yugoslavia, North Korea and China, which did not participate in the 1960s and early 1970s in the networks of the “pro-Moscow” International Communist movement analyzed above. Before its withdrawal from the International Fund, as result of the general Sino-Soviet conflict, China was the second “majority partner” of the organization, with its contributions not being decided for it by Moscow, but discussed between the leaderships of the two countries.

At the end of the 1950s and in the early 60s, as revealed in the memoirs of Luis Corvalán, the Chilean CP received sporadic and extraordinary contributions from China. Corvalán mentions (without indicating the year) the request for a rotary press for the newspaper *El Siglo*, and this was responded to by the Chinese leadership not in kind but in currency. This US\$ 50 thousand for Chilean Communists was withdrawn from a European bank and brought to the country by Pablo Neruda⁷⁰. It can be stated that from the time of the substantial worsening of relations leading to open enmity between the USSR and China, it became absolutely impossible for the same political actor to receive aid from both countries at the same time. So far we have not found any explicit manifestation of concern on the part of Soviet side for the supposed *rapprochement* between any Chilean actor and Popular China.

As regards “international political aid” policies by North Korea and Yugoslavia, these always developed absolutely autonomously, and were mainly aimed towards less orthodox organizations of the international left. Their presence in the Chilean political process as yet remains to be analyzed.

Moreover, we have only considered the case of the CP among international aid beneficiaries in the socialist camp in Chile, as this appears as the sole recipient of Soviet contributions. No other Chilean party appears

⁷⁰ Luis Corvalán, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

in the list of International Fund beneficiaries before 1973, a situation that would be reversed later, with the inclusion of the Chilean Socialist Party (in its Almeyda wing following the split) and in the second half of the 1970s of MAPU OC. Meanwhile, the issue of sources, forms and procedures of possible foreign aid for financing the Socialist Party and other currents on the Chilean left remains an open question.

Final comments

The archive documents we have analyzed demonstrate the existence of a permanent and regular systematic link between the Chilean Communist Party and the Soviet Communist Party from the mid-1950s until the end of the period analyzed, its nucleus was represented by financial contributions that were regular and freely disposable. The most significant aid was provided to the Chilean CP at the beginning of the 1970s, when the party came to occupy fourth and six positions among beneficiaries of Soviet party aid. This aid, which was constant and growing throughout the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, has been a significant factor in Chilean domestic politics. A mere consideration of the real value of the amounts provided by various international actors to their allies in Chile at that time, substantially alter one's perception of their eventual impact (see Table N° 1).

However, in no way do we wish to insinuate that Chilean communism was a sort of paid mercenary of Moscow. Communism, as a lay religion of the 20th century which filled the empty spaces left by the pseudo-secularization of societies with significant components of traditional mentality, was able to develop levels of mystique (including the spirit of sacrifice and martyrdom) comparable to the founding stages of the great religions.

The spirit of serving the cause above all else, along with a spirit of austerity, constituted the base of the world view developed by their loyal supports, of which the most famous manifestations in the Chilean case were the deputies and senators who donated their parliamentary salaries to the party, and government ministers and congressmen of working-class origins who continued to live in popular neighborhoods, etc. This mystique and veneration for the Party explains the existence of significant sources of domestic financing: from the dues paid by modest militants to contributions from outstanding professionals and even entrepreneurs, attracted by the mythical aim of constructing the kingdom of God on Earth.

Even though Chilean communism at that stage of 20th century history had an indisputable autonomous social base of its own, this apparently modest Soviet aid contributed to the better articulation and working of its party machinery. Likewise, although the routine and regular nature of the aid we have tried to illustrate in this article, may be interpreted from the standpoint of Soviet political analysis as formalism and indifference from the Brezhnev leadership towards the “international communist movement”, it ensured the constant and long-run organic working of a political party with certain historical roots in society. The Chilean CP was a party based on stable structures, and on cadres of “professional revolutionaries”.

“This served to pay the wages”, in the words of someone who had handed over “CPSU money in briefcases, to their friends”. We do not know the effective distribution mechanism of this aid within the Chilean CP, but in the perception of middle-ranking Soviet officials it was provided to support the daily activities of the party: pay the wages of its officials and office rents, as well as supporting printing presses and publications, organizing events: in other words to achieve a more relevant party political presence. At the same time, apart from its practical daily effects, this aid encouraged the mythical perception among militants of belonging to a global movement, and at the same time the practice tied the local CP more closely to the policies of its “big brother”.

The report drawn up in the Soviet Embassy in Santiago October 1970, analyzing the chances of Allende being confirmed president by Congress, is especially interesting. It analyzes the internal situation of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and insinuates the possibility of an alliance with the PDC or at least with certain sectors of it. The aim was to “isolate (...) the right wing of the PDC” (see “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 2-1, *supra*). Meanwhile, The report prepared in the Latin American Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, in mid-1972, presents a fairly realistic picture of the Chilean political situation (see “Chile in the Archives of the USSR”, 2-9, *supra*).

The full and detailed analysis of this set of sources goes beyond the scope of this article and will be presented at another opportunity. However, as a sort of *leitmotiv* for this relationship, we wish to draw attention to the divergence, which was tragic for the Chilean left, between Soviet pragmatism and the expectations of their Chilean “partners” as regards the importance they had for the USSR, and the Soviet commitment towards the Chilean process, specially in economic terms. A clear example of these differences of appreciation is reflected in the 1972 report mentioned above (2-9), which concludes:

The development plan for Soviet-Chilean trade proposed by the Chilean side means that the Soviet Union would have to accept conditions such as had never been contemplated in USSR relations with developing countries. The Chileans expected the USSR to provide them annually with large amounts of basic goods that were scarce in the USSR, such as wheat, meat, butter, cotton, etc., on the basis of a long-term loan. In turn, it is assumed that the Soviet Union will have to import products for which it does not have great need, paying for them immediately in hard currency (...). (Report of the Latin American Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, *ca.* July 1972, in "Chile in the archives of the USSR", *supra*).

These expectations on the part the Chilean left were based on their admiration for the USSR and on the quasi-religious devotion that certain sectors professed towards it, especially the "CP culture", as well as its reading of the ideological principles of the "proletariat internationalism" declared by the USSR. All of this was blended in a subtle and complex way with the dream of getting hold of an external magic wand to resolve domestic problems (or, in another words, shift part of the responsibility to someone else)⁷¹, a dream fueled by the closeness and/or coincidence of the local CP with its "big brother" in its appreciation of the Chilean situation, which favored an atmosphere of special confidence in party-state relations (Chilean CP-Soviet State)⁷².

Soviet perceptions and behavior reflected the correlation of ideological factors and *real politik* of its foreign policy and also, in a significant way, the logic of bipolar contraposition in the cold war era.

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⁷¹ According to the report of the Soviet delegation that attended the handover of power to Salvador Allende, Luis Corvalán reproached the Soviet party for not having believed in the triumph of UP and for not having proposals for future economic and political collaboration.

⁷² This is reflected in the tone of the interviews held between Soviet ambassadors to Santiago and Chilean communist leaders, in which other national forces —both rival and allied— were assessed, as well as the situation of the country and the weight of the CP inside the *Unidad Popular* coalition, relations between the Chilean left and other poles of the international left, Cuba in particular, etc.

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