

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Against a Continental Threat: Transnational Anti-Communist Networks of the Chilean Right Wing in the 1950s

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Abstract

Drawing on minutes, publications, diplomatic documents and the written press, I explore the transnational networks of the Chilean right wing within Latin America in the 1950s, especially around the four Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America held in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Lima and Antigua between 1954 and 1958. I argue that the Chilean right wing's participation in those networks alongside other Latin American like-minded actors was based on both its long local experience in fighting communism and its attachment to Cold War anti-communism. In these transnational spaces, some Chilean right-wingers gained recognition and prestige, as was the case with the conservative leader Sergio Fernández Larraín, largely thanks to his systematic denunciation of supposed Soviet penetration in the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), then the ruling party in Bolivia.

Keywords: anti-communism; right wing; transnational networks; Cold War; Chile

In October 1958, Chilean conservative leader Sergio Fernández Larraín received a somewhat unusual letter for a right-wing politician during those years. Ku Cheng-kang, president of the Asian People's Anti-Communist League (APAL), had signed the letter, and was calling for the Chilean's help over a particular issue. Communist China, the sender said, was threatening Taiwan's position on the Kinmen (Quemoy) Islands, only 2 km off the coast of mainland China, and he was seeking support to 'shape public opinion' in favour of this cause. Fernández Larraín ensured publication of the letter in *El Diario Ilustrado*, the newspaper of the Partido Conservador (Conservative Party).¹

The contact between Fernández Larraín and the leader of a regional anti-communist organisation thousands of miles from his home in Santiago was no

¹Piden al Sr. Fernández Larraín que forme opinión para defensa de las islas Quemoy', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 11 Oct. 1958, p. 4.

accident. This Chilean conservative was one of the protagonists in a continental anti-communist network known as the Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America, which included as observers anti-communist organisations from other regions. These Congresses were held in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Lima and Antigua between 1954 and 1958. When Fernández Larraín received this letter, he was preparing to participate in the fourth meeting, perhaps the most important for him yet, since he was to present there the results of the Commission of Inquiry that he had led to Bolivia. At previous Congresses, accusations had been made against Bolivia's ruling party, the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, MNR), to the effect that it was a cover-up for the communists. The Commission of Inquiry and the report drafted by Fernández Larraín would support this interpretation.

In this article I identify and analyse the transnational networks of the Chilean Right in the 1950s, which allowed Fernández Larraín to enjoy a certain international prestige. These networks connected different places through protagonists, organisations and even governments during years when Latin American political actors inserted their own local conflicts into a bipolar Cold War logic. Thus, for example, the Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America were first organised around the transnational campaign to destabilise the Jacobo Árbenz government in Guatemala. Then they took on new causes: the presence of communists in Brazil, the latent threat of communism in Chile, the supposed communist character of Peronism in Argentina and the suspicions raised by the Bolivian revolution, among others. This changing Latin American anti-communist network assumed and disseminated a Manichaean interpretation of political reality, associating any nationalist or popular movement with the Soviets, both within the continent and throughout the world. Similarly, despite some initial differences, the Congresses identified the United States as the main guarantor against the global Red menace. Moreover, any criticism of the leadership of the northern power – i.e., any anti-imperialist stance – was understood as a strategy by the communists to advance their positions on the continent.

During the Congresses held during these years, delegates from all countries in Latin America discussed these visions and agreed upon their meaning. There, they built a shared universe of convictions regarding the challenges of the new global scenario that had unfolded with the defeat of fascism in the Second World War. For those who participated and identified themselves with the premises of this continental network, there was no doubt: the great enemy to defeat was communism, and this enemy was increasing all its strategies of deceit throughout Latin America. In this vein, in this article I argue that the entry point for the construction of transnational links and the creation of a global imaginary of the Chilean Right in the 1950s was its attachment to anti-communism, and particularly an attachment to that version of the Cold War that understood the world as an insoluble contradiction between the 'free world', led by Washington, and the totalitarian threat, led by Moscow. In this sense, Cold War anti-communism operated as the basis of political identity, and as the way in which the ideas, documents and constituent members of these transnational networks circulated. However, this anti-communism should be understood neither as a mere reflection of US foreign policy towards Latin America nor as an exclusively Cold War phenomenon, but as an historical articulation

between local practices and experiences, on the one hand, and reception of and reactions to global events, ideas and networks, on the other. In other words, anti-communism had a long history in Chile and Latin America that predated the Cold War, and it was shaped not only by the global struggle between two super-powers but more decisively by local political and social conditions. As we will see, the Chilean right wing's attachment to Cold War anti-communism was both a strategic decision in reaction to what was perceived as a continental threat, and a consequence of its own previous history.²

The historiography of the right wing in Chile has implicitly assumed that both its 'national' character, and its attempts to present itself as the true defender of local, republican traditions, have cancelled out any hint of international influence and that, beyond certain intellectual and political references, it has not been present in any global political network activity.³ To a certain extent, this interpretation is valid, especially when other political actors of the Centre and Left of Chile are considered. For example, the Partido Comunista (Communist Party, PC) understood itself as the local expression of an international movement based in the Soviet Union, and consequently built and maintained regional and global networks for much of the twentieth century.⁴ The Partido Socialista (Socialist Party, PS) did the same, especially as its revolutionary models were either unaligned with the Soviet matrix or aligned with leftist nationalist movements in Latin America.⁵ In the same way, although without the markedly internationalist imprint of the Marxist Left, the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party,

²For empirical studies of and theoretical insights into the Latin American anti-communist tradition beyond classical geopolitical, US-centred approaches, see, among others, Paulo Drinot, 'Creole Anti-Communism: Labor, the Peruvian Communist Party, and APRA, 1930–1934', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92: 4 (2012): pp. 703–36; and Gilbert M. Joseph, 'What We Now Know and Should Know: Bringing Latin America More Meaningfully into Cold War Studies', in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (eds.), *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

³Although with important differences between them, this is a common trait in works such as: Sofía Correa, *Con las riendas del poder: La derecha chilena en el siglo XX* (Santiago: Editorial Sudamericana, 2005); Verónica Valdivia Ortiz de Zárata, *Nacionales y gremialistas: El 'parto' de la nueva derecha política chilena, 1964–1973* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2008); Pablo Rubio Apiolaza, *Los civiles de Pinochet: La derecha en el régimen militar chileno, 1983–1990* (Santiago: Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 2013); Teresa Pereira, *El Partido Conservador 1930–1965: Ideas, figuras y actitudes* (Santiago: Fundación Mario Góngora, 1994). If anyone has been paying attention to this dimension of right-wing political practices, although limited to women's participation against the Unidad Popular (Popular Unity) government (1970–3), it is Margaret Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle against Allende, 1964–1973* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

⁴An important part of the historiography of the PC has emphasised its international dimension. Undoubtedly, the greatest contribution in this matter are the three volumes published so far in the work by Olga Ulianova and Alfredo Riquelme Segovia (eds.), all published in Santiago by DIBAM – Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana: *Chile en los archivos soviéticos, 1922–1991*, vol. 1: *Komintern y Chile, 1922–1931* (2005); vol. 2: *Komintern y Chile entre julio de 1931 y febrero de 1935: Crisis e ilusión revolucionaria* (2009); and vol. 3: *Komintern y Chile, 1936–1941* (2017).

⁵For more information, see Olga Ulianova, 'Inserción internacional del socialismo chileno, 1933–1973', in Olga Ulianova (ed.), *Redes políticas y militancias: La historia política está de vuelta* (Santiago: Universidad de Santiago de Chile, 2009); and Joaquín Fernández Abara, 'Nacionalismo y Marxismo en el Partido Socialista Popular (1948–1957)', in *Izquierdas*, 34 (2017), pp. 26–49.

PDC), built transnational links with like-minded parties, finding a certain authority in its Italian counterpart amongst worldwide social-Christian organisations.⁶

Recent studies of the Right in Latin America and other geographical areas have begun to emphasise transnational dimensions, in contrast to the nationalist rhetoric of many of such groups. João Fábio Bertonha and Ernesto Bohoslavsky, for example, have pointed to the importance of addressing the linkages of Latin American right-wing groups as an expression of shared mentality, of belonging to a global movement, largely defined by an aversion to a revolutionary and popular threat that transcended national boundaries. In this dynamic, intellectuals, leaders and activists within right-wing groups who interpreted reality in regional terms were especially important.⁷ Along the same lines, Martin Durham and Margaret Power have emphasised the fact that right-wing transnational links at the global level do not conform to a centre-periphery model, but are rather multidirectional, and present in regional and global conflict dynamics with considerable degrees of autonomy.⁸ The same holds true for the study of transnational anti-communist networks, as suggested by Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin and Giles Scott-Smith in a pioneering book on the subject. Far from being centred solely on the United States, these types of contacts and links had more complex origins, often along the lines of migratory movements and political exile.⁹

In Latin America, Margaret Power and Patrick Iber have further studied the construction of regional Cold War anti-communist networks.¹⁰ This article seeks to complement that effort by focusing attention on the Chilean Right and its (scarcely

⁶Raffaele Nocera, *Acuerdos y desacuerdos: La DC italiana y el PDC chileno: 1962–1973* (Santiago: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2015). On the international dimension of Chilean politics in the Cold War, see Alfredo Riquelme, 'La Guerra Fría en Chile: Los intrincados nexos entre lo nacional y lo global', in Alfredo Riquelme and Tanya Harmer (eds.), *Chile y la guerra fría global* (Santiago: RIL Editores – Instituto de Historia, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2014), pp. 11–43; and Olga Ulianova, 'Algunas reflexiones sobre la guerra fría desde el fin del mundo', in Fernando Purcell Torretti and Alfredo Riquelme (eds.), *Ampliando miradas: Chile y su historia en un tiempo global* (Santiago: RIL Editores – Instituto de Historia, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2012), pp. 235–59.

⁷João Fábio Bertonha and Ernesto Bohoslavsky, 'Las derechas sudamericanas: Trayectorias, miradas y circulación', in João Fábio Bertonha and Ernesto Bohoslavsky (eds.), *Circule por la derecha: Percepciones, redes y contactos entre las derechas sudamericanas, 1917–1973* (Los Polvorines: Ediciones UNGS, 2016).

⁸Martin Durham and Margaret Power, 'Introduction', in Martin Durham and Margaret Power (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). The multidirectionality of right-wing transnational links has been explored empirically in the context of the Latin American Cold War by, among others, Ariel C. Armony, 'Transnationalizing the Dirty War: Argentina in Central America', in Joseph and Spenser (eds.), *In from the Cold*, pp. 134–68; and Fernando Aparicio, Roberto García Ferreira and Mercedes Terra, *Espionaje y política: Guerra fría, inteligencia policial y anticomunismo en el sur de América Latina, 1947–1961* (Montevideo: Ediciones B, 2013). See also, for the case of the transnational diffusion of fascism between Europe and Latin America, Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁹Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin and Giles Scott-Smith, 'Introduction', in Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin and Giles Scott-Smith (eds.), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War. Agents, Activities, and Networks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

¹⁰Margaret Power, 'Who but a Woman? The Transnational Diffusion of Anti-Communism among Conservative Women in Brazil, Chile and the United States during the Cold War', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 47: 1 (2015), pp. 93–119; Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), chap. 3.

researched) political networks. Power, on the one hand, has studied contacts and reciprocal influences between conservative women from Chile, Brazil and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, demonstrating the existence of channels of communication, advice and support that crossed national and linguistic borders. As this article demonstrates, the Chilean Right's transnational experience had deeper roots, which probably served as the basis for its later development. On the other hand, Iber has analysed the 'cultural Cold War' in Latin America, identifying the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) as the main actor in this dispute from the anti-communist camp. As Iber argues, this organisation, which the United States supported and financed, sought to capture the sympathies and collaboration of non-communist intellectuals of Centre and Left parties in the 1950s, an effort that was not without tensions and contradictions. Chilean right-wing and like-minded groups scattered throughout Latin America not only participated in these spaces, but also came into conflict with interpretations that aimed to fight communism by modernising and reforming social structures. In the four Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America, the Chilean right wing found a place to consolidate and spread its particular brand of anti-communism; this had become its *raison d'être*, and would also be the route for its international projection during those years.

Anti-Communism and Conservatism in Chile: Sergio Fernández Larraín

Anti-communism has been one of the most powerful political forces in twentieth-century Chile, and at the same time one of those most ignored by historical research. A powerful tool in the political struggle, a justification for state repression, or the basis for political identities, different anti-communist sentiments have been present in the main institutional and ideological transformations of Chilean politics. The state, political parties and a variety of civil society organisations have acted in its name, mobilising their forces at different times to defend what they considered threatened by the communist presence. For example, in the early twentieth century, the state repressed workers' movements and accused them of wanting to subvert the social order and precipitate a bloody revolution. The development of a socialist movement in the *pampa salitrera* (nitrate fields) further triggered alarm bells for the dominant sectors, which still had not found an adequate formula to deal with the so-called 'social question', i.e., the set of social tensions produced by both economic modernisation and increasing awareness of the intolerable spread of misery, in contrast with the opulence of the elite. Those who tended more towards action organised themselves into nationalist Ligas Patrióticas (Patriotic Leagues) – which attracted sympathies from some popular sectors – in order to oppose both foreigners and socialists in the mining areas of the north. Accusations of socialist, 'maximalist' or revolutionary became commonplace in political debate, even targeting anti-oligarchic liberal candidates such as Arturo Alessandri in the 1920 presidential elections.¹¹

¹¹On the early stages of Chilean socialism and the reactions to it, see, among many others, Sergio González Miranda, *El dios cautivo: Las Ligas Patrióticas en la chilenización compulsiva de Tarapacá*

In addition to all this, global events influenced local politics. The Russian Revolution provided a concrete reference for what had previously been a mere theoretical possibility.¹² In Chile and around the world, liberalism had been heavily discredited during the early years of the twentieth century, especially following the First World War. In this context, between 1924 and 1932 the spectre of revolution became real, exciting its supporters and terrorising its detractors. The 1929 global economic crisis hit Chile hard, making socialist formulae for social change increasingly popular. This was clear in the months following the fall of the military government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo in 1931, when there were numerous insurrection attempts, some of which succeeded, such as those that gave life to the brief Socialist Republic in 1932.¹³

The return to relative institutional stability after the second election of Arturo Alessandri (1932–8) did not lessen fears. The Marxist Left was now organised into two major parties, the PS and the PC, and together they controlled the workers' movement.¹⁴ In this respect, right-wing anti-communism was not pure hysteria or exaggeration; it was a response to both global events and local political changes that threatened fundamental conservative values. At the same time, the creation of the Frente Popular (Popular Front, FP) together with the Partido Radical (Radical Party) brought the political language of the Spanish Civil War to Chile. Conservatives and liberals, among others, took sides with the nationalist insurrection led by Francisco Franco, fearful of reproducing the experience of the Spanish FP in Chilean lands. The election of the radical Pedro Aguirre Cerda in 1938 fuelled this anxiety. The loss of the executive left the Right in an unprecedented situation of weakness in the face of the advance of what they interpreted as forces against civilisation, religion and nation.

The Chilean Right, organising itself therefore in reaction to the challenge of the Left and social mobilisations of the 1930s, made anti-communism one of its main distinguishing features.¹⁵ To this end, conservatives and liberals adopted a strategy of containment in the National Congress in the face of centre–left reformism. Anti-communism reached its highest point after the election of radical Gabriel

(1910–1922) (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2004); Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), chap. 5; Julio Pinto Vallejos and Verónica Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *¿Revolución proletaria o querida chusma?: Socialismo y alessandriismo en la pugna por la politización pampina (1911–1932)* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2001); and Sergio Grez Toso, *Historia del comunismo en Chile: La era de Recabarren, 1912–1924* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2011). On the 'social question', see Sergio Grez Toso, *La 'cuestión social' en Chile: Ideas y debates precursores, 1804–1902* (Santiago: Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivo y Museos – Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 1995).

¹²Evguenia Fediakova, 'Rusia soviética en el imaginario político chileno, 1917–1939', in Manuel Loyola and Jorge Rojas Flores (eds.), *Por un rojo amanecer: Hacia una historia de los comunistas chilenos* (Santiago: ICAL, 2000), pp. 107–42.

¹³Verónica Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *Subversión, coerción y consenso: Creando el Chile del siglo XX (1918–1938)* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2017).

¹⁴Alan Angell, *Politics and the Labour Movement in Chile* (London and New York: Oxford University Press – Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1972), chap. 5.

¹⁵Correa, *Con las riendas del poder*, chap. 1; Raúl Burgos Pinto, 'La discusión cívica y moralizadora en el discurso anticomunista de la derecha conservadora chilena, 1932–1938', *Historia Crítica*, 61 (2016), pp. 171–91.

González Videla, supported by the communists, in 1946. Although he was elected with enthusiastic communist support, the post-war global context (and internal social contradictions) strained relations within the coalition, provoking, first, the expulsion of the PC from the government, and then its outlawing, with the enactment of the *Ley de Defensa Permanente de la Democracia* (Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy) in 1948. The political right wing, although affected by some internal divisions due to this law, was the main driving force behind the exclusion and persecution of communists.¹⁶

In the 1950s, the Chilean right wing faced two threats. On the one hand, social-Christian groups, while a minority within the Conservative Party, were able to control the party leadership for a few years before being expelled in 1949. In the early 1950s, the 'traditionalist' conservatives criticised the social-Christian leaders due to both their weak commitment to liberal capitalism and their 'soft' approach to the communist 'menace'. On the other hand, during the second Carlos Ibáñez government (1952–8), the right wing rejected statist economic policies. When Ibáñez briefly turned to liberal economics in 1955, conservatives and liberals supported him, to then back away from the government in view of Ibáñez's intentions to repeal the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy.¹⁷ At the same time, the global logic of the Cold War framed right-wing anti-communism. Commitment to a limited, procedures-based democracy and a liberal economy went hand in hand with recognition of the United States as the champion of the 'free world'. In 1952, the famous Chilean conservative leader Héctor Rodríguez de la Sotta expressed this in a book with the telling title *O Capitalismo o Comunismo. O vivir como en Estados Unidos o vivir como en Rusia* ('Either Capitalism or Communism. To Live Either as in the United States or as in Russia').¹⁸ Among other things, this book established the radical incompatibility between anti-capitalism and anti-communism: the only possible defence against the revolutionary threat was to reproduce capitalism and, therefore, to respect the leading role of the United States at a global level. Hence right-wing anti-communism in Chile in the 1950s expressed a particular articulation of local and global conditions. While domestically anti-communism operated as a way to defend liberal capitalism against social-Christianism and statist populism, internationally it was shaped by the post-war global and regional order, which was characterised by the dichotomy between the 'free world' and 'communism'.

Anti-communism, then, was the unifying element of the Chilean Right. For most of their leaders, militants and sympathisers, communism was the greatest threat of their time, although there was not always consensus on how to deal with it. The new Cold War scenario sharpened anxieties about communist dangers in Chile and the world, opening the doors for some right-wing leaders to specialise in the struggle against communism. Those who gained recognition in these tasks

¹⁶Correa, *Con las riendas del poder*, chap. 2; Carlos Huneeus, *La Guerra Fría chilena: Gabriel González Videla y la Ley Maldita* (Santiago: Random House Mondadori, 2009). I have discussed these issues in greater detail in Marcelo Casals, *La creación de la amenaza roja. Del surgimiento del anticomunismo en Chile a la 'campaña del terror' de 1964* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2016), chaps. 2–5.

¹⁷Correa, *Con las riendas del poder*, chaps. 3–5.

¹⁸Héctor Rodríguez de la Sotta, *O Capitalismo o Comunismo. O vivir como en Estados Unidos o vivir como en Rusia* (Santiago: Editorial Jurídica de Chile, 1952).

climbed the party ranks, made their voices heard in the press and Congress, and came to represent the whole right wing in the face of the 'red menace'. Between the 1930s and 1960s, conservative Sergio Fernández Larraín shone in this regard.

Fernández Larraín hailed from the natural social and cultural milieu of the Chilean right wing: the land-owning world of the Central Valley. His student years nurtured his preoccupation about communism. His law degree thesis for the Catholic University, a report entitled 'Notions of Soviet Political Law', sought to demonstrate the theoretical and practical arbitrariness of the legal system that arose from the Russian Revolution.¹⁹ After graduating, he began to work for his father-in-law, the liberal patriarch Ladislao Errazuriz, at his law firm, while at the same time ascending the ranks of the Conservative Party.²⁰ In 1937 he was elected to the National Congress as deputy for the province of Chiloé, and for two consecutive terms in the fourth district of Santiago. He remained in this latter position until 1949, when he joined the Senate. The Spanish Civil War would have a profound impact on Fernández Larraín's parliamentary career. Memories of his father's Spanish family and the anti-communist rhetoric of Franco's nationalism would leave a strong Hispanist and Catholic imprint on him, as well as on a whole generation of conservative and nationalist intellectuals. For them, Spain was an example of the limits of liberal democracy and the legitimate, extreme means which should be used to confront a revolutionary threat.²¹ That experience also led Fernández Larraín to his first incursions into international politics. After the end of the Second World War, he initiated a campaign to defend Franco's dictatorship in both the Chilean Congress and the United Nations, which led to his enjoying warm relations with the Spanish elite.²²

In 1940, Sergio Fernández Larraín achieved a certain fame at the national level by drafting and sponsoring a bill entitled 'Ley de Represión al Comunismo' ('Law to Repress Communism'), which outlawed the PC, then a part of the FP government. Both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate approved the bill, and only President Pedro Aguirre Cerda's veto stopped it.²³ In his reasoning behind the initiative, Fernández Larraín accused Chilean communism of seeking total control of the country through infiltration of the education system, the Armed Forces and other state agencies. He also warned of Spanish Republican refugees arriving in Chile at that time, calling them agents of international communism.²⁴

¹⁹Sergio Fernández Larraín, 'Nociones de derecho político soviético', unpubl. thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1933.

²⁰Sergio Salas Fernández, 'Sergio Fernández Larraín (1909–1983): Una inquieta existencia', *Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia*, 72: 115 (2006), p. 248.

²¹On the impact of the Spanish Civil War on Chilean politics in the 1930s and beyond, see Kirsten Weld, 'The Spanish Civil War and the Construction of a Reactionary Historical Consciousness in Augusto Pinochet's Chile', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 98: 1 (2018), pp. 77–115.

²²In fact, between 1958 and 1961 Fernández Larraín was Chile's ambassador to Spain, establishing a friendly relationship with Francisco Franco himself. His resignation from the embassy, as he pointed out to the then president Jorge Alessandri, was motivated by a 'deep concern' about the advance of the 'communist forces' in Chile. Salas Fernández, 'Sergio Fernández Larraín', pp. 251–3 and 266–7.

²³Eladio Huentemilla, 'Antecedentes de la Ley de Defensa Permanente de la Democracia', unpubl. BA thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1992, pp. 33–44.

²⁴Fernández Larraín compiled and published his own speeches at this juncture in order to give them greater publicity. Sergio Fernández Larraín, *¡Traición!!* (Santiago: El Imparcial, 1941).

From that moment on, Fernández Larraín's parliamentary work focused almost exclusively on the fight against communism. From his seat in the Chamber of Deputies he denounced, for example, the anti-national character of the PC and its strict adherence to Moscow's stance. In 1942, he pointed out in Congress that 'no one in Chile, nor in the whole world, will be able to trust in the patriotism of these groups, uprooted from their countries, who act anti-nationally, at the fringe of societal thought, unconcerned about the fate of their own lands, attentive only, and with sight and ears directed, to the icy Republic of Stalin'.²⁵

Fernández Larraín also became the defender of traditionalist conservatism, in opposition to the social-Christian tendencies that had emerged within the Conservative Party both in the late 1930s and in the mid-1940s. During the 1930s, a younger generation heavily influenced by social Christianity – which sought to fight communism through social reform – joined the youth section of the party, and were known as the Falange Nacional (National Falange). Following defeat in the 1938 presidential elections (narrowly won by Aguirre Cerda), the conservative leadership blamed the Falange Nacional since they had refused to openly support the right-wing candidate, Gustavo Ross Santa María. Given the attempt to reorganise the entire conservative youth section, the Falange Nacional left the Party. In this dispute, the conservative leadership had the support of the majority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with whom they shared a confrontational and unreserved anti-communism. Indeed, differences over how to deal with communism were at the base of this conflict. In 1946, the failed presidential candidacy of the social-Christian conservative Eduardo Cruz-Coke – which divided the right wing and made González Videla's victory possible – again heightened tensions within conservatism. Two years later, the social-Christian faction opposed the enactment of the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy, which provoked acerbic public debate with representatives of the 'traditionalist' majority. The main point under dispute was again the approach to the problem of communism: while Fernández Larraín and the traditionalists argued that communism was a crime of 'treason' that should be proscribed before it was committed, the social Christians felt that the repression of ideas was unconstitutional and anti-democratic.²⁶ After the law was passed, Fernández Larraín called for a vote of censure against Cruz-Coke for violating the principles of the Conservative Party; this call hastened a further split in the party.²⁷

In 1952, Fernández Larraín retired from parliamentary politics to dedicate himself exclusively to opposing communism. In June 1954, the Conservative Party Executive Board created the Comisión Permanente para Investigar las Actividades Comunistas en el País (Permanent Commission to Investigate

²⁵Sergio Fernández Larraín, 'La línea zigzagante de los partidos comunistas. Discurso pronunciado el 25 de agosto de 1942', in *En vigilia de guerra ... Exposiciones y discursos parlamentarios* (Santiago: El Imparcial, 1946), p. 6.

²⁶Pereira, *El Partido Conservador*, pp. 223–8.

²⁷Correa, *Con las riendas del poder*, chap. 3. The majority of the conservatives remained in the party. After the split, they agreed to add the adjective 'Traditionalist' to their name, resulting in the Partido Conservador Tradicionalista (Traditionalist Conservative Party, PCT), in order to differentiate themselves from the Partido Conservador Social Cristiano (Social Christian Conservative Party), organised around Cruz-Coke and his supporters.

Communist Activities in the Country), which he led. A few months later Fernández Larraín presented his *Informe sobre el comunismo* ('Report on Communism') to the Party's General Convention, in which he detailed all the organisations, events and people related to the Chilean PC and included accusations against the University of Chile for its 'undue complacency towards international communism'.²⁸

Unlike the previous years' denunciations and legal initiatives against communism, the 1954 report resembled a criminal investigation carried out by the police, since it included lists of people and organisations labelled as communists. Under the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy, accusations of communism could result in job losses, civil rights violations, jail sentences or demotion. Writer Guillermo Blanco recalls witnessing several cases of people on Fernández Larraín's lists who lost their jobs. He adds that the accusations of communism reached as far as the President of the Catholic Action movement in the city of Talca.²⁹

Fernández Larraín's report attracted criticism from social Christians, whose weapon in the struggle against communism was economic and social development. In 1955, National Falange intellectual Jaime Castillo Velasco published *El problema comunista* ('The Communist Problem'), in which he accused conservative anti-communism of seeking only to defend material interests and, thus, of further fuelling the social problems that served as a breeding ground for the expansion of communism.³⁰ The disputes between traditionalist conservatism and social Christians over this problem would continue for the rest of the decade. To a certain extent, these disputes were also reflected in the networks that both sides were building.³¹ The Chilean chapter of the CIA-supported anti-communist CCF, one of the most active in Latin America, was founded in 1953, and Castillo Velasco himself would play a leading role in it.³² Chilean CCF events and publications criticised not only local communist movements, but also Washington's foreign policy, generating friction within the Chilean chapter. In contrast, conservative anti-communism as represented by Fernández Larraín framed the political struggle in the bipolar scheme of the Cold War. From 1954 onwards, an opportunity would be opened up to project this type of anti-communist rhetoric and to practise it

²⁸Sergio Fernández Larraín, *Informe sobre el comunismo rendido a la Convención General del Partido Conservador Unido el 12 de octubre de 1954* (Santiago: Talleres de la Empresa Editora Zig-Zag, 1954), p. 167. At the same time, Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy initiated a large-scale anti-communist campaign in the United States. Although I have not found evidence of any connection between Fernández Larraín and McCarthy, the left-wing press did notice the resemblance. According to Fredrick Pike, Fernández Larraín was known – in a mocking tone – as the 'McCarthy from Melipilla', referring to his birthplace. Fredrick B. Pike, *Chile and the United States, 1880–1962: The Emergence of Chile's Social Crisis and the Challenge to United States Diplomacy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), note 425.

²⁹Guillermo Blanco, *Recuerdos no siempre cuerds* (Santiago: Tajamar Editores, 2005), p. 118.

³⁰Jaime Castillo Velasco, *El problema comunista* (Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico, 1955).

³¹Fernández Larraín's replies to social-Christian criticism regarding conservative anti-communism are compiled in Sergio Fernández Larraín, *Falange nacional, democracia cristiana y comunismo* (Santiago: Imprenta ZAI, 1958); and in Sergio Fernández Larraín, *Y el comunismo sigue su marcha ...* (Santiago: Del Pregón, 1963).

³²Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom*, pp. 92–3.

internationally, with the holding of the First Congress against Soviet Intervention in Latin America.

Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America (1954–8)

The years immediately following the Second World War in Latin America marked the end of the phase of democratic expansion of the late 1930s and early 1940s. Throughout the region, left-wing movements and trade unions were repressed in different ways, while governments turned to conservatism and anti-communism.³³

It was in this context that the Chilean Congress enacted the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy, and politicians like Fernández Larraín were acknowledged as champions of anti-communism. Mexico experienced a similar process, and this set the conditions for the first attempt to build a Latin American anti-communist, conservative network. From the late 1940s, post-revolutionary Mexican governments had veered to the Right in a systematic attempt to sweep away the protectionist, anti-imperialist and pro-mobilisation legacy of the popular movements and organisation of the Lázaro Cardenas period (1934–40). To this end, the governments of Miguel Alemán, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines and Adolfo López Mateos (1946–64) took refuge in anti-communism as a new strategy for legitimising power.³⁴ Sensing the way the wind was blowing, Jorge Prieto Laurens – an experienced and wily politician – founded the Frente Popular Anti-comunista Mexicano (Mexican Anti-Communist Popular Front, FPAM). According to its ‘Declaration of Principles’, the FPAM aimed to ‘fight any totalitarian doctrine that contradicts the principles of Fatherland, Freedom, and Democracy’.³⁵ Although this organisation never enjoyed significant growth in members or political influence, and occupied a rather marginal position in Mexican politics, Prieto Laurens’s ties with the post-Cárdenas governments and the US embassy assured him of resources and influence. Thanks to them, the FPAM set about the creation of a continental body to fight against communism, mixing the imperatives of US foreign policy, Mexican domestic politics and the conviction that communism could be defeated only by an international organisation. This is how the First Congress against Soviet Intervention in Latin America, held in Mexico City in May 1954, was born.³⁶

Around this same time (May 1954), the United States was carrying out large-scale intelligence operations against the government of Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala. In the belief that his government had opened the doors to communist

³³Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, ‘Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War: Some Reflections on the 1945–8 Conjunction’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 20:1 (1988), pp. 167–89.

³⁴Elisa Servín, ‘Propaganda y Guerra Fría: La campaña anticomunista en la prensa mexicana del medio siglo’, *Signos Históricos*, 11 (2004), pp. 9–39; Luis Alberto Herrán Ávila, ‘Las guerrillas blancas: Anticomunismo transnacional e imaginarios de derechas en Argentina y México, 1954–1972’, *Quinto sol*, 19: 1 (June 2015), pp. 1–26.

³⁵Frente Popular Anti-comunista de México, ‘Declaración de Principios y Estatutos’, Mexico City, 1952, p. 3: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP83-00423R001100320006-8.pdf>, last access 6 Nov. 2018.

³⁶Mario Virgilio Santiago Jiménez, ‘Entre “hispanistas” y “pro-yanquis”. El Primer Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina, México, mayo de 1954’, *Nuevo Mundo – Mundos Nuevos, Coloquios* (2017): <https://nuevomundo.revues.org/70497>, last access 6 Nov. 2018.

domination, and was thus a threat to US dominance in Central America, the CIA elaborated an extensive plan that included propaganda and organised action from Guatemalan dissidents to overthrow the government by force.³⁷ The US intelligence agency considered that the First Congress could help both in discrediting the Árbenz regime internationally and in providing aid to the Guatemalan opposition organisation abroad, so it decided to finance and organise the event together with FPAM. Prieto Laurens invited politicians and intellectuals across Latin America, especially those interested in maligning Árbenz's Guatemala. However, even with support from the Mexican government and the CIA, Prieto Laurens and his group were unable to bring their project to fruition by the arranged dates. The Congress had to be postponed from February to May 1954. By the end of April there was still no venue for the event, the list of speakers had only a few names on it, and there were no mechanisms to prevent 'infiltrations' from the Left. The Congress was eventually inaugurated on 27 May in a small theatre on the outskirts of Mexico City.

Whilst they shared an anti-communist stance there were important differences between the delegates. There were those who criticised the United States along the lines of interwar Catholic, conservative Hispanism, while others accused the Mexican government of 'communist infiltration'. This caused some important delegates, such as the president of the Chamber of Deputies of Ecuador, José Antonio Baquero de la Calle, to leave the event, annoyed by some attendees' insistence on accusing the local authorities of communist infiltration. To make things worse, a group of Guatemalan students broke into the assembly to denounce the US intervention in their country, giving rise to a violent brawl.³⁸ Only police action restored order. Because of these problems, opinions about the event were not encouraging. The *New York Times* called the Congress a 'failure', and the CIA acknowledged organisational errors.³⁹ Nevertheless, the drive to build a continental anti-communist network would not end there.

Chilean conservatives received no advance notice of the First Congress in Mexico City. *El Diario Ilustrado* reported only briefly on the efforts of Argentine delegate Andrés de Cicco to offer the honorary presidency of an eventual Anti-Communist Front of Latin America to US President Dwight Eisenhower.⁴⁰ No invitations were issued to Chilean anti-communists and the Congress had no great impact on the local public sphere. That situation would change quickly. At the First Congress, a Comisión Permanente (Permanent Commission) was created to establish contact with related groups and to prepare a second Congress.⁴¹ Jorge

³⁷On the American intervention in Guatemala, see Stephen C. Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

³⁸For a detailed account, see the CIA's report on and the transcripts of the Congress debates (untitled) in the CIA's online archives: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000922613.pdf and https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000922999.pdf, last access 18 Nov. 2018.

³⁹Santiago Jiménez, 'Entre "hispanistas" y "pro-yanquis"'.
⁴⁰Frente Popular anticomunista en América presidiría D. Eisenhower', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 1 June 1954,

p. 9.

⁴¹“Memoria del primer congreso contra la intervención soviética en América Latina”. Publicaciones de la Comisión Permanente del Primer Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina, México, 1955', *Estudios sobre el Comunismo*, 12 (April–June 1956), p. 142.

Prieto Laurens and Admiral Carlos Penna Botto (later to be elected to the posts of secretary-general and president of the Congress) led two commissions that travelled through Central America and the Caribbean, and South America, respectively, in order to invite organisations, parliamentarians, parties and governments to attend the Second Congress.⁴² Penna Botto was the leader of the Cruzada Brasileira Anticomunista (Brazilian Anti-Communist Crusade, CBA), the most radical anti-communist group in Brazil. Founded in 1952, the CBA was composed mostly of navy officers dedicated to denouncing people and organisations as communist. The CBA published several newspapers full of Manichean anti-Soviet rhetoric. Although marginal to Brazilian politics, this group maintained a visible presence thanks to its insistent propaganda campaigns.⁴³ With his background in the CBA, Penna Botto managed to excite the Chilean conservatives, who pledged their participation in the Second Congress.

The continental and Chilean contexts were conducive to affirming the anti-communist identity of conservatives in contrast to other political forces. The overthrow of Árbenz in Guatemala was unanimously repudiated by the centre-left parties and their press in Chile since he symbolised a national, popular and democratic attempt to modernise a small, poor country against the wishes of powerful economic interests represented by the United Fruit Company and the US State Department. Several protests arose spontaneously, while a 'Friends of Guatemala' group was formed in Congress to coordinate action. Two figures grew in importance, the leader of the National Falange Eduardo Frei, and the socialist Salvador Allende. Transcending the differences that separated social Christians from Marxists, the repudiation of the United States inspired a brief rapprochement, which resulted in the organisation of public protests in the streets of Santiago and other Chilean cities. At one of these gatherings, a US flag was burned, an image that circulated widely in the US press. The 'Friends of Guatemala' also organised a Congreso de Parlamentarios y Personalidades (Congress of Parliamentarians and Personalities), with delegates from several Latin American countries, to emphasise rejection of the coup and criticism of the United States.⁴⁴

The Second Congress against Soviet Intervention in Latin America, hosted by Penna Botto and his CBA, was held in Rio de Janeiro in August 1955. The language used in the invitation to attend left no doubt about the objectives of the Congress: the event would make efforts to 'obstruct and annul Soviet Russia's intervention in the Americas through the stateless Bolsheviks, who make up the sordid fifth

⁴²*Memoria del Segundo Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina* (Mexico City: n.p., 1956), pp. 5–7. One of these commissions visited Guatemala after the overthrow of Árbenz. As a way of showing support for the dictatorship of Carlos Castillo Armas and expressing its enthusiasm for the CIA-inspired coup, the Commission published an extensive essay condemning 'communism' in Guatemala: Comisión Permanente del Primer Congreso Contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina y Jorge Prieto Laurens, *El libro negro del comunismo en Guatemala: Comisión Permanente del Primer Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina* (Mexico City: S. Turanzas del Valle, [1954]).

⁴³Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *Em guarda contra o perigo vermelho: O anticomunismo no Brasil, 1917–1964* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva – FAPESP, 2002), pp. 143–8.

⁴⁴Mark T. Hove, 'The Arbenz Factor: Salvador Allende, U.S.–Chilean Relations, and the 1954 U.S. Intervention in Guatemala', *Diplomatic History*, 31: 4 (2007), pp. 636–7.

column organised, directed and subsidised by the Kremlin'.⁴⁵ There were some differences from the First Congress. First, almost all the delegates subscribed to the same conservative, authoritarian, pro-United States, anti-communist spirit, so the debates were not as heated and there were no major disagreements. Secondly, the lack of CIA declassified documents on this matter suggests that the event was organised independently of Washington.

This time, the organisation of the event did not suffer any setbacks. The Congress held sessions in an auditorium at the Ministry of Finance, which implied some government support for Penna Botto. More than 130 delegates from all the Latin American countries accepted invitations, and there were four observers from other continents. The delegates were journalists, writers, trade union leaders, government officials, military officials, parliamentarians, leaders of anti-communist organisations, professionals and representatives of right-wing women's organisations. The Chilean delegation was led by Sergio Fernández Larraín and included former Police General Eduardo Maldonado, conservative student Fernando Zegers Santa Cruz, liberal congressman Raúl Marín Balmaceda, Miguel Podarowski – a Polish priest residing in Chile and director of the magazine *Estudios sobre el Comunismo* (Studies on Communism) – and journalist Luis Bilbao Aracena.⁴⁶

A significant portion of the debates and presentations at the Second Congress referred to the collective need to confront a global enemy. For many, it was the first time they had attended a meeting of delegates from across Latin America focused on the struggle against communism. The shared discussions and experiences made clear the potential for concerted action at the continental level, both within and outside their respective nations. In that regard, proposals were varied and ambitious. The delegation from Guatemala – now under the dictatorship of Carlos Castillo Armas – was especially welcomed. In its speech before the assembly, the Guatemalan delegation called for the formulation of an international pact against communism, and for all nations to pass into law the criminalisation of any act thereof.⁴⁷ At the same time, and in an attempt to consolidate the regional anti-communist network, Penna Botto himself pressed for the creation of the Confederación Interamericana para la Defensa del Continente (Inter-American Confederation for the Defence of the Continent), comprised of all the organisations represented at the Second Congress.⁴⁸

In Chile, both the national press and specialised magazines disseminated the debates and papers of the Second Congress. Fernando Zegers acted as correspondent for *El Diario Ilustrado*. In his reporting, he was able to inform conservative readers that Fernández Larraín enjoyed great prestige among the delegates. The Congress warmly welcomed his presentations on communist penetration in Chile, Soviet cultural action and homages to the Pope and to popes in general for their anti-communist struggle. In fact, Fernández Larraín accepted a position as chair of one of the four working committees.⁴⁹ Luis Bilbao wrote a long

⁴⁵ *Memoria del Segundo Congreso*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁴⁹ 'Simpatías continentales halla el Congreso Anticomunista en Brasil', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 24 Aug. 1955, p. 1; 'Las 21 naciones de América Latina, unidas para impedir la intervención comunista', *El Diario*

description of the Congress for the magazine *Estudios sobre el Comunismo*, where, among other things, he publicised the denunciations against communist penetration in Brazil and Mexico, which, in the eyes of the organisers, were the Latin American countries most at risk.⁵⁰

In addition to Fernández Larraín, Raúl Marín Balmaceda too played a leading role in the debates and resolutions adopted at this Congress. Marín Balmaceda, a liberal who served first as a deputy and then as a senator, was the leader of the Liberal Party who warned most insistently about the danger of communism. In 1953, while Fernández Larraín was preparing his 'Report on Communism', Marín Balmaceda published an essay entitled '¿Por qué soy anticomunista?' ('Why Am I Anti-Communist?'), basing his position on the rejection of a 'tyranny constituted by the masses – ignorant and deceived – to snuff out every right, every freedom, every thought that is not congruent with the tyrant's orders'.⁵¹ In order to combat this danger he, like his conservative counterpart, focused much of his parliamentary activity on denouncing communism. In 20 years of parliamentary life – from his election as a deputy in 1937 to his death in 1957 – he gave more than 40 anti-communist speeches.⁵² One of these caught the attention of the Permanent Commission, led by Prieto Laurens and Penna Botto. In 1956, between the Second and Third Congresses, Marín Balmaceda's intervention in the Senate against a bill that sought to repeal the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy was published by the Permanent Commission as an informative pamphlet.⁵³ The speech, entitled 'Proceso al Soviet en el Senado de Chile' ('Prosecuting the Soviet in the Chilean Senate'), was based on Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February of the same year; it sought – as Jorge Prieto Laurens pointed out in his prologue to the pamphlet – 'to demonstrate [...] the radical and fundamental falsehood of communism'. Thus, thanks to the Permanent Commission, Marín Balmaceda's authoritarian anti-communist arguments could have some kind of continental reach.

Meanwhile, preparations were under way for the Third Congress, which opened in Lima in April 1957. As in Rio de Janeiro, but with more conviction, the Congress had the support of the local government. The then Peruvian president Manuel

Ilustrado, 26 Aug. 1955, pp. 1 and 4; 'Ponencias presentadas por la delegación chilena, aprobadas en el Congreso contra Intervención Soviética en América Latina', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 30 Aug. 1955, p. 2, and 1 Sept. 1955, p. 5. Fernández Larraín came very close to chairing the Permanent Commission. Although the assembly voted by a majority for Penna Botto, the Brazilian admiral in a modest gesture tried to reject the position, proposing instead the Chilean conservative. The manoeuvre did not succeed. *Memoria del Segundo Congreso*, p. 314.

⁵⁰Luis Bilbao, 'El Segundo Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina', *Estudios sobre el comunismo*, 10 (Oct.–Dec. 1955), pp. 37–44.

⁵¹Raúl Marín Balmaceda, '¿Por qué soy anticomunista?', *Estudios sobre el comunismo*, 2 (Oct.–Dec. 1953), p. 1.

⁵²This can be deduced from the list of parliamentary appearances in Mario Correa, *Imagen de Raúl Marín Balmaceda* (Santiago: Tip. San Pablo, 1964), pp. 81–159.

⁵³Raúl Marín Balmaceda, *Discurso del señor senador don Raúl Marín Balmaceda, delegado suplente de la República de Chile, ante la 'Confederación Interamericana de Defensa del Continente', sobre la Defensa Permanente de la Democracia* (Mexico City: Publicaciones de la Comisión Permanente del Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina, 1956), p. 3.

Prado met with the delegations and held an official reception for the delegates. In his speech to them, he promised to maintain 'an unwavering anti-communist stance, both at the national level [...] and in terms of the international cooperation that is necessary to prevent communist infiltration'. The delegates applauded enthusiastically, and did not hesitate to coin the term 'Prado Doctrine' to refer to the concepts espoused by the president.⁵⁴

The writer Luis Alayza y Paz Soldán represented the event's organising committee. In his inaugural speech, before over 100 delegates, he described communism in religious and binary terms. Communism, in this sense, would be the contemporary expression of evil battling good, of 'fallen angels'; the Latin American peoples, it followed, should be warned of their imminent danger: 'There is no alternative but to fight together under the banners of democracy or surrender.'⁵⁵ In his speech, Admiral Penna Botto went even further. Calling upon Western democracies not to fall for Soviet deception after the denunciation of Stalin, he argued for a break in all negotiations and for preparation for a violent confrontation with communism: 'I am firmly convinced that the free world will have to fight sooner or later, to safeguard its own freedom and to free enslaved peoples from captivity; and the sooner the better, to achieve a faster and more rapid victory.'⁵⁶

In contrast to the two previous Congresses, in Lima there was a large number of delegates who noticed the contradiction between fighting communism to defend democracy, on the one hand, and being in the presence of envoys of Central American dictatorships, on the other. Hence, the final document of the Congress, the so-called 'Declaration of Lima', briefly set out anti-totalitarian and anti-dictatorial principles, irrespective of political leanings. Moreover, it called for 'the condemnation of any system of oppression that uses anti-communism as an excuse'.⁵⁷ This change did not go unnoticed by foreign observers. A report from the British embassy in Lima pointed out that the Congress had been more 'positive', with the participation of 'some genuine democrats', although the presence of delegations with the support of 'tyrannies' from Central America left certain doubts.⁵⁸

Despite this relative openness and the media coverage provided by the most important Peruvian newspapers, the Lima Congress did not include political forces beyond representatives of right-wing nationalist, conservative and liberal parties of the continent. Prior to the inaugural session, Arturo Jáuregui – secretary-general of the Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores (Inter-American Regional Organisation of Workers) and member of Peru's anti-communist, populist Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American Revolutionary Popular Alliance, APRA) – published a letter in which he described the Congress delegates as having a 'doubtful moral standing' and as 'trafficking in anti-Communism'. To a

⁵⁴Confederación Interamericana de Defensa del Continente (CIDC), *Resoluciones del Tercer Congreso contra la Infiltración Soviética en América Latina* (Mexico City: n.p., 1957), p. 20.

⁵⁵CIDC, *Resoluciones del Tercer Congreso*, p. 25.

⁵⁶Carlos Penna Botto, 'La amenaza soviética', *Estudios sobre el comunismo*, 17 (July–Sept. 1957), p. 5.

⁵⁷CIDC, *Resoluciones del Tercer Congreso*, p. 36; Gonzalo Bonilla Cortés, 'El Tercer Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina', *Estudios sobre el comunismo*, 17 (July–Sept. 1957), pp. 7–9.

⁵⁸The National Archives, United Kingdom (TNA), Foreign Office, file 371/126087, American Department 1077/2, 'Third Congress against Soviet Intervention in Latin America held in Lima, 10–14 April 1957.

large extent, that reaction foreshadowed APRA's refusal to join the Congress, despite repeated invitations from Penna Botto. When the Brazilian insinuated the possibility of APRA's collusion with communism, Jáuregui's answer was blunt: 'Our anti-imperialism is not the anti-imperialism of Communists and our anti-Communism is not the anti-Communism of the imperialists.'⁵⁹ Differences in the struggle against communism among Latin American groups close to the CCF, such as APRA,⁶⁰ and those attending the Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America seemed insurmountable.

In Chile, *El Diario Ilustrado* reported on the debates of the Congress daily through reports from news agencies and members of the delegation. Conservatives and liberals had commissioned Fernández Larraín and Marín Balmaceda, respectively, to represent them at the Congress.⁶¹ The local situation led to the reaffirmation of their anti-communist commitments. A few days earlier, on 2 and 3 April 1957, a violent social outburst had occurred in the Chilean capital as a result of the difficult economic situation, an event that the right-wing press interpreted as an attempt at revolution led by communism.⁶² Furthermore, at the same time, discussions had begun on repealing the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy, something that President Ibáñez himself viewed favourably. As a result, some Chilean right-wing leaders saw the Lima Congress as an opportunity to gather reliable information on the dimension of the 'communist threat' and to implicate those 'who live exclusively concerned about their electoral possibilities', as well as those who 'appear to be reaching out to the traditional enemies of democracy and its institutions'.⁶³ Congress itself, in one of its resolutions, recommended that Latin American nations enact laws for the 'defence of the democratic regime', which met with the Chilean conservatives' 'special applause and praise'.⁶⁴

The Lima Congress also served to widen the field of participating anti-communist organisations to other regions.⁶⁵ Among the invited delegates were representatives of the APAL – organised around the Chinese nationalists of Taiwan and South Korea⁶⁶ – and 'fraternal delegates of the countries subjugated by Russia', especially Ukrainians, Hungarians and Romanians.⁶⁷ One Argentine delegate, Elsie Krasting de Rivero Haedo, was particularly enthusiastic about these contacts. In a private letter that came to the attention of British diplomats, she noted many commonalities between the Latin Americans attending the

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom*, pp. 96–7.

⁶¹'Partido Conservador Unido adhiere a Congr. Anti-comunista en Lima', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 10 April 1957, p. 4.

⁶²Pedro Milos Hurtado, *Historia y memoria: 2 de abril de 1957* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2007), pp. 292–304.

⁶³'La conferencia de Lima', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 12 April 1957, p. 3. The implicit mention, by the way, referred to social-Christian groups, such as the National Falange, which supported repeal of the law.

⁶⁴'El congreso de Lima', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 25 April 1957, p. 3.

⁶⁵This was an initiative that would bear fruit in the 1960s and 1970s, when some Latin American actors joined global anti-communist organisations such as the World Anticommunist League: Pierre Abramovici, 'The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures and Activities', in van Dongen *et al.* (eds.), *Transnational Anti-Communism*, pp. 113–29.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶⁷CIDC, *Resoluciones del Tercer Congreso*, p. 3.

Congress and the Asian and European guests, and therefore recommended the deepening of these ties.⁶⁸

The Fourth Congress was held in Antigua, Guatemala in October 1958. As with the other Congresses, the organisation had the support of the local government, now the best example of an anti-communist role model, following the overthrow of Árbenz. Guatemalan President Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes (who had succeeded the recently-assassinated Castillo Armas) gave a passionate speech to the assembly, as did Honduran President Ramón Villedas Morales. As British diplomats had noted a couple of years earlier, this Latin American anti-communist network had become a relatively important actor in Central American politics, especially for those who needed to make professions of anti-communist faith and thus legitimise themselves internally.⁶⁹

The discussions went on as usual: the Congress passed resolutions recommending that Latin American nations repress communism, others expressed solidarity with anti-communist movements from different regions, and some condemned Marxism using more philosophical and theological arguments. Among other things, the Congress paid a heartfelt tribute to two anti-communist 'heroes' who had died months earlier: the Guatemalan dictator Carlos Castillo Armas, and Chilean liberal Raúl Marín Balmaceda.⁷⁰ Sergio Fernández Larraín continued to increase his prestige within the organisation. He gave a long speech at the inaugural session, and the organisation elected him vice-president of the Confederation, accompanying President Penna Botto and Secretary-General Prieto Laurens on the board.⁷¹

The Fourth Congress also resolved an issue that had generated conflict within the organisation, and which would have some international ramifications: accusations against Bolivia's then ruling party, the MNR, of communist infiltration. Fernández Larraín was the protagonist in this whole affair.

'Marxism in Bolivia'

Delegate presentations to the four Congresses often referred to domestic issues. Denouncing rivals as communists at those events was a serious accusation, and could serve to displace rivals in the local political game. For example, Guatemala's Movimiento Democrático Nacional (National Democratic Movement), founded by Castillo Armas, withdrew from sessions during the Fourth Congress in Antigua after its delegate accused the majority of the Guatemalan delegation of having colluded with communists in the past.⁷² Similarly, a public display of anti-communism could help to improve positions in domestic and international arenas. According to British diplomats, the participation of the Partido Liberal de Honduras (Honduran Liberal Party) in the Third Congress in Lima was a 'whitewashing operation' – in

⁶⁸TNA, 'Third Congress', American Department 1077/2.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*IV Congreso Continental Anticomunista. Actas de las sesiones, versión taquigráfica, resoluciones* (Guatemala City: Talleres de la Tipografía Nacional, 1961), pp. 84 and 126–7.

⁷¹'Del Congreso Anticomunista de Guatemala (correspondencia aérea para 'El Diario Ilustrado')', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 18 Oct. 1958, p. 3.

⁷²*IV Congreso Continental Anticomunista*, p. 151.

the eyes of both local voters and the United States – due to rumours of a previous proximity to communism.⁷³

Something similar would happen in the case of Bolivia, although with more lasting consequences. At the Second Congress in Rio de Janeiro, the leader of the ultra-right-wing Falange Socialista Boliviana (Bolivian Socialist Falange), Óscar Unzaga de la Vega, accused the MNR of paving the way for Soviet socialism. For Unzaga de la Vega, the MNR sought centralisation of political power, suppression of the dissident press and control of universities in order to establish communism in Bolivia. In addition, the country's geographical and economic position – at the heart of South America and with great mineral wealth – had, according to him, whetted Moscow's appetite. The MNR itself was accused of infiltration by communists who would blindly follow Soviet orders. Congress unanimously passed a resolution condemning the MNR's 'communist methods' and urged international organisations to take action on the issue.⁷⁴

The MNR was born as a nationalist party in the wake of the political and social crisis generated by the Chaco War against Paraguay between 1932 and 1935. Towards the late 1940s, its association with the organised labour movement – particularly miners – drove it away from fascist rhetoric and brought it closer to the Left. Between 1943 and 1946, the MNR had its first experience in power during the nationalist and reformist (and also fascist sympathising) government of Gualberto Villarroel, until its overthrow in 1946 as a result of an uprising that united conservatives and the pro-Soviet Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Party). The military governments of the so-called *sexenio* (1946–52) were unable to withstand the popular urban and rural mobilisation against the military, the traditional oligarchy and, above all, against the powerful 'Rosca', the oligarchical group of businessmen who owned the tin mines. Once it became clear that the military would not accept the MNR's overwhelming electoral success in the 1951 elections, a violent popular uprising overthrew the Armed Forces in 1952 and installed the victorious party.⁷⁵

The MNR and its allies on the Left decreed agrarian reform, nationalisation of mines, dissolution of the Army and the organisation of popular militias, among other revolutionary measures. In line with their popular nationalist rhetoric, they sought to refound the nation on the broad basis of anti-oligarchy and workers' social alliances. However, the revolutionary impulse did not last long. By the mid-1950s, the economic situation had forced rapprochement with the United States, which sought to channel the Bolivian revolution towards a development and modernisation model. The original political and social alliance soon fractured, while the MNR participated in President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress in the early 1960s until overthrown by another military coup in 1964.⁷⁶

⁷³TNA, 'Third Congress', American Department 1077/5.

⁷⁴Bilbao, 'El Segundo Congreso', p. 44.

⁷⁵James Dunkerley, *Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952–82* (London: Verso, 1984), chap. 1.

⁷⁶Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson, *Revolutionary Horizons. Past and Present in Bolivian Politics* (New York and London: Verso, 2007), chaps. 5 and 6. On the scale of and conditions attached to US aid to Bolivia in those years, see James F. Siekmeier, *The Bolivian Revolution and the United States, 1952 to the Present* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), chap. 2.

In this context, motivated by Unzaga de la Vega's accusations at the Third Congress of Lima – and perhaps in collusion with Bolivian opposition groups exiled in Chile – Sergio Fernández Larraín presented a brief speech on communist penetration in Bolivia during the first government of MNR leader Víctor Paz Estenssoro (1952–6). The speech generated controversy, especially within the official Bolivian delegation, which included members of the MNR, and the Bolivian attendees who were opposed to the government. Although Fernández Larraín tried to resolve the situation by pointing out that his remarks were valid only for the Paz Estenssoro government and not for his successor and then president, Hernán Siles Suazo, the debate among Bolivians in the assembly was loud and clear. In the middle of the discussion, Bolivian Senator Federico Álvarez Plata proposed the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry that would go to La Paz to report on the new trends in the country.⁷⁷ The motion was carried.

The animosity of the vast majority of Congress delegates towards the MNR had deep roots. The conservative anti-communism of the 1950s was particularly suspicious of national-popular movements and regimes, understood from its perspective as mere communist masquerades. Guatemala, in this sense, served as a model and reference point for understanding these political phenomena. This perspective coincided with US foreign policy of those years, especially during the Dwight Eisenhower era (1953–61). For Washington, there were too many points of contact between developmental nationalism and Soviet socialism to be ignored. Any nationalisation or redistribution proposal set off alarm bells. That is why during those years the United States did not hesitate to support right-wing military dictatorships if that ensured the containment of nationalist popular movements. The only exception to this scheme was Bolivia, probably thanks to the MNR's previous pro-fascist background.⁷⁸

The developing situation in Chile also influenced Fernández Larraín's case against the Bolivian MNR. A new alliance which redefined the relationship between the socialist and communist Left gave rise to the Frente de Acción Popular (Popular Action Front) in 1956. At the same time, pressure for the repeal of the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy began to come under increasing pressure, a repeal the majority of radicals and Falangists/Christian Democrats also supported. Moreover, Fernández Larraín could not ignore the links between the MNR and the Chilean PS. In the 1950s, most socialists were attuned to foreign models of revolutionary nationalism, particularly those that implied a detachment from the Soviet model. The Peruvian APRA and the governments of Juan José Arévalo and his successor Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala had aroused great enthusiasm among socialists. This was also true of the Bolivian MNR regime, especially thanks to its policies of nationalisation, agrarian reform and support for workers' militias. There were also direct links: the Chilean PS invited Bolivian mining leader Juan Lechín, the most influential figure in the Trotskyist Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers' Party), and a close ally of the MNR, to address its Central Committee

⁷⁷'Realidad vigente del peligro comunista en América Latina', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 24 April 1957, p. 2.

⁷⁸Vanni Pettinà, 'Del anticomunismo al antinacionalismo: La presidencia Eisenhower y el giro autoritario en la América Latina de los años 50', *Revista de Indias*, 67: 240 (2007), pp. 573–606.

in 1949 during his exile in Chile. From that moment on, Lechín would become the official nexus between the PS and the MNR.⁷⁹

This was the background to Fernández Larraín's leadership of the Third Congress's Commission of Inquiry to La Paz. Originally, the mission was to have been led by Penna Botto and composed of other members of Congress. Due to logistical and economic problems, however, only Peru's Miguel Cavero, Ignacio Ramírez of Colombia, Guatemala's Carlos Simons and Cuban representative Ernesto de la Fe, along with Fernández Larraín, were able to meet in the Bolivian capital. On 24 October 1957, once they had settled into a downtown hotel in La Paz – protected by plain-clothes policemen – they set to work. In order to save time, they decided to conduct their research separately, and then share it in daily meetings. According to Fernández Larraín himself, in the prologue to the report, the delegates met 'with elements of every condition and ideology', except government authorities.⁸⁰

Despite the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry and Fernández Larraín's visit to Bolivia, the truth is that the report's main lines of argument were agreed upon beforehand. In May 1956, almost a year before the Third Congress, Fernández Larraín – in his capacity as president of the Comisión para Investigar la Penetración del Comunismo en Chile (Commission to Investigate the Penetration of Communism into Chile) of the Partido Conservador Unido (United Conservative Party)⁸¹ – had given a long speech in which he sought to demonstrate 'that the regime of the so-called "Revolutionary Nationalist Movement" is subserviently following the directives of International Communism'.⁸² Specifically, the MNR regime was 'a Chinese-type experiment developing in the Altiplano',⁸³ and, what was even worse, 'under the complacent gaze and cooperation of the government of the United States of America', since Washington was supposedly ignoring the communist nature of the MNR. As he saw it, what was happening in Bolivia was a more sophisticated version of the Guatemalan case, and was in exact accordance with 'the penetration plan that Moscow has strived to implement in underdeveloped countries'.⁸⁴

Fernández Larraín was a scholar of anti-communism, as he demonstrated in this speech. The type-written version is full of quotations from and references to documents originating in different parts of Latin America, reflecting a certain circulation

⁷⁹Fernández Abara, 'Nacionalismo y Marxismo', p. 37.

⁸⁰Sergio Fernández Larraín, *El marxismo en Bolivia. Informe de la mayoría de la comisión designada por el III Congreso de la Confederación Interamericana de Defensa del Continente, sobre la situación interna de Bolivia* (Santiago: J. Cifuentes Impresor, 1957), pp. 6–8.

⁸¹After poor performances in several elections, some of the members who had left the party after the 1948 law (and who had joined the Social-Christian Conservative Party; see note 27) rejoined the PCT, while others would join the PDC on its foundation in 1957. To acknowledge this fact, the PCT changed its name in 1953 (replacing 'Traditionalist' by 'Unido', or 'United'), retaining this name until its dissolution in 1966: Correa, *Con las riendas del poder*, p. 139.

⁸²Sergio Fernández Larraín, *El comunismo en Bolivia. Versión taquigráfica de la conferencia ofrecida por el autor en el Salón de Actos del Partido Conservador Unido, el 3 de mayo de 1956* (Santiago: Publicaciones de la Unión Democrática Boliviana, 1956), p. 3.

⁸³At this time (before the Sino-Soviet split of the 1960s) Fernández Larraín viewed the leading role given to peasants as evidence of a 'Chinese' type of regime, but one that was nevertheless led by Moscow.

⁸⁴Fernández Larraín, *El comunismo en Bolivia. Versión taquigráfica*, p. 17.

of information at the continental level, perhaps as a result of the Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America held up to that time. A group of Bolivian opponents of the MNR residing in Chile published the conference proceedings, which demonstrates the existence of contacts with Fernández Larraín prior to the Commission of Inquiry. All the information disseminated through these channels aimed at demonstrating the communist nature of the MNR, despite its statements to the contrary. In fact, Fernández Larraín viewed any attempt to defend the Bolivian government as nothing more than a communist strategy: 'Communism does not appear in anything [is not mentioned anywhere]. Even the hierarchies of the Altiplano often take positions and make anti-Soviet statements, but [...] these attitudes and words, confronted with the reality of Bolivian chaos, do not go beyond being weak, useless gestures and a useless waste of breath.'⁸⁵

Siles Suazo's government feared the international effects of the report of the Commission led by Fernández Larraín. Anticipating its tone, the Minister of Foreign Affairs entrusted the Bolivian ambassador to Mexico, Mario Diez de Medina, with the task of trying to retrieve the situation through Prieto Laurens, then secretary-general of the Permanent Commission. Ambassador Diez de Medina reported that, during their subsequent meeting, Prieto Laurens had been 'courteous and affable'; indeed, they took time to remember the participation of Bolivia's official delegation in the Third Congress. In fact, Prieto Laurens had said, his relations with the head of the Bolivian Socialist Falange, Óscar Unzaga de la Vega, had 'cooled considerably' as a result of his welcoming delegates of the MNR. The ambassador, without worrying about these issues, went straight to the point. He noted that he had received information that Fernández Larraín was in the process of drafting his report. In view of the Chilean conservative's belligerent stance against Bolivia in border disputes, the ambassador pointed out that 'he would not be a friend of my country and will always seek the means to discredit it and to create a bad atmosphere in the international arena'. He also accused Fernández Larraín of drafting the report on behalf of the entire Commission, which contravened what had been agreed at the Third Congress, in that each member of the Commission of Inquiry would draft separate reports. Prieto Laurens was able to get himself off the hook by pointing out that Cuban delegate Ernesto de la Fe – the only one to meet with government authorities in La Paz – had already sent in his report and was generally in favour of the MNR. At any rate, Prieto Laurens promised that these 'manoeuvres against Bolivia' would have no effect whatsoever. He even empathised with the ambassador, inviting him to attend the Fourth Congress in Antigua to 'finish convincing two recalcitrant anti-Bolivians: the Chilean Fernández Larraín and the Brazilian Penna Botto'.⁸⁶

Some details of the report under preparation also reached British diplomats. From the Lima embassy, they reported that Miguel Cavero, director of *El Comercio* and member of the Commission of Inquiry, had had access to a draft

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸⁶International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Bolivia) Collection, Letter from Mario Diez de Medina, Bolivian ambassador to Mexico, to Manuel Barrau, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Culture of Bolivia, Mexico City, 28 June 1957, fiche no. 397, f. 6466.

of Fernández Larraín's text, and said that the conclusion stated that the MNR regime displayed 'Marxists [*sic*] essence, structure, and objectives', adding that Bolivia was a 'red bastion in the Latin-American [*sic*] map'.⁸⁷ The British diplomats, however, did not take Fernández Larraín's partial conclusions very seriously. They informed London that there was no solid evidence for Soviet intervention or a communist state. The fact that Cuban Ernesto de la Fe had drafted a minority report in opposing terms, they added, reflected the weakness of the Chilean's interpretations. In British eyes, it was evident that the MNR had become more moderate and that Marxist influence had diminished. The start of US aid was proof of this. Referring to the signatories to Fernández Larraín's report, they concluded: 'It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they were not concerned for the production of an objective report, but rather [with] making a case against the Bolivian Government.'⁸⁸

Fernández Larraín's report received the support of the entire Commission of Inquiry – with the exception of the Cuban delegate – and also the approval of Penna Botto. Although the Fourth Congress was supposed to deliberate on the relevance of the text, Fernández Larraín decided to publish the results of his research before the opening of the event. Like the previous year's paper – *El comunismo en Bolivia* – his report was rich in quotes from and references to a large number of documents, pamphlets, books and journals from Bolivia and elsewhere. The conclusion was unequivocal: the MNR's achievements since coming to power and the power amassed by the workers' movement were proof of the regime's Marxist inspiration: 'This methodical and objective study has demonstrated to us with undeniable evidence that the revolutionary apparatus of Bolivia has shifted onto Marxist pillars. The major political parties, with no exceptions whatsoever, which have previously held or now hold positions of responsibility in the revolution, are and remain essentially Marxist.'⁸⁹ He further added:

In accordance with what has surfaced from the in-depth examination we have carried out, *we express our absolute conviction that the Bolivian Revolution has not been an original creation, nor a national explosion rebelling against foreign influences. The Bolivian Revolution runs mainly on tracks laid by Marxists that take it far beyond any original forecast.*⁹⁰

The Fourth Congress received Fernández Larraín's report with enthusiasm, and, after some discussion, approved it with no major revisions. Contrary to what he said to the Bolivian ambassador, Prieto Laurens agreed with Fernández Larraín's diagnosis and accused Siles Suazo himself of being 'committed to communism'.⁹¹ According to Fernando Zegers, member of the Chilean delegation, once the debates

⁸⁷TNA, 'Third Congress', American Department 1077/4.

⁸⁸TNA, 'Third Congress', American Department 1077/5.

⁸⁹Fernández Larraín, *El marxismo en Bolivia*, pp. 264–5.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 273. Emphasis in original.

⁹¹*IV Congreso Continental Anticomunista*, p. 43.

were over the participants of the Congress in Antigua heaped praise on both the text and Fernández Larraín, the Commission's rapporteur.⁹²

Conclusions

The praise received by Fernández Larraín and the relative importance that his report acquired in the Latin American context were an expression of a fundamental phenomenon for understanding the Chilean right wing: the potential of anti-communism as a basis for political action inside and outside the country's borders. In fact, it was through anti-communism that the traditional Right, composed of the old conservative and liberal parties, was able to project itself beyond Chile and establish contact with similar movements and organisations in Latin America and other regions. The opportunity to create these networks came from the establishment of the Congresses against Soviet Intervention in Latin America and the warnings and denunciations deployed there.

Fernández Larraín was the most prominent anti-communist activist on the Chilean Right. His work ranged from denouncing and persecuting local communism to controversies with social-Christian groups based on anti-communism. He was, in that sense, both a political representative of the main anxieties of the Chilean Right and the most sophisticated expression of conservative anti-communism. This accumulated experience allowed him to successfully insert himself in the Latin American networks of the 1950s. His campaign against communism was focused on the investigation and denunciation of supposedly communist-inspired people, organisations and regimes. He also advocated the enactment of legislation that would exclude from the political system and repress anyone labelled as communist. Similar recommendations emerged from the four Congresses. When the denunciations against the Bolivian MNR gave rise to the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, Fernández Larraín's authority and prestige allowed him to take on the task of drafting the majority report, in line with his own previous denunciations. It was the traditional Chilean right wing's greatest moment in the continental limelight.

This moment of transnational affinity and prominence of Chile's traditional right wing in Latin American anti-communist networks would quickly come to an end. The Fifth Congress against Soviet Intervention in Latin America was to have been held in San Salvador in 1959. However, according to Prieto Laurens himself, the event had to be cancelled due to lack of funds.⁹³ With this the Congresses came to a close. While the First Congress was organised with CIA support, those that followed – and the transnational networks organised around those events – had an important degree of autonomy from Washington. Anti-communism, in that regard, was not implanted in Latin America by the United States. It was part of local and regional political conflicts; a way to signify complex political realities such as national-popular regimes or conservative military dictatorships. To a certain extent, this transnational anti-communist network was successful in its

⁹²Fernando Zegers Santa Cruz, 'El IV Congreso Continental Anticomunista', *Estudios sobre el comunismo*, 24 (April–June 1959), p. 40.

⁹³*IV Congreso Continental Anticomunista*, p. 6.

attempt to transform Latin American politics into a conflict between 'democratic' and 'totalitarian' forces, as the international relevance gained by Fernández Larraín's report demonstrated.

Chilean anti-communism was not a phenomenon limited to the 1950s. Its roots can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century when the oligarchic state was challenged by radicalised political groups amidst increasing social tensions. The traditional political parties (especially the conservatives and liberals, who were identified as the Right in the 1930s) assumed anti-communism as the basis of their political identity. The same can be said of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1966 conservatives and liberals merged in the Partido Nacional (National Party), which would lead the political opposition to the socialist government of Salvador Allende, and would eventually encourage and support the 1973 coup. Just like the political Right in the 1950s, the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship based an important part of its legitimacy on anti-communism: Chile, from that perspective, was the vanguard of the global struggle against communism, and its experience demonstrated that 'democratic' forces should use violence whenever 'totalitarians' attained power.

These connections were not a coincidence. The Chilean right wing of the 1970s and 1980s inherited anti-communism as the main lens through which it had interpreted social reality during its previous political history. The 1950s were especially critical for understanding the right wing's political identity, anxieties and resources, all of which were used in the radicalised political conflict during the following years. This was a period of political learning for conservatives and liberals since they were able to consolidate their anti-communist political identity by building transnational networks. After decades of denouncing communism within Chile, they arrived at the conclusion that a continental threat required a continental response – which was now possible thanks to the conservative turn taken by the Latin American states after the end of the Second World War. Understanding the changes experienced by counterrevolutionary forces during the 1950s allows us to rethink established chronologies and common assumptions about the Latin American Cold War as a whole. Although an important part of historical scholarship has dealt with issues of revolution, radicalisation, political violence and counterrevolution in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, not everything started in the 1960s. The political actors who gained prominence by actively participating in the political conflict were shaped by their experiences in the previous years, especially when Latin American politics adapted concepts and practices from the Cold War's bipolar logic – as did anti-communism. The transnational anti-communist networks of the Chilean right wing, together with like-minded actors across the continent, are a good example of the ways in which experiences consolidated political identities, which in turn were key for explaining its behaviour when political conflict was met with violence and authoritarianism.

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Spanish abstract

A partir de minutas, publicaciones, documentos diplomáticos y prensa escrita, exploro las redes transnacionales de la derecha chilena en América Latina en los años 1950s, especialmente alrededor de los cuatro Congresos contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina llevados a cabo en la Ciudad de México, Río de Janeiro, Lima y Antigua entre 1954 y 1958. Argumento que la participación de la derecha chilena en esas redes junto a otros actores latinoamericanos afines se basó tanto en su experiencia local de larga data en su lucha contra el comunismo como en su conexión con el anticomunismo de la Guerra Fría. En estos espacios tradicionales, algunos derechistas chilenos obtuvieron reconocimiento y prestigio, como fue el caso del líder conservador Sergio Fernández Larraín, en gran parte gracias a su sistemática denuncia de la supuesta penetración soviética en el Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), entonces en el poder en Bolivia.

Spanish keywords: anticomunismo; derecha; redes transnacionales; Guerra Fría; Chile

Portuguese abstract

Com base em atas de reuniões, publicações, documentos diplomáticos e da imprensa escrita, eu exploro as redes transnacionais da direita do Chile na América Latina dos anos 1950s, focando em particular nos quatro Congressos Contra a Intervenção Soviética na América Latina realizados na Cidade do México, Rio de Janeiro, Lima e Antígua entre 1954 e 1958. Argumento também que a integração da direita Chilena a estas redes, conjuntamente com outros agentes Latino Americanos semelhantes, foi devido à experiência da mesma em lutar contra o comunismo e sua ligação ao anticomunismo da Guerra Fria. Nestes espaços transnacionais, alguns membros da direita ganharam prestígio e reconhecimento, como foi o caso do líder conservador Sergio Fernández Larraín, em grande parte devido à denúncia sistemática da suposta penetração Soviética no Movimento Nacionalista Revolucionário (MNR), nesse momento o partido governista da Bolívia.

Portuguese keywords: anticomunismo; direita; redes transnacionais; Guerra Fria; Chile

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