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ARTICLE

Against Latin American Regionalisms: The 1927 Brussels Congress and the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas

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Abstract

This article examines the encounter of activists from the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas (LADLA) with African, African American, and Asian anticolonial intellectuals through the League Against Imperialism (LAI), founded at the 1927 Brussels Congress. Drawing from LADLA's newspaper *El Libertador*, letters from LADLA leaders, and speeches and resolutions in the LAI archive, it studies how exchanges begun in Brussels influenced debates in radical circles in the Americas. The article builds on extant scholarship and makes two primary interventions. First, it argues that a closer look at LADLA's participation in the LAI shifts the traditional understanding of interwar Latin American regionalist ideologies, which LADLA rejected in favor of drawing connections to anti-imperialist movements around the world. Second, it argues that the exchange in Brussels influenced LADLA to eventually expand its initial focus on Indigenous struggles to think more critically about Black communities, including Black migrant labor, in political organizing.

Keywords: postcolonial; Third World; Global South; League Against Imperialism; Afro–Latin America

Resumen

Este artículo examina el encuentro de activistas de la Liga Antimperialista de las Américas (LADLA) con intelectuales anticolonialistas africanos, afroamericanos y asiáticos a través de la Liga contra el Imperialismo (LAI), fundada en el Congreso de Bruselas de 1927. A partir de los archivos del periódico *El Libertador* de LADLA, de cartas de líderes de LADLA y de discursos y resoluciones en el archivo de LAI, se estudia cómo los intercambios iniciados en Bruselas influyeron en los debates en círculos radicales de las Américas. Este artículo parte de estudios académicos existentes y realiza dos intervenciones principales. En primer lugar, argumenta que una mirada más cercana a la participación de LADLA en la LAI cambia la comprensión tradicional de las ideologías regionalistas latinoamericanas del periodo de entreguerras, las cuales LADLA rechazó a favor de trazar conexiones con los movimientos antimperialistas de todo el mundo. En segundo lugar, argumenta que el intercambio en Bruselas influyó en que LADLA finalmente ampliara su enfoque inicial en las luchas indígenas para pensar más críticamente sobre las comunidades negras, incluyendo la fuerza laboral de migrantes negros, en la organización política.

Palabras claves: poscolonial; Tercer Mundo; Sur Global; Liga contra el Imperialismo; Afro-Latinoamérica

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Figure 1. LAI General Council (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927).

In the Palais d'Egmont in Brussels, Belgium, the General Council of the newly formed League Against Imperialism (LAI) crowded together for a photograph (Figure 1). They were just a few of the 170 delegates from thirty-seven countries at the Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism and for National Independence, held February 10–15, 1927 (Louro 2018, 34).[1] In the photo appear many of the twentieth century's foremost anticolonial activists, like India's Jawaharlal Nehru and Indonesia's Mohammad Hatta. Although their presence frequently goes unmentioned, several Latin Americans stand in the back row: Cuban activist Julio Antonio Mella, general secretary for the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas (Liga Antimperialista de las Américas, LADLA); Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos; Italian Argentine communist Victorio Codovilla; and Manuel Gomez (no accent), the non–Latin American US citizen representing LADLA's US section.[2] These and other Latin Americans participated in the discussions in Brussels and subsequent LAI meetings. LADLA, designated in Brussels as the LAI's Latin American Bureau, was particularly well represented. However, because most scholarship on the LAI focuses on the history of Afro-Asian collaborations, it has tended to neglect LADLA's involvement.[3]

This article revisits LADLA to better understand how intellectuals from the Americas were influenced by anticolonial thinkers from elsewhere and to emphasize the role of Latin American thinkers in the LAI's global history. In doing so, it draws from LADLA's periodical *El Libertador*, letters exchanged among LADLA leaders, and speeches and

[1] For delegates, see file 2, League against Imperialism (LAI) archive, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

[2] Manuel Gomez (alias for Charles Francis Phillips) evaded military conscription by moving to Mexico City, where he helped found the Mexican Communist Party. Upon returning to the United States, he claimed to be a Mexican expatriate, directed the Anti-Imperialist Department of the Workers Party, and in April 1925, became secretary of LADLA-US (Shipman 1993, 133–151).

[3] Louro (2018) discusses Mexico's role in the LAI, but the treatment is limited since her study focuses on Nehru. Petersson (2014) does not mention LADLA, instead focusing on the US-based All-America Anti-Imperialist League (a.k.a. LADLA-US). His study does not reflect an understanding that LADLA preceded the LAI by two years or that the LAI's Latin American sections were synonymous with LADLA sections. Goebel (2020), in an edited volume on the LAI, does provide an in-depth look at Latin American participation in Brussels.

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resolutions from the LAI archive. The 1927 Brussels Congress, which founded the LAI, is recognized for its unprecedented historical significance. It is often described as the forerunner to the 1955 Bandung Conference of African and Asian nations, frequently cited as a foundational moment for the development of postcolonial thought (Dinkel 2018; Weiss 2013). Centering LADLA's involvement in the LAI helps reframe this early history of postcolonial thought, which has overwhelmingly focused on the enduring legacies of European colonialism in Africa and Asia.[4]

Existing scholarship exclusively focused on LADLA relies on archival sources and newspapers in Mexico, Argentina, and Cuba (Kersffeld 2012; Melgar Bao 2000, 2008).[5] However, LADLA had an explicitly hemispheric vision, maintaining an active section (and several subsections) in the United States and collaborating with US citizens, especially Jewish and Black activists. This article brings the personal papers of LADLA-US activists into conversation with Latin American materials. Although LADLA-US consistently translated the organization's name as the "All-America Anti-Imperialist League," I use the more direct translation (the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas), as it better captures LADLA's hemispheric imagination.[6]

If studies of the LAI often overlook LADLA's involvement, scholarship on Latin American radicalism, with some exceptions, tends to have a regional focus that does not frame these activists in the global milieus that they inhabited.[7] This is especially the case regarding the interwar period, characterized by the emergence of Latin America's regionalist ideologies. In response to post–World War I disillusionment with Western Europe and the increasing dominance of the United States, interwar Latin American writers and political figures defined Latin America through ideologies like *hispanoamericanismo*, *indoamericanismo*, *mestizaje*, and *indigenismo*. Latin Americans' participation in the Brussels Congress has been characterized as reinforcing such regionalist ideologies, representing a failure to "enhance mutual understanding between Latin Americans and the anticolonialists from Asia and Africa" (Goebel 2015, 206). This understanding draws from the perspectives of a few prominent Latin American congress participants, especially José Vasconcelos. However, as I argue, the views of LADLA, representing more than one-third of Latin American delegates, differed sharply from those of Vasconcelos.

A closer look at LADLA nuances our understanding of interwar Latin American intellectual history. Contrary to the regionalist lens through which Latin American participation in the Brussels Congress has been understood (Goebel 2015, 2020; Lindner 2023; Prashad 2007), this article argues that LADLA members rejected interwar regionalisms for what I describe as a *hemispheric globalism*, wherein LADLA expanded on its initially hemispheric connections with US worker and minority struggles to embrace interdependency with anti-imperialist movements around the world.[8] During the Brussels Congress, LADLA began to clearly

[4] For Latin America's marginal position in postcolonial studies, see Coronil (2008).

[5] Lindner (2023), who studies anti-imperialism in Mexico City in the 1920s including LADLA, also uses the Hoover Institution's Wolfe and Shipman papers. In her study of LADLA–Puerto Rico, Pujals (2013) relies on the New York Public Library's Bertram David Wolfe papers, leading her to underestimate LADLA's hemispheric impact.

[6] Melgar Bao (2008) and Lindner (2023) also use this translation.

[7] Exceptions include Carr (1992), Kersffeld (2012), Lindner (2023), Melgar Bao (2008), and Pujals (2013).

[8] Goebel (2015, 2020) studies Latin American participation in Brussels, focusing on disagreements between Mella and Haya de la Torre. Goebel (2020) uses Vasconcelos's and Haya de la Torre's regionalism to characterize the perspectives of all Latin American delegates. He mentions LADLA but obviates that LADLA (over one-third of Latin American delegates) rejected regionalist perspectives, and he inaccurately argues that the LAI had little cooperation with LADLA after 1927. Lindner (2023) provides an overview of Latin Americans' participation in Brussels, attending much more to LADLA's role. However, he relies on Goebel's characterization of the "Latin American regionalism" of all Latin American delegates in Brussels (Lindner 2023, 167). Prashad (2007) uses Vasconcelos's speech to incorrectly argue that Latin Americans had difficulty participating in the congress because of their unique colonial and linguistic history. Kersffeld (2012) provides an in-depth look at LADLA's participation in Brussels, focusing on the Mella-Haya controversy. My understanding of LADLA in Brussels relies

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differentiate its platform from Latin American regionalisms, including the perspectives of two of the foremost thinkers of such regionalist ideologies: Vasconcelos and Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre.

If the congress offered LADLA organizers the chance to see more clearly the connections between their struggles and those of other colonial contexts, it also helped them draw connections with non-Spanish-speaking communities that were closer geographically, like African Americans and activists from the francophone and anglophone Caribbeans. LADLA's global perspective enhanced its hemispheric connections and vice versa. The encounters in Brussels, I maintain, began a process of expanding LADLA's initial focus on Indigenous struggles to think more critically about Black communities in the Americas. This influenced LADLA's eventual theorization of white supremacy as an integral part of imperialist domination, which became a defining aspect of LADLA's worldview.

Remembering the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas

LADLA, founded in January 1925 in Mexico City, began as a collaboration between the Mexican Communist Party (Partido Comunista Mexicano, PCM) and the Workers Party (WP), the legal name used by the Communist Party of America from 1921 to 1929.[9] It quickly grew to include fourteen national sections throughout the continent, and these national sections often oversaw subsections in local cities. LADLA brought together urban trade unions, agrarian and Indigenous organizations, and artistic groups across the two continents in a collaborative effort against US and European commercial and military expansion. Although partially funded by the Communist International (Comintern, 1919–1943), LADLA maintained an ideologically fluid vision based on the Comintern's united-front approach of the 1920s, joining a broad range of social classes and leftist ideologies behind a position of anti-imperialism (Communist International 1929, 320–330). LADLA's core leadership included Mexican organizers Úrsulo Galván and Rafael Carrillo; Mexican artists Diego Rivera and Xavier Guerrero; leaders of the Cuban anti-Machado resistance movement exiled in Mexico City, like Julio Antonio Mella and Sandalio Junco; exiled Venezuelans Salvador de la Plaza and Gustavo Machado; US activists who joined the Mexican Left when they evaded military conscription, like Manuel Gomez and Bertram and Ella Wolfe; as well as Italian-born photographer Tina Modotti.[10]

In its beginnings, a few key members—Guerrero, Galván, Bertram and Ella Wolfe—took primary responsibility for launching LADLA and early issues of its periodical *El Libertador*. In the first two years (1925–1926), Nahua artist Xavier Guerrero served as administrator of *El Libertador* and signed communications as LADLA's secretary. He provided all illustrations for early issues of *El Libertador*, which he signed as "Indio" (Indian). His illustrations included LADLA's logo of an Indigenous man breaking chains

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particularly on Kersffeld but moves in different directions by incorporating insights from LADLA-US activists' personal papers, using cultural studies analysis of LADLA propaganda, tracing LADLA's antagonistic position toward Latin American regionalisms, and analyzing LADLA's growing interest in Black communities.

[9] In 1924, the WP sent Jack Johnstone to Mexico City to help organize protests of the Fourth Congress of the Pan-American Federation of Labor (Kersffeld 2012, 48). Johnstone wrote a report regarding potential collaboration of the WP and PCM in creating an alternative Pan-American Anti-Imperialist League, founded in January 1925. "The All-America Anti-Imperialist League," box 1, Charles Shipman papers, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, San Francisco, CA. In March 1925, to shed associations between "pan-Americanism" and US dominance, it changed its name to the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas. In April 1925, Gomez, LADLA-US secretary, returned to Mexico City as WP representative to the PCM's Third National Congress with the aim of advancing LADLA's collaborative organization (Shipman 1993, 154–155).

[10] For a longer list of LADLA's leadership, see Kersffeld (2012).

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Figure 2. LADLA logo, Xavier Guerrero. *El Libertador* leaflet, box 3, Bertram David Wolfe papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York.

that descend from northern skyscrapers over the Latin American countries on the map beneath his feet (Figure 2).[11]

Another early influence on LADLA was the charismatic political leader Úrsulo Galván, who served as director of *El Libertador*. In 1923, Galván helped found the Veracruz League of Agrarian Communities (Liga de Comunidades Agrarias del Estado de Veracruz, LCAEV) and traveled to Moscow for the first congress of the Peasant International, where he shared a stage with Ho Chi Minh (Reynoso Jaime 2020, 80–91). In 1926, the LCAEV joined other agrarian organizations to become the National Peasant League, led by Galván, the most radical farmers' organization in Mexico at the time (Carr 1992, 33).

In addition to the impact of Galván's agrarianism on *El Libertador*, Bertram Wolfe served as the periodical's initial editor (Wolfe 1981, 345). Wolfe and his wife, Ella Goldberg Wolfe—both Jewish US citizens who helped found the Communist Party of America—arrived in Mexico in 1923 and joined the PCM. Bertram obtained the initial funding for *El Libertador* from Stanislav Pestovsky, Soviet ambassador to Mexico, but by June 1925,

[11] Melgar Bao (2000) describes this illustration as a character with "rasgos . . . indígenas" (Indigenous features) but incorrectly identifies the artist as Diego Rivera.

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Bertram was deported from Mexico to the United States, and Ella Wolfe followed him shortly afterward (Wolfe 1981, 345). The couple stayed involved with LADLA, however, serving as liaisons between LADLA headquarters and the WP.[12]

Seven months after LADLA's founding, Guerrero and PCM secretary Rafael Carrillo wrote to LADLA-US secretary Manuel Gomez to clarify a number of issues. They argued that LADLA's headquarters and leadership should remain in Mexico since "the residence in the United States of the League's leadership would awaken very bad suspicions by our movement."[13] They also requested that "the American secretariat fulfill agreements contracted with the Mexican Secretariat, regarding the maintenance of 'Libertador,' the League's publication. Today, it has only complied with this promise one time."[14] The accurate location of LADLA's headquarters and securing WP funding remained ongoing points of contention between Mexico City leadership and LADLA-US secretary Gomez. Carrillo continuously wrote to the Wolfes, asking them to advocate for monetary support from the WP. In September 1925, Guerrero had to borrow money to keep the journal afloat, and during a five-month period in late 1925, *El Libertador* was, as Carrillo wrote, "muerto" (dead) due to financial difficulties.[15]

LADLA received a new boost of energy with the February 1926 arrival in Mexico City of Julio Antonio Mella, the leader of LADLA's Cuban section, founded in June 1925. Several LADLA-Cuba members joined Mella in Mexico City in the coming months, seeking asylum from the repressive government of Cuban president Gerardo Machado. This group, which included several Venezuelan exiles, like Salvador de la Plaza, who took over Guerrero's role as administrator of *El Libertador* in April 1926, formed the Comité Continental (Continental Committee) based in Mexico City under Mella's leadership. While funding remained a problem, the Continental Committee resolved the question of the headquarters once and for all. Mella wrote to Gomez, instructing him to clarify in his communications that he served merely as the general secretary of LADLA-US, not the organization as a whole.[16] Mella served as LADLA's general secretary in Mexico City from 1926 until his assassination in 1929.

After establishing the first three sections in Mexico, Cuba, and the United States, LADLA expanded significantly. By December 1926, it reported fourteen sections in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Venezuela, and the continental United States.[17] The first issue (March 1925) of *El Libertador* described LADLA as an attempt "to organize all the anti-imperialist forces of Latin America, to unify them in a continental unity, to ally them with natural allies that exist in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and WITHIN THE UNITED STATES ITSELF; to awaken the sleeping masses of workers and farmers, of Indigenous, mestizos, and whites that groan under the yoke of imperialism (since the master of our industries is the same

[12] Box 4, folder 11, Bertram Wolfe papers, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, San Francisco, CA.

[13] "La residencia en Estados Unidos de la dirección de Liga, despertaría suspicacias muy malas por nuestro movimiento." Rafael Carrillo and Xavier Guerrero to Bertram and Ella Wolfe, August 10, 1925, box 4, folder 11, Bertram Wolfe papers (Hoover). All translations mine.

[14] "El secretariado americano, cumpla los compromisos contraídos con el Secretariado Mexicano, respecto al sostenimiento del 'Libertador,' órgano de la Liga. Hasta la fecha solo una vez ha cumplido lo prometido." Rafael Carrillo and Xavier Guerrero to Bertram and Ella Wolfe, August 10, 1925, box 4, folder 11, Bertram Wolfe papers (Hoover).

[15] Rafael Carrillo to Bertram and Ella Wolfe, December 31, 1925, box 4, folder 11, Bertram Wolfe papers (Hoover).

[16] Manuel Gomez to Jaime Nevares Sager, May 12, 1926, box 1, Bertram David Wolfe papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library (NYPL), New York; Julio Mella to Manuel Gomez, August 4, 1926, box 1, folder 1, Charles Shipman papers.

[17] These sections appear on LADLA's letterhead in December 1926. Julio Antonio Mella to Jaime Nevares Sager, December 18, 1926, box 1, Bertram David Wolfe papers (NYPL). However, the number and locations of sections fluctuated (LADLA 1929a, 3).

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Yankee capitalism, and a strike in the plantation or in the mines, in the refinery or the mill, in the salt or oil fields, is always a strike against the foreign master)" (LADLA 1925b, 2).[18] Here, LADLA conceived of imperialism as a mechanism tied to extractive industries: the plantation, mine, refinery, mill, and salt and oil fields. What united LADLA's community of workers and farmers was the connection to this shared extractive geography. Fighting for one's labor rights within these industries was also a fight against their common "foreign master."

El Libertador explained LADLA's creation as the necessary response to the expanding US economic and military domination of Latin America, stating that Latin American workers must ally with US workers to form "a single anti-imperialist continental movement," which can then "eventually perhaps save Europe, Asia, and Africa as well" (LADLA 1925b, 1). That is, LADLA began with a hemispheric vision that intended to build outward toward a global one. The writers of *El Libertador* asserted that while the publication would focus primarily on the American hemisphere, it would report on movements around the world. Petroleum workers in Tampico, Mexico, for example, must "seek out alliances with petroleum workers from Europe, Asia, and South America, since the capital of Standard and Royal Dutch Shell is international" (LADLA 1925a, 6). A strike against these companies, "in order to be effective, must become international" (LADLA 1925a, 6). In this way, connecting workers' movements in Latin America with internationalist labor structures, especially the Red International of Labor Unions, was among LADLA's core goals.

In addition to LADLA's ideological and geographic openness, it maintained an explicit stance of antiracism rooted in the belief that agrarian laborers formed the base of the anti-imperialist struggle. LADLA especially aimed to ally with Indigenous populations within rural regions impacted by extractive industries. The early leadership of Nahua artist Guerrero, as well as agrarian leader Galván, largely drove this focus on Indigenous communities. In the July 1925 article in *El Libertador*, "The Indian as the Base of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle," Bertram Wolfe argued that until more Indigenous activists "enter into the struggle, the anti-imperialist movement is condemned to remain a mere literary tendency among intellectuals, a sterile struggle of pamphlets and books denouncing Yankee imperialism in the name of the 'Spanish race,' which does not constitute the race that numerically predominates in the countries most subjected to said imperialism" (Wolfe 1925, 3). US domination was so pervasive in Latin America, Wolfe maintained, precisely because of the oppression of Indigenous communities by a domestic white and mestizo elite. Wolfe called for LADLA to reach out to Indigenous leaders, who could use their linguistic and cultural expertise to organize Indigenous anti-imperialist leagues among agrarian communities.

Whereas Wolfe characterized Indigenous peoples as "the base of the anti-imperialist struggle" in the Americas, Diego Rivera, who became director of *El Libertador* from August 1927 to November 1928, later seemed to expand this idea to encompass the globe. In Rivera's cover illustration (Figure 3) for the June 1927 issue of *El Libertador*, which reported on the Brussels Congress, workers of multiple races gather behind a wall. Beneath the wall—whose square stones may allude to the Incan Sacsayhuamán walls of Cusco, Peru—is what appears to be a Quechua man wearing an Andean *chullo* hat with a chevron pattern. He is flanked by two bearded men, holding weapons and wearing top hats with the insignia of British and US flags. The illustration could suggest multiple interpretations.[19] The

[18] For original Spanish of *El Libertador*, see digitized version (Melgar Bao and Torres Parés 2010).

[19] My reading differs from that of Melgar Bao (2000) who interprets the hat as the pope's tiara and a critique of the Vatican's role in imperialism. Lindner (2023, 178) relies on this interpretation in the context of the Cristero War but acknowledges that the figure wearing the hat appears "seemingly submissive" and that the Brussels Congress did not take an anti-Vatican stance. My reading of this figure as Indigenous is, I believe, more consistent with the facial features in Rivera's other depictions of Indigenous people and with LADLA's view of Indigenous as the base of anti-imperialist struggle.

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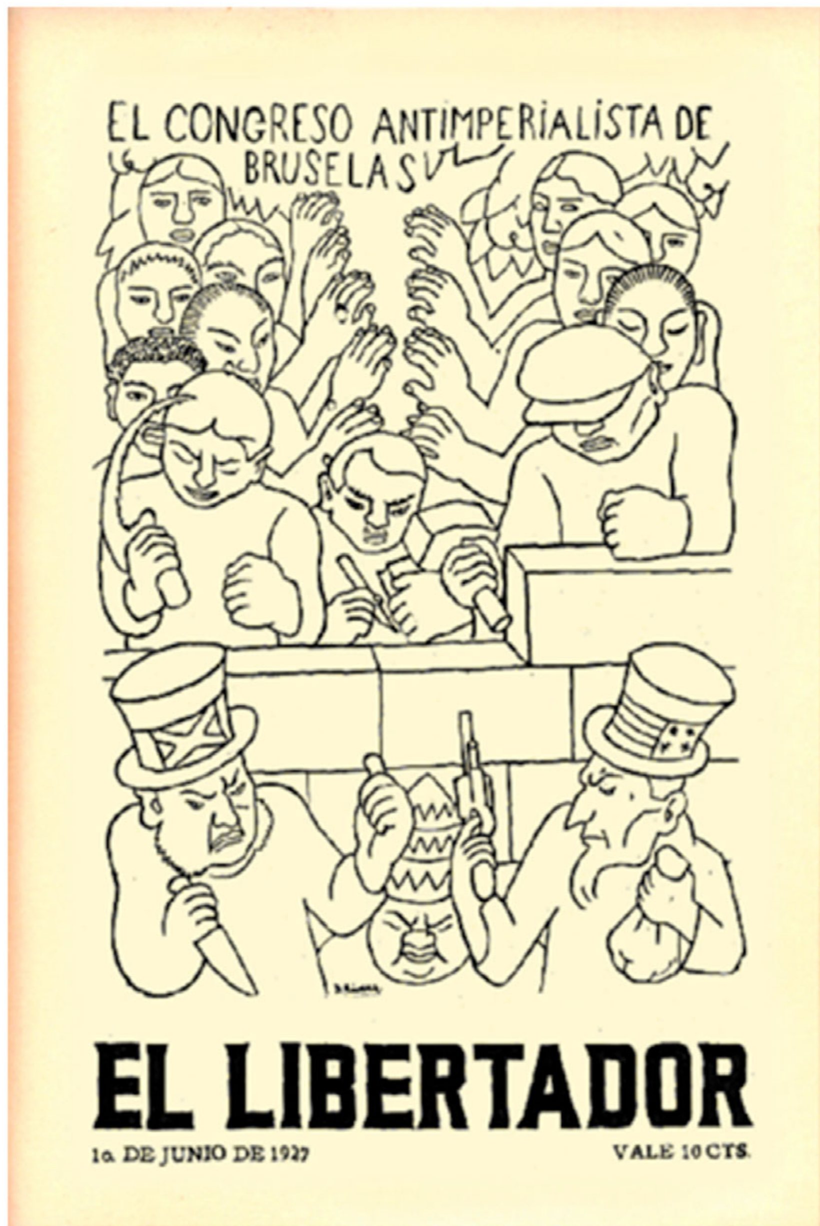

Figure 3. Rivera, cover, *El Libertador* (June 1927). Centro Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia Morelos.

Quechua man, who appears to strain under a weight, may be holding up the wall to protect those behind him. Alternatively, the world's peoples—including farmers (with sickles), industrial workers (with hammers), and intellectuals (with pens)—may be coming to his aid by breaking down the wall. Above the drawing appear the words "The Anti-Imperialist Congress of Brussels," suggesting the Quechua man at the base of the wall as "the base of the anti-imperialist struggle" and the LAI's global project. Beyond depicting the interdependency between anti-imperialist movements, Rivera suggests that the

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struggle for Indigenous rights is fundamental to a multiracial, anti-imperialist project across the globe.

The 1927 Brussels Congress: Setting the scene

A few months after LADLA's formation in Mexico City, German communist Willi Münzenberg organized in Berlin the Committee against Cruelties in Syria in response to the 1925 French bombing of Damascus (Kersffeld 2012, 94). The committee later became the broader League against Colonial Oppression, which charged Münzenberg, Indian nationalist Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, and Hungarian Luis Otto Gibarti with organizing the Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism and for National Independence (Dinkel 2018, 19).[20] They formed a congress Executive Committee, which included LADLA leaders Mella and Gomez, to assist with congress invitations.[21] The congress was largely funded through the International Red Aid, a Comintern-affiliated organization that provided support to political prisoners. However, the organizers insisted on the LAI's independence from the Comintern, and many delegations bore no affiliation with communism (Dinkel 2018, 20).

The congress was organized into six sessions arranged over three days, with the final day dedicated to establishing the LAI.[22] LADLA delegates and delegates from other Latin American organizations spoke mostly on the panel dedicated to cooperation between nationalist movements in "oppressed countries" and labor and anti-imperialist movements in "imperialist countries."[23] This included speeches by Mella, Gomez, Vasconcelos, Carlos Quijano (Uruguay), and Ismael Martínez (Mexico) (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927, 282). The congress's final resolution stated that the delegations agreed to establish the LAI and invited the affiliation of any organization or individual fighting against capitalist imperialism, for nationalist independence, or for equal rights of all races, classes, and peoples.

Congress delegates elected a General Council (Figure 1), including Mella and Gomez, which then elected a smaller Executive Committee with the authority to make decisions on the LAI's behalf. The delegates penned several resolutions, including one on North American imperialisms, one on Latin America, and another on Puerto Rico. LADLA published the Latin America resolution in *El Libertador*, as well as an additional resolution by the LAI Executive Committee naming LADLA as its organizing bureau for Latin America (LADLA 1927b, 10–12; LADLA 1927d, 12).

Although several other Latin American organizations attended, LADLA had the largest representation (eight of twenty-three Latin American delegates in the program).[24] LADLA delegates included Mella, general secretary of LADLA's Continental Committee, who also represented the Panamanian and Colombian sections; Venezuelan Leonardo Fernández Sánchez representing LADLA-Cuba; Venezuelan Gustavo Machado for LADLA-Nicaragua; and Gomez for LADLA-US, among others (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927, 236–238).

Because each organization paid for its delegates' travel, some—including the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party (PNPR)—did not send delegates but asked trusted individuals already planning to attend to serve as their proxy. Because of Puerto Rico's unique colonial status, LADLA made significant efforts to ensure Puerto Rican representation at the

[20] LACO attempted to organize the congress in Berlin and then in Paris, but both requests were denied. The Belgian government sanctioned the congress, barring discussion on Belgian colonialism (Prashad 2007, 19).

[21] File 2, LAI archive.

[22] File 5, LAI archive.

[23] File 5, LAI archive.

[24] For a list of the other eighteen Latin American organizations present, see Liga gegen imperialismus (1927, 236–238).

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congress. LADLA–Puerto Rico secretary Jaime Nevares Sager wrote to PNPR's vice president Pedro Albizu Campos describing the upcoming Brussels Congress and encouraging the PNPR to send a delegate. Sager mentioned that the organizers would pay expenses for those delegates whose organizations had limited budgets. The PNPR responded enthusiastically, promising to send Pedro Jota Rosa, editor of *Voz Latina*, then living in Paris. However, since the congress was postponed several times, Rosa had already returned to Puerto Rico by the time of its convening, and additional travel subsidies were no longer available.[25]

Because the PNPR planned to send a delegate only if LADLA paid his expenses, LADLA–Puerto Rico chose as its delegate Samuel Quiñones, "a law graduate, leader of nationalist youth movement, and of students federation," because Quiñones believed he could also secure the PNPR's endorsement since he was a member.[26] PNPR's president Federico Acosta Velarde apparently recognized "that the League is a non-communist organization," but he believed that public affiliation to LADLA–Puerto Rico would leave the PNPR "open to attack as being Bolshevik, which would lead to disastrous consequences."[27] For this reason, the PNPR declined to endorse Quiñones and instead named Mexican José Vasconcelos, who had visited Puerto Rico earlier that year, as well as Argentine Manuel Ugarte, both of whom had already planned to attend.[28] In the end, no Puerto Ricans attended, and Vasconcelos did not mention Puerto Rico during his speech at the congress.[29]

Regarding the issue of cross-representation, Michael Goebel writes, "since the conference obliged Spanish Americans from one country to speak on behalf of another country, it rallied them on a shared platform of 'Latin' Americanism … The LAI conference thus reinforced Latin American regionalism on the basis of a shared anti-imperialism" (2015, 205–206). Indeed, the fact that a single delegate like Mella could represent multiple LADLA national sections demonstrates the extent to which LADLA drew parallels across national boundaries at the risk of erasing differences between these contexts. Yet even as LADLA delegates traced connections between Latin American countries, I argue that LADLA's anti-imperialist ideology took shape in dialogue with—and in contrast to—Latin America's interwar regionalist ideologies. LADLA sought, for example, to provide a different vision from *hispanoamericanismo*, which rejected US influence through an identification with Spain. Instead, LADLA critiqued any colonial power, including Spanish holdings in Morocco. LADLA also did not base its movement in the cultural ideology of *mestizaje,* which celebrated the cultural and genetic mixing of peoples of Hispanic and Indigenous descent into an imagined mestizo racial identity shared across the region. Additionally, although it centered Indigenous struggles, LADLA dismissed *indigenismo*, which frequently interpellated Indigenous subjects for the purpose of national assimilation, and LADLA denounced essentializing views of Indigenous communities as precursors to communist societies.

The 1927 Brussels Congress solidified LADLA's rejection of Latin American regionalisms in favor of a hemispheric globalism, wherein LADLA expanded on its hemispheric connections with US struggles by insisting on interdependency with anti-imperialist movements around the globe. While LADLA did not employ the term *hemispheric globalism*, I use it to describe: first, an ideological belief that self-determination for "oppressed, colonial, and semicolonial peoples" in Latin America could be achieved only through

[25] James Sager to Manuel Gomez, May 13, 1926; James Sager to Manuel Gomez, September 15, 1926; League against Colonial Suppression Provisional Committee to James Sager, July 18, 1926, box 1, Bertram David Wolfe papers (NYPL).

[26] James Sager to Manuel Gomez, October 6, 1926, box 1, Bertram David Wolfe papers (NYPL).

[27] James Sager to Manuel Gomez, March 10, 1926, box 1, Bertram David Wolfe papers (NYPL).

[28] James Sager to Manuel Gomez, December 14, 1926, box 1, Bertram David Wolfe papers (NYPL).

[29] Vasconcelos's failure to mention Puerto Rico is discussed in Goebel (2015) but without the context provided by the Bertram David Wolfe papers (NYPL).

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internationalist alliances with similar struggles in the American hemisphere and around the world, and second, a practical strategy to foment systems of mutual support by facilitating communication between resistant movements across the American hemisphere and by expanding those connections, through the LAI, toward global horizons (LADLA 1927a, 9). Following the Brussels Congress, LADLA repeatedly stated its position of hemispheric globalism in its propaganda materials. In one example, an article in *El Libertador* delineating LADLA delegates' planned contributions to the 1929 Second LAI Congress in Frankfurt stated: "Existing among many thinkers of Latin America … is an overly nationalist concept … the members of LADLA are perhaps the only ones who understand that it is not necessary to limit the struggle to Latin America; rather, the imperious necessity exists to unite not only with the anti-imperialist forces of our Continent, but also with those of the whole world" (LADLA 1929b, 2). The 1927 Brussels Congress played an important role in shaping this perspective. It was there that LADLA began to clearly differentiate its platform from Latin American regionalist ideologies, including the perspectives of two of the foremost thinkers of Latin American regionalisms—Vasconcelos and Haya de la Torre.

Despite differences between LADLA delegates and some other Latin Americans present, the "Resolutions on Latin America"—signed by all Latin American delegates—built on LADLA's platform. It began by tracing how US imperialism largely replaced British imperialism in the region, taking control of primary resources and means of production. Economic domination paved the way for political domination, and through investments and loans, the United States created debtor governments in Latin America that threatened national sovereignty.

Regarding the "Resolutions on Latin America," three elements of this document draw my attention. The first, which has been commented on by several scholars (Goebel 2015; Lindner 2023; Rojas 2018), are the signatures of Peruvians Haya de la Torre and Eudocio Ravines Pérez, both members of the newly founded American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) and the only delegates to sign the resolution "with reservations." The second, which has been addressed but begs the deeper analysis provided here, is the discussion of Black communities in the resolution (Goebel 2015; Linder 2023). This resolution was later reprinted in *El Libertador*, representing the first time that LADLA's periodical mentioned Black peoples. The third, closely tied to the second, is the presence of two signatures by members of the conference's Committee on the Negro Question: Carlos Deambrosis Martins and Richard B. Moore.

These three elements of the resolution, I maintain, are integrally related. Haya de la Torre's "reservations" signal how the Brussels Congress was decisive in a rift within the Latin American Left in which LADLA differentiated itself from other Latin American regionalist visions. The congress offered LADLA organizers the opportunity to develop connections with movements in other contexts, including nearby non-Spanish-speaking communities. This encounter influenced LADLA to begin to expand its focus on Indigenous movements to consider the significance of Black labor and to theorize the fight against anti-Black racism as inherent to the anti-imperialist struggle.

LADLA's hemispheric globalism

The Brussels Congress helped broaden LADLA's vision from the Americas to the globe. Comparing LADLA's positions with those of Vasconcelos and Haya de la Torre sheds light on how LADLA's hemispheric globalism differed from Latin America's interwar regionalist anti-imperialisms.

Several LADLA delegates and affiliates gave speeches in Brussels. Mella and LADLA-Cuba delegate Leonardo Fernández Sánchez, for example, presented the paper "Cuba: Yankee

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Factory," which detailed US domination in Cuba.[30] LADLA-US secretary Gomez gave a lengthy speech on US imperialism in Latin America and the Pacific and described LADLA's work in building resistance through connecting nationalist and workers' struggles (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927, 70–76). Carlos Quijano described how "the struggle against imperialism in Latin America is now being led in a united way thanks to the Anti-Imperialist League in America" and how the Brussels Congress offered the framework to unite these efforts with a global movement (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927, 68).

Venezuelan Salvador de la Plaza, director of *El Libertador*, returned to Brussels in December 1927 to deliver LADLA's Continental Committee report to the LAI General Council. Therein, he described how, although Latin American nations had long been independent from Spain, "that independence was fictional for workers" because Spanish domination was simply passed to the elite, *criollo* class (LADLA 1928, 5). He then described the mid-nineteenth-century penetration of British capital through loans to Latin American governments and subsequent expansion of the US economy into Latin American markets through military occupations. US expansion, De la Plaza explained, was done "in search of primary materials and the cheap manual labor of the Indigenous" such that the anti-imperialist struggle must be simultaneously a movement for national liberation, control of national resources, and a workers' movement focused on Indigenous rights (LADLA 1928, 5). De la Plaza argued for Latin America's importance within the global anti-imperialist movement since it formed the base of the US economy. As De la Plaza's speech demonstrates, LAI meetings gave Latin Americans a platform to explain their regional context and emphasize why that context mattered globally. LADLA delegates brought to the LAI direct experience with US imperialism and a nuanced understanding of how it overlapped with, and differed from, the region's prior encounters with European colonialisms.

At this December 1927 LAI General Council meeting, Diego Rivera added that the Latin American proletariat must understand "its absolute economic dependence on the foreign economy"; the local ruling classes are "simply employed by dictators who are nothing more than servants to imperialist capitalism" (LADLA 1928, 4). For this reason, workers should struggle for "their true national independence," which would imply liberation from local elites, and which "is not possible without an intimate connection and joint action with the revolutionary proletariat of the United States" (LADLA 1928, 4).

This decidedly hemispheric and transregional project set LADLA members apart from many of their contemporaries, like Vasconcelos. Because Vasconcelos's speech in Brussels is the only speech by a Latin American conserved in the LAI archive, his perspectives have sometimes been misconstrued as representing all Latin American delegates (Goebel 2015; Prashad 2007). However, LADLA delegates had markedly different views from Vasconcelos, who is perhaps best known for his notion of the "cosmic race" that defined Latin America through a history of racial mixing. While seemingly an antiracist rejection of Anglo-centric white supremacism, Vasconcelos's notion of the cosmic race has been widely criticized for its eugenicist advocacy of the erasure of Indigenous peoples and for relying on biological notions of race to argue for the benefits of *mestizaje*.

Although he was never intimately involved, Vasconcelos was an early friend of LADLA (Vasconcelos 1925). But after the Brussels Congress, LADLA published articles critiquing Vasconcelos, reminding its readers that he had never been a member. Some have understood this derision as originating from Vasconcelos's opposition to Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles, who financially supported the congress. However, the discord between LADLA and Vasconcelos should also be understood through their differing positions toward Latin American regionalist thinking. Vasconcelos began his speech in Brussels by saying that he would speak in English since "it was decided in Committee that

[30] LADLA-Cuba member Rubén Martínez Villena (1999) wrote this text.

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only two languages should be used in the Congress."[31] Although he was "one of those ardent defenders of the Spanish language as the main link of our race," when he heard English and US workers collaborating, he decided that "if there are still people who use the English language to speak of Liberty, then Latin Americans can use it to express their soul." In this opening, Vasconcelos expressed the region's opposition to imperialism by defining Latin America as a singular "race" linked through the Spanish language. In this way, his speech combined his vision for a cosmic race with a Hispanist allegiance to the Spanish language, conveying an image of Latin American anti-imperialists as Spanish-speaking mestizos. This differed significantly from LADLA's multilingual vision of hemispheric globalism and focus on Indigenous struggles.

Vasconcelos argued that political divisions represented the biggest challenge for Latin American anti-imperialism and explained that the organization he represented (PNPR) "has given me instructions to make it clear they are not communists." This is "because we in Latin America feel we are entitled to settle our problems in our own manner. We are not blind followers of any creed .... We claim the right to be absolutely independent." Vasconcelos took a fiercely regionalist position that differed from LADLA's communist leanings and its vision of mutual interdependence between regional struggles and those around the globe.

Vasconcelos closed his speech, which harped on Latin American difference, by stating, "Remember, friends ... Latin America is not only our country but also your country, the country of every man, no matter what race or colour, the country of the future and the home of all men." This statement is undoubtedly an inclusive one that sought to build bridges. Yet those familiar with Vasconcelos's writings may also see this comment as an allusion to his view that mestizos represented the future of humanity, a eugenicist and assimilationist vision that sought to erase ethnic difference.

Beyond Vasconcelos, another divide emerged in Brussels between LADLA and Haya de la Torre. Haya became involved in LADLA in Mexico City, writing articles for *El Libertador* as early as July 1925, but left for Europe shortly afterward (Rojas 2018, 57). While APRA's official history claims that Haya founded APRA in Mexico City in May 1924 (six months before LADLA), it was actually founded by a group of Peruvians living in Paris when Haya traveled there in September 1926. Peruvian exiles formed a second cell in Buenos Aires in 1927, and eventually additional cells formed in Havana, La Paz, and Mexico City (García-Bryce 2019, 30; Goebel 2015, 207). When Haya arrived in Brussels, APRA was about five months old and did not yet have a base in Mexico. APRA did not appear among the organizations listed in the Brussels program; Haya was listed as a representative for LADLA's sections in Panama, Nicaragua, and Peru (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927, 237–238). Mella later claimed that Haya did not make his differences from LADLA known until the congress itself (Tibol 1968, 121). When Haya agreed to sign the Latin American resolution "with reservations," Mella interpreted it as resulting from Haya's frustration that the congress did not recognize APRA as the "only anti-imperialist organization in Latin America" (Tibol 1968, 122).[32]

Haya and APRA took Mella by surprise in Brussels. Indeed, Haya had published his first public statement on APRA, called "¿Qué es el APRA?" (What is APRA?) in Britain's *Labour Monthly* only two months before. There, he described APRA's program, where the influence of LADLA's anti-imperialist vision is obvious. In fact, although APRA has not necessarily been understood in this way, APRA's vision represented a slight revision of LADLA's platform and should be understood as one of the most lasting examples of LADLA's understudied legacy. Specifically, APRA's commitment to anti-imperialism, internationalism, a united front that included intellectuals and artists, and a focus on Indigenous

[31] All quotes from Vasconcelos's speech come from file 39, LAI archive.
[32] All translations mine. For original, see Tibol (1968).

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struggles all drew from LADLA. The third point of APRA's platform regarding the nationalization of land and industry was, Haya explained, "international in spirit," since "such nationalizations could only take place if Latin American countries united forces against foreign imperialism," a vision of interdependency between nationalism and internationalism that was identical to LADLA (García-Bryce 2019, 13). Haya's insistence on APRA being unique, despite its overt borrowing of LADLA's positions, angered Mella and LADLA organizers.

Although Haya critiqued *hispanoamericanismo*, he coincided with Vasconcelos in dismissing communism as "exotic and oriental in Latin America" and argued that he based APRA's continental vision on the anticolonial legacies of the region, like those of Simón Bolívar and José Martí (Tibol 1968, 110).[33] Latin America, Haya argued, "need not look to European or North American political traditions for solutions; it needed simply to look inward" and especially "to its own revolution, the Mexican Revolution, as a homegrown model to follow" (García-Bryce 2019, 2). Considering Haya's apparent rejection of European influences, it could be tempting to overstate the disagreement between LADLA and Haya as a stark ideological division between communists and nationalists.[34] Yet the reality is more complicated. Both LADLA and Haya translated Marxism to Latin American contexts in different ways, and LADLA was not a hardline communist organization since it bridged a range of ideologies under the banner of anti-imperialism. Moreover, APRA had broad influences, taking direct inspiration from Chinese nationalism (Goebel 2015, 207).

In the months following the Brussels Congress, a slew of anti-APRA articles appeared in the PCM's *El Machete* and in *El Libertador*, culminating in Mella's April 1928 pamphlet, "Qué es el ARPA?" (What is ARPA?). In this pamphlet, Mella intentionally changed the organization's acronym to ARPA (*arpa* in Spanish is "harp"; Goebel 2015, 209). Mella critiqued APRA for Latin American exceptionalism and for targeting US imperialism rather than all imperial powers. He argued that when APRA called for the political unity of Latin America without specifying the social classes it intended to unify, it endorsed the misleading regional identity politics practiced by Vasconcelos and others and risked calling for nationalization without socialization of resources. Mella also accused Haya of being internationalist only when it was convenient, pointing to Haya's tendency to draw inspiration from China while practicing a "chinismo anti-chino" (anti-Chinese Chineseism) since Haya supported the establishment of anti-Chinese committees in Mexican provinces (Tibol 1968, 105, 104).

Mella ended his pamphlet with a call "to solidify the united front of all classes oppressed by imperialism in the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas and to cooperate, on an international scale, with the Brussels Congress, genuine representative of all the revolutionary movements of the world" (Tibol 1968, 128). By the second LAI congress in 1929, LADLA named its opposition to APRA and other regionalist ideologies in the congress's Latin American resolution, which called activists to combat APRA and "all kinds of demagogic confusions (Pan-Indianism, regionalism, etc.)."[35]

The Brussels Congress solidified LADLA's differentiation from Latin American regionalisms and deepened its commitment to hemispheric globalism. It was also in Brussels that LADLA organizers met members of the Committee on the Negro Question.

[33] For Haya's perspective on *hispanoamericanismo*, see Haya de la Torre (1925).

[34] The Mella-Haya division has been characterized as Mella's alignment with Moscow versus Haya's nationalism (Kersffeld 2012; Rojas 2018). Goebel (2015, 207) illuminates how the positions were informed by China's nationalist-communist split. While helpful for understanding trends in Latin American leftism, the characterization of this conflict as a stark ideological division between communists and nationalists is exaggerated. As the two battled their differences, they each took more extreme positions. It may appear that Mella and LADLA held overlapping views, but Mella took narrower positions in his opposition to Haya in the context of the recent Comintern decision against Mella's expulsion from the Cuban Communist Party (Rojas 2018).

[35] My translation. For original, see file 85, LAI archive.

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These interactions and LADLA's openness toward non-Spanish-speaking communities influenced LADLA to begin expanding its focus from Indigenous workers to Black communities in the Americas. A move away from Latin American regionalism, in this sense, allowed LADLA to eventually move beyond the familiar trappings of Latin American racial exceptionalism, which relegates anti-Black racism to the United States.

LADLA's turn toward Black communities

In 1927, LADLA did not yet have a strong grasp of anti-Black racism in Latin America. However, the LAI encounter in Brussels helped push LADLA activists to take Black voices seriously, beginning a dialogue within LADLA about this issue. As I detail, this dialogue would be advanced especially by Afro-Cuban activist Sandalio Junco, who became LADLA's general secretary in 1929.

Minkah Makalani (2011, 134) has characterized the Brussels Congress as playing a significant role in the history of Black internationalisms, writing that "black Communists believed they had a venue where they could pursue the internationalist politics that continued to elude them even within the international communist movement." The LAI's more flexible program provided a space for Black internationalist organizing that attracted Black radicals from a range of leftist ideologies (Makalani 2011, 137–8).

The Committee on the Negro Question was chaired by Lamine Senghor (Committee for the Defense of the Black Race) with Richard B. Moore (American Negro Labor Congress) as secretary.[36] Other members included Josiah T. Gumede (African National Congress), Max Clainville-Bloncourt (Intercolonial Union), Carlos Deambrosis Martins (Haitian Patriotic Union), and Narcisse Danaë, Camille Saint-Jacques, and James La Guma (South African Non-European Trade Union Federation) (Turner and Turner 2005, 146). Several scholars have assumed that Deambrosis Martins (Haitian Patriotic Union) was Haitian and of African descent (Makalani 2011; Robinson 1983). However, Deambrosis Martins (Figure 4) was a white Uruguayan living in France (Deambrosis Martins 1967, 9). This repeated, albeit understandable, error speaks again to the need to better understand Latin Americans' participation in the LAI. Deambrosis Martins had contact with the Haitian Patriotic Union, giving a detailed speech on its behalf about the 1915 US invasion of Haiti and its aftermath (Liga gegen imperialismus 1927, 119–123). Significantly, no Black delegates from Hispanophone or Lusophone Latin America attended the congress. Even so, the committee's interventions would have a clear impact on LADLA.

The so-called Negro Question was discussed on the fifth day. Several members gave speeches, and Moore, as committee reporter, presented the "Common Resolution on the Negro Question" along with an introduction. Moore emphasized that "the fight against imperialism is first of all an incessant struggle against imperialistic ideology. We must fight fascism, the Ku-Klux-Klan, chauvinism, and the doctrine of the supremacy of the white race" (Turner and Turner 2005, 143).

The interventions by the Committee on the Negro Question Influenced LADLA. The congress's "Resolutions on Latin America" addressed US imperialism in Haiti and included two signatures—Deambrosis Martins and Moore—from this committee. Although the resolutions were written by Latin American delegates who were not exclusively LADLA members, these resolutions, reprinted in *El Libertador* (June 1927), largely repeated LADLA's platform in framing Indigenous communities as disproportionately experiencing the violence of imperialist extractive industries. Yet in a way different from previous iterations of this position, the resolution argued the following: "Imperialist penetration in

[36] Although Moore also represented the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Moore "had not been empowered to appear as a UNIA representative" (Turner and Turner 2005, 53).

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Figure 4. Committee on the Negro Question. 1927 Brussels. Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire. Deambrosis Martins is second from left.

these countries has exacerbated the inequality faced by Indigenous and Black peoples, because of the concentration of land, since Black and Indigenous people constitute the vast majority of the agrarian population" (LADLA 1927b, 11). This resolution signals the beginning of LADLA's redefinition of its program to include anti-Black racism as a central part of the imperialist extractive economy, identifying both Indigenous and Black communities as key to the anti-imperialist struggle. By framing Black and Indigenous agrarian communities as the base of anti-imperialism, LADLA would eventually take a further-reaching stance of antiracism than the Comintern, which sought to incorporate (but not center) these workers into a struggle of primarily industrial labor.

Whereas LADLA had always identified US workers as potential allies, this resolution recognized that "the oppressed races are also our allies with the United States itself" (LADLA 1927b, 11). Moore's signature on the resolution made clear that African Americans could be important collaborators in LADLA's project, and Moore became an active member of LADLA-US. LADLA also developed a relationship with the Haitian Patriotic Union, particularly through Joseph Jolibois Fils, who spent time with the Continental Committee in Mexico City and wrote several articles for *El Libertador*.[37]

Alongside the "Resolutions on Latin America," *El Libertador* printed "The Common Resolution on the Negro Question." The resolution argued that the wealth of Western Europe and the United States was developed through the slave trade and European expansion and that African Americans' rights are consistently denied in the United States.

[37] *El Libertador* (August 1927) included a photo of the founders of the Haitian Patriotic Union (HPU) with an announcement of its LADLA membership. See also the September 1928 photograph of HPU banquet for LADLA-US secretary Gomez. Box 4, Charles Shipman papers.

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"That very power" that oppresses Black people within the United States, it stated, has now occupied Haiti and other Caribbean nations (Turner and Turner 2005, 145).

The resolution then included a curious statement regarding Spanish-speaking Latin America: "In Latin America, Negroes suffer no special oppression. The cordial relations resulting from the social and political equality in the races in these countries prove that there is no inherent antagonism between them."[38] This statement was not necessarily due to the influence of the Latin American delegates, since the resolution was based on a 1926 UNIA statement that contained a similar claim (Weiss 2013, 85).[39]

Importantly, I have found that when LADLA reprinted this resolution in Spanish in *El Libertador*, the editors made revisions in the section that discussed Latin America, adding text to the original that offered Cuba and Panama as exceptions. The revised version in Spanish stated: "In Latin America, except in Cuba, Black people do not suffer the yoke of any special oppression. [In Panama, the Yankee intervention has transplanted the United States' barbaric customs against Black people, and this is the same origin of social inequalities in Cuba.] Social and political equality, as well as the cordial relations between different races in other countries in Latin America, prove that no natural antagonism exists between them" (LADLA 1927c, 14). While LADLA's version recognized the existence of anti-Black oppression in Latin America, it claimed that it appeared only in Cuba and Panama and attributed it to US influence.

This simplistic understanding reflects LADLA's nascent theorizing on race relations in Latin America in 1927 as well as the absence of Spanish-speaking Black Latin American delegates in Brussels. Despite this, the Committee on the Negro Question raised issues that became vital for LADLA moving forward. The "Common Resolution on the Negro Question" made five recommendations, including organizing Black workers; fighting "imperialist ideology: Chauvinism, fascism, kukluxism, and race prejudice; Admission of the workers of all races into all unions on the basis of equality"; organizing Black liberation movements; and establishing unity with other "suppressed peoples and classes for the fight against world imperialism" (Turner and Turner 2005, 146).

Although in 1927, LADLA wrongly attributed anti-Black racism only to the influence of imperialist powers, the "Common Resolution on the Negro Question" articulated a relationship between imperialism and white supremacism and identified how this ideology negatively impacted Black representation within anti-imperialist organizations. In the coming years, LADLA not only recognized how imperialist extractive industries affected Black communities in the Americas but also incorporated a fight against white supremacist ideologies into its platform.

The relationship between LADLA and the ideas put forth by the Committee on the Negro Question would be especially developed through the later interventions of Afro-Cuban activist Sandalio Junco, who became LADLA's general secretary in Mexico City after Mella's 1929 assassination. Junco did not attend the Brussels Congress, but he subsequently called into question a central assumption of its "Common Resolution on the Negro Question" regarding the supposed absence of anti-Black racism in many parts of Latin America. His arguments on this issue would advance anti-imperialist thought in Latin America, especially regarding Black Latin American and Black immigrant communities.

From LADLA headquarters in Mexico City, Junco traveled in 1929 to two meetings: the founding conference of the Confederation of Latin American Labor Unions in Montevideo and the First Latin American Communist Conference in Buenos Aires. Related scholarship recognizes these conferences for their examination of Indigenous rights through the interventions of Peruvian philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui (Becker 2006). However, it was in this same context where Junco presented a little-known but foundational text of

[38] Turner and Turner (2005, 146); File 54, LAI archive.

[39] Lindner (2023, 164) describes this clause as "ignorant" for denying the existence of racism in Latin America.

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Black internationalism that analyzed the conditions faced by Black peoples in the Americas. In his speech, "The Negro Question and the Proletarian Movement," and his subsequent comments, Junco challenged Mariátegui's strict differentiation between Black and Indigenous experiences and rejected some conference participants' dismissal of the presence of anti-Black racism among Latin American working classes and in Latin American societies more broadly. In contrast to these positions, Junco drew comparisons (but not equivalences) between Black Latin Americans' experiences and those of other racialized populations throughout the hemisphere, like Indigenous, African Americans, and Haitian, West Indian, and Chinese immigrant workers. Through these comparisons, he theorized the overlap between anti-Blackness and anti-immigrant sentiment faced especially by Black immigrant workers in Latin American contexts. I have provided an in-depth analysis of Junco's interventions at these conferences elsewhere (Mahler 2018).

Junco's leadership helped advance LADLA's platform toward Black and immigrant communities, an expansion whose roots can be traced back to the 1927 Brussels Congress. This shift is visible, for example, in LADLA's 1929 organizing around the sugar and banana industries in Central America and the Caribbean. According to LADLA, United Fruit Company and other banana companies worked with local authoritarian governments to create national guards that violently suppressed strikes. In Costa Rica, for instance, United Fruit used anti-Black racial prejudice among white and mestizo Costa Ricans to facilitate antilabor violence by local police and military and to prevent labor organizing across racial lines. LADLA tasked its sections in these countries with organizing with Black banana workers, "destroying racial prejudice and attracting to us Black workers looking for fraternization in the anti-imperialist struggle" (Montero 1929, 8). LADLA's propaganda materials used the terms "white terror" and "tropical fascism" to refer in shorthand to the ways that land dispossession, racism, and policing were inherent to the logic of extractive capital.

LADLA's legacy

As a result of a government crack-down against radical elements in Mexico, much of LADLA's central leadership was deported in the early 1930s, leading to the dissolution of its Continental Committee, although several national sections remained active throughout the early 1930s. Some of LADLA's leadership reconvened in the Comintern's Caribbean Bureau (BC), established in 1931 in New York City. Because of the Comintern's formal shift to its "class against class" line, which abandoned the broad alliances on which LADLA was based, the BC came to eclipse LADLA in importance. The BC ceased activities by 1936 in the lead-up to the US-Soviet alliance in World War II. All national sections of LADLA closed around the same time, and the LAI dissolved in 1937 (Louro 2018, 259). But the ideas advanced by LADLA have a longer life.

As I have argued, studying LADLA reframes the global history of the LAI, which was foundational to the later development of postcolonial thought and which has been largely understood through Afro-Asian exchanges. Through bringing the personal papers of LADLA's US activists into dialogue with materials from its Latin American sections and with LAI archives, I maintain that LADLA shifts prior scholarly understandings of Latin American intellectual history from the interwar period, known for its regionalist ideologies. LADLA activists rejected interwar regionalisms, like those espoused by Vasconcelos and Haya de la Torre, in favor of what I have called a hemispheric globalism, an ideological and practical interdependency with anti-imperialist movements in the United States and around the world. Moreover, through the sustained analysis of the "Resolutions on Latin America" and "Common Resolution on the Negro Question" and through discussion of Sandalio Junco's later contributions, this article claims that the

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encounter between LADLA and LAI activists in Brussels influenced LADLA to begin to expand its initial focus on Indigenous struggles toward Black communities, and eventually toward Black immigrant labor. In this sense, LADLA offers an early model of a movement that questioned the familiar trappings of Latin American racial exceptionalism.

The American continent today remains a hotbed of antiextractive activism—from Colombian anti-dam activism to anti-mining in Ecuador to protests at the US Standing Rock Indian Reservation. These movements gain visibility through creating far-reaching solidarity networks across national and linguistic boundaries. Even as LADLA has largely faded from our collective memory, it is worth revisiting how recent social movements may rely, even subconsciously, on LADLA's global, antiextractive, anti-imperialist, and antiracist political vision. Future efforts to build transnational movements against extractive racial capitalism will require deep knowledge of similar movements that came before and will necessitate as much attentiveness to those movements' errors as to their triumphs.

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