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Comintern Archives: Files of the Communist Party of Mexico, 1919-1940

Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), Moscow
Comintern Archives: Files of the Communist Party of Mexico, 1919-1940

Classified as top secret, the Comintern archives were inaccessible to researchers until 1992, when they were opened to the public. However, even though they are now public, the archives are still difficult for researchers to access. This situation is now changing, as IDC Publishers is making accessible the files of the national communist and left socialist parties of various countries. The files of the Communist Party of Mexico (CPM) cover the period 1919-1940 and include extensive documentation on the relations between the Comintern and its counterparts in Latin and North America.

THE COMINTERN ARCHIVES: TOP SECRET

The Comintern, or Third, International (Comintern) and its archives, kept hidden away for many years, have been shrouded in rumor, conjecture, and myth. Its influence was heavily felt even in countries where it could only operate in semi- or total illegality, through secretive activities, yet it is impossible to write 20th-century history without these archives. The archives, which are held in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History in Moscow, contain 55 million pages of original documents in almost 90 languages covering the entire period during which the organization was active (1919-1943). However, access to this indispensable source of information – 15 linear kilometers of shelving classified as “top secret” – was virtually impossible for many years. In 1992, the archives were opened to the public, but were still difficult to access, due to their vastness and complexity.

Comintern Archives: Files of the Communist Party of Mexico (fond 495, opis’ 108) cover the period 1919-1940 and include extensive documentation of relations between the Comintern and its counterparts in Mexico and other countries in Latin America. Among the documents of the CPM, the most informative are letters, reports, and reports to the Executive Committee of the Comintern concerning workers’ and communist movements, the creation of the Popular Front, financing the work of the party, the presidential elections, and the activities of the churches in Mexico. Many documents in these collections are unique, for instance, the documents on two muralists – Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros (Siqueiros) – and correspondence between Siqueiros and Secretary General of Profintern, A. Lozovskii. The collection also includes rare periodicals and newspapers, and many valuable photos.

Unique collection

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Until 1992, access to the documents of Communist parties was extremely limited; for example, researchers were allowed access only to printed materials, individual resolutions, and reports on the performance of CP delegates at the congresses of the Comintern. Now IDC Publishers is making these documents available to researchers all over the world.

THE COLLECTION CONTAINS

• Relations between the Comintern and its counterparts in Latin America, North America, and Europe
• Material of the Caribbean Bureau, the Latin American Bureau, and the Pan-American Bureau
• History of the Communist Party of Mexico and that of the USA
• Correspondence with the Communist Party of the USA
• Labor history, trade unions, and youth organization in Mexico
• Pamphlets, ephemera, leaflets
• Collection of rare periodicals and newspapers: Bandera Roja, Vida Nueva, La Voz del Campesino, El Machete, and Nuestros ideales

Product Information

• Scope: fond 495, opis’ 108, 231 files
• Language: The documents are in English, Spanish, French, German, and Russian
• Number of reels: 29
• Price: EUR 3,770/ US$ 4,785 (R-40) 130 /165 per reel

Finding Aid

An online finding aid to this collection is available at www.comintern-online.com. Access is free, although you will be required to register. A guide can also be downloaded from www.idc.nl. For a printed version please email info@idc.nl.

*Note: Comintern Archives: Files of the Communist Party of Mexico, 1919-1940 will not become available in Comintern Online.