

Ibarra

The generous support of the Tinker Award enabled me to spend eight weeks conducting pre-dissertation research in Havana, Cuba. During my research, I located important sources in a variety of archives, and established contacts with archivists, professors, and interviewees for the oral history aspect of my project. Furthermore, this research has allowed me to develop a stronger dissertation research agenda, which I will submit to my committee this coming spring.

My dissertation project is an investigation of the role of the Soviet Union in the development of a new, socialist Cuban science from 1959-1985. It focuses on the extent of Soviet influence in the realm of scientific research and education, and the effects of Soviet aid and education on developing Cuba's new professional class post-Revolution. The project also seeks to examine the intricacies of Soviet and Cuban relationships in workplaces, laboratories, and universities, unraveling the social and cultural clashes that accompanied this influx of Soviet Scientists. After the mass-exodus of middle and upper class professionals in the early years of the Revolution, the remaining professionals in Cuba realized that there was a large amount of work ahead of them in order to conduct the necessary research to propel the economy forward. While Cuban professionals and scientists wanted to jump start Cuba's research capabilities, they did not have the personnel nor the material resources to do so for at least another ten years. The solution, according to the Cuban Academy of Sciences: Cuba would *simultaneously* bring foreign Soviet specialists to Cuba to begin the important research for agriculture and extracting natural resources, while sending Cuban students to learn abroad in Soviet universities. This dual exchange would ensure that scientific research could continue at home, even while the Cuban specialists of the future were learning abroad. Whether within scientific institutes in Cuba or Russian universities Soviets were deeply involved in developing the Cuban professional class post Revolution.

While Soviet specialists directed research projects, taught Cubans how to use the

Soviet equipment donated to them by the USSR, conducted informational conferences and compiled many of the crucial handbooks, textbooks, and reports used in Cuban classrooms, how did Cubans interpret this privileging of Soviet knowledge in their fields? Was the experience of learning from Soviets different for Cubans studying abroad than it was for Cubans who studied in their own country? How do Cubans understand this dependency, and how was Soviet knowledge contested and adapted in their research projects, in their work, and in their studies?

In order to answer these questions, I consulted a variety of sources from multiple archives across Havana. Many of the research reports from joint Soviet-Cuban research teams were published by the Academy of Sciences, and were available at the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí. These reports offer a look at how Soviet scientists influenced the research directed by the new Academy of Sciences, whose rechristening in 1962 under the ideals of the Revolution ushered a flood of new research projects. Similarly, the Biblioteca Nacional held a collection of letters from Juan Marinello, the rector of the University of Havana, who handled the flow of petitions from Russians to work at the Universidad de La Habana. I was also able to consult letters, annual reports, and memoranda from the Academy of Sciences at the Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez. In addition, I located bulletins and conference transcripts from the branches of the Academy of Sciences, to determine the presence, influence, and reception of Soviet specialists within different fields. After completing my research goals, I spent the last part of my trip making important contacts with Cuban professionals who studied in the Soviet Union. Their experiences constitute an important perspective on Soviet aid, for their experiences round out the reality of international exchange and the influence of a drastic change in the demographics of their professional and education settings. These preliminary interviews consisted of questions addressing these individuals' experiences both within the Soviet university system and the impact their education abroad had on their career and professional opportunities.

While the preliminary sources I've consulted give a good glimpse at the extent of Soviet influence on Cuban science and science education, further research is necessary to untangle the intricate relationships between Cubans and Soviets in professional environments. I plan to conduct additional interviews with Cuban researchers who worked alongside Soviet scientists, Cuban professionals who learned from Russian professors, textbooks, and instructors at the workplace and at Cuban universities, as well as with Cuban students who went abroad to Soviet universities and lived and studied with Russian students and interacted with Russian professors. These interviews will unveil the *cultural processes* that accompanied these exchanges, and the clashes that occurred as Cuban and Soviet professionals underwent a give-and-take of information and plans for development.

Though there is much work to be done, the materials I consulted during this preliminary research trip have helped guide my research questions and my ability to design a feasible research plan for the dissertation. I am grateful to the Center for Latin American Studies and the Tinker Award committee for selecting my project and providing me with this opportunity.