

Conference “Radical Lefts of the South: cross-regional dialogues and research trends in the MENA and Latin America”

Dates: July 6-7, 2023

Place: German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) - Neuer Jungfernstieg 21, 20354 Hamburg, Germany

Organizers: Dr. Natália Schmiedecke (University of Hamburg), Dr. Khalil Dahbi (German Institute for Global and Area Studies), Dr. Thiago Prates (University of Hamburg)

Conference goals

The “Radical Lefts of the South: cross-regional dialogues and research trends in the MENA and Latin America” conference aims at advancing our understanding of leftist movements in the Middle East and North Africa (hereafter MENA) and Latin America through a comparative and interdisciplinary lens. It does so by bringing together individuals with different disciplinary backgrounds to discuss the ideas, practices, and discourses of the radical Lefts in the post-World War II era, the moment when regions once marginalized in global politics – variously referred to as “the Third World,” “underdeveloped”/“developing countries” or, more recently, “the Global South” – became significant political actors.

The conference adopts a cross-regional approach, encouraging comparative analyses with a focus on the exploration of similarities and differences between movements in the MENA and Latin America, as well as their common experiences and possible connections. Furthermore, the conference will address the methodological challenges associated with studying leftist movements in these regions and discuss ways to overcome them by drawing on concepts and methodologies from various disciplines, such as history, political science, sociology, and anthropology.

The conference interrogates whether leftist movements can be considered a global phenomenon by examining the degree to which movements in these regions share common characteristics, ideologies, and strategies. Participants will also explore the evolution of these movements’ goals and strategies over time, particularly in the context of the Cold War and its aftermath, and how they have shaped and been shaped by the specific historical and socio-economic contexts of their respective regions. In doing so, this conference aims to advance our understanding of two key issues that remain understudied: experiences in the “margins” and their global linkages.

Conference plan

The conference encompasses five thematic panels followed by discussions and exchanges with all participants, ensuring exchanges that go beyond the prevalent disciplinary and regional boundaries. The theme of each panel was chosen based on its relevance both to the study of the Lefts in the 20th and 21st centuries and to political development in each region. Researchers are encouraged to participate in all panels. The idea is to have open debates after the presentations between scholars from different disciplines and regions in order to enrich the comprehension of a global and multifaceted phenomenon and foster cross-regional collaboration.

Panel 1: Intellectual and political networks and circulation of ideas discusses connections between left-wing movements across the Global South. It focuses on the transit of individuals, discourses, and practices in different regions, as well as the reception and appropriation of ideas in various contexts.

- Eugenia Palieraki (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) - “Rethinking Cold War agency from the ‘margins.’ Global South experts and the co-production of Third World scientific knowledge, Chile–Algeria, 1960s–1970s”
- Aldo Marchesi (Universidad de la República) - “From developmentalism to liberation. Intellectual and political trajectories of radicalization within the Latin American left during the fifties and sixties”

Panel 2: Engagement and the role of intellectuals addresses an important topic for the Left: the relation between intellectuals, knowledge, art, and the radical transformation of reality. The panel brings together scholars interested in discussing and comparing how the Left has defined intellectual engagement and framed recurrent topics such as national liberation, colonialism, and popular culture during the 20th and 21st centuries.

- Thiago Prates (University of Hamburg) - “History as a weapon: (re)writing the past of the Third World (Argentina and Uruguay, 1960s-1970s)”
- Idriss Jebari (Trinity College Dublin) - “Global Socialist Youth in Tunisia: Between Marx, Che and Mao”
- Matías Marambio (Universidad Alberto Hurtado) - “Tricontinentalism for the Masses: Print Culture and the Latin American New Left”

Panel 3: South-South Solidarity focuses on a central practice of the political Left that has allowed for the construction of relations between different places, political processes, and social groups.

Panelists will present case studies of solidarity work promoted by leftist actors in the MENA and Latin America, including cases of solidarity among these regions. They will analyze the strategies used to gain support for revolutionary movements in various contexts and reflect on the limits of this endeavor.

- Fernando Camacho Padilla (Autonomous University of Madrid) - “OSPAAAL, Cuba, and the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990)”¹
- Natália Schmiedecke (University of Hamburg) - “Forging rapprochements, reiterating distances: Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean in the OSPAAAL posters”

Panel 4: Post-Cold War discusses the radical Lefts over the past thirty years. Panelists will address the transformations, continuities, dilemmas and new challenges of the Lefts of the Global South in a world marked by both the hegemony of neoliberalism and the decay of revolutionary paradigms that guided political groups for decades.

- Khalil Dahbi (German Institute for Global and Area Studies) - “The Moroccan Marxist Leninist Movement in the Post-Cold War Era: Trajectory and Relevance”
- Francesco Saverio Leopardi (University of Padua) - “Still the Radical Option? The Palestinian Left after the Cold War”
- Fabio Luis Barbosa dos Santos (Universidade Federal de São Paulo) - “Larger than the ballot boxes: rebellions in South America during the pandemic”

Panel 5: Religion and the Left explores intersections between religious and political fields. To this day, the conventional wisdom holds that the secular Left has clashed with religious groups and that their interests and beliefs are completely antagonistic. Nevertheless, experiences in Latin America and the MENA regions question these views, and have shown that leftists and religious authorities from different creeds often shared and came together around a program based on social justice and equality. This panel intends to analyze and compare these phenomena.

- Eliana Lacombe (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba) - “*Political-religious* experiences: Memories and trajectories of Third Worlders and Montoneros in Argentina”
- Montassir Sakhi (KU Leuven) - “Leftist Islamist Political Actors in Morocco: The case of Al Badil Al Hadari”
- Bradley Hilgert (Universidad de las Artes) - “On the methodology and theology of Ignacio Ellacuría: should the Global South be considered the ‘place that renders truth’?”

¹ Paper co-authored with Jessica Stites Mor (University of British Columbia).

Program

July 6th (Thursday)

9:30 – 10:00 – Opening

10:00 – 10:30 – Networking and coffee break

10:30 – 12:00 – Panel 1: Intellectual and political networks and circulation of ideas

12:00 – 14:00 – Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:30 – Panel 2: Engagement and the role of intellectuals

15:30 – 16:00 – Break

16:00 – 17:30 – Roundtable (all participants): Globality of the Left(s)?

19:30 – Dinner (optional)

July 7th (Friday)

9:00 – 10:30 – Panel 3: South-South Solidarity

10:30 – 11:00 – Break

11:00 – 12:30 – Panel 4: Post-Cold War

12:30 – 14:30 – Lunch Break

14:30 – 16:00 – Panel 5: Religion and the Left

16:15 – 18:00 – Roundtable (all participants) - feedback; discussion about a possible future event and/or publication; ideas for a network about global studies of the Left(s).

19:30 – Dinner (optional)

Abstracts

Rethinking Cold War agency from the ‘margins.’ Global South experts and the co-production of Third World scientific knowledge, Chile–Algeria, 1960s–1970s

Eugenia Palieraki²

The recent renewal of the historiographical debate on the ‘global sixties’ has been made possible by moving away from an exclusive focus on 1968 in the United States and Western Europe as well as by increased scholarly attention to Third World revolutionary processes and the connections among them. However, scholarship on the 1960s in the Third World has mainly explored the

² Eugenia Palieraki is a tenured Associate Professor in Latin American History at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Her research interests focus on the Latin American “New Left” during the 1960s and the 1970s, and more recently, on Latin America and the Third World in the Cold War era.

circulation of strictly political agency (activists, governments, states, political movements), neglecting other important actors. Militant experts who transnationally coproduced an epistemology by and for the Third World are one such case. These politically committed professionals played a crucial role in postwar international forums and actively contributed to building postcolonial states. This article explores the case of postcolonial Algeria and its encounter with South American experts who were strongly committed to the Third World's political and economic independence. First, I will focus on South American economists and Algerian jurists who met in international organizations, mainly the UN, and who collaborated seeking to produce a new international economic order. Secondly, I will follow the trajectory of Latin American architects and engineers exiled in Algeria and working for its newly independent state.

From developmentalism to liberation. Intellectual and political trajectories of radicalization within the Latin American left during the fifties and sixties

Aldo Marchesi³

My presentation will focus on how developmentalist, populist and leftist traditions rethought their utopias of future in the context of the increasing polarization of the Latin American Cold War during the 1950s and 1960s. By studying the trajectories of some influential intellectuals in the fields of history, sociology and urbanism I review the main political, cultural and geopolitical dilemmas that they faced to rethink their ideas about modernity under the conditions of the bipolar cold war order. I will argue that the problem of underdevelopment was the point of departure from which other issues emerged. In my talk I will pay attention to the ways in which the idea of development interplayed with the problem of national sovereignty in order to think radical projects of the future. While in theoretical terms some projects of the future were linked to the vindication of national traditions and others to certain "universal" values associated with the cold war discourses, in practice, their strategies were hybrid and oscillating.

History as a weapon: (re)writing the past of the Third World (Argentina and Uruguay, 1950s-1970s)

Thiago Prates⁴

How could (or should) one write the Histories of the new countries of Asia and Africa? Many

³ Professor at the Institute of History of the University of the Republic (Uruguay). He has worked on the recent history of the Southern Cone of Latin America, particularly on the Left. In 2018 he published *Latin America's Radical Left: Rebellion and Cold War in the Global 1960s* (Cambridge University Press). Then, through the study of individual and collective transnational trajectories he has been working on the conflictive relationship between internationalism and Latin Americanism in the Left of the region during the twentieth century. He is also working on another line of research: intellectual and political history of the idea of poverty in contemporary Uruguay (1943-2010).

⁴ Thiago Prates is a historian who works on political and intellectual history of modern Latin America, focused mostly on the Southern Cone during the 1950s-1970s. Among his topics of interest are intellectual networks, cultural magazines, editorial projects, political uses of the past and the relations between knowledge and radical politics. Currently he works as Research Associate at the University of Hamburg and as editor of the Brazilian journal of Latin-American history *Revista Eletrônica da ANPHLAC*.

intellectuals asked that question during and after the processes of independence and decolonization that shattered European empires in the decades following the end of World War II. Latin American leftists were particularly interested in that scenario: their countries conquered political independency from colonial powers a century and a half before, but still they perceived it as a mere formal autonomy. In that sense, they could relate their political tasks to those developing in other continents. According to this logic, national Histories written so far were considered inadequate, wrong or plainly falsified by the ruling elites, and needed to be rewritten to fully represent the past and to create revolutionary political consciousness. This paper discusses the radical poetics of history and the political uses of the past by the Latin American lefts. I focus on leftist publications (cultural magazines, newspapers, books) produced between the 1950s and 1970s in Argentina and Uruguay. First, I present the ethical engagement of writing History in the forementioned period, and then I move to explain the intellectual operation present in those discourses. I expect to engage my colleagues to discuss matters of intellectual engagement and (self)representation and common narratives between Latin America and MENA.

Global Socialist Youth in Tunisia: Between Marx, Che and Mao

Idriss Jebari⁵

From the sixties to the seventies, several leftist organizations of Tunisian students led a contestation movement against the Bourguiba regime on the national university's campus. In their published material (pamphlets and periodicals) or through the memoirs of their participants, they frequently evoked the importance of other struggles in the Global South for their own. From Vietnam to Palestine, Maoist China or Cuba, Tunisian leftist youth sought to dialogue with this anti-imperialist front and inspire their own struggle. What were the Tunisians observing and learning from their counterparts? Taking the *Perspectives Tunisiennes* and *al-Amil al-Tunsi* organizations as examples, I trace the way that changing references can help better understand the shifts within the youth movement over their understanding of the revolution. The key idea which divided these movements related to the role of ideas in relation to political actions. What role should youth play? An intellectual vanguard to educate the masses or the first spark for a nationwide uprising? This paper proposes an alternative typology of the Tunisian left around its different ideological stages – Marxism, Maoism and the Guerilla – and interrogates whether we can understand this experience in light of other similar movements in North Africa and in relation to other experiences of leftist youth movements in Latin America.

⁵ Lecturer in Middle East Studies at Trinity College Dublin. He is a historian of Arab thought and his research focuses on North African cultural and social history after its independences from France, on the radical sixties and seventies, on collective memory in the Arab world, and its role for reconciliation processes and transitional justice. He is currently working on the histories and memories of leftist groups in North Africa between nostalgia, amnesia and the archive. This project will bring focus on youth, student groups, radical film makers, and novelists that make up an alternative history postcolonial North Africa. After completing his doctorate on the history of the production of critical thought in Morocco and Tunisia at the University of Oxford, he held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the American University of Beirut (Lebanon), and a teaching fellowship in Middle East and North African history at Bowdoin College in Maine (USA).

Tricontinentalism for the Masses: Print Culture and the Latin American New Left

Matías Marambio⁶

The presentation looks at two editorial experiences of the Latin American Left in the 1960s: publications linked to the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) and Editorial Quimantú. Both *Tricontinental Magazine* and the homonymous bulletin (published by OSPAAAL), as well as issues of the magazine *Hechos Mundiales* (published by Quimantú) serve as evidence of different editorial manoeuvres that relate these publications to the visual language and the materiality of its contemporary mass culture. Contrary to some of the discourse by Left organizations and intellectuals at the time, these editorial projects attempted a mixture of radical politics with languages and techniques strongly rooted in the 60s mass culture and avant-garde visual arts. The presentation explores the strategies used by these print objects from a materialist perspective, focusing on the presentation of Tricontinentalist discourse for a mass audience.

OSPAAAL, Cuba, and the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990)⁷

Fernando Camacho Padilla⁸

The Lebanese Civil War which started in 1975 got the attention of the Cuban government, media, and solidarity organizations greatly. In the previous decade, relations with Lebanon became important in connection with Cuba's growing interest with the Middle East after the revolution, but especially when Beirut became the hub of activity of several Palestinian political organizations against Israel. Thereafter, Cuban journalist and diplomats regularly visited Beirut to contact Palestinian political leaders and discuss different possibilities of cooperation. Solidarity with Palestine was one of the major causes of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) solidarity campaigns, and got much space in their two main publications, the *Tricontinental* magazine and the *Tricontinental* bulletin, both of which included much information gathered in Lebanon. The war, especially the Israeli military actions and invasion of the country, caused a significant impact on OSPAAAL, and many activities and publications

⁶ Matías Marambio is a historian with a PhD in Latin American studies by the Centro de Estudios Culturales Latinoamericanos (Latin American Cultural Studies Center) of the University of Chile. He works as an adjunct lecturer at the Anthropology Department of the Alberto Hurtado University teaching modern Latin American history and Latin American critical thought. His research areas are intellectual and cultural history of modern Latin America, visual studies, cultural activism and the political history of the Left. Currently he is conducting postdoctoral research in New Left print culture in Latin America during the 1960s.

⁷ Co-authored with Jessica Stites Mor (University of British Columbia).

⁸ Fernando Camacho Padilla received his PhD in 2013 from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid Madrid (UAM) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. He is associate professor in the Department of Contemporary History at the UAM. He has carried out research stays at the University of Santiago de Chile, El Colegio de México and University of La Habana (Cuiba). He has been invited to teach academic courses and workshops at the Allameh Tabataba'i University, University of Tehran, the University of the Punjab (Lahore, Pakistan), and the Azerbaijan University of Foreign Languages, among others. Before joining the UAM, he was a professor at the universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Södertörn and Dalarna (Sweden). His main publications deal with the relations between Chile and Sweden, as well as the Truth Commissions in the Southern Cone. In recent years, his research has focused on contemporary relations between Latin America and the Islamic World, especially during the Cold War period.

emerged through the end of the conflict. This paper focuses on the visibility of the Lebanese Civil War in OSPAAAL's printed materials, with a special attention on photography, posters, and drawings which were included regarding this topic in its various publications.

**Forging rapprochements, reiterating distances:
Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean in the OSPAAAL posters**

Natália Ayo Schmiedecke⁹

Created during the Tricontinental Conference in 1966, the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL), which existed until 2019 based in Havana, had as its main activity the production and dissemination of propaganda materials aimed at supporting revolutionary movements in the so-called Third World. This paper will focus on the posters produced by the organization that focused on struggles carried out in Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean. These regions, which were the most portrayed on the posters, have occupied a central place in Cuban identity discourses, since the island is part of the Caribbean and has a large Afro-descendant population. Through a comparative analysis that will include both quantitative and qualitative elements, the space dedicated to each region and the way in which they were portrayed on the posters will be related both to the priorities of Cuban foreign policy in different moments and to internal issues of the island. In addressing this topic, special attention will be given to the racial issue. In addition to highlighting the role of artists in the Third World project, the paper aims to reflect on the limits of this project and to question the prevalent tendency to idealize south-south solidarity.

**The Moroccan Marxist Leninist Movement in the Post-Cold War Era:
Trajectory and Relevance**

Khalil Dahbi¹⁰

This paper delves into the evolution of the Moroccan Marxist-Leninist Movement (MMLM) in the post-Cold War era, particularly Annahj Addimocrati. The study scrutinizes the group's adaptations from the end of the Cold War until 2023, within a national context shaped by significant national and global change processes.

The paper explores how the Annahj has navigated the shifting political landscape, including its

⁹ Research Associate at the Department of History of the University of Hamburg, member of the project "World Order Narratives of the Global South", funded by the BMBF. She obtained her PhD and master's degrees in History from the São Paulo State University, in Brazil. She was a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Campinas State University and a Visiting Researcher at both the University of Helsinki and the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin. She authored the book *Chilean New Song and the Question of Culture in the Allende Government: Voices for a Revolution* (Lexington Books, 2022), among other publications.

¹⁰ Research fellow at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Institute for Middle East Studies (IMES). Member of the project "World Order Narratives of the Global South" (WONAGO) project. He received his Ph.D at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in Japan. His research focuses on North African politics, particularly on the region's radical left(s).

response to the (limited) political opening of the early 2000s, the rise of Islamism, and its role in recent protest movements. It further investigates the group's strategic and tactical choices in response to these changes and to the dynamics of the Moroccan political field, as well as how these decisions might reflect internal organizational dynamics. Subsequently, a novel framework for understanding the "relevance" of political oppositions within authoritarian contexts is introduced. Challenges the conventional electoral understandings of relevance that predominates in studies on Moroccan politics, the framework offers a fresh perspective on the evolution and significance of the Moroccan Marxist-Leninist left.

The study makes three key contributions: First, It provides a detailed analysis of Annahj's ideological and strategic evolution in the post-Cold War era. Second, it introduces a new framework for understanding the relevance of radical political actors in non-democratic settings. Finally, it fills a gap in the current knowledge on the post-Cold War trajectory of the MMLM and the dynamics that have shaped its evolution.

Still the Radical Option? The Palestinian Left after the Cold War

Francesco Saverio Leopardi¹¹

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, represented a further source of crisis for the Palestinian leftist factions. The collapse of "existing socialism" deprived those faction of an ideological reference which added to more material, local problems such as the rise of an Islamist alternative within the Palestinian national movement, the fateful Palestinian support to Saddam Hussein invasion of Kuwait and the deadlock of the First Intifada which led to the 1993 secret Oslo accords between the PLO and Israel. In this context, the Palestinian Left needed deep ideological and organizational revision in order to retain its historical role of "radical opposition" to the PLO conservative leadership embodied by Yasser Arafat's Fatah.

In this paper I will address the causes that prevented the Palestinian left from undergoing such revision by focusing on its most important faction, namely the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Internal divisions, leftist dependence on traditional Palestinian institutional frameworks and limited ideological elaboration emerged as major factor behind the worsening of the Left's crisis. In fact, the conjunction of the above-mentioned critical events expedited the crisis of leftist agency that broke out after the loss of the Beirut sanctuary in 1982 following the second Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Ultimately, in looking into the Palestinian Left inability to retain its role of radical option, this paper will offer a compared analysis by discussing the case of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its more successful trajectory of renewal.

¹¹ Research fellow at the University of Padua, Department of Political Science, Law and International Studies where he teaches International History of the Middle East. His research interests span from the history of the Palestinian national movement to the history of debt and neoliberal reforms in the Middle East and North Africa. He has published a monograph on the history of the PFLP with Palgrave Macmillan and several journal articles on both research subjects.

Larger than the ballot boxes: rebellions in South America during the pandemic

Fabio Luis Barbosa dos Santos¹²

This paper discusses rebellions during the pandemic in South America and their relationship to progressive politics alluding to three cases: Colombia, Peru and Chile. At the beginning of the 21st century, these were the only countries that did not elect presidents identified with a South American Pink Tide. However, in a kind of reversal of history, these countries witnessed radical riots during the pandemic. And more recently, they have elected presidents identified with social change: it is as if the expectation of change has changed sides. My hypothesis is that Chile, Peru and Colombia experienced, at a later stage, the erosion of political forms associated with neoliberalism that in other countries were reconstituted by progressivism. Rebellions during the pandemic produced a crisis of legitimacy comparable to the one that ended up in progressivism, and the ways of dealing with this crisis tend to mimic them: between elections and constitutions, it is possible that social change is limited to a political and institutional reordering.

Political-religious experiences: Memories and trajectories of Third Worlders and Montoneros in Argentina

Eliana Lacombe¹³

This paper is the product of anthropological research carried out between 2010 and 2018 in Argentina. It focuses on social memories about the Third World movement during the last half of the 20th century. This work inquires memories of Third World militants, some of whom became members of *Montoneros*: a political arms organization which was very important in Argentina in the seventies.

The research aimed to understand the articulation between Christianity and the political left in the sixties and seventies. The question that drives my enquiry is: *Why did many young Catholics decide to join the Montoneros?*

I start from an ethnographic perspective that pays special attention to the way in which the actors signify and transmit their lived experience. In this sense, in this paper I am interested in making an analytical contribution about the difficulty of separating *the political* and *the religious* in the experiences of ex-militants of the Third World and the Montoneros.

The work tries to analyze the moral reasons and political beliefs that crossed the decisions to take up arms.

¹² Latin American Studies Professor at the Federal University of São Paulo and at Prolam-USP. Research Associate at the Society, Work and Politics Institute at University of Witwatersrand. Author of *Power and Impotence. A History of South American under Progressivism* (Haymarket, 2020). Coeditor of *The Radical Right. Politics of Hate on the Margins of Global Capitalism* (Brill, 2022).

¹³ PhD in Anthropology. Professor and researcher at the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities of the National University of Córdoba (Argentina). Director of the research team "Memory and Oral History" based at the Institute of Anthropology of Córdoba (IDACOR-CONICET).

**Leftist Islamist Political Actors in Morocco:
The case of Al Badil Al Hadari and al Harakat al Oumma**

Montassir Sakhi¹⁴

This presentation examines the communist and socialist roots of activists in Moroccan Islamic organisations. More specifically, it briefly describes the legacy of the radical left in the organisational formation of two Moroccan Islamic political parties (Al Badil al Hadari and Harakat Al Oumma) and a religious and political brotherhood (al Adl wal Ihsan). This description is based on interviews with the leaders of these three political parties. Three main questions will guide this ethnographic presentation: How did the break with the left come about in the history of these political parties and the trajectories of their founders? What differentiates, in terms of political discourse, these parties claiming to be Islamic-leftist (in the case of al Badil and Al Oumma) from other Islamic parties? And finally, how does the legacy of the radical left shape the experience of activism and ideology of political Islam in our case studies?

**On the methodology and theology of Ignacio Ellacuría: should the Global South be
considered the ‘place that renders truth’?**

Bradley Hilgert¹⁵

This paper explores the relevance of Ignacio Ellacuría's theology and methodology for contemporary left-wing socio-political theory. Ellacuría's theology of liberation advocates for thinking from the perspective of the “crucified people”, “the place of contradiction”, or “the place that renders truth”. Ellacuría's very life constitutes a methodology of historicizing the descension of Jesus of Nazareth from the cross into historically reality. This historicization has a double movement as well, because not only should the historical Jesus be brought into each present period but the place he appears, the “crucified people”, then must become the place from which we understand our current context. This approach to de-ideologizing thought, both theological-ethical and theoretical, can yield pertinent and more just truths.

I read Ellacuría's proposals in conjunction with Claribel Alegría and D. J. Flakoll's testimonial novel *They Won't Take Me Alive* because the novel allows us to imagine what it might mean to bring his methodology of historicization into praxis. By examining Ellacuría and Alegría in concert, the paper probes the potential to deconstruct and transcend the existing world system. It argues that the practice of historicization—critically assessing concepts within their historical realities and actualizing ideas in these contexts—supplies critical thinking tools essential for moving beyond mere idealism. To surmount our current, exploitative world-system, it is imperative to pinpoint the

¹⁴ Postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the KU Leuven (Belgium). His research focuses on the phenomena of utopian political thought and national border devices. His thesis focused on the revolution in Syria and the Islamic state in Iraq. He is currently conducting research on the politics of European migrants to jihad. He is co-founder of a research group at the University of Sousse "Border-Studies", which explores the politics of borderisation of the Mediterranean and resistance of migrants and their families.

¹⁵ Bradley Hilgert holds a Ph.D. in Latin American Literature and Culture from The Ohio State University, where he worked under Ileana Rodríguez, founder of the Latin America Subaltern Studies group. He has published texts on higher education in the arts, El Salvador's *literatura comprometida*, Central American thought, Latin American critical pedagogies, and memory studies. He is currently the Academic Vice Rector of the University of the Arts in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

“place of contradiction” or “the place that renders truth”. In doing so, we are better equipped to further Ellacuría’s quest for a “civilization of poverty”—a justice-centered trans-national political system that ensures an abundant life for all.¹⁶

¹⁶ I use the prefix trans here in the sense that it transcends the national, overcoming the ideologization of nation and nationalisms and not in the corporative sense of the transnational (company). Perhaps it might be more accurate to speak of the trans-human.