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Southern experiences in dialogue:
A case study on South Atlantic Knowledge Production

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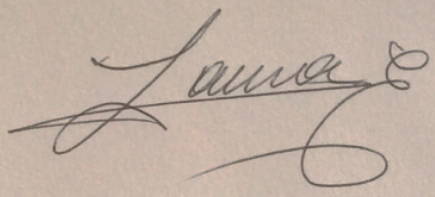
This thesis represents my own work, both in concept and execution, based on personal reflections and the documents and memories shared by the members involved in the research process.



LAURA EFRON

Abstract

In this thesis I am putting forward the contention that rather than constituting a barrier between Africa and the Americas, the Atlantic Ocean was a space of dialogues and exchange. In terms of this, if we understand the ocean as a communication space rather than one of separation, analysis of local realities and experiences cannot be conducted on the basis of the idea of exclusivity or exceptionalism. Experiences and realities in these two sides need to be understood and interpreted in their hybridity. One side of the ocean cannot be understood without paying attention to the other.

Following this perspective, the aim of this thesis is to make a trans-national and trans-Atlantic study of the exchange of radical educational practices and ideas between Latin America and South Africa in the South African context of state of emergency during the 1980s. How did radical Latin American ideas from the 60s and 70s arrive into South Africa? Which ideas found an audience here? Were they read, analysed and re-appropriated by local organisations in the South African context of struggle against apartheid? How were they put into practice? To answer these questions, this thesis analyses the work of the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) an independent research agency that supported the labour movement in South Africa. ILRIG published a wide range of educational materials for use in the training and education of trade union and social activist circles. Amongst these materials was a series of booklets and pamphlets on liberation movements and struggles in Latin America. This study uses these publications and the workshops that ILRIG organised around them to open up a broader discussion of how ideas travel across contexts.

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Lastly, I would like to thank Charlene Thompson (and her family). Charlene has been a key person in this thesis for many reasons. Our relationship shifted from me being her Spanish teacher to her being my friend, family, teacher, colleague, mind reader, editor, driver, nanny, psychologist and much more. Your kindness *es un regalo del cielo*, a gift from heaven. No words can really express how I feel for you and your support. I believe we learnt to translate our worlds in such a beautiful way. Thank you.

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Chapter 1

The effervescence of Southern Atlantic ideas in the South African Context[1]

General problem

The 1970s and 1980s in the South Atlantic (on both sides of the globe) were marked by the imposition of oppressive regimes and states of emergency.[2] Racial and ideological domination (largely white and capitalistic) resulted in the establishment and deepening of policies of social control and violent repression to impose and entrench racial and ideological domination. In South America this took the form of military dictatorships, while in the Southern African context it led to the imposition of one-party ruling governments and the development of apartheid (Fig, 1992: 2). Consequently, social practices and daily life on both sides of the Atlantic were dominated by fear and control. There were several ways to react to such oppression. Some organisations chose to openly reject the prevailing systems of domination through armed resistance. Others attempted to repudiate such regimes through subtler, but no less significant resistance practices.

In relation to these practices, the spread of ideas can be seen as one of the most powerful weapons feared by oppressive regimes all over the South Atlantic. Attempts to quash it took the form of exiling, banning, assassination and controlling of people's movement and radically curtailing freedom of speech in media and publications. These became important strategies in the arsenal of the authorities. However, none of these strategies were so successful that they enabled authorities to gain complete control over people's lives. They were not able to stop people from thinking differently. The power of ideas resides in their capacity to change the way people see themselves and the world around them. Ideas enable people to think, feel and behave in ways that differ from the mores of thinking which the hegemonic power

[1] In this thesis, the concept of "ideas" is used to express how the process of circulation of information, histories and experiences from Latin America promoted a wider perspective and a deeper and more critical understanding of South African local realities.

[2] As Vijay Prashad explains, since the mid-60s and mostly during the 70s and early 80s there was a clear aim from the North (particularly USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada) to redefine the geography of production in a way in which neoliberalism became the main new international way of labour organisation. This project brought up diverse resistances in the South that derived in the instalment of oppressive states as a way to control and suppress those alternative projects (Prashad, 2014: 13-25).

seeks to dictate. Ideas, being abstract, are communicated in ways that defy “capture” or control and, consequently, are all but impossible to stop. Finally, ideas are deeply linked with historical contexts. They represent both ways of understanding and ways to change particular contexts.

As Cathy-Mae Karelse reminds us, counter ideas[3] and methodologies do not develop only in opposition to the dominant and controlling ones; they also have their own dynamics (Karelse, 1995: 26). Therefore, while it is true that in oppressive contexts banned ideas would still circulate in the underground, this does not mean they are created only in reaction to oppression. Opposing ideas also have their own origins, independent from the dominant ones. Alternative ideas develop in relation to specific local realities, contexts, beliefs and epistemologies. Post 1948, the South African apartheid state created a battery of legislation and policy designed to control society, its ways of living, behaving and thinking. Notwithstanding the tight grip censorship held over South African society, forbidden, banned, critical ideas continued to emerge and develop. They had their own ways of circulating and proliferating (Karelse, 1995: 30-31). During the 70s and 80s, South African organisations were reflecting upon, and trying to develop, new sets of ideas about the nature of the struggle and about ways of thinking of a post-apartheid future. These ideas as Freire (1970) suggests were rooted in the desire for alternatives and for an emancipated world. One of the main sources for these emerging ideas was Latin America. Studying and reflecting on Latin American histories of struggle provided and contributed critical concepts, ideas and formulations to the South African political and intellectual community as it struggled to make sense of the social order and the strategies of struggle that were necessary to challenge the social order and to undertake to construct an alternative world, a world in which South Africans could flourish and grow as free people.

Acknowledging the influence of Latin American thinking in the 1970s and 1980s on the ideas that were emerging in South Africa at that time, gives rise to the following

[3] While the author adopts Gramsci’s ideas on hegemony and counter hegemony, and thus sees alternative ideas as counter ideas, I disagree with that conceptual framework as it defines alternative ideas as responses to dominant ones. That perspective does not recognise alternative ideas agency as an independent project, not necessarily in dialogue with the dominant ones. The concept of counter ideas is important to acknowledge ideas that resist against the dominant system. While I acknowledge that conceptual contribution, it is also important to understand alternative ideas in terms of their own reality and dynamics. Perhaps that would allow one to understand how knowledge is produced from the margins as suggested by Walter Mignolo (Mignolo, 2003).

questions: How did this process of the transfer and exchange of ideas take place in these oppressive regimes of the South Atlantic? How did these ideas move across the boundaries of time, space, language and history? How and why did they take root? What pathways did the ideas take? Were they solely migrating from the North or were they circulating in a South-South direction as well?

Main Research Questions and aims

The main aim of this thesis is to open up the discussion and describe the complexities of the links that activists and intellectuals constructed within the space of the South Atlantic. The thesis undertakes to uncover and trace the ways in which links were established and developed between scholars and activists in the South and to initiate a path of scholarship which will help us understand how alternative knowledge formations, independent from the North, were established and institutionalised. Critical to an understanding of this historical experience, which is strikingly under-researched and under-explored in the narrative and historiography of the history of knowledge-formation (in the broadest sense), is how much it was taken for granted, even by its participants and stakeholders. It was so taken for granted that it did not even have a conceptual place in the South African narrative.

The terms ‘north’ and ‘south’ are used here to denote the broad points and places of development of ideas. It is by no means claimed that knowledge formations are ever completely autonomous. Intellectual developments in one part of the world can be shown to have connections with developments elsewhere. But they can be and often are relatively autonomous.

The purpose of this study is to highlight the significance of this ‘south-south’ relationship and begin the process of locating it within the larger story of how the struggle for democracy was also a struggle over ideas. As I have explained before, in their deliberate consideration of liberation struggles around the world, South African social movements looked broadly but Latin America was a major site of interest for them. One of my main concerns is to deconstruct the idea that South African struggles and alternative projects to apartheid were fundamentally based on Northern ideologies and concepts. In order to achieve this stated aim, I will describe and analyse cases that represent concrete examples in which Latin American ideas

and historical experiences were explicitly used as main references to discuss local options available to participants in the struggle in their fight against the repressive system.

I will analyse a specific case in which progressive South African organisations were studying and teaching Latin American contents and methodologies as part of their educational and political struggle against the apartheid system during the 80s. This case will allow us to understand not only how Latin American constructs were circulated but also how they were adopted/adapted and redefined in the local South African context. Thus, I am looking to recover those alternative, marginalised and silenced ways of producing critical knowledge from the South as a way to contribute to de-colonial epistemological debates.

Debates over knowledge production had mostly focused on the links between North and South or within a continent. While, some studies have explored Southern knowledge production (Mudimbe, 1989; Chakrabarty, 2002; Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000; Range, 2002; Connell, 2007, among others), hardly any studies have investigated the South Atlantic as a space of exchanges, links, circulation and production of alternative knowledge. This research aims to open new debates on the field by analysing a specific case in which this was taking place. I believe this thesis will contribute towards producing a wider understanding of South African history from an international approach that recognises that the links with the South Atlantic were as important in influencing the culture and means of resistance as the ones with the North.

Furthermore, this research undertakes to contribute to the debates and disputes over knowledge production by introducing examples that have not been studied previously, particularly by sharing experiences from the South Atlantic. It is important to open spaces for thinking critically about our own experiences and hegemonic notions about the past (and probably the present as well). As an Argentinean who has been studying African History for a long time, I believe exchanges and more fluid communication should be taking place between our countries/continents. In the past, Latin America looked to Africa and Africa to Latin America for examples and alternatives. At present that circulation of ideas seems to have been eclipsed by globalisation and the end of the Cold War and even where the links between Africa

and Latin America continue to exist, they have lost (or appear to have lost) their fluidity.

The decision to do my PhD in South Africa was influenced by personal, professional and even political factors. Since I am attempting to promote fluid links between our continents, I felt it important to experience first-hand that same circulation on a personal level. Living in Cape Town became not only a way to be able to do my research but also to experience in my own body the reality that I am trying to explain. And at the same time, also myself promote in present times debates and exchanges from a Southern perspective over current local issues.

Historical roots

Much has been said about North-South links. This includes extensive commentary, especially on the unidirectionality of idea flows with particular emphasis on how Western ideas circulated and were adopted and adapted in the South.[4] It has become common sense to think of knowledge production as a North-South reality. The corollary of this is that local ways of thinking and producing knowledge have been effectively silenced by the dominant Western epistemology and Sciences. This is particularly true for the South Atlantic links; to the extent that it is almost as if they do not exist. On the contrary, however, these links have, in fact, a long history of interconnections and transatlantic awareness.

Raewyn Connell examines the importance of putting the focus on the South and its own knowledge repositories and reproductive modalities. Despite efforts at erasing and marginalising them, these have, in reality, constituted powerful alternatives to those imposed from the North (Connell, 2007: 12). During the 1970s (and '80s) Southern experiences and ideas of autonomy (economically and culturally) were perceived to be a possible threat to the dominant system. This resulted in steps being taken to block ideas emanating from the South so that these ideas were ultimately rejected and even destroyed by authoritarian regimes and the imposition of neoliberal projects (Connell, 2007: 151-152).

[4] A more detailed explanation of this issue is provided in the following chapter. Some of the main authors that reflected on the North-South links in the process of knowledge production are Basalla (1967), Said (1978), Mudimbe (1989), Chatterjee (1993), Bhabha (1994), Hountondji (1997), Chakrabarty (2000), Quijano (2000), Ranger (2002), Connell (2007, 2013), etc.

The circulating of Southern ideas through the South Atlantic was not a new experience, confined to the 1970s. Ideas had been traveling and crossing the ocean from the late 1940s onwards. The 1950s are known as the period in which anti-colonial movements shifted into liberation movements in the Southern hemisphere. If during the 20s and 30s, the main ideas under discussion and exchange were related with defining local identities in comparison with the Northern ones, the 50s brought together different levels of frustrations, consciousness and aspirations that gave rise to new ways of thinking, independent from the North (Ranger, 2002).

Shifting ideas were possible not only because of a particular historical context of imperial and economic crisis after WWII; but also, because Southern ideas had been evolving across the Atlantic Ocean for a while. That is to say, these changes in directions, strategies, demands, projects and ideas, cannot be understood without taking under consideration a longer history of Southern international dialogues, exchanges and reflections.[5]

Starting early in the 20th Century, there were regular movements of intellectuals across the world. They met at specific conferences. Their publications were carried between countries. Examples of these were the pan-African Conferences (1919, 1921, 1923, 1927 and 1945), the Anti-Imperialist League meeting (1927), the Comintern conferences (1919-1935), among others (Devés Valdés, 2012: 353-387).

In a world that was becoming more interconnected, (even in the context of the Cold War), ideas were travelling faster and more frequently than before. African and Asian independencies and Latin American Revolutions during 1950s-1970s were based on networks of intellectuals exchanging projects, perspectives and experiences. Even though local contexts varied from each other, the main concern by the 1950s was to create new and original nation states that were also modern and developed (Devés Valdés, 2012: 457-458). In that sense, the Bandung Conference of 1955 could be seen as the first powerful post WWII attempt to construct a common project across Southern nations (Prashad, 2014: 8-9). The main objective of this gathering of new

[5] Generally, this shift is analysed and explained from a Northern perspective; as if new independent Southern ideas were only able to develop because of the European crisis after WWII. The problem with this analysis is that it does not consider the South as the engine of its own development. Of course, the end of WWII did affect the way people thought; behaved and believed in the South, but that is not the only reason why the shift in the 50s took place. From a local approach, ideas had been developing and changing in the South based on local experiences as well. See Mudimbe (1989).

independent states' leaders, was to define a new approach to global development based on the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, pacific coexistence, defining colonialism and cooperation towards economic development (Devés Valdés, 2012: 459). The Bandung Conference provided a platform to share concerns across the South and created a global project that put together, in a formal and deliberate way, Latin American, Caribbean, African and Asian ideas for the first time (Devés Valdés, 2012: 461). This political and intellectual effort led to the creation of the Third World Project and also gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement (1961).

But what did the idea of modern and developed nation states mean in that particular Southern context? Primarily, it meant a political, economic and social project independent from the North and based on local realities. How is it possible to build modern and developed countries based on their own cultural, environmental, social, political and economic backgrounds? The decades of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed many attempts around the Southern hemisphere (India, Egypt, Cuba, Ghana, Tanzania, Chile, etc.) to become modern, developed nations.

Whether these attempts were successful or not, their importance lies in the deep thinking and genuine concern on how to build cross-border knowledge (as Mignolo (2003) would define it) and alternative projects (to the North). To this end, it became very important to study, understand and reflect on other Southern cases.

The 60s, 70s and 80s were decades which witnessed intense circulation of Southern ideas and experiences. Intellectuals, exiled people, workers, politicians, students, were traveling from one side of the Atlantic Ocean to the other; North America, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa. Travellers were constantly taking and bringing ideas, books, movies, experiences. Anywhere, everywhere, the exchange and spread of knowledge was deeply linked with one concern in common: how to build an alternative future that would emancipate and liberate the oppressed?

In this particular global context, the emerging trade union movement in South Africa developed a non-racial approach to the local context and struggle against apartheid. The spirit in which this was conducted was deliberately non-racial. It involved conscious engagements between white and black activist intellectuals. These, as the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement demonstrates, did not always lead easy

outcomes, but there was in the liberation movement, a deliberate attempt to work with the question of 'race' in new and radical ways.

South African intellectuals, academics, teachers and activists (against apartheid) were able to learn from other cases of oppression, racism, authoritarian governments, and uncover different ways to go against them, by reading books, pamphlets, newspapers and watching movies; also, by meeting together and reflecting on the international scene and ideas/projects to develop alternative realities. People were able to learn and engage in discussion about the international scene in different ways. One way to achieve this was to travel outside the country. South Africans in exile were able to see the world through new lenses by experiencing new realities and connecting with people from other parts of the world.[6] Some South Africans were able to travel abroad which exposed them to ideas which they, in turn, could take home with them (either in books, photocopies or memories).[7] These travellers, who included independent individuals, activists, students and members of churches, became one of the main conduits for new or more current experiences, news, ideas, projects, etc.

Another way was to learn about international context and ideas within the confines of national borders. As Bill Nasson explains, during the apartheid era censorship developed slowly in the 50s and 60s, allowing the circulation of international material that only later on in the 70s became banned.[8] This is an important remark to make; as the system only began to control reading material more strictly in later years. By that time, any ideas that had arrived in the country earlier were already circulating in the underground and even in formal spaces (although they would later be banned[9]).

What information was circulating in South Africa during those years? And why? In this chapter I will give a general description of the circulation of Latin American ideas in South Africa; as a way to recreate a map of links and effervescences; for the

[6] Three members of this research affirmed that their encounter with other exiled people coming from Latin America, Iran, Turkey, among other places, did affect their own understanding of South African and world reality. Particularly, Linda Cooper expressed how meeting Latin Americans in London made her feel they shared similar pains.
[7] Two female members of this research shared their own experiences of bringing books in their suitcases for political purposes.
[8] I had many informal chats with Bill Nasson during 2016 where he explained to me that some books he had and was reading in the 60s became banned during the 70s and 80s.
[9] An ex-librarian that was interviewed in 2016 at UCT explained this by using Che Guevara's book as an example. The book was available at local book stores and libraries until 1974, when it was banned and began to circulate in the underground.

purpose of revealing how the South Atlantic was a space of knowledge production in itself.

Theoretical and methodological Framework

The idea of the South Atlantic which I use in this thesis draws on Raewyn Connell's idea of Southern Theory. I define my area of studies as the South as a way of emphasising, not only the power relationships between intellectual and institutions in the metropolis and the periphery, but also as a means of showing that the rest of the world also produces theory, and always did (Connell, 2007). While the rest of the world reproduces the dominant ways of knowledge production, it can also produce knowledge from "the margins" (Mignolo, 2003; Connell, 2007).

From a historical approach, it would seem that the Southern links were mostly understood and explained through a Eurocentric point of view (Connell, 2007). Even in cases where authors put the focus in the South and its inner links, they did so by giving agency only to Europe. The continent was seen as the engine of history; the intermediary between the "other" societies; the single entity controlling all kinds of exchanges and transoceanic relationships. This having been said, this work's theoretical framework is based on the idea of making a study about the South, for the South and from a Southern perspective. It is not my idea to explain these links through the very well-known triangular system of the commercial relations in the South (America-Europe-Africa). Southern societies were studying, thinking and reflecting on each other's experiences of independency, autonomy and freedom. Particularly in the South Atlantic, Latin American radical thinkers were looking at the African National Movements and their independent projects, while thinkers in Africa were looking at the revolutionary movements in Latin America and their struggles against the capitalist system of domination.

My theoretical approach undertakes to explicitly discuss and challenge the transfer theory of knowledge production, which is based in George Basalla's model of Western science spread over the rest of the world (1967). Basalla focuses on the study of Western science production and its success in positioning itself as the dominant way of knowledge production, the hegemonic one. In that sense, the author fails to note the real possibility that alternative and independent knowledge

can be produced from the periphery. The main problem I find in this framework is that knowledge that is defined from a Western point of view, only contemplates so-called scientific knowledge and cannot include in its analysis other types of knowledge; this movement makes the transfer of theory problematic from its initial statement. Discussions and answers to this model can be found in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Partha Chatterjee's *The nation and its fragments* (1993), Homi Bhabha's *The location of culture* (1994), Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000), Aníbal Quijano's *La colonialidad del poder*, *Eurocentrismo y América Latina* (2000), Luis Tapia's *La producción del conocimiento local* (2002), among other alternative thinkers.

Many black South African activists and academics had questioned epistemological domination and Eurocentrism since the late 60s onwards. In the case of activism responses to the apartheid system of oppression promoted also a critique to Western ideas. Some early examples on how the questioning of the apartheid system was linked with a deeper analysis on epistemological domination can be found in Steve Biko's speeches (1978), Nelson Mandela's letters from prison (2018), Ahmed Kathrada's letters from Robben Island (1999) and Neville Alexander's speeches (1979), among others.

From an academic point of view, black South African anthropologists and sociologists reflected on and questioned the reproduction of Western conceptual frameworks, concepts and analysis on Africa, African realities and history since the 70s. In this regard, Archie Mafeje (1971, 1976, 1996), Bernard Magubane (1973) and Jimi Adesina (2002, 2005, 2006) were some of the biggest contributors to the creation of an alternative academic discourse that not only pointed out how Western ideas were still dominating South African universities and academic spaces. They also attempted to develop local approaches to the analysis and reflection on local realities (Bongani Nyoka, 2017: 20-22).

As Juan Obarrio explains, knowledge originating from the South is produced in a social context of social movements, independent intellectuals and university spaces that, despite their struggle against financial constraints, have developed particular and alternative ways of organisation that build bridges with real people and social problems (Obarrio, 2013). In a world in which goods, money and people have been moving around for centuries, ideas cannot be thought of as particular and

independent. This reality necessitates the belief in the existence of a hegemonic system of knowledge that homogenises ideas all over the world, hiding, rejecting and rendering invisible the actual diversity and multidirectional exchange and production of ideas.

Southern knowledge production has its own history of epistemological oppression; but that does not mean it failed or vanished under the Western hegemony. Our actual challenge and task as Southern researchers and intellectuals is to dispute spaces and forms of knowledge production by producing Southern research, knowledge, ideas and theories. In Marcelo Rosa's words, the idea is to enact the South – understanding that idea as "the production of characteristics and methods of detection that are already in use and in a process of legitimation as well" (Rosa, 2014: 864).

As Said explains, ideas travel, as people do, from one place to the other and from one period to another. In addition, ideas are borrowed and re-appropriated in many different ways (Said, 1984: 226). These kinds of movements are crucial for intellectual activity as they promote interactions that enable new engagements and new approaches to realities. Furthermore, one of the key issues to consider is how and why it is possible for some ideas to get stronger/weaker when traveling and why some ideas travel and others not.

Said proposes a pattern for the movement of ideas. This pattern is composed of four stages that help provide answers to these questions. As he explains, we need to consider the set of conditions that enables the acceptance or rejection of the travelling theories in the new space. And we should also reflect on how these theories, in the case of being accepted, accommodate and transform themselves in the new context (Said, 1984: 227). Said's approach, once again, enlightens the academic field by proposing alternative ways of researching, analysing and producing knowledge. Rosa is critical of how the history of ideas became a monolithic and closed field of studies, separated from reality, from everyday life history and other ways of exchanges. From his perspective, this kind of study requires a wider and less conservative approach to academia, one in which different disciplines and methodologies are combined (Said, 1984: 228).

Acknowledging these difficulties and dangers of the field, I understand movements of ideas as small, constant and everyday actions that can only be traced if we combine different methods of researching (if we make a less conventional study). In that sense, analysing booklets, pamphlets, private notes, and other written documents are not enough. Our research must include people's experiences, memories and thoughts about how they were reading, thinking, sharing and behaving at that time. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos explains, the only real way to break the dominant and oppressive epistemic system is by recognising and accepting the existence of different epistemologies and cosmologies that form part of an ecology of knowledge (Santos, 2007).

As Daniel Lvovich explains, oppressive states are successful as they not only create an oppressive context full of fear but also some sense of consent (Lvovich, 2006). In the Southern Atlantic experience of oppression upon which this research is based, some organisations and institutions openly rejected the regime, others embraced it.

But these are not the only forms of response historians ought to be examining. There were multiple other forms of resistance evolving in these contexts. These had to do with engaging with the contexts in which people found themselves in a number of different ways. These involved operating in clandestine ways right underneath the noses of the authorities, to participating in structures established by the 'oppressor'. This raises the question of what was actually going on. What was happening in people's everyday lives?

As the author reflects, there exists a wide diversity of concepts that could help to define those reactions; these include support, accession, resignation, dissent and explicit rejection - to name but a few (Lvovich, 2009). Lvovich's main idea is that, even in those cases where people did not react explicitly to reject the regime, it did not mean they were not opposing it. These specific ways of surviving and creating alternative realities, even within the system of oppression, can be as powerful as armed opposition in the struggle against the system.

How can we recover those complex realities? Furthermore, how can we express those complexities in a paper? I believe that there is no single answer to these questions. The only thing we can do is to be conscious about these difficulties when researching and writing.

From a methodological and theoretical approach, the aim of this thesis is to practice alternative ways of researching, avoiding the traditional extractive methodology and applying more horizontal and communal strategies. As Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1987: 56-57) explains, oral history allows the dominated subjects to be collective agents in the reconstruction of history and, by doing that, dis-alienate themselves from the coloniality of knowledge. In that sense, I adopt Rivera Cusicanqui's decolonial perspective in oral history: subjects do not produce an impartial history but a partial one. And as the author explains (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987), that action goes against the dominant theory of social sciences as neutral and distant from the study object, coming from the North, and disputes the science normativity from the margins. The author's method invites the different subjects involved in the event to talk, exchange experiences and their ideas about the other. That dialogue promotes the collective production of knowledge instead of applying the Western perspective in which the researcher listens, takes the information and produces knowledge without including the speaker in that process. By leaving behind the interview's Western dominant rules, Rivera Cusicanqui relocates the research into its local ecology and creates a secure environment to listen and be listened to.

Nevertheless, this methodology cannot be applied if people are neither keen nor interested in participating in such experience. Thus, this research applies Rivera Cusicanqui's proposal only to those cases in which people embraced it. In several cases I found myself unable to establish the kind of links needed for this methodology to succeed. In those cases, I decided not to undertake extractive interviews, or when that tended to happen, I opted not to use that material and substituted the lost resource with other sources.

I discovered that some people were open to this proposal quite possibly because most of them are educators who still believe in pedagogy and collective ways of thinking and producing knowledge. Also, I believe that in many cases, these contributors found in this research an opportunity to remember, rethink and share experiences that are valuable for them and the current South African context.

Some people were more reluctant to engage in a more deeper and personal exchange of ideas. In many cases, I was probably seen, as some people said explicitly, as yet another foreigner coming to South Africa (and, particularly, UCT). By defining me that way, they assumed I was not committed to the country, its history of

struggle and, consequently, was not a responsible researcher. I understood this. It had happened, and still happens regularly in the South, (not only in South Africa), that academics from the North came to do research and then left, not only to write whatever they wanted to, but also to never find ways of crossing the boundary from their places of privilege.

In those cases where I was not afforded the opportunity to engage with local interlocutors, I consulted the national archives, UCT libraries, private organisations and also, I accessed significant volumes of sources from private collections. In that sense, I want to thank those people who opened their houses, their hearts, their memories and their attics to share them with me. This research could not have been done without these.

The aim of this thesis is to recover, analyse and reflect on how Latin American ideas were circulating in South Africa and how, in the process of translation, there was production of knowledge made. Questions on how this South-South relations impacted in the anti-oppressive projects would require a fully new research and cannot be answered in this thesis. Hopefully future research will focus on this issue as it could enrich the understanding of South-South dialogues.

The arrival of South Atlantic ideas into South Africa

The circulation of South Atlantic ideas, ideas that were produced based on exchanges and dialogues between Latin America and Africa, has been poorly studied. There is a big gap in the research of dialogues and exchanges of ideas between both continents. Few studies have been done and generally they are either brought together in the person of Paulo Freire and his ideas (Puiggrós, 1994; Blackburn, 2000; Moujan, 2010) or in a comparison of popular and alternative educational experiences (Puiggrós, 1994; Kane, 2001; Yoo, 2007; Moujan, 2010; Crowther, 2013).

I could only find a few cases in which academics chose to use trans-Atlantic and trans-national approaches promoting the study of the historical South Atlantic dialogues and exchanges. One example is David Fig's PhD dissertation, which traces the historical links between South Africa and Latin America and places

emphasis on secret economic and political agreements made by the military and authoritarian governments' (Fig, 1992). Coming from the other side of the ocean, Gladys Lechini has been examining the international relationships between Africa and Latin America – her studies are more about international policies than history (Lechini, 2006). Finally, the deepest attempt to recover the history of South Atlantic ideas was made by Eduardo Devés Valdés, who made a wider and general study on the history of circulation of Latin American ideas in Africa (Devés Valdés, 2006, 2008 and 2012). The author analyses how Latin American ideas arrived in Africa by focusing on specific intellectuals and their trajectories. Critical as his work is for mapping the South Atlantic circulation of ideas, Valdés' research is based on well-known individuals (Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Walter Rodney, etc.); it is a study from above that does not pay attention to the everyday life of everyday people. And in that sense, it creates an image in which southern knowledge seems to be produced and circulated only among high-profile intellectuals.

Taking under consideration that general scene, it seems easier to understand why in South Africa there is no collective memory that expresses the ideological links between the country and Latin America. That is to say, even though people cannot see or do not remember those dialogues, they did exist – to various extents - and were meaningful in the struggle against apartheid. During my research I found that whenever I spoke with people – even randomly- about my research topic, their reaction was one of surprise. In many cases I found myself listening to all kinds of memories and personal stories related to the circulation and use of Latin American ideas in educational projects in the 80s, while standing in corridors, in library halls, bars, classrooms, etc. I experienced spontaneous reactions of excitement, passion and the need to talk about that past that in many cases seemed to me had been forgotten or left aside. Suddenly, by informally sharing my topic, I was promoting the recovery of old experiences that had been buried in their memories.[10]

During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s there were connections between South African and Latin American leaders, ideas and political projects – not only from the left wing but

[10]For example (one of many), when I was presenting a paper at the Southern African Historical Society on June 2017, four different participants waited for me to leave the room to approach me and tell me their personal memories related with Latin American books, readings and ideas they were exposed to and engaged with during the 80s. All of them are academics. Nevertheless, they came to talk to me in a personal level, to share memories they had forgotten about, as most of them explicitly said.

from the right wing as well. For example, while the Black Consciousness Movement and the South African Student Organisation were reading, discussing and applying Frantz Fanon and Paulo Freire's ideas that came to South Africa through the Christian movement (Naidoo, 2015; Motala, Vally, 2002; Nekhwevha, 2002, Alexander, 1990), the apartheid and Argentinean military forces were making military secret agreements (Fig, 1979). These exchanges took place particularly during those decades when the so-called Third World was defining its future in the context of the Cold War's worst years (Prashad, 2014). The global context of that time was one of effervescence, possibilities and struggles: the Cuban revolution, African countries independencies and Latin American *guerrillas.* At the same time, dictatorship regimes were developing in Latin America and white supremacy imposed its racist system with the creation of the Republic of South Africa. While the apartheid system was becoming more violent, South African activists and teachers were reading Che Guevara's *Handbook on Warfare Guerrilla* and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and translating both of those into Afrikaans.[11]

While some Latin American intellectuals and activists did travel to the African continent to make connections (as for example, Che Guevara to Congo, Paulo Freire to Tanzania and Cuban teachers to African socialist countries), many of those links took place outside both continents. In a particular context in which both Latin America and South Africa were under oppressive regimes, people met in exile. Through sharing their common experience of exile, they tended to become interested in each other's context. While there were exiles all over Europe, South Africans concentrated mostly in London, where they met Chileans, Argentineans, Colombians, Peruvians, Brazilians, and other Latin Americans in exile.[12] Besides the fact that more South Africans were living in London than in other European cities, there is also another important issue that made the links more fluent in that city than others: language. As most South Africans did not speak Spanish or Portuguese,

[11] Evidence that Che Guevara's book was translated into Afrikaans can be found in the Jacobsen's Index. The book appears to be banned in English and Afrikaans. Evidence that Paulo Freire's book was circulating in the underground and was translated into Afrikaans can be found in Neville Alexander's memories (Alexander, 1990).

[12] The number of Latin Americans in exile increased during the 70s and 80s as all over the continent dictatorship regimes were taking over the states. If before, Latin Americans found themselves safe in a neighbour country, since the early 70s the safer option was Europe (Roniger, 2017). Members of this research that had been in exile or studying in London during the 70s and 80s affirmed that the experience of meeting with other people in exile (particularly Latin Americans in exile) had a great impact in their way of seeing and understanding not only the South African context but the World itself.

London became the perfect spot to connect via translations. Some Latin American theoretical books were translated and published in English either in the USA or UK.[13] These ideas were circulated more easily than ideas that were not translated.

Latin American ideas, news, projects, etc. were translated into English in Europe (or the USA) and from there travelled to South Africa. As David Cooper explained, the language gap determined what non-Spanish speakers could read and know about the Latin American context. As non-Spanish speakers were only reading in English, there were a lot of ideas, discussions, projects, news, pamphlets, etc. they could not access. In that sense, the lack of knowledge of the Spanish language restricted the possibilities of deepening South Atlantic discussions. It is important to say that this lack of language knowledge was not equivalent on both sides. Even though most Spanish speakers did not speak or understand English, the influence of the language has always been bigger, which allowed Spanish speakers to have a wider understanding of the South Atlantic connections. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the effort made by South Africans to shorten the distances and promote the production of South Atlantic knowledge.

I found four different ways in which Latin American ideas were brought into South Africa: The Church experience, the 'luggage' experience, the library experience and the liberal university experience.

The Church experience

Since mid-60s many independent churches had begun to question more openly the apartheid system, not only from a theological perspective but also from a political, social and humanitarian point of view. However, it was only after 1976 that they really took a critical and active position against the oppressive regime (Walshe, 1987). During the 70s and 80s, state repression and violence were becoming endemic and military interventions and imprisonments as well. The number of deaths increased fast enough to make the independent churches take a stand and denounce the general crisis in the *Kairos document* in 1985.

[13] As Eduardo Devés Valdés explains, many important Latin American contributions to the Southern theories were not published in English and those ideas, even if meaningful, did not circulate as easy and fast as others (Devés Valdés, 2012).

In that particular context, theology of liberation had been adopted by many of these churches as the new Christian paradigm to follow. The origin of the latter, nevertheless, was not in South Africa nor Africa but Latin America.

During the 60s many members of evangelical churches in Latin America were reflecting on their current context in the light of a more historic theology; that reconsidered the definitions of people and, at the same time, understood people in their local context. This new religious perspective was particularly influenced by the Dependency theory (Nichols, 1991). The spread of the revolutionary Latin American Christian thoughts allowed a theology of liberation to become a main movement inside the church that was accepted and recognised by the Vatican. That recognition facilitated its spread across the ocean. South African churches adopted and adapted the Latin American theology and created an original local theology of liberation that provided answers to local problems – the best example can be traced in the links between the University Christian Movement and the origins of the Black Consciousness Movement (Parratt, 1990:528).

Thus, a general theological link can be traced in the South Atlantic through common new religious perspectives during the 1960s and 1970s. These networks promoted not only dialogues and reflections about religion but also how to approach the question of human subjectivity. The new movement was specifically concerned with those who had been dominated, discriminated, marginalized and rejected by oppressive systems.

As many authors explain, it was through the Christian churches (particularly the University Christian Movement) that Paulo Freire's ideas were spread in South Africa (Nekhwevha, 2002:137). His book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was translated into English and published in 1970. Neville Alexander explained how even though the book had been banned, there were 500 copies circulating underground among students and other educational activists (Alexander, 1990).

Paulo Freire's pedagogy proposed tools and strategies that helped individuals involved in educational activism to create new projects with new approaches in the struggle for human freedom and critical consciousness. Since then, religion, politics and education converged in particular ways, promoting critical thinking among the wider community.

As David Fig recalls, he first encountered Latin American ideas while with Anne Hope on her literacy projects during the 70s.[14] But that experience was not so much about ideas as it was about personal emancipation experiences. He remembers learning and studying Freire's approach to education more as an educational strategy than a theoretical contribution. In that sense, it was not about discussing common contexts with Latin America but putting into practice revolutionary education. Through experiences of soul, mind, body and conscience liberation, Fig – as many other university and high school students- was introduced to Latin American ideas.

Experiencing critical thinking through church and educational organisations opened the door for other Latin American ideas to arrive in South Africa through another channel.

The 'luggage' experience

I found that in the South African case, many white women were transporting reading (political) material. I met informally with four white women who had participated in this enterprise in their past, during the 70s and 80s. When traveling abroad, they would get political books (some of which were banned in South Africa) and bring them into the country[15] on their return. There was a risk of getting caught and passing through customs was a very nerve-wracking and tense experience. When

[14]David Fig is a South African sociologist and activist. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics. He worked at the Latin American Bureau, where he studied, translated and wrote about Latin American history. His understanding of the continent's political context, its history and languages allowed him to have a wider perspective on the struggles taking place in the South Atlantic. I interviewed David Fig two times during 2016-2019 as he was a key member of ILRIG (more information about this is provided in the following chapters).
Anne Hope was an educator, founder of Training for Transformation, an educational program inspired in Paulo Freire's ideas and methodologies. Anne was also part of the Grail and through it got to meet Steve Biko, who requested her help to train members of the Black Consciousness Movement on Freire's pedagogy. Her work was very influential among young activists during the 70s and 80s, spreading all over South Africa and having a deep impact on the way popular education was developed. As David Fig recalls, his experience with literacy training was not linked to the Church but to the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). NUSAS had a sub-project called NUSED (NUSAS-Education) which brought Anne Hope into the picture to provide literacy training. Nevertheless, this experience demonstrates how religion, politics and society were interlinked to the point in which secular and religious spaces were in constant dialogue, exchanging ideas, perspectives and projects. David Fig explained this after reading the draft version of this dissertation and gave extra information to help in providing a wider and better picture of the 70s in South Africa.

[15] Some of them remember bringing photocopies of Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a VHS with some scenes of the Chilean military forces attacking the Parliament, old slides showing Latin American peasantry, Chilean History books, etc.

recounting their memories, some women found the risk not to be great and only expected that the books would be confiscated. Others did not mention their feelings about it.

What caught my attention is that many of these women only mentioned their experiences to me in a very informal chat, in very light and easy ways, as if they could not recognise their value. The way they explained the events made them sound like normal, simple and forgettable anecdotes, as if it were something that did not seem important either then or now. I did tell them of my surprise at their way of talking about those past experiences. In many cases, I asked them why they were narrating those stories in that manner. For them, there was no problem in sharing their experiences as simple events. They found it normal. As for me, I found it very intriguing.

I explained why, from my point of view, actions that they regarded as normal and small, were really important in that particular context. These supposedly small actions, in fact, were eroding the system of oppression by acting against the mechanisms of control.

It was not only women who brought books and printed material in their luggage. Some men did so as well. David Fig remembers bringing material from the Latin America Bureau in London (the organisation where he worked before returning to South Africa) and also Brazilian documents he managed to collect while in Brazil in 1983.

After spending ten years studying and working in London (and working on Latin American themes), he travelled to Brazil and Paraguay, where he was exposed to the reality of Latin American dictatorship regimes.[16] In Paraguay he witnessed the military raids and the university's intervention. He recalls having to sleep with his clothes on in case he had to run out from the house in the middle of the night. And he also remembers the State closing the sociology department at the University of

[16] David Fig was able to travel to Brazil when the dictatorship regime was ending there. He had the chance to see how Brazilian society lived, experienced and thought about those difficult years. At the same time, once in Paraguay he experienced the fear, uncertainties and difficulties in everyday life Paraguayans were dealing with during Alfredo Stroessner's oppressive regime. Coming from South African apartheid into a Latin American dictatorship reality might have seemed familiar. Nevertheless, the way military forces were using their power and intervened in society were different. Being a white foreigner was not enough to be safe. In fact, it did not give him any privilege or protection. By experiencing it personally, David Fig had the chance to feel in his own body the differences and particularities of the Latin American dictatorship regimes.

Asunción and forbidding sociological studies. After leaving Paraguay with lots of documents that he took to international human rights organisations in Brazil, he came back to South Africa. And in his luggage, there were many Latin American articles, books and documents that circulated among scholars and activists and were crucial for thinking about South Africa in comparison with Latin America. Many of those documents can still be found at the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) and UCT libraries.

Educational activists mentioned Fig's contribution to the link between Latin America and South Africa as he returned to South Africa not only with reading material but also with expertise. David remembers how a group of artists contacted him because they were working on a drama piece and needed material about Che Guevara's life and thoughts. They wanted to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Che Guevara's death (1987). They asked him for material to read. So, as he was travelling to London, he bought some books and sent them by post to his own address. He was called by the customs police to explain why he was bringing in material on Che Guevara, as this was identified as communist material, which was forbidden. David had written a chapter for a history textbook which covered Latin America and he had looked at the official curriculum which listed "the spread of communism in Latin America". When he went to the customs he took the textbook, the curriculum and a copy of the blanket permission document allowing researchers employed at UCT to consult banned books in the UCT library. He explained to the customs that "as someone who writes your children's textbooks I am obliged to research and explain the history of communism in Latin America". Thus, by using his academic profile, he succeeded in getting the books into South Africa and was able to pass them on to the theatre group.[17]

These small actions were not the main conduit for bringing Latin American books into South Africa. Most of the time, the number of books that could be taken was not enough to be distributed widely and quickly around the country. These books were probably used in small circles, from whence ideas would spread afterwards.

[17] I met David Fig for the first time in June 2017 in his house in Johannesburg where we had a long interview in which he narrated his first experience in Latin America. David Fig shared more information on this by email after reading the draft version of this dissertation. That extra information was crucial and contributed substantially to this thesis.

Nevertheless, these small actions show that people were hungry for ideas and were willing to deceive the system to gain access to them.

The library experience

As Archie Dick affirms "the library space, like any 'lived space', was one of meaning-making and conflict in the 1980s" (Dick, 2012:110)[18]. During the apartheid, libraries worked as meeting spaces, studying spaces. Most of the time libraries were controlling institutions that could frame the readers, but in many cases, libraries were also the place where critical political thinking would take place. Libraries could also work as resistance spaces. This could be achieved either by buying new books, and/or hiding books that should have been incinerated on the shelves. Libraries provided institutional spaces that could promote critical knowledge and thinking. Many times, institutional libraries also worked as a formal structure, supporting underground libraries and educational projects.

I have been in touch with ex-librarians. One thing they all agreed on was that during the apartheid period, librarians had the opportunity to follow the norms or to be more flexible and make exceptions. So, while some librarians were discussing the banning norms and lists and trying to slow the system down, others were applying it immediately and unquestioningly.[19] This means that for some librarians, the concern about what a library ought to do and should be, were in tension with a political context.

Joni Jacobs remembers having these discussions while working at Cape Town library.[20] His involvement in political and educational projects as the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED), gave him the understanding that the

[18] Archie Dick is Head of Department and Professor of Information Science at University of Pretoria. Professor Dick has worked in many Universities as Dean and Professor. He was appointed as Chairperson of the National Council of Library and Information Services (NCLIS) by the Minister of Arts and Culture in 2012. That same year, his book *The hidden history of South Africa's book and reading cultures*, was published by University of Toronto Press. This book has been widely reviewed. It is a great contribution to the history of South Africa's reading behaviours during apartheid. Prof. Dick has been rated by the National Research Foundation as an internationally acclaimed researcher in 2016.

[19] Kathleen Laishley, main librarian at Cape Town Library, explained, during our encounters 2016, how depending on political and ideological perspectives but also on fear, librarians took small decisions in their everyday work regarding listing and framing readers, applying the banning to specific books, or not.

[20] Joni Jacobs has been interviewed during 2016 at his house.

library should not be adapted to the controlling system just because of fear. In that sense, Jacobs chose to use the system to oppose it. He chose to ostensibly "play the game" legally as a means of allowing actions that were defined as illegal to take place in the library. Joni Jacobs decided to change the covers of the banned books and put them back on the shelves so that people could still read them.

Two realities came into play at the same time, in the same space; Jacob's decision to hide books in the system was not only a professional decision, in his capacity as a librarian and teacher, it was also a political decision. There were many other cases in which complexities like these can be identified.

Archie Dick describes how many librarians and readers built private underground libraries where they kept collections of banned books and promoted their circulation, especially in Cape Town[21]. One interesting example given by Dick, is the one regarding Che Guevara's *Handbook on Guerrilla Warfare* – Eleanor Kasrils had bought twenty copies of the book and circulated them underground. Eleanor was working at Griggs bookstore in Durban and, along with her husband, was using it as a drop box for secret communications (Dick, 2012:106). The author also points out how readers and students set up underground meetings where they screened films such as *Viva Zapata* and listened to Bob Marley's songs (Dick, 2012: 108). Vincent Kolbe, who worked at Bonteheuwel public library in the 1980s, was known for collecting banned material, for example books related to the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Chilean revolutions.

These few examples could be considered the tip of the iceberg, a leading track for my research that confirms people still found ways to act in a very oppressive context. Latin American books were kept in the libraries, hidden among other books, passed into underground libraries and study groups. Librarians had the opportunity to choose and decide how to react to the oppressive norms. Everyday actions can help reconstruct the underground or informal intellectual networks and the way Latin American ideas circulated among them.[22]

[21] I met Archie Dick in October 2016. We had an informal interview in which he shared many cases in which books were circulating smoothly through the system. While there is more research on libraries, Dick suggested I should also pay attention to what was happening in religious spaces and the circulation of banned material translated into Arabic, Yiddish, etc.

[22] We should be aware of the complexities when analysing the links between both sides of the South Atlantic Ocean. From both coasts, particular images and ideas about the other side have been produced; which in many cases were romantic and/or stereotyped.

People's reactions to apartheid, were influenced by many factors, (e.g. personality, community backgrounds, political perspectives, class, race, religion, etc.). What these few examples show is that even when inside formal institutions and under lots of pressure, people still had space for decisions. They could respect the norms and the institutions or they could use them for other means. In that sense, while librarians were a powerful channel to allow books to get into the country and circulate even in the underground by using the libraries' infrastructure, liberal universities and their political stand in favour of the production and circulation of knowledge had a more powerful impact in the struggle for ideas in the informal world.[23]

The Liberal University experience

South African universities had very diverse reactions to apartheid, its oppressive and controlling system and its educational program. While some universities acted as the intellectual foundations to the system, others took a liberal position and promoted critical knowledge production.[24] The leading liberal educational institutions were University of Natal, Rhodes University, University of Cape Town, University College of the Western Cape and University of the Witwatersrand. All these universities provided sufficient space for teaching, researching and making extension projects related to critical knowledge, even though, at the same time, there were librarians, teachers, students and authorities engaged with the apartheid system who tended to keep records of student and activist requests and shared information with the police.[25]

[23] Coming from Latin America, where dictatorship states chased ideas and intervened in all educational institutions to control knowledge production, I got surprised by the fact that South African universities had some grade of independence from the state control and were spaces in which while some members were secretly working for the state framing people, others managed to defend critical thinking and knowledge production. For more information, check Ancer, 2017.

[24] The division between universities might not be as simple and clear as we suppose. There are cases in which, in the most conservative universities teachers would close the classroom door and teach revolutionary ideas as for example Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Two current lecturers shared stories and memories from their university's years like this one with me. Also, it is known that in many of the liberal universities there were apartheid secret agents that informed the police and helped to torture, kill or imprison students' members of the opposition (Ancer, 2017).

[25] One of the things many people explained while talking about their experiences at university (for example David Cooper) is that when it comes to readings in the 70s and 80s, it all depended on the librarian. Some librarians were committed against the banning and persecution of ideas and took the risk to share material that was forbidden. Others were analysing secretly which books were circulating and who was reading them. They took notes and informed the government about it. I also know about cases of university students and lecturers that were assassinated by the State because of inside informants (Ancer, 2017).

As mentioned before, liberal universities played a prominent role in the production and spread of critical thinking. On one hand, liberal university libraries did not burn banned books (instead, they managed to separate them and lock them in a special room that could be consulted for research reasons). On the other hand, liberal universities allowed teaching alternative theories, concepts and histories. And for this reason, they were allowed to order special books from abroad.

In these universities, while banned books had a special coding and were kept in a separate room, librarians found ways to allow people to check the books out without leaving any proof of it.[26] Librarians had the chance to fill in forms that they knew could be used to chase students for political reasons or to avoid the paperwork and allow people to read and research freely. At the same time, I have since learned that this could also occur when using non-banned books. Some librarians could implicate students by taking notes of their reading lists.[27]

During the 80s these universities introduced courses (for example Latin American Economic History, International Labour History, etc.) and extension projects (for example Learn and Teach and ILRIG). The latter included education programs (for example Centre for Adult and Continuing Education) and research projects concerned with popular history (for example the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop and the Western Cape Oral History project), among others. All these initiatives had a common general aim based on the social, political and educational turmoil of the period and historiography concerns and changes.[28] And many of these positions had been influenced by Latin American ideas, educational experiences and theories.[29]

[26] In 2017 I was present in an interview made by UCT current librarians to an ex librarian from the 70s and 80s. The ex-librarian explained the procedures they had to apply when lending banned books and how they bent the rules.
[27] David Cooper remembers the case of a librarian in UCT main library that was framing students by taking notes of their readings and passing them to apartheid authorities. No name was specified.
[28] As John Aitchison explains, the 80s witnessed an exponential increase of university extra mural projects and literacy projects that were built mostly during the 70s. 1976 marked a turning point in education projects. Since then, education became a central site for struggle (Aitchison, 2003).
[29] As David Fig and Linda Cooper explained in our encounters, the 80s was a period of effervescence in which many educational projects developed and spread across the country. Trade unions did not have educational projects yet, the ANC was banned and the UDF was leading the protests inside the country, students were questioning the educational system, etc. There was a general concern regarding the future in South Africa and in that sense, educational projects became much more meaningful than before. For more information, read Aitchison, 2003.

As part of a university and with its support, these projects had enough budget, infrastructure and means to be sustained and developed. It is particularly important to mention that many of these projects could only survive because they were located at a university. Not only because of infrastructure but also because, as part of a university, they were understood as community service projects and social-academic engagement instead of political activism.[30]

While most of my research regarding the links between the formal and informal spaces is based at UCT and its knowledge policies during the 1970s and 80s - and I will use it to explain strategies and experiences linked with Latin American ideas - many of these dynamics can be seen taking place at the other universities as well.[31]

How did Latin American ideas arrive and circulate at universities? During the 70s and 80s many History, Economic History, Education and Sociology courses began to include wider analyses incorporating case studies and theories from other Third World countries. In a particular context in which the development/dependency theory was being discussed all over the South, many scholars were concerned with a wider reality, one in which South Africa's apartheid system could be understood from a different perspective[32]. Thus, teaching Latin American history, labour relations, economy, trade unions organisations, etc. was not only an academic decision (to expose students to other realities) but a political one as well.

By the mid 80s many young lecturers in sociology, history and education began to include Latin American content in their courses, particularly from theoretical, economic and political perspectives. The social and cultural background of Latin American societies was not part of the mainstream courses at South African universities. This academic approach had to do with current political concerns. Many

[30] Linda Cooper, David Cooper, David Fig, among others, explained this in their interviews. Many other white academics also explained this in very informal chats I had over my research period.

[31] For example, the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, Learn and Teach at University of Natal, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Western Cape, among others.

[32] The development/dependency theory was born in the 60s in Latin America. It explains the underdevelopment of the peripheral countries (Latin America, Africa and Asia) as a result of the colonial exploitation. The theory says that through the extraction of minerals and raw materials from the colonies, Europe was able to accumulate the capital needed to develop the capitalist system and position itself as the centre. And by doing so, the colonial territories became peripheral, providing raw material to the international market and depending on the metropolitan capital. The theory explains the historical roots of the international division of labour. The main question, for the dependency theory intellectuals was, thus, how to promote an original and local development that would not depend on Europe anymore. For more information, read Devés Valdés, 2012; Rodney, 1982; Amin, 1972; among others.

of these lecturers were Marxist/left wing and therefore were concerned about the capitalist structural features of non-developed societies. This approach to understanding and reading reality allowed them to reflect on South Africa's apartheid system within a wider map where a more global explanation could be considered. Thus, teaching Latin American content was neither an academically fashionable decision, nor a random one. It was a conscious political and analytical choice.

Most of these lecturers had studied in South Africa and abroad in the UK. While they learned about Marxism in South Africa, they only began to engage with Latin America once in Europe. As mentioned before, London was the place where the South Africans interviewed in this thesis met many Latin Americans in exile. These encounters allowed them to understand that despite the many differences South Africa's context of oppression was not unique and could not be explained in isolation. They realised that studying Latin America was necessary to those wanting to understand South Africa in the global context and to change it.[33]

I managed to gather material from the History and Sociology Departments in UCT during the 80s. Specifically, course descriptions, exams, students' feedbacks, bibliography, videos, slides used to teach then (See Appendix 1). These documents are not at university libraries as there "is not enough space to keep them"; neither can they be found in the relevant Departments. I received most of the documents from ex lecturers who still kept their teaching material in their homes or offices.

Eva Perón's speeches and Juan Domingo Perón's populist economic plan (Argentina), the Chilean revolution, Peruvian peasantry organisations, the Mexican revolution, the Bolivian mining women's movement, the Latin American labour movement, Brazil's dictatorship regime and the workers responses to it… all these themes could be seen as "academic" case-studies. But through those cases, lecturers were also inviting their students to view South Africa's reality with another lens; more critical and politically engaged ones.[34] These cases were also used as examples that allowed them to teach Marxist ideology. The international approach, the way of understanding international politics and economics and how to introduce

[33] For example, Linda Cooper, Anne Mager, Bill Nasson, David Fig, among others.
[34] There were courses on Comparative Labour Studies, Trade Unions in the Third World, Latin American Economic History, The making of the modern world economy, among others. All these courses promoted a more international southern approach to history, economy, society and current realities.

that to the class were based on the lecturers' ideological position. By teaching Latin American history and reality, lecturers were also teaching Marxism, which was banned in South Africa.

It is interesting to remark that most of the Latin American books circulating in South Africa were not banned in the Jacobsen Index of Objectionable Literature published in 1990 in Pretoria[35]. Maybe because it was difficult to prove why they should be banned, or perhaps because many officials did not know enough about Latin America to be able to read between the lines and understand the real meaning of those contents, possibly because the content was not explicitly revolutionary and maybe because some books were circulating secretly and the apartheid system did not know about their existence. In any case, lecturers were ordering books either for their own research, for their courses or for general information. And the books arrived at university, even though they might have been controlled and questioned by the state or even the institution itself. Most of the material was the lecturers' material but there were also many books at the main library, as well as forbidden books in the forbidden books special room. The fact is that while the Jacobsen Index had only a few Latin American titles among the official forbidden books list, there were many other books and materials circulating on the ground. And lecturers knew those contents were having a direct impact on the alternative projects and struggle against the system.[36]

So how did all that reading material circulate once it was inside the country? To answer this question, in the following chapters I will describe and analyse a specific

[35] I only found some Latin American books banned in the index, some of them were banned more than once during the apartheid. For example, Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Welfare* has been banned four times, in English and Afrikaans, in between 1974-1977. Other books related with revolutionary thoughts were banned, as for example Salvador Allende's *Chile's road to socialism* was banned in 1974, Eva Peron's plays in 1978 and Fidel Castro's *Playa Girona, Victory of the people* (no date specified). Some literature and poetry books were also banned, as for example Pablo Neruda's *Le Chant* was banned in 1956, Jorge Amado's *Gabriella* in 1964, Gabriel García Márquez's *The autumn of the patriarch* in 1984, Robert Marquez's *Latin American Revolutionary Poetry/Poesía Revolucionaria Latinoamericana* in 1986.Most of the books that were banned had an explicit link with revolutionary ideas that made it more than obvious that they should be banned. The controlling system did not have enough knowledge about Latin America and that is why only a few books were banned and controlled and not all of them. Much of the material that got into the country and was not banned had a radical and critical approach and was based on Marxist theory analysis. Nevertheless, the fact that was academic material and was written in a specific academic format made it easier to hide its political power.

[36] Some lecturers developed surveys for their students to give feedback on their courses, content and material. Also, lecturers had an idea about which students were politically engaged and how these materials could enrich their thinking and planning. I managed to get survey results and students' feedback from private collections of a few lecturers from UCT, DCPC.

case in which Latin American contents were circulating from the institutional world into the ground. Particularly, I will be working with a project that promoted critical thinking and popular education.

Latin American ideas on the ground

Literacy programs, night schools, political seminars, trade union education programs, adult education projects, church workshops, art projects, clandestine film screenings and libraries, community programs; an endless list can be written, full of organisations and projects. During the late 70s and early 80s there was an explosion of non-formal education projects in South Africa. There were more than 700 organisations developing alternative education content (Aitchison, 2003).

The South African education system had been questioned and defied since the beginning of apartheid. But it was particularly during the 70s and 80s that the education struggle became stronger and spread all over the educational community and system (Aitchison, 2003). Projects that were developed within these two decades worked not only as a real threat to the system but also as a testing ground for the future democratic South African education plan.

For this reason, looking at other South Atlantic realities became crucial for educational activists. At some point, many of the people interviewed and consulted during this research agreed with the belief that the only way to build up a new educational reality was by taking under consideration a wider perspective, by studying other similar international realities. Thus, Latin American experiences were studied, taught and used as examples that could help in the struggle against apartheid.

As explained before, the aim of this research is to analyse how Latin American ideas were circulated, adopted and adapted to create alternative education projects. Since institutions were the main channel through which ideas could arrive into the country and circulate into the ground, I chose a specific project that was linked with different formal institutions as a study case. The case will be studied and analysed in depth in the next chapters. By choosing this case, I expect to describe a more general and broader South African reality. Even though this is a well-known educational

experience, this case is just a sample that could help us construct a more complex reality.

In the beginning of this research I was expecting to work only with universities' extension projects and assumed universities were probably the main formal spaces from where to create alternative educational experiences. Nevertheless, after talking with very diverse people I realised that alternative educational projects were growing and spreading all over society. I realised there were different channels for developing those projects and to get to the people. I have chosen to work with a particular institutional educational project, The International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), during the early 1980s. As an extension project from UCT, ILRIG's main concern was the production and circulation of information (in the apartheid oppressive context). ILRIG believed that information was a keystone for liberation and emancipation. Its contents and methodologies adopted and adapted Latin American ideas and experiences. ILRIG focussed its work on a very wide public that during those same years had been defined as "the people". This concept underlined the values of the struggle against apartheid and allowed for the coming together of diverse groups under oppression. ILRIG's projects were oriented mostly to workers' education but also to the youth. Its impact among the educational community (in formal and informal spaces) was very important for the struggle against apartheid, not only in the educational sphere but also the social and political one. In the following chapters ILRIG's case will be presented and analysed extensively, showing how this alternative information and education project managed to produce independent and original knowledge from the South.

Brief description of the case-study

International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG)

ILRIG was founded in 1983 as an extension program based at UCT Sociology Department. Originally, it was focused on research and educational activities linked with workers organisations. As part of an academic research project that focused on international labour organisations and history, ILRIG was also perceived to be an opportunity to extend links with the labour movement. Although trade unions had a

long history in South Africa, the apartheid system had succeeded in harassing and limiting them by banning organisations and their members.

In the context of South Africa in the 1980s, trade unions were reorganising themselves and attempting to develop strategies and projects which already took into consideration the next steps required for a transition to democracy. Thus, knowledge about other historical experiences became crucial as this information would provide tools for engaging with the local scene with deeper understanding. Trade unions requested education on the history of trade unionism, trade unions and political parties, international solidarities and study cases.

ILRIG became one of the main organisations for providing this education for workers. Through workshops, seminars and printed material, the organisation was able to offer a wide set of concepts, theories and history that promoted discussions on how to move forward in the local South African reality. One of the main contents that ILRIG shared with unions, was the history of Latin American trade unions and workers, specifically. While in many cases, these contents were not necessarily based directly on Freirean pedagogy, its influence can be seen in the way some printing material was designed and in how ideas are exposed. In the case of ILRIG, the link with Latin America was more about understanding its history for the purpose of bringing those experiences into the discussion about how to move forward in South Africa. By teaching and analysing Latin American cases, the organisation promoted the production of new critical knowledge among workers.

At the same time, ILRIG became one of the main resources and information centres providing material on Latin America and international labour issues. In many cases, other alternative education and progressive organisations (besides trade unions) were using ILRIG materials or asking ILRIG for workshops to learn about Latin America for the purpose of using them later, in their own projects. Clear examples of this are seminars and workshops run by ILRIG for the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED), The Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE), Khanya College, among others.

ILRIG became a nucleus that produced, shared and circulated material among progressive organisations, creating a network that promoted collective knowledge exchange and production. In this dissertation ILRIG will be analysed as the main

case-study as it allows us to track the arrival, study and reflection of Latin American ideas in South Africa and their later spread among workers and students.

Organisation of the dissertation

Chapter one: This chapter provides a general introduction to the main theme of the dissertation. Its aim is to describe the general historical context and theoretical framework within which the thesis seeks to discuss and intends to make its contributions. As a broad overview of this work, the chapter also exposes, briefly, the cases that will be studied and analysed in the following chapters.

Chapter two: The second chapter introduces the theoretical debate into which this dissertation is inserted. Discussions over knowledge production and circulation are explained and described. In particular, my main concern is to deconstruct the dominant scheme that understands knowledge production in a North-South direction. To do so, I reflect on how knowledge is defined and how that definition has been imposed to dominate and erase other definitions and histories. The main aim of this chapter is to propose alternative definitions of knowledge and alternative circulations of it.

Chapter three: Chapter Three aims to reflect on the methodology applied in this research by analysing the experiences of oral history developed during the last three years and the difficulties when dealing with private archives and collections.

Chapter four: Chapter Four is the first case study chapter. Its primary purpose is to introduce ILRIG's history and describe its structure. The aim is to share ILRIG's experience in studying Latin American history and sharing it with workers organisations, by presenting the dynamics of, and general contents produced by the group.

Chapter five: This chapter focuses on ILRIG's publications. Its specific intention is to share ILRIG's material and underline their commitment to international history and specifically Latin American issues. Chapter 5 shares ILRIG's material and analyses, their approach and understanding of Latin American history and theory. The main aim is to show how ILRIG was adopting and adapting Latin American knowledge in the South African context.

Chapter six: Chapter Six looks to reflect on ILRIG's understanding of Latin American history. While the previous chapter focused on the researcher's analysis (from a Latin American perspective) of ILRIG's booklets and educational publications, this chapter aims to share the discussions and reflections developed with ILRIG members about their personal understanding and conceptualisation of the cases explained in the booklets. In an attempt to produce a more horizontal and honest research, the aim of this chapter is to show how the researcher and ILRIG members opened a space for common reflection on ILRIG's publications, and also on the results of this dissertation's research experience.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework. Knowledge production discussions

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the concepts of knowledge, knowledge production and circulation from a non-Eurocentric approach. Its key purpose is to introduce and explain the theoretical framework analysis undertaken in this thesis and its research outcomes. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the process of knowledge production based on the study of a specific historical case. It also explores the concept of knowledge and its circulation. It is important to note that one's understanding of circulation depends upon the perspective from which the concept is defined. Therefore, defining the concept of knowledge should be understood as a political dispute related to colonial legacies on the epistemological sphere.

This research aims to discuss the history of the circulation of knowledge in the South Atlantic for the purpose of promoting a wider and more critical approach to the subject, in which other links, besides the North-South link, are recovered. In discussing the circulation of knowledge, the idea of knowledge is scrutinised. For the purposes of this thesis, knowledge is understood as diverse, heterogeneous and multiple. Knowledge, as described by Connell (2007) and Santos (2007), is produced everywhere and by everyone and circulates in many directions and is in dialogue with other knowledge. This understanding of knowledge and agency sees people as agents of knowledge production and not mere passive recipients of ideas coming from the North. It challenges and opposes the dominant viewpoint created, imposed and sustained by the West for centuries, which asserted that Western knowledge is the only legitimate knowledge that was taught as part of the process of “civilisation”, imposed in the colonies. Post-colonial realities and ideas promoted the open debate of this historical epistemological domination and enabled the circulation of other ideas coming from the peripheric world. These attempts to re-position knowledge that was formerly marginalised from the mainstream are still taking place, as the dominating universals were not completely destroyed yet.

Santos wrote that global social justice cannot be achieved on its own, it requires global cognitive justice to be completed (Santos, 2007). This dissertation aims to

contribute to this concept of social justice by tracing and reflecting on the links between South African and Latin American ideas.

On knowledge as a concept and not a universal truth

The question of knowledge has been historically addressed in societies all over the world, for centuries. Nevertheless, it was the European conception of knowledge that managed to produce and impose a universal and universalising idea, powerful enough to show itself as sufficiently homogeneous and consistent to discredit all other possibilities arising from alternative perspectives, epistemologies and cosmologies (Santos, 2007; Quijano, 2000). This process of theoretical and epistemological domination took place alongside the history of European expansion and colonisation of the other continents and the consolidation of the capitalist system; and managed to gain its dominant position as universal since the 15th century onwards (Santos, 2007; Mudimbe, 1989).

This process of epistemological domination relied, not only on the imposition of specific ways of explaining and understanding the world, but also the rejection of other alternative ways of doing it. Making European knowledge the acceptable standard, also implied that knowledge was produced in Europe and spread, from there, throughout the rest of the world. As Connell explains, knowledge was organised hierarchically, based on the metropole's knowledge definitions. Thus, European ideas were understood as theory while ideas produced in the colonial territories (or later on in underdeveloped countries) were defined as data (Hountondji, 1997; Connell, 2007:106). In Santos' words, this process of territorial and epistemological domination implied not only the genocide of local populations (as was the case of indigenous people in the Americas) but also an epistemicide (Santos, 2007:19). Local cosmologies, ideas, and ways of understanding the world, and living in it, were destroyed by colonial domination. As a result of centuries of epistemological oppression, when these territories finally gained their political independence, they continued to perpetuate the system of colonial domination of knowledge. Newly independent local governments tended to embrace European knowledge as the only true knowledge in an attempt to develop their local realities into civilised and developed societies (Santos, 2007:33).

The same could be said about intellectual work. As Hountondji (1997) explained, there is an economy of knowledge in which the division of work implies that the metropoles are the locations of knowledge production while the peripheries contribute with data. In cases where ex-colonial territories attempt to produce knowledge (from the peripheries), they do so by means of reproducing the hierarchies imposed during colonial times. This indicates, as explained by Connell (2013), that scholars and intellectuals look to the metropoles for validity and sources of authority.

In other words, knowledge was not seen as something that could circulate, mix, exchange and change depending on contact with disparate societies. Knowledge was something to be transferred from the metropoles and adopted within the territories. And, if any knowledge was being produced locally, it would only be recognised as such if it reproduced the epistemological norms coming from the North.

This way of understanding knowledge production and circulation was studied by historian Georges Basalla, who developed a theory on how Western Science spread into the peripheric territories. His theory has been recognised as the valid explanation on the history of knowledge circulation. Basalla's diffusionist model of knowledge transfer is composed of three stages that explain how European science arrived at the colonial territories and was adopted by the locals (Basalla, 1967). While the aim of the author is to track how European knowledge expanded historically, until it became the universal knowledge, his approach (although historical), is not critical of the idea of a European knowledge itself. From his perspective, there is no intention to reflect on the idea of European knowledge and its inner contradictions, nor on the exchanges and dialogues that existed historically between that type of knowledge and others coming from other regions. His perspective reaffirms the idea of Western knowledge as homogeneous and consolidated. And at the same time, it reinforces the invisibilisation of the existence of other knowledges.

Basalla's explanation contributed to the understanding of how European ideas infiltrated local realities since modern times. He pays particular attention to the development of European science in the colonial territories. Nevertheless, his explanation counts with several theoretical and epistemological problems that have

only been addressed in the last thirty decades, by intellectuals and academics around the world. Subaltern studies in India, post-colonial studies in Africa and de-colonial studies in Latin America questioned and contested the colonial domination of identities, subjects and subjectivities, ideas, language, beliefs and knowledge from different approaches. These are all in dialogue with each other to some extent, because while their conceptual frameworks may differ, their aims and concerns share historical backgrounds of oppression.

At the same time as these debates and disputes were taking place in the academic and intellectual spheres, people in their everyday life were practicing their own ways of seeing and understanding the world while coexisting with the control of the modern nation-state (Santos, 2007, 2012, 2014). Thus, while the theoretical confrontation only began to take place a few decades ago, the practical dispute has been taking place since the colonial days (Mignolo, 2007: 28).

Basalla's explanation of the rise of European science reproduced the coloniality of power and knowledge: reinforced the power of the epistemological and cosmological European domination that remained after the political independence of the colonial territories. Hence, while there was a genuine concern about the history of ideas and knowledge, there was no discussion over the meaning of the concepts. Defining knowledge as European modern science is (and has always been) political.

During the last thirty years, this well-consolidated idea and belief has been questioned and deconstructed, not only by academics and intellectuals, but also by alternative political projects such as new constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador, the struggle against agro-toxics in Latin America and the question over land in southern Africa.[37] The concepts of state, democracy, citizenship and well-being began to be disputed by local experiences and theories. Local knowledge began to have a much more powerful influence in the development of new policies based on local realities, local cosmologies and local experiences.

Something similar can be said regarding the intellectual and academic space. During the last thirty years, the idea of European knowledge as universal (and objective true) began to be disputed by local theories that give expression to local beliefs,

[37]For more information on these issues, read Satgar, 2018.

acknowledge backgrounds and seek to recover and revalue local realities, knowledge and epistemologies.

There have been many attempts to re-define the idea of knowledge, as a means of disputing the dominance of the European concept. Some authors have chosen to emphasise alternative concepts, such as that of indigenous knowledge or knowledge from the borders. Others re-define the main concept of knowledge itself. Intellectuals and academics are disrupting the “naturality” of the dominant epistemology. They share a deep concern over the issue of how to express the complexities of what is being discussed and, in that process, how not to fall into the trap of the dominant discourse. As has been affirmed before, defining the concept of knowledge is political.

Re-defining knowledge. The Concepts of Indigenous knowledge, knowledge from borders and the ecology of knowledges.

Questioning the concept of knowledge so that it could be re-defined and decolonised required the development of new reflections and explanations that could give voice to ideas that had been rejected and repressed over centuries. As mentioned before, this questioning took place in two different ways. One was through the local development of new and alternative policies that put into practice alternative definitions of citizenship, democracy, well-being and the recognition of the self. The other took the form of the academic, intellectual discussions and disputes over alternative ways of producing alternative knowledge. In other words, there were two movements taking place at the same time, a theoretical one and a practical one. These two approaches are interconnected and in constant dialogue as knowledge is a way to understand the world that surrounds us and informs how we act/behave in it.

There have been (and are) many debates on how to re-define knowledge. Two significant alternative concepts arose from the academic and intellectual sphere (viz. the idea of indigenous knowledge and knowledge from the borders). The general concern was (and is) how to decolonise the mind, the thoughts and ultimately the self.

Knowledge from the borders is a concept that has been developed among decolonial intellectuals and scholars. Particularly, it was Walter Mignolo (2007, 2011) who reflected on how societies produce knowledge that belongs to them and represents them in a context of coloniality of power. How do people open up their ways of seeing, experiencing, understanding and explaining the world? From his perspective, the epistemic and paradigmatic changes can only take place from inside the system of oppression. In his opinion, a system of knowledge cannot be replaced by changing only its content or perspective, it also needs to change the terms that define and structure the content. So, while societies are immersed in a colonial epistemic system, the battle is not about changing the ideas or discourses but changing the whole system and opening the opportunity for other epistemic systems to coexist.

Border thinking is, for Mignolo, the most effective weapon for breaking down the epistemic oppressive system. It is not about replacing the dominating system with a new one. It is about destroying the notion of any universal system of thoughts. Thus, border thinking implies accepting the fact that we are immersed in a universalised system of ideas; and that rejecting it does not directly translate into destroying it, as that rejection can all too easily reproduce the structures of oppression. Rather, border thinking implies questioning the structure of the epistemic system and opening the space for a pluri-versal world where different cosmologies and epistemologies can be in dialogue and coexist.

As abstract as this proposal may seem, it does question the definition of knowledge and it underlines the importance of rethinking the way in which ideas position themselves and relate to each other. From Mignolo's perspective, there is no need to define the concept of knowledge because by doing so we would be delimiting (once again) what can be thought and how to think. His proposal works as a manifesto that positions the debate in the right place. Nevertheless, in a more practical way, this manifesto does not share suggestions on how to further develop border thinking. While that is in fact part of his own point of view: there is no one single way to do so; the manifesto leaves many questions unanswered and in a context of epistemic disputes, there is a need for a clearer explanation with clearer positionalities.

Another significant attempt to question the concept of knowledge and the coloniality of power came from scholars and intellectuals who adopted the idea of indigenous knowledge as a strategy for disputing the legacies of colonial systems of thoughts.

Indigenous knowledge is a concept adopted among scholars and intellectuals in an attempt to protect local knowledge that is being threatened by capitalist relationships, exploitation of land, plants, people, etc. By defining local knowledges as indigenous they also aim to question the epistemic system of oppression and exploitation, which rejects local ideas as invalid while using them to produce goods that are sold in the global market.

These scholars describe indigenous knowledge as traditional norms, values and cosmologies that organise the way people live and understand their world (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000). Consequently, their concept of indigenous knowledge makes domination explicit. Furthermore, it disputes the idea of one universal knowledge by acknowledging other knowledges. Nevertheless, defining local, alternative knowledges as indigenous, is also a way of limiting and restraining what can be considered part of it.

Indigenous knowledge stands in opposition to Eurocentric knowledge. Thus, it defines itself as a counterpart of another knowledge. It is not independent and it does not promote border thinking. It also romanticises the idea of traditional knowledges as pure and historically rooted in a specific territory. It does not acknowledge diversities that exist between knowledges nor their dynamic links and dialogues. Following Mignolo, this definition does not question the terms of the epistemic system but only its content. Thus, it reproduces deep dynamics of defining, and categorising inherited from the colonial epistemology.

The concept of indigenous knowledge is theoretical and comes from the intellectual and academic world. Local societies do not need to label their knowledge as indigenous. Their knowledge is knowledge. It is neither traditional, nor indigenous, but simply knowledge. Defining knowledge as indigenous implies that it is either being viewed from an essentialist understanding (as a pure and ancestral knowledge that seems precious in present times), or from an ethnocentric understanding, (as an attempt to recognise other epistemologies while still defining them from a specific academic point of view). If indigenous societies do not refer to themselves as

indigenous or call their knowledge indigenous knowledge, then this idea also expresses the hierarchical relationship between researchers and those societies being researched by them. It expresses a relation of power in which academic knowledge seems to have the right to define and name knowledge that does not belong to its epistemic sphere.

As Santos explains, the way to democratise knowledge is to accept the fact that there are many knowledges, that they are diverse and that they cannot and should not be defined based on their relationship with other knowledges. Knowledges are situated, partial and incomplete (Santos, 2007: 31). This understanding derives from the fact that knowledges are produced in particular contexts, reflect on particular issues and look for answers to particular concerns. For this reason, no specific knowledge can really be universal or answer disparate universal questions.

From Santos' perspective, the only way to break the coloniality of power is by replacing "the monoculture of scientific knowledge" with an "ecology of knowledges" that understands the need for diverse knowledges to coexist and interact with each other as the way to produce a fairer world (Santos, 2003, 2004). Santos (2007) and Connell (2007, 2013) agree on the fact that European knowledge is in fact a particular knowledge that succeeded in imposing itself as the existing universal standard based on political and economic domination and control. So, while local struggles aim for more democratic and equal political and economic conditions, there is also a need for democratising knowledge.

Following this idea, the main question that arises is how to do it? How does society democratise knowledge and build an ecology of knowledges. Historically, the first attempts to recognise other knowledges relied on approaching them through the concept of multiculturalism and relativism. The problem with both concepts was (and still is) their positionality. Both concepts implicitly accepted the belief in universal knowledge. That is to say, from a Western perspective, there was an interest on trying to understand others and their ways of living and thinking. Nevertheless, that did not mean opening the reflection on how different knowledges coexist. At the same time, these two concepts were avoiding the political dispute over knowledge by accepting the existence of different cultures (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010:55).

As Santos (2007: 26) suggests, the way to accept, promote and create an ecology of knowledges is by translation. Acknowledging the need for translation means recognising the fact that there is more than one way of seeing, understanding and naming what surrounds us. It means accepting the fact that cosmologies and epistemologies are different, partial and incomplete, and because of that they cannot be expressed, explained and developed from a "universal" point of view. This having been said, the act of translation then becomes a way in which different worlds can recognise each other and dialogue. But as with any other act of translation, this understanding also has to deal with the impossibility of full translation; it has to acknowledge the silences, barriers and abysses that will appear during that process. Instead of attempting to solve the difference, to eliminate the unintelligible by replacing concepts, this impossibility must be accepted and respected. From Santos' (2007) perspective, this is the way that allows for coexistence and dialogue between different epistemologies. It is also the way in which it becomes possible to construct an ecology of knowledges.

On translation, coloniality and knowledge(s)

This research is based on the understanding that translation is an attempt to make different worlds understandable but is also, in itself, an instance of knowledge production. Translation is understood as an instance that can overcome the coloniality of power by promoting border thinking and recognising and respecting the diversity of knowledges existing in the world. Translation, as Sousa explains, can be a strategy that promotes the construction of an Ecology of knowledges. But from the viewpoint of this research, it can also promote the production of new knowledges from the borders.

Following Walter Mignolo and Freya Schiwy (2007), translation has the double power of being a tool for domination and, at the same time, enabling border thinking. As contradictory as this may sound, these two possibilities are, in fact, two sides of the same coin. The authors explain the complexities of translation as an important epistemological tool by analysing the colonial encounter in the Americas. From their point of view, it was at that time when translation began to be functional for colonisation. As they explain, the act of translating was an important tool in the

process of colonisation and epistemological domination from the 16th century onwards. From the authors' perspective, during colonial times and with the development of the anthropological discipline, translation was used not only as a way to control societies but also to force trans-culturation (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007: 8-10).

Translation was one of the elements that helped construct the modern-colonial world and the coloniality of power. Although translations had been taking place for centuries (from Arabic to Greek to Arabic, for example), it was only in the 16th century that it became a tool that contributed to the establishment of hierarchical dichotomies (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007:8). Prior to the 16th century, different worlds were able to coexist, even during times of conquest and expansion. This changed in the 16th century as the colonisation of the American continent implied a violent imposition of a political and economic system over local societies but also of language, behaviours and religion. In the colonisation context, translation and transculturation were unidirectional and hierarchical and helped to build and reproduce the colonial difference (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007: 7-9). In the authors' words:

> Since then translation contributed to the construction of hierarchical dichotomies that have imposed certain rules and directionalities of transculturation. Translation helped build the colonial difference between Western Europe languages (languages of the sciences, knowledge and the locus of enunciation) and the rest of the languages of the planet (languages of culture and religion and the locus of the enunciated).

Since then, translation and interpretation that was based in one specific epistemic system, defined that system as the only legitimate one from which all interpretations and understandings of the world were made. This process of language, epistemological and cosmological domination implied the imposition of concepts and ideas that were not enough to give voice, define, signify and translate other worlds into the Western World. From the colonial point of view other realities and societies were adjusted to the dominant system of ideas, which did not enable a dialogue with those other worlds or the acceptance of the limits of translation. Monolithic discourses were produced, creating homogeneous images of the metropoles and also of the colonies, where there were no contradictions, disputes or silences in the way these worlds were defined (Said, 1978). This dynamic of domination spread all over the colonial experiences and can also be seen in neoliberal contexts of oppression (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007:10; Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994).

As explained by the authors, translation has been a powerful tool in the process of epistemological domination, but it also was and can still be used as a powerful tool for decolonising knowledge and promoting the creation of an Ecology of knowledges. In colonial contexts, local societies were able to use translations not only as a tool that would promote their acceptance by the colonial society but also as a tool for epistemological resistance.

From the academic point of view, recognising this capacity is dependent on the researcher adopting a postcolonial perspective. In other words, as mentioned earlier on, local societies have been disputing colonial epistemologies from the time they were first colonised. Nevertheless, researchers have only been able to understand this and draw attention to it more recently. For example, in the case of the Latin American Spanish colonisation, the first attempts to raise this question, took place during the 1950s when historians, anthropologists and philologists began to study how Spanish translation of local knowledges was not accurate, and how it was, in essence, a Spanish construct and representation of local realities rather than a representation of the local realities themselves. Authors like Miguel Leon Portilla (1959), Nathan Wachtel (1971), Tzvetan Todorov (1982), established the basis for the analysis and reflection on the voices that had been silenced by colonisation and translation and on how to recover them. There was a counter-history to the representation of the others by the colonial rulers that appear, not only in local languages, but also in the usage of Spanish by the colonial subjects. As the founders of a new historiographical approach to the history of the American continent's colonisation and colonial times, these researchers' contributions underlined the need for a study of local representations and processes of translations.

While this perspective has enriched the analysis of the impact of the colonial world in local societies (and showed how inaccurate the Spanish definitions and translations of indigenous realities were), it did not question the epistemological effects of colonial impact. It was only in the 1980s, with the contribution of postcolonial studies, that researchers began to analyse the epistemological aspect of translation in the American colonial world.

Since Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the historiographical approach to translation and representation in colonial (and postcolonial) contexts has taken a turn and begun to look at translation and representation as a process that is, in itself, essential to an

ideological construction of the colonial world. Postcolonial studies have contributed to the broadening of perspectives on translations and representations. Since then, reflections on the concept and process of translation have been held, not only among translation studies specialists, but also among other Humanities' experts. Opening the discussion over what translation means from the perspective of other disciplines promoted richer understandings and discussions that had a significant impact in the theories of knowledge, epistemologies and coloniality. The translational shift, as it is called in the Translations Studies area, took place in different ways and with different approaches, contributing to a deeper dialogue between disciplines.

Doris Bachman-Medick (2009) introduces four new alternative interdisciplinary approaches to translation: namely, translation as contextualisation, translation as transformation, cross-cultural translations and the epistemological impact of translation. Each perspective contributes to new discussions on translation by focussing on a specific social science concept. As explained before, this dissertation is focused mainly on the latter perspective, as translation is understood and defined as a key factor in the process of knowledge production.

Translation as contextualisation

This first shift understands translation not only as text and language translations but also cultural ones. During the 1980s many researchers began to pay attention to the idea of cultural translations, based on the concepts of representation, transformation, displacement, power and differences, among others (Bachman-Medick, 2009: 5). Their reflections were based on ethnographic work and they were looking to understand and explain specific processes of translation based on cultural backgrounds.

By paying attention to a broader cultural context, translations began to take into consideration the power factor in the relationship between cultures. Since then, the history of translation has been included as part of the history of colonialism (Said, 1978; Venuti, 1998).

Translation as transformation

This second approach focuses attention on the asymmetric links that exist between local languages and those that are deemed universal languages. As Bachman-Medick explains, in colonial contexts and territories with colonial backgrounds, the encounter between local and European languages was one of repression and violence (Bachman-Medick, 2009: 6). This encounter had an impact not only in language but also in the bodies and identities of the colonial subjects. The experience of the writer Ngugı wa Thiong'o demonstrates how the self transforms when translating discourses and ideas. The use of another language in order to communicate more broadly implies the possibility of changing not only the words but also the authors' behaviours. This could imply repression and domination of the self by the so called universal language; or could imply an opportunity for agency and resistance in the process of translation (Niranjana, 1992; Spivak, 2000; Fuchs, 2009). The common ground in both cases is the fact that languages and cultures are neither equivalent nor symmetrical. The dynamic of the power relationship that exists between the two languages impacts the process of translation as transformation of the self.

Cross-cultural translations

The previous conceptualisation of translation as transformation opened a way for the discussion over culture itself. Following Homi Bhabha (1994), this new approach began to understand the concept of culture as a process of translation in itself (Bachman-Medick, 2009: 7). From this perspective, cultures have been defined as unified, homogeneous systems, whereas, in reality, they are much more diverse and dynamic. The process of defining a culture in a globalised context ought to give consideration to the conflicts and counter-discourses that exist in any cultural identity and that the latter changes constantly as it is in dialogue with other cultures

In a context of globalisation, cross-cultural experiences should be understood as processes of cultural translations. At the same time, there is a need to take historical backgrounds into consideration when understanding the cultural definitions among different societies.

The epistemological impact of translation

Translation as a cultural process needs to be understood from a wider perspective that not only includes the idea of culture but also different epistemological and holistic approaches to the world. This means that, in fact, any situation of translation is political and cannot solely be seen as a bridge between different cultures. There are differences that go beyond that of language, traditions and ideas; differences that the process of translation alone cannot convey, in their entirety, to other worlds. There is, therefore, a need to reflect on the process of translation itself, allowing for alternative methods and conceptual strategies, beyond those historically imposed as universals (Bachman-Medick, 2009: 8).

Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000) analyses this categorical domination and proposes alternative ways to promote translations that are not mediated by Eurocentric conceptual frameworks. As Bachman-Medick explains, Chakrabarty shows how new approaches to translations require a historical contextualisation of those categories that had been understood as universal in the processes of translation (Bachman-Medick, 2009: 10). These include (among others), the concept of democracy, human dignity and equality. In other words, the author questions the need to mediate any translation with Eurocentric categories and proposes a re-conceptualisation of the process of translation in which two different worlds can communicate with each other without the mediation of those Eurocentric categories.

Walter Mignolo and Freya Schiwy's article (2007) is in dialogue with this proposal but they focus on the coloniality of power that is expressed in translations and its epistemological effects. As explained before, the authors understand translation as an epistemological instance that has been historically defined by coloniality but can and ought to be redefined as part of the decolonisation process.

Despite coming from different academic backgrounds and personal experiences, Chakrabarty shares similar concerns to those expressed by Mignolo and Schiwy. Chakrabarty's approach has contributed a more holistic and deeper understanding to the concept of translation. These perspectives look to redefine the power relations inherent in the entrenched process of translation by proposing alternative non-Eurocentric strategies and methodologies.

As part of their theoretical explanation, and as a means of demonstrating the role translation can play in promoting border thinking, Mignolo and Schiwy refer to the example of the Zapatista movement and its double translation process (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007). In the Mexican neoliberal context of the mid 1990s, the Zapatistas developed a subaltern theory and performance of translation in resistance to the coloniality of power and global capitalist relationships. Their translation praxis is not merely from one language to another one, it is richer and much more complex: involving epistemological and cosmological dialogues between different worlds. Marxism, feminism, Spanish and English concepts and cosmologies (such as the concept of democracy, human dignity and equality) are translated and trans-cultured into the Amerindian cosmology and vice versa (Mignolo and Schiwy, 2007:11).

As the authors explain, the Zapatistas use translation in many different ways. There are translations taking place between the four regional languages spoken by members of the movement (Tojobal, Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Chol). There are also translations taking place between local languages and Spanish, but these translations are done in a specific way, whereby the local cosmologies transcend the linguistic boundaries and express themselves by altering the Spanish syntax (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007:15-16). At the same time, when translating from Spanish to local languages, there is a process of reinterpretation of the language in a way that is able to adjust to local cosmologies.

Sub-commandant Marcos (of the Zapatista movement) explains that translation is not only between languages but also between cosmologies (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007: 16). As Mignolo and Schiwy describe, the Zapatista movement found a way to make communication possible between the Marxist-Leninist guerrilla forces and the local communities in Chiapas. Instead of using and reaffirming the hierarchical Eurocentric system that prioritised the Marxist theory over local realities when thinking of the revolution and its strategies, the Zapatistas changed the balance of power and insisted that the organisation listen to local leaders and learn from them. Local communities' knowledges were embraced by the Marxist-Leninist leaders of the movement; they understood that the only way to make a meaningful revolution was by displacing themselves from the centre of knowledge production and opening an honest dialogue between the diverse cosmologies involved in the construction of the Zapatistas' movement.

It is worth noting that one of the outcomes arising from this experience was the truth that none of the knowledges involved in these dialogues is understood or seen as pure, isolated or dominant. Knowledges are open spaces of dialogue and exchange that promote alternative ways of thinking. This requires languages and translations to become flexible. The interconnections between cosmologies and knowledges can only occur if the process of translation is seen as an instance of knowledge production in itself. It is impossible to produce a completely literal translation of language, beliefs, cosmologies, etc. Thus, the Zapatista movement found a powerful, innovative alternative: namely, using language and translation as a way to interconnect different worlds in new ways. Implementing this method ultimately results in the production of new knowledges. From Mignolo's and Schiwy's perspective, this is a perfect example of border thinking (Mignolo, Schiwy, 2007:19-20). The Zapatista's case introduces an example in which border thinking appears as a space for epistemic production and resistance to the neoliberal way of thinking. In this space languages are transformed and interconnected as a way to express the dialogues between cosmologies and knowledges.

Translation, knowledge production and Ecology of Knowledges

As has already been explained, this dissertation understands translation as an instance of knowledge production, as a possible alternative to coloniality of power and as an opportunity for Southern knowledges to engage in dialogue and produce new knowledges from the borders.

This definition of translation aims to open a space for reflections on how to decolonise knowledge and its history. This is the rationale behind this dissertation's focus on the analysis of ILRIG's publications. ILRIG's teaching material provides a clear example of the political nature of translation and its epistemological implications.

As will be described, analysed and demonstrated in the following chapters, whilst engaged in the process of sharing information with workers and the general public, ILRIG was keenly aware of the challenges that translation would bring. On one hand, the organisation had to find a way to translate the Latin American reality into the South African context. On the other hand, it had to contend with the challenge of

expressing the cosmologies and languages of Latin America from an English perspective. While both processes could have been approached from the easier Eurocentric point of view, ILRIG's members were earnestly committed to finding alternative, more meaningful ways of doing so.

The issue of language in the South African context was addressed by Neville Alexander in the mid1970s (Alexander,1979, Busch, et al., 2014). While it is true that South African students were fighting for their right to learn in English instead of in Afrikaans during the 60s and 70s, the issue of local languages and their role in the national struggle had not yet been addressed (Busch, et al., 2014:101). It was only in the late 70s and early 80s, during which time Neville Alexander and his comrades established the National Language Project that the question of local languages began to be considered as part of the national discussion. As Alexander explains, at the time of the struggle against apartheid it was very difficult to address the complexities of the language issue in South Africa. As part of the struggle against the system and Bantu Education, English was intentionally adopted as the main language of the struggle in defiance of Afrikaner Nationalism. This strategy, as Alexander explains, reaffirmed white (epistemological) domination by recovering the history of the Anglo-Boer war as the medium for disputing nationalism and language (Busch, et al., 2014: 102).

At the same time that this dispute became a national strategy to express opposition against the system of oppression, there were educational projects taking place that put in praxis alternative perspectives on the language issue. ILRIG's publications and seminars are an example of it. As it will be described and analysed in the following chapters, ILRIG's members were conscious of the complexities of the language issue in South Africa and made a concerted effort to take it under consideration in their own educational projects. This dissertation pays particular attention to the process of translation of Latin American concepts and history into the South African reality. In most of the cases, the resources used by ILRIG to produce their educational material was already translated or written in English. Thus, there was no need for ILRIG to translate from Spanish into English. However, they had to develop cultural, epistemological and cosmological translations.

ILRIG did consider the language issue in the South African context. It was with this issue in mind that its publications were translated from English to Afrikaans, Xhosa,

Zulu and Sotho, among others. ILRIG members were aware of the importance of local languages as part of the struggle against apartheid and the future national project. Reflections on those experiences of translation would foster new debates on the politics of language in South Africa and the local production of knowledges (and coloniality of power). Nevertheless, these experiences are not included as part of this dissertation. On one hand, where efforts were made to research those experiences, the people involved in them were not keen to be interviewed or did not reply to the researcher's attempts to connect with them.[38] On the other one, this dissertation focuses specifically on the interconnections and dialogues developed between Latin American cosmologies, concepts, histories and South African ones. Accordingly, it focuses on one particular instance of the translation process in order to reflect on how Southern knowledges were in dialogue and had an impact in local struggles.[39]

As will be explained in the following chapters, ILRIG's publications were planned and produced with the aim of enriching and broadening local workers' political perspectives. From ILRIG's point of view, sharing international experiences was a means to achieving that aim, as it exposed their audience to other examples and strategies of struggle against domination and exploitation. To this end, ILRIG chose to share cases from other African countries (such as Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, etc) and cases from Latin American ones (Brazil, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Chile, etc). These were consciously selected by ILRIG's team. There was a particular interest in Latin American history that caused ILRIG to prioritise those cases over others in their publications. So, the process of translation, in these cases, required more than the traditional approach to language translation. It required building bridges between different continents with different realities, beliefs, traditions and people. Those bridges were produced in the process of narrating the Latin American cases to a South African working-class public. But, as has been mentioned before, translations are never complete or perfect. Based on the translational turns' perspective, translations are, in fact, an instance of creation in which different knowledges are placed in dialogue to create a new, hybrid and complex version of

[38]Dinga Sikwebu, one of ILRIG's members, was in charge of translating English publications into Xhosa. The researcher tried many times to get in touch with him but did not succeed. While other ILRIG members did talk about Sikwebu's experience and their debates on translations, the resources were not enough to be able to reflect properly on it in this thesis. Hopefully this matter will be studied in the future as it would enrich local current debates on language and democracy.

[39]Focusing on the processes of local translations would require to develop a whole new approach and a whole new thesis.

these knowledges. Translations can promote epistemological dialogues in a non-hierarchical way. And, as Santos (2007) affirms, translations can contribute in the building of an ecology of knowledges.

This research aim is to recover ILRIG's experience of cultural, cosmological and epistemological translations between Latin American and South African realities. These experiences are described and analysed in detail in the following chapters. The ultimate aim is to recover ILRIG's experiences of knowledge production as a record of Southern knowledges exchanges and productions.

Chapter 3

Methodological reflections and experiences.

Research Design

The main aim of this research is to reflect on how Latin American ideas circulated in South Africa and how they were adopted and adapted for the purpose of producing local knowledge and strategies in the struggle against apartheid. How ideas circulate is not necessarily tangible or easy to track. In many cases, knowledge may be produced without any written evidence thereof. Thus, written sources alone may not provide sufficient evidence when tracing the movement of ideas from one context to another.

This research is a historical study that seeks to understand how ideas were circulating within contexts of oppression, such as South Africa in the 1980s. While tracing the movement of ideas in general, is a difficult task, seeking to uncover and identify the circulation of ideas in the apartheid context, is even more complicated. In a context of ideological persecution, repression and intense violence, people tried not to leave evidence that could later incriminate them or impact negatively on their struggle plans. Consequently, much of the alternative and critical thoughts that were part of the struggle against apartheid, were not disseminated in writing.

For the afore-stated reasons, studying the circulation of ideas in a context such as South Africa in the apartheid era, requires the researcher to use a combination of research methods and take an interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter. Sources are never enough or ever complete. That is why having a wider perspective promotes a better understanding of the findings - expressed in documents and memories or silences.

The material sourced for this study includes books, pamphlets, booklets, films, course-lines, seminars' sketches and memories. These are supplemented by oral histories, interviews, social engagements, conversations and written communications with key activists and academics who were interested in introducing the history of the struggle for independence in Latin America, to the South African public. These two kinds of material are analysed together here. Silences and incomplete answers also

contribute to the research as they signal dynamics which led people to seek anonymity or, for whatever reason, to take the decision not to share their involvement in the experience of knowledge transfer. In acknowledgement and respect of this latter position, this research makes no claims to completion or comprehensiveness. It does not seek to present itself as a complete product but rather aims to open a space for reflection on the densities of the past and the richness of the knowledge production process.

Sources are combined in the analysis of a very diverse and complex historical experience. Most of the written sources, besides books, are private collections and archives from different people. Written sources were analysed together with oral interviews. I am endlessly thankful to each and every person who opened his or her home to me, showed me their old boxes and their libraries and shared material that is not available in the libraries and archives. I am equally grateful to the community members who were interested in being part of this journey and opened their personal memories and souls to express what cannot be found anywhere else but in their narrations of the past.

I managed to meet in person with fifteen contributors to this thesis. Some of them were consulted regarding more general issues, such as the circulation of forbidden books in South Africa. And some were contacted to get more deep and specific information, precisely related with ILRIG's booklets, aims and projects. Interviews took place from 2016 until 2019[40]. In the case of the more general interviews, they tended to take place in public places such as libraries, restaurants, university halls. In the case of the deeper encounters that took place specifically with Linda Cooper, David Cooper and David Fig, those were held in our houses (theirs and mine). We met two to four times between 2016 and 2019, mostly in Cape Town. These interviews were approximately two hours long. During these encounters, David Fig, David Cooper and Linda Cooper not only engaged with me and studied ILRIG documents with me but also provided me with sources that could not be found in public archives. Some examples of this are ILRIG internal surveys that took place in their workshops, workshop's outlines, ILRIG's reports, lessons' outlines, among others.

[40] For more details on names and dates, check the bibliography list.

The main issue of having to work with private archives is that access to sources depends mainly on personal documents that many times are lost, thrown away by another family member, decomposed as a result of exposure to moisture in storage spaces, etc. In this sense, historians become archeologists trying to recover documents that tend to disappear. At the same time, it becomes very difficult to have a broader understanding of the period and content when many sources are not accessible yet.

This chapter aims to share the methodological approach and the practical experience of research as a way to reflect on how academic knowledge is produced and how this research in particular intends to position itself in the academic world. Thus, there is no intention to produce a traditional methodology chapter. This chapter shows the discomforts, the hidden back-of-stage dynamics, the problems, the discussions and concerns that took place during the research process and from there, reflects on methodological issues that arose in the course of the research.

The methodological journey

First Scene

At the start of this research process, the main concern was how to manage and access sources that were circulating in the underground during the apartheid era. The priority was to track Latin American books and published material. After studying the Jacobsen Index of Objectionable Literature (published in 1990 in Pretoria) in detail and interviewing librarians and activists it was clear that most of the material from Latin America was not banned; Only those publications with titles including main figures or concepts related with revolutionary ideas were (for example, material related with Cuba, Chile, Latin American socialist struggles, etc.) were classified as prohibited material.[41]

[41] In 1963, the apartheid government codified its censorship norms (Merrett, 1982). The Publications and Entertainments Act defined what was considered as undesirable by the State but allowed the right to appeal to the Appellate Division. Public hearings made censorship a public discussion and that is why in 1974 this right was abolished. The amendments made to the Act reaffirmed the banning on importation, circulation, printing and retail of banned material. It included a new category that forbade possessing banned material, “possession prohibited”. The Publication Amendment Act of 1977 included also, as prohibited material, scientific, professional and religious publications that were possible to be considered banned. The criteria for banning was as followed: a) obscenity and harm for public morals; b) blasphemy and offence to religious convictions; c) bringing of a section of the community into contempt or ridicule; d) prejudicing the safety of the State, general welfare, peace and

The process of identifying this material in the library system, revealed a new reality about Latin American material in South Africa: the material was not going to be in the official records. This was not because it was banned, but because it was still circulating in the underground. The fact that some publications were not banned did not mean they could be read and shared openly. In most of the cases, the government only managed to ban material once it was already circulating. Furthermore, the banning process implied questioning the owner of those publications. Therefore, people were careful to avoid being caught and found alternative ways to share those documents.

A consequence of this, in terms of research, was that notwithstanding their legality (or illegality) of being in possession of Latin American books, pamphlets and films, this material is not to be found in the official documents of the time. This created the need to find the network of people involved in the circulation of Latin American material whom I could interview. In many cases, information was obtained through small informal conversations. Anecdotes, suggestions and contacts were shared after the presentation of draft versions of my thesis proposal in conferences. On many occasions, people approached me to tell me that this research brought old memories to mind. They then proceeded to share some of these remembrances. These informal encounters took place in corridors, at lunchtime and/or during a coffee break. Attempts to contact these sources again for the purpose of meeting up and discussing these experiences, generally proved fruitless, with many unwilling or seemingly no longer interested in recounting their stories.

Second Scene

One of the most significant issues I had to resolve in undertaking this research was how to find the documents I was looking for. If these sources were not listed in official documents or stored in libraries, they were probably packed in old boxes or standing in a dusty shelf in people's houses. I soon realised that most of the

good order; e) disclosing certain judicial proceedings. The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, which banned the Communist Party, allowed the government to censor any publication that promoted communist ideas, aims and beliefs. The definition of communism was very wide and allowed the government to control and ban material that was not necessarily communist but could be critical of the government.

documents I was looking for were in private collections, even though they were not private documents.

This second stage of the research required deeper connections with more specific people that were directly involved in the organisations that were being studied. Making contact with them and creating a safe, secure and comfortable space where sharing documents, memories and ideas could take place, was a long process requiring many encounters and discussions. While some people were keen and open to being involved in the research project, others were suspicious and did not want to participate. This had a direct impact on the selection of study cases. Although the initial plan was to work with diverse organisations, the links with people and their personal interest in the research, impacted on the final selection and narrowed the research plan.

The main reason for these changes in the research plan was my methodological approach. While many researchers pre-define their cases, and find ways to study them even if people refuse to participate, I did not wish to participate in an extractive exercise. If people refused or were reluctant to engage, I did not insist and chose to back off instead. Political sensitivities in post-apartheid South Africa remain extremely tender. Confidentiality and even secrecy are still so entrenched in the South African political landscape that it is important to respect people's boundaries in this regard. This is, it needs to be said, a whole area of study which urgently needs to be undertaken. There needs to be a better understanding of why, in these new times of democracy, there continues to be anxiety about security.

Following Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1987), Rita Segato (2016) and Mario Rufer (2012, 2016), the aim of this dissertation is to produce horizontal, communal and committed knowledge. This methodological approach questions the way positivist academic knowledge is produced and proposes alternative, and more respectful, ways to connect and interact with communities and their histories. Dominant perspectives on research methods tend to be extractivist. This means that the researcher distances him/herself from the community being studied in an attempt to produce an "objective" analysis and outcome. The main problem of this perspective is that it relies on a construction of what is often a questionable objectivity, based on the researcher's point of view and epistemological understanding of reality. In this process of objectification, people are dehumanised by research mechanisms that

silence, extract, appropriate and re-signify others' life, memories, dreams, experiences, voices, points of views, realities.

In their aim to produce a rational, neutral and objective narration of the memories and the past, anthropologists (and this could be said about other social scientists as well) generally attempt to explain experiences, behaviours, beliefs and movements, rather than understand them. According to Segato (2016: 29-33), this problem cannot be resolved because of the unbridgeable divide between disparate cosmologies. This truth is rarely voiced because it questions the dominant system of thinking. Researchers who rely on this methodology run the risk of coming to believe that it is possible to approach the past in an objective way by respecting the dominant scientific criteria. However, this results in a simplification and restraining of concepts and definitions. The positivist invention of research norms excludes certain memories, documents, silences, behaviours and subsumes them under the hegemonic discourses and methodologies. Memories get trapped in the dominant epistemological order and lose their own meaning and agency.

In dialogue with this perspective, Mario Rufer (2016: 165-168) goes beyond and reflects on the features of the archives and how their arbitrary selection of documents creates a specific narration that marginalizes, rejects and silences alternative memories, voices and histories. In his analysis, academia tends to erase those histories that cannot be proven with evidence. The dominant approach to science implies the need for concrete evidence that demonstrates a fact. Thus, memories, oral traditions, imaginaries and reflections are seen as expressions that cannot and should not be incorporated in the archive. Those silences in the archives are in fact an evidence. The question is how to understand them and express them in a way that respects their original meaning.

These critical perspectives offer an alternative to dominant research methods; an alternative that gives space to silence, to local concepts and ways to imagine, remember and communicate. In that sense, this new methodological proposal opens the discussion about who has the right to tell stories and how to do so. It questions the way scientific knowledge positions and represses itself in pursuit of being the dominant knowledge.

Mario Rufer offers a good example of the tensions between traditional academic research methods and a more critical, honest and committed one, and proposes some alternative approaches to research (Rufer, 2012). His article reads more as a confession, a self-reflective essay or even a testimony than a traditional academic paper. Thus, Rufer not only proposes a new way of conducting research, but also puts it into practice in his article. In sharing one of his first experiences of conducting research in a small town in Cordoba, Argentina, Rufer reflects on the meanings of truth, evidence, listening and information as key concepts that define and structure the way in which we approach to research and people.

In a field work trip to this small town in the rural areas, the research team was looking for testimonies, memories and material that would enable them to rewrite the history of the town from below. In one of their interviews with Efrén, a member of that community, Rufer's team realised that in answer to their question about the history of the town, Efrén was reproducing the official history narrated in the history books. Rufer and the other researchers were surprised as they did not expect that answer. After some time, he decided to talk to Efrén again and express his surprise. Efrén answered the following: *"La historia nuestra no está escrita. Pero eso no es lo preocupante. Lo que preocupa es que ya tampoco puede ser no digamos escrita, pero dicha. Ustedes vienen a buscar lo que ya saben que van a encontrar. Después escriben…"* (Rufer, 2012: 3).[42]

After sharing such a deep moment of truly committed and honest conversation, Rufer reflects on the causes of this reaction. From his perspective, there is a long-established dynamic between researchers and community members in which the first ones create and define subaltern subjects for their own academic aims, while the second ones behave and talk in the ways that the academic system expects from them.

In the process of communicating with others that are considered a source of knowledge, researchers tend to unconsciously impose a hierarchical dynamic in which their aims define what can be said and heard. Attempting to break this asymmetry and create more honest and horizontal ways of engaging with each other, Rufer suggests a number of approaches to changing the understanding of

[42] Translation: "Our history is not written. But this is not what worries us. What worries us the most is the fact that it cannot be let's not only say written but mostly said. You (researchers) come here looking for that that you already know you are going to find. And then you write…"

research and how to behave as researchers. This proposal should not be understood as a mere exercise but as a political stance that defies dominant methodologies and gives academics the chance to choose alternative (and more honest ways) of approaching the research experience (Rufer, 2012).

The first step in this process is to accept and acknowledge the epistemic privilege academics have. This requires not only accepting the academic positionality (related to the idea of a public intellectual with the authority to talk and express opinions), but also exercising the political power of listening (Rufer, 2012:17). In other words, academics have the opportunity to reflect on their power as sources of knowledge, as well as how to redefine their position in society. They can also choose to listen. According to Rufer, choosing to listen, is a political decision. How do academics listen to the people they interview? Listening is not only establishing silence in order to let the other person speak. In Rufer's opinion, listening means accepting and being consciously aware of the difference (in terms of language, experience, knowledge, life, cosmologies, power, class, etc.) existing between the two-people involved in the conversation.

Rufer agrees with Segato's academic and political position and contributes to her methodological proposal by sharing reflections on how to listen. As listening is a process of giving meaning to what the other person says and also (re)signifying it, the difficulties researchers encounter are mainly related to the asymmetry created by academic dynamics in the process of signification and quotation. Erasing the authorship and the conditions of production when writing about encounters with people that share their knowledge and memories is dangerous as it invisibilises how those conditions impact in the process of giving meaning to their words (Rufer, 2012: 21). From Rufer's perspective, the main issue then is how to really be honest in the approach to people and the process of writing about those experiences. In other words, the main issue is how to be honest researchers.

Following this perspective, this chapter aims to open a space of reflection based on the research experience. It is not looking to expose a successful story, without personal implications and flaws, or one which is perfectly objective and neat. As part of an academic political position, this chapter will express my positionality and the difficulties, ambiguities and dead ends that were part of this research. This is an effort to present an honest result committed to an honest production of knowledge.

Accepting positionality and making it explicit to the members of the research and to the public becomes then a duty.

Third Scene

I found myself being questioned, examined and evaluated by many people whom I had contacted for the purpose of engaging them with, in future conversations. Given that South Africa has been the subject of extractive methodologies from researchers from the North, this response is understandable. Oftentimes, students from Europe and the United States come to South Africa to study and do research for a semester. Afterwards, they leave and take with them local knowledge, local histories and memories that are never returned. This expropriation of knowledge generates suspicion and bitter feelings among local people. From the outset, I was keenly aware that I would have to deal with this distrust and strive to gain their confidence. To this end, (and in keeping with my methodological approach), I decided to open myself up and set aside the academic costume. I believed that the most respectful way to approach the people with whom I wanted to engage, was to do so by being honest and openly sharing my academic and personal background and interests.

Nevertheless, reactions to my positionality exposed a contradiction in the expectations of the people. While there is a general complaint regarding foreign researchers' behaviours, when it comes to shifting that dynamic and proposing a more personal and honest way of communicating, almost everybody struggles. Thus, my approach, which was intended as a respectful attempt to connect, was sometimes perceived as being less professional and/or even naïve. Some respondents even requested that I omit the personal background introduction, as they believed it would bias their perception of the research.

How might we understand this contradiction? There is no single answer. It might be that some respondents still believe in the dominant way of knowledge production but expect that research about local issues should only be conducted by local researchers. Alternatively, it could be that opening my personal space to them made them feel uncomfortable, as that action implies displacing all the costumes and not only the researcher's one. Once that "faultless" academic reality is displaced, the researcher exposes not only him/herself, but the community members as well.

Suddenly, they find their own identities under scrutiny as the researcher seeks to look beyond the projected image to the real person behind it. Some people can deal with that; others cannot.

Respecting personal reactions is a keystone when using non extractivist methodologies. In this research rejections, suspicions and silences were accepted as part of the journey.

Fourth scene

The second stage of research began with a broad strategy of getting to know people from many different backgrounds. These included librarians, activists from diverse organisations, academics, workers, etc. This stage of the research was not only about finding the right people to engage with, but also about putting into practice my methodology of choice. I soon discovered that when I approached people in a more formal and traditional manner, the resulting conversations were formal discussions in which people did not engage deeply but responded as “informants”. Respondents would share the information they thought I was looking for, and not open a space for a more personal dialogue. This dynamic allowed me to go back to my research with “concrete information” but the results were problematic to me, as it reproduced extractivist methodologies and did not open spaces of trust and real conversation. While some of the information gathered in this stage was useful for planning the next research strategy, by and large it was superficial and based on quantitative data collection more than qualitative analysis. Some of the information gathered this way was useful to my understanding of the general context of books circulation and library policies. However, when looking to understand the circulation of Latin American ideas and their influence in the local knowledge production, this approach was somewhat deficient.

This first experience opened a space for self-reflection. It was clear that there were two problems that had to be resolved: the first problem was how to deal with being a foreigner in South Africa. The second was how to engage in a deep way that could be meaningful. In this context, Rivera Cusicanqui’s (1987), Mario Rufer’s (2012, 2016) and Rita Segato’s (2016) methodological proposals became crucial and promoted a significant change of strategy. I decided to engage with the

methodological discussion that takes the researcher out of his/her comfort zone and allowed myself to question my chosen methods and my personal approach to research. The process of deconstructing traditional academic practices, became a learning opportunity that led to new, alternative and more honest ways to engage with knowledge production. Thereafter, I deliberately sought to develop ways of engendering deep encounters and connections with specific people linked to organisations and educational projects.

Fifth Scene

As Sean Field (2016) explains, oral historians are facilitators that open spaces for people to connect private experiences with public events and re-signify them. In this sense, the process allows people to regenerate their agency in the present by re-encountering with their past memories. Although I did not think of myself in these terms initially, after reflecting on the research experience, I found that in all probability, this did, in fact, occur in some of the encounters.

I originally contacted Linda Cooper in 2016. From the beginning, Linda was open to, and interested in, engagement with the research. At our first meeting, we introduced ourselves and chatted in general about my research and myself. Compared to other first encounters, in which people were suspicious and expected me to “pass a test”, Linda Cooper welcomed me and my research warmly. There is not a clear explanation for this. All or some of the following may have contributed to her open willingness to engage: Linda is an academic and a teacher; the research seemed interesting and meaningful to her; I am a foreigner living in South Africa, I am Latin American and maybe also the fact that she knows my supervisor and trusts him.

Whatever the reason, Linda Cooper did not react negatively to my personal way of introducing myself and my research. She did not judge my professionalism nor my integrity because of it. It felt like she respected my “passionate” way of engaging with people and work. This is an important remark to make: in the South African context, the cultural difference makes the warmness, loudness, straight-forwardness and touchiness of Latin American people look like “too passionate”. This is sometimes translated into a stereotype of Latin Americans as not serious enough. There is a general reaction to Latin American cultural background behaviours that promotes

and reproduces the stereotype of the “Latin American drama” or “Latin American soap opera”. Not every South African understands it like this, but many do and it did affect my first encounters - as much as academic job interviews - with many of them. In the case of Linda Cooper, this did not affect her way of engaging with this research.

We had many email exchanges and some meetings. Those encounters took place in her house and mine and were two hours long approximately each time. During those conversations, many themes arose. From her personal background as a student, to her experience in the UK, her concerns then, the origins of ILRIG, the way research was conducted and booklets were planned and produced, etc. Linda Cooper explicitly observed that her memories were influenced by her present analysis of the past and her life experience to the present. She also observed that, after many years of not thinking about them, it was only in the course of our discussion that she recalled many of the issues.

In my encounters with Linda Cooper, my questions invited her to revive dusty memories and reflect on them again. This exercise tends to be emotionally and physically exhausting. It is interesting to note that during these conversations Linda was not only remembering but also re-encountering herself with that past and reinterpreting it as well. She was able to question her memories and share those reflections instead of showing a close and neat narrative. Our conversations invited her to rethink some issues from the past and connect them to her present interests and concerns; in both her academic/professional life and her personal/private one.

Following Oberti and Pittaluga, memories can work as an anchor for transmitted meanings, as a way to recover those enriching experiences that modernity (and Western epistemologies) rendered invisible and impossible to transmit. During the encounters with Linda Cooper, memories became meaningful for the present and future. Memories became a crucial source for a historical research but they also opened the discussion about the meaning of history. As Oberti and Pittaluga affirm, history is not a recipient where facts from the past (distant from the present reality) are deposited. History should be understood as a past-present in which people are committed to the present (and future), try to develop critical approaches to traumatic events and re-signify their memories in their intent to embrace the future.

Sixth Scene

Linda Cooper suggested that I contact her brother, David Cooper as he was the founder of ILRIG. She gave me his contact details. I wrote him an email introducing myself and the general idea of the research. His first reply was distant and included a list of publications of his authorship that he expected me to read before we met. I replied explaining I was interested in *him* besides his academic work, his personal experience as the founder of ILRIG and his memories. His second reply was also distant and made it clear he did not want to talk about ILRIG.

While it seemed that I was not going to be able to connect with him, after talking with Linda Cooper, I approached him once again. By then, David Cooper understood my intentions and was keen to meet. Our first encounter took place in his office in UCT where we talked informally for an hour and a half. One of the first things he did was to apologize for his reaction to my emails. He explained why my contact made him react in a defensive way. And in doing so, he spoke truly and honestly about himself and his past.

Unexpectedly, and immediately, in that first encounter David Cooper was the one who was opening the space for a more personal dialogue while I was the one trying to “look professional”. I was unprepared by his honesty which, consequently, took me by surprise... As our previous email exchanges were much more formal and distant, I prepared myself for a more traditional conversation. So, when David Cooper talked about his personal life to explain his reaction to my emails and why he did not want to talk about ILRIG, I was shocked. That first encounter was really intense, for both of us. It made me realise that no matter how well prepared the researcher is, real connections with real people in real life have unexpected surprises that require one to improvise (if, and only if the researcher is committed to a non-superficial and non-extractivist research).

As Florencia Levín (2016) explains, recent history needs to be approached by taking into consideration how trauma still influences memories and reactions in the present. In that sense, when studying the recent past, the methodology needs to be different and acknowledge the persistence of fears, pains and concerns. It also implies reflecting on the epistemological approach to those reactions. How does the researcher understand a reality that he/she did not experience?

In the particular case of David Cooper, I opened myself to his way of engaging with people while at the same time, measuring the extent to which he was interested in/ready/open to knowing me. I realised he needed to talk and share his story. He valued my research and contact as an opportunity to express himself, his ideological perspective, his long-time work and attempts to develop a more international approach to South African issues among workers and academics. It is important to note that David Cooper's position at university was not one for which he became known and admired in the scientific campus. His work is very important and relevant, his teaching has been valued enormously by students, but he has always worked and positioned himself at the margins of the academic world.

The link with David Cooper became crucial for this research. Not only was he enthusiastic about it but he insisted on having discussions about my findings and shared his private archive on ILRIG and his teaching experience with me. A few hours after our first encounter, he called me to let me know that he had found all his material and wanted me to have it, and he would be bringing it to me.

Cooper's passion for research and history, his kindness, his belief in knowledge and his commitment to sharing it, made this encounter a unique experience to me. David Cooper had a real need to express himself, re-engage with his memories and past and rethink it. He was not particularly interested in my personal background. He needed to talk, needed someone to engage with his concerns. Furthermore, he needed someone to value those past experiences from an internationalist perspective. Throughout our encounters, I could see his reaction changed from a defensive one to a very enthusiastic and proactive one. This shift is evident in his behaviour, his way of engaging, his voice and expressions, his energy; his personal process of dealing with his past and memories reflected on his non-verbal communication, more than in his words. That change does not only speak about how we managed to build a relationship but also about his personal pain and how he found a way to deal with it.

Florencia Levín (2016) reflects on this process and the coexistence of the past in the present. According to the author, the past remains rooted in the present and it expresses itself through language. In that sense, researchers should not only pay attention to the literal discourse but also (and probably mostly) to the structures of thought and argumentation and the way they are expressed in non-verbal

enunciation acts. These particularities have a direct effect in the way researchers approach, understand and interpret that complex reality. It also impacts on their methodological analysis as it obliges the researcher to break the discourse literality.

In the journey of engaging with David Cooper I found myself rethinking how to engage with him and his past-present. His words were powerful, but it was impossible to convey his actions in words. He invited me to be part of his own journey through his memories and made me experience a completely different and unique research reality.

Seventh Scene

Many other encounters should be described in this chapter. Nevertheless, those exposed represent a wider view of the general research journey, they are deep encounters that can be narrated from a beginning to an end. As mentioned before, the research experience was not complete, neat, neutral or successful. This experience was complex and it is important to give expression to this, as a way to reflect on how research is done in the academic world.

Not all the encounters were this deep or complete. The research path was not linear and progressive. It was a counterpoint composition where some voices had a stable line, while others entered and disappeared in a rhythmic way. Some encounters accompanied the research from the beginning until the end, as a stable bass line that sustains the melody. Others created short but powerful solos. As a musical piece, the research experience was composed of different parts with different meanings, all necessary for the whole to exist. The intermittence and concomitance defined the research dynamic and outcome.

I met Anne Mager while tutoring at the Historical Studies Department at UCT in 2016. After many emails and attempts to meet up, she contacted me to let me know that as she was retiring, all her books and materials were going to be available and she wanted me to have her teaching material on Latin American history. In a short encounter at her office, Anne Mager shared with me not only boxes full of photocopies, slides and outlines, but also her personal experience of how she got to know about Latin American politics during the 70s, and how she decided to teach about it once she became a lecturer. That short encounter left me with lots of stories

and reflections on her past as a teacher and piles of small booklets from alternative education organisations in South Africa in addition to all her teaching material. In a context of moving out from the office and beginning a new stage in her life, Mager, like so many other academics and activists, had to decide what to do with her personal material. I committed myself to take the material to Argentina and donating it to the African and Asian Interdisciplinary Studies library, which is part of the University of Buenos Aires. In the meantime, working with the material allowed me to understand how books and material were circulating in the universities, how academics were able to justify their teaching selection as part of the knowledge production and how by doing so were able to open spaces and opportunities for students to engage with a wider approach to South African history by understanding Latin American struggles.

Anne Mager's papers provided a specific example of material that has been circulating and used for teaching purposes from the 80s to the present day. Among those papers were course outlines, photocopies, personal notes, booklets, etc. In addition, there was material produced by ILRIG; material that was probably used to teach Bolivian, Brazilian and Nicaraguan history. Specifically, those documents were not only the content for the class but also the way to present and teach them. It is interesting to notice that a big effort had been made in ILRIG and between ILRIG ex members, to locate the materials. The effort appeared to reach a dead-end. As with most of the sources used for this research, these documents were not easy to find and just appeared in unexpected places. Once again, a private collection had the answers. And once again, that collection could have been thrown away if I had not met Anne Mager at the right time.

Another example of unexpected encounters took place on a visit to David Fig's house in Johannesburg. I contacted Fig early 2017 and stayed in touch by email until I managed to travel there in June of that year. I met him at his house and we had a long interview for more than two hours in which we talked about his personal history, his experience in London and his trips to Latin America. David Fig's house is full of books and documents. Two different rooms are filled to capacity with material. Nevertheless, his old papers are not organised and he does not know where to find them. Being in the house, seeing all the material around me and knowing that among it there were important documents that might not be found for years made me feel

anxious. This was another clear example of how material gets lost and might end up burnt or thrown away just because it was not organised and/or donated to an archive or library.

What happens when public material becomes private? Why does that happen? Can a new idea of archive be created?

If only certain elements of the past - written ones - can be understood as documents and therefore kept, preserved and available to the public, this implies not only the hierarchy of elements - written over any other type of remnant of the past - but also the imposition of a way of understanding the past and its possible investigation. In many cases, in Latin America and even Africa, the notion of knowledge that is endorsed by the states - and also the scientific communities - is a Western notion.

Both Achille Mbembe (2002) and Mario Rufer (2016) make reference to this issue in their works when reflecting on the idea of the document as a proof or evidence. It seems that, from a dominant perspective, it is only when we understand time as linear and the past as dead, that we can revise the past. Now, such a perspective silences and oppresses other existing worlds, other possible worlds and other ways of understanding knowledge (not necessarily in relation to truth and truthfulness).

But in addition to this, the very file that is erected from such a positivist perspective -and presents it to the public and reproduces it - also hides its own ambiguities, disputes, disorders and contradictions. In short, hides its own discordant voices. There are contradictions within that file that is presented (or tries to be presented) as homogeneous, coherent and powerful. This is where the complexity of the case lies: the archive manages to present itself as a coherent space, a space where the selection of documents is done in the "correct" way (respecting accepted, prescribed scientific criteria) and its process of cataloguing appears to be the most relevant, for allowing the general public to access "knowledge". However, all of this is a construction that seeks to reaffirm the legitimacy of such spaces for the collection of certain pasts over other spaces and conceptions of the past. This is why private and personal collections become such an important tool for disputing dominations and constructions. The main concern, then, is how to keep those materials and make them accessible.

The Background Scene

In the pursuit of truth and science, academic knowledge production loses density and complexity. However, it does produce a concrete outcome that is easy to evaluate and share in the academic world. But what happens with all the experiences, questions, doubts that are part of the research process but are not displayed? Omitting those steps is probably the most common response in academia. But what happens when academics want to share them and consider them as a substantial part of their research? In these cases, the academics run a real risk of not having their work accepted as truly academic.

In the last decades these methodological and epistemological discussions became a field in themselves when de-colonial thinkers drew attention to them, and opened the space to question them, in an attempt to create non-Western alternatives (Cusicanqui, 1987, Dussel, 1990, Tapia, 2002, Mignolo, 2003, Lugones, 2010, Rufer, 2016, Segato, 2016, among others).

Questioning research assumptions, expectations and behaviours and making it explicit and available to the public became part of an alternative and disputative way of committing to the academic knowledge production. This chapter followed this methodological and epistemological proposal and aimed to open the curtain that hides the background and process of formulating the dissertation. But this attempt would not be complete if the experience of supervision was not b included as a crucial part of it.

In most of the cases, the supervision experience is one in which supervisors give advice, have a critical approach to the plan, content and methods and guide the process of knowledge production. But what happens when the supervisor can also be a subject of the research? What happens when he/she is, to some extent, linked by his/her personal past experience to the theme of the dissertation?

In these cases, guidance and testimony intertwine creating a unique experience. Judged from dominant academic standards, this situation is considered to be a danger for the dissertation process. However, from a de-colonial perspective, this unique experience is an integral part of the academic commitment to produce alternative and meaningful knowledge. In the particular case of Crain Soudien, he was able to navigate that complex path in a way that did not over-expose him or

affect his supervision duties and our relationship. It is important to mention that his guidance was not conventional, and it opened a space for a more personal connection and sharing his memories and experiences. History, philosophy, education, academic knowledge, personal backgrounds and memories were all interconnected in the supervision process and allowed to create a special space where knowledge production was not restricted by boundaries. Within this dynamic, supervision and testimony became part of the same process, opening new alternatives of trying to produce meaningful knowledge.

In a South African context where higher education colonial legacies are questioned and academics begin to reflect critically on their own practices and place in University (Vorster, Quinn, 2017), this particular experience of supervision becomes an important example of how alternative knowledge can and must be produced at South African universities.

Contemplating the research journey

There exists a distance between what was expected to be the research experience and what it actually was. That gap expresses a reality that is part of an honest, committed and engaged approach to academic research. Many of the ambiguities and difficulties of it have been described in this chapter in an attempt to share crucial methodological and epistemological concerns and open a space for reflection.

The links between past and present, history and memory, public and private, and pretension of academic truth were key to both the research process and the chosen methodological approach. Accepting my Argentinean background as a rich source that could promote more complex encounters with South African history, allowed me to take into consideration a lot of Argentinean methodological proposals and use these as vital resources in the search for new ways to understand and approach the past. In an attempt to recover and resume the reflections produced in this chapter, these last paragraphs will expose the most significant thoughts, gleaned from Argentinean academics and activists, that reflect on how to approach and study the recent past of the country. Particularly, the main idea is to express how different experiences of oppression and the way to engage with them can be shared across the Atlantic in an effort to open new methodological discussions and proposals.

In a context in which the Argentinean government reopened the trials related to the dictatorship regime, many historians found their methods questioned by the academic community as biased or not professional enough, as they engaged with the former investigations to bring evidence during the trials. In that particular context, Elizabeth Jelin (2002) and Pilar Calveiro (2008) reflected on the truth aspiration, both in the case of academic discourse and in that of testimonies, and developed a clear response to academic accusations against the subjectivity of the latter.

Both authors share the same conception of history and memory, a view that complicates the link between both by relativising the old assumptions. Memory is produced by active subjects and as such it becomes a place of knowledge in which past and present interact. While it can be understood as individual, memory is also culturally and collectively framed. So, while memories may appear to be subjective because they are normally enunciated in the first person, they have defined limits that are made explicit by the act of enunciation. In contrast, historical discipline aims to build and show a discourse around the past that is objective and is closer to the supposed "truth". Its impersonal enunciation generates a fictional distancing that hides the subjectivity of the researchers. At the same time, it promotes the construction of continuous stories hiding the darkened spaces of the past. In other words, it was not the academic historians who sought to give voice to the traumatic past but the men and women who experienced them and transmitted it from their memories and testimonies.

This short explanation works as an invitation to reflect on how academic knowledge is produced, how it engages with reality and how different approaches are needed if we want to commit to decolonising the academic space. This research is an attempt to do so. Not only because of its methodological approach, but also because of the content researched and the way it is shared. As described in the introduction, the main aim is to produce knowledge from the South, for the South and about the South and to create an opportunity to rethink history, knowledge and academia.

Chapter 4

Latin American Ideas among workers: The work of the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG)

Background, origins and history of ILRIG

As explained in earlier chapters of this thesis, Latin American ideas were circulating in South Africa through many different channels and in many different ways. The motivation behind these circulations was based on a common idea: viz. learning and understanding other experiences of repression and struggle, that encourages and informs reflection on the local conditions and possibilities. This is why Latin American experiences of oppression and resistance became an important issue to be learnt and discussed.

Getting ideas into South Africa was one thing, but once the materials and information arrived in South Africa, a significant concern was how to circulate these among the people. Accessing material (books, photocopies, papers, booklets) posed a concrete obstacle, but there was also concern as to what content to share and how to do so properly. This is one of many reasons why it is important to recover ILRIG's origins and experience. ILRIG developed educational content in particular ways and managed to spread it all over the country and among many diverse workers organisations.[43] The aim of this chapter is to present ILRIG's organisation and dynamics so that in the next chapter I can analyse why, how and which Latin American ideas ILRIG was studying, sharing and teaching.

ILRIG was originally designed as a university extension program in the Sociology Department, UCT in 1982. This allowed the organisation to have access to specific materials and also infrastructure. Books, magazines, sources, papers… any material needed for research could be brought from abroad. Thus, as David Cooper explained, ILRIG's main members were able to import material because they were also university lecturers.[44] At the same time, in terms of infrastructure, these lecturers could use university facilities to make photocopies, have meetings and/or

[43] ILRIG Project Report, 1983-1985, 1985-1987, 1988. David Cooper personal documents (DCPD).
[44] I had several encounters with David Cooper during 2017-2019.

design booklets.[45] Nevertheless, the organisation was not economically dependent on the university. It managed to secure funding from the Dutch Development Agency, Novib, the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Development and Peace (Canada) and Centre National De Cooperation Au Development, CNCD (Belgium), among others. This allowed the organisation to produce written material, print it and sell it cheaply at prices workers could afford.[46]

Cathy-Mae Karelse, who wrote a thesis in 1995 on ILRIG and the Education Resource and Information Project, reminds us that at the time when ILRIG was created, there were no other organisations doing research, producing materials and sharing information relating to international labour studies in a way that was accessible to workers to read and discuss (Karelse, 1995:103). Thus, by providing this service, which was a direct response to local demands, ILRIG fulfilled a unique purpose in its time. As Linda Cooper suggested in an interview, workers in the 80s were organising themselves again and needed information on other experiences around the world to compare and think through.[47] ILRIG promoted critical thinking among workers by providing these materials and education programs and ensuring that workers could access them. In this way, as has been explained by David Cooper, (Cooper, D., 2009), from its inception, ILRIG combined a research initiative with educational and political projects.

The idea of providing international labour information for workers, had its root in Linda Cooper's own educational background and David Cooper's course lines which combined academic research, alternative pedagogies and grass roots activism. During his first years as a lecturer, Cooper lectured on trade union history in the Sociology Department at UCT, specifically as part of the Industrial Sociology curriculum. During his first two years as a lecturer, Cooper also developed courses on the history of capitalism, international labour history and labour in the Third World. By the time ILRIG was set up, Cooper had accumulated significant materials and

[45] ILRIG'S research centre was based at the Sociology Department, UCT. By 1985 it got a second space, where they developed a resources centre, based at Community House, Salt River, Cape Town.
[46] The series of booklets "Workers of the World" had been translated into local languages as trade unions asked for it. Between 1984 and 1987, 37,822 booklets had been printed out and 23,265 were sold all over South Africa. The May Day publication had been translated into Xhosa and Afrikaans. Between 1984 and 1987 30,927 pamphlets had been printed out and 25,108 were sold. DCPC.
[47] Linda Cooper was interviewed during 2017-2019.

experience, teaching international workers' history with special focus on African, Latin American and Asian cases.[48]

Linda Cooper, had been involved in many seminars and workshops related to popular history, workers' education and popular education. Her perspective on education enriched the project by introducing new alternatives on how to approach knowledge production and exchanges. Furthermore, her links with trade unions and workers' organisations facilitated collaboration in the process of building networks.

David Fig was invited by David Cooper to be part of ILRIG in the early days. He was also a keystone in the project as he was considered an "expert" in Latin American history. As has been mentioned before, Fig was part of the Latin America Bureau in London, where he was studying, researching and writing about Latin American struggles. He could read Portuguese and some Spanish and had access to lots of material coming from London. The three (Cooper, Cooper and Fig) became the founders of ILRIG. While others were included in their staff, most were either young students or temporary collaborators.

ILRIG's original aims were to research and produce material on international labour history and conditions. Linda Cooper explains that ILRIG was formed in mid-1983 "to produce education material and information on international labour issues" specifically to be shared with independent trade unions and progressive organisations (Cooper, L, 1985:1). Although this had been clear from the beginning, the organisation had grown and developed through time in relation to specific contexts, networks and demands. Thus, by 1987 ILRIG was not only producing resources but was also in charge of workshops and seminars teaching specific content. The link with workers and unions led the leading members to debate ILRIG's aim and target market. While it was clear that ILRIG was not a vanguard organisation, it was not easy to determine whether it should focus on shop-stewards or rank-and-file workers and how popular it should become. The question then became, "what was ILRIG's political/ideological perspective?" There was no easy agreement on this. The discussion revolved not only around Marxist approaches to the South African reality, but also considered the ways in which to engage with the

[48] David Cooper course lines in Industrial Sociology, UCT, DCPD, Course lines descriptions and materials, see Appendix 1.

struggle and protest, and to navigate between the academic and non-academic world.[49]

Following Freire's idea on individual conscientisation, ILRIG members opened channels for engaging with workers by offering seminars and workshops. Those experiences were meant to offer a space and skills for workers to reflect on their own realities while learning about other international workers contexts. This new approach also impacted the way materials were produced. At some point, I could see how information and resources were produced specifically in relation to this concern.[50] One clear example is the case of the Bolivian booklet that used the biography and experience of a female mining worker to describe the Bolivian' reality.[51] The use of biographies in this way, was a pedagogical strategy based in Freirean approaches. It allowed workers to reflect on their own biographies of oppression and raised their consciousness. A biography provided a useful means of telling a specific story with which workers could identify. Biographies thus, promoted reflections on personal realities while they also offered information on international labour experiences.

Although there were fluent links between workshop aims and the resources to be produced, ILRIG inner organisation had also conflicts and difficulties. Committees and sub-committees did not have equal influence when making decisions, and the educational sphere had a tendency to expand and by the late 1980s it had become more influential than the others (Karelse, 1995: 112).[52]

While there were difficulties in group communication and decision-making, services did manage to interlink and feed each other. There was a fluency in terms of content production and workshop development that made ILRIG a consistent organisation (Karelse, 1995: 112). To ensure that my analysis is fair, I should take under

[49] David Cooper explained how he tried to keep ILRIG in the institutional sphere as it was the way they could act freely and be protected by the university. Nevertheless, as time passed by and the South African context got more violent, many of the members began to expand their actions and links into the underground and grass roots organisations. David Cooper recalls discussing these actions as a political and personal concern.

[50] David and Linda Cooper explained in their interviews how ILRIG tried to give answers to workers' needs during the 80s as a way to help their own organisation and conscientisation.

[51] For more details, check Workers of the World booklets collection. This material will be described and analysed more deeply later on in this chapter and the following one.

[52] Conflicts and discussions among ILRIG members were much more complicated than what is being explained and expressed in this dissertation. Although it would be important to share those complexities in detail, I have decided to respect and protect personal and private memories about those who engaged in this particular conversation.

consideration the fact that the organisation was growing organically, while in the middle of the South African uprising reality. Ideology, praxis and historical context were entangled and affecting one another.

Structure

Originally, ILRIG had four sub-committees: distribution, resources, publications and education. Over time, inner communications problems resulted in structural changes. Nevertheless, I can still describe some of the main tasks of the different work groups.

Distribution

For the first two years, ILRIG had members of their staff contacting organisations and distributing their booklets and pamphlets. These staff members made contact either by mailing material or by personal visits. In the course of those initial two years, 17.604 booklets and pamphlets were sold.[53] ILRIG established contact with 33 unions, 22 organisations, five bookshops and four libraries. In many cases, they sent material on credit so that the unions or organisations could pay the cost through sales of the material. By 1985, ILRIG had come to realise that it needed to develop personal contacts with local members or unions that are involved in education work.[54]

After two more years of work, ILRIG managed to double its sales. By 1987 it had sold over 51.000 publications. This huge increase in distribution has to do with the links that were forged with other organisations. These organisations would order material and commit to distribute it and pay afterwards. Nevertheless, the 1985-1987 Project Report shows some concern on how to improve sales and distribution.[55]

From as early as 1983, the organisation had been thinking of hiring a special member to concentrate on distributions and links with organisations. By 1985 the concern was still valid. ILRIG had been discussing the issue with other alternative publishers in the Western Cape (Labour History Group) and the Witwatersrand (Ravan, Work in Progress, SA Labour Bulletin and Learn and Teach) and they all

[53] ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p.3-4. DCPD
[54] Idem, p.6. DCPD
[55] ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p.12. DCPD

began to collaborate with each other in distributing resources for workers. Mainly they held old stock from the other publishers and ran bookstalls in meetings.

By 1987 the Joint Distribution Group (JDG) was created by an agreement among Southern African Research Service, Learn and Teach, South African Labour Bulletin, SACHED, Speak, Ravan Press and ILRIG. The main aim of the JDG was to "promote and strengthen popular literacy and progressive culture, and to increase general awareness of issues via progressive publications". [56] It also promoted the creation of distribution networks that could make literature accessible for workers all over the country. While ILRIG supported the initiative, and sold many booklets through the JDG, it also continued to make its own distributions. By 1987 ILRIG sales were growing fast, resulting in a need to expand its storage area. Between 1987 and 1988 approximately 18.500 booklets were sold.

Resources

As Karelse explains, during the 1980s there was a revival of community organisations against apartheid. In that context there was a need for the circulation/provision of information that was controlled and banned by the state. NGOs and many other organisations began to spread and provide information and resources for people to be informed about the local context but also the international one (Karelse, 1995: 41). ILRIG was one of the first organisations to make international workers' information available to the people. For that, it needed to get education material, books, journals and pamphlets, among others, from overseas.

During 1983-1985 ILRIG managed to collect material from different parts of the world, as for example Brazil Labour Reports, Central American Briefings and International Labour Reports, among others. ILRIG also managed to organise material exchange programs with many organisations in Brazil, Peru, USA, Italy, UK, Zimbabwe, and many more.[57]

ILRIG was able to get resources and information from abroad as it was part of an academic project from university and had international funding. Once the material arrived, it was catalogued and computerized to make it easy to retrieve it.

[56] ILRIG Project Report 1987-1988, p.11. DCPD
[57] ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p. 8. DCPD

Between 1985 and 1987 ILRIG managed to consolidate its collection of resources and organise it in different collections. There were regular consultations of the material by different organisations. These consultations contributed to the decision to transfer the Resource centre into Community House, for the purpose of making it more accessible for people.[58] In 1987 ILRIG was offered an office at Community House in Salt River. The building was meant to house The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), The United Democratic Front (UDF), Western Province Council of Churches and 20 other progressive organisations. Moving the resource centre from University to Community House had a great impact.[59] On one hand, it allowed people to pass by and consult material. It also promoted the creation and deepening of progressive organisations networks. On the other hand, however, for some members of ILRIG this move resulted in a difficulty in the inner communications of the organisation which, in turn, affected the way in which members made decisions collectively.[60]

Publications

ILRIG published various types of education material for and about workers during the 1980s: Workers of the World Series, May Day booklet, posters and pamphlets.

Between 1983 and 1985 the organisation focused on the production of four booklets as part of the Workers of the World Series: Botswana, Solidarity of Labour, Brazil and Bolivia.[61] Two additional booklets were produced outside the series during this period. In November 1984, a local Cape Town union asked ILRIG to make a short booklet on Nicaragua, focusing specifically on the Sandinista Revolution. By May 1985 ILRIG also created a short booklet on the topic of May Day, based on the history of international workers' day.

By 1987 the May Day booklet had a second edition produced with "a more attractive cover" and had also been translated and published in Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa.[62]

[58] ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p.22-23. DCPD
[59] ILRIG Project Report, 1987-1988, p.4, 12, 13. DCPD
[60] Some members of ILRIG reflected on this idea during our interviews.
[61] ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p.2. DCPD. Full name of the booklets: *Botswana: The story of workers in an Independent African Country* (April, 1984), *Solidarity of Labour: The story of International Worker Organisations* (September, 1984), *Brazil: A Worker's Story* (January, 1985) and *Bolivia: The Unfinished Revolution* (June, 1985).
[62] ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p.6. DCPD

By June 1987 some of the Workers World Series booklets were translated and published in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho.[63] During this period two additional new booklets were published, one on Mozambique and the other one on Tanzania.[64]

As Linda Cooper recalls, the ILRIG team spent time discussing and planning how to approach their contents - international labour history, Southern African and Latin American cases and the local context - and how to transmit them; in terms of vocabulary, narrative, graphic design, language, activities, etc. There was a genuine concern over transmission of information as well as over teaching skills and strategies.

Booklets' general themes were first defined by ILRIG's team. A first sketch and draft was written by one member of the team. Later on, it would be examined and discussed by the whole writing team. As David Cooper recalls, that used to be a very important stage in the writing process as they would meet several times and would for several hours painstaking work paragraph by paragraph through analysis of the meanings of words, sentence structures, ideas, etc. Changes would be made in those meetings and also later on in the last writing stage, where one of the members would edit the draft version of the text. In this sense, ILRIG's publications were produced collectively. This is why there is no individual authorship and no names are explicitly mentioned in any publication.

In the case of posters and pamphlets, these were created to support the educational material for workshops but also to support the booklets material. So most of the posters and pamphlets were based on other publications' contents.

In that sense, it is evident that many materials were produced to support booklets in their educational aim. This took the form, not only of pamphlets and posters, but included audio-visual material and education/information packs produced for that purpose. In most of the cases, the idea was to use these resources in workshops run by ILRIG members, or workshops taking place in trade unions. Audio-visual material was important as it gave the public a more interactive, real and dynamic understanding of the historical content being taught.

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[63] ILRIG Project Report 1987-1988, p.8. DCPD

[64] Idem, p.9, DCPD, *Mozambique: A luta Continua!* (Workers of the World Series 5, November, 1987) and *Tanzania: the struggle for Ujamaa* (Workers of the World Series 6, May 1988).

For example, by 1985, following a visit to Botswana, the organisation had produced its own slideshow about Botswana's society, industry and agriculture. This slideshow was linked with the 1983 booklet on Botswana. The slides worked as supporting material for the Botswana booklet. ILRIG also made tapes about Nigeria, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Brazil, land issues in Latin America and the US multinationals.[65]

Many organisations would ask ILRIG to produce specific material needed for their own workshops, meetings, etc. Some examples of those include information packs on the development of capitalism, the US involvement in Latin America, and briefing documentation for Archbishop Tutu's visit to Brazil, the NUM delegation visit to Antigua and Barbuda, the experience of candidates of the Theology Exchange Program in Latin America, etc.[66]

By 1987 ILRIG managed to include all the audio-visual material in its resource centre, as part of the library material for users in the Western Cape region. This decision allowed many organisations (trade unions, students' organisations, educational institutions, and many others[67]) to use the material for their own purposes.

Education

From its inception, ILRIG was asked to run workshops for different organisations and trade unions. As explained before, ILRIG grew faster than it had originally planned, and it was constantly adapting itself to the political context. Thus, its primary aims changed through time and experience.

Between 1983-85, while it was creating its resource centre and producing material with international workers' information, ILRIG also developed education workshops in response to requests from some organisations.[68] In most cases, requests came from trade unions. For example, the Plastics and Allied Workers' Union in the Cape Town area requested an education workshop for shop-stewards. The aim of the

[65] ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p. 6, DCPD. The tapes titles are the following: "Botswana cattle farmers take the land", "Nigeria: Lagos Port and Dockworkers", "The New Nicaragua", "The Miners of Bolivia", "Trade Union Struggle in Brazil", "Latina America: Land and Liberty" and "Guess Who's Coming to Breakfast".
[66] ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p.7. DCPD
[67] For detailed information check ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p.33. DCPD
[68] ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p.11. DCPD

workshop was to explain the history of trade union organisation in South Africa, and compare the South African experience with experiences in Chile and Britain.

In 1984 ILRIG participated at FOSATU's Education Workshop and the History Workshop in Johannesburg. At both events, ILRIG members shared information on the history of trade unions in South Africa and Latin America and also on how to write for a popular audience.[69]

ILRIG ran courses primarily among trade unions. In general, it was asked to teach about international labour issues in relation to particular current contexts. Some of the main debates promoted by ILRIG were related to the links with international trade union organisations, the capitalist and socialist roads and workers' experiences in other countries.[70]

At the same time, other progressive organisations approached ILRIG with a request to prepare educational courses. Some churches asked for courses linked to their own projects such as, for example, the Churches Urban Planning Commission, the Board of Social Responsibility of the Anglican Church and the Theology Exchange Programme, an ecumenical group that sent candidates to Latin America.[71]

During the students' uprisings in 1985 ILRIG also promoted seminars, courses and talks for the youth, their parents and teachers' organisations that were demanding education for the people. ILRIG became a member of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and collaborated with the educational community to produce educational material and resources. These included, i.a. running courses on popular writing for groups of students, writing chapters of a new alternative history text-book, providing courses at university levels (mainly at UCT, Khanya College and Wits).[72] ILRIG also taught courses on alternative education organisations such as CACE, Popular History of COSAS group, SACHED, Community Education Resources, etc.

By 1988 the number of workshops and courses run by the organisation grew exponentially, becoming one of its main activities. As ILRIG built closer links with trade unions, the courses were developed and run in different unions across the country: COSATU, FAWU, NACTU, NUMSA, CWIU, UWM, among others.[73]

[69] ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p. 17. DCPD
[70] Idem, p. 23. DCPD
[71] Idem, p. 25. DCPD
[72] ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p. 26. DCPD
[73] ILRIG Project Report 1987-1988, p. 5-7. DCPD

ILRIG's development in the 80s

The general description of ILRIG's organisation and its inner dynamics described above, reveals how a project that began as a small extension activity linked to UCT eventually grew and adapted itself under the influence of local context. While ILRIG remained part of a University project, it would appear that its work took a different path to the one originally planned.[74] The reasons for this can quite likely be found in the particular context of protests and uprisings in South Africa during the decade of the 1980s.

Linda Cooper, David Fig and David Cooper agree that the local political context impacted ILRIG's plans. Although they may not agree on their appreciations of it, they all recall having to take decisions under the pressure of the context and having to improvise and change plans in the praxis.[75] While these changes in praxis can be seen as part of the organic growth of any organisation under political repressive domination, in the case of ILRIG it did have an impact on their members' relationships and the organisation's inner dynamics.

During the first two years of its existence, ILRIG managed to build up its main structure based on research and producing resources. But from 1985 onwards things began to change rapidly. 1985-1987 saw the emergence of a strong effervescence, and protests that led ILRIG to change direction and pursue a path that would require more engagement with other organisations and greater and deeper contact with students and workers. While it is true that the local context encouraged and promoted the spread of progressive organisations and alternative projects, ILRIG had the opportunity to choose to either engage in a more grassroots level or to play it safe and remain enclosed institutionally. As Karelse explains, some ILRIG members felt the political need to engage with the social realm of the moment (Karelse, 1995: 105-107). From an ideological approach, ILRIG members understood the political effervescence of 1985 onwards as a crucial political uprising of the people. And thus, they could collaborate in their political discussions, their understanding of the present and future plans of resistance by teaching and offering political material for

[74] Tensions among ILRIG members became stronger by the end of the 1980s. The reasons for this are linked to political disagreements that were affecting the organisation's everyday life and its links to University and trade unions. As it has been mentioned before, out of respect, the details are not going to be shared in this thesis.

[75] Linda Cooper, David Fig and David Cooper had been interviewed in depth individually during 2016-2019.

discussions and awareness. In that particular context and from that ideological position, engaging with the NECC and the educational uprisings and at the same time moving the Resource Centre to Community House might have been decisions taken in the heat of the moment but they would have a big impact in ILRIG's future.

From that time, the organisation became more popular and spread all over the country by running seminars and workshops and establishing contact with an increasing number of diverse organisations.

This change of path had a huge influence in the content developed and published by the organisation. In the following section I will describe and analyse, through a general approach, the links between local issues and the internationalist perspective in ILRIG's work.

Content

As explained before, ILRIG was collecting and producing material mainly for the purpose of sharing these materials with progressive organisations and trade unions. The diversity of its target market raised several issues and concerns among staff specifically with regard to languages, themes and approaches. While everyone agreed that the material should be translated into local languages, (and a great deal of effort was put into meeting this aim), approaches on how to teach and share that information were very different. At the same time, in the heat of the 80s, many decisions had to be made with short notice and on the fly. Consequently, one of the main difficulties that ILRIG confronted revolved around establishing a balance between its original aims and local demands.

ILRIG's material and workshops reveal the difficulty of establishing balance. In the beginning, it was clear that the organisation was specialising in international workers' history and reality. But with the passing of time and increasing demands for local political material, ILRIG found itself in a dilemma: whether to produce what the organisation thought was the workers main political ideology concern or what workers were asking for. As Karelse explains, there was a point in which international contents were displaced by local demands for local political information (Karelse, 1995: 105-106).

This essential dilemma expresses not only the features of a very particular local context but also the tensions and discrepancies that exist between theory and praxis and between different ideological analyses of reality.[76]

Booklets

As explained before, ILRIG produced its own political education material right from the start. Its main publication was a series of booklets called Workers of the World. The central idea was to share the complexities of workers' economic, social and political context in different parts of the world in a way that was deep but could still be comprehended by its readers. The booklets' particular focus was on Southern Africa and South America's workers realities.

Between 1984-1989, the following booklets were published:

1. Botswana: The story of mineworkers in an independent African country
2. Bolivia: The unfinished struggle
3. Brazil: A worker's story
4. Solidarity of Labour: The story of international trade union organisations
5. Mozambique: A luta continua!
6. Tanzania: The struggle for Ujamaa
7. Kenya. Uhuru, Whose freedom?

Writing about specific historical cases of worker's struggles and organisations was a collective decision based on ILRIG's aims, other organisations' requests and ILRIG's members' ideological analysis of the South African worker's context. On another note, however, writing and publishing these booklets provided ILRIG with a concrete product that could be shown and shared. Since ILRIG was an extension program of UCT and was funded by several different organisations, it needed to show results. The booklets were an ideal means of fulfilling this obligation as they served both as a concrete outcome for investors and a means of reporting academic research results. Consequently, it would appear that the organisation managed to combine both its

[76] For more information, read Cooper, D. 1991, 1992 and 2009.

political and institutional aims in a way that allowed it to continue to spread its work among workers, with the support of the University.

One of the major issues they faced was, how to make academic aims, political aims and people's aims intersect in such a way that all could be achieved. ILRIG's engagement with local realities was serious and this compelled its members to discuss the efficacy of booklets for engaging and working with workers. Did the conceptual development, and the vocabulary, fit the target readership? What about the way events were narrated and presented? Was it possible to truly communicate with the workers without compromising academic quality? How could the subject matter be communicated simply without patronizing the workers? I believe this tension was part of ILRIG's everyday thoughts and discussions. This was the dilemma faced by ILRIG's members and in all probability, it may never have been fully resolved.

Coming back to the selection of a theme, it is interesting to note that while most of the booklets are about local African cases and experiences of struggle, ILRIG chose to publish two booklets on Latin American cases. I mentioned before that in addition to these publications, there were also workshops on Chile's path to Socialism and special issues on Nicaragua's Revolution, among others.

Why did they choose Bolivia and Brazil for the booklets series? How were these cases relevant to the South African workers' context? In the following chapters, I will analyse this material in depth, and reflect on ILRIG's choice of Latin American history. But, as a general response, I could say LRIG members were aware that promoting an international perspective was important to the process of gaining an understanding of the local (South African) context of struggle. However, while it was acknowledged that it was important to know and understand Western history as well as the Indian Ocean realities, Latin America was perceived to be Southern Africa's main interlocutor. There are clear and significant reasons for this, including the common economic developments, social structures and systems of oppression between Latin America and South Africa. In addition, South America had experienced revolutionary struggles and revolutionary attempts that could be used as historical examples in the planning of the local struggle strategies.

As Linda Cooper explains, there were many debates about how to produce the booklets, particularly in terms of vocabulary, language, concepts and display[77] (Cooper, L, 1985). For this reason, ILRIG conducted a brief survey among Trade Union members. The responses showed how different types of workers approached the material differently, but also revealed that Latin American cases seemed to be valued as international examples that could contribute to a wider perspective on the workers' context in the world and to a better understanding of the local context. While in many cases the booklets were read on their own, they were combined with audio-visual material when used in workshops and seminars. Therefore, descriptions of content should also take under consideration the pedagogical approaches adopted by ILRIG when teaching and sharing information. I describe these fundamental issues in the following sections, and provide a deeper and more detailed analysis of Latin American contents and pedagogies in the next chapters.

Audio-Visual material

During the 80s ILRIG produced slide and tape presentations related to the booklets as means of complementing the written material with a more interactive one: audios, slides, videos, etc. As part of a popular education strategy, the material was created with the intention of opening diverse channels for workers to connect with their personal local context through international examples, by using visual material. It is also important to take under consideration the fact that many rank and file workers did not know how to read. Consequently, this material became the primary means of sharing content with them.

By 1987, ILRIG's library had accumulated audio-visuals on Bolivia, Brazil, Britain, Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Sri Lanka, the US, the USSR and Zimbabwe, Botswana, Haiti, Mozambique and Tanzania.[78] Most of this audio-visual material was made based on films and documentaries available in various countries.

[77] From the interviews and documents analysed for this research, it does not seem to have been deep arguments among ILRIG members on the cases that should have been included in the booklets. It is interesting to highlight that ILRIG members seemed to agree on the main topics and study cases to be published while disagreeing on how to introduce and present them to the public.
[78] ILRIG Project Report 1985-1987, p. 14-15. DCPD

Some of ILRIG's own audio-visual productions covered the following themes: The miners of Bolivia, The workers of Brazil, The State of emergency (in South Africa), Farmworkers of Brazil, The new Nicaragua and Botswana, cattle owners take the land.

By this time (1987), there were more than 60 organisations across South Africa borrowing audio-visual materials from ILRIG.[79] One year later, in 1988, the organisation's audio-visual collection had tripled to more than 50 videos and was being used by many organisations and universities on a daily basis.[80] This demand prompted ILRIG to make several copies of the material and to acquire its own TV-video recorder.[81]

Seminars and Workshops

As has already been explained, ILRIG began to run seminars and workshops from early in its existence. In most of the cases, these were organised in response to requests by other organisations. Organisations would request specific themes and ILRIG would design a seminar accordingly, using both internally and externally produced material, and defining specific content and conceptual framework.

Linda Cooper reflected on this dynamic during one of our meetings and explained that ILRIG's work was a response to social effervescence and hunger for alternative ideas[82]. In that sense, it seems to me that Linda understood her positionality in society as being that of an educator and facilitator. From Linda Cooper's perspective, workshops helped to create a bigger framework within which to analyse local realities.

Most of the workshops were organised in several stages. The first stage usually began with sharing experiences related to the main theme. The second stage always included some content and material to be read/watched and discussed. And finally,

[79] Idem, p.33-34. DCPD
[80] For example, Chile's coup d'état video was being used in the History department to teach Latin American history (and dictatorship regimes). Anne Mager's personal documents.
[81] Report 1987-1988, p.13. DCPD
[82] During the early 1980s, South African trade unions and workers' organisations were reorganising and becoming stronger, even when the apartheid system was still controlling, repressing and oppressing people's organisations. These emergent developments inside people's movements and organisations depended on the availability and provision of information and ideas to enrich and promote their discussions and analyses of the local political situation.

there would be a general sharing of positions which would then be taken into consideration when planning actions and strategies. The intention behind this structure for running workshops was to promote and provide a space for committing with workers in a responsible way and for valuing their own experiences, voices and thoughts in the process of producing collective knowledge.

For example, Linda Cooper recalls a specific workshop they had to run for NUMSA on African Socialism. They began the workshop by opening the space to working in groups and sharing experiences from the participants' personal work backgrounds. The ILRIG team intended for this to be an introductory activity which, they assumed, would not take long. Nevertheless, as people seized the opportunity to talk about themselves and their work, the activity became a special moment in which people were able to introduce themselves and share their concerns in a welcoming space that promoted collective interaction. Consequently, the original idea of the seminar transformed itself in the praxis, which also altered its aims. Linda affirmed that after approximately four hours of introductions, the facilitators were able to continue with their original aim, but, in all probability the whole course of the seminar changed and became an intense personal experience, rather than an analysis of Mozambican factories led by workers.

This example shows how workshops were held based in a general conceptual content but also linked with the real-life experiences of real people. In that sense, taking workers and their knowledge as part of the common knowledge production process required acceptance of the fact that what was planned for that session might change completely in the practice and that this does not equate to a failure in the educational process but, on the contrary, should be viewed as a success. Providing the space for the sharing of ideas and experiences, is the first step in the production of knowledge based on popular education theories.

Not all ILRIG members shared the same approach to knowledge and education. Depending on their personal perspectives, workshops and seminars were run in different ways. Some were more academic, some more political and some were influenced more deeply by popular education methodologies. So, while there was a common agreement in terms of contents, their pedagogical perspectives and performances were diverse, based on personality features and personal understandings on what was education and how to share and produce knowledge. In

the following section, pedagogical approaches will be described and analysed in depth.

David Fig recalls how many of the workshops and seminars had to be prepared in the rush of the moment, which in many cases meant there was no time to plan and reflect deeply on how to run them.[83] Probably, more often than not, the planning was more about content than pedagogical strategies.

The fact that the courses were done in the heat of the context does not mean there was no pedagogical or political approach to it. Even if there was not enough time for planning, each of ILRIG's facilitators had an idea on how to run the event. Most of ILRIG's members did have either academic training or educational training and that means they could draw on their personal backgrounds as a tool to develop educational experiences. Some facilitators were exposed to popular education theories while they were university students, others were influenced by a more academic way of teaching, and others yet had their personal experiences as students to teach them how to run a workshop.

Not having sufficient time to plan and to spend thinking about and reflecting on how to teach, quite likely had an impact on the way workshops were taking place, in the relationship with the public and also among ILRIG's members as well.

Going through the experience of facilitating seminars does have an impact in a political way and also on a more personal level as well. Many members began to reflect on their educational practices after a few experiences and, in turn, perhaps began to question why and how to teach and what teaching means.[84] Regardless of their personal perspectives on pedagogical strategies, ILRIG members did share a common belief in education as a way of sharing alternative knowledge and ideas, and as a way of thinking critically and engaging with the local reality in a responsible way. In conclusion, ILRIG members believed their resources and information were an important input that combined with workshops could contribute to a better

[83] Conversations with David Fig took place in his house in Johannesburg in June 2017 and continued by email and phone calls during 2018.

[84] In the case of David Cooper, he remembers how he used to plan his seminars carefully but admits his way of running workshops was probably more academic than the other members due to his personal background and experience and his personality. In the case of Linda Cooper, it is clear she has been reflecting on her practice as a facilitator/teacher/educator since then until nowadays. For more details, read Cooper, L, 1985.

understanding of the South African context and a better planning of struggle strategies.

The public

In its origins, ILRIG's content was produced for the general public as a way to contribute to the circulation of information. While this general aim has always been one of the foundations of the project, as I explained before, ILRIG tended to shift into a more pedagogical/educational approach as a response to the demands from local communities and organisations for seminars and workshops. This is an important issue as it resulted in a deeper link between seminars and booklets as the teaching material used for them. But at the same time, as Linda Cooper recalls, many trade unions only wanted access to the written material, so that they could use it in their own meetings and seminars.

Writing a booklet for its own circulation is not the same as writing it knowing it will be used as teaching material, as the content will be determined by the writer's concept of the public. From one perspective, the public is seen as independent and as possessing enough of an understanding of context to be critical about the reading material. From the other perspective, the public is seen as a group of people that do not have enough knowledge about the theme, even if it is critical. I believe the approach to designing a general circulation material differs from the approach to designing educational material, although it is possible to try and find a meeting point in between. Surveys produced by ILRIG in 1985 show this difficulty (Cooper, 1985). This problem is also deeply connected with the concrete public that used the material (whether in ILRIG seminars or not). University students, rank-and-file workers, shop stewards and leaders from the trade unions did not share the same background or the same concerns. While ILRIG did manage to translate booklets into local languages as a way to be able to bridge distances with workers, some unionists saw concepts and explanations as oversimplified (based on their personal point of view) while they also recognised that most of the general workers had difficulties reading the booklets because of their poor educational background (Cooper, 1985:3).

The contradictions and dichotomies raised here are in fact a result of ILRIG's lack of a clearer definition of its public. It is not the same to produce material for rank-and-file workers or trade union leaders or university students. Although this could be seen as a problem, it expresses in fact the particularities of the context in which ILRIG was producing materials and the changes the organisation went through in the heat of the 80s uprisings.

Linda Cooper recalls running a seminar for university students in which they engaged deeply with more theoretical and conceptual debates. In one of our meetings, she reflected on it and expressed how conceptual the debate became and how the approach taken for that workshop was completely different to the one used with workers. In that sense, ILRIG's written material could be used differently depending on the public of the seminars. As a general source of information, booklets were an attempt to engage with a wide and diverse public, but it was in the educational encounters where their message could be shared and explained in a more precise way. One of the questions that remains unanswered is, how trade unions used ILRIG material when running their own meetings and workshops. But, as it is generally known, written material takes on its own life once it's shared with the public, who, in fact, assigns its own meanings to it.

Pedagogy

The practice of teaching is a way in which people can produce knowledge. It is true that this does not always happen and depends mainly on how the teacher understands the process and purposes of teaching and the agency (or not) of the group. And it is also true that it can be an instance of reproduction of dominant/oppressive ideas or emancipation, liberation and innovation.

ILRIG's work was based on the belief that by sharing knowledge that in many cases was either banned or racialised, enabled people to gain a bigger picture from which to question the system and plan their actions and a better future society. In that sense, while the main aim was not teaching (ILRIG's essence was the production and distribution of information), the organisation found itself completely involved in it, not only by running workshops but also by discussing how their material should be planned, written, edited and presented to the public.

The way ILRIG members approached the production of its materials varied. Nevertheless, all of them had been influenced, to some extent, by Freirean pedagogy theory. Paulo Freire's pedagogy has been circulating in South Africa since the 70s and had a huge impact on the youth[85]. Many ILRIG members were trained, during their university years, in Freirean pedagogy and its new approach to understanding teaching, knowledge and people, which influenced the way these members approached workshops and booklets.

There are many layers that can be analysed regarding pedagogy in ILRIG's projects. I will focus on the teaching/learning definition and positionality as the main two issues facilitators had to deal with either when running workshops or writing content for the booklets.

There was a general concern regarding how to display the information that they wanted to share with the public. On one hand, this can be seen in the written material: in the way stories are told, the general explanations and descriptions and the vocabulary chosen for that. At the same time, that can also be seen, in the images and general display of the content in the booklets. There was a deep concern over how pedagogical the booklets could be and how complex concepts could be shared. On the other hand, displaying information during workshops had a different dynamic but was still an important issue that needed to be planned and thought through. In the case of workshops, each facilitator had his/her own approach to sharing information. Some preferred a more expository approach with more explanations and questions, some preferred to base their strategy on the group and their interests, while others preferred to leave it open to the audience's character and to improvise based on it. The range of approaches on how to share and produce information varied from a more inductive approach to a deep Freirean methodology. These differences were probably based on personal teaching expertise but also on specific ideas about teaching/learning. Some thought it was important to explain and contribute by sharing information that the public did not have access to and/or knowledge about. Some others thought the strength of workshops relied on opening spaces for the public to share their personal knowledge and debate. While members were aware that they held different perspectives on the definition of teaching/learning, this did not affect their working together and they would usually

[85] For more information on it, read Naidoo, 2015.

accept the proposal of the main facilitator and try to adapt to it. In general, even when approaches differed, all facilitators shared a common belief in education as a space in which to share and produce knowledge with and for the public.

In the case of positionality (based on Linda and David Cooper's memories) it seems that the way facilitators positioned themselves differed from sharing their political perspectives in an explicit way that was open to debate and discussion, to a more neutral position in which facilitators tried to avoid sharing their personal ideas and acting as external subjects. As diverse as the positionality was, members worked in teams of three (or more) when running workshops and writing and publishing booklets. This means groups were diverse and had to reach consensus when working together. That diversity was probably difficult to deal with but at the same time very enriching to the project. Furthermore, it opened different possibilities and spaces for learning from each other. Expressing or not expressing their political positions while teaching or writing had to do with their political analysis of the moment, their understanding of their personal agency as well as their approach to education. Whether they chose to share their positionality or not, they shared a common understanding of education as a political act.

Through the interviews, Linda reflected on the aim of the contents and the pedagogical approach to it, including language and conceptualisations. But she also reflected on workers' perceptions, their previous knowledge and their understanding of their society and context. In a past and present confluence, through memories and reflections, Linda expressed how she had changed her approach over workers education and how ILRIG experience was an important stage in which intense work was taking place in a very particular historical moment, unexpected for many of them. One of the main issues that was evident through her interviews and articles, is the concern over what knowledge means and what workers understand as knowledge and how to share and produce it. That concern was already beginning to appear in Linda's articles as early as 1985. By that time, she was already questioning ILRIG's practices not in terms of research or political approach but from a pedagogical perspective (Cooper, L, 1985). As part of ILRIG's concern with their work and impact, the organisation conducted a survey among workers in 1985. The feedback received helped the team to gain a clearer idea of how the public was understanding and seeing their work. Taking into consideration workers' opinion on

workshops and booklets shows the level of commitment and responsibility with which ILRIG's team approached knowledge and education.

Linda Cooper's article recovers the results from the survey and analyses them. She reflects on their practices and shows that, while there was a clear aim to produce and spread material related to international labour issues, it seems that the organisation did not have a plan in terms of how to approach the educational task and had to learn it through time and experience (Cooper, L, 1985). It is evident that there was feedback between theory and praxis. ILRIG staff had a theoretical and ideological position regarding the South African context, the workers and the struggle against apartheid (and capitalism). And ILRIG projects became the space of action, the praxis where all that ideological approach became experience. From my perspective, education and its own specificities became the main space within which to test the link between political ideology and praxis.

The questions about ILRIGs pedagogy had to do not only with emancipatory/liberation pedagogy but also with defining ILRIGs main public (in relationship with the idea of revolutionary struggles in the Capitalist world). Union leaders, shop stewards, rank and file workers, students, etc. Defining the public was probably difficult as ILRIG was engaging with very diverse communities (university students, workers, trade union leaders, Christian organisations, civil communities, etc.). Nevertheless, ILRIG members (consciously or unconsciously) had a definition of what they understood as the way to go against apartheid and probably that definition was related to their own political approach and positionality[86].

Through ILRIG's booklets and materials it is possible to see the importance of Latin American content to their approach to information sharing. In their aim to share a bigger picture with the people, Latin American history, became one of the main themes alongside Southern African affairs. Nevertheless, producing those materials and sharing the information did not, in and of itself, equate to an emancipatory

[86] One of the main political discussions among ILRIG members was based on their different political perspectives on the local struggle and workers' positionality. Some of ILRIG's members believed in the strengthening of the workers' movement and the creation of a workers' party while others supported the Communist Party and the African National Congress, and other political organisations. The main political questions were who should lead the struggle against apartheid, who was the main engine and agent of the revolution against capitalism in South Africa and who should lead the revolution and liberation movement. This is why studying Latin American liberation movements was so important, as it would provide historical information from similar experiences (to the South African one) in the South Atlantic that could be analysed when planning the local struggle.

practice. That is why it is important to also underline that, while Latin American content was shared, in some cases there was also a Latin American methodology in practice, based on Freirean pedagogy in an intent to open spaces for liberation and conscientisation. There was a deep commitment in their effort to produce a local, non-Eurocentric understanding of South Africa's reality. In ILRIG's Project there was a confluence of Marxist theory and Latin American studies in their production of a Southern African approach to a common South Atlantic context of oppression. In other words, ILRIG was producing knowledge from and for the South.

The link between Marxism, Latin American studies and Southern African approaches was not always balanced and peaceful. There were probably tensions and disputes among ideas and beliefs based on particular South African problematics and concrete issues. And quite possibly, those tensions were not always resolved. This tension may well have been a common engine for ILRIG's team to keep engaging with each other's perspectives and ideas and producing new analysis. Reflecting on ILRIG's work, it is evident that there is tension between a more traditional Marxist approach to an analysis of South Africa's affairs and a more Southern approach to it. Historically, in many cases all over the South Atlantic, Marxism was adopted as the main conceptual framework for approaching an understanding of local realities. Debates over its effects and impact had taken place through time and space. Nowadays many activists and academics are questioning the extent to which Marxism is a Eurocentric ideology and how it can be adapted to local ways of thinking. ILRIG is an interesting case for identifying these links between Marxism and Southern knowledge production. Historically, there was a tendency to understand South African intellectuals, activists and struggle projects in terms of dialogue with (or even direct influence by) Marxist theory coming from the North. ILRIG evidences a more complex scenario that allows us to problematize this general belief. There was a network of ideas circulating among ILRIG members and these were adopted and adapted into the local context. ILRIG's conceptual understanding of South Africa's context was shaped by local ideas that selected and adjusted Marxist theory and Latin American theories and experiences as tools in their process of producing local knowledge. There was a clear understanding of the South as space interconnected through experiences of domination and struggles. Hence, even if Northern ideas were helpful, ILRIG saw the South as an active agent of its own history. In other words, ILRIG had a conceptual approach that can be

considered to be part of the South Atlantic knowledge production. And at the same time, ILRIG's practices were also based on that same conceptual background. Theory and praxis were deeply engaged with each other.

The South Atlantic network

As we mentioned in other chapters, the links and networks with Latin American ideas had been developed in Southern Africa through time and movement of people. Travelers, books, news were coming and going from one side of the South Atlantic to the other. At the same time, lots of material about Latin America was also coming to South Africa from London. This flow of material and people embedded ILRIG's experience and had a huge impact on the way members understood knowledge and how important it was to have a bigger picture.

Many of ILRIG's members had been exposed to Freirean methodology in South Africa, during their youth, while studying at university. They learnt the theory and got involved in literacy projects led by Freirean ideas. Initial experience was later enriched by their encounters with Latin American people in exile who shared information on their country's oppressive contexts, as well as reading and audio-visual material. Linda Cooper recalls how affected she felt by meeting Chilean students while in London and how many Latin American groups had a big presence among students. David Fig, as described previously, was engaged with the Latin America Bureau and managed to learn and accumulate lots of material on Latin American history that was later brought back to South Africa. Dinga Sikwebu was invited to participate in a special trip to Italy to be part of a workshop and a magazine publication by the International Documentation and Communication Centre (IDOC), where there were many Latin Americans sharing experiences in Uruguay, Nicaragua, Chile, Brazil, among others.[87]

Some ILRIG members did travel to Latin America. It was not enough to meet people and read about events there, they wanted to have first-hand experience of being there. Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru… Regardless of how many places they visited and how long they travelled, the experience of simply being in those countries was enough to shake their ideas and constructed images of the continent. Besides the

[87] For more information, check *IDOC,* Vol.19, No.6/87, December, 1987. ILRIG Archive

language barrier, ways of living and everyday life in oppressive contexts made them realise that South African oppression had its own dynamics that were to some extent both similar to, and also different from Latin American ones. Linda Cooper and David Fig shared anecdotes from those trips in our meetings. And it seemed to me that both of them connected with those memories in a way that made them reflect about it afresh, 30 years on. It is clear that those trips had a personal impact that remain important even after so many years.

Besides the personal effect of Latin American links, trips also allowed them to make direct contact with people and begin to build up South Atlantic networks. These networks made it possible for people to come and go and share local experiences and realities. Linda Cooper remembers getting in touch with members of trade unions in Brazil and miners in Bolivia. David Fig met political activists in Paraguay and Human Rights organisations and workers activists in Brazil.[88] These links opened a space for concrete and real political and ideological exchanges.

Thus, a few years later, ILRIG also received visitors from Latin America; for example, Father Linus Dolan OP, Peruvian priest from Instituto de Promoción de Educación Popular and Lilia Azevedo and Fr. João Xerri representing Church organisations from São Paulo, Brazil. The last two were also engaged with other South African organisations related with the theology of liberation and popular education.[89]

As part of these ideological and conceptual exchanges, ILRIG also sent a few copies of the Workers of the World series publications, specifically the booklet on Brazil's history, to some activist/educational NGOs in Sao Paulo that translated the booklet into Portuguese and used it as an educational material.[90]

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[88] David Fig travelled to Latin America in 1983 as a result of his involvement with the Latin America Bureau. His visit lasted for a period of six months and was a deep experience in which he had four months of direct contact with worker activists in Sao Paulo and the ABC. He also travelled to Paraguay during this time and made contact with trade union support organisations. David was aware of the language barrier before traveling and learnt Portuguese.

[89] Frei Xerri and Frei Dolan were both Dominican friars engaged with theology of liberation. They met in Peru in 1983 while Frei Xerri attended a seminar run by Gustavo Gutierrez at Universidad Católica de Lima, Peru. In that same theology of liberation course, they both met Mike Deeb who introduced them to anti-apartheid movements. After that experience, both friars went to South Africa to visit and get connected with those movements through church. Lilia do Amaral Azevedo was part of that visit as a professional translator (Portuguese, French, Spanish, English) working as a volunteer in a Pastoral Center linked to the Dominicans that helped trade unionists. As a result, from this particular visit, Lilia translated Steve Biko's writings on Black Consciousness into Portuguese. At the same time, in 1985 Lilia Azevedo and Frei Xerri published a book in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in Portuguese about their experience and views of South Africa called *Cartas da Africa do Sul: uma experiencia do apartheid.*

[90] This information was provided by David Fig after reading the draft version of this dissertation.

These examples work as small concrete cases that explain how interconnected the two sides of the ocean were. Through books, publications, visits, experiences, discussions, workshops, etc. South African organisations were able to engage in the Southern knowledge production and produce local analyses that could have an important impact in the struggle against apartheid and the thinking of a different future.

In this chapter I introduced features and history of the organisation. As it was explained before, ILRIG's main concern was to produce and share resources and information that would contribute to a wider perspective and better understanding of the South African political context. ILRIG's team was deeply concerned with how providing information on other historical struggles in the South Atlantic could enrich local perspectives and future plans. This is why they chose specific Latin American and African cases for their booklets.

In the case of the Latin American experiences, ILIRG had to translate those experiences into the local South African reality. This means not only language translations but also the way of explaining historical events and experiences for the South African public. In that process of multiple translations, ILRIG was not only sharing information but also producing alternative knowledges. In the following chapter, I will describe and analyse the reading material produced by ILRIG on Latin America. The aim is to reflect on how ILRIG was understanding and creating an image of Latin America to share among the people as a way to also reflect on South Africa's reality but situated in an international South Atlantic context. In other words, the main purpose of the following chapter is to study the ways in which Latin American ideas were adopted and adapted as part of the South Atlantic knowledge production process in the South African context.

Chapter 5

Latin American ideas in praxis. ILRIG's understanding of Latin America.

Sharing ideas and producing knowledge

How did ILRIG members understand Latin American history, politics and theory? How did they adopt and adapt these contents as part of their own program? The aim of this chapter is to analyse ILRIG's material on Latin America, describe the cases chosen, their narratives and the ways ILRIG read Latin American realities and showcased them in their booklets, pamphlets and courses.

As mentioned before, ILRIG developed different resources to promote the circulation of ideas and knowledge in an extremely repressive South African context. The main contention of this chapter is that ILRIG not only made the circulation of ideas possible but also produced knowledge by creating their own educational material. The Workers of the World booklets, as well as the audio-visual material and teaching they produced, reflected ILRIG members' personal understanding of Latin American ideas. In other words, they were not just editing Latin American material, but processing it through their personal lenses and reflections and thereby making it accessible to the general public. In short ILRIG was not a passive reproducer of ideas but, rather, an active producer of them.

Through ILRIG's material, it is possible to reflect on how South African organisations were aware of the necessity to understand Latin American experiences as examples that could influence thinking about and planning the local struggle and the future South Africa as well. It should be noted that few (if any) ILRIG members could read or speak Spanish. This lack of understanding of the language determined what material they could connect with. It also implies that ILRIG's understanding of Latin America was affected by the translation process. Nevertheless, the significance of what took place in this relationship between Latin American and South African ideas does not reside in the material that ILRIG's members were able to access, but in the members' own construction of the idea of Latin America and their understanding of it. This "construction and understanding" will be analysed in the chapter.

The chapter is organised around key publications produced within the organisation. Each is described and analysed from its physical appearance to its deepest conceptual proposals. The way information is displayed and the concepts chosen to explain these histories express how ILRIG's members were interpreting and sharing Latin American history. For this reason, describing and analysing the material from a structural and conceptual way becomes important because it reflects ILRIG's understanding of Latin American history and how they produced knowledge.

It is important to mention that this chapter is based on the researcher's analysis. These descriptions, reflections and critiques are based in the researcher's personal Latin American background, cosmology and historical knowledge. The history of the continent, the concepts and social contexts are well known by the researcher. Consequently, her understanding of ILRIG's content is based on a Latin American perspective, not a Southern African one. For this reason, many concepts and narratives that are part of ILRIG publications, are questioned and examined closely.

This chapter specifically focuses on the way ILRIG members described and defined Latin American realities. And the comments and critiques made by the researcher do not aim to mark what is right or wrong, but rather to show the distance existing in any process of social translation.

The explanation for this relies on the fact that the process of understanding a different reality requires a process of translation. The latter process provides an opportunity for the re-signification of those realities based on local perspectives and concerns. As part of a reflection in terms of knowledge production, this particular encounter of perspectives and cosmologies makes the analysis of the publications an experience in which differing knowledge and epistemologies are in dialogue. In other words, the researcher's reflections should not be taken as more true or more correct than ILRIG's ones.

This chapter should be seen as an exercise in which two disparate cosmologies and realities are in dialogue in two distinct ways. The first dialogue takes place in ILRIG's publications; it reflects the way they understood and shared Latin American historical cases. The second dialogue begins to take place in the researcher's description and analysis. This dialogue will continue in the next chapter, as this current chapter does not include ILRIG members' voices and reflections. Debates and discussions with

ILRIG members on the publications and the meanings and concepts will be presented. Therefore, the dialogue that begins to take place in this chapter will continue in the next. The ultimate aim of these two chapters is to promote multiple layers of analysis, reflection and dialogue between two different realities. These took place in the past -through the publications - and in the present - through the research itself. All these dialogues and reflections contribute to the process of recreating how knowledge was and is produced and is in dialogue.

On multiple translations

Before introducing the analysis of the material, it is important to describe the translation process as it had a big impact on the process of knowledge production.

The process of reading, discussing and writing about Latin American history and ideas, involved several instances of translation. The first, and most obvious, was the language translation, whereby American material was translated from Spanish and-or Portuguese into English. The second translation took place in ILRIG's members' understanding of Latin American history and ideas. In this instance, the main issue was how to understand specificities from Latin American realities from a South African perspective. The third process occurred when producing ILRIG's material. This necessitated a process of translation of academic and political content into a more accessible and understandable narrative for the South African public. In this case there was also a language translation process from English into South African languages. The fourth, and final, translation instance took place among readers.

In other words, the process of sharing Latin American history in the South African context implied several instances of translation: both inter-linguistic and inter-cosmologic. Cosmologic refers to one's understanding of the meaning of life, it is used here to suggest that different ways of thinking and understanding the world were being exchanged and, in so doing, were creating the space for different and new ways of understanding reality. In that sense, as Walter Mignolo and Freya Schiwy explain, grammar, cosmology and knowledge are interrelated and cannot be separated one from the other (Mignolo, M, Schiwy, F, 2003: 12). Following this

perspective, the translation process allows different realities to transcend time and space: the past becomes present in a different territory with different features.

So how did that Latin American content transform and develop in this long and multiple process of circulation and translation? This chapter focuses on ILRIG's translation processes, on how ILRIG exposed and explained Latin American realities and histories. In many cases, Latin American concepts and features had to be translated into South African definitions and within social dimensions. This chapter will focus on those processes because the process of translation inevitably results in knowledge production.

Content analysis: history, concepts and narrations

In the following section, a selection of ILRIG's publications is described and analysed based on the researcher's perspective and Latin American knowledge. As explained in the previous chapters, ILRIG developed educational material in the form of booklets, pamphlets, audio-visual material and workshops.

During the 80s nine booklets were produced, published, distributed, sold and translated into different local languages. Over the course of a decade, the organisation managed to sell more than 50.000 copies of these booklets, which shows how influential ILRIG's publications were at that time. Of those nine booklets, seven were part of the Workers of the World Series and the other two were special editions produced for specific occasions. This section focuses specifically on four booklets. Three of these belong to the Workers of the World Series (Bolivia, Brazil and Solidarity of Labour) and the other is a booklet on Nicaragua's Revolution requested by a Cape Town trade union.

During the same time period, the 1980s, ILRIG produced 24 audio-visual tapes on very diverse themes and study cases. For the purposes of this research, only two transcripts were selected to be analysed. This has to do with the fact that only written scripts for these two tapes (viz. the Bolivia script and the Nicaragua script) were found during the research.

As explained in the previous chapters, ILRIG's publications were produced collectively, based on team planning and discussions. ILRIG's selection of themes

and types of publications was based on the organisation's aim to produce resources and information that could circulate among workers, students and communities as a way to provide alternative perspectives and contents that could enrich local debates. More specifically, they believed that by sharing international cases of workers' struggles and historical labour conditions, they could contribute towards deepening the local discussions over South Africa's reality and struggles' strategies.

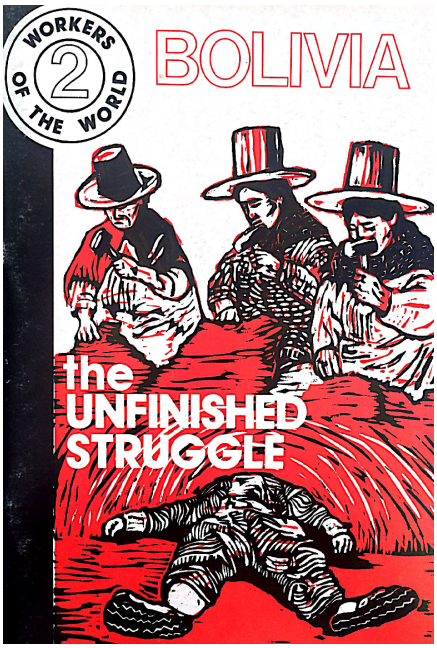
Most of the material produced by ILRIG was created for the purpose of presenting different study cases from different parts of the Third World. These studies focused on workers' labour conditions, and workers' rights and struggles. This had to do with ILRIG's links with South African trade unions and workers organisations and the necessity for alternative political educational material that could bring new perspectives into workers' understanding of the political and economic struggle in South Africa. ILRIG believed that South Africa's reality needed to be analysed as part of the broader context of capitalist oppression and exploitation. Hence, the need to understand other cases and examples as a means of creating a broader perspective and enabling a deeper analysis.

In order to achieve these aims, specific concepts appeared repeatedly in most of ILRIG's publications. Recurrent themes included the idea of the working class, the class struggle, debates over leadership in the struggles, the concept of class alliance, the idea of a popular front, democracy, property, production systems, etc. These concepts are used, not only to reflect on the local context, but also to describe the study cases. In other words, concepts that have their roots in Marxists theories are used to understand and reflect on Southern realities, as common concerns that promote dialogues between the cases. This use could be seen as another layer in the process of translation, in which Marxists ideas are appropriated as a way to create a common ground among different realities.

In the following pages, ILRIG's publication is described and analysed based on the idea that understanding other realities is a difficult task that requires substantial epistemological effort and that cannot ever be completely fulfilled. As Santos (2007) proposes, in the process of accepting, recognising and respecting the ecology of knowledges, it is important to give space to the absences and the silences. ILRIG's attempts to share alternative histories were, in themselves, a process of knowledge production in which other realities were translated as much as possible to the South

African context, and in that process, there was a reinvention and resignification of those other realities. It is important to notice that comments and critiques made by the researcher on the concepts and ideas developed by ILRIG in their publications do not aim to express that ILRIG's perspective was wrong or that they misunderstood local Latin American realities. The comments and critiques specifically aim to reflect on the process of translation of alternative realities as a process of resignification and production of knowledge. Accepting the fact that complete understanding among different worlds and cosmologies is not possible, should not be understood as a problem or failure but rather as a relief and an opportunity to build a different dynamic among diverse realities.

Workers of the World 2: Bolivia. The Unfinished Struggle



This booklet was published in 1985 as part of ILRIG's project to research, study and share material on other workers' experiences. It is very interesting that ILRIG chose Bolivia as a study case, first of all, because not many people in South Africa were aware of Bolivian reality and history and thus, were unable to see the connection between the two countries. Bolivia is a study case that has many similarities with South Africa through its history and even into the present. Nevertheless, it was only in the 21st Century that those connections became more popular and visible and accessible to study.[91]

The fact that ILRIG was studying, publishing and teaching Bolivian history during the 80s underlines the organisation's commitment to promoting an understanding of the world from a more international and meaningful approach. They could have chosen many other cases, but they chose Bolivia. Why? Because they could see in Bolivia a reality and a history of struggles that could work as an answer to the South African reality. In one of his interviews, David Cooper explained why he saw this case as being important. From his perspective, Bolivia is a country that has many structural similarities to South Africa: it is a mining country where the indigenous population

[91] Even Evo Morales mentioned the South African reality during his first speech as president of the country in January 2006 and affirmed "Bolivia looks like South Africa". Evo Morales was the first indigenous president of the country, elected democratically. Since his first election, his government had made many significant reforms that gave voice, full citizenship and many rights to indigenous people in Bolivia, one of the countries with the highest indigenous population in the continent that had been left behind power and rights for centuries.

works as miners; it is an underdeveloped country that was colonised and subsequently dominated by international capital interests. Furthermore, like South Africa, Bolivia is a country where a minority of the population controlled and exploited the majority. From David Cooper's point of view, Bolivia was a key case study, as it too experienced a revolution that did not succeed completely. This made Bolivia an excellent country to analyse in the context of the South African struggle against apartheid.[92]

The display

The Bolivia booklet has 68 pages of Bolivian history from below, based mainly in the biography of Domitla Barrios de Chungara, written by her and Moema Viezzer.[93] It mixes powerful images of Bolivian people with drawings, statements, text and definitions. In a very pedagogical way, this booklet sets out to explain the history of the Bolivian people, the revolutionary struggle and the factors that hindered the revolution's progress and resulted in its failure to succeed completely. As Bolivia is not familiar to South Africans; the authors made a huge effort to make its relevance understandable. To this end, they included maps, pictures and small comparisons with South Africa, as a way to translate the Bolivian world into local and familiar ideas.

In terms of its presentation, the booklet has a large image of indigenous workers on the cover, a serigraphy, designed by a South African artist. On the inside, most of the images are pictures from Bolivia's landscape and people. While there is some colour on the cover, (black, red and white), the inside is entirely black and white. The booklet's cover is a unique piece of art that represents three indigenous women dressed in traditional costumes. The image of three women, hammering rocks, evokes a reference to mining. Below the women, a man lies on the floor. The man is dressed in a suit and his head is covered by the rocks that the women are hammering on. He seems to represent a middle-class man, as he is wearing a suit, similar to the one appearing in page 34, where the booklet explains the class relations in Bolivia the image is displayed and discussed later on in this chapter. The

[92] David Cooper interview, 2017.
[93] Barrios De Chungara, D. and Viezzer, M. (1978). *Let me speak, Testimony of Domitla, a woman from the Bolivian mines,* London: Stage 1.

message seems to refer to the power of women and their organisations in the struggle against exploitation. Nevertheless, the booklet develops a more complex narrative, which will be explained in the following sections.

In terms of content organisation, the booklet is divided into six parts that follow a chronological order. There is a clear division and hierarchy of information created by titles, subtitles, bulleted lists, etc. This organization makes the layout look very neat and helps the reader to move from the more general to the more particular information. At the same time, special sections with specific comments are displayed in different fonts and sizes. These work as a general conclusion or conceptual explanation. This structuring of the information in the booklet, made it very pedagogical and enabled the reader to follow the ideas with ease.

The relationship between images and text in the booklets, is also very pedagogical and clear. In many cases, as the aim was to develop a people's narrative, images are portraits from workers and are linked to workers' comments and short anecdotes about their lives. In other cases, images show the workers' environment and work conditions. Those general images are connected to the more general explanations.

General description

The Bolivian booklet tells the story of the Bolivian Revolution that took place in 1952 and its consequences. The first two pages of the booklet present a brief introduction to the main theme, the revolution, the people and the difficulties and achievements. Nevertheless, to make Bolivia's history accessible to people, the booklet first introduces a general overview of Bolivia's history and social context. It displays a map to show where the country is located and gives information about population and cities.[94] By the time the booklet was written, there were 6 million people living in Bolivia. The country is next to the Andes Mountains and its two main cities are La Paz and Santa Cruz.

The booklet briefly describes the pre-colonial and colonial history of the country.[95] The Inca Kingdom was in control of the region where there were Aymara and

[94] ILRIG, *Bolivia: the unfinished struggle*, Workers of the World series, Vol. 2, Cape Town 1985, pp.6-7.
[95] Idem, pp.8-11.

Quechua speaking people living together, before the Spanish colonisers arrived. Five hundred years ago, the Spanish defeated the Incas and took over the government and control of the region. Since then the territory became a Spanish colony and had to produce crops, silver and gold for the Spanish crown.

Following this short explanation, the booklet describes the context in which Bolivia gained independence from Spain. As part of a more general continental struggle during the early 1800s, Bolivian Spanish settlers demanded independence from Spain. In order to win the Independence wars, the settlers joined forces with the local population. Nevertheless, once independence was gained, settlers remained in power.[96]

The next two pages of the booklet are dedicated to describing the tin mining industry and the power relations around it. Most of the mines were owned by three families who sold the tin to North America and Europe. The booklet explains that Bolivia's economy depended on exporting minerals as there were no factories in the country. Food also had to be imported from neighbouring countries.[97]

To explain the social composition of Bolivia, the booklet presents a categorisation based on the idea of class. The booklet divides the Bolivian people into a ruling class, a middle class, a working class and peasants. At the same time, it addresses the impact of race and language on the social scale.[98]

After developing a general introduction, the booklet moves on to focus on the workers of the mines. The second part of the booklet describes their working and living conditions and workers' organisations; and gives many examples by using workers' memories, quotations and pictures.[99] Bolivian mines are located in altitude, far away from the cities, which forces workers and their families to live close to the mines.

The booklet describes the working conditions by explaining how workers had to work day and night, six days a week, for salaries that were not enough to cover basic needs (p.14). The work is dangerous as it can expose workers to many sicknesses.

[96] Idem, p.10.
[97] Idem.
[98] Idem, pp.12-13.
[99] Idem, pp.14-27.

In order to give the reader an understanding of the plight of the workers, the booklet quotes a woman worker and her experience.[100]

Pages 20 to 27 are dedicated to a description of the different organisations that existed in the mining community (workers, wives and families). The booklet explains that even though the mine workers represented a minority, they had a long history of organisation and struggle that became very important in the context of the 1952 revolution.[101] The Bolivian Mineworkers Federation and the Housewives' Committee are the main two organisations described in the booklet in detail.

After sharing a general picture of Bolivia's economy and society, the third part of the booklet describes the 1952 Revolution.[102] From its perspective, this was a revolution in which the poor people allied with the small business owners and intellectuals against the big mine owners who made agreements with foreign banks and investors in order to increase their profits to the detriment of workers' living conditions.

The booklet looks at the roots of the revolution and describes the history of workers' organisations in Bolivia for the purpose of contextualising the workers' movement through time. One of the most significant historical events that impacted workers' organisation was the Catavi Massacre in 1942.[103] Workers had been striking since the 1930s and were protesting for better working conditions and salaries. Six thousand workers were peacefully protesting when soldiers began to shoot at them; 35 people were killed. This experience motivated unions to become more organised thereafter.[104]

Another key contributor to the revolution was the impoverishment of the middle class and the lack of growth opportunities in business and professional jobs. At the same time, the war against Paraguay, in the 1930s, which resulted in the death of thousands of men, had a negative impact on the economy and on people's quality of life.[105]

Within this general context, members of the middle class decided to form a new party, (i.e. the Movement of National Resistance (MNR)). The movement was

[100] Idem, pp.16-18.
[101] Idem, p.20.
[102] Idem, pp.28-43.
[103] Idem, p.30.
[104] Idem, pp.30-31.
[105] Idem, pp.31-32.

concentrated mainly in the urban areas and most of its followers were members of the middle class.[106] Nevertheless, they realised they needed to create a bigger support base if they wanted to fight the tin mine owners. That is why they built an alliance with the workers and peasants.[107] This way, a bigger movement would be able to overthrow the rule of the tin barons.

The booklet explains in detail how the concept of alliance was understood by the movement. It also lays out the aims of the organisation. In this section, there is a long description and explanation about the concept of an alliance of the people and the idea of a class alliance towards a democratic revolution.[108] As part of the project, the MNR began to support workers' rights and demands and included their demands in the revolution's project. At this point, the booklet explains briefly that socialist parties in Bolivia were still very small and weak and the MNR was the most powerful party against the tin barons. This explains why people had hope in the MNR project.

The revolution took place in April 1952. The MNR took control of the government and began to dismantle the old oppressive and exploitative system by implementing new and more democratic measures.[109] As part of the new projects and changes, unions created a national trade union federation, La Central Obrero Boliviano, COB. The booklet explains how other organisations, such as peasants and students' organisations, joined the COB in their demands to the new MNR government.[110]

[106] Idem, p.32.
[107] Idem, pp. 33-36.
[108] Idem, pp.35-36.
[109] Idem, p.38.
[110] Idem, p.39.

THE COB

The COB was a federation of all the trade unions in Bolivia. Other groups like peasants, tenants, housewives and students also joined. The COB tried to bring together all the oppressed groups in the country, as part of the labour movement.

The COB leaders made these demands:

- the COB must govern the country together with the MNR.
- the MNR must nationalise (take control of) the mines and railways, and let the COB and the unions help the government to run these industries.
- the MNR must take land from the landlords, and give it to the peasant unions to organise for farming.
- everyone must get the vote.
- the army must go and the workers and peasants must keep their guns.

These were strong demands. But the COB was a new organisation, and not very strong. It was the leaders who put forward these demands – they were not discussed properly with all the members. Also there were some divisions amongst the leaders – some wanted big changes quickly, while others wanted small, slow changes. All this weakened the voice of the COB.

Even so, the MNR leaders soon appointed three trade union leaders from the COB to serve in the new government as cabinet ministers.

The nationalisation of mines and land reform led to debates and disputes within the MNR movement.[111] The main questions that arose were: how to nationalise the mines, how to manage them, which lands to redistribute to and how to do so. Some members were expecting more radical measures, while others more conservative ones.

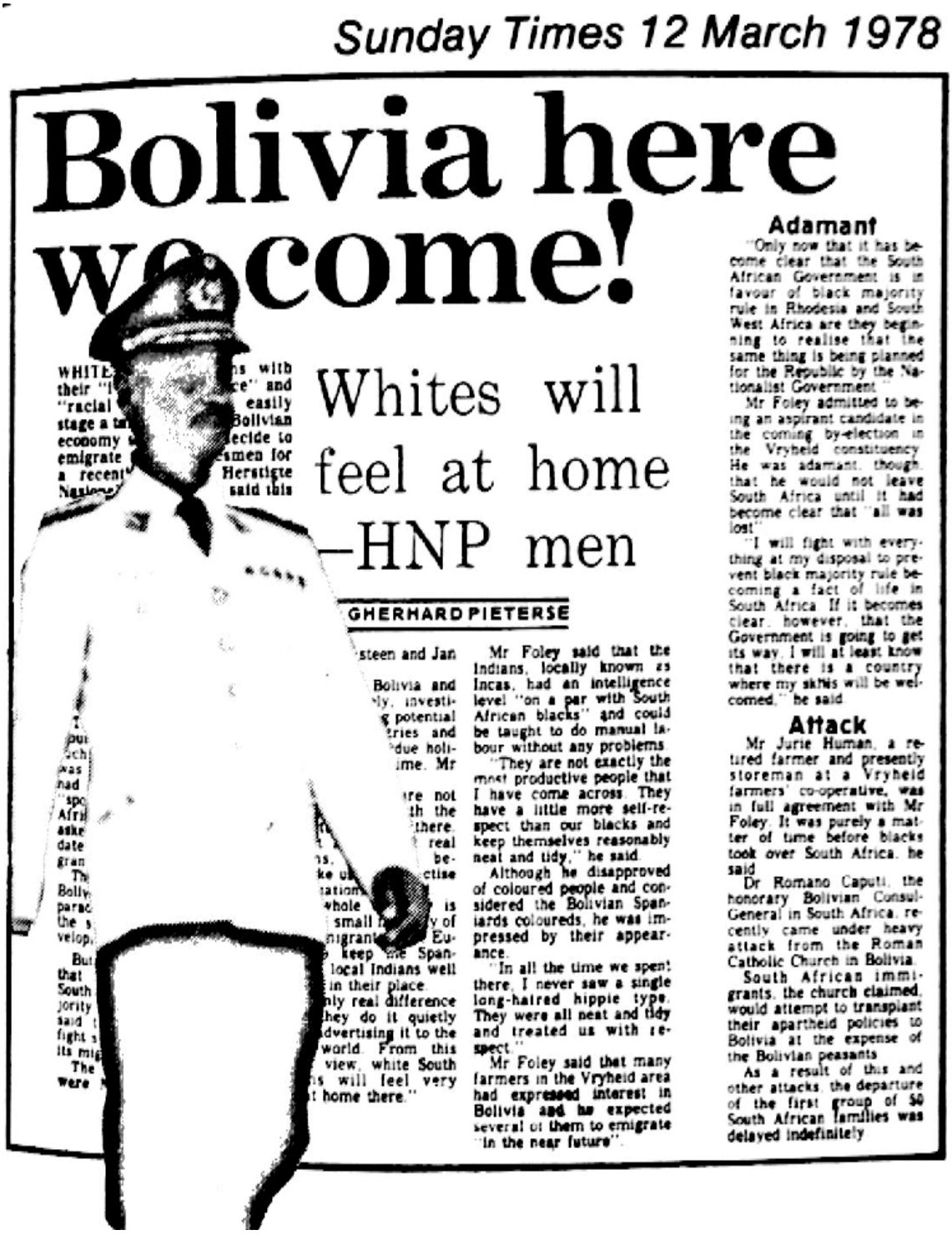
Problems and disputes are explained in the next section of the booklet. Section four describes the challenges that the new government had to overcome, once it gained power.[112] Conflicts that arose between workers and the middle class about how to proceed with the revolution led to the gradual breakdown of the alliance. While one side wanted to retain a more conservative approach to the revolution, the other side wanted a socialist transition. Divisions over the nature of the revolution were not only defined by class, even among workers and union leaders there were groups that supported a more conservative project. Slowly the more conservative union leaders took control of COB, with the support of the MNR leaders.[113]

By 1956 Bolivia's economy was in crisis again. With no money to invest in the national project, the government felt the pressure of the people's expectations. At the same time, the US government was interested in investing money in the country as a way to have greater control over the national project, and prevent socialist developments. Discussions over this offer had a great impact on, and deepened the tensions among the different groups that were part of the MNR. Accepting the US money implied acceptance of the imposition of political conditions and control.[114]

The president accepted the loan, which mostly benefited the big owners of land and companies and helped to build a stronger national army. In 1964 the army took over the government. The army had been trained in the American schools and was influenced by the US and its plan to exterminate communism and socialism in Latin America. The military government promoted the repression of workers as a way to control them politically but also as a way to help big companies increase profits by decreasing salaries and increasing workers exploitation.[115] As part of this political

[111] Idem, pp.41-43.
[112] Idem, pp.44-54.
[113] Idem, p.45.
[114] Idem, pp.46-47.
[115] Idem, pp.50-52.

project, the new president promoted the immigration of white people from South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia[116]:



Sunday Times 12 March 1978

Bolivia here we come!

Whites will feel at home —HNP men

GHERHARD PIETERSE

WHITE ... with their "l... ce" and "racial ... easily stage a ta... Bolivian economy ... decide to emigrate ... smen for a recent ... Herstigte Nasionale ... said this ... steen and Jan ... Bolivia and ... ly, investi... potential ... tries and ... due holi... ime. Mr ... re not ... th the ... there. ... real ... be... ctise ... whole ... is ... small ... y of ... migrant ... Eu... keep the Span... local Indians well ... in their place. ... nly real difference ... hey do it quietly ... dvertising it to the ... world. From this ... view, white South ... s will feel very ... t home there."

Mr Foley said that the Indians, locally known as Incas, had an intelligence level "on a par with South African blacks" and could be taught to do manual labour without any problems.

"They are not exactly the most productive people that I have come across. They have a little more self-respect than our blacks and keep themselves reasonably neat and tidy," he said.

Although he disapproved of coloured people and considered the Bolivian Spaniards coloureds, he was impressed by their appearance.

"In all the time we spent there, I never saw a single long-haired hippie type. They were all neat and tidy and treated us with respect."

Mr Foley said that many farmers in the Vryheid area had expressed interest in Bolivia and he expected several of them to emigrate "in the near future".

Adamant

"Only now that it has become clear that the South African Government is in favour of black majority rule in Rhodesia and South West Africa are they beginning to realise that the same thing is being planned for the Republic by the Nationalist Government."

Mr Foley admitted to being an aspirant candidate in the coming by-election in the Vryheid constituency. He was adamant, though, that he would not leave South Africa until it had become clear that "all was lost".

"I will fight with everything at my disposal to prevent black majority rule becoming a fact of life in South Africa. If it becomes clear, however, that the Government is going to get its way, I will at least know that there is a country where my skills will be welcomed," he said.

Attack

Mr Jurie Human, a retired farmer and presently storeman at a Vryheid farmers' co-operative, was in full agreement with Mr Foley. It was purely a matter of time before blacks took over South Africa, he said.

Dr Romano Caputi, the honorary Bolivian Consul-General in South Africa, recently came under heavy attack from the Roman Catholic Church in Bolivia.

South African immigrants, the church claimed, would attempt to transplant their apartheid policies to Bolivia at the expense of the Bolivian peasants.

As a result of this and other attacks, the departure of the first group of 50 South African families was delayed indefinitely.

To understand why these changes took place in Bolivia, the fifth chapter in the booklet describes the various factors that contributed to the failure of the

[116] Idem, p.53.

revolution.[117] It explains that, while the revolution was based on an alliance between the middle class and workers, the latter were not the leaders and their interests were slowly put aside. The middle class prioritised its own interests over the workers' ones. The booklet attempts to answer the question, "Why did this happen?" And in order to do so, it analyses the nature of the workers' organisations and their links with the peasants.[118] Other factors that influenced the failure of the revolution included the power of the army and the influence exerted by the USA. As in many other Latin American countries, the US government helped strengthen the army as a means to control events in Bolivia and avoid socialist revolutions.[119]

By the end of the booklet, there is a special section containing opinions from the Bolivian workers reflecting on the causes of the failure of the revolution. This appears in a bigger and brighter font to make it more visible and to capture the attention of the reader[120]:

[117] Idem, pp.55-64.
[118] Idem, pp.56-58.
[119] Idem, pp.59-60.
[120] Idem, p.63.

1. The problem was that we had no strong working class party to lead the workers. The MNR wasn't a party of the workers and peasants. The MNR was an alliance between the workers and peasants, and the middle class people. The only organisation truly of the working class, the COB, was a union federation. But a trade union federation cannot take over the government. Instead, the working class needs its own political party to take over the government.

2. I don't agree. The working class in Bolivia was small and weak in 1952. The MNR party was the only thing possible in 1952. I think we were right to have a party of all the oppressed groups, not just of the workers alone. But there were problems with the way the MNR worked. It was difficult for the voices of us ordinary workers and peasants to be heard. The middle class voices were loud. People should have tried to change this in the party.

3. The problem was not so much with the MNR party itself. The problem was that we needed to be strong in our own organisations outside of the party. The workers and peasants needed to build up strong and democratic unions, housewives committees, and peasant organisations. If we were strong in these organisations, we could make our power felt. We could have controlled the MNR party and made sure it worked for us.

The last section of the booklet focuses on the democratic demands that were made during the 1980s in Bolivia. Section six describes what happened once the army government stepped down in 1982.[121] The new democratic process was current at the time that ILRIG published the booklet. This chapter worked as an analysis of the current situation and the future of the country. It presents the workers and peasants' conditions and describes their new struggles. ILRIG could not describe these issues in depth as they were happening at the moment of publication. Nevertheless, showing the discussions and future possibilities helped to promote local South African reflections on how to lead a revolution and its challenges.

The narrative and concepts

There are many concepts and ideas that express how the booklet was created specifically for a South African working-class public. The first important idea that appears is the concept of the Revolution in 1952 as a "new people's government":

> In 1952 big changes happened in Bolivia, a small country in South America. Ordinary workers, peasants, educated people and owners of small businesses got rid of the army government and the owners of the big mines. They formed a new people's government. [122]

In a South African context, the idea of the people became central to the organisation of the struggle and protests inside the country. Looking at Bolivia's revolution in those terms allowed workers to make the implicit connection and compare the experiences. The idea of a "new people's government" is not defined in the paragraph and only becomes clearer later on, in the section of the booklet that describes and explains the 1952 revolution. It is interesting to notice that the concept is not used in that section to talk about the new government. The idea that arises in it is the idea of a class alliance. Nevertheless, in the local South African context, the concept of a people's government that was spread all over society, was a very popular idea that did not require explicit explanation.

In the Latin American context, the revolution of 1952 is not seen as a people's government but as a nationalist revolution (Mansilla,2003). This idea has a specific meaning in Latin America as many revolutions in many countries were analysed in

[121] Idem, pp.65-68.
[122] Idem, p.2.

those terms. A “nationalist revolution” in the Latin American political history refers to an attempt to nationalise the economy of the country through the use of the military forces. The conceptual difference is important as it expresses different ways of understanding a reality, based on local concerns. In South Africa, the concept of nationalism had become synonymous with the National Party. Consequently, the Latin American understanding of a nationalist revolution cannot be translated directly. Hence the need to speak of a “people’s government”. The translation of the concept into a local context was crucial, even if in that process concepts would lose their complexities.

This gap in translation appears again when describing the composition of the MNR (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario, the party that led the revolution). ILRIG’s booklet defines it as “the alliance of the people”.[123] In their attempt to produce a history from below that could be meaningful for local workers and peasants, they analysed and described the MNR composition based on the workers’ strength. While that perspective is correct and brings into light the importance of the masses in a revolutionary process, the MNR did not think of the alliance in those terms. As a middle-class movement, it had its inner diversity among members, but they all shared the idea that the middle class should lead the revolution. The idea of “the alliance of the people” sounded more familiar and easy to understand in the South African context where the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) was seen as the alliance of the people. That attempt to put Bolivia’s experience in dialogue with South Africa’s context was important as it brought up the discussion of who should lead the struggle and how the middle-class tended to take over the leadership of the people and impose their own agenda based on class interests. Once again, the gap in translation sacrificed the complexities of the Bolivian dynamic to make it accessible, understandable and meaningful for a local South African public in a special moment of the struggle against apartheid.

To open alternatives to that political organisation, the booklet presents two pages of images that show, in a pedagogical way, the middle-class leading program in comparison to the workers one.[124] The main question that arises from that explanation is who should be the group leading a revolutionary process and what are the consequences of that.

[123]Idem, p.35.
[124]Idem, pp.33-34.

THE MNR TURNS TO THE WORKERS

The government of the tin barons was cruel and often acted against the opposition. Some MNR leaders began to think that the small businessmen and educated group were too weak to do much about the tin barons on their own. To kick out the tin barons, they needed the support of the workers and peasants.

The small middle class could not win power alone. The MNR said the middleclass needed to build an **alliance** with the working class, so they could strengthen their struggle to overthrow the tin barons.

There are many kinds of alliances. What is an **alliance**? What kind of alliance did the MNR build?

WHAT IS AN ALLIANCE

An alliance means that different classes and their organisations work together because they have a common goal. For example, sometimes the working class and middle class are both oppressed by the same government or ruling group. They will both want to get rid of this government. So they might come together in an alliance to try and do this.

But the differences between the classes will still be there, even if they are working together in an alliance. The workers will carry on their struggle to improve their wages and conditions. The businessmen will carry on trying to increase their profits, at the expense of the workers. And the educated people will often be more interested in getting better jobs for themselves than in the problems of the workers.

So there will be a lot of struggle and fighting in an alliance between these two groups or classes. Sometimes the middle class will be stronger, and will use the alliance to improve their position. Sometimes the working class will be able to lead in the alliance and put the workers' interests first.

How can these classes join together?

An alliance of *the people* — but who leads?

OR

Here the working class takes the lead.

The third translation instance takes place when describing the social and racial composition of Bolivia. As part of the same conceptual network as the class relations, the booklet gives a racial explanation of Bolivia's society. The racial analysis developed by ILRIG explains the relationship between settlers, mixed race people and Indians (concept used by the Spanish to define indigenous population in Latin America) and compares it to apartheid:

> … the Spanish settlers in Bolivia were still the ruling class. They owned the best land, and took even more land from the Indians…[125]
>
> The Indians kept their old traditions. The richer people who often spoke Spanish often look down on them because of this. Indians were sometimes told to keep out of the main streets of the capital city. Sometimes even some workers in the towns who gave up their Indian language and customs thought they were better than the peasants.
> So there was often a kind of apartheid in Bolivia because of this discrimination.[126]

In the South African context, the idea of settlers has a clear definition as it has been used to reject colonial legacies and to establish white domination. Nevertheless, in Latin America, the concept has not been used to that extent and was not popular (and still is not) as a way to refer to Spanish descendants. The same happens with the idea of apartheid. In that sense, ILRIG's analysis of the Bolivian social and racial composition underlined the colonial impact and legacies in that country. For a long time, those South Atlantic historical links and exchanges did not take place on the Latin American side. As explained earlier on, it was only during Evo Morales' presidency in the 21st century that the idea of apartheid began to circulate as a way to describe Bolivia's history and reality.

Another important conceptual translation in the booklet is the one made on the mineworkers' conditions. In pre-colonial Inca Kingdom, in Latin America, there existed a system of work in the mines called *mita. Mita* forced men from different regions of the kingdom to work in the mines for a specific amount of time and then return to their hometowns. The *mita* system was based on the rotation of groups from different regions of the Kingdom. It was compulsory to go work in the mines as part of the collaboration to the kingdom system. As the Kingdom had diverse products produced in the different areas, the rotation system for mining protected the

[125]Idem, p.10.
[126]Idem, p.13.

stability of the regions and their production capacity. Men would go to the mines for some days and come back to their hometowns in time to take care of the lands (Zagalsky, 2014).

During the Spanish colonial period, the government used the *mita* system as a means of exploiting the work of indigenous people. While it was still compulsory (and the idea was still to collaborate with the community) the system was no longer rotational. As a result, miners began to live in the surroundings of the mines with their families. Small towns were created in which the housing and the food stores were owned by the mine owners. Workers would pay for rent and food with their salaries. While the men were in the mines, women and kids were in the town, working and studying. This mining system differed from the South African system where men were housed in compounds, because there was a sense of community and family that did not exist in the South African system. The ILRIG booklet tries to explain this difference by comparing the two systems.[127] This comparison allows one to understand better how living with the family or not had an impact on the sense of community and the workers' organisation. At the same time, it raises the question of language and cultural differences when trying to establish a communal organisation.

In its effort to make Bolivia's context understandable for a South African public, the booklet describes the quality of life of miners by sharing the average wages and the food that could be bought with the minimum salary, the gender and family power relationships and the features of mining work in the tin mines. The mining section of the booklet makes a huge effort to present the Bolivian case in a way that emphasizes the distinctiveness of the Bolivian situation. The main aim is to understand its own features and maybe, by doing that, be able to compare it with the local reality. Comparing the local context to a somehow different one (that still has in common racism, economic structures, political privileges, etc.) could promote deconstructing it. But more importantly, it broadens local perspectives and ways of understanding and thinking.

[127] Workers of the World, Bolivia, p. 21-22.

Aims and purposes

The aim of the booklet is not only to share other countries' experiences. It has also a political purpose and a political perspective. The booklet presents a Marxist approach to Bolivia's history. This was so, not only because the sources used to make the booklet came with that perspective but also because ILRIG members positioned themselves in the left. The main discussion that arises from the Bolivian experience focusses on the following questions: who should be leading the revolution (in Bolivia but probably also in South Africa), what are the problems of creating a common front and which should be the demands or aims of the revolution.

During one of his interviews, David Cooper explained that this booklet was meant to discuss the Freedom Charter (1955). Probably, this had to do with the many similarities in the historical background of both countries. During the 50s South Africans and Bolivians were living in a particular historical moment in which it was possible to consider a new alternative national project and find ways to develop it. Nevertheless, political environments of the 60s and 70s took that chance away, as both governments became much more violent and oppressive.

As much as this is evident throughout the booklet, it is also possible to understand it in deep relationship with the South African context during the 80s. This non-chronological comparison raised alternative questions, such as: Should the workers follow the middle class in a common front? Or should they organise the labour movement to be able to lead the revolution?

The Bolivian case works as an example in which the middle class took over the lead of the movement and because of that the revolution had a clear limit: i.e. the class interests. It also shows how workers have the ability to organise themselves and build communal and solidarity links that strengthen the workers identity. But it underlines the risks of losing their battles when working with the government or other organisations. In their own words:

> People in Bolivia are discussing important questions. How can they build progressive political parties and alliances? How should the grassroots organizations in the COB work with the political parties? How should the COB work with the government? How can people have real democracy?[128]

[128]Idem, p.68.

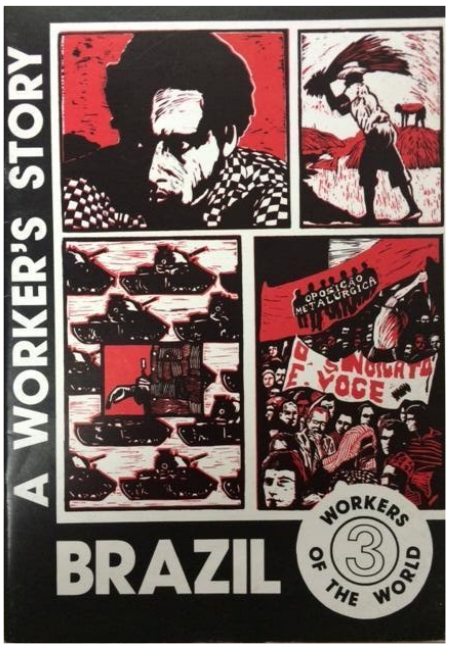
To some extent these questions do not speak only about Bolivia, but also about South Africa. In the context of the 80s, when most grassroots organisations were spreading around the country and gaining strength, when the UDF began to be seen as the common front to contest the apartheid inside the country and the ANC was getting stronger outside the country, and when the workers' organisation was developing faster and becoming stronger, Bolivia's questions seemed critical for South Africa as well.

Achievements and limits

This dynamic of comparison, where past and present become interchangeable, is complex and can be easily misunderstood. As mentioned initially in this chapter, the translation process opens the possibility for convergence of different times and spaces. This brings many opportunities for discussions and reflections and the production of new ideas. Nevertheless, on the following instances of translation, the readers' translations, there can be a process of simplification of the complexities and nuances developed in the previous stages. This depended on and how, and by whom, the booklet was read. Reading the booklet individually, was not the same as reading it in a group. Guidance from ILRIG facilitators (or the lack of it) would also influence understanding.

Leaving the reader to forge his/her own understanding of the texts, led to multiple and widely ranging interpretations of ILRIG's narrative. While the Bolivia booklet did not elicit a negative reaction from the public, the Brazil one did. In general, the main problem with this approach is that people could (and did) take it as a direct translation of their own reality, without understanding that comparison requires accepting that others have a different story and that learning about it can help one to rethink our local and personal stories. In the next section, the Brazil booklet will be described and analysed in detail.

Workers of the World 3: Brazil. A worker's story



If there was a recurring theme that emerged from all the interviews conducted with ILRIG ex members, it was the story of the Brazil booklet and its political impact. While the aim of the booklet was to share Brazil's struggle experiences and workers' organisations, many local organisations (particularly the Communist Party in the underground and some supporters of the UDF) felt the booklet was a critique of South African unions and the links with political organisations. Instead of looking at the booklet as an international case, different to the South Africa situation, and understanding Brazilian history in its own context, they made a literal translation of their own reality. The question that arises is the following: Did the booklet really have that intention or did it trigger reactions to a very sensitive issue that was already circulating among people? The creators and writers of the booklet affirm that it was not their intention to criticise South African unions and/or political organisations by explaining the Brazilian case. Their aim was to promote wider approaches to a common structure of domination, the capitalist one. Nevertheless, when reading the booklet and imagining its impact in the heat of the struggle against apartheid, one could understand why they reacted that way.

In this particular case, it seems that the way ideas were displayed in the booklet made the process of translation and interpretation politically problematic and affected the image of ILRIG's members. There are many reasons why this could have taken place. The concepts used to describe the Brazilian workers' struggle, the narrative

developed in the booklet, the display, the particular similarities with the South African case, etc. This section will reflect on it as a way to reflect also on the process of knowledge production and its challenges.

The Layout

The Brazil booklet, like the Bolivian one, was published in 1984 and consisted of 68 pages of Brazilian history. The booklet displays text with images and drawings, even comics. It tells the history of Brazilian workers and the oppressive government's links with the local and international capital. While it does express many workers' experiences through personal memories and stories, trying to construct a history from below, the text also has more general explanations of historical events.

The booklet had a similar aesthetic to that of the Bolivia one. The cover also comprises an image in red, black and white, while the rest of the booklet is in black and white. The serigraphy designed for the Brazil's booklet has four images: a portrait of Santo Días (a strong leader and figure of the workers' struggle), two peasants working in the fields, many military tanks with a business man controlling them and a workers' protest with flags of the trade unions. These four images tell a story of the workers' struggle history and the history of the country. Compared to the Bolivian booklet's cover, the cover of the Brazilian one is not as neither as neat nor as abstract. Furthermore, while the cover of the Bolivia booklet expresses an ideal, Brazil's cover narrates a story.

In order to give the reader a better idea on where the country is located, the Brazil booklet shows Brazil in the planisphere map. At the same time, some images and comics work on deconstructing pre-concepts such as the samba dancing and fun country. Most of the pictures are general images of workers' protests, the military government or the workers in the factories. There are a few images of specific leaders, but not many. The overall layout of the information expresses a more general approach to the history of workers rather than a history marked by memories or testimonies.

The content is organised chronologically. There are four different parts that explain the general history of the country, the general conditions of workers, the workers' strikes in 1979 and 1980 and the new challenges that arose during the 80s. The

booklet, thus, is focused on the strikes that took place at the end of the 70s and the next decade. Most importantly, it focuses on the industrial workers' strikes. This booklet provides a more contemporary history than the history explored the Bolivia booklet.

General description

The Brazil booklet describes the history of Brazilian workers struggles in the context of the military government from the 1960s until the 1980s. The main aim of the booklet is to present a case in which workers organised themselves not only in trade unions and federations but also in relationship with the communist party and the workers party. As mentioned before, the booklet is organised in four chapters that present a general understanding of the country's history and its people.

The first section is dedicated to a general description of the country's history.[129] For that reason, there is a map that shows where the country is located and some general information about it. At the time that the booklet was published, there were 120 million people living in Brazil, most of them in the cities and 40 million in the rural areas.[130] Brazil is the most industrialised country in Latin America, with the biggest number of factories and workers in the continent. The booklet explains that, similarly to South Africa, Brazil has numerous mines, lands and industries, which make it a rich country. Nevertheless, the majority of Brazilians are poor.[131]

Pages 12 to 14 describe Brazil's society and cultural background. Brazil is the only country in Latin America where Portuguese is spoken, as it was the only South American country colonized by the Portuguese in the 1500s. Portuguese settlers controlled the territory and the indigenous people. The levels of exploitation and multiple outbreaks of epidemics, eradicated large numbers of the native population. In 1822 the Portuguese settlers gained control of the government and independence from the crown.

The social composition of Brazil is described on page 13, where the booklet explains that the country has the largest black population outside of Africa. Following the

[129] ILRIG, *Brazil: a worker's story*, Workers of the World Series, Vol.3, Cape Town, 1984, pp.4-15.
[130] Idem, p.10.
[131] Idem, p.11.

deaths of huge numbers of indigenous people, African slaves were brought into the territory to work on the plantation system. Some slaves managed to escape and build free villages that the authorities attempted to destroy. Slavery in Brazil only came to an end in 1888. The free Black population then became part of the Brazilian social composition.

Discrimination in Brazil is based on race and class. Most of the poorest people in the country are black and cannot get good jobs or good living conditions.[132] At this point, the booklet compares the Brazilian reality with the South African one, and explains that poor people live in separate areas, similar to shanty towns. Black people in Brazil can vote and a few have succeeded in gaining positions of power, such as members of Parliament. Nevertheless, most of black population work in the non-qualified jobs sector.

From page 15 onwards, the booklet draws on the biography of Santo Dias, a prominent leader among workers, to further describe the Brazilian worker's context and quality of life. The second part of the booklet is dedicated to this topic.[133] Santo Dias' life story gives the reader some insight into workers' personal life stories, backgrounds and trajectories. Like Santo, many workers were born in the rural areas, where their families work as peasants in lands that were owned by rich families.[134]

At the age of 17 Dias began to work on fixing machines in rural areas. In 1960 he participated in a short strike demanding better working conditions on large farms. While workers succeeded in getting better working conditions, the owners took this opportunity to fire the workers who led the strike and reduce the quantity of workers in the farms, as many converted from producing crops to raising cattle. The booklet explains that something similar happened in South Africa during the 1960s.[135] As a result, like Santo, many farm workers had to move to the cities and look for jobs in the factories.

Although Santo's family moved to the city, they continued working as peasants in the farms.[136] By the time Santo turned 21, he was working as a metal worker in a car

[132] Idem, p.14.
[133] Idem, pp.16-32.
[134] Idem, pp.16-17.
[135] Idem, p.18.
[136] Idem, p.19.

factory. Working conditions were exceedingly difficult, workers were made to work 11 hours shifts and throughout the weekends as well. Metal workers were included in the Sao Paulo Metalworker's Union, one of the biggest unions in the country.

At this point, the booklet explains the history of Brazilian unions and the labour code.[137] During the 1930s the government introduced a labour code in an attempt to control the creation, dynamics and rights of the trade unions in the country. Under this labour code, which was still active in the 1980s, the government only sanctioned trade unions that were officially registered. Furthermore, only one union per industry per area[138], was permitted. Federations were against the law and unions in different parts of the country were not allowed to form a national movement to address national working issues.

During the 1950s and 1960s new foreign factories were set up in Brazil. This resulted in a bigger concentration of workers in the factory areas, which led to increasing workers' participation in the unions. This was a period of intense organisation and many strikes. Although the law forbade spontaneous strikes (unions had to request legal permission to strike), workers were organising themselves and striking. Workers and leaders were repressed by the police and jailed. Nevertheless, as a direct result of strikes in 1962 and 1963, they received a bonus each year.[139]

In 1964, in the midst of social turmoil, the Brazilian army wrested power from government with the help of the US government. This was part of a continental trend at the time, in which the US assisted armies all over South America, to seize power as a means of controlling people's movements, strikes and possible socialist revolutions. Many workers and leaders were arrested and the army succeeded in placing its supporters in leading positions in the unions, for the purpose of controlling the unions.[140]

Workers saw these new leaders, who came to be referred to as "pelegos", as serving the interests of the army. "Pelegos" is the name given to the sheep skin saddle used for horse-riding. The "pelegos" leaders were working for the army and not for workers' interests. They made it easier for the new government to control workers'

[137] Idem, pp.21-23.
[138] Idem, p.22.
[139] Idem, p.24.
[140] Idem, p.26-27.

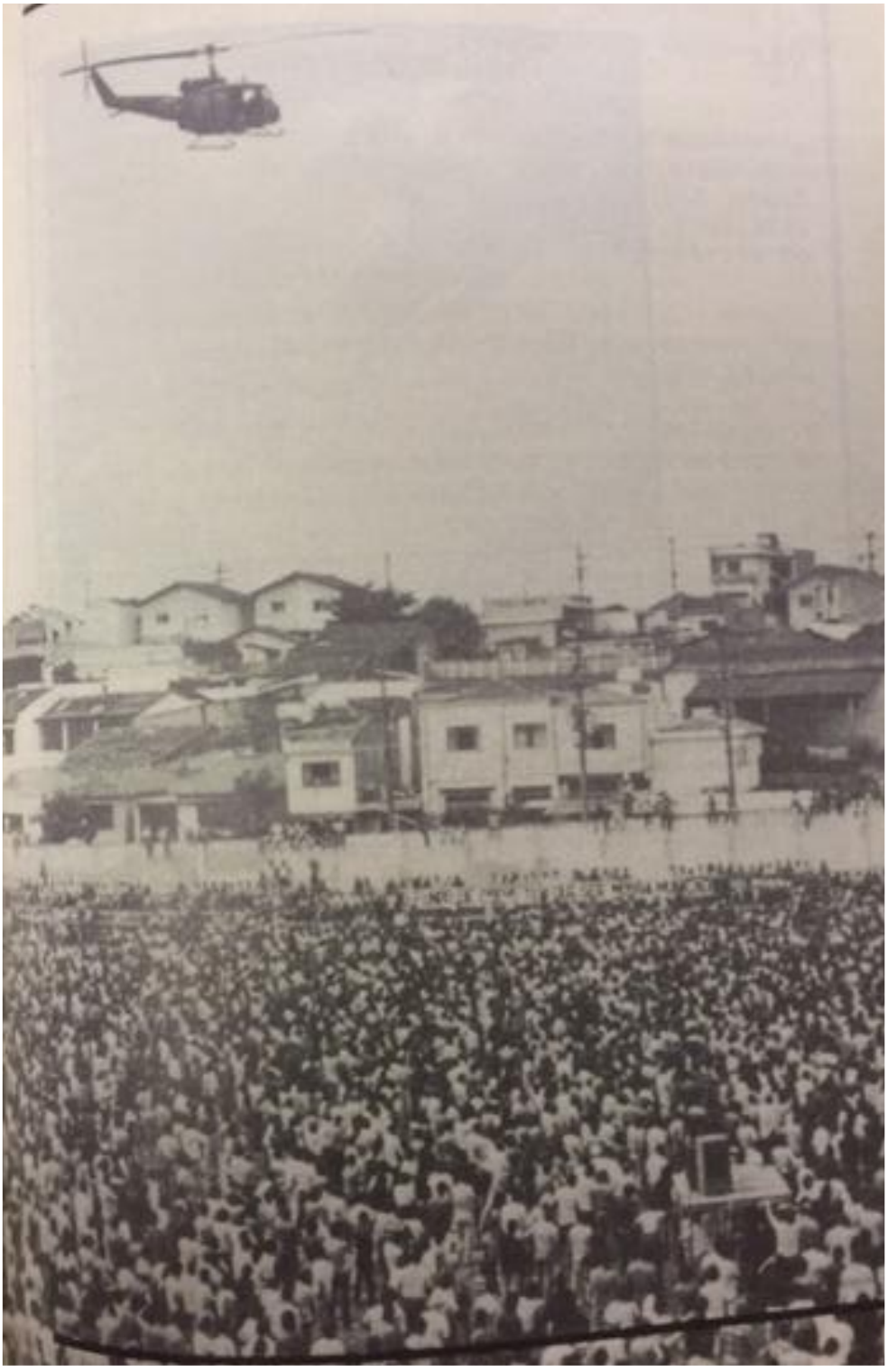
movements[141]. Workers opposed the “pelegos” leadership and tried to win elections in the unions but were repressed by the government, which protected their alliances with unions’ leaders as it assured the control of the unions by the government.

It took the unions a number of years to organise themselves and become strong enough to dispute the “pelegos’” power. In the case of the Sao Paulo Metalworkers Union, Santo’s union, it was only in 1978 that the opposition was strong enough to oppose the “pelegos” and win the elections.[142]

The third section of the booklet focuses on the strikes and conflicts that took place outside the city of Sao Paulo during the 1970s.[143] The ABC region is located between the city and the sea, it is known as one of the biggest industrial areas, as most of the big motors factories are based there. Huge factories, such as Volkswagen, employed around 40.000 workers. Motor factories in the ABC region were located very close to each other, which meant there was a large concentration of metal workers in the area. For example, the region of Sao Bernardo, which belonged to the ABC area, had 100.000 metalworkers. This is probably why one of the most important strikes of the period took place in this region.[144] The folded arms strike was the first big strike since 1964. It was an important strike not only because of its effects and impact but also because, instead of being organised by unions, it was the workers that took the initiative on their own. Workers went into the factories and stayed inside while not working. This initiative spread all over the region and soon workers in many other factories joined the strike. This strike lasted for a couple of weeks. Workers demanded better wages, the right to organise independently and a 40-hour working week.[145]

These strikes continued to take place during 1979. As employers kept refusing to meet the workers’ demands, the strikes grew in number and power.[146] In 1979 185.000 workers went on strike. Football stadiums were used to hold workers’ meetings, as thousands of workers were participating in the strikes and needed a large space to assemble in[147]:

[141] Idem, p.28.
[142] Idem, p.32.
[143] Idem, 33-53.
[144] Idem, p.36.
[145] Idem, pp.38-40.
[146] Idem, p.44.
[147] Idem, pp.44-45.



Striking workers did not remain inside the factories, they protested outside them with posters. At the same time strikes were organised by the unions, not by the workers on their own. While workers and unions were better organised than the preceding year, employers were also better prepared for this type of strike, and developed an alliance and agreement with the armed forces to repress and control workers'

uprisings.[148] After 15 days of strike, the police and the army were sent to take over the union offices. The government supported the interests of the employers and big companies. The conflict continued for 45 days until, finally, the employers agreed to negotiate a rise in wages.

The ABC strike had a powerful impact in society, many other groups in different regions followed its example and started their own strikes. The strike movement spread all over the country. The government and big companies responded with violence, repression and the murder of leaders.[149]

Part four of the booklet moves on to describe and analyse the social and political context of the 1980s.[150] Repression against workers became much more violent as the military forces were assigned by the state to control strikes and protests. Workers' strikes during the early 1980s continued to strengthen as workers' organisations managed to unite in their struggles.

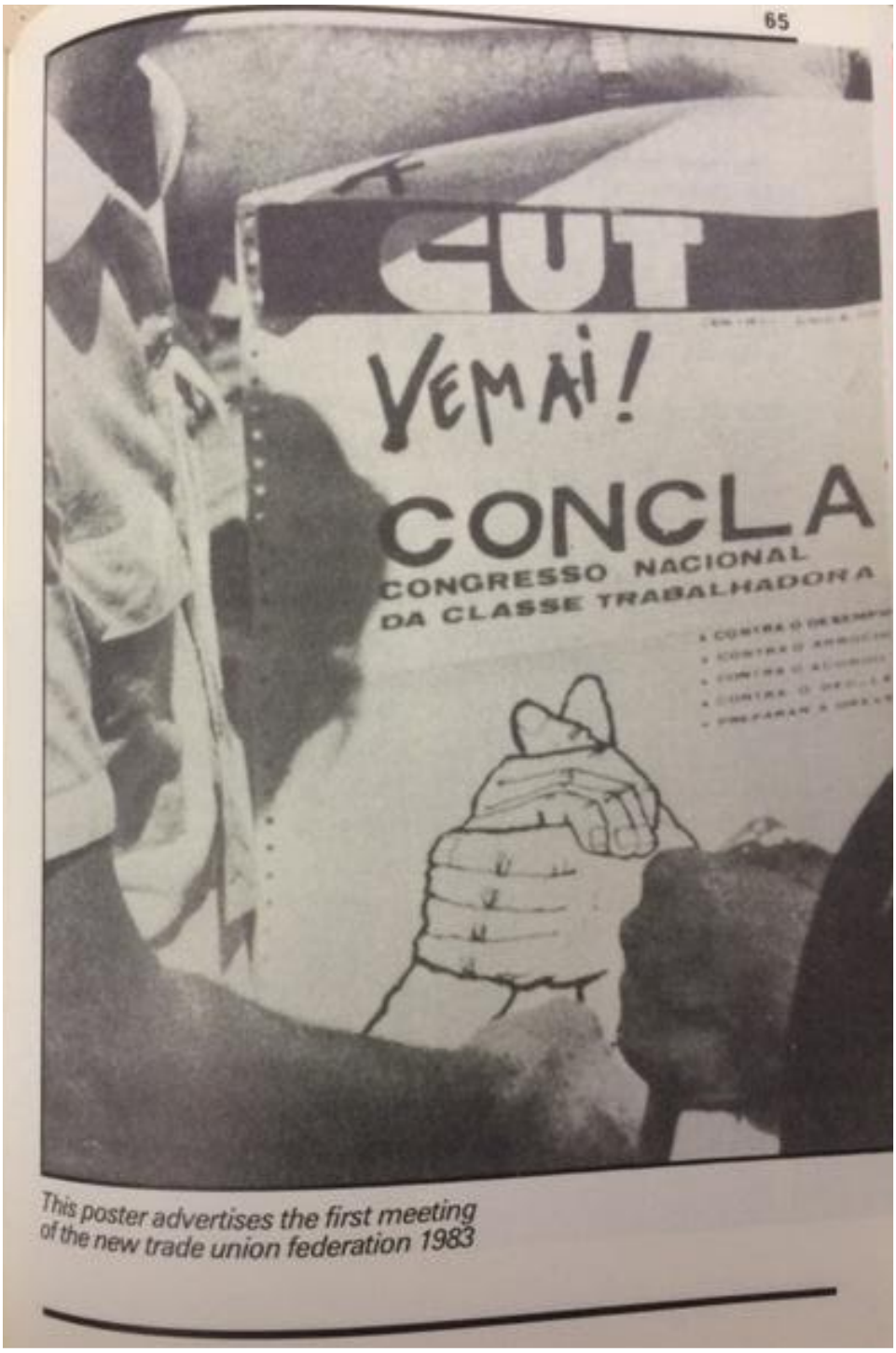
In the rural areas, peasants also had their own struggles against the big land-owners. Many families took over small portions of lands that were not being used as they had nowhere else to go. The landowners sent gunmen to threaten and forcibly remove these families from their lands.[151] Farm workers also suffered from bad working conditions and excessive repression.

In such a violent context, workers began to consider new strategies for their struggles.[152] They realised that they needed a stronger national organisation and more efficient links with rural workers. They also needed more democratic representation inside the workers' movement. For these reasons, workers decided to create a workers' party: O Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). The PT managed to get representation in some city councils, state assemblies and the national parliament, thanks to greater support from workers, students, black people, intellectuals and community organisations. Nevertheless, not all workers supported the PT. Some believed it was not yet the right time to create a political party and other issues had priority. For example, how to consolidate unity among workers.

[148] Idem, p.47.
[149] Idem, p.50.
[150] Idem, 54-68.
[151] Idem, p.56.
[152] Idem, p.58.

As explained before, the labour code forbade the creation of national federations. Workers all over the country could only be represented by their local union. This norm was a strategy to prevent workers from forming a national organisation across the country.[153] After two years of planning and discussing, workers' representatives from all over the country met in August 1983 in a congress and voted in favour of the creation of a new national trade union federation: A Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT):

[153] Idem, p.64.



The CUT promoted more fluent links and solidarity between industrial and rural workers. It also demanded a land reform and better salaries and working conditions for rural workers.[154]

The last two pages of the booklet serve as a general conclusion.[155] Under the title “A Luta Continua: the struggle continues”, the last two pages provide a very general

[154] Idem, p.66.
[155] Idem, pp.67-68.

description of the Brazilian context by 1985. Workers continued to work within an oppressive system, many lost their jobs, working conditions remained bad, salaries were low, discrimination was still practised and many other issues remained unchanged.

Despite all these difficulties, during the strike years, workers succeeded in improving their daily reality by organising themselves better, developing improved and more democratic ways of representation and fighting for better conditions. The booklet concludes by asserting that Brazil's experience could function as an example from which South African workers could learn some lessons that could aid them in their own struggles.

The narrative and concepts

Following the same initiative and perspective as the Bolivia booklet, the Brazil booklet also aims to share workers' experiences. This booklet also uses lots of images and short biographies as a way to make Brazilian reality accessible for South African workers. The main focus is the urban workers from industrial companies and their struggles; particularly in the city of Sao Paulo and its surroundings.

Brazil is the biggest country in South America with one of the biggest economies as well. It's a diverse country, with a population that speaks a variety of local languages, have different beliefs and backgrounds. While it is true, as the booklet explains, that most of the population speaks Portuguese and follows the Christian churches, the booklet is too concentrated on the Sao Paulo area and because of it, does not show the country's diversity in a deeper way. It seems like the main concern in the South African context was to share the urban workers struggles as it could enrich local discussions.

The booklet presents two significant historical moments in Brazilian history, 1964 and 1978. Both years are chosen by ILRIG because of the workers strikes and uprisings. The booklet is oriented to describe the workers' struggles. While these are exposed successfully, with a deep understanding of its nuances, the overall Brazilian context within the Latin American context of the 70s and 80s is not explained sufficiently. 1964 was the year of the imposition of the dictatorship regime in Brazil that would

remain in power until 1985. The booklet explains the army's control of the state as follows:

> Tanks came onto the streets of Brazil. The army generals took over the government and threw out politicians. Anyone who spoke out against the army was arrested or sent out of the country.
>
> The army did not want Brazil to have strong trade unions. They jailed and tortured many trade union leaders (…)[156]

The explanation continues later on in the booklet. When describing the general context of social and political tension in 1964, it explains the rise of the dictatorship regime in these terms: "So with some help from the American government and big business, the Brazilian army took over the country in April 1964. The army wanted to put a stop to the people's movements".[157]

The main issue with this explanation is that it does not explicitly define the process as the imposition of a military dictatorship regime or coup d'état. While it describes the strength of the military forces and their imposition in government, it fails to mention any of the key concepts used to define the process in most of (if not all of) the Latin American countries during that time. At the same time, there is only a very small mention of the fact that this was happening all across the continent: "Army generals ruled in several countries of Latin America".[158]

By the time this booklet was created, it was already clear that Latin American countries suffered from many and very violent dictatorship regimes that were supported by the United States of America and were part of an international historical context. The question, then, is why did the author not mention this in his explanation? As the booklet focuses on the workers' struggles, it seems that the author intended to explain Brazil's history from that perspective. The problem is that Brazil's reality was much more complex and could not be separated from the continent's history. It is possible that the author felt that any reference to the idea of a dictatorial regime was too explicit and might have provoked the censorship of this booklet and the political persecution of ILRIG. In the South African context at the

[156]Idem, p. 7.
[157]Idem, p.26.
[158]Idem, p.27.

time, great care had to be taken when presenting content, so as to ensure that written material (such as the booklet) could circulate without any problem.

In its attempt to make Brazilian history easy to understand, the booklet draws many comparisons between the Brazilian workers' struggle and the struggle in South Africa. The period selected (1960s-1980s) is also in line with the South African context of oppression and the workers' attempts to struggle, which makes comparison easier: "1978 proved to be the start of a new period in the struggles of Brazil's workers, just like 1973 was in South Africa".[159]

It is important to notice that from ILRIG's perspective, the Brazilian experience of big workers' strikes and uprisings could be translated into and compared, somehow, to the Durban strikes of 1973, when 100.000 workers protested against the companies and government laws and demanded better working conditions. While in both cases the power dynamics are similar -workers organising themselves against the alliance between company owners and oppressive governments- the racial factor that defined workers' rights in South Africa differed from the situation in Brazil. The oppressive government in that country based its system of oppression on ideological and class conditions and not on race. While the comparison shortens distances and promotes an easier dialogue between experiences, it sacrifices the complexities of reality for it.

Nevertheless, in an effort to nuance the comparison, the booklet does explicitly explain that Brazil did not have an apartheid system and that racial oppression had its own features in that country:

> In Brazil there is no apartheid system. There are no bantustans or pass laws. Everyone now has the vote. Black and white can marry and live side by side, so the people are of all colors mixed together (...)
>
> Yet there is still discrimination: many of the poorest people are black and find it more difficult to get good jobs, housing and education. Many live in the Shanty towns in the big cities, in conditions similar to Crossroads, Winterveld or Malukazi (...)[160]

The Brazilian social composition and the general modes of racial discrimination descriptions offer diverse cases and open a space for reflecting on different modes

[159]Idem, p.9.
[160]Idem, p.14.

of control, domination, exploitation and segregation. Learning about other cases that differ from the South African experience, offers new insights for the local reality.

Comparisons between both cases can be traced throughout the booklet and the chronology. For example, when explaining that landowners in Brazil chose to change from crop-farming to cattle-farming so that they could have fewer workers and more profit, the Brazilian situation is compared to the South African one in the 1960s: “There was a change to farming on a big scale, with lots of machines and few workers. Profits were higher that way.”[161]

Comparisons are drawn alongside the chronology of the booklets, from the 60s until the 80s. A good and clear example of this can be found in the section explaining the 1978 strikes in the ABC region nearby Sao Paulo. The area was formerly an industrial centre, where many car and truck companies (local and international ones) were situated. This area contained the largest concentration of metalworkers in the country. In order to describe and make this particularity understandable for the public, the booklet includes the following graphic:

[161]Idem, p. 18.

NUMBER OF WORKERS:

FACTORY	BRAZIL	SOUTH AFRICA
VW	38 000	6 000
FORD	20 000	7 000
GM	19 000	5 000
MERCEDES	15 000	3 000
TOYOTA	400	4 000
OTHER	14 600	15 000
CAR PARTS	222 000	100 000
TOTAL No.WORKERS:	330 000	140 000

Under the law all the workers in the motor industry belonged to the metalworkers' union. Each of the towns in ABC had its own metalworkers' union. The most important union in ABC was the metalworkers' union in the town of São Bernardo. In São Bernardo alone, there were almost 100 thousand metalworkers.

It was in São Bernardo that the Folded Arms strike happened in 1978.

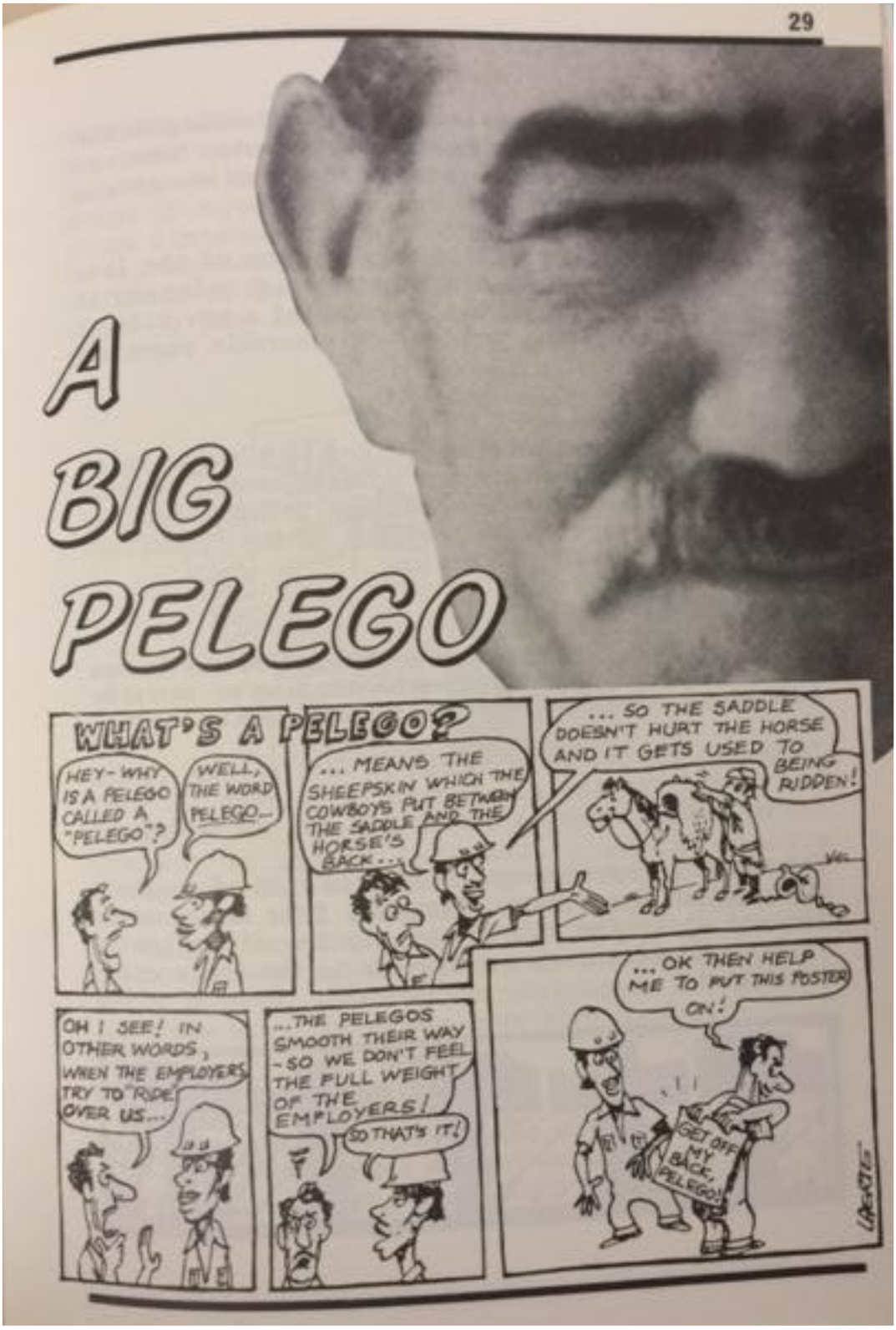
By comparing numbers of workers in both countries, the Brazilian reality is made much clearer for the South African public. The metal industry was much bigger in Brazil than in South Africa, as were the number of workers as well. This concentration of people in one region made the strikes easier to organise and gave strikers a more powerful voice than was the case with the strikes that could take place in South Africa. Understanding this dynamic, based on the comparison, could help organizers to plan better strategies in the local reality.

One of the most important concepts that appear in the booklet is the idea of the "pelegos". The concept has a very specific meaning related particularly to the Brazilian context, and based in the Brazilian cultural background. Its explanation in the booklet is very clear and well done. Nevertheless, the concept itself could have been problematic in the South African context because of its meaning.[162]

In 1964 there was a coup d'état in Brazil. With US support, the army took over the government, imposed new measurements to control people by fear and oppression. In that particular context, the army also replaced the trade unions' leadership with allies that could smooth the protests and keep workers quiet. That was a strategy to control general uprisings, strikes and protests against government and companies' policies. The new people in charge of the unions were not accepted nor supported by workers, who began to call them "pelegos".[163] In Portuguese, the concept defines the sheep skin that is used to saddle horses and make it easy to ride them. Brazilian workers referred to the new trade unions' leaders with this term as they understood the replacement of authorities as an attempt by the military government to control and manipulate them.

The booklet explains this in detail and analyses the workers' context from this perspective: "Workers in Brazil realised very clearly that they were faced with two enemies, the employers and the government run by the army. But many were beginning to recognise a third enemy. These were the pelegos, the union leaders that were not prepared to challenge the employers or the government".[164]

[162]After reading the draft version of this thesis, David Cooper explained that the elite that led the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) in the 1970s and early 1980s could be seen as 'pelegos'. Moreover, in 1978 the National Party set up the Wiehahn Commission which made proposals to stifle the new union movement, including "pelego" type proposals. From Cooper's point of view, the new FOSATU unions managed to defeat these attempts.
[163]Idem, pp.26-43.
[164]Idem, p.42.



The idea of the “pelegos” reflects a very particular, local reality. The concept of “pelegos” was really important in the Brazilian context as it promoted critical thinking among workers and created an awareness of the oppressive tactics developed by the company owners and the government. This reality was also taking place in other

countries of Latin America as part of the controls developed by the governments and the influence of the USA. Explaining this concept in the Brazil booklet was very important as it was a significant issue in the workers' struggle. The definition described by ILRIG is accurate and clear. It contributes to the general explanation of the workers' issues and strategies utilised in that historical context. ILRIG managed to develop an easy and accessible explanation for a very complex reality. No comparison is made in this section of the booklet, although the South African reality was not that different from the Brazilian one.[165] Throughout the rest of the booklet, comparisons are drawn to point out similarities and differences between Brazil and South Africa. The problem with this particular theme is the lack of comparison as its omission could have caused people to misunderstand this section, thereby allowing readers to reach different conclusions to those of the authors.

Aims and purposes

Unlike the Bolivia booklet, where time and space are both diverse and gave rise to new dialogues, the Brazil booklet tells a contemporaneous story to the South African political reality. While in the Bolivia booklet, a revolution from the 50s is used as an example to open new paths for the South African struggle in the 80s, the Brazil booklet is focused on the mid 70s and early 80s. It does make a general review of the history of the workers struggle, but it is a brief overview that serves as a platform for developing a narrative on Brazilian current affairs.

The main aim of this booklet is to describe, analyse and reflect on the Brazilian working-class struggle and ways of organising during the 70s and 80s. The main concern was the inner dynamics of the trade unions and the links with the political parties. The theme resonated in the South African political context. And while learning about the Brazilian case could have opened new discussions and brought new perspective on local issues, people tended to make a literal translation of its complexities as a direct critique of the links between the unions and the ANC/SACP. Why did this happen? Perhaps because events were taking place in both locations at the same time. But maybe there were other factors involved as well, for example, the way information was presented and explained.

[165] As it was mentioned in a previous footnote, South African unions also had to deal with "pelegos".

Achievements and limits

The conceptual definitions developed in this booklet are very nuanced and promote a deep understanding of the Brazilian reality through a South African lens. However, despite the clarity with which concepts and analysis were communicated and made easy to understand, the Communist Party and members of the UDF reacted negatively to the booklet's narrative. While there may be multiple reasons for this, it may be due, in some part, to the way in which ideas were explained and linked (the logical connections between ideas) and the lack of references.

It is highly likely that the author saw comparison as the best strategy to make Brazilian reality understandable and closer to the South African one. Although it is true that Brazil seemed far away from (and very different to) South Africa at the time, the booklet attempts to shorten that distance by drawing comparisons. The danger implicit in this approach is that it relies on how people understand the comparison. It could be possible that people translated the Brazilian case literally as the South African one and consequently were unable to see the complexities of it. But it could also be that people understood Brazil as a different reality but failed to grasp the significance of studying it. It is quite possible that ILRIG workshops provided the space where ambiguities, discomforts and suspicions could be teased out. However, it is possible that where the booklet was read in isolation, without the guidance and interaction provided in the workshop, people reached their own conclusions and reacted in accordance with these conclusions.

There are a few affirmations/explanations in the booklet that may have promoted these reactions. In particular, the Brazilian critique of the trade union leaders could have been one of the main factors contributing to South African trade unionists' negative reaction to ILRIG's publication. It was perceived to be a direct critique of their own work.

In the last pages of the booklet, the analysis evolves and introduces strategies to fight against the government. This is presented in a complex (and possibly confusing) way, as it mixes the academic language with the supposed voice of the Brazilian workers. There are no quotation marks and the text mixes what should be the literal voice of the workers with the academic one:

> In the 1980s, all over Brazil, workers discussed the problem of how to carry forward their struggles. They asked: **What forms of organisation do we need to help us win our demands?**
>
> In the discussions, workers came up with some proposals:
>
> 1. Many felt that the workers faced not just an ECONOMIC struggle but also a POLITICAL struggle. So they needed to form a political party.
>
> 2. They needed to build more democracy inside the trade unions and to form more factory committees.
>
> 3. They needed to unite all organised workers in a national trade union federation (…)[166]

The main problem with the text resides in its lack of clarity when mixing speeches and the lack of references. The quoted statement is followed by a description of how the workers' party was created in Brazil. Finally, the booklet ends the story by comparing the Brazilian workers experience to the South African one:

> "Like the workers of Brazil, South African workers face a repressive government, racial and sex discrimination, low pay, and bad work conditions. There are difficulties in building democratic unions free from government control. There is also the struggle to build political organisations and the big problem of worker unity.
>
> In Brazil workers have been trying to solve these problems. So there are many lessons that South African workers can learn from their struggle"[167].

While it almost certainly was not intentional, the layout of the content in the booklet may have contributed to misunderstanding by the Communist Party, who interpreted the explanations as a personal affront. Let us not forget that the 80s context in South Africa was one of tensions, disputes and violence while at the same time, the local trade unions were reorganising themselves and trying to represent local workers and their demands against the apartheid system. The way the booklet translates the Brazilian case into an accessible and comparable case to the South African one results in its aim gets lost in the process and allows for misunderstanding and confusion. While ILRIG's commitment to sharing the experience of others was both important and enriching and was certainly valued by many people, its main danger

[166]Idem, p.58.
[167]Idem, p.67.

resided in how pedagogical and political perspectives were expressed in particular ways this inadvertently resulted in misunderstandings. Once again, it is possible that these contradictions and confusions were resolved in the seminars run by ILRIG.

Workers of the World 4: Solidarity of labour

ILRIG's attempts to expose its public to a broader and more international approach to people's struggles is evident in its fourth booklet. Its main aim in this booklet was to describe the general context and conditions of trade unions federations that existed on the different continents.[168] To do so, the booklet first offers a broad history of workers' organizations and how specific organizations engaged with their particular historical contexts. Throughout the 20th century, workers' organizations were emerging and spreading around the world and connecting with one another.

It is interesting to note that while the booklet presents a wide perspective, ILRIG chose to focus on and explore African and Latin American cases over Asian ones. This promotes a continuation of the dialogues introduced in the previous booklets. The cases chosen for the 4th booklet were Chile and Guatemala. These cases were very important and well known in the context of the 1980s. While ILRIG was not able to include these cases in the Workers of the World series, the organization did teach and produce content on them.

This layout of the booklet is very interesting as it is the first to provide an explicit description of the international dynamics and history of workers. While it does promote a more internationalist and wider perspective, it gives prominence to the

[168]ILRIG, *Solidarity of labour*, Workers of the World series, Vol. 4, Cape Town, 1984.

European workers' history. The explanation for this can be found in the aim of the booklet, which looks to explain the history of international workers' organisations and the way they succeeded in connecting with each other and have similar agendas. In that sense, the most important attempt was the one based on the Marxist organisations of workers around the globe. In all probability, this is why the booklet explains the history of worker movements based on the history of Marxism.

The Layout

This booklet was also published in 1984 and consists of 68 pages. As with the other booklets in the Workers World series, the cover is in red, black and white and the pages are white with black print. As in the other cases, the cover is also a stencil which, in this booklet, depicts five workers holding hands around a globe. As the workers are visibly different from each other, one could assume that each worker represents one of the five continents. This booklet differs from the others in the manner in which ideas are displayed. Instead of focusing on one particular case, it develops a more general approach to international workers' struggles, and shares different examples across the world.

As it introduces cases from different continents, the booklet includes a map in which the countries involved are marked in red, as a pedagogical strategy. It also includes pictures of workers in the different struggle contexts, a list of organisations, a chronological historical explanation of international workers organisations and struggles, etc. The booklet is divided into four parts, each of which describes and explains the history of the workers struggle from an international(ist) perspective and links it with local (South African) concerns.

The first section explains and describes various types of international organisations that existed at the time the booklet was written. The second section develops a historical explanation of the origins of the workers' international collaborations. The third section focuses on South African unions and their links with international organisations. And the fourth and final section reflects on the problems international trade union organisations were facing at that time.

General description, narrative and concepts

This booklet differs from the others booklets as it not only develops a historical analysis but also explains, in a very pedagogical way, the different types of international organisations linking trade unions and workers movements in contemporary times. This booklet not only shares historical content but also provides trade unions with educational material on the different options for organising workers' movements around the world.

In order to do so, the booklet includes many images and definitions. It presents the information in a didactic and clear way, utilising different fonts and drawings that help to organise the information. The first fifteen pages explain various key concepts of the international workers' organisations. It is important to note that these explanations had a powerful impact on the public, as many workers had no knowledge of those international organisations. In the South African context, the information provided may have been an important contributor to the future strategies employed in the workers' struggles. As mentioned in previous chapters, the content of this booklet may well have been produced in response to local demands for specific information concerning how to organise workers' struggles. It is also true that ILRIGs members were trying to develop a wider perspective that could enrich the local analysis with cases from abroad. In that sense, this booklet could also work as a statement in favour of a more international approach to local struggles.

The narrative on the history of the workers' organisation, in the second part of the booklet, pays special attention to the European origins of workers' trade unions. Based on a Marxist analysis, it focuses on factory workers, rather than rural workers. It explains the origins and problems of the First, Second and Third International and the origins of different types of confederations. From the booklet's perspective, workers' organisations eventually succeeded in forming an alliance with each other as a response against fascism during the 30s and 40s. By the end of the Second World War, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was created. This historical narrative places an emphasis on international conflicts such as the World Wars, but the core focus is on Europe. European organisations, whose actions were based on local European conflicts are presented as the leading international organisations.[169]

[169]Idem, pp. 22-25.

Following a European chronology of events, the booklet then introduces the Cold War environment as the next big international historical conflict that affected the international workers' organisation. In an attempt to weaken their opponent's alliances, American and the Soviet leaders competed with each other to incorporate trade unions from all over the world into their nation's federations.[170]

As part of this narrative of events, the booklet introduces examples of that competition in different countries. The first case chosen is located in Nigeria. The booklet describes how the Nigerian trade union movement split into two federations, one supporting the US and the other one the USSR. According to the explanation provided in the booklet, one direct consequence of this was that both local Nigerian federations became very weak and corrupted, as they depended on foreign money to survive. Finally, the local government took control of the unions and banned international links.[171]

The conflict between the American and European trade unions led to divisions within their alliance and competition among the various national federations. As part of the explanation of this process, the booklet shares examples of European and American federations' influence in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

As an example of the influence of the American Federation of Labour – Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO), the booklet cites the rise and fall of Salvador Allende in Chile and the role played by trade unions in this historical event.[172]

[170]Idem, pp. 26-43.
[171]Idem, pp. 36-37.
[172]Idem, pp. 40-41.

THE AFL-CIO AND CHILE

In 1970 Salvador Allende was voted in as the new president of Chile. He had the support of the majority of the workers. He aimed to build socialism in Chile.

1970: a picture in the streets of the capital city

The American government was worried that the Allende government would help to spread socialism in Latin America. Big American companies owned factories and mines in Chile.

They made huge profits from these mines and factories. They were worried about their profits under this new workers' government.

The American government as well as these big companies wanted to get rid of the Allende government. So they gave lots of money to the AFL-CIO's programme in Chile.

The AFL-CIO helped to weaken Allende's government. It trained some Chilean trade unionists who organised strikes against the Allende government. In 1973 these American-backed trade-unionists supported a revolt by the army. This destroyed the Allende government and put the army in power.

After this the military government took violent action against the workers and peasants. Thousands of people were killed, imprisoned or tortured. The new government banned democratic unions and all political parties. It allowed the American-trained unionists to operate.

1973: a worker is arrested by the military police

The case is presented very briefly and broadly. From the way it is described, it would seem that the author assumed the readers knew more about Chilean history than may have been the case. The case does not explain where Chile is located nor does it describe any general features of the country. In comparison to the Nigerian case, where a few introductory sentences explain Nigeria's location and the reason why it is an important case to study, the Chilean case assumes the reader has some knowledge of Chile's history.

The Chilean case is explained as part of the discussions over the role of the American Federation of Labour (AFL) in the Latin American continent.[173] As the AFL had influenced and spread all over the different continents, the main question was how it impacted the region and behaved in each case. The booklet succeeds in describing the complexities of the AFL influence and its diverse effects in each case. It seems like its presence in Latin America was disputed by local unions that saw it as an ally to the US government and capital. To explain that, the booklet introduces the history of Chile's socialist government and its overthrow through a military coup d'état in the 1970s. The narrative is very brief and oriented to the link between unions and the US participation in the coup. In this case, it seems the aim was not to develop a deep analysis of the Chilean case but to mention it. As has been exposed in many interviews, this case used to be presented in depth in seminars and workshops. Probably this brief mention in the booklet assumed readers had more information on Chile and could reconstruct the links on their own.

This section explains the influence of the AFL-CIO in training some trade unionists to organise strikes against Salvador Allende's government. The main reason for this was that the US and US multinational companies were concerned about the Chilean socialist project. Influence on the trade unions and through investing considerable sums of money in them made some workers support the revolt of the army that destroyed Allende's government. Once in power, the army repressed workers and peasants and banned all unions and political organisations.

While it is well known that the AFL-CIO had a significant influence on the workers' opposition to Allende's government, the text overlooks the complexities and disputes that existed within the workers' organisations that led to that reaction. Some Chilean trade unions supported conservative values and cooperative ways of organising the

[173]Idem, pp.39-41.

unions (Álvarez Vallejos, 2010). Viewed from this perspective these unions perceived Allende's government as a threat to their values and beliefs. Consequently, supporting the AFL-CIO was a conscious decision based on their own agenda.

After explaining how different international federations became involved in local political disputes and influenced workers in specific ways based on specific agendas, the booklet describes how workers organised themselves against multinational companies' exploitation.

In that section, the second Latin American example in this booklet is displayed: the Guatemalan workers' boycott against Coca-Cola in 1975.[174] As in the Chilean example, the Guatemalan case is introduced very briefly and is not described in detail. However, as a general example, it helps to create a wider image and idea of how workers were fighting against capitalist exploitation in the South.

The narrative is very straightforward and explains how Guatemalan workers stood up and demanded better working conditions and the recognition of their union representation inside the Coca Cola company. Workers were threatened and attacked violently but that did not stop their struggle. Eventually, they got international support from the International Union of Food-workers (IUF). Workers from many Coca Cola factories around the world organised boycotts in support of the Guatemalan workers. This made the company recognise the union and give better working conditions to workers.

The main idea of this section is to show the power of international solidarity when fighting against multinational companies. The case does not explain in depth the features of the Guatemalan society nor the country's economy. So, while the section does begin with a very short sentence that describes where the country is located in the map, there is no further description of the case. The main concern was to show examples of international solidarities and struggles, and not the particularities of each case.

The booklet then goes on to explain the links between international federations and local trade unions, specifically in the South African case.

[174]Idem, pp. 50-51.

In these examples there are no comparisons or translations to the South African reality. The latter is described on its own in a separate chapter. The aim of this booklet, it could be suggested, was not to create a dialogue between South Africa and other Southern cases, but to develop a wider map of struggles. Thus, while it does not explain each case in detail, it manages to present a complex international reality from a Southern perspective.

Aims and purposes

The main and general aim of the booklet is to share a history of international workers' organisations and solidarities. But the more specific aim of the booklet is to provide workers with an international perspective of workers organisations, federations, trade unions and their links with the local and international political agendas. Paying particular attention to developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America (or more specifically to the Third World), the booklet reflects on the influence of international capital on the local struggles and how workers reacted to that.

It is interesting to notice that the focus is on the wider international organisations and their influence in local conflicts, more than in the links between different local organisations from different countries. The booklet makes a clear explanation of the hierarchical relationships and how they can promote or not solidarity links among workers and their struggles.

Achievements and limits

The booklet has a clear political education purpose and that is probably why it explains and defines very carefully the history of workers' organisations and international solidarities. In that sense, the booklet manages to describe a general and wider international scene and makes a big effort to define concepts very clearly. The historical narration is also very organized and well presented.

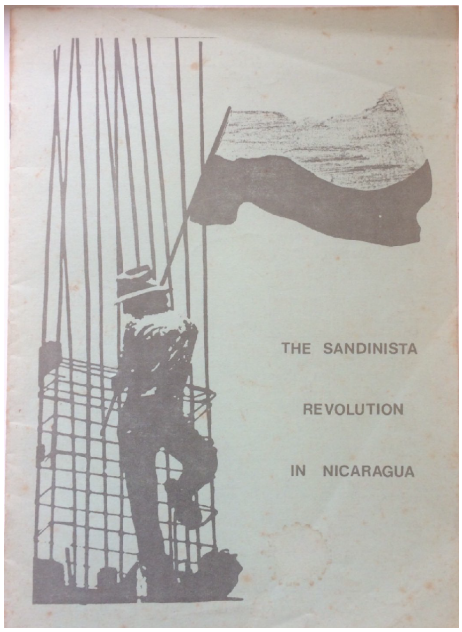
It is important to notice that the main theoretical background developed in the booklet is based on Marxism and internationalism. In this sense, European history marks the rhythm of the booklet's narration. And in that structure, the cases used to

explain the international workers' struggle in the Third World only appear as short brief examples that are accommodated in the European historical narration.

As mentioned before, the booklet could have included many cases from Africa, Asia and Latin America but ended up choosing cases mostly from Latin America and Africa. Knowing that ILRIG was already writing about other Latin American cases and running workshops on Latin American struggles as well, it should have been expected to have Latin American cases in this booklet.

The main limitation of this publication stems from the way it approaches the question of international workers' struggles and solidarities. The text places an overemphasis on the North to South influence, with scant attention given to the influence of the South on the South. During the 1980s there were connections between trade unions in different countries, besides the links proposed by the bigger federations. In fact, ILRIG members were involved in those links. The question then is why they did not include this approach in this booklet. Many factors could have influenced the choice made on how to approach international workers' solidarities. This choice may have been influenced by the readers' interests. On the other hand, it may have been based on a more conceptual aim to teach general history. A third possibility is that it may have been related to the fact that local organisations had to be careful about how they shared information in the oppressive local context. These questions will be answered in the following chapter, where the voices of ILRIG members will be exposed in the reflections and discussions held with the researcher on the aims and features of the booklets.

Special booklet: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua



This booklet was produced in November 1984 as a response to a request from a local Cape Town trade union.[175] It was a limited-edition booklet, specifically designed to fulfil a particular aim for a particular public. In the heat of the Nicaraguan revolution and the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) government's reforms, this short booklet provided South African trade unions with a general understanding of the Nicaraguan workers' struggle and the achievements and problems brought about by revolution. In the local South African context, the Nicaraguan revolution could help to clarify possible strategies and policies to be developed in the struggle against apartheid and even afterwards, when building a new nation.

The layout

As mentioned before, this booklet was a special limited edition that was not part of the Workers of the World series. The paper used to print this booklet is thinner and cheaper than that used for the other booklets. At the same time, it is a shorter publication, comprising just twelve pages. The cover was also printed in thinner and cheaper paper than the other booklets. As this publication was created to provide answers to specific trade unions and was not considered to be part of a bigger

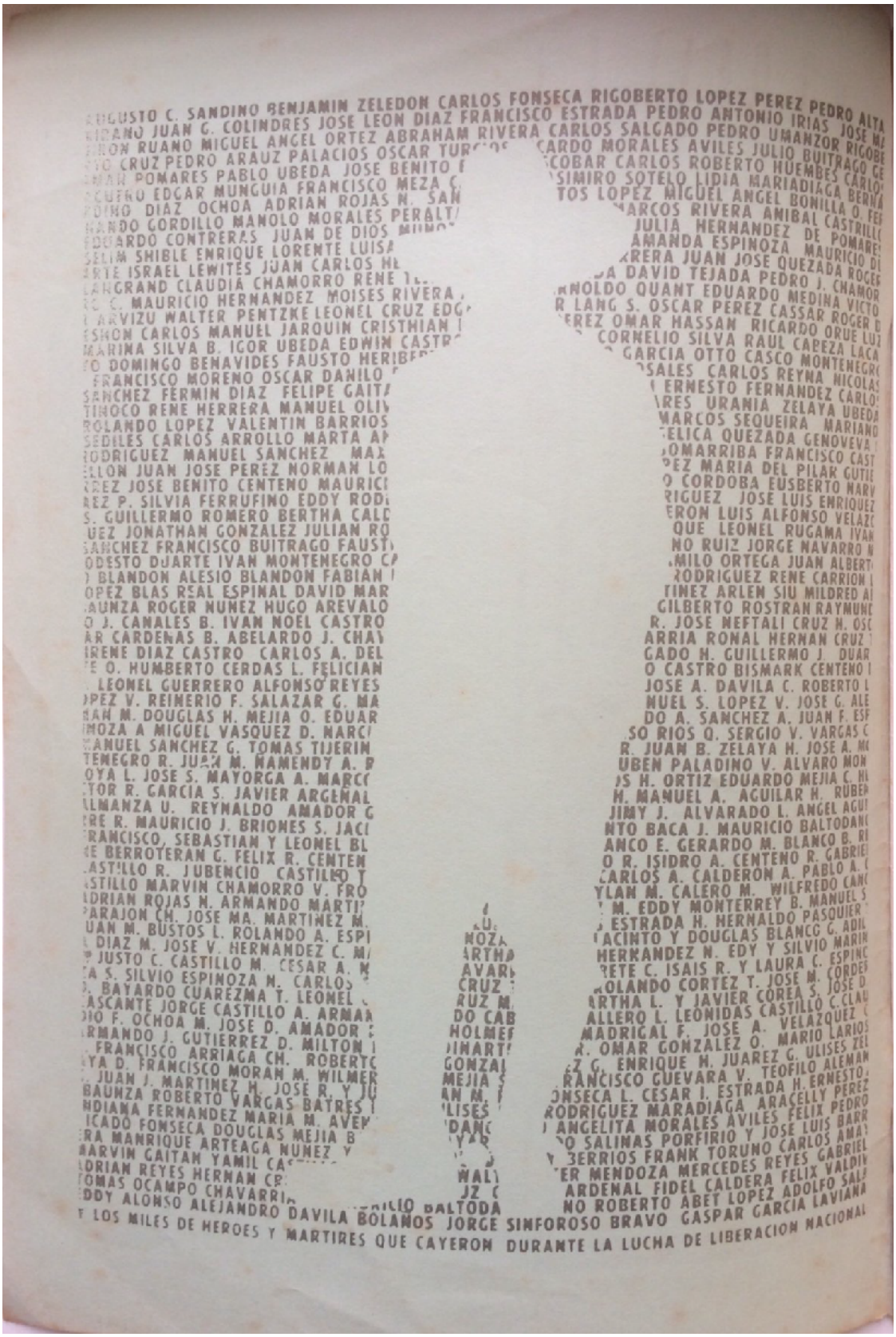
[175]ILRIG, *The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua*, Cape Town, 1984. ILRIG Project Report 1983-1985, p.2, DCPD.

publication project, there were fewer resources available to invest in it and so the booklet was prepared hurriedly.

The information in the booklet is arranged in a very organised layout, with titles and subtitles providing clear links between ideas. Most sections contain a picture or drawing that supports the information being displayed. The booklet also includes a map that shows where Nicaragua is located in the American continent. Unlike the Workers of the World series, the images and pictures shown in this booklet are of lower quality and the drawings are considerably more basic as well.

The cover has an image of a man raising the revolution's flag while climbing a scaffold. The image looks as if it has been adapted for the cover of the booklet. On the flipside of the cover there is a list of names of people who died for the revolution. The list is interrupted with the outline of the shape of a man in the middle of the page. At the end of the list of names one can read the following phrase: "…y los miles de heroes y mártires que cayeron durante la lucha de liberación nacional".[176] These two images seem to be taken from a Nicaraguan publication and adapted for this booklet. The effect is powerful and conveys a sense of the energy and pride of the revolutionary movement.

[176] Translation of the phrase into English: "…and the thousands of heroes and martyrs that fell during the struggle for national liberation".


AUGUSTO C. SANDINO BENJAMIN ZELEDON CARLOS FONSECA RIGOBERTO LOPEZ PEREZ PEDRO ALTA
RIGANO JUAN G. COLINDRES JOSE LEON DIAZ FRANCISCO ESTRADA PEDRO ANTONIO IRIAS JOSE MA
RON RUANO MIGUEL ANGEL ORTEZ ABRAHAM RIVERA CARLOS SALGADO PEDRO UMANZOR RIGOBE
CRUZ PEDRO ARAUZ PALACIOS OSCAR TUR
MAN POMARES PABLO UBEDA JOSE BENITO
CUFRO EDGAR MUNGUIA FRANCISCO MEZA
DINO DIAZ OCHOA ADRIAN ROJAS N.
NANDO GORDILLO MANOLO MORALES PERALT
EDUARDO CONTRERAS JUAN DE DIOS
SELIM SHIBLE ENRIQUE LORENTE LUIS
RTE ISRAEL LEWITES JUAN CARLOS HE
LANGRAND CLAUDIA CHAMORRO RENE
C. MAURICIO HERNANDEZ MOISES RIVERA
ARVIZU WALTER PENTZKE LEONEL CRUZ EDG
ESHON CARLOS MANUEL JARQUIN CRISTHIAN
MARINA SILVA B. IGOR UBEDA EDWIN CASTR
O DOMINGO BENAVIDES FAUSTO HERIBER
FRANCISCO MORENO OSCAR DANILO
SANCHEZ FERMIN DIAZ FELIPE GAIT
TINOCO RENE HERRERA MANUEL OLI
ROLANDO LOPEZ VALENTIN BARRIOS
SEDILES CARLOS ARROLLO MARTA A
RODRIGUEZ MANUEL SANCHEZ MA
ELLON JUAN JOSE PEREZ NORMAN LO
REZ JOSE BENITO CENTENO MAURIC
REZ P. SILVIA FERRUFINO EDDY ROD
S. GUILLERMO ROMERO BERTHA CAL
UEZ JONATHAN GONZALEZ JULIAN RO
SANCHEZ FRANCISCO BUITRAGO FAUST
ODESTO DUARTE IVAN MONTENEGRO CA
BLANDON ALESIO BLANDON FABIAN
OPEZ BLAS REAL ESPINAL DAVID MAR
AUNZA ROGER NUNEZ HUGO AREVALO
O J. CANALES B. IVAN NOEL CASTRO
AR CARDENAS B. ABELARDO J. CHA
IRENE DIAZ CASTRO CARLOS A. DEL
E O. HUMBERTO CERDAS L. FELICIAN
LEONEL GUERRERO ALFONSO REYES
PEZ V. REINERIO F. SALAZAR G. MA
AH M. DOUGLAS H. MEJIA O. EDUAR
MOZA A MIGUEL VASQUEZ D. MARC
MANUEL SANCHEZ G. TOMAS TIJERIN
TENEGRO R. JUAN M. HAMENDY A.
OYA L. JOSE S. MAYORGA A. MARC
TOR R. GARCIA S. JAVIER ARGEÑAL
LMANZA U. REYNALDO AMADOR
RE R. MAURICIO J. BRIONES S. JAC
FRANCISCO, SEBASTIAN Y LEONEL BL
E BERROTERAN G. FELIX R. CENTEN
ASTILLO R. JUBENCIO CASTILLO
ASTILLO MARVIN CHAMORRO V. FR
ADRIAN ROJAS N. ARMANDO MART
PARAJON CH. JOSE MA. MARTINEZ M.
UAN M. BUSTOS L. ROLANDO A. ESP
DIAZ M. JOSE V. HERNANDEZ C. M
JUSTO C. CASTILLO M. CESAR A.
A S. SILVIO ESPINOZA N. CARLO
BAYARDO CUAREZMA T. LEONEL
ASCANTE JORGE CASTILLO A. ARMA
DIO F. OCHOA M. JOSE D. AMADOR
RMANDO J. GUTIERREZ D. MILTON
FRANCISCO ARRIAGA CH. ROBERT
YA D. FRANCISCO MORAN M. WILMER
JUAN J. MARTINEZ M. JOSE R. Y J
BAUNZA ROBERTO VARGAS BATRES
NDIANA FERNANDEZ MARIA M. AVE
ICADO FONSECA DOUGLAS MEJIA B
RA MANRIQUE ARTEAGA NUNEZ
MARVIN GAITAN YAMIL CA
ADRIAN REYES HERNAN CR
TOMAS OCAMPO CHAVARR
EDDY ALONSO ALEJANDRO DAVILA BOLAÑOS JORGE SIMFOROSO BRAVO GASPAR GARCIA LAVIANA
Y LOS MILES DE HEROES Y MARTIRES QUE CAYERON DURANTE LA LUCHA DE LIBERACION NACIONAL

General description

The Nicaraguan booklet does not include an index as it is not organised in chapters. The booklet begins with a very brief introduction in which the main aim is presented: viz. to share the story of the Nicaraguan revolution. In order to do so, it includes a very short description of Nicaraguan people and the links with the US.[177]

Nicaragua is a country in Central America that was conquered by the Spanish five hundred years ago. Spanish settlers took over the lands to produce cotton, sugar and other products sold in Europe. At the same time, Spanish settlers married local women and mixed with the local population.[178] Nevertheless, this commingling did not extend to sharing the land's resources and wealth. Most of the local people were poor, did not own land and had to work in the plantations.

Nicaragua's produce was mostly exported to the US. Consequently, the Nicaraguan economy became very vulnerable and dependent on the USA. After 1912 the US invaded the country in an attempt to seize direct control of it. It was only during the 1930s, that the local population managed to organise themselves and fight against the US invaders.[179] This was possible thanks to Sandino's leadership. Sandino formed an army of peasants and workers and together they waged a guerrilla war. Although Sandino was the victor, a remnant of the local population continued to support the US project. Most importantly, the US managed to raise up a powerful army that fought against Sandino, after he had succeeded in seizing power. This US backed army overthrew his government. The National Guard imposed Somoza as the new president of Nicaragua in 1936. Somoza's family retained power for more than 50 years, keeping the US influence and links in the country intact.

The booklet explains that the Somoza family became very powerful and very corrupt. It appropriated most of the richest land in the country, plus the most profitable business, for itself. Meanwhile, the local population was becoming more and more impoverished, and was encountered repression any time it protested against the government.[180]

[177] ILRIG, *The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua*, Cape Town, 1984, p.1.
[178] Idem, p.2.
[179] Idem, p.3.
[180] Idem, p.2.

The brief overview of the roots of the Nicaraguan revolution, establishes a platform from which ILRIG introduces the story of the Revolution story.[181] The booklet explains the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FLNS) which was formed in 1961 and fought to overthrow the government. The FLNS understood that the only way for the revolution to succeed was by including both workers and farmers in the organisation.[182]

At the same time, the middle class, business men and big company owners also began to reject Somoza's government as their profits were decreasing in favour of the US companies and Somoza's family.

Workers, farmers, businessmen, the middle class, students and others joined together in a popular front in 1974 to evict Somoza.[183] For several years they fought against the government and several strikes and protests were organised in the main cities. The popular front was also responsible for guerrilla attacks. On the opposing side, the National Guard resorted to both physical and armed engagement in their struggle to ensure that Somoza retained control of the government. This included bombing streets and murdering local leaders. Countless people lost their lives during this struggle.

By 1979 worker and peasant organisations had assumed leadership of the popular front. The FLNS organised a last attack against the government in May 1979. This took the form of a general strike followed by an armed uprising. This final attack ended in victory for the Popular Front and by July, Somoza had fled the country, as had many members of the National Guard.[184]

Once in power, the Sandinistas found themselves with a country that had been destroyed by bombings and utterly impoverished as Somoza and his supporters took all the profit and capital from their companies when they left Nicaragua.[185] The urgent question then, was how to rebuild the country. The FLNS was the strongest organisation inside the popular front, and its aim was to develop a socialist country. However, it soon became patently clear to the FLNS that it would be impossible to

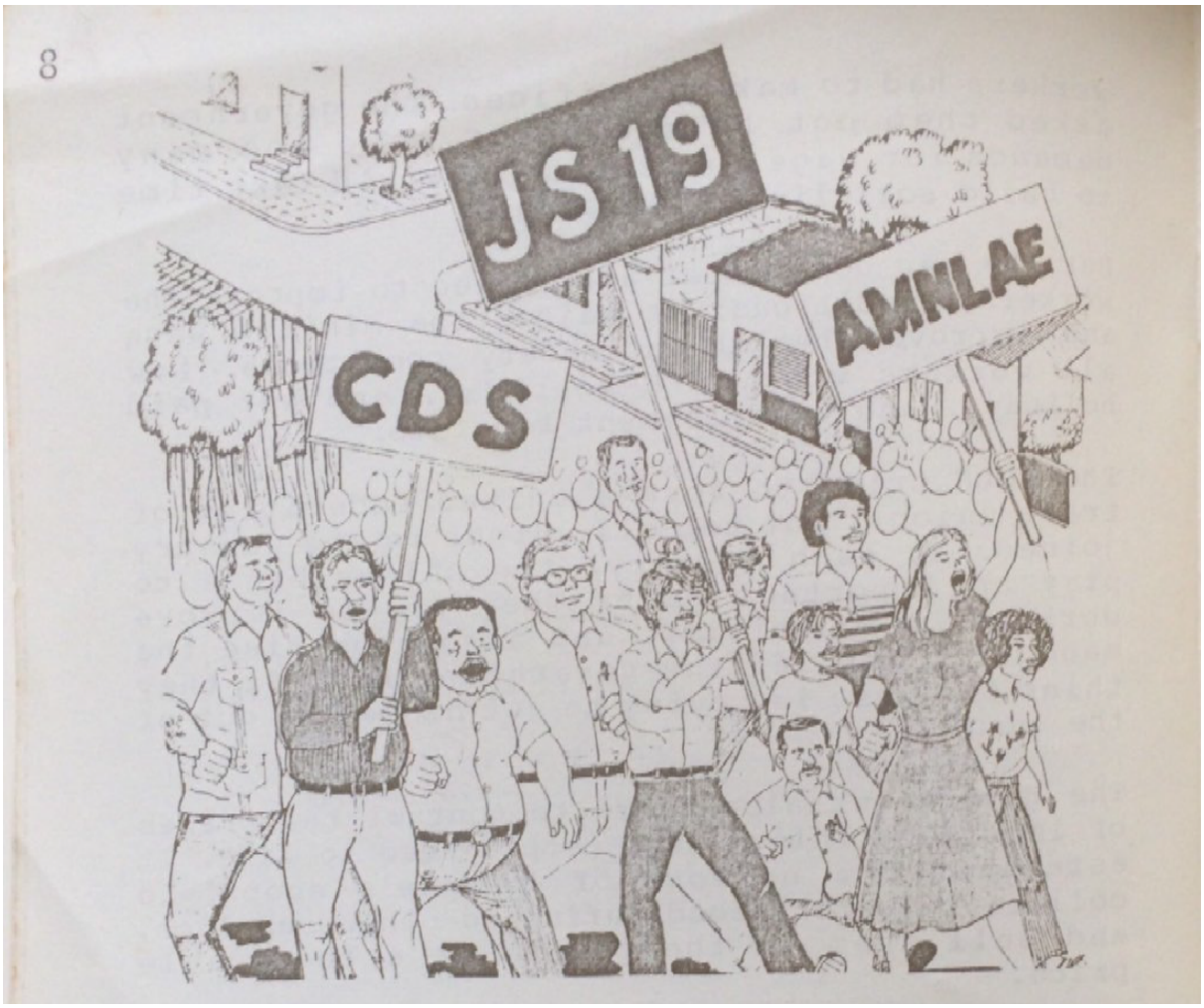
[181] Idem, p.3.
[182] Idem.
[183] Idem, p.4.
[184] Idem, p.5.
[185] Idem.

rebuild the country without the collaboration of powerful local capitalists and businessmen.[186]

This, the booklet explains, is the reason why the revolutionary government did not nationalise all the lands and companies but only those belonging to the Somoza family and supporters. At the same time, the new government did implement new policies designed to improve the workers' and farmers' quality of life: there was a rise in the minimum wage, better health and safety conditions, unemployment benefits, etc[187]. Improvements in workers' and farmers' conditions were provided but they did not impact negatively on company owners and businessmen. This was a strategy to avoid businesses taking their money out of the country and leaving workers unemployed. In an attempt to guarantee people's access to basic needs, the new government also tried to control prices. This initiative included the creation of "people's shops" where the poorest sectors of society could purchase basic food at regulated prices.

The booklet continues to describe the strategy of the revolutionary government and explains that since it included many middle-class members and big company owners, the FLNS promoted the creation of organisations that could give more representation, visibility and voice to the people's needs.[188]

[186] Idem, p.6.
[187] Idem, p.7.
[188] Idem.



The booklet makes it clear that this was not an authoritarian revolution but a democratic one. It explains that opposition was permitted and that democratic elections were held in 1984, in which different parties could participate.[189]

As part of the revolutionary project, the government built new hospitals, decreased the prices of rent, subsidised transport fares and helped small farmers to get land, create cooperatives and subsidised part of the resources needed to activate the farms.[190]

Another aspect given consideration in the booklet, is the role of women in the revolutionary struggle and in the revolutionary government's project. In a separate section, the booklet explains that women were very active during the revolutionary struggle and fought alongside men. The new government also recognized women's

[189] Idem, p.8.
[190] Idem, p.9.

needs and created new jobs for women, gave them the right to maternity leave, and promoted the creation of women's unions.[191]

The final aspect of the revolutionary government's project described in the booklet, is education. In an effort to address the high percentage of illiteracy (half the population at that time) the government promoted an educational crusade for the duration of six months. During those six months, young students spent time with workers and taught them how to read, write and count as well as Nicaragua's history. Young students, in turn, learnt skills from the workers skills and also gained useful life experience.

The last two pages of the booklet are dedicated to describing the problems that confronted the new government, and reflecting on the Nicaraguan experience as a whole.[192] This section is written in the present tense as events were unfolding in Nicaragua at the same time that the booklet was being written and published. The new government had to contend with the US influence in the country. The US government was paying rebels to instigate chaos and make it difficult for the new government to rule the country. Many big land and company owners also tried to sabotage the revolutionary government.

On another level, the country's economy was dependent on the international market as it needed to sell coffee, cotton and sugar abroad in order to be able to import machines. A direct consequence of this dependency was the increase in local prices. This made it very difficult for the people to access basic products.

The booklet goes on to explain how the alliance with the capitalists and big owners brought tensions to the national project. It was very difficult to find a balance between the vested interests of the capitalists and the needs of the people.

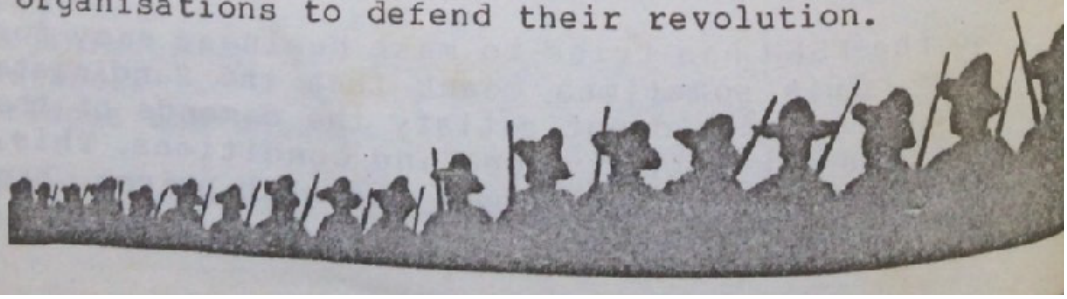
The conclusions published in the booklet were intended to acknowledge the value of the revolutionary experience, despite the many difficult problems it encountered. It is an open-ended narrative as the revolutionary project was still in process when the booklet was completed:

[191] Idem, p.10.
[192] Idem, pp.11-12.

DEFENDING THE REVOLUTION

The revolution in Nicaragua brought many improvements for the workers and peasants. Support for the Sandinistas has grown. In the general election in November, 1984, about 70% of the people voted for the Sandinistas. The people are determined to defend the gains that they have made.

They know that the only way they can really defend the revolution is if the workers and peasants strengthen their power against the bosses, the landowners and United States inteference. The struggle must continue. The people must build and strengthen their own organisations to defend their revolution.



The narrative and concepts

The Nicaraguan booklet differs from the other booklets in that it does not contain any commentary on, or comparison with, the local South African context. There is, in fact, no mention of South Africa at all. Thus, the booklet does not aim to promote a dialogue between cases but rather, to introduce the specific details of the Nicaraguan revolution. As a special publication with limited edition, the booklet can be seen as a case study. This may well be why it is not part of the wider dialogue between workers' experiences held in the Workers of the World series.

On another level, the way in which Nicaraguan history is narrated also differs from the other booklets. There are two main differences in this booklet's approach. The first is that it does not include personal histories, biographies or memories. This booklet does not attempt to create a popular narrative. It is a more general description of events, based on a class analysis.

The second difference is that it is much more pedagogically descriptive of concepts and processes than the other booklets. Some concepts in the booklet are defined very clearly, so as to ensure that the reader will be able to both understand and assimilate them. (One example of this can be found in the description of Somoza's fall from power:

> In 1974 many organisations came together and formed a **popular front** to throw out Somoza. This big organisation brought together the organisations of people from different classes: worker organisations, students organisations and bosses organisations[193]

This short paragraph aims to explain the concept of "popular front" as a class alliance with a common project. It is noteworthy that the concept appears in black in order to underline its importance. The notion of "popular front" is initially introduced in a sentence and is subsequently explained in detail with more specific information. This strategy can be traced throughout the booklet.

Another good example of this technique is evident in the explanation of the idea of nationalisation:

> The FSLN **nationalised** some parts of the economy. This means that the government took over as owner of these

[193]Idem, p.4.

> businesses. In these companies, the FSLN allowed the workers a big say in [how] the business is run[194]

As can be seen in the preceding example, there is a common order to the manner in which concepts are exposed and explained in this booklet. As in the example cited earlier, the main concept is also underlined in black in the first sentence and explained in detail in the following sentences. This shows that the approach developed to explain and make understandable a different reality (to the South African one) promoted a more conceptual analysis than a comparison between concrete examples.

Nevertheless, while the approach is much more pedagogical than in the other publications, the narrative of the Nicaraguan revolution is extremely brief. Consequently, while the narrative in this booklet presented a more pedagogical explanation of history. However, in so doing, the narrative lost depth and complexity. It must, however, be acknowledged that it is impossible to expose these complexities in just twelve pages.

The general narrative in the Nicaraguan revolution booklet aims to reveal a broad understanding of the events and challenges the FSLN had to contend with in the process of constructing a new Nicaragua. Consequently, the booklet provides a very clear description of how this revolution was not authoritarian and made an effort to balance the economy of the country. The booklet makes it clear that in the process of building a socialist Nicaragua, the FSLN did not nationalise all properties and companies simultaneously. Instead it allowed the capitalist relationships of production to continue, while, at the same time, developing new and better working conditions and facilitating land access. The booklet also goes on to explain that there were democratic elections in Nicaragua that permitted opposition to the government. As the Nicaraguan reality was unfolding concurrently to the booklet's publication, this last section is written in present tense, making it clear that the challenges were not resolved yet.[195] The booklet marks three main problems: the presence of anti-Sandinista rebels that counted with the support of the American government, the lack of local production of technology and basic products which led to import them on high prices and the power of the land and company owners that still control the

[194]Idem, p.6.
[195]Idem, p.11.

economy and make it difficult to develop better living and working conditions for the people.

While this section is very short (a single page), it manages to present a concise, complex (and critical) version of the revolution. This is particularly significant, as at the time, many organisations and political parties were looking at Nicaragua as one of the final attempts to construct a socialist model. As a direct consequence, many of these organisations were fervently supportive of it and were unable to critique it objectively. ILRIG's appraised the Nicaraguan revolution from a more realistic viewpoint which did not present it as an idealised case. Nevertheless, the booklet concludes with a very positive and/or romantic statement that evokes feelings of pride for the revolution and the people's struggle:

> The revolution in Nicaragua brought many improvements for the workers and peasants. Support for the Sandinistas has grown. In the general election in November, 1984, about 70% of people voted for the Sandinistas. The people are determined to defend the gains that they have made.
>
> They know that the only way they can really defend the revolution is if the workers and peasants strengthen their power against the bosses, the landowners and United States interference. The struggle must continue. The people must build and strengthen their own organisations to defend their revolution[196]

This concluding statement that appears under the title "Defending the revolution" is accompanied by a powerful image of Nicaraguan people in protest: a close-up image that enables the viewer to see the subjects' features and facial expressions. In so doing, the final page of the booklet conveys a powerful statement that evokes a fervent feeling in favour of the struggle for the revolution. This open-ended conclusion to the booklet's narrative succeeds in communicating a sense of faith and pride in the history of the peasants' and workers' struggle. It is highly likely that the concluding statement had an emotional impact on the readers, arousing feelings of strength, belief and hope for the future.

[196]Idem, p.12.

Aims and purposes

As mentioned before, the main aim of this booklet was to provide a brief explanation of the history and features of the Nicaraguan revolution for the South African trade unions. The booklet is therefore very straight-forward and does not include any additional information that would expose the reader to other themes and debates. As a short booklet presenting a case study, there is no explicit intention to create a dialogue with South Africa's reality.

The booklet does not look to develop a theoretical or conceptual statement, as is the case in the Workers of the World series. Its sole purpose is to expose general features of the history of the revolution. There is no deep explanation of the local reality prior to this period, nor is there any deep analysis of social and political conditions. The importance of the booklet resides in the fact that it was, in all likelihood, one of the only sources of information on the Nicaraguan revolution that was circulating in South Africa. The manner in which the booklet was written and published suggests that there was insufficient available information on the Nicaraguan context at the time, but it was widely known that something important was happening in that country. The booklet appears to be an attempt to provide some information on a situation about which very few facts were available outside of Nicaragua.

Achievements and limits

It does not seem fair to evaluate this booklet in the same way as the others analysed in this study. The Nicaraguan booklet was not part of ILRIG's project. Instead it was compiled in response to demands from other organisations. It therefore reflects more about ILRIG's position as a producer of information and resources for popular circulation than its role as an educational and political organisation. As explained in the preceding chapters, ILRIG had to contend with the ambiguity of being both an information provider and a political educational organisation, and the pressure this duality brought to bear on the organisation[197]. These two core functions tended to coexist and vie for pre-eminence within the organisation's projects and actions. The Nicaraguan booklet provides a clear example of material produced by ILRIG in

[197] For more information on this, read Cooper, D., 2009.

response to local demands for information. For this reason, the booklet's approach, display and aesthetic differs significantly from those produced in the Workers of the World series.

Audio-visual material on Nicaragua and Bolivia

In addition to publishing booklets and seminars, ILRIG also produced audio-visual material with accompanying written scripts. Numerous videos and slides were developed by the organisation. Nevertheless, only two Latin American audio-visual productions could be found for this research: one on Nicaragua and one on Bolivia. In many cases, this material would accompany the booklets or pamphlets as supportive material.

In the case of the Nicaraguan booklet, while it was developed as a source of information for specific trade unions, it was also accompanied by audio-visual material that came with a written script. This was based on audio-visual material produced by Grupo Alforja, from Costa Rica.[198]

As with all other cases presented by ILRIG, the Nicaraguan script begins by contextualising Nicaragua. It describes its general history before the revolution of 1979. The main aim of the material is to present the dynamics of the Sandinista revolution and the difficulties the new state had to confront afterwards. The script takes a more general approach to those developed in the booklets, presenting the history by sharing images of workers, instead of through their memories. The content is distinctly conceptual and is, in fact, directed at seminar and course facilitators. Unlike the booklets, it does not focus much on the workers' life and experiences but sheds light on the challenges that confronted the new government and how people became engaged with these challenges. In other words, the script concentrates on the revolutionary aims and on how to rebuild the country.

The explanation for this change of perspective may lie in the fact that the script was written (and the courses were run) while the Nicaraguan revolution and struggle

[198]The New Nicaragua, Audio-visual script, Anne Mager personal documents, see appendix 2.

were still ongoing. Thus, the production of this entire project was an open-ended process.

The main aspects described in the script are the people's engagement with the revolution, their rights, the nationalisation of industries, land reform, education and health, and the US's attempts to discredit the revolution and its links to the local middle class. In comparison to the other cases studied by ILRIG, the Nicaraguan struggle was still active and ongoing while it was being taught. It was not approached as a historical case but as a contemporary one, and it opened the space for alternative reflections and discussions. In this assessment, the revolution was seen as successful and the main concern was how to stop the US influence against it and how to act in solidarity with it.

The script does not mention South Africa and does not attempt to translate the Nicaraguan case to a South African reality. It may, in fact, have represented a possible example of the challenges that could arise post-revolution in the South African context. It may equally well have been that ILRIG members were hesitant to draw conclusions while presenting a then current process of which the outcome was still unknown and unknowable.

It is notable that this script was unlike any of the others. For example, the Bolivian script reflected the same biographical approach as its booklet (see appendix 2). The Nicaraguan script offered a different example that gave rise to alternative discussions in the local context, and more particularly the question of what the challenges would be once liberation took place.

As explained before, the Bolivian booklet was published based on biographical information and history from Bolivian workers. The main idea was to share workers' experiences and histories of struggle and organisation against the oppressive regime. The aim was not only to evaluate Bolivia's present but its past revolutionary experience as well. In that sense, the narration of its history is done based on a reflective analysis that tries to make Bolivian history understandable for a South African public. To achieve this end, different strategies of translation are used throughout the booklet.

The approach developed in the audio-visual material is not different to the one in the Bolivian booklet. Thus, in this case, the audio-visual script keeps a similar structure

and perspective, even though it was produced for teaching purposes. The voices of different workers are combined with local music and images to create a scene that could make local South Africans understand a bit better and more about that country. This is the main difference between the Bolivian script and the Nicaraguan one. While the first one is based in the people's voice, the second one is more general and abstract. As mentioned before, this could perhaps be explained by the fact that the Nicaraguan revolution was still taking place while being taught. But it could also be the case that there was not enough material to produce a history from below; maybe because of language issues and translations and maybe because information was not circulating that easily to South Africa. It could also be the case that the public for whom these scripts and booklets were produced were different, requiring different approaches.

As this chapter is based on the researcher's approach to the sources, these questions cannot be answered here. Consequently, it is left open-ended to allow for the public to reflect on the analysis that has been produced in these pages. More specific answers and new questions will be presented in the following chapter, where reflections and discussion with ILRIG members on the publications will be shared.

The production of Latin American material and knowledge

While it is true that the aforementioned booklets and audio-visual scripts are linked to each other, in that they were produced to be used together, there are differences between the two forms of media that are important to mention. As the booklets were circulated throughout the country and in many cases, were used in private spaces, their scripts had to be clear, neat, explicit. In short, the booklets had to be compiled and designed in a way that made them accessible to autonomous readers. They also had to compensate for the lack of interaction that is part of a group workshop. In order to meet these requirements, the booklets contain intentionally profound descriptions with pedagogical questions that guided the reflections.

Conversely, the audio-visual scripts were produced with the clear understanding that the viewing of the material would be facilitated. Furthermore, the creators of the material, gave consideration to the fact that the viewers would have access to the booklets plus all the information that was discussed in the workshop. This allowed

facilitators to create new opportunities to discuss and consider the cases, as well as the South African context.

ILRIG's choice to expose these key Latin American themes and concepts was more than an attempt to give expression to, and describe, the complexities of the Latin American struggles. It was also an attempt to communicate ILRIG's understanding and interpreting of these events, based on the personal backgrounds and thoughts of its members.

In the process of sharing, teaching and discussing Latin American histories of struggle, ILRIG was also producing its own knowledge on it and formulating its own ideas about the South African struggle. This knowledge process was informed by the differing languages, concepts, cultures and experiences that required translation to enable the two contexts to dialogue one with the other. The difficulty resides precisely in the process of translating. However, in as much as it is a complex process that cannot bridge the epistemological distances, translation opens up the possibility of the production of new meanings, new ideas, new realities.

As mentioned before, translating is a complex process that affects grammar, knowledge and the cosmology of different societies and realities (Mignolo, M, Schiwy, F, 2003: 12). It is a process that attempts to build a bridge between two different worlds (or ways of living within and understanding the world) that are very distant from each other. The process of translation, therefore, requires a comprehensive effort that, while it may indeed help to reduce the distance, will never solve it completely.

Loss is part of any translation experience. The loss of meanings, of ideas, of complexities. These losses must be acknowledged as part of a responsible process of translation. It is impossible to overlook, deny or erase these losses as they exist even if they are not mentioned. Nevertheless, if one accepts the fact that the distance will never be breached and that translation always implies a loss, one may be able to understand the process as a creative one.

What happens with realities that are difficult to comprehend, to explain, to communicate? How do people grasp them? The most interesting elements of the process of translation lie on those instances in which people grapple to find alternative ways to explain a reality that is not epistemologically and/or

cosmologically accessible to them. Those instances require an exercise of conceptual translation that in many cases (or perhaps even all of them) implies the production of new ideas.

This chapter is an attempt to recognise and underline some examples where new ideas were produced as a means of explaining a reality that seemed far removed from the local South African context. ILRIG members were particularly interested in Latin American history as they believed that particular reality could help to provide a broader perspective from which to better understand the South African struggle context and plan future strategies. As it was mentioned before, by translating Latin American struggle experiences, ILRIG promoted local awareness and discussions over class solidarity and political leadership. This was the driving force behind their concerted effort to learn about and study Latin American cases. As mentioned in previous chapters, some members even travelled to the South American continent in an effort to gain a better understanding of the South American reality and to create networks that could possibly promote closer links with the South African struggle.

These efforts were not in vain. It is true that in many cases ILRIG members could not really capture the deepness of Latin American cosmologies and realities. But that is not because they did not make an effort. That is only an example of a more general and universal fact: it is impossible to translate different realities without losing content and meaning in the process of it.

If that is accepted, then it is possible to recover the creative instance of the process of translation as an instance of knowledge production. The interest and commitment of ILRIG's members allowed them to get closer to those other realities. It might be the case that in that process, ILRIG members were not completely conscious about the real distance existing in between their reality and the Latin American one. In any case, conscious or not, they made the effort to understand, comprehend and communicate that different world to the local people.

So, while in the process of translation, loss was unavoidable, the same is true for the creative instance. ILRIG members were producing new ideas when translating the Latin American cases for a South African public. They did so by making comparisons, explaining and defining concepts, using images and people's memories and making conclusions. Concepts such as mita, race, gender, class,

indigenous population, democracy, national revolution were understood from a South African framework. When defining and explaining them, ILRIG members included the Latin American perspective as much as they could understand it themselves. This means that in the process of sharing those ideas they mixed their own definitions and experiences with what they got from the Latin American cases.

As any other instance of knowledge production, they had a clear aim and a clear idea of what they wanted to transmit. The process of translation began before the writing of the booklets and audio-visual scripts. It began when ILRIG members chose the cases, read, studied and finally created their own narrative of them. Thus, the material produced is an expression of that long and complex process of translation and production of knowledge. Many ideas, discussions, questions and reflections that they had while planning the production of the material are not exposed in it. So, when analysing the written material there is also a loss as the research cannot reach those complexities completely.

In other words, this chapter shows an analysis of the content produced by ILRIG, from a Latin American perspective/lens. It does not include ILRIG members' opinions, reflections and discussions. As part of a research exercise, the idea is to show the different layers of analysis as a work in progress. In the following chapter, ILRIG members' voices will be shared by displaying transcriptions of those special encounters in which we discussed and reflected on the content produced by them. The aim of this way of organising the research results is to also reflect on the researcher's process of understanding and her methodological challenges when working with a South African reality; a reality that is different to hers and can also be understood partially through her Latin American background.

Chapter 6

Past and present trans-Atlantic reflections

> David Cooper: "In December 1981 I'm reading Brazil and my problem is, because of the way I work, I have no knowledge about Latin America. I don't know who lives there… I know there are Indians but I don't know the proportions. Like, I don't know... Bolivia is primarily…"
>
> Laura Efron: "Indigenous"
>
> David Cooper: "Yes, indigenous. People speak Quechua and Aymara. I don't know... there was colonial independency in 1820… I mean, I'm lost but I can see the political relevance"[199]

Getting to understand how ILRIG read and reflected on the Latin American cases introduced in its booklets required more than just an analysis of the content. During 2018 I invited Linda Cooper, David Cooper and David Fig to participate in a series of encounters in which they were able to reflect on their experiences on the production of the Latin American booklets. I shared digital copies of the publications and suggested general questions regarding the way the booklets were produced, the layout of the content and the conceptual background. At this stage, questions were very wide, inviting them to engage with the booklets in a more personal way.

As it was mentioned before, the main aim was to open a space for reflection on the multiple meanings of the booklets that could even question my ideas and analysis on ILRIG. Furthermore, these latest encounters were held after I analysed the booklets' content based on previous meetings with ILRIG members and my personal perspective and background. This was an intentional decision: avoiding feedback before I produced my own reflections on the cases was integral to my research method and strategy. The idea was to be able to separate the different stages in the research process as it would show how knowledge was produced during each step of the thesis. In other words, South Atlantic dialogues did not only take place in the

[199] Final interview with David Cooper, November, 2018. David Cooper provided me with more information and explanations on his perspective and understanding on Latin American history after reading the first draft of this thesis. He explained how ILRIG's team had a specific perspective on Latin American history that was deeply linked to the South African political context. He also suggested to link this interview to his preview articles from 1991, 1992 and 2009 as they show how his knowledge on Latin American history has changed in a very short period of time, how his perspective on Latin American history was influenced by his concerns on South Africa's political context (based on the concept of bureaucratic authoritarian government) and economic development (based on his perceptions on the third world's industrial development under capitalism). For more information, read Cooper, D. 1991, 1992 and 2009.

past that is being studied in this thesis but also continue in the present: in the process of researching ILRIG's understanding of Latin American history and their production of knowledge, I, plus all the members involved in this research, was also exchanging ideas and producing South Atlantic knowledge(s) in and for the present times.

Thus, the aim of this final chapter is to share some of those reflections and dialogues held with ILRIG members and, based on them, review my perspective on ILRIG's booklets and assumptions about ILRIG's knowledge on Latin America.

The encounters

Encounters with Linda Cooper, David Cooper and David Fig had been taking place since the inception of the research. Over the course of the past three years, we met to review their personal backgrounds, their group readings, ILRIG's history, ILRIG's perspective on Latin American history, etc. However, the final meetings were different. After three years of building a relationship with the respondents, these concluding discussions were the closure of a long process of reviewing their past (both with me and individually on their own).[200] Consequently, the primary intention was to open a space for reflections. On one hand, I was looking to reflect on the concepts and ideas exposed in the booklets, their meanings and ILRIG's understanding of Latin American history. On the other hand, I also wanted to allow space and time for reflection on the process of reviewing the past of ILRIG's members from a more personal perspective.

After sharing the idea of this final encounter with them, I sent digital copies of the booklets that each respondent was responsible for writing and suggested open-ended questions as a basic guide on the themes I was interested in discussing

[200]After finishing the first draft of this thesis, all respondents were asked to read, comment and suggest corrections to the manuscript. All of them made many suggestions and corrections that were crucial for this research. In the case of David Cooper, he asked to have one last encounter in which he explained in detail many of the discussions and difficulties ILRIG's team had during the first decade of the organisation. His feedback was very important as it brought up new information that had not been shared before by him or the others. This new information explained many of the researchers' gaps in understanding ILRIG's booklets and political choices.
The difficulties of opening the space for feedback after writing the thesis reside in the complexities of the links established with people and in the concepts of and conceptions on truth and trust. These stories that people tell are so complicated that it is impossible to get a full understanding of them. I decided -out of respect- to limit what to share and how to share it in this thesis.

with them. Nevertheless, I knew that having the chance to engage afresh with their own past (what they wrote, how they wrote it, etc) would give rise to thoughts, feelings and reactions that I could not anticipate. I welcomed this unpredictability and encouraged it, as it was part of my methodological (and even ideological) approach to research. These ultimate encounters promoted further symmetrical dialogue and discussion. They gave ILRIG members an opportunity to express opinions from their current perspective, to give expression to their doubts and silences and not to have all the answers to my questions. At the same time, these last encounters afforded me the opportunity to reciprocate; to express my opinions and doubts and share my misunderstandings in the process of analysing the publications.

As exposed in the theoretical and methodological chapters, this approach expressed my intention as an academic not to reproduce the coloniality of power that is still dominant in the academic world. On one hand, the aim was to promote a communal and collective reflection and interaction that would allow us to listen to each other in an attempt to disrupt extractivist mechanisms. On the other hand, this type of encounter also promoted collective ways of producing knowledge. The following main beliefs and values were taken under consideration when proposing these last meetings: viz. honesty, transparency and symmetry. I understood these meetings as a space and opportunity for all of us to reflect on what we thought in the past, what we think at present, what we do not understand, what we do not remember and how we felt throughout our common journey of unfolding ILRIG's history.

Following Rufer (2012) and Segato (2016) the key is to listen in a committed and responsible way, to refrain from filling in gaps or changing meanings in the process of epistemological translation. This exercise of an honest approach required an intentional effort to leave aside those well-known and widely accepted methodological strategies of neutrality and lack of personal engagement during interviews and encounters. The result was diverse. Some encounters were more intense and deeper than others. Nevertheless, in most of the cases ILRIG members did express how this research experience had a personal impact on them and promoted their own personal reencounter with their past.

The context of production

The first of these final encounters took place in early October 2018 with David Fig. As he is based in Johannesburg we had to organise a video-call; knowing fully that this type of interaction might not be as deep and personal as a face to face encounter. Before the meeting I shared the Brazil booklet with David so that he could meet again with his own work and take the time to go through it on his own.

In my analysis, I understood the Brazil booklet as an attempt to share other workers' struggles experiences that could promote a better understanding of the local South African context. In that sense, comparisons and biographies were the two main strategies for translating distant reality into a local imagery. I focused my research on how Brazilian history was explained and described using specific concepts. In that sense, I did not take into consideration the specifics of the local context -South African political conflicts and debates among parties and organisations- as I was particularly interested in how the Brazilian reality was understood and explained from a South African perspective. Thus, my research does not express the implicit dialogues and conflicts taking place between political parties and organisations but, rather, the processes of translation that developed when sharing different experiences and realities.

The conversation with David Fig made it clear to me that while the booklet was an attempt to communicate another experience of workers' struggles, it was created as a response to a local political context. In other words, David Fig decided to make explicit comparisons between Brazil and South Africa as a means of exposing local workers to other cases of struggles and debates that could, in turn, contribute towards widening their perspectives. Learning about the Brazilian case could promote richer discussions among FOSATU's plan of action.[201]

This same concern was raised by both Linda Cooper and David Cooper in our final encounters during November 2018. ILRIG's booklets were published in a particular local context in which local unions were debating how to organise themselves and their struggles.

FOSATU was formed in 1979 as the biggest South African independent federation of trade unions. From its early days FOSATU counted more than 45.000 members from

[201] FOSATU: Federation of South African Trade Unions

all over the country, in its ranks. Soon its influence became even bigger, amassing 120.000 affiliates from 11 unions (Byrne, 2013). FOSATU was a workers-based, non-racial and politically independent organisation. Different to other organisations, it promoted workers' control of the Federation, independent of any political party. It also promoted trade union unity and international solidarity. FOSATU believed in democratising the unions by getting workers to participate in decision making. To this end, the structure of the Federation was based on the shop stewards as the main workers representatives (Friedman, 2011: 43-46). Shop stewards were workers elected by other workers to mediate and communicate with the regional and national representatives.

The main debate during the 1980s revolved around whether FOSATU should involve itself in the political struggle against apartheid or not. Initially, the organisation aimed to focus on workers' struggles and class solidarities against capitalist exploitation, understanding apartheid as an expression of capitalist domination (Friedman, 2011:50-53). FOSATU was against political alliances with political parties and tried to remain independent. Nevertheless, as the local political context became more and more tense, it became difficult to separate the class struggle from the political one. In that context, the idea of a Worker's Party was considered.

FOSATU's organisation and struggle strategies differed from those of the ANC and SACP. Besides having been much more hierarchical than FOSATU, these two political parties also had differing analyses of the local reality and thus, developed different struggle strategies. Their "populist" approach promoted black alliances as the conduit for developing a national liberation movement against apartheid. During the early 1980s "workerism" and "populism" were the two main struggle strategies developed within workers and black organisations. These two concepts were in dispute as they implied different approaches to the local reality and different plans of action. They also implied different power relations between workers and political leaders. Before FOSATU merged with COSATU in 1985, these two perspectives were very strong and it was not clear which one was going to lead the local struggle against apartheid. This is the context in which ILRIG booklets and publications were produced.

As much as this context impacted directly on ILRIG's decision to publish those specific booklets, the way in which the histories were presented and explained

speaks not only to the local political debates but also to local cosmologies and ways of understanding and translating distant realities into a knowable world. It is this process of translation that this thesis has attempted to analyse. To this end, the main discussion I attempted to promote among ILRIG members, was based on concepts and definitions and not on the historical explanation of the booklets' context of production.

The concepts

As explained earlier on, different stages of analysis took place during the research process. In itself, this thesis provided me with an opportunity to practice alternative ways of producing academic knowledge. And in that attempt, this final chapter aims to share some of the debates, doubts, misunderstandings and reflections that took place while working with the conceptual analysis on ILRIG's publications on Latin American history. In the following pages, a selection of broad concepts that were key concepts in most of the booklets and the final encounters' reflections will be re-analysed. This final analysis aims to put different voices and past and present in dialogue, as an attempt to develop an honest academic praxis and alternative ways of producing knowledge.

The last encounters with ILRIG members should be understood as deep encounters in which different theoretical and methodological concepts and practices took place at the same time. Past and present, memories and history, converged in that reunion between the booklets and the writers. It was an instance for ILRIG members to meet again with their ideas and ways of writing from thirty years ago.

Cultural, categorical and cosmological dialogues took place between them and me. Their understanding of the Latin American cases, my understanding of their writings and their replies/corrections/comments to my ideas became interconnected in a feedback circle in which ideas, definitions and doubts were able to circulate freely, without being judged.

As it was explained earlier on in the theoretical chapter, the process of translation can be understood as a process with multiple layers: as a language process, as an identity process, as a cultural process (Homi Bhabha, 1994), as a categorical process (Chakrabarty, 2000), as a cosmological process (Mignolo and Schiwy,

2003). From my perspective, translations are epistemological process that can either reproduce the coloniality of power or can contribute to an ecology of knowledges. These two might not even be two separate options. It might be the case that they are present in every translation instance and in constant dispute. This being said, I understand that this is what took place in ILRIG's booklets: The process of translating Latin American historical cases gave rise to a reproduction of colonial epistemological domination as well as instances of alternative knowledge production.

At that time (and as ILRIG members recall), Marxist theory was perceived to be the most likely answer to the question of how to produce social transformation. The booklets were written from a European theoretical perspective and included struggle experiences from underdeveloped regions. In this way, ILRIG booklets represented a genuine effort to produce alternative answers (not universal ones) to local problems and realities. ILRIG publications were an attempt to contribute to the development of a wider perspective and deeper understanding of the local reality by contextualising it in the capitalist system of domination. Thus, most of the concepts and explanations in the booklets were based on their Marxist perspective and analysis of the South African political context. ILRIG members were seen, in the local context, as white Marxists. Most of them had English as their mother tongue and were part of the middle class. This complex combination of influences should be taken under consideration when reflecting on how they translated Latin American realities into the South African context.

My personal background was also important in the process of analysing the publications as it affected the way I understood ILRIG's perspective. As a female, middle class, Jewish Argentinean that migrated to South Africa, my own understanding of the booklets was also mediated by my past, my migration experience, my encounter with other cosmologies and ways of living and my personal transformation because of it.

Taking all these complex realities under consideration, the following pages try to expose the different types of difficulties that raised in the process of analysing ILRIG's publications. Past and present experiences of translations and their challenges can be recognised and analysed in the conceptual cases that will be described. Most of the concepts that were previously analysed in chapter five were discussed at a later date with Linda Cooper, David Cooper and David Fig in our final

encounters. It is from those last debates that the following analysis comes into life as an expression of the challenges existing in any cosmological translation; either the ones done by ILRIG in the 80s or the ones developed by me in this thesis. The following pages are the result of a long ideological and methodological effort to de-construct the process of knowledge production based on the multiple translation experiences that are part of this thesis.

Race

ILRIG members were aware of the Latin American racial dynamics. As it was explained in previous chapters, they were able to understand the racial composition of Brazil, Bolivia and Nicaragua and describe it for the local South African readers. It is interesting to see though, how they understood race in Latin America and how they made the effort to translate that reality so that it would be easy to understand it from a South African point of view.

One of the first concepts that caught my attention during my analysis of ILRIG's booklets and reflections on it with ILRIG members, was the notion of Indian as a racial classification to define indigenous societies in Latin America. In the South African context, this category was used to define descendants of Indian migrants to the country. But when ILRIG members used the concept in reference to the Latin American context, the word alluded to indigenous people. As the opening transcript fragment shows, ILRIG members were not aware of this fundamental difference or the implications of using the idea of Indians to talk about indigenous people in Latin America. From a historical point of view, Spanish colonisers defined indigenous societies as Indians because during the first expeditions to the continent, Columbus believed he had reached the Indian ocean and, consequently, confused the local inhabitants with Indian people. Once the Spanish colonial government took control over local societies, they continued to use the concept to define local societies in a demeaning way. Local societies do not define themselves as Indians but rather as indigenous, originating from that land.

When David Cooper mentioned the concept of Indian and I suggested the use of the concept of indigenous, as shown in the first transcript fragment of this chapter, he was not aware of that. We talked about it and reflected on it. At the time of our last

encounter with David, I was not able to understand why was it that ILRIG defined local societies with the concept of Indians, which has a very specific connotation in the South African reality. If ILRIG members knew that local societies in Latin America were not Indian descendants, why did they use that concept to talk about them and not another one?

South Africa's society was historically defined and divided in racial groups based on four specific racial categories: White, Black, Coloured and Indian. None of the concepts makes explicit reference to historical roots of the people, probably because in a settlers' society the right to belong to the land was and still is in dispute.[202] Nevertheless, South African activists did have a clear understanding on how colonial power dynamics had a direct influence on those local identity markers. During the uprisings and struggles that took place against the apartheid government in the 70s and 80s, it was clear that blackness was more than just a racial category for the exploitation of the people; it was also a political identity that enabled consciousness and awakening of the people.

If ILRIG members were looking at Latin America through the South African epistemological lens, then why did they not define Latin American indigenous societies as black? As hilarious as it sounds, asking this question puts on the table the difficulties that are inherent in the process of translation.

When reflecting on this issue together with David Cooper, he expressed how ILRIG's booklets were not able to underline the racial differences between Indians (native indigenous) and the others (mestizos -mixed race). From his point of view, the latter were part of the whiteness scale, shades of whiteness. From the South African reality, mestizo people could be understood by the concept of Coloured. Nevertheless, ILRIG booklets do not make that literal social translation. In this case, the concept of Mestizo is used.

ILRIG booklets defined those who were Spanish descendants as White and/or Settlers. As mentioned in previous chapters, the use of these two categories was also not common in the Latin American context by the time the booklets were published. In this case, ILRIG members were also translating realities by using those concepts. In this particular case, I found myself surprised by their categorial choice

[202] For more information, read Mamdani (1998)

as it was politically accurate, even if that was not the way local Latin American societies were analysing their own reality in general.

I reflected on this particular issue in my last encounters with David Cooper and Linda Cooper, sharing how surprised I was by their categorial choice. From their perspective it was clearly obvious that Spanish descendants should be defined as settlers. That was not true for me. In the Latin American educational systems, Spanish descendants are not presented as Settler but as Criollos -creoles. The idea of belonging has not been in question in the general imaginary of local societies. I even found myself questioning my own understanding of my own society as a result of ILRIGs definitions.

In the case of racial categories used in the booklets to make Latin American reality understandable for the South African public, there was a process of selective translation. As the two racial contexts are different (not only because of social dynamics but also of cosmological understandings) the possibility to translate one reality into the other one's perspective becomes complex.

Gender

In the process of analysing ILRIG's publications I managed to understand how ILRIG members read the racial composition of Bolivia, Brazil and Nicaragua. I paid special attention to the concepts chosen by the writers to describe race in Latin America. In most of the booklets race is described along the side with gender. Although that was explicit and clear, I did not give that conceptual link and specifically the gender explanations the value that ILRIG members did to it. In other words, when analysing ILRIG's explanations on race and gender I were not able to understand that in that definition and description of the gender reality in Bolivia, Brazil and Nicaragua, there was a genuine and important local concern. From my perspective, those explanations on the gender relationships in Latin America seemed accurate and managed to describe a local Latin American reality. What I could not see was that those descriptions could have a big impact among workers in South Africa.

In my last encounter with David Cooper, I was ready to speak about the concepts of Mestizo, Settlers, Indians as racial categories and how he understood them, based on my analysis in chapter five. I did not take under consideration the gender analysis

made by ILRIG as a key conceptual issue. I did not see the challenges in translations that this matter could bring into the South African reality. It was only when talking about race that David Cooper corrected me and highlighted a specific section of the booklet that we had to review together. That section was a specific paragraph in which the gender relationships were explained. I could not see why that explanation could be problematic and it was David Cooper who had to make the effort to explain to me how the Latin American gender reality could be translated and could impact on the local South African one:

[David Cooper is looking in the booklet for the section on gender and "machismo"]

> Women are sometimes treated badly by their husbands. Most men in Latin America believe that they should tell the women what to do. The men like to control their wives and family. They do not think that women can be equal to men. They think that a woman's place is in the home, that she must do all the housework. Also, the men have hard, tiring jobs, and some of them drink to forget their jobs. Then they beat their wives[203].

> Laura Efron: "…Because the concept in itself doesn't exist in English, isn't it?"
>
> David Cooper: "No, we couldn't use that. (…) We would spend the whole day discussing this… There was a real issue in the trade unions of white intellectuals writing a book effectively saying most Africans are "machistas". We knew most men in Cape Town and Joburg believed they should tell women what to do. (…) The simple discussion was should we put 'some' or 'most'… but people were worried politically…"
>
> Laura Efron: "yes… because it could easily be translated to the South African…"
>
> David Cooper: "No, it WAS translated"[204]

David Cooper and I agreed that the Bolivian race and gender reality had many similarities to the South African one. We agreed on how the racial and class definitions impacted in the gender dynamics. That was clear for both of us. What was difficult for me to understand was how describing the Bolivian reality could have such an impact among South African workers. I was surprised when David explained that it took them several hours and many team discussions to write that paragraph. I could not understand what was so difficult to express or why it would have such an impact among South African workers. In that sense, I could not comprehend and/or

[203] ILRIG, *Bolivia, the unfinished struggle*, Workers of the World Series, Vol.2, Cape Town, 1985, p.24.
[204] David Cooper final interview, November, 2018.

interpret the local context. While paying such close attention to the racial concepts by which ILRIG chose to describe the Latin American societies, I inadvertently overlooked the gender ones.

After David Cooper, Linda Cooper and David Fig had reflected on gender in our ultimate encounters I was able to understand why I had not paid attention to it before. It sounded so obvious, so well explained and so important that I could not see why or how talking about gender could be problematic.

In fact, as I was so concerned about concepts, I was only able to focus on the idea of "machismo" and how to translate it into English. So, when David Cooper pointed out the difficulties of writing a paragraph on gender I thought only of the concept of "machismo". I did not consider how difficult or problematic it might be to describe similar realities. I did not think of the readers and how those words could criticise their own beliefs and behaviours and their own concepts of masculinity. In my aim to understand the process of translation I focused too strongly on racial concepts and did not see how in the similarities of the gender realities there was a translation challenge. Thus, I got lost in translation.[205]

The people

The concept of "the people" is one of the most important concepts in ILRIG's publications. It appears in all the booklets and it is normally underlined and emphasised. As it was explained in previous chapters, it was the strong influence of the South African context what made ILRIG use that concept when analysing Latin American history of struggles. People's government, people's movement, people's needs, people's front; all these ideas were used to describe Latin American realities.

In the local South African context, the concept was widely used as part of a political stand against apartheid and as part of the conceptual imaginary that was meant to build a project for the future of the country. Did the concept mean the same for the Latin American context than for the South African one? Were ILRIG members aware

[205] After sharing the draft version of this thesis with David Cooper and Linda Cooper, both of them pointed out that ILRIG debates on how to describe "machismo" had to do more with race than with gender issues. Being most of ILRIG members white made it very difficult to openly criticise black patriarchal dynamics. They knew that workers were going to react to their narrative and read it through a racial lens.

of the Latin American meaning? Was the decision of using this concept to explain Latin American realities a conscious/ interested one? How did ILRIG understand the idea of “the people”? Was it in dialogue with the way in which the concept was understood in Latin America? And was the concept describing the historical events or referring to the South African present? Or both?

When reflecting about it with David Cooper and Linda Cooper, both agreed that the South African context strongly influenced the choice to use the concept of people’s government/movement/organisation. David Cooper, particularly, clearly explained how this concept linked to the local struggles and political parties:

> L: (talking about Bolivia’s Revolution of 1952) why did you say it was gonna be a people’s government?
>
> D: cause that’s the UDF.
>
> L: so that’s a concept that you were bringing from the South African reality…
>
> D: they’re wanting to establish a government of the people, not of the whites, not of capitalism. That’s not Latin American… (he laughs)
>
> L: yes… (she laughs)

This affirmation confirms the analysis made in the previous chapter, that the links made by ILRIG’s booklet between Bolivian history and South African history went beyond chronology. The booklet was not only speaking about the 1950s in Bolivia and South Africa but also the 1980s in South Africa. Regardless of how accurate the previous analysis is, this transcript brings up an example on how complex translations and epistemological dynamics are. This particular fragment of our long conversation with David Cooper invites reflection on how time(s) and space(s) interact with each other in the (multiple) definition(s) of the concept of “the people”.

The laughs and the comment “this is not Latin American” at the end of the fragment are an expression of David Cooper’s current perspective on Latin American history, which is not necessarily the same as what ILRIG used to think of it in the 80s. During the 80s ILRIG was looking at Latin America to learn from its history of struggles from below, understanding those experiences as real attempts to build fairer futures for the people. In that particular context, “the people” was a concept that implied those who were being discriminated, exploited and repressed by the apartheid and/or

capitalist system. In the local South African context of struggles against apartheid, local organisations were not only thinking about how to fight the system but also considering how to build a new South Africa. The concept of “the people” was crucial for this thought process. So, when looking at and describing the history of “the people” in Latin America, ILRIG was thinking of “the people” and their current circumstances in South Africa.

In Latin American struggles against capitalism and dictatorship regimes, the idea of “the people” was also used and it also implied those who were discriminated against, exploited and repressed by the system of domination. Thus, the complexity of the translation and epistemological process does not reside on the translation and definition of the concept itself but on its relationship with the South African imaginary on Latin America.

In the conversation with David Cooper it became clear that the imagery of Latin America during the 80s was based on an idea(lisation) of Latin America as a revolutionary continent where “the people” were fighting against systems of oppression, and attempting to construct alternative futures. In the course of our final discussion, it became evident that, viewed from his current perspective, David Cooper maintains that the “people’s” struggle in Latin America did not succeed.

ILRIG’s use of the concept of “the people” to describe the history of the struggles in Latin America during the 1980s was accurate to some extent, as many of the revolutionary movements did, in fact, adopt this concept as part of their political stand. Nevertheless, the tendency to overuse and over-emphasise the notion of “the people” was more an expression of South African expectations than of Latin American realities. In other words, presenting Latin American struggles through the lens of the concept of “the people” was a means of bringing answers to local South African questions and uncertainties; a way to bring hope and confidence to “the people” in the struggle against apartheid.

The process of translation implied the merging of different times and spaces. In a sense, ideas from the South African struggle in the 1980s and concepts of struggle from the 1950s-80s in Latin America were circulating and interacting. But this does not mean that Latin American times and spaces were erased by this epistemological merging. As has been described earlier in this thesis, ILRIG had a very accurate

understanding of Latin American history and managed to describe it and translate it into a comprehensible reality for South African readers. In ILRIG's narrative, the history of Latin America coexisted with South African expectations for a better future. Thus, it can be said that South African past, present and future were interacting in the analysis of the past, present and future of Latin America. Expectations on the outcomes of Latin American revolutions were directly linked to local expectations for a better South Africa.

Past and Present

These movements of time(s) can be explained as being part of the selective process that takes place when narrating the past (Oberti and Pittaluga, 2011). The past tends to be narrated in such a way that it ascribes new meaning to the present. At the same time, it promotes new ways of imagining the future and reinventing the self. In other words, the past is an active agent of the present and the imagination of the future. Examined from this perspective, ILRIG's booklets give expression to the link between past-present-future when analysing past events. In other words, linking the past with present realities provided an opportunity for thinking about an alternative future.

The link between past and present is also influenced by the links with spaces. In the process of translating Latin American realities into the South African context, there were several layers in which past, present and space connected with each other. The first, and probably the more obvious, layer is defined by the connections drawn in the booklets between the Latin American past and the South African present in the 1980s. As explained in the analysis in chapter five, in the process of translating the Latin American reality into the local one there were times and spaces overlapping between the Latin American history of struggles in the 1960s until the 1980s and the South African struggle reality in the 1980s. But there was also another layer in which past, present and spaces were interconnected, viz. the times and spaces discussed during the interviews with David Cooper, Linda Cooper and David Fig. Any interview relating to the past invariably results in the use of expressions and reflections from the present to explain the past and make it meaningful. As Linda Cooper expressed in one of our final encounters, the process of interviewing afforded her the chance to

re-engage with a part of her past that she had erased from her memory and to re-evaluate and appreciate it from a different perspective.

The development of and approach to this research is rooted in the belief that the personal and subjective approach to history is enriching and contributes to a better understanding of the past. While this thesis is of my authorship, my thoughts could not and would not have been developed to this extent were it not for the personal encounters that provided opportunities to engage with and reflect on the past collectively. Thus, in the process of rethinking their pasts, David Cooper, Linda Cooper and David Fig were also contributing to the creation of this dissertation. Once again, the intertwining of past and present, South Africa and Latin America, made possible the production of a collective knowledge.

The stated aim of this thesis was to produce "a trans-national and trans-Atlantic study of the exchange of radical educational practices and ideas between Latin America and South Africa in the South African context of state of emergency during the 1980s". As such, this thesis is an expression of South Atlantic historical links. At the same time, it is an attempt to re-engage with these links in the present. The belief that South Atlantic knowledges can be and were produced from the south and for the south, is evident in both the historical content and the methodology used in this thesis.

It is important to understand that while there were many links and exchanges taking place in the South Atlantic during this time, knowledge production did not result in the creation of new concepts. Nevertheless, while there are no new concepts developed from the circulation and exchanges of histories and experiences, those movements of information promoted and enabled critical thinking among workers, had an impact in their actions and reactions against the system of oppression and opened new horizons of possibilities.

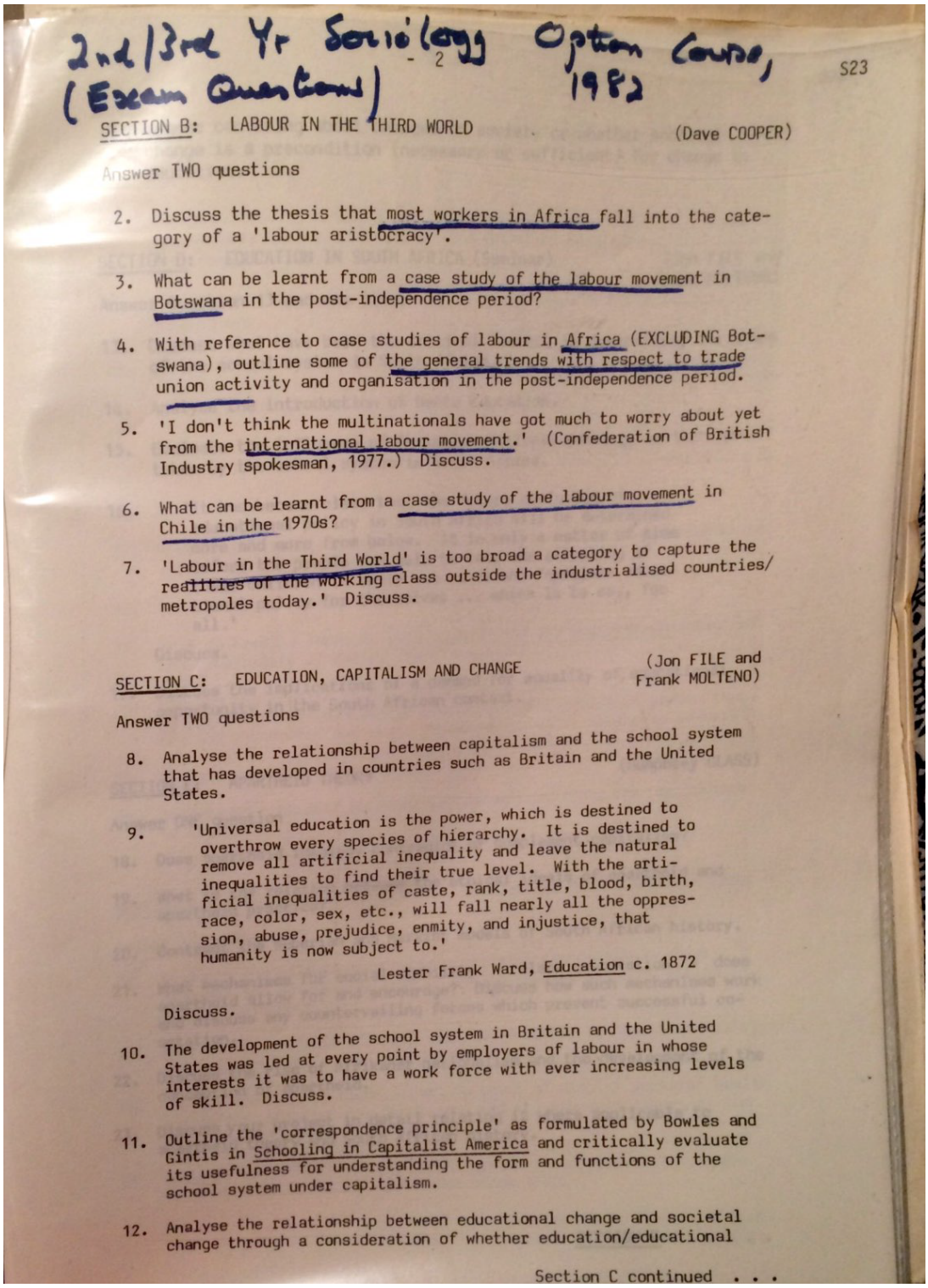
Once again, times and spaces were interconnected. While the research was focused on past circulations, exchanges and translations of ideas, the same issue was taking place in the context of the research. In other words, the subject of the research was mirrored in the research process. In a sense, my process paralleled the process of translating the interviewees had undertaken when producing the booklets. In

producing this thesis, I was exchanging and translating ideas with the aim to produce meaningful knowledge from and for the South Atlantic in the present.

From a historical point of view, ILRIG's publications and workshops were promoting the production of collective knowledges in the grassroots. ILRIG's intervention had a deep and long-term impact among workers organisations. It contributed to raising worker consciousness immeasurably. This educational intervention helped raise levels of literacy about political dynamics around the world in critical ways. During the 80s, when trade union organisation was at its peak, ILRIG's work promoted the development of a culture of critical engagement with ideas which led to a phase of democratic practice in the trade union/liberation movement. Past-present-future and space were interconnected in a unique way that promoted and enabled South Africans to produce collective ideas impacting South Africa's political struggle and imagination of an alternative future.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Samples of course lines and teaching material



2nd/3rd Yr Sociology Option Course, 1982
(Exam Questions)

- 2 -

S23

SECTION B: LABOUR IN THE THIRD WORLD (Dave COOPER)

Answer TWO questions

2. Discuss the thesis that most workers in Africa fall into the category of a 'labour aristocracy'.

3. What can be learnt from a case study of the labour movement in Botswana in the post-independence period?

4. With reference to case studies of labour in Africa (EXCLUDING Botswana), outline some of the general trends with respect to trade union activity and organisation in the post-independence period.

5. 'I don't think the multinationals have got much to worry about yet from the international labour movement.' (Confederation of British Industry spokesman, 1977.) Discuss.

6. What can be learnt from a case study of the labour movement in Chile in the 1970s?

7. 'Labour in the Third World' is too broad a category to capture the realities of the working class outside the industrialised countries/metropoles today.' Discuss.

SECTION C: EDUCATION, CAPITALISM AND CHANGE (Jon FILE and Frank MOLTENO)

Answer TWO questions

8. Analyse the relationship between capitalism and the school system that has developed in countries such as Britain and the United States.

9. 'Universal education is the power, which is destined to overthrow every species of hierarchy. It is destined to remove all artificial inequality and leave the natural inequalities to find their true level. With the artificial inequalities of caste, rank, title, blood, birth, race, color, sex, etc., will fall nearly all the oppression, abuse, prejudice, enmity, and injustice, that humanity is now subject to.'

Lester Frank Ward, Education c. 1872

Discuss.

10. The development of the school system in Britain and the United States was led at every point by employers of labour in whose interests it was to have a work force with ever increasing levels of skill. Discuss.

11. Outline the 'correspondence principle' as formulated by Bowles and Gintis in Schooling in Capitalist America and critically evaluate its usefulness for understanding the form and functions of the school system under capitalism.

12. Analyse the relationship between educational change and societal change through a consideration of whether education/educational

Section C continued . . .

Second and Third year Sociology, UCT, Option Course: Labour in the Third World, by David Cooper, Exam questions, 1982, DCPC.

Soc&Ind Soc 2&3.4.6

Additional Reading

Specifically Chile

x	Roxborough O'Brien P. and Roddick, J. 1977	Chile: The State and Revolution
	Smirnow, G. 1979	The Revolution Disarmed. Chile 1970-1973 (can borrow from Dave C.)
x	Angell, A 1972	Politics and the Labour Movement in Chile
	Raptes, M. 1973	Revolution and Counter Revolution in Chile (can borrow from Dave C.)
x	Moss, R. 1973	Chile's Marxist Experiment
x	Sigmund, P.E. 1977	The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976
x	Sweezy, P. and Magdoff, H. (ed). 1974	Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Chile
x	Henfrey,C. and Sorz, J 1977	Chilean Voices: Activists describe their experiences in the Popular Unity period.
x	Birns, L.(ed) 1973	The End of Chilean Democracy : An IDOC Dossier on the Coup and its Aftermath.
x	Gil, F. 1966	'Land, People and Politics'. Pp 1-35 in F. Gil, The Political System of Chile
x	Petras, J. 1978	'Reflections on the Chilean Experience: the Petty Bourgeoisie and the Working Class". In J. Petras, Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World
	Zeitlin, M and Petras, J. 1970	'The working class vote in Chile: Christian democracy versus Marxism' British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 21.
x	Miliband, R. 1973	'The Coup in Chile'. Socialist Register.
x	Steenland, K. 1973	'Two years of "Popular Unity" in Chile: a balance sheet'. New Left Review No. 78

Second and Third year Sociology, UCT, Option Course: Labour in the Third World, by David Cooper, Additional reading: Chile, 1982, DCPC.

Soc&Ind Soc 2&3.4.7

Latin America in General

Latin America Bureau
1980
Unity is Strength. Trade Unions in Latin America Pp 12-47 (In SALDRU Library)

× Sweezy, P. and Huberman L. (eds)
1968
Regis Debray and the Latin American Revolution

Alexander, R.J.
1965
Organised Labor in Latin America (Can borrow from Dave C.)

Latin American Perspectives
1979
'Brazil, Part 1: Capitalist Crisis and Workers Challenge'. See articles on labour, No. 23, 6(4).

× Zeitlin, M.
1970
Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class

× Lansberger, H.A.
1967
'The Labor Elite : is it Revolutionary?' In S.M. Lipset and A Solari (eds) Elites in Latin America

× Jelin, E.
1979
'Labour Conflicts under the second Peronist regime, Argentina 1973-76' In Development and Change 10(2), April.

Suggested Essay Topic

What can be learnt from the Chilean case study with respect to labour organisation and the political movements representing labour?

or

Analyse labour organisation and political movements in a Latin American country of your choice.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SECOND SEMESTER 1985

Course : S 214 TRADE UNIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD
Venue : 3B (Tues, Wed, Thurs 8.15 a.m.)
Lecturer: D Cooper

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1. CHILE

Core reading

1. Roxborough, I, P O'Brien and J Roddick
   1977 Chile: The State and Revolution. Especially pp 1-69, 161-186, 238-277.

2. de Vylder, S
   1977 Allende's Chile. Pp 41-51, 214-220.

Additional reading

3. Latin America Bureau
   1983 Chile: The Pinochet Decade (look under O'Brien, P.)

4. Angell, A
   1972 Politics and the Labour Movement in Chile. Especially Chapters 3 and 4.

5. Bolivar Publications
   1976 Introduction to Chile. A cartoon history. (look under Welch, C.)

6. Latin America Bureau
   Unity is Strength. Trade Unions in Latin America. Pp 24-47, 77-79. (in SALDRU)

7. Zimbalist, A and J Petras
   1974 Workers control in Allende's Chile.

8. Smirnow, G
   1979 The Revolution Disarmed: Chile 1970-1973.

9. Peppe, P V
   1977 'Parliamentary Socialism and Workers' Consciousness in Chile'. In J Nash, J Corradi and H Spalding (eds), Ideology and Social Change in Latin America. (see Nash)

10. Pollack, B
    'The Chilean Socialist Party: Prolegomena to its Ideology and Organisation'. Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol 10, Part 1.

Background reading

11. Petras, J and M Morley
    1975 The United States and Chile: Imperialism and the Overthrow of the Allende Government (ask Dave Cooper).

12. Gittings, J (ed)
    1975 The Lessons of Chile. (ask Dave Cooper).

Course line: Trade unions in the Third World, Sociology Department, UCT, by David Cooper, 1985, p.1, DCPC.

BRAZIL S214 7

Core reading

1 Latin America Bureau
1982 Brazil: state and struggle

2a. Fig, D
1984 'Brazil: Labour movement and the crisis'. South African Labour Bulletin 9 (6, May).

2b. ILRIG (198) Brazil. A Worker's Story. ILRIG Workers of the World Series, No. 3.

Additional Reading:

3 Faucher, P
1979 Authoritarian capitalism

4 Harding, T F
1973 'The politics of labour and dependency in Brazil: an historical approach'. International Socialist Review 33(7).

5 Humphrey, J
1980/1 'Labour use and labour control in the Brazilian automobile industry'. Capital and Class 12. Pp 43-57.

6 Humphrey, J
1982 Capitalist control and workers' struggle in the Brazilian auto industry.

7 Latin America Perspectives
1984 Brazil in crisis. Issue 40. 11(1).

8 Mendes de Almeida, A and Lowy, M
1976 'Union structure and labor organisation in contemporary Brazil'. Latin America Perspectives 3 (1). Pp 98-119.

9 Merricle, K
1977 'Corporate control of the working class'. In Malloy, J (ed), Authoritarianism and capitalism in Latin America. (see Malloy)

10 Moises, J A
1979 'Current issues in the labor movement in Brazil'. Latin America Perspectives 6(4). Pp 51-69.

11 TIE Report
1984 Brazil: the new militancy: trade unions and transnational corporations. Issue 17.

General Background

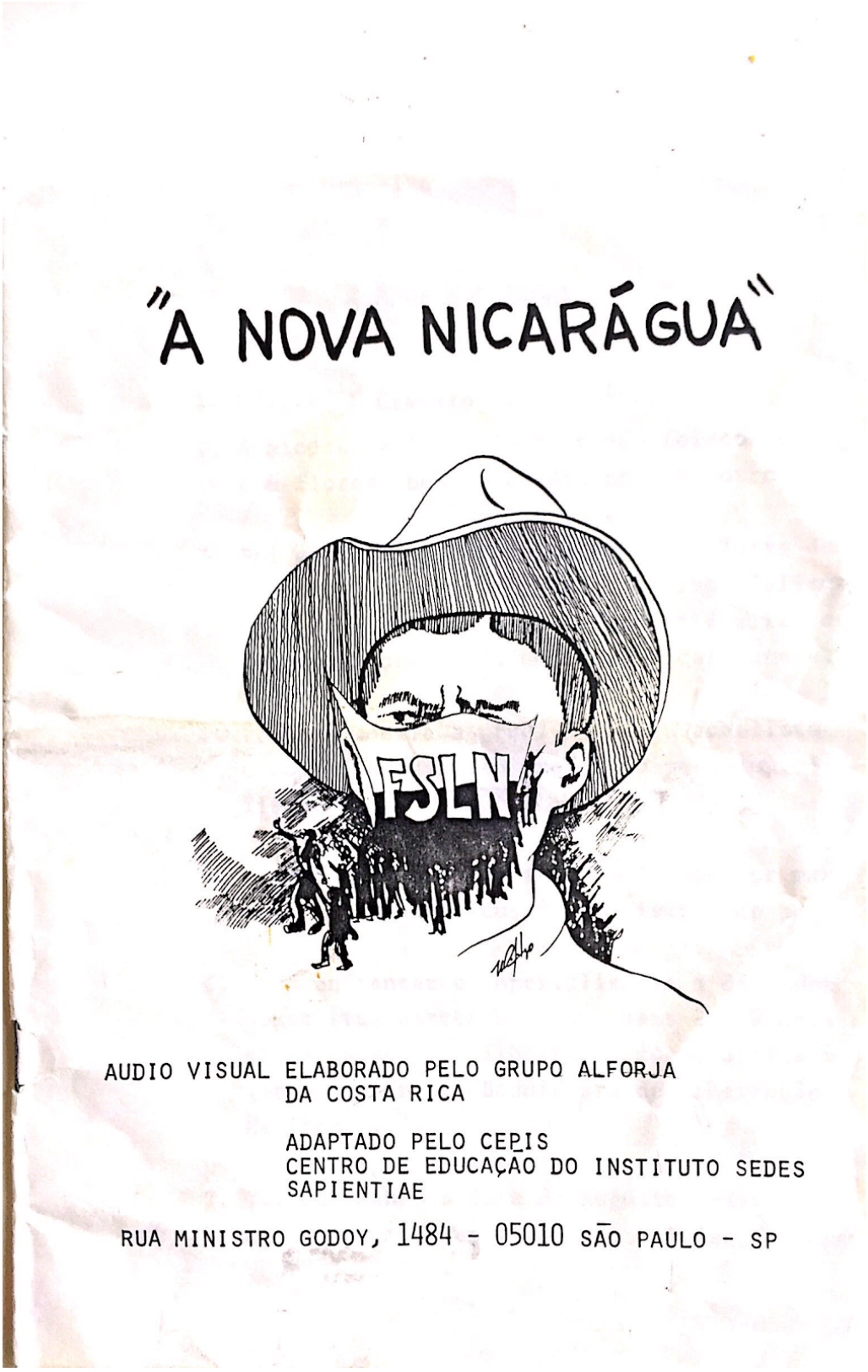
12 Green, J
1979 'Liberalization on trial: the workers' movement'. NACLA Report 13(3)

13 Harding, T F
1973 The political history of organized labor in Brazil (open shelves)

14 Latin America Perspectives
1979 Special issue on Brazilian labour. 6(4).

15 Quartim, J
1971 Dictatorship and armed struggle in Brazil

Appendix 2: Samples of audio-visual transcripts



"A Nova Nicarágua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by Centro de educacao do instituto Sedes Sapientiae, Sao Paulo, Brazil, cover, AMPD.

A NOVA NICARAGUA

1. Música (Créditos)
2. A Nicarágua livre de hoje não foi conquista com flores, nem de um dia para o outro.
3. Foi mais de um século de heróicas lutas do povo contra as intervenções do imperialismo norte-americano e a presença dos fuzileiros navais daquele país em terra nicaraguense..
4. ...luta contra a cruel ditadura somozista, o modo de dominação preferido pelo imperialismo...
5. ...ditadura que por mais de 40 anos se manteve no poder às custas da miséria do povo.
6. Para enfrentar o imperialismo e a ditadura somozista, nasceu há pouco mais de 20 anos atrás da sede de libertação do povo nicaraguense, a Frente Sandinista de Libertação Nacional...
7. ... retomando a luta de Augusto César Sandino, sob a direção de Carlos Fonseca Amador

.1.

"A Nova Nicarágua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by Centro de educacao do instituto Sedes Sapientiae, Sao Paulo, Brazil, p.1, AMPD.

8. A Frente Sandinista de Libertação Nacional foi se forjando na luta, crescendo no campo e na cidade, nutrindo-se, nos combates, da força do povo trabalhador e conduzindo-o com a estratégia da guerra revolucionária popular...

9. ...ao triunfo definitivo de 19 de julho de 1979!

10. Música . . . "Mas herdamos um país saqueado pelo imperialismo, pelo sistema econômico...

11. ... que beneficiava uma minoria de privilegiados e os interesses estrangeiros.

12. Um país arrasado pelo terremoto

13. Um país destruído e saqueado na guerra de libertação, um país descapitalizado, endividado, uma indústria desbaratada...

14. O regime capitalista dos Somoza deixou altas taxas de desnutrição, mortalidade infantil, desemprego, falta de saneamento básico...

.2.

"A Nova Nicarágua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by Centro de educacao do instituto Sedes Sapientiae, Sao Paulo, Brazil, p.2, AMPD.

15. Para enfrentar esses graves problemas, a proposta do novo governo revolucionário foi de ser um governo de"Reconstrução Nacional".

16. Reconstruir a Nicarágua era uma tarefa imensa que exigia a participação e o esforço de todos que amam sua pátria!

17. Por isso o governo revolucionário chamou todos os setores à unidade nacional, estabelecendo um regime de economia mista e pluralismo político.

18. E por isso está se criando uma nova Nicarágua sem opressão nem exploração na qual os operários e os camponeses serão a força principal do seu desenvolvimento;

19. ... mas na qual tem lugar outros setores sociais, profissionais e empresários patriotas, identificados com o interesse da nação, com os interesses das grandes maiorias.

20. Música (Missa Campesina)

21. São agora ss maiorias populares organizadas que decidirão seu próprio destino. (Discurso Tomás Borge) "porque o poder pertence em ple

.3.

"A Nova Nicarágua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by Centro de educacao do instituto Sedes Sapientiae, Sao Paulo, Brazil, p.3, AMPD.

MEMORANDUM

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

To THE NEW NICARAGUA

From Audiovisual designed by GRUPO ALFORJA Costa Rica Adapted by INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RESEARCH & INFORMATION GROUP, Cape Town

Department

Date

Slide No.	Text	Visual	Fx
1		Credits	Music
2	Nicaragua is a small country in Central America. In 1979 it threw off 40 years of dictatorship. To do this the people had to fight a war of liberation. This war was not won without a bitter struggle.		
3	For over a hundred years the people of Nicaragua have struggled against interference by foreigners, mainly from the United States of America. In 1927 the USA sent soldiers from the navy to take over the government of Nicaragua. These soldiers were called marines.		
4	The Americans set up a dictatorship under the Somoza family, which passed from father to son. The Somozas were cruel and greedy. They took over many businesses and the best farmland for themselves . They kept control over the government...		
5	...and their rule lasted for over 40 years. They stayed in power and grew richer and richer, while the majority of the people grew poorer and poorer.		
6	To challlenge the dictatorship and the American imperialism which backed it, the Nicaraguan people formed a liberation movement just over 20 years ago. They called this the Sandinista Front for National Liberation, the FSLN.		
7	The Sandinista Front was named after Augusto Sandino. In the 1920s and 1930s Sandino was a leader of a guerrilla movement which fought against the American marines who occupied Nicaragua. Sandino was killed by one of the Somozas while he was on his way to sign a peace treaty. His picture, wearing a cowboy hat, is famous all over Nicaragua as a symbol of resistence.		
8	The Sandinista Front for National Liberation grew strong in the cities and in the country-side. Itx relied on the strength of the working people of Nicaragua, and developed a strategy for popular revolutionary war.		
9	Victory was wan on the 19th July 1979 when the Sandinistas marched into the main city of Nicaragua, Managua. They threw out the government of Somoza and set up a new people's government.		

"The new Nicaragua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.1, AMPD.

MEMORANDUM

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

To. THE NEW NICARAGUA/2

From Grupo Alforja, Costa Rica/ ILRIG, Cape Town

Department

Date

Slide no.	Text	Visual	Fx
10	But the people of Nicaragua inherited a country which suffered from outside interference...		Music up
11	...they inherited a country in which the economy benefited a priveleged minority and foreign interests...		
12	...a country which suffered from terrible earthquakes		
13	...a country which suffered destruction in the war of liberation, destruction of crops and equipment, huge debts to pay, and industry in ruins		
14	The capitalist government of Somoza left people hungry and badly fed, many babies died before they reached the age of 5, there was great unemployment, a lack of basic health services.		
15	When the Sandinista Front took power, it was faced with all these problems. It proposed to solve them by forming a government of National Reconstruction.		
16	The rebuilding of Nicaragua is a big task which demands the effort and involvement of all those who want to see a better life for the majority.		
17	The revolutionary government is therefore calling on all classes to work for national unity and to build the new Nicaragua based on a mixed economy and political pluralism (multi-party politics).		
18	For this reason it is creating a new Nicaragua free of oppression and exploitation in which the workers and peasants are the major force for development.		
19	The government also wants to win over other social groups, such as teachers, doctors and business people, some of whom identify themselves with the interests of the majority.		
20			Music up
21	The organisations of the majority of the people are deciding their own fate. Nicaragua's leaders have said that power belongs to the followers of Sandino...		
22	...to those without shoes, to those who suffer hunger and thirst for justice, to those denied these things		
23	If those in power, the leaders of the revolution, want to solve the enormous problems of health, education, defence,&the economy, there is only one answer:		
24	The only answer is the full involvement of the majority in the daily tasks of rebuilding the country.		
25	The different worker organisations have united together in the ~~Co-ordinated Unions of Nicaragua (CUS)~~ National Inter-Union Commitee (CIU) to put forward united demands and joint actions with the Unions of the Sandinista Front.		

"The new Nicaragua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.2, AMPD.

MEMORANDUM UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

To. THE NEW NICARAGUA / 3 From Grupo Alforja / ILRIG

Department

Date

Slide no.	Text	Visual	FX
26.	In the field of politics, the Patriotic Front of the Revolution joins together all the political parties which support the revolution in a common organisation with the Sandinista Front. These parties include the PPSC Popular Social Christian Party, the PSN Socialist Party of Nicaragua, and the PLI – Independent Liberal Party.	FPR Billboard	
27.	The ~~main decision making body~~ place where important matters are debated in Nicaragua is the Council of State. This is a congress made up from the different social and political organisations in ~~Nicaragua~~ the country.	Masthead of council of State hansard	
28.	In the Council of State, members ~~seek~~ help the govt to develop laws which benefit the majority of the Nicaraguan people.	Crowd close up	
29.	In this way, through the mobilization and participation of the mass organisations, popular democracy is being built in Nicaragua.	Crowd outside Palácio Nacional	
30.	"Democracy is not just elections. It is something much more. For a Sandinista it means the participation of the people in political, economic, social & cultural matters.	Indoor meeting applause FSLN flags.	Speech by Tomás Borge.
31.	Democracy is the intervention of the masses in all aspects of social life."	Peasant festival – 1 yr of revo.	
32.	The mass participation of the Nicaragua people has made it possible to rebuild the country despite enormous difficulties.	CDS, local ?	

"The new Nicaragua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.3, AMPD.

MEMORANDUM UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

To. THE NEW NICARAGUA / 4 From .....

..... Department .....

..... Date .....

No.	Text	Visual	Fx
33.	The corrupt state of the Somozas must be transformed. The state must be put at the service of the people. For this reason the Sandinistas created new government departments: planning, social welfare and culture.	Hoarding? Distribution?	
34.	During the war of Liberation the economy of Nicaragua was almost destroyed. The new government made great efforts to put the economy back on its feet.	Digging rural area	
35.	The properties confiscated from Somoza & his followers now belong to the revolutionary State, forming an area of public property which contributes 30% of national production.	oxen ploughing	
36.	Progress has been made in the planning of the economy to produce what the people and the country need. In industry existing national raw materials are used, in order to reduce the dependency on other countries.	Coffee harvest	
37.	In the countryside, land reform will allow idle lands to be put back into production, and will turn thousands of rural families, formerly without land or renting it at exorbitant prices	Cultivation of lands	
38.	Land reform also aims at raising the production of basic grains so as to have sufficient food for the whole population.	Grading grains	

"The new Nicaragua". Audio Visual created by Grupo Alforja from Costa Rica, adapted by ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.4, AMPD.

SLIDE SCRIPT:

BOLIVIA – THE UNFINISHED STRUGGLE

Notes:
FX = audio effects
Background Bolivian/Andean music could run behind a lot of the voices.
>> = New slide needed
[] = No. of old slide

CAST: MATILDA, narrator, experienced activist
RODRIGO, peasant, young man
GONZALO, miner, young man

SCRIPT	VISUAL
MATILDA: 1. My name is Matilda, and I want to tell you the story of my people, the working people of Bolivia.	Slide of Matilda (1)
2. My country, Bolivia, is in South America, which lies far across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa.	MAP (2)
3. Many of my people live high up in the Andes mountains. It is a hard place for anyone to live, because it is cold and rocky. But deep underground, it is rich in tin.	Mountains & altiplano (3)
4. The tin has brought a lot of wealth to a few, but we who mine the tin have had few benefits from all this wealth. The Bolivian people remain one of the poorest peoples in the world.	Poverty scene in mountain village street (4)

"Bolivia, the unfinished struggle", Audio visual script, ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.1, DCPD.

5.	We Bolivians have carried on a long struggle against our poverty and oppression. For some it has brought death, but for others it has brought courage and hope.....	Miners grouped around corpses (5) FX: shots/screams?
6.	FX: Bolivian music	Title Slide (6)
7.	Even though the official language of my country is Spanish, most of us speak the languages of our ancestors, Quechua or Aymara. ...The story of my country is the story of its people. Sometimes you will hear me telling the story, and sometimes you will hear others. So, let me introduce you to Rodrigo, who is the nephew of my husband.	Bolivian band (7) (=ketch-wa, eye-mah-rah; NOT eh-mah-rah)
RODRIGO:		
8.	My name is Rodrigo, and I live in a small village high up in the mountains	Bolivian peasant face (8)
9.	Like most people in Bolivia, I am a poor peasant. I have a few sheep and I grow some potatoes to sell in the nearby mining town of Siglo Viente.	Peasant family (9)
10.	My father remembers the days when the peasants were like slaves on the farms of the rich landowners.	Graveyard scene (10)
11.	Things are a bit better for me now, because I own a little piece of land, but my family still suffers in poverty.	Children on snowy landscape (11)

"Bolivia, the unfinished struggle", Audio visual script, ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.2, DCPD.

MATILDA:

12. Like most Bolivians, Rodrigo's life is on the land. It's a very different life on the mines, as you will hear from my brother, Gonzalo.

Matilda's head/face (12)

GONZALO:

13. My name is Gonzalo. For most of my life I have worked in the tin mines of Bolivia.

Close-up of miner (13)

14. I live and work in Siglo Viente, a mining town high up in the Andes mountains. I work deep underground, digging out the tin.

Siglo Viente (14)

15. My family lives with me in the mining town. To survive, my whole family must work. My wife, Maria, works with other women breaking stone to get the last small bits of tin out of the rock.

Women on slag heap (15)
FX: Breaking stones

16. Our children must also help, shifting the rubble. Even though the whole family works, we are still very poor.

Two young boys shifting rubble (13)

17. Life for us in the mines has not changed much. In the old days our working conditions were very dangerous and unhealthy.

Old picture of miners (17)

18. Nowadays, we have modern drills, but the safety conditions are still very bad.

Miners with drills (18)

19. Even the masks that we have are old-fashioned, and not designed for the dust and heat which we suffer underground.

Miner with mask (19)

"Bolivia, the unfinished struggle", Audio visual script, ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.3, DCPD.

20. Sooner or later, all of us who work underground get silicosis - a disease of the lungs caused by the dust.

Miner in dusty conditions (20)

21. The work we do has many other dangers. If you are not careful when the dynamite explodes, you can die.

Miner handling dynamite (21)
FX: Explosion, rockfall

22. There is also the danger of falling rock. This can happen at any time. Many miners die like this without warning.

Miner in shaft (22)

23. Because of these conditions, it is no surprise that most of us who work on the mines can expect to die before we reach the age of 35 years.

Close-up of miner (23)

24. FX: Bolivian music

Mountains and silhouetted cemetery (24)

25. If you think our working conditions are bad, you should also see our terrible living conditions. There are some company houses in the mining camp, but not enough for all of us. Our small houses are so overcrowded that more than 8 people live in each one. We have no toilets or running water.

View of housing in mining camp (25)

26. We workers have to buy our food from the company shop. The prices are high, and we are always in debt to the mining company.

Interior of mine store (26)

MATILDA:
27. The important question is: why is it that in a country so rich in mineral wealth, most of our people live in such poverty?

Beggar on street (27)

"Bolivia, the unfinished struggle", Audio visual script, ILRIG, Cape Town, South Africa, p.4, DCPD.

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Academic articles

Miscellaneous

Anne Mager Personal Documents

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Academic articles

Interviews

David Cooper

15th of June 2017

24th of September 2018

27th of November 2018

3rd of October 2019

Linda Cooper

25th of October 2016

5th of June 2017

17th of April 2018

7th of November 2018

David Fig

24th of June 2017

8th of October 2018

Informal encounters / General interviews

Archie Dick, 12th of October, 2016.

Marcus Solomon, 14th of October, 2016.

Kathleen Laishley, 17th of October, 2016.

Johnny Jacobs, 27th of October, 2016.

Darhen Swartz, 5th of November, 2016.

Anne Mager, 15th of November, 2016.

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