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Eichmann goes global: his trial as a critical juncture in the
globalization of ideas among the Third Worldist Latin
American project

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Abstract

In a world undergoing rapid decolonization and geopolitical realignment, the mid-20th century witnessed a series of events that, in the context of the Cold War, reshaped global narratives on justice, memory, and resistance. This thesis delves into the intricate interplay between the Eichmann trial, the Russell Tribunal for Latin America, and the broader cultural and political landscapes of Latin America and the Third Worldist project developed in the region. Through an examination of some primary sources, testimonies, and intellectual discourses, this research situates these landmark events within the context of postcolonial debates.

Central to this exploration is the Eichmann trial's role as both a concrete historical moment and a catalyst for debates that reverberated globally. The trial's resonance with anti-colonial actors, its contributions to the development of the so-called Holocaust consciousness, and its subsequent influence on the testimonial turn in Latin America are analyzed. This last one, strongly shaped by the intellectual scene of which Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar and institutions such as Casa de las Américas were an important part, had reached a mature and authentically Latin American form by the moment the second Russell Tribunal for Latin America took place, with its symbolic rituals and profound cultural significance. Those phenomena are here analyzed, emphasizing its connections to the

Holocaust narrative, the influence of the Eichmann trial, and its impact on the revolutionary imagination of the era.

In doing so, the thesis underscores the Cuban Revolution's pivotal role in fostering global solidarity and challenging dominant Cold War narratives, illuminating the dynamic interplay between local and global narratives, highlighting the transformative power of collective memory and resistance.

In essence, this thesis is not just a historical analysis but a journey through a tapestry of dreams, struggles, and aspirations that defined an era. It offers a nuanced interpretation of how global events, anchored in specific regional contexts, can shape, challenge, and redefine the very fabric of cultural and political thought.

Zusammenfassung

In einer Welt, die eine rasche Dekolonisierung und geopolitische Neuausrichtung erlebte, war die Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts Zeuge einer Reihe von Ereignissen, die im Kontext des Kalten Krieges globale Erzählungen über Gerechtigkeit, Erinnerung und Widerstand neu gestalteten. Diese Arbeit befasst sich mit dem komplizierten Zusammenspiel zwischen dem Eichmann-Prozess, dem Russell-Tribunal für Lateinamerika und der breiteren kulturellen und politischen Landschaft Lateinamerikas sowie dem in der Region entwickelten Dritte-Welt-Projekt. Durch die Untersuchung von Primärquellen, Zeugenaussagen und intellektuellen Diskursen werden diese bahnbrechenden Ereignisse in den Kontext der postkolonialen Debatten gestellt.

Im Mittelpunkt dieser Untersuchung steht die Rolle des Eichmann-Prozesses sowohl als konkreter historischer Moment als auch als Katalysator für Debatten, die weltweit nachhallten. Analysiert werden die Resonanz des Prozesses bei antikolonialen Akteuren, sein Beitrag zur Entwicklung des so genannten Holocaust-Bewusstseins und sein späterer Einfluss auf den testimonial turn in Lateinamerika. Letztere, stark geprägt von der intellektuellen Szene, zu der Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar und Institutionen wie die Casa de las Américas gehörten, hatte zum Zeitpunkt des zweiten Russell-Tribunals für Lateinamerika mit seinen symbolischen Ritualen und seiner tiefgreifenden kulturellen Bedeutung eine reife und authentisch lateinamerikanische Form erreicht. Diese Phänomene werden hier analysiert, wobei die Verbindungen zum Holocaust-Narrativ, der

Einfluss des Eichmann-Prozesses und die Auswirkungen auf die revolutionäre Vorstellungskraft der Epoche hervorgehoben werden.

Dabei unterstreicht die Arbeit die zentrale Rolle der kubanischen Revolution bei der Förderung der globalen Solidarität und der Infragestellung der vorherrschenden Narrative des Kalten Krieges. Sie beleuchtet das dynamische Zusammenspiel zwischen lokalen und globalen Narrativen und hebt die transformative Kraft des kollektiven Gedächtnisses und des Widerstands hervor.

Im Wesentlichen ist diese Arbeit nicht nur eine historische Analyse, sondern eine Reise durch ein Geflecht von Träumen, Kämpfen und Hoffnungen, die eine Ära prägten. Sie bietet eine nuancierte Interpretation dessen, wie globale Ereignisse, die in spezifischen regionalen Kontexten verankert sind, die Struktur des kulturellen und politischen Denkens selbst formen, herausfordern und neu definieren können.

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Obviando por un momento la poderosa sensación de sinsentido que me alcanza mientras escribo esta sección, creo que, en el simbolismo de agradecer, radica una fuerza que no merece ser ignorada. Este small paragraph existe porque, más allá de mis responsabilidades académicas, tuve la oportunidad de escribir sobre un tema, una época, un momento, una utopía, que formó en mí una identidad moldeada a partir de la de mi padre. En sus historias cargadas de nostalgia; en las noches que pasamos escuchando a Mercedes Sosa, Víctor Heredia, y Silvio Rodríguez; en los conciertos del Grupo Suramérica; en la biografía del Che que, en nuestra casa, curiosamente reposó siempre junto a las obras de García Márquez; en esa vida de cronopio; en sus ideas de izquierda pausadas, sopesadas, humanas; en sus historias sobre esa otra Cuba, imaginada, que un día se desvaneció, encontré la inspiración para pensar. Y si seguimos a Cortázar, en el pensar encontré la libertad.

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Introduction

It was 1955. A young Colombian writer named Gabriel García Márquez had just arrived in Paris. In the precariousness of his economic conditions, and having arrived in France as a correspondent for a Colombian newspaper (*El Espectador*) that would be shut down by the military regime of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla not long after, the writer was surprised to discover, at first, that the city was abuzz with a love that was unknown to him, with a post-war generation fully dedicated, according to himself, to nothing but kissing: "They kissed everywhere with endless kisses, in cafés and on subway trains, in the cinema and in the middle of the street, and they even stopped traffic to continue kissing, as if they were aware that life was not going to be enough for so much love" (1991, p. 173)¹. And this idealized account of a Paris brimming with love is suddenly and radically interrupted by an unexpected allusion, just a few lines later, to another radically different Paris, when García Márquez takes his readers to the story of that night when, "on leaving a movie theater, a police patrol ran me over in the street, spat in my face and beat me to a pulp inside an armored car. It was full of taciturn Algerians, beaten up and spat on in the neighborhood cafés. They too, like the agents who had arrested us, believed that I was Algerian" (ibid)². And so, from one moment to the next, we are

¹ Original, in Spanish: "Se besaban en todas partes con besos interminables, en los cafés y en los trenes subterráneos, en el cine y en plena calle, y hasta paraban el tránsito para seguirse besando, como si tuvieran conciencia de que la vida no les iba a alcanzar para tanto amor".

² Original, in Spanish: "a la salida de un cine, una patrulla de policías me atropelló en la calle, me escupieron la cara y me metieron a golpes dentro de una camioneta blindada. Estaba llena de argelinos taciturnos, recogidos a golpes y también escupidos en los

in imperial Paris, the epicenter of a war against Algeria and, therefore, we come face to face, along with this newly arrived Latin American, with the narrative debates that were taking place in the midst of decolonization. In 1961, when the former Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann, after having been kidnapped by the Mossad in Argentina, was tried in Israel, this dramatic redefinition of categories was already unfolding, and in a context in which forms of otherness were being reformulated in clear opposition to the system of oppression of imperialist practices, the trial would propose categories of representation and narration that, during this period, and before being incorporated into a liberal canon that was far from consolidated, found resonance and were reinterpreted within the dynamic spectrum of anti-colonial actors. In that sense, this is also, as will be seen, a story about the defeat or disappearance of some narrative projects.

García Márquez would not be alone in this process of reframing, and experiences such as his, which were to meet many others, not only in Paris, began to be narratively superimposed, compared with the experiences of others who were perceived as similar. In the Algerians of whom he spoke a few lines back; in the combatants of North Vietnam; in the struggle of African Americans against institutionalized discrimination in the United States; in the stories of exile and repression articulated by other Latin Americans; but also, and fundamentally, in the consolidation of the Holocaust, of the Jewish victim in all the specificity that this trope would come to attain, actors and intellectuals from a wide spectrum of global imaginations found their place in the world for a time, in this "age of revolt".

cafetines del barrio. También ellos, como los agentes que nos habían arrestado, creyeron que yo era argelino”.

The project of Latin America as a place, an actor in the Third World, grew and took shape in the light of the Bandung and Belgrade conferences, or the Tricontinental Conference in Havana; in the light of the Cuban revolution, the decolonization of Africa or the Vietnam War, but also in the light of the narratives of the Holocaust, of the debates that, in direct or indirect relation to the Eichmann trial, were aroused in a wide spectrum of actors who, in their interpretation of Jewish victimization, of Nazi perpetration, of the vindication of testimony not only as a narrative resource but as an articulator of projects, as an act of resistance in an era marked by the narrative of oppression, shaped their own projects of globalization. This thesis tries to assess this particular dimension of the ideational history of the Global South.

Certain events stand out in history not just for their immediate impact, but for the ripples they send across time and space, intertwining with other narratives and reshaping our understanding of the world. They raise, from the particularity of its material and factual existence, into something that both transcends them and constantly reshapes them, making them critical junctures, constantly subjected to reinterpretation. The Eichmann trial is one such event—a moment that, while rooted in the specific horrors of the Holocaust, reverberated far beyond its immediate context, touching shores and minds that seemingly had little to do with the Jewish tragedy in Europe. This thesis is a journey through those ripples, an exploration of the unexpected intersections and dialogues that emerged in the wake of Eichmann's capture and trial, even if the event itself sometimes seems to be cut off against an almost invisible background.

At the time of Adolf Eichmann's capture, his name was largely obscure, recognized only within rather specific circles. He was only one among many former nazis that had disappeared in foreign countries, acquiring new identities, and he was on the radar of some Nazi hunters and prosecutors in Germany or Israel. However, by the time Eichmann stood trial in Jerusalem's District Court a year after his capture, the global awareness of his identity and his crimes had undergone a seismic shift. The trial, broadcasted and reported worldwide, evolved into a media phenomenon, capturing the attention of millions. This dramatic transformation from obscurity to global infamy wasn't solely a result of the trial's inherent drama or the gravity of Eichmann's crimes. Instead, it was also a reflection of broader cultural and historical shifts that had been unfolding over the decade since World War II's conclusion.

While the dominant narrative post-war continued to be one that celebrated heroism and sacrifice, subtle undercurrents were reshaping the collective memory of the conflict. In many Western countries, there was a burgeoning shift in the memory culture surrounding the war and the Holocaust. This evolving narrative was not only becoming more multifaceted but was also increasingly centering on the victims of political atrocities and genocidal actions. The Eichmann trial, in many ways, epitomized this shift, spotlighting the individual stories of suffering and survival, and forcing the world to confront the dimensions of the Holocaust's bureaucratic machinery.

Eichmann, then, came to represent many things. In Hannah Arendt's pen, on the television news screen, on the front pages of newspapers, in articles and in the

imagination of intellectuals and global actors, Eichmann ceased to be a historical and concrete character, a link in the Nazi machine. He was no longer even Ricardo Klement, the name under which he had hidden in Argentina. His trial would not be, also, just a trial anymore.

The effects of its conversion into a critical juncture in global history are what make it a co-protagonist in this story: it endowed a State of Israel still in the process of consolidation with a powerful founding myth, a cause that would legitimize the very existence of the State; the victims of Nazism took center stage in its execution, so that the Holocaust, until then interpreted in the widest range of postwar narratives, finally acquired its specific Jewish connotation in the universal imagination; this leading role, which led a hundred victims to testify, would position the testimony, and the very act of giving it, as a legitimate mechanism of denunciation, of resistance to a repressive power; from this would also derive a very specific concept of "truth" as that which, preserved through testimony, was then the only path to the redemption of the vanquished (the victims) and, therefore, to the punishment of their perpetrators, a premise that, in the midst of the Cold War and in light of the rise of post-colonial and revolutionary movements in much of the Global South, would have significant effects on the narrative nuances acquired by their counter-hegemonic globalization projects. Eichmann's guilt was thus almost unimportant. His trial and what was made of it by those who covered for him and followed him provided narrative resources, forms of enunciation, devices, to a wide range of actors who, within the framework of their own struggles and causes, would make this trial an authentically global event. This is what we will be referring

to, then, whenever in the course of this analysis the Eichmann trial or the debates it unleashed, encouraged or helped to promote are mentioned.

Then, our story begins with a brief analysis of the trial itself, but not just as a simple recounting of facts and testimonies, and definitively not from its legal perspective, nor from Arendt's famous account of it. In **Chapter 1**, we delve into transfer-related implications of the trial, exploring its role in the global appearance and diffusion of a certain concept of "truth", and the narrative horizons it created or expanded. How did the trial, with its emphasis on witness testimonies and the pursuit of justice, intersect with the broader decolonizing imagination of the time? How did it influence, and was influenced by, the global context in which it unfolded?

From there, we move to **Chapter 2**, where we shift our gaze to Latin America—a region, at first sight, far removed from the epicenter of the Holocaust, yet deeply entangled in its own tapestry of narrative debates. How did Latin American intellectuals and the public engage with the narratives of the Holocaust, during and shortly after its occurrence? Was it a mere transposition of European narratives, or did it represent a co-creation of new narratives, informed by the region's own experiences of violence, colonization, and resistance? The intellectual epicenter of this period, built around Victoria Ocampo's *Revista Sur* (Argentina), is deeply illustrative of the dramatic changes and debates that came to the region in the 1960s, influenced both by local and regional events, such as the emergence of increasingly oppressive military regimes or the Cuban Revolution, and international debates fostered by the emergence of Third Worldism, decolonization processes and the Eichmann trial. But here, we do not talk about the Eichmann trial merely as

a concrete historical or legal event, but as a broad diversity of thematic markers that are here understood as a spectrum of conditions that made the trial possible in the first place and the lasting effects that it had and still has.

Chapter 3 takes us deeper into the heart of Latin America during the tumultuous 1960s, a time of dreams (later framed as utopias) and despair, of revolutionary imagination and reactionary repression. But it was also a time of transnational connections, of networks and alliances that far transcended national borders and, at the same time, strengthened them. Latin American intellectuals and activists were not isolated actors; they were part of a larger global dialogue, contributing to and drawing from the Third Worldist identity that was taking shape, on which the Cuban revolutionary global project, the Tricontinental Conference and publications such as *Casa de las Américas*, *Marcha* and *Tricontinental Magazine* were vital. Through them, García Márquez, Julio Cortázar and many others separated themselves from the previous generation, represented by Ocampo, Jorge Luis Borges and many others, and engaged in multidirectional reflections and narrative experiments to frame themselves and others. This chapter explores, to a certain extent, these connections, these bridges that Latin America built with the rest of the decolonizing world.

Finally, in **Chapter 4**, we zoom in on the Second Russell Tribunal, a significant event that, much like the Eichmann trial, sought to use the power of testimony and narrative to highlight injustices and envision a project of universal humanity in which García Márquez and Cortázar played a fundamental role. The participation of some of these intellectuals in a tribunal devoid of any real means of coercion,

however, can be understood as a very useful ritualization to study the relationship between political commitment and intellectual activity that was at the center of important debates during this period, and it is important not only to glimpse their relationship with certain ideas of global circulation, but also the truly unique ways in which Latin America approached the dilemmas of the Cold War. How did they articulate their visions of a global humanity, the formulation of a certain otherness in constant dialogue with the self of the Latin American project?

This thesis, at its core, is about connections—sometimes evident, sometimes subtle. It's about the threads that link seemingly disparate events and ideas, weaving them into a complex network of global histories and imaginations. It is a story about Latin America, but it is also a story about the Third World, Tricontinentalism, and the experiences, discourses and imaginations that some actors inhabited, and how they were shaped by events that could be considered critical junctures in the globalization of ideas, such as the Eichmann trial.

Methodology

Discourse is a widely used term and, therefore, approaching its study implies not only opting for a definition that is operational, but that enters into dialogue with multidisciplinary approaches and, in this case, allows us to understand the ways in which discourse and narrative complement each other, constantly floating on the porous delineations between the national and the global, between the particular and the universal. Therefore, we do not intend here to opt for a definition of discourse that limits its use and study to linguistic faculties, to compartments of information condensed in messages longer than a word or sentence (Brownell and Martino, 1998). On the contrary, we opt for a critical definition of discourse that allows us to point out and emphasize the relationship between a discourse and the society that incorporates it (without denying the constantly contested nature of this status). Discourse can be understood "as an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being" (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, 3). The existence of a discourse, then, is not limited to its verbal or written existence in the forms of language, but produces, through its symbols, ways of being in the world (Gee, 1996), while at the same time, in a certain way, it produces the very world it deals with.

Moreover, discourse is not a carved stone, but a body of ideas, values, expressions, moral orientations, social identities in constant change and interaction with those it encompasses, who incorporate it into their daily lives through narratives that are often taken for granted. Discourse, its institutionalized and structured forms, its crystallization around a system, is an enunciation in constant

development, which in a certain way adapts and rewrites itself, in its performative character, in the lives of those who inhabit it, promote it, shape it.

In this frontier between institution and life lies a complex relationship: "There are ... channels between lifeworld and systems which in principle flow in either direction – systems can be shaped by lifeworlds, lifeworlds by systems" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 86). It is not, therefore, merely a matter of conceiving the relationship between discourse and human beings as a monodirectional and vertical one, in which a system colonizes and invades the lives of subjects through language and institutionalized forms, but also of how regular human beings interact with the system, appropriate its discourses, transform, incorporate or contest them (Archer, 2003), according to their own particular interests or objectives.

The method chosen here, then, as a documentary approach and, in turn, as an analysis exercise, is based on a proposal outlined by Mariana Souto-Manning (2012), which entails the combination of elements of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and narrative analysis. This approach proposes that, while narrative analysis digs where actors give meaning and shape (embedded in a narrative) their existence and the context in which they operate, critical discourse analysis approaches the relationship between power and language in the set of social spaces where those very same actors unfold. The combination of both approaches allows us to understand "how these two discourse-analytic approaches can inform one another as a means to seek a more complete analysis" (Souto-Manning, 2012, p. 3).

Critical narrative analysis (CNA), which is the method to which this combination gives rise, also starts then from the understanding of language as a social practice (Fairclough, 2003), and as such studies discourse in particular social and linguistic contexts, in which it seeks power relations and "aims to take apart, question, and investigate the ideological foundations of discourses normalized over a period of time" (Souto-Manning, 2012, p. 4). These normalized discourses, it is assumed from this method, not only crystallize in the institutions that shape a system (for this case, for example, museums, commemorations, national narratives), but acquire life in their "mundane" use and appropriation by those who inhabit the discourse, reproduce or challenge its language, forms and power.

Critical narrative analysis allows us to approach the concept of cosmopolitan memory (Levy, Sznajder, 2014) and the globalization fluxes of which it is part, and to trace its institutional existence, the roots of its power and extension, but also the ways in which certain narrative structures are born and coexist within a discursive form (Abbott, 2002). All this taking into account that memory (and, specifically, the ways in which the conception of the Holocaust has shaped it) is a discourse that, in the interstice between the narrated and the forgotten, lays the foundations for a strong process of identity construction and definition of otherness. To look at where the individual and the institution are related, where a hegemonic discourse consolidates and transforms beyond the channels of the system that shapes it, "and how institutional discourses influence and are influenced by personal everyday narratives" (Souto-Manning, 2012, p. 4-5).

Brief introduction of protagonists

In the immense, overwhelming field of Latin American intellectuality, two figures emerge as protagonists of this particular story: Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez. Their tales are not just those of writers, but of wanderers, activists, and keen observers of the context they lived in, whose experiences in the convulsed world of the global Cold War would profoundly shape their understanding of Latin America and the Third World transnational imagination.

Julio Cortázar, the Argentine maestro of the short story, found himself in the bustling streets of Paris, a city that would become his home for much of his life. But Paris was more than just a backdrop for Cortázar; it was a crucible in which his Latin American identity was both challenged and crystallized. The Seine's whispers and the Left Bank's intellectual fervor provided a counterpoint to his memories of Buenos Aires, allowing him to view his homeland from a distance, both geographically and emotionally. This duality, this dance between two worlds, would come to define much of Cortázar's work, where the ordinary often slips into the extraordinary, in the essence of the narrative experiments that his generation would come to be known for, and where political undertones were never far from the surface. His European sojourns sharpened his political edge, leading him to champion leftist causes and stand in solidarity with revolutionary movements back in Latin America.

Meanwhile, the Colombian Nobel prize, Gabriel García Márquez, also found himself drawn to Europe's shores. García Márquez's time in Europe, particularly in

a post-war Paris grappling with existentialist thought and the echoes of decolonization, deeply influenced his perception of Latin America. The continent's history, its myths, and its tumultuous present became clearer, paradoxically, the further he was from it. His exile was not just physical but also intellectual, allowing him a vantage point from which he could weave the magical realism that would become his signature. García Márquez's political awakening, too, was profound. His friendships with leftist leaders, his journalistic endeavors, and his firsthand experiences of the power dynamics in the Cold War era all seeped into his writings, making them as much a chronicle of the times as they were works of fiction.

For both Cortázar and García Márquez, Europe was not just a place of refuge or inspiration; it was a mirror, a political space in which they found actors, movements and ideas upon which they reflected their Latin American selves, sometimes in stark clarity and sometimes in mystifying ways. Their cosmopolitan lives, marked by multidirectional reflections, were a testament to their ability to be at once rooted and rootless, to belong everywhere and nowhere, that would come to be the mark of this era of global imaginations and, for them and many others, also of exile. In their writings, one can sense the pulse of a continent, its joys and sorrows, its revolutions and its stagnations, all filtered through the lens of two of its most prominent figures, who discovered their Latin American essence in the heart of Europe.

My approach through this thesis is nothing more than the attempt, through the ideas and stories of some specific historical figures (who are defined here as intellectuals in a specific sense), to link themselves not only to the production of

ideas and discourses, but also to the task, self-assigned or not, of elaborating imaginaries committed to reality and the context that surrounded them, in order to also tell a part of the story (one interpretation, among many possible ones) of a critical period, unique in its richness of debates and splits, of elaborating imaginaries committed to the reality and context that surrounded them, in order to also tell a part of the story (one interpretation, among many possible ones) of a critical period, unique for the richness of the debates and splits it saw, for the unexpected connections that were drawn and for the multiplicity of projects and narratives that coexisted. Cortázar and García Márquez are, therefore, a narrative thread for this story that, from the truly global character of the Eichmann trial, will have to unfold through the processes, narratives and imaginaries with which our protagonists interacted, helped to change, throughout their rich and complex intellectual lives. It is, then, a matter of searching for the traces of Eichmann in the world they inhabited.

Chapter 1: Eichmann and the decolonizing imagination

The trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of the key architects of the Holocaust, marked a critical juncture in the globalization of ideas and the way we understand modern perpetrators, victims, and violent conflicts. The trial's global resonance, largely influenced by Hannah Arendt's controversial account, catalyzed the universalization of the Holocaust as the metaphor for human evil, political crime, and genocide (Dean, 2019). This transformative event not only redefined the portrayal of perpetrators and victims but also reshaped postcolonial debates around the globe, with specifically evident features in the so-called Third World.

The Eichmann trial paved the way for the consolidation of the concept of crimes against humanity but was also, and perhaps most importantly, a critical turn on the road to the consolidation of the Nazi Holocaust as an event of global proportions and scope, as well as in the narrative drift from one centered on the anti-fascist victims of Nazism, to an emphasis on largely Jewish victimization. This universalization of the Holocaust extended its impact beyond the specific historical context on which it unfolded, making it a "cosmopolitan and, indeed, rather promiscuous symbol for any number of messages" (Pendas, 2017, p. 228). The trial's influence reached beyond the immediate subject matter. The French state's racialization of the Algerian war provoked intensified connections and comparisons with the experiences of Jews under Nazi occupation (Rothberg, 2009); in Argentina, where Eichmann was captured, the coverage of the trial and the illegal conditions of his abduction unleashed waves of anti-Semitic attacks and discourse

that came into direct confrontation with liberal intellectual elites and leftist movements (Rein, 2003).

The trial also facilitated the integration of Germany into the Western anticommunist alliance with which some Third World actors related in deeply nuanced and particular ways, as it reframed the discourse on totalitarianism and pathological modernity, positioning anticommunism and liberalism as its antidote (Pendas, 2017). Moreover, the Eichmann trial shifted the focus from the perpetrators to the victims, with witnesses becoming "embodiments of memory," attesting to the past and its continuing "presence in the present" (Wieviorka, 2006, p. 88), a process by which some categories of victimhood and heroism merged, creating what Carolyn Dean calls "secular saints" (2019). The apparent consensus retrospectively constructed around the Eichmann trial is not incidental at all. It is part of a narrative that, when faced with equally ambitious interpretative projects, ended up prevailing and becoming a hegemonic narrative. The trial was, and often still is, a space for narrative confrontation in which, when carefully scrutinized, it is possible to find dissimilar interpretations promoted and utilized by different actors to support or justify their own projects and ideas. Upon reaching this point, Eichmann, within his bulletproof glass booth, seems to shrink even further. The overall impact of his trial, and thus the focus of this analysis, is not Eichmann himself.

Therefore, when attempting to connect the Eichmann trial to contemporary debates around decolonization and the Cold War, it is essential to consider the historical context in which it occurred: it had been only a few years since the Suez Crisis, which positioned the State of Israel within postcolonial debates; France was still

waging a military and diplomatic war against the FLN in Algeria; the civil rights movement in the United States was at one of its peaks; Cuba, freshly following its revolution, began to play a significant role in the revolutionary imagination, not only in Latin America, after the failed US invasion of the island in Bahía Cochinos (which occurred, as well as the trial, in 1961³); Nasser and his pan-Arabist ideas retained their political capital, and the Bandung Conference still propelled the project of a non-aligned movement within the Cold War framework. Moreover, various actors in the communist axis, whose discourse would frame, but not subsume, some of the aforementioned debates, sought at all costs to make the trial, and by extension, the interpretation of the Holocaust and Nazism, an idea susceptible to fitting within their interpretative framework of World War II as a conflict between fascism and antifascism, and hence, the Cold War as a continuation of that dichotomy (Bohus, 2015).

By incorporating this insight, we can further emphasize the Eichmann trial's role as a critical juncture in the globalization of ideas and its connections to broader historical and political constellations. Acknowledging the multitude of competing narratives and interpretations surrounding the trial not only could enrich our understanding of the event itself but also provide a more nuanced perspective on

³ Also in 1961, the Belgrade Conference of Non-Aligned countries took place, and the Berlin Wall, perhaps the most memorable trace of the Cold War, started to be erected. In short, 1961 was a condensed moment of parallel and intersecting political developments in the Global South (or better, those causes and places circumscribed to the Third World project) and the Global North, within the socialist and the capitalist world systems, in the Middle East and the Atlantic West alike –processes that often made headlines on the same front page in newspapers or in newsreels from New Delhi to Oslo to Cairo to Buenos Aires.

the diverse ways in which the trial has shaped and been shaped by broader debates around colonialism, the Cold War, and Human Rights. It is important to note, in this case, that the consolidation of a hegemonic narrative does not imply ignoring that it exists and came to exist only within the framework of a complex process of competition, cooperation or coexistence (sometimes all at once) with other interpretative projects before, during and after the trial. This is not an exceptional case in that regard.

The Eichmann trial is, in itself, an issue that far transcends its legal connotations and, therefore, Eichmann himself. It is in the controversy, in the complex deployment of narrative and interpretative forces that it unleashed, that its analytical potential lies, for "it is potentially useful, in a sense, to interpret the objects of controversies as subsidiary in importance, since their function is sometimes almost purely occasional or pretextual: they simply provide the lightning rod for the preexisting but previously insulated energies that animate the dispute to be sparked" (Moyn, 2005, p. 9). These energies, precisely, collided in the interpretation of the trial in ways that, in their multidirectional relations, reconfigured the narrative resources to which, at the confluence of the Cold War, the processes of decolonization and the reinterpretation of the Holocaust, diverse global actors could appeal to give meaning to their own experiences and projects, often in unexpected contrasts with dissimilar experiences. Only in the action of such actors can the paradigmatic character of the trial be explained.

Its insertion into Cold War narrative tropes was clear, for example, from the first session of the trial, which occurred exactly one day before a Soviet mission

succeeded in making Yuri Gagarin the first human being to orbit the Earth. Brackney (2018) shows how the press of the time, in covering these simultaneous events, brought them discursively closer together and established between them an at first unlikely connection, in which "these two men represented very different and distinctly twentieth-century modes of warfare" (p. 127). Eichmann's crimes are inconceivable both in their horror and in the insignificance of the character whose photo, protected behind a glass booth, appears on all the front pages next to the account of Gagarin's feat, also framed as a display of human capabilities at their limit, so that both stories seem to give an account, in their own frame, of the human condition itself and, by extension, of the Cold War. Both stories are also inscribed in a narrative confrontation that transcends them, which Brackney extends even further by moving to the French press, where Gagarin's trial and story share space with France's war in Algeria and deploy, literally, disparate narratives that, though superficially connected (often, by mere typographical arrangement) in print, hint at collisions and reappropriations that, during this period, occurred frequently.

By 1961, the majority interpretation given to the Holocaust in much of Europe was its insertion in the wide range of Nazi crimes, and the now widely accepted specificity of the disproportionate Jewish victimization was merged into the "myth of resistance, a discourse of 'deportation' [...], amalgamating many different categories of victim" (Moyn, 2005, p.47). This fusion served the purpose, during the postwar period, of making available to diverse actors a narrative with which to give meaning to the transition, so that "all victims of Nazi criminality were presented as victims for a powerful collective cause" (p. 47).

In France, for example, this emphasis on the Frenchness (over many other possible categories and emphases) of the victims of the Nazi occupation served different purposes in different political sectors: for some sectors of the left, such an emphasis fitted into the framework of the struggle between fascism and anti-fascism, and their own role within the Cold War allowed them to project their actions as a natural continuation of that struggle. In the case of the Gaullist right, it served to highlight Nazi responsibility and French resistance, downplaying at the same time French responsibility and collaborationism during the occupation and the growing questioning of the French colonial regime, especially evident in its war against Algeria. There, the narrative confrontation, the overlapping of issues traditionally framed as non-related, confronted several actors such as certain left-wing French organizations that, denouncing racism from the Cold War framework, were forced to reconcile their particular form of humanitarian internationalism in light of the very discriminatory practices of the French colonial project that, at times, they left unquestioned (House, 2010).

This shows how the intersection between the testimonial account that the Eichmann trial raised and its emphasis on the non-political victimhood of the Jewish, had the unexpected effect, in a particularly important historical context for the confrontation of various globalizing projects, of challenging hegemonic narratives and opening a place of reflection for debates that occurred outside the binary logics of the official narrative around the Cold War. For a wide range of communist narratives "it was difficult to accommodate the idea of non-political victimhood, i. e. the destruction of Jews based on racist ideas and not because of their political commitments. This represented a problem for communist propaganda

during the Eichmann trial, a process that highlighted the destruction of Jews as the worst crime of the Nazi regime"(Bohus, 2010, p. 765).

This speaks of a phenomenon that is complex but inseparable from the narrative dilemmas in which the Cold War enveloped a wide variety of global actors, and which in the context of decolonization processes, also acquired specific conditions: the radical depoliticization of the Holocaust victims, their insertion into the hegemonic narrative of the liberal interpretation of the Second World War, gave shape to a series of structures, discourses and devices that allowed the standardization of the victim-subject, of the witness, and with it a systematic erasure of their agency and contradictions.

But what does this liberal interpretation entail? In rather general terms and yet related to our topic, legal philosopher Julie Saada states that "the term 'liberal' refers to a theory based on the notion of moral autonomy and a rational capacity in individuals, which includes their rights to equal treatment and respect from other citizens and from the state" (Saada, 2012, p. 134). In the narrower context of the politics of history and memory in the second half of the Twentieth Century, however, the term also acquires a particularly non-revolutionary (or even anti-revolutionary) meaning: liberalism was claimed to represent the democratic middle ground between positions of the revolutionary Left and the fascist Right, both considered as essentially totalitarian by Hannah Arendt and others (1951). As during the Cold War, Fascist or right-wing regimes constituted no threat (yet often allies) to the Atlantic West, liberalism was positioned as the positive alternative to the Left. The Nuremberg Trial may have been at the beginning of the post-World

War II era, but its constellation was soon washed away by the logics of the Cold War.

In order to establish my specific understanding of the term “liberal” in this thesis, it is perhaps best to refer to the labeling of a number of tribunals on war and human rights crimes as “liberal show trials.” The Eichmann trial has been labeled as such – but so have others. According to Thomas Meaney of the *New Left Review*, Lyndon B. Johnson’s Attorney General and subsequent critic of the Vietnam War, Ramsey Clark, held that opinion of the Nuremberg Trial, which Ramsey had observed as a young Marine in Europe (Meaney, 2021). The legal historian Mark J. Osiel, invoking writings by Tzvetan Todorov (1996) and Nahman Ben-Yehuda (1995) has applied this evaluation to trials from Nuremberg to post-Junta Argentina, including the Eichmann trial. In a rather refreshing view compared to many others during those early days of what some have called the “memory boom”, Osiel declared that “liberal show trials are ones self-consciously designed to show merits of liberal morality and to do so in ways consistent with its very requirements” (Osiel, 2000, p. 65).

Given this, narratively powerful events like the Eichmann trial fit into a logic of Cold War liberalism that was fundamentally opposed to alternative social projects on the Left and post-colonial aspirations that exceeded the terms offered by the former (European) and current (US) centers of “empire”. As Samuel Moyn recently put it,

Cold War liberalism was not just about legitimating the west against its global enemies, whether they were communist or global South liberationists. Cold War

liberalism was also about proscribing a certain politics within the West itself. So I think it was quite fundamental in Transatlantic spaces that Cold War liberals banned optimism and utopianism, and issued a call for constraints and self-constraint, to the point that they didn't even set out to defend the modest steps towards welfare states that the actual liberals were in practice taking when these figures were writing (McAteer, 2022).

Thus, primarily in Europe, the narrative of the anti-fascist combatant was eventually replaced (although, of course, both narratives can also overlap), in the framework of the Cold War, by that of the universal victim of repressive violence (Traverso, 2012; Dean, 2020), devoid to some extent of the specificity of her context, of her agency and political ideas. And this effort was in turn contested by those actors who, gravitating between the overlapping globalization projects in dispute, wove their own connections and, in a multidirectional, often surprising or unexpected use of dissimilar narratives, projected their own claims.

A quest for the “truth”: the North African trial’s perceptions as examples of its impact in the “Third World”

In France, several international actors, for instance, were closely involved in the publication of banned articles and books on anticolonial topics, circumventing state censorship and publishing in journals which, from their very names, were actively declaring this crusade for the truth one of their main goals (among them, it is possible to identify *Verité-Liberté*, *Vérités Anticolonialistes* or *La Vérité des Travailleurs*) (Judaken, 2011). The testimonial aspect of these journals as well as in

the efforts of the *cinéma vérité* movement resonated with anticolonial activists, who saw parallels between the Holocaust and the Algerian War. For several intellectuals and activists, the acts of testimony and resistance bridged the gap between the two wars, highlighting the common threads between these historical events (Rothberg, 2009). The intellectual debates around the Eichmann trial were closely linked to transnational networks and movements, and they played a significant role in the testimonial turn (Sarlo, 2012), both cementing and broadening the trial's own contributions.

At the same time, those processes were being closely followed by actors involved in decolonization projects, such as the FLN, that invoked the Holocaust narratives displayed at the trial to frame the French actions against Algerians as similar to Nazi atrocities and procedures. The role that intellectual and activist reflections played throughout this process was significant, as racial criteria were being used for the French police to randomly check and arrest Arab- or Mediterranean looking citizens in France, and concentrationary practices were being applied against Algerians (House, 2010).

This interconnections were made explicit through the articulation of actors such as Pierre Vidal Naquet, André Mandouze (who titled his memoirs "D'une résistance à l'autre") or Jean Paul Sartre, that show how those narratives circulated through transnational networks of solidarity and renarration, from revolutionary Latin America to Africa and Asia. Nasser's Egypt, given the context of its role as a producer of counternarratives in the midst of the Cold War, directly circumscribed the Eichmann trial to its own signifiers and frameworks: in the framework of the

Cold War, it served to highlight the alleged hypocrisy of the United Kingdom and France in their support for Israel; and as for the latter, to question not only the very legitimacy of Eichmann's trial and capture on Argentine soil, but also to insert Israel directly into postcolonial debates, as an actor that, with the support of the West, extended the colonial practices of its allies towards the Palestinians and the Arab world.

Egyptian media, as exemplified by the newspaper *al-Ahram's* coverage, grappled with how to report on the Eichmann trial without seeming to sympathize with Eichmann or provoke empathy for Israel and the Jewish people (Achcar, 2012, p. 81). *Al-Ahram's* coverage presented the trial as an opportunity for Israel to achieve various goals, such as establishing itself as the "supreme judiciary power" for Jews worldwide and connecting Arab nationalism with Nazism, a common claim during this period (Achcar, 2012, p. 88).

Memories of colonial violence and the Holocaust in some cases "overlapped, as many Algerians living in France would have witnessed the mass round-ups of Jews in Paris or been aware of their persecution in Vichy Algeria" (House, 2010, p. 30). In the early 1960s, Egypt, under the leadership of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, was the dominant political force in the Arab world, shaping Arab public opinion on a range of issues, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Achcar, 2012).

The Eichmann trial unfolded against this backdrop, as Nasser attempted to strengthen bilateral relations with the United States and ease regional tensions (Sharnoff, 2012, p. 5). During this period, Nasser worked to establish a Palestinian entity under the influence of Pan-Arabist ideas, ultimately contributing to the

creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 (Sharnoff, 2012, p. 7). Meanwhile, the francophone Algerian elite associated with the FLN's Fédération de France used transversal themes such as antifascism, antiracism, and the right to human dignity to build bridges with French society (House, 2010).

The Egyptian coverage of the Eichmann trial, here taken as a single, yet revealing and thus relevant example, demonstrates the complex interplay between Holocaust memory, decolonization, and anti-Semitism not only in Nasser's Egypt, but through the Third World in general, as will become evident in the following chapters. For instance, one column about the trial published by the Arab-Socialist intellectual Lutfi al-Khuli in *Al-Ahram*, titled "Eichmann, between Nazism and Zionism", emphasized the presumed similarities between Zionism and Nazism, condemning both (Achcar, 2012) but connecting Nazi practices with the actions committed by the Israelis against their Arab neighbors.

The reception of the trial in Nasser's Egypt highlights the intersections and divergences between memories of colonial violence and the Holocaust, as well as the complex relationships between anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and decolonization struggles. The testimonies and narratives surrounding these events reveal the intricate web of historical sensibilities and political motivations that have shaped and continue to shape public opinion and memory in the Arab world and beyond, and how they were inextricably connected to the Cold War and global narratives.

The Eichmann trial clearly influenced and was shaped by the global historical and political contexts in which it unfolded. The trial propelled reflections around the specific "Jewishness" of the Holocaust, challenging narratives regarding the

resistance and the fascist-antifascist dualism that were prevalent in some parts of Europe, and therefore dominant narratives that often obscured or downplayed the extent of European complicity or collaboration with the nazis. It was closely followed by actors involved in decolonization projects, who utilized the Holocaust narratives that emerged from the trial to frame their own struggles against colonial and neocolonial oppression.

One of the main insights that can be drawn from this analysis is the inherently interconnected nature of historical narratives and political struggles. The Eichmann trial, while primarily focused on the specific crimes of Adolf Eichmann and the larger context of the Holocaust, nonetheless became a powerful lens through which to view and understand a variety of seemingly disparate historical and political phenomena. This is evidenced by the ways in which the trial's narratives were appropriated and reconfigured by actors as diverse as French and Hungarian politicians, decolonization activists, and intellectuals such as Pierre Vidal Naquet, André Mandouze, Jean Paul Sartre, Gabriel García Márquez and Frantz Fanon. At the same time, the trial's emphasis on testimony and truth-telling resonated powerfully with decolonization movements and other global imaginations, demonstrating the ways in which seemingly disparate historical events and processes can be linked through shared themes and concerns.

This interconnectedness of historical narratives is evident in the ways in which the trial was received and interpreted in Nasser's Egypt, where it became enmeshed in broader debates around decolonization, Pan-Arabism, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The trial's focus on the Holocaust provided an opportunity for Nasser and

his allies to question the legitimacy of the Israeli state and to frame it as a neocolonial project, while also helping to shape Egyptian and Arab attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more broadly. On its part, the Algerian case serves as a prime example of how Holocaust narratives were interwoven with the experiences of colonialism and decolonization. The FLN's efforts to frame their struggle against French colonial rule in the context of the Holocaust and the Eichmann trial demonstrate the fluidity of these narratives and their ability to shape and be shaped by the political struggles of the time. Furthermore, the broader Third World's engagement with the Eichmann trial, Israel and Palestine, reveals the ways in which Holocaust narratives were appropriated and reframed within the context of pan-Arabism, anti-Zionism, and anti-imperialism, dissimilar but also connected projects, with their own set of narratives and discourses attached to them.

Chapter 2: Latin American holocausts

The Holocaust, as a defining historical event of the 20th century, has shaped global discourses on suffering, victimization, and human rights. In the aftermath of World War II and the social revolutions that swept through Latin America in the 1940s and 1950s, the region engaged with and contributed to Holocaust narratives in unique and significant ways. Here, we seek to explore, through the concept of multidirectional memory (Rothberg, 2009), the consolidation of a hegemonic narrative around the Nazi Holocaust with specific Latin American features, with the Eichmann trial as a critical juncture, and the ways in which various regional actors, in the context of the Cold War, appealed to narrative resources typical of the reflection on the Holocaust, to articulate their own projects, struggles and narratives. In this interstice, it is possible to find concrete reflections to insert Latin America in the history of the diverse, and often opposed, projects of moral entrepreneurship of global scope that marked the second half of the twentieth century, but that in the subcontinent reached specificities worthy of study.

This section examines the ways in which Holocaust consciousness has developed its own shapes and forms in the region while also participating in global patterns of Holocaust consciousness, particularly in the gradual shift that the region experienced (broadly speaking) between the figure of the anti-fascist militant and the victim-witness. To this end, emphasis will be placed on some cases which, although they cannot and do not pretend to give an exhaustive account of the regional processes, lay the foundations for future research. In the discursive crystallization that these forms of memory represent, it will be possible to analyze

the complex coexistence (and often confrontation) between different types of testimony, inseparably linked to narrative and discursive exercises that, although connected to global phenomena, are also specifically Latin American. By examining the adoption of a particular form of approach, specific mechanisms to portray the past, and the elegiac nature of these commemoration efforts, I will attempt to understand the interplay between the national and the global, the particular and the universal.

The priority interest of this approach is to point out and string together some comprehensive elements that give meaning to the complex phenomenon that has been outlined in the previous paragraphs, and it does so not from a historical perspective, but from what Jan Assmann (1997) calls a mnemo-historical one. In other words, the proposal does not evaluate the historical precision with which these memorials and narratives have approached the past, but rather is concerned with the way in which various pasts have been remembered and represented over time, and how the conditions of that representation and reconfiguration have gone through constant changes or, in this case, crystallized around certain common factors, constantly contested and reshaped.

In doing so, it is possible to draw over the understanding of Latin America's role in shaping global discourses on memory, identity, and otherness, as well as the impact this process might have had on transitional justice and memorialization efforts in the region. This examination will not only shed light on the ways in which Latin America has engaged with and contributed to hegemonic Holocaust narratives but also serve as a foundation for future reflections.

About a (not so) distant war

At the edge of the Rio de la Plata, not far from where Eichmann lived for ten years under the name Riccardo Klement, a series of commemorative plaques, a small square and a few concrete walls that seem to merge with the shore, give shape to the Holocaust Memorial of the Jewish People, in Montevideo, Uruguay. At the occasion of its inauguration, Uruguayan president Luis Alberto Lacalle, related the presence of such a monument in that place in Latin America's Southern Cone to a conception of the Uruguayan nation as a "land of peace, tolerance, respect and freedom". Although this Holocaust memorial was inaugurated in 1994, it was only in 2002 that the first memorial was erected directly commemorating state violence during the years of military dictatorship, which the nation, like many of its regional neighbors, suffered during part of the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, regarding Lacalle's later emphasis on linking the memorial to the mantra "Never Again", Aizenberg (2008) responds that "What President Lacalle did not mention was that such episodes had happened again, in none other than the tolerant land of Uruguay, and that the entire Uruguayan collectivity was not united behind the cause of a memorial remembering its own detained and disappeared" (p. 222).

The tension behind this apparent contradiction becomes even more evident when taking into account that Montevideo, deeply connected to the narrative conflicts of the 20th century, also had featured monuments dedicated to the city of Guernica, bombed as part of the Spanish Civil War (erected in 1943); to Lidice, the Czech town razed to the ground by the Nazis in retaliation for the assassination attempt against Heinrich Heydrich (erected in 1942); or even to the failed uprising against

the communist government of Hungary in 1956—all of them built long before any monument to its own victims. Given that these three memorials were inaugurated and discussed before the advent of the subjective turn (Sarlo, 2005) previously associated with the Eichmann trial and contemporary events, it is worth understanding them as commemorative exercises of a very different nature. The narrative framing of these historical events led their Uruguayan promoters to speak of ".... a tribute to the heroic city of Guernica" (Fernández & Maytía, 2-9/07/2004); of "[...] a tribute to perpetuate the memory of a people that was destroyed by invading forces for having expressed its resistance to the domination imposed by force", in the case of Lídice; or of a recognition of "the struggle for freedom of Budapest" (Departmental Council of Montevideo, 1959, p. 116), in the case of the Hungarian rebellion.

When these narratives are placed in dialogue with the historical context of their promotion and with the projects in dispute during this period, it is possible to find not only a constant multidirectionality and overlapping between diverse narratives of apparently dissimilar pasts, but also significant changes that connect the particular case of Uruguay with the global flow of ideas in which Latin America took part during the twentieth century: thus, the monuments to Guernica and Lídice must be interpreted in light of Uruguay's affiliation with the Allied side during World War II. With its democratic transition in the early 1940s, the country was inserted into the narrative of the war as a confrontation between fascists and anti-fascists which, by the early 1960s, when the monument to "the heroes of Hungary" was inaugurated at the height of the Cold War, had already seen its narrative elements fundamentally altered: the emphasis previously placed on the anti-fascist factor

had shifted and given way to a narrative framing in which the liberal order within which the Uruguayan government is inserted, confronts the totalitarian regimes of the communist bloc. And, although this case refers specifically to the Hungarian government, it must be understood in the light of a rich and complex flow of ideas, narratives and projects that Latin American actors such as Cuba were challenging and reconfiguring. What could have changed, then, between these projects of remembrance of the mid-twentieth century, and those others that, in the following decades, during and after a long period of dictatorial rule, made use of the Shoah to reflect on the future of the region?

In order to carry out this analysis it is important to start from an enunciative premise: although in evident dialogue and cooperation with other globalization projects ascribed to the narrative of Human Rights as a liberal institution with universal pretensions, a specific Latin American relationship with these narrative tropes, with the reinterpretation or standardization of some elements of what has been called a “liberal canon” (Kallis, 2021), responds to authentically different processes, in which shared imaginations between anti-colonial, anti-capitalist and revolutionary projects allowed alternative categories of otherness, of narration and militancy, to take shape in open dialogue with, and sometimes opposition to, other forms of enunciation and political engagement now considered hegemonic and institutionalized: the memory of the Holocaust has been identified as one of these hegemonic signifiers.

The existence of a hegemonic narrative, however, does not imply that it remains unquestioned, and the particular conditions of Latin America have implied dissident

narratives, often associated with very diverse political projects and moral entrepreneurs (Molden, 2016). Rothberg's (2009) concept of multidirectional memory is particularly relevant to understand the complex correlation of forces that produced this political and narrative shift in Latin America. And this multidirectionality operates within the framework of a constant and flexible flow of ideas, projects and imaginaries to and from the subcontinent, which can be traced back to the Eichmann trial, but which in many ways also transcend it.

Thus, by the time the period of military dictatorships in Latin America brought to the region a certain standardized use of repressive state violence, the actors who put up clandestine or public resistance, had at their disposal a repertoire of narratives that can only be understood in the complex correlation of forces between a variety of factors: the Cold War framework; the irruption of the victim-witness derived (though not exclusively) from the Eichmann trial and the consolidation of the Holocaust in the global imaginary; the drifts of postcolonial debates and discourses, inseparable from the multiple and often overlapping alternative globalization projects (such as those discussed at the Tricontinental Conference held in Cuba in 1966); and the Latin American revolutionary imagination itself. From there it is possible to appeal to the important split, pointed out by Enzo Traverso (2012) as a displacement that occurred in the hegemonic narratives of the twentieth century, from the anti-fascist militant to the victim-witness, in which, "concurrently, the genocide came to be defined as a succession of individual experiences with which the public was supposed to identify" (Wieviorka, p. 88).

Amidst these intersecting forces, the Latin American resistance fighters sought to articulate their experiences of struggle and repression, drawing on diverse sources for inspiration and validation. The division between the anti-fascist militant and the victim-witness often shaped the reception of these testimonies, with certain narratives prioritized over others. This cleavage was particularly pronounced in the Latin American context, as the politically active survivors of state violence faced suspicion and marginalization, while the other (more passive) victims were elevated to a higher moral ground (Feierstein, 2006; Longoni, 2007)⁴.

The testimonies of these politically engaged survivors, whose experiences did not fit neatly into the prevailing victim-witness paradigm, struggled to find a place within the collective memory of the region's traumatic past, and they had to wait longer to enter the Latin American "pantheon of victims" (Dean, 2020). However, as democratic transitions unfolded and efforts to confront the legacy of state violence gained momentum, scholars and activists in countries like Argentina began to challenge these binary divisions and recognize the complex realities of repression, resistance, and suffering that transcended simplistic categories (Robben, 2005).

⁴ In Ana Longoni's "Traiciones: la figura del traidor en los relatos acerca de los sobrevivientes de la represión" (2007), the author critically examines the post-Dirty War narratives in Argentina, highlighting a marked preference for a specific kind of victim: the passive, non-political, and innocent individual. This idealized victim stands in stark contrast to the figure of the militant, who, due to their political activism, was often viewed with suspicion and even seen as having potentially "provoked" their own persecution. This trend mirrors the broader shift in Latin America from a revolutionary understanding of testimony, which emphasized militancy and heroism, to a more liberal one that prioritizes victimhood and defenselessness. Notably, this narrative and conceptual shift resonates with debates that surrounded the Eichmann trial and, therefore, encapsulates its major importance in the region.

Thus, the evolving process of incorporating a broader range of survivor testimonies in Latin America reveals not only the intricate interplay between memory, politics, and identity in the aftermath of state violence, but also the region's ongoing general struggle for truth, justice, and historical recognition amidst globally competing narratives and interests.

Victoria Ocampo and the Latin American cosmopolitan humanism

The Eichmann trial was a seminal event that profoundly influenced the global imagination of the Holocaust. Through the testimonies recorded and broadcasted, the trial provided a body of narrative elements and tropes that transformed the Holocaust into a multi-semantic and diluted symbol. While Latin America was geographically distant from the epicenter of these events, the region was far from isolated in its intellectual and political engagement with them, and understanding how some regional actors related to the Holocaust, World War II and nazism before the trial, could provide better elements to understand why and how the trial influenced the narratives circulating in the region.

In the early 1960s, Latin America was grappling with its own set of complex regional dilemmas. Some of its foundational myths regarding the independence from conventional colonial powers in the 19th century were being challenged, since the region faced significant interference from the United States, particularly in the context of the Cold War. This geopolitical tension created a fertile ground for the debates triggered by the Second World War and its aftermath. In Argentina, for

instance, intellectuals like Victoria Ocampo and Jorge Luis Borges were already reflecting on the dimensions of Nazism and its universal, abstract implications during and shortly after the war. Briefly approaching these two authors might allow us to better understand the intellectual and political transition to which many actors who defined the 1960s in Latin America were later related and, in turn, allows us to see what changed in terms of the relationship of those actors to the global circulation of Holocaust narratives.

Ocampo, who came from a family of the Argentine aristocracy, was of vital importance for Latin American intellectual activity during this period, and a controversial figure, commonly accused of representing a type of European-minded intellectuality⁵. In 1931, she founded the journal *Revista Sur*, around which one of the most important intellectual circles of the region was articulated. Under her guidance, *Revista Sur* not only showcased texts written by some of the best-known Argentine and Latin American authors of the time (such as Borges, Bioy Casares, Ernesto Sábato, Octavio Paz, etc.), but also introduced Spanish-speaking readers to global literary figures, including Virginia Woolf, Albert Camus, and T.S. Eliot. The magazine became a nexus for the exchange of ideas, and was also, during and after World War II, a space from which the region's first

⁵ Among the many anecdotes that tell of this Europeanized intellectuality are not only her constant trips to Europe and the United States, but a long list of interesting episodes: his interview with Benito Mussolini in 1934; her friendship and admiration for Virginia Woolf, whom she met at an exhibition of Man Ray's photographs in London that she attended with Aldous Huxley (Salomone, 2006); her evident Francophilia or the fact that, in her *Revista Sur*, more European than Latin American authors were published (Plotkin, 2002).

narrative approaches to the Holocaust and the phenomenon of Nazism were orchestrated.

Among those first approaches is, for example, a text written by Jorge Luis Borges, published in issue 36 of the magazine, in 1946, and entitled "Deutsches Requiem". In the text, a fictional character named Otto Dietrich zur Linde, a Nazi about to face his death sentence as a war criminal, tells his life story and explains himself in first person (Borges, 1949). The text, replete with footnotes, carries the narrator's comments as a counterpoint and is thus an interpretative exercise in clear dialogue with the Nuremberg trials, which were taking place when it was first published. At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, Victoria Ocampo was attending those same trials, invited by the British Council, and as the only Latin American present there. From there, the author wrote letters to her sisters about what she saw and interpreted. These were published in *Soledad sonora* (1950), several years later. In the analysis of these texts, two aspects stand out among many others: first, the constant comparison, apparently frivolous, between the trial and a spectacle, which resonates very strongly with some of Hannah Arendt's interpretations of the Eichmann trial in Israel, a decade and a half later. Ocampo

describes Hess as a cold-eyed monkey, finds it "comical" how Jodl with his headphones, in the midst of the drama, makes telephone operator gestures, exults at the state-of-the-art simultaneous translation system in the midst of a city in ruins, compares the interrogations in Russian and German to a Wagner opera, his location in the courtroom to a superpullman, and the gesture with which Goering covers his legs with a gray blanket to that of Berta Krauss, the stern piano teacher of her childhood (Liendo, 2016, p. 4).

The second aspect to highlight in Ocampo's reflections is precisely her political involvement, her affinity with a project of moral entrepreneurship that the author, and with her, a good part of the generation that was contemporary to her and published in her magazine with some frequency, embraced and defended, and which is also what explains her later break with a generation of younger intellectuals who, like Cortázar, would reformulate some of the post-war liberal premises on which the *Revista Sur* project was built. Victoria Ocampo and her circle, despite their presumed "apolitical" condition, found in their narrative exploration of the Nazi regime and its criminality a condition of enunciation whence to reflect on their local realities, which in the case of Argentina went through a succession of military juntas "that were supposedly neutral but were during World War II not so quietly pro-Axis" (Aizenberg, 2015, p. 3).

What conditions allowed some Latin American actors to embark on interpretative exercises that, in Europe and the United States, would still have to wait a few years? Aizenberg raises the possibility that Latin American actors "began to confront this fantasy/reality conundrum during the Hitler moment itself because they didn't fight in the conflict (Brazil was a late exception) and were not occupied by the Nazis" (2015, p. 15). This might have had the effect of providing them with a certain "perceptive distancing", which gave them the opportunity, in the immediacy of the postwar period, to articulate narratives that put them in dialogue with Latin American realities and, in Ocampo's case, to elaborate a particular form of transnational humanism that would later collide with the cultural changes triggered by the Cuban revolution in a new generation of intellectuals.

Victoria Ocampo and the *Sur* circle began to be questioned more and more vehemently and, already in 1961, precisely the year of the Eichmann trial, the split between this circle and the new generation of intellectuals that massively supported the Cuban experiment would become clear. That year, José Bianco, Ocampo's collaborator and *Sur*'s editorial secretary since 1938, was invited to participate as a jury member in one of the first editions of the Casa de las Américas Prize, which was part of the cultural project of the then young Cuban Revolution (which will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter). Victoria Ocampo, who viewed the Cuban experiment with suspicion, asked Bianco to publish a letter disassociating *Sur* from its participation in the contest, and he refused to do so, arguing that another member of *Sur*'s circle, Héctor Murena, had not done the same when he visited the United States at the cultural invitation of the State Department (Podlubne, 2008).

After that incident, not only Bianco abandoned the *Sur* project for good, but also other Latin American intellectuals decided to definitively break all ties with Ocampo and her magazine. Among them was precisely Julio Cortázar, who in a letter sent to Argentine film director Manuel Antín in 1963, perfectly encapsulates the enthusiasm of a good part of his generation for the Cuban Revolution and the decline of *Sur* as a catalyst for ideas and narratives in the region, in the shadow of the new currents and projects that the revolution promoted and inspired during the 1960s:

Death awaits Cuba from one day to the next, but these people will know how to die as many of us do not. The risk, the joy of feeling free, have made of the

Cubans something new, never seen in America. Their own internal struggle, unknown abroad where everything is seen in general lines, is giving this people a quality that only the Yankees and **the subscribers of Sur** are capable of ignoring (Cortázar, 2019, p.400).⁶

This fundamental break would explain the narrative imagination that in the region, always in constant interaction with global flows, would have the Cuban island as its epicenter, from where not only the meaning of Latin American identity would be questioned, but also its place within an anti-imperialist and post-colonial project in which dissimilar actors, causes and narratives would coincide and meet, at least for a while. The association made by Cortázar between "the Yankees and the subscribers of Sur", within the framework of the Cold War, then reveals a critical positioning that, during the following decades, would lead Latin American intellectuals to constantly ask themselves about their role in the realization, hypothetical or not, of a political or cultural revolution that, before becoming a utopia, had as its most evident counterpart not only the "Yankees and the subscribers of Sur", but also the "Yankees", had as its most evident counterpart not only the foreign policy of the United States, or the impassive and uniformed faces of the military juntas that populated the reality and narrative imagination of the region, but also the ideas, the passivity or

⁶ Original, in Spanish: La muerte espera a Cuba de un día para otro, pero ese pueblo sabrá morir como no lo sabemos muchos de nosotros. El riesgo, la alegría de sentirse libres, han hecho de los cubanos algo nuevo, nunca visto en América. Su propia lucha interna, desconocida en el exterior donde todo se ve en líneas generales, le está dando a ese pueblo una calidad que sólo los yanquis y los suscriptores de Sur son capaces de ignorar. Viví allá un mes admirable en todo sentido, del que te hablaré cuando vengas; (Cortázar, 2019, p.400).

dispassion that a sector of that intelligentsia, here embodied in Sur magazine, came to represent in this narrative:

Sur also embodied, to use an expression of Ernesto Sábato, a need for the absolute, an ethical tension that had sought, in the support for the Spanish Republic, in the rejection of totalitarianism, in the repugnance for Creole politicking, its expression. The aura of disinterested opposition, the cleanliness of the rejection of honors for ethical reasons, the invocation of high objectives, the exasperation, all this accompanied a process that will throw its protagonists, towards the middle of their lives, in the difficult period inaugurated by the Liberating Revolution (Conrado, 1992, p. 432).

Narrating their own horrors: transposition or co creation?

Faced with multiple military dictatorships during the second half of the twentieth century, various Latin American political actors had to seek, in a highly repressive context, narrative mechanisms in which to inscribe their own struggles and projects. Although undoubtedly a wide repertoire of ideas and narratives circulated and confronted each other during this period, all inextricably linked to the context of the Cold War and its alternative projects (Tricontinental, NAM, pan-Arabism, etc.), many found in the Holocaust a repertoire of symbols (Montealegre, 2013) that allowed them to articulate their own discourses in the face of repression, revolutionary imagination and political militancy, but also in the face of disappearance and concentrationary violence.

In this sense, it is important to mention the correlation between the repressive imaginaries that emerged (dissimilar, but deeply connected during this period) in the postcolonial debates in Africa and Europe (especially Algeria and France), and the emergence of narrative and conceptual endeavors such as the New Latin American Cinema (in clear interaction with Italian neorealism or *cinema vérité*)⁷ or testimonial literature (Rothberg, 2009; Moyn, 2005), which coincide in raising an idea of "truth" in direct opposition to the state censorship systems of, for example, the French state during its war against Algeria or the military juntas in Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Many of these narrative elements took on particularly Latin American forms during the dictatorial period, and provided those who opposed them with multiple narratives to relate to. They also served to articulate, after the

⁷ Santiago Álvarez Román, a pioneering Cuban film director and good representative of this point, is renowned for his innovative documentary shorts (in clear conversation with this global narrative and intellectual flows) that captured the revolutionary spirit of the 1960s and 1970s. A hallmark of Álvarez's oeuvre is its multidirectional nature, which reflects a global perspective on revolutionary struggles and solidarity. One of his most iconic films, "Now" (1965), is a powerful commentary on the African American civil rights movement in the United States. Similarly, in "Hanoi, Martes 13" (1967), Álvarez offers a poignant portrayal of the North Vietnamese capital during the Vietnam War. In both these films, and throughout his career, Álvarez's work transcends geographical boundaries, emphasizing the shared aspirations and challenges of revolutionary movements worldwide. His films serve as a testament to the interconnected nature of the Third Worldist vision, where struggles in one part of the world resonate and find solidarity in another.

transition periods, claims that are deeply related to the fundamental role of Latin America in the development and professionalization of transitional justice.

In this way, Latin America faced its own version of the dilemma between the defenseless victim, turned into an icon, and the militant who, in the exercise of his agency, opposes the repressive state. In order to narrate and represent guerrillas, activists, trade unionists, the disappeared, survivors, human rights defenders (and all the wide range of categories that can be traced in the region), different actors navigated through a variety of narrative devices and master plots. From this process derived "a moral consensus around victims whose suffering can be universalized and whose presence no longer inspires guilt, denial, and displacement" (Dean, 2020) that was already possible to observe in the case of Uruguay, previously discussed. Thus, Latin American actors during this period decontextualized and recontextualized the Holocaust narrative "in an established comparative and Cosmopolitan tradition" (Tarica, 2022, p. 12).

Authors, leaders, and activists in Latin America thus made use of the collective imaginary around the Holocaust to articulate their own stories, recontextualize them and endow them with a specific meaning in a different context. For instance, in Argentina, journalist Jorge Luis Bernetti referred to the violence during the military dictatorship as the "holocaust of thousands of Argentines" (Tarica, 2022, p. 5). Similarly, Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer drew a comparison between the dictatorship years in the country and a "mini-Holocaust", building dialectical bridges between the presumed European passivity against Hitler and the world's passivity in front of the Argentinian atrocities (Siman, Kahan, 2020). This pattern of Holocaust

comparisons also emerged in Chile, where Hernán Valdés published a diary recounting his experiences in a Chilean concentration camp, accusing Chilean citizens of the same false innocence claimed by Germans under Nazi rule (Tarica, 2022).

These comparisons were extended to the concentrational conditions of prisoners: Uruguayan Lilian Celiberti described her imprisonment, comparing her captor's physical appearance and demeanor to a Nazi officer. Likewise, Mauricio Rosencof compared the appearance of his fellow prisoners in Uruguay to the inhabitants of Treblinka (Montealegre, 2013). Latin America's engagement with Holocaust narratives has resulted in a complex interweaving of testimonial literature, memory, and historical experiences. This engagement has provided a framework for understanding and interpreting the region's own history of violence and oppression while also participating in a broader cosmopolitan tradition of comparative memory.

Where the anti-fascist fighter, where the resistance soldier, where the political exile appealed to the highly idealized contesting imagination of the postwar period, the defenseless victim, devoid of any political motivation, of any history of resistance, rebellion or heroism, produced discomfort and, sometimes, shame. Thus, the victims of the Nazis were, in principle, members of the French resistance, or Hungarian anti-fascist fighters (to mention only a few examples), rather than Jews. The elevation of the Jewish victim, the depoliticization of his figure in the exaltation of his innocence (or lack of agency in his own destruction), and the fundamental alteration that this brought about, would come later, and reached Latin America in the midst of the dictatorial period. Through the complex circulation of ideas,

imaginaries and narratives available since Second World War (and especially since the Eichmann trial) until the so-called memory boom, it is possible to see in the region much more than a simple transposition or appropriation of terms and narratives, so that the national, the regional and the global merge in complex connections. The Uruguayan case accounts for this phenomenon in a particular way, and shows how Latin American actors adapted and tried to re-signify their projects and imaginaries in the light of others, whereas the explicit comparisons drawn by some actors in Chile and Argentina made use of heavily consolidated symbols in order to signify (and, in the process, also simplify) their own struggle.

As the concept of the Holocaust and the figure of the innocent victim entered Latin American consciousness during the era of military dictatorships, they introduced a new set of narrative tools and frameworks for local actors to address their own experiences of repression, violence, and suffering. This shift in focus from the anti-fascist fighter to the innocent victim allowed for a broader reflection on the human cost of state-sponsored violence, repression, and genocide through multidirectional memory exercises, which resonated across different national and regional contexts and often simplified complex processes through the iconization of victims.

The incorporation of Holocaust narratives and the figure of the defenseless/apolitical victim in certain Latin American political discourses also provided a means to highlight, towards the end of the century, during and after the so-called democratic transitions, the universality of human rights and the alleged shared responsibility of the international community to confront and combat, within

specific, malleable frameworks, violent pasts. This cosmopolitan approach to memory and commemoration inserted Latin America in the global flux of ideas, with its transitional justice processes and truth commissions producing and reshaping the global debates during the second half of the 20th century.

As for the influence of the Eichmann trial analyzed in the following chapters, Edna Aizenberg, talking about Latin American literature and the Holocaust, identifies one of the intellectual milestones upon which it is possible to reflect on this complex matter:

Even if the works I study, in a wide generic range, don't always declare the Shoah, if they are set in a Brazilian landscape among rural folk, or they occupy a niche in an author's oeuvre, the Shoah is there, laterally and forcefully. How it is there makes for absorbing reading on the question of "poetry after Auschwitz," and for an engaging decoding of the signs that combine the "Latin American" and the "European." (Aizenberg, 2015, p. 12-13).

In this sense, the Latin American experience with Holocaust narratives and the figure of the innocent victim can be seen as a process of mutual exchange and adaptation, in which local actors (and not only state actors) engaged in a creative dialogue with global memory discourses and practices. This interaction resulted in the production of novel and hybrid forms of memory, commemoration, and resistance, which in turn contributed to the ongoing process of global memory construction and consolidation. Moreover, the encounter between Holocaust memory and Latin American experiences of state-sponsored violence and repression also facilitated the emergence of new forms of political agency and

activism, which were informed by the ethics of human rights (not necessarily the liberal version of them that would become hegemonic, as will be seen) and the struggle for truth, justice, and reparation, in itself deeply contested concepts.

Chapter 3: Latin America in the 1960s: Transnational connections and Third Worldist identity

Once upon a time, during the 19th century, a Habsburg assumed his position as emperor of Mexico. From this eccentric episode, in addition to the death of the aforementioned emperor (Maximilian), shot by a martial court in 1867, one more story emerged, among the many diverse and varied ones that populate the history (and narrative imagination) of the region, which have been starred by a foreign power that tried to intervene to maintain, or alter, the regional status. In this case it was Napoleon III's France, which alleged that Mexico had defaulted on its debt payments. To this period, and to the discursive maneuvers that France carried out to frame the occupied territories and justify its incursions into them, some attribute the adhesion of the adjective "Latin" to the noun "America", generally associated with the existence of a presumed "Latin" race, of European filiation (Phelan, 1968). However, when tracing the origin of "Latin America", it is important to understand it as a concept intimately related to the concerns and projects of those who promoted it and, therefore, to narrative exercises.

Also in the 19th century, and precisely under the influence of interventionist policies in the region and the recent loss of an enormous portion of Mexican territory in the war with the United States, "Latin America" became a markedly anti-colonial project. In this, Gobat (2013) argues, the opposition of regional actors to the projects of some American filibusters played a determining role. In 1856, Franklin Pierce, then president of the United States, made the decision to recognize William

Walker, an American mercenary and filibuster who had just seized power in Nicaragua (and who, among other things, reinstated slavery when he did so), as a legitimate government.

This gesture, perceived as a common threat to the entire region,

eventually led governments to forge the largest anti-U.S. alliance in Latin American history. Such an alliance had been demanded by politicians throughout the region immediately after they heard about Pierce's decision to recognize the Walker regime. And it was their transnational campaign on behalf of this alliance that caused the idea of Latin America to spread throughout the continent. The rise of "Latin America" was perhaps the most enduring outcome of one of the first anti-U.S. moments in world history (Gobat, 2013, 1346).

This early form of regional solidarity was deeply anti-colonial and anti-imperial in nature, laying the ideological groundwork for later political movements. Latin America would become (or at least, this version of Latin America), from this conception, an integrating project, an enunciation of resistance and, therefore, a discursive resignification. And, in many ways, also a promise. A century after that first anti-imperialist articulation, and in the midst of the Cold War, many other actors and intellectuals will ask themselves about the meaning and essence of that promise. To this history of anti-colonial resistance, filibusters and military coups, García Márquez convincingly responds: "A characteristic that unifies and singles us

out from other continents is the growing need to know who the fuck we are" (*El Mundo*, 1982)⁸.

Without this search for a Latin American identity, without the projection of this idea that binds and makes discernible the phenomena and actors of a very broad region, it is very difficult to conceive the fluid and fruitful relationship of this anti-colonial Latin Americanism with the Third World project, with the global trajectory of ideas and imaginaries that, during the 60s and 70s, allowed Latin American intellectuals to reflect and reinterpret themselves in the experiences of other subaltern actors. And, therefore, it would be difficult to trace how the trial of a Nazi criminal, in a theater more than ten thousand kilometers away, could have had something to do, something to say, in the evolution and forms of a project that, at that time, was finding its own expressive language.

“True homeland”: The agglutinating power of the Latin American identity

The intellectual debates surrounding the Eichmann trial were intertwined with transnational networks that connected different movements and ideas. In connecting the Algerian War to those debates figures such as Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre were instrumental in forging connections between Holocaust

⁸ Original, in Spanish: “Una característica que nos unifica y nos singulariza, con respecto a los demás continentes, es la creciente necesidad de saber quién carajo somos” (*El Mundo*, 1982).

remembrance and anticolonial struggles in France, but at the same time, ideas and narratives of a different sort, in complex relation with the European intellectuality, were being developed among the anticolonial and revolutionary movements of the Third World project. Therefore, and in approaching this historical juncture, it is important to understand the Third World as more than a sociological, geographical, or simply descriptive category. During this period, and especially among the actors whose connections and reinterpretations are studied here, the Third World represents an imaginary of redemption and a bet on the future that can only be understood from the context of its development. It is not a delimitable and traceable place (Prashad, 2007), but a project with global pretensions and, therefore, an agglutinating element, a common framework from which it is possible to read the intricate intellectual networks that shaped it.

The circulation of projects and imaginaries characteristic of this period owes much to the idea of the committed intellectual that ended up defining the scope and dimension of the Global Sixties, and the genuine narrative interconnection between these moral entrepreneurs in light of their own political circumstances is well represented in an anecdote by Gabriel García Márquez about his life in Paris in the late 1950s: At the time the writer was staying, with many other exiled Latin American writers, at the Grand Hotel Saint Michel, which he describes as "the least seedy of a street of cheap hotels where a gang of Latin Americans and Algerians waited for passage back home, eating rancid cheese and boiled cauliflower"⁹

⁹ Original, in Spanish: "el menos sórdido de una calle de hoteles baratos donde una pandilla de latinoamericanos y argelinos esperábamos pasaje de regreso comiendo queso rancio y coliflores hervidas" (García Márquez, 1977).

(García Márquez, 1977). Among his momentary neighbors was Nicolás Guillén, who would come to be considered the great poet of the Cuban Revolution. According to García Márquez, Guillén used to shout, through his bedroom window, news about Latin America every morning. One day, what Guillén shouted was "The man fell!," and each of his Latin American neighbors "believed that the fallen man was his own" (ibid), all of them being exiles from various repressive governments, most of them military.

In such an anecdote, it is already possible to identify the networks of dialogue and cooperation that often allowed these intellectuals to develop a complex range of identities and narratives: in the figure of the exile, of the repressive dictator ("the man") whose fall is longed for, Latin American authors meet in Paris (and later on, in Cuba or Mexico) and enunciate themselves, from their similar experiences, as *Latin Americans*. This complex correlation, intrinsically tied to the Latin American project, between exile and imagination; this constant appeal to forms of de- and reterritorialization ascribed to the term, appear constantly in authors such as Cortázar:

In these sometimes terrible islands in which we South Americans live (since Argentina or Mexico are as insular as their Cuba), it is sometimes necessary to come to live in Europe to discover at last the twinned voices. From here, little by little, America becomes like a constellation, with lights that shine and form the drawing of the true homeland, much bigger and more beautiful than the one that the passport vocifies (Cortázar, 2019 p.145).¹⁰

¹⁰ Original, in Spanish: En estas islas a veces terribles en que vivimos metidos los sudamericanos (pues la Argentina, o México, son tan insulares como su Cuba) a veces es

But also in this processes they perceive and meet, as García Márquez's anecdote barely hints, other actors, such as the Algerians of his story, with whose enunciation, in the light of their commitment to decolonization, they have the opportunity to compare themselves, thus giving rise to several layers of identification and reflection that superpose and fold with the Latin American one, but also the revolutionary imagination that founds another complexity level (that of their belonging to the Third World), and that allows solidarity and multidirectional reflection among them.

At the same time, these processes occur under the influence of ideas that, from critical events such as the Eichmann trial, produce significant cultural changes. Thus, some of these actors, even if they never specifically referred to the Eichmann case, came into contact with the debates it produced and, in the long run, with many of the phenomena that events of this type helped to cement. Yoav Di-Capua (2021), for example, when speaking of the consolidation of the Palestinian cause as a global issue ascribed to the causes of the Third World project, emphasizes the importance of tracing these unsuspected connections, for “by doing so, we can begin to outline the slow inner dynamics that shifted knowledge about the world from being free-floating facts into politically consequential ideas, or a cause with universal dimensions” (p. 24).

necesario venirse a vivir a Europa para descubrir por fin las voces hermanas. Desde aquí, poco a poco, América va siendo como una constelación, con luces que brillan y van formando el dibujo de la verdadera patria, mucho más grande y hermosa que la que vocifera el pasaporte.

Cuba: imaginary center of the anticolonial world

In 1956, a rickety yacht named Granma cut through the Caribbean waters, carrying 82 guerrilla fighters, including the now-iconic figures of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Their destination was Cuba, an island that, despite its modest size, had long, and would long, cast a shadow far larger than its geographical footprint. A mere 90 miles separated the Cuban coast from the United States, a distance so small it could be traversed in a morning's drive or a brisk sail. Yet, in the cultural symbolism of the Cold War, these 90 miles represented an abyss.

When, in 1959, the government of Fulgencio Batista was finally deposed by the revolutionary movement, it ushered in a period that definitively altered the global imagination: the Cuban Revolution. And that small island would become, after a brief period of ambiguous relations with the United States¹¹, a nerve center of transnational thought, a portal of globalization¹² through which a good part of the

¹¹ Fidel Castro visited the United States several times during his first years in office, and Gabriel García Márquez himself worked as a correspondent for the then recently created Cuban press agency Prensa Latina in the heart of Manhattan, New York. After the break in diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States and the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the break between the two countries was definitive, and García Márquez himself ended up leaving for Mexico after five months of work.

¹² Here, I follow the concept of Baumann, Dietze and Maruschke: "Portals of globalization is an analytical category introduced in globalization research to investigate how global interactions are anchored and managed in particular places. Despite the increasing preoccupation with global flows, circulations, and networks in academic debates, it is through particular sites – like metropolises, border checkpoints, trading places, and international conference venues – that processes of globalization become tangible. These places are not only "where the action is," but they also turn into symbolic reference points in debates about what it means to live in an interconnected world" (2017, p. 8). From this

ideas of the postcolonial and anti-imperialist movement would flow, a catalyst of alliances and bridges in the broad spectrum of the Third World Left (Gronbeck-Tedesco, 2008). To get an idea of how much weight this moment played in the articulation of transnational causes ascribed to a humanism of universal pretensions, it is enough to cross the 90 miles we crossed a few paragraphs earlier, back to the United States, where Amiri Baraka, African American poet and activist, would recall, years later, his first interaction with revolutionary Cuba:

See, when I went to Cuba, it was like a revelation to me. Suddenly, there I was in Cuba and, at first, I didn't understand that that was real stuff, that people actually could make a revolution, that you could actually seize countries. There I was down there with a whole lot of young dudes my own age who were walking around with guns – they just did it. It blew my mind; I was never the same (in Benston, 1978, p. 306).

The universalist character of these projections can be seen in the fact that many prominent figures from the black liberation movement visited Cuba during the first years of the revolution. Huey P. Newton, Stokely Carmichael, Robert F. Williams¹³

perspective, Cuba can be understood as a place through which (and from which), ideas and projects of Third Worldism flowed.

¹³ Williams, accused of kidnapping in the United States, was invited to live in Cuba in 1961, where he edited a newspaper he called *The Crusader*. From there, he spoke not only against the government of the United States and its discriminatory or imperialist policies, but also criticized a sector of the Civil Rights Movement for its refusal to embrace armed struggle, which he perceived, inspired by the example of the Cuba he lived in, as the only sure path towards the emancipation of the African American people. He also reflected on Algeria, Vietnam and several transnational causes. Thus, and from Cuba, Williams would draw comparisons between the situation of blacks in the United States and that of Jews in

or Angela Davis found on the island a project from which to reflect on their own struggles, but also the possibility of conceiving themselves as part of a transnational community, which transcended the principles of national affiliation without canceling it, in a constant flow between the universal and the local that in Cuba would be especially marked. This shared imagination appears in Davis, when referring to the Cuban revolution, she expressed "her hope 'that more people - Black, Brown, Red, Yellow and white - might be inspired to join our growing community of struggle'" (Quoted in Gronbeck-Tedesco, 2008, p. 671).

In this representative universe, the conception of a single cause, tied around the strands that tied together many causes in principle distinct, dissimilar, distant, grew and gave shape to the global dimensions of the Third World project. From there it is possible to understand, for example, that Haydeé Santamaría, the founder of Casa de las Américas, the most visible face of the Cuban cultural project, declared that "black Americans form a fundamental part of our anti-imperialist Third World" (1967), and Richard Gibson came to the conclusion that "[t]he luck of twenty million black Americans [...] is very linked to the success of the Cuban Revolution, as well as to the tremendous movement for the liberation of Africa and Asia. No people can be free while others are oppressed" (quoted in Mahler; Lee, 2020, p. 185).

Nazi-occupied Europe, just a few days before Adolf Eichmann was executed in Israel in 1962: "Already, the racist, fascists are laying the groundwork for a mass exodus. Our people must not forget how the Nazis loaded the Jews on death trains under the pretense of sending workers to other locations when they were really destined for the extermination chambers. It goes without saying that the Afro-American is not wanted in the USA anymore. Machinery and poor white workers are fast replacing him."(Williams, May 1962, p. 2).

The history that unites the Third World around the Cuban Revolution then meets the world of the Cold War and, in the framework of it, new narratives begin to consolidate in this revolutionary and postcolonial imagination of global scope (or pretensions), so that, if we allow ourselves to return one last time to the United States, for the UN General Assembly in 1960, we will find an anecdote that contains, in itself, much of what has been said here: the Cuban delegation in New York, headed by Fidel Castro, left their downtown hotel after an alleged economic disagreement and, breaking all protocol, moved in full to the Theresa Hotel in Harlem, an emblematic neighborhood for the city's African-Americans.

And there he was, "one of the blackest men in the world"¹⁴, next to Khrushchev, who decided to meet him in this Harlem hotel (where he was also to meet Malcolm X), about to appear before the UN, to give a four-hour speech in which, among many other things, he compared the nazi concentration camps with a broad spectrum of causes, narratives and oppressed actors in a World, the Third, that seemed bigger than ever, and whose main enemy, then, was clearly shown:

It cannot be on the side of the colonies which want their freedom, because it is allied to the colonizers. That is to say, it is for Franco, for the colonization of Algeria, for the colonization of the Congo; it is for the maintenance of its privileges and interests in the Panama Canal, for colonialism throughout the world. It is for the German militarism and for the resurgence of German militarism (...)The

¹⁴ This phrase, pronounced by Stokely Carmichael and quoted by Vijay Prashad (2001, p. 51), defines the conception of a colored Third World, united in the dimension of opposing oppressions. Carmichael, by the way, would be part of the Russell Tribunal for Vietnam some years later.

Government of the United States forgets the millions of Jews murdered in European concentration camps by the Nazis, who are today regaining their influence in the German army. It forgets the Frenchmen who were killed in their heroic struggle against the occupation; it forgets the American soldiers who died on the Siegfried Line, in the Ruhr, on the Rhine, and on the Asian fronts (Castro, 1960).

Castro's speech at the UN General Assembly, where he established parallels between the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camps and the struggles of the Third World, underscores the growing omnipresence of the Nazi legacy in the global consciousness by that time. This legacy, with its dark shadows and haunting figures, was not just a distant European memory but had direct implications and resonances in the Americas, especially in Latin America. As Castro evoked the horrors of the concentration camps, he inadvertently set the stage for a deeper exploration of how the Nazi legacy, and particularly the narrative changes that the Eichmann trial fostered, permeated the Latin American political and cultural landscape.

Third Worldist identity

The concept of "Third World" as a geographical and cultural entity has always been fraught with complexities, not least because it is a term that emerged from the interplay of colonial histories, linguistic affinities, and shared experiences of resistance against various forms of external domination. However, the 1960s,

marked by the rise of postcolonial thought and global anti-imperialist movements, offered a new lens through which to understand this complex identity. This period saw the emergence of transnational paradigms that challenged the traditional nation-state as the primary unit of cultural and political analysis.

Figures like Che Guevara epitomized this new transnational consciousness. Born in Argentina, adopted by Cuba, and active in various nationalist movements across Africa and Latin America¹⁵, Che defied easy categorization within the traditional frameworks of nationhood. His life and political activities embodied a form of borderless resistance that transcended national identities, aligning more closely with a broader struggle against global systems of oppression. In doing so, he became a symbol of a new kind of political engagement that was rooted in a "Third World" identity, understood not as a geographical coordinate but as a "social location" defined by shared experiences of marginalization and resistance.

This shift in perspective had profound implications for how Latin America engaged with global narratives of victimhood, justice, and human rights. The Eichmann trial, for instance, can be seen as a pivotal moment that resonated with Latin American intellectuals and activists not just because of its focus on the Holocaust, but because it tapped into broader themes of testimony, victimhood, and resistance that were central to the Third Worldist project. The trial offered a narrative

¹⁵ As part of the Cuban globalization project, Che Guevara participated in the military and medical aid missions that the island sent to various anti-colonial movements in Africa and Asia. The Cuban government continued to sponsor similar missions, and García Márquez wrote an article for *Tricontinental* magazine (issue 53, 1977) about one of the most famous: Operation Carlota, in Angola.

framework that allowed for the articulation of a shared experience of suffering and struggle, one that could bridge the gap between diverse forms of oppression, from the extermination camps of Nazi Germany to the torture chambers of Latin American dictatorships.

The notion of the "Third World" as a social location rather than a geographical one allows us to understand how regimes of privilege and repression were framed within a global context. It provides a framework for recognizing the shared political claims and existential predicaments of marginalized communities across different national contexts. For instance, and from this perspective, the struggles of African Americans in the United States, can be seen as part of a larger tapestry of resistance that includes the anti-colonial movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

In this light, publications like *Casa de las Américas* and *Tricontinental Magazine* became more than just regional or national platforms; they were part of a global network of intellectual and political engagement that defied traditional borders and boundaries and, in many senses, produced or fostered multidirectional reflections. They contributed to a form of global activism that was rooted in a shared experience of marginalization and a common struggle against systems of oppression, whether these are located in the Global North or the Global South.

Thus, the 1960s marked a significant shift in the way Latin America engaged with global narratives and discourses. Influenced by transnational figures like Che Guevara and pivotal events like the Eichmann trial, the region began to articulate a form of identity and resistance that was both rooted in local experiences and

engaged with global struggles. Two pivotal events in the latter half of the 1960s underscored the trajectory of Third Worldism in Latin America. The first was the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966, which bolstered Cuba's leadership role in the alliance of Third World countries. This conference, which led to the creation of the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL), was followed by its intellectual counterpart: the Havana Cultural Congress in 1968. This congress was a monumental gathering of intellectuals from around the world, perhaps the most extensive in terms of participating countries in the history of such meetings.

Eichmann on the background

The narrative and political impact of the Eichmann capture in Argentina cannot be understated. Early coverage by outlets like the *New York Times* was rife with a palpable intrigue, not just about the moral implications of Eichmann's deeds, but also the meticulous details of the operation that led to his capture (Pendas, 2011). This fascination was emblematic of a broader shift in cultural narratives during the post-war period. Initially, the immediate aftermath of the war was dominated by heroic tales of wartime valor, epitomized by works like Alistair MacLean's "Guns of Navarone" (1957). However, as the 1960s dawned, there was a discernible pivot towards confronting the lingering shadows of Nazism, in clear relation to the Eichmann figure. Films like Stanley Kramer's "Judgment at Nuremberg" (1961) are testament to this evolving cultural consciousness.

The Eichmann trial, in its own right, catalyzed this transition. By the 1970s, the archetype of the concealed yet ever-menacing Nazi, lurking in the shadows, became a recurrent theme in popular thrillers. Works such as Frederick Forsyth's "The Odessa File" (1972), William Goldman's "Marathon Man" (1974), and Ira Levin's "The Boys from Brazil" (1976) capitalized on this narrative. While some might argue that the portrayal of these hidden Nazis as a looming threat in the 1970s was a reflection of the paranoia characteristic of the Watergate-era American psyche, the deliberate invocation of figures like Eichmann and Dr. Josef Mengele grounded these tales in a tangible historical context.

In Latin America, this narrative framing was especially resonant, given the very real presence of former Nazis like Eichmann, Mengele, and Klaus Barbie. The fact that these figures were not just characters in thrillers but actual remnants of the Nazi regime hiding in plain sight in the region added a layer of authenticity and urgency to these stories. The chilling reality that Klaus Barbie, known as the "Butcher of Lyon," was advising the Bolivian military government during the time of Che Guevara's assassination is a stark reminder of these intertwined histories. Barbie's expertise, honed during his time hunting down Resistance leaders in Nazi-occupied France, was presumably put to use in Bolivia. Such intersections of history and narrative underscore the multidirectional reflections and connections between the Nazi legacy and the political realities of Latin America during the 60s and 70s.

Revolutionary testimony: between heroes and tyrants

The testimonial turn and its global consolidation, came out of a constant interplay between intellectual work and activism capable of forging multidirectional connections (García, 2015). The contemporaneous innovation of movements such as the *cinéma vérité*, which emerged alongside these debates, brought a novel concept of "truth" to the forefront. This concept acted as a mantra that propelled the testimonial turn in various global movements, including decolonization efforts. The central tenet of some of these movements was to represent reality authentically, echoing the calls for truth-telling among anticolonial activists (Rothberg, 2004).

This vindication of reality, which assigns to the intellectual the responsibility of unearthing it, of questioning the very legitimacy of the repressive system through denunciation, deeply marked the artistic production of many actors during the Cold War. In Latin America, the so-called New Latin American Cinema, the formalization of the literary testimonial genre or the emergence of the so-called protest song as a mass genre, all of them consolidated precisely during the 1960s, speak of the deep cultural ferment that went through the region's intellectual scene. This came into contact with global currents and narrative exercises and, in a way that was both authentically Latin American and deeply connected to this global flow of ideas, brought about profound changes in the region's intelligentsia, where the testimonial turn and the discussion on the relationship between art and reality, between intellectuality and social commitment, was intense and interacted with ideas and narratives that circulated through networks of direct cooperation among the very

diverse actors of the postcolonial and revolutionary scene in other parts of the world.

The exploration of narrative resources with which to confront a suffocating reality allowed the adoption of complex multidirectional narratives, and the tandem between testimonial narrative and "truth" became a kind of revolutionary counterpart in discursive opposition to the repression and censorship of that period. Therefore, the repression and censorship associated with the colonial violence (was it in Algeria, Vietnam or Argentina) offered a platform upon which several global imagination projects would grow (Rothberg, 2009).

In this complex field of parallel narratives, the notion of a global project began to operate, of a transnational and autonomous solidarity and reflection, of a multiracial and anticapitalist humanism (in tense relation with the discursive bipolarity of the Cold War), and an ideological neighborhood was consolidated, capable of framing in narratives of a similar order causes ranging from the civil rights movement of African Americans in the United States, to Vietnam and the struggle of the FLN in Algeria. This notion appears constantly, as in this fragment of a poem written by the African-American poet Langston Hughes:

The folks with no titles in front of their names

all over the world

are raring up and talking back

to the folks called Mister. [...]

Dixie to Singapore, Cape Town to Hong Kong [...]

So naturally, there's trouble

in these our times

Langston Hughes, 'In Explanation of Our Times' (1955)

This sort of imagined global community found its great catalyst in Cuba, when the island and its revolutionaries became a constituent part of the Third World imaginary and, through some of its organs and publications, also propitiated an authentically Latin American interpretation of the testimonial turn that the Eichmann trial, with its wide repertoire of novel narrative devices, had made available to the subaltern actors who identified, during this period, with the Cuban experiment and the Third Worldist project.

***Casa de las Américas* and the testimonial turn**

Publications like *Casa de las Américas* and *Tricontinental Magazine* played a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual and cultural landscape of Latin America during this period. These platforms were not merely passive conduits for disseminating ideas; they were active participants in the construction and articulation of the complex imaginaries and revolutionary narratives of the time. They served as vital nodes in a transnational network of intellectuals, activists, and artists who were engaged in a multidirectional dialogue on issues ranging from human rights and justice to anti-imperialism and revolutionary struggle.

Casa de las Américas, based in La Habana, was particularly instrumental in fostering a sense of pan-Latin American identity and solidarity. Its literary prizes, which included a category for "testimony," reflected the region's unique engagement with narrative as a form of political and historical expression. This was a direct extension of the "testimonial turn" that had been influenced by events like the Eichmann trial and the First Russell Tribunal. By recognizing and promoting testimonial literature, *Casa de las Américas* contributed to the legitimization of this genre as an authentic counter hegemonic form of articulating previously mentioned conceptions of truth and resistance.

Tricontinental, also rooted in Cuba and named after the conference that, in 1966, gave identity to the Cuban globalization project, extended this dialogue to a global scale. It served as a platform for Third Worldist ideas, connecting struggles in Latin America with those in Africa, Asia, and the USA. The magazine disseminated articles, essays, and manifestos that explored the complexities of anti-imperialism, decolonization, and global solidarity. It was a space where the multidirectional reflections were catalyzed and could be further developed and disseminated.

Both publications were deeply influenced by the intellectual contributions of figures like Gabriel García Márquez and Julio Cortázar (Cortázar was part of the editorial board of *Casa de las Américas* and acted as a jury in some editions of its literary prize). Their works often appeared in these platforms, and their ideas resonated with the broader editorial orientations of these publications. In this sense, *Casa de las Américas* and *Tricontinental* served as extensions of the intellectual and artistic projects of these authors. They were spaces where the complex conceptions of a

revolutionary universal humanity could be explored in depth, reaching audiences that extended beyond the confines of the literary or academic world.

Moreover, these publications were not isolated phenomena; they were part of a broader ecosystem of journals, newspapers, and bulletins that were engaged in similar endeavors. They interacted with other platforms, both within Latin America and globally, creating a rich tapestry of intellectual and cultural exchange. This ecosystem served as a vital infrastructure for the dissemination and development of the era's complex ideas and imaginaries.

Victoria García's observation that the Casa de las Américas' testimonio prize was connected to the "new social and political significance given to intellectual labour" (Forné, 2021, p. 2) underscores the publication's role in elevating intellectual work to a form of political activism. This aligns with the broader revolutionary ethos of the time, where intellectual labor was not merely an academic exercise but a form of engagement with the pressing social and political issues. The testimonio genre, as Forné notes, was fundamentally linked to a "specific politico-aesthetic discursivity" aimed at disseminating the revolutionary imaginary (Forné, 2021, p. 2). This genre was not just a form of storytelling; it was a strategic tool for shaping a particular narrative about resistance and social transformation.

The tension between the political and the aesthetic in the creative arts, as highlighted by Forné, reflects the broader intellectual debates of the 1960s. These debates were "torn between the idea of an autochthonous decolonized Latin American culture and the need to distribute Latin American culture around the world" (Forné, 2021, p. 4). Publications like *Casa de las Américas* and

Tricontinental were at the forefront of navigating this tension. They sought to articulate a form of Latin American identity that was both rooted in local experiences and engaged with global struggles. As Franco notes, Casa de las Américas "represented a new cultural geography, one whose center had drastically shifted from Europe" (Franco, 2002, p. 45). It aimed to close the gap between life and art and foster intellectual commitment to the cause of emancipation, situating Latin America as an ally of other Third World causes in the struggle against imperialism.

However, this revolutionary ethos also raised questions about the implications of institutionalizing counterhegemonic narratives. As Gugelberger points out, when the "margin moves to the center and loses its counterhegemonic quality, a different assessment is required" (Forné, 2021, p. 3). This raises critical questions about the commodification of revolutionary narratives, especially when they become sanctioned and canonized. It asks us to consider what happens when, in Marxist terms, "the product turns into a commodity" (Forné, 2021, p. 3).

The testimonio genre is described then as an "ideo-aesthetic artifact employed in the symbolic construction of the new decolonized and modernized citizenship" (Forné, 2021, p. 5). This encapsulates the genre's dual role as both a form of artistic expression and a tool for political mobilization. It was a narrative form that was deeply embedded in the revolutionary project, aimed at constructing a new form of citizenship that was both decolonized and modernized, and one that was definitively in dialogue with the Eichmann trial's contributions to this urgent and deeply contested fields.

Chapter 4: The Russell Tribunals and the liberal bifurcation

Between the landmark Eichmann trial in 1961 and the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1994, the judicial landscape was notably devoid of genocide trials. Yet, as one might ponder, was the discourse on genocide silenced during this interregnum? The answer is a resounding no. "Between 1961 and 1994 the term was actively circulating and accruing new valences beyond the field of formal law" (Zunino, 2016, p. 216), and it was so always in stark contrast, comparison or relation to the Jewish genocide.

The first Russell Tribunal of 1967 stands as a watershed moment during this period. Spearheaded by the renowned British philosopher Bertrand Russell, this Tribunal was more than a mere legal assembly. It was a confluence of intellectual renowned figures, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Stokely Carmichael, Günther Anders and Lázaro Cárdenas, all of whom were deeply embedded in the global narratives of national self-determination, decolonization and anti imperialism. Set against the backdrop of events like the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnam War, the Tribunal infused the term "genocide" with new connotations, aligning it with the broader struggles of the Third Worldist movement. Rather than a traditional court, it functioned as an intellectual and moral platform, aiming to address and critique the actions of powerful nations.

The tribunal's first session was a direct response to the Vietnam War. As the conflict escalated, gaining international resonance as a cause for postcolonial movements, the tribunal sought to critically examine the alleged war crimes

committed by the United States in Vietnam. Devoid of any coercive capacity, without the support of any particular State, it was not a legal trial with enforceable results, but an exercise in moral and symbolic judgment, the aim of which was to draw global attention to the issues at stake.

Echoing the legacy of the Eichmann trial, the Tribunal's design and intent were reminiscent of previous landmark trials. Its title, "tribunal," was not a casual choice. As Zunino (2016, p. 216) points out, this nomenclature was "spurred by a desire to associate the initiative with the International Military Tribunal" that had previously tried the Nazi leaders. Yet, the Russell Tribunal carved its own niche. Its overarching aim was not mere adjudication but to unveil the "full truth" about the Vietnam War. In this mission, it bore similarities to truth commissions, marked by its eclectic assembly of eminent personalities from diverse fields. Functioning as an "unofficial truth project" under the aegis of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, the Tribunal ventured beyond traditional judicial paradigms, offering an innovative perspective on justice.

The members of the Tribunal were unhesitant in drawing parallels between the Vietnamese and the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. But these analogies were not mere expressions of empathy. They were potent statements looking to emphasize the presumed righteousness of resistance. Ralph Schoenman's assertion that the Vietnamese resistance was as justified as the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto encapsulates this sentiment. Furthermore, Sartre, invoking the haunting memory of the Holocaust, argued, "Hitler killed the Jews because they were Jews. The armed forces of the United States torture and kill men, women and children in Vietnam

merely because they are Vietnamese. Whatever lies or euphemisms the government may think up, the spirit of genocide is in the minds of the soldiers.”

This reimagining of genocide, as articulated by Zunino (2016, p. 218), as a crime against a nation resisting colonial subjugation, found resonance with Latin American intellectuals. It offered them a compelling framework to interpret and critique the Cold War atrocities in their homeland. Both the Eichmann trial and the Russell Tribunal (the both versions previously mentioned), while distinct in their contexts and objectives, collectively enriched the discourse on genocide, transcending mere legal definitions to encompass the broader struggles of nations and communities against oppressive regimes.

From Eichmann to Russell

In the wake of World War II, the Holocaust emerged as a singular event, a profound rupture in the fabric of human history. Its sheer scale and the systematic nature of its atrocities led to the coining of the term "genocide" by jurist Raphael Lemkin in his 1944 work, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. This term, still relatively unused in the 1960s, would become central to the political and moral lexicon of the era, especially as the world grappled with new instances of mass violence and state-sanctioned atrocities, incorporated in truly nuanced and diverse ways by the postcolonial and revolutionary movements, and then finally crystallized as the liberal narrative referent that came to be towards the end of the second half of the 20th century.

The Russell Tribunal, in its iterations addressing Vietnam and later Latin America, played a pivotal role in shaping and expanding the currency and semantic attachments to the concept of genocide. As Manfredi (2018) suggests, the Tribunal's work can be understood through Asad's theory of ritual, not as a mechanism to sanction wrongdoing, but as a "practice directed toward influencing participants and onlookers." The Tribunal's proceedings, in this light, were less about legalistic outcomes and more about a "public performance" that aimed to cultivate specific sensibilities, galvanize political mobilization, and shape the global political imaginary, therefore resonating with some of the most notable features of the Eichmann trial. In that sense,

The courtroom scenarios in which audiences strained to comprehend victims' testimony transformed the speakers into figurative witnesses, each a variation on a narrative about mass murder that ascribed moral meaning to victims' experiences of pogroms, of concentration camps, and of extermination. Brought into being by the act of testimony and the symbolic solidarity it constitutes, the witness possesses similar features across different trials that makes victims' experience of extreme violence culturally legible (Dean, 2019, p. 5).

The first Tribunal's explicit focus on genocide, was not merely a legal or academic exercise, but an attempt to make the facts, or their interpretation, "culturally legible". It was a conscious effort to draw parallels between the atrocities of the Vietnam War, and the Holocaust, the "genocide par excellence." By labeling the actions of an Allied power, the United States, as genocidal, the Tribunal was making a profound and controversial statement. It was suggesting that the horrors of the Holocaust were not confined to the past or to the actions of the Axis powers.

Instead, they could be replicated, in different forms, in contemporary geopolitical contexts.

This act of labeling, as Manfredi (2018) notes, engaged the "affective sensibilities" of all those involved with or observing the Tribunal. It evoked strong emotions, memories, and moral judgments. By placing the Vietnam War and later the Latin American military regimes within the same moral and symbolic framework as the Holocaust, the Tribunal was challenging global perceptions and urging a reevaluation of state actions in the light of a certain humanitarian project with global pretensions.

When considering the Tribunal's ritualistic and performative nature, it aligns more closely with the Eichmann trial than the Nuremberg trials. While the Nuremberg trials were primarily legal proceedings with clear punitive intentions, the Eichmann trial, much like the Russell Tribunal, was deeply symbolic. It was about bearing witness, about giving testimony, and about establishing a narrative with the explicit target of changing public opinion. Both the Eichmann trial and the Russell Tribunal were conscious of their roles in shaping global memory and moral consciousness. They were less about the individuals or states on trial and more about the broader narratives of justice, memory, and human rights in a rapidly changing world.

The Second Russell Tribunal, focused on Latin America, encapsulated the complexities and contradictions of the era's intellectual and political climate, and the changes through which it was going. Although separated by less than a decade, the two courts faced markedly different political circumstances. While it lacked the legal authority to prosecute or pass sentences, its importance lay in its

performative, ritualistic, and discursive dimensions. In many ways, it was a stage where the courtroom became a theater for the articulation of a particular kind of truth, a truth that was not just factual but also moral and political. This performative aspect of the tribunal was not accidental; it was a deliberate strategy to engage with a global audience, much like the Eichmann trial before it.

The tribunal's conception of the courtroom as a show stage and the act of bearing witness as a key element in constructing truth were clearly influenced by the Eichmann trial. Both trials were not merely legal proceedings; they were also narrative events that sought to construct a particular version of history and reality. They aimed to bring to light truths that were often obscured or distorted by repressive regimes and their apparatuses of evasion and denial. In this sense, the tribunal was not just a legal endeavor but also a narrative one, aimed at constructing a compelling story about justice, victimhood, and resistance.

The Second Russell Tribunal was also deeply embedded in the Latin American context, where it served as a platform for framing local struggles within global narratives. It appealed to universal principles of human rights and justice, even as it sought to highlight the specificities of Latin American experiences of imperialism, authoritarianism, and resistance. The tribunal was an attempt to articulate a form of universalism that was not abstract but rooted in the concrete struggles and aspirations of people in Latin America and beyond.

This tribunal was not just an event but also a catalyst for further intellectual and artistic engagement. Julio Cortázar's work "Fantomas," for instance, can be seen as an extension of the tribunal's project. In this work, Cortázar grapples with a

complex array of ideas that overlap with the project of an imagined global humanity. This humanity is not founded on the discourse of Human Rights as we know it today but on a shared opposition to oppression, imperialism, and capitalism. It is a form of universalism that is constantly in flux, shaped by an ever-changing global landscape of semantic and narrative possibilities.

By the 1970s, Latin America had become a focal point of political upheaval, characterized by military coups, state-sanctioned violence, and widespread human rights violations. The 1973 military coup in Chile, which saw the ousting of the democratically elected socialist president Salvador Allende and the rise of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, was a particularly stark manifestation of these trends.

Given the escalating situation in Latin America, the Russell Tribunal reconvened, shifting its attention to the region. This iteration was not merely about cataloging state violence; it sought to contextualize these events within broader geopolitical frameworks, especially considering the role of external powers like the United States in these political shifts.

Two significant literary figures, Gabriel García Márquez and Julio Cortázar, were invited to participate in this session. Both were not only celebrated for their literary contributions but were also deeply embedded in the political discourses of the time. García Márquez's affiliations with the Cuban Revolution and his close relationship with Fidel Castro, coupled with Cortázar's fervent support for leftist movements, made their involvement particularly poignant. Their participation in the tribunal underscored its interdisciplinary nature, bridging the realms of literature, politics, and activism.

For the intellectuals and activists involved, the Russell Tribunal represented a space to challenge dominant narratives and power structures. It provided a platform to amplify the experiences and grievances of those affected by state and imperialist violence. In its symbolic capacity, the tribunal highlighted the role of global intellectual communities in shaping discourse, bearing witness to injustices, and advocating for a more equitable world order. In that, nevertheless, they would also face frustrations, like Cortázar clearly states on article published in 1975, when the Tribunal was still in session:

This already long participation in the international struggle against the junta regime has repeatedly shown me the falsity of the skepticism that both prudent liberals and those who call for direct action tend to display towards it, and in a sadly paradoxical way. Both doubt the efficacy of congresses, manifestos, petitions, posters, Russell-like tribunals, books, festivals, and any other manifestation of a mainly intellectual type. Curiously, many of the prudent liberals conceal their bad conscience by saying that only force can overcome force, which allows them to remain on the sidelines of the two possible attitudes since they are not in favor of violence and at the same time pretend that intellectual work is useless. From totally dissimilar positions, their point of view resembles that of many supporters of direct action, for whom an intellectual is only worthwhile if he enters into that action or, in the worst case, allows himself to be controlled by those who direct it and becomes a mere spokesman for that action (Cortázar, 2008, p. 188)¹⁶.

¹⁶ Original, in Spanish: Esta ya larga participación en la lucha que internacionalmente se libra contra el régimen de la junta me ha mostrado repetidas veces la falsedad del escepticismo que suelen mostrar frente a ella, y de una manera tristemente paradójica, tanto los prudentes liberales como los que exigen la acción directa. Unos y otros dudan de la eficacia de congresos, manifiestos, peticiones, carteles, tribunales a la manera del

The liberal bifurcation (or the narratives of defeat)

In 1961, when the Eichmann trial occurred, the Palestinian cause had not yet reached the global dimension it came to attain during that decade, nor had Israel yet definitively entered the pantheon of neocolonial powers in the Third Worldist narrative. This period, it is argued here, therefore marks a narrative bifurcation of enormous importance for approaching the intersection between the postcolonial and revolutionary imagination of the Third Worldist project, and the development and consolidation of a liberal version of Human Rights, with global, institutionalized and hegemonic pretensions:

It mattered very much that this trial took place in Israel, specifically a pre-1967 Israel. Before the Six Days War and the problematic occupation of Arab lands that followed it, Israel enjoyed much broader popularity with Western publics both in the US and, especially, in Europe than would be the case later. In particular, with its left-wing Zionist governments and its Kibbutzim, Israel at this point enjoyed

Russell, libros, festivales, y cualquier otra manifestación de tipo principalmente intelectual. Curiosamente, muchos de los prudentes liberales disimulan su mala conciencia al decir que sólo la fuerza puede vencer a la fuerza, lo que les permite quedarse al margen de las dos actitudes posibles puesto que ellos no están por la violencia y a la vez pretenden que el trabajo intelectual no sirve para nada. Desde posiciones totalmente disímiles, su punto de vista se parece al de muchos partidarios de la acción directa, para quienes un intelectual sólo alcanza a valer si entra en esa acción o en el peor de los casos se deja controlar por quienes la dirigen y se vuelve mero portavoz de esa acción (Cortázar, 2008, p. 188).

substantial popular legitimacy within left-wing and oppositional circles in America and Europe, precisely those groups that were most likely to be fascinated by a trial of former Nazi functionaries and to be convinced that Nazis had been aided and abetted by conservative elites after the war (Pendas, 2011, p. 268).

It is, therefore, a key factor when approaching the role that Latin America played in this complex scenario. In this period, the hitherto hegemonic narrative of the Second World War, which emphasized the fascism/anti-fascism duo (and in which Latin American actors such as Uruguay, as seen above, played a very active role), still collided with alternative interpretations that, at that time, were still far from being hegemonic, such as the association between fascism and imperialism that incorporated and reinterpreted Jewish victimization to the broad axis of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist discussions.

The definitive positioning of Israel and Palestine on the map of postcolonial discourses was therefore consolidated after the trial, when "students gathering in smoky Paris cafés and clubs took the postcolonial ethical detour via Algeria, Cuba, Rhodesia, and Vietnam to Palestine" (Di-Capua, 2021, p. 20). It was an easy association. Able to view the question of Palestine in an entirely new context, students identified with its moral meaning and became skeptical of Zionism's motives and Israel's *raison d'être*.

We have then two moments of particular importance to understand the history that has been traced in these pages: first, the incorporation of the Palestine-Israel conflict into postcolonial debates during the second half of the 1960s, which brings Palestine definitively closer to the imagination of the Third Worldist project,

distances Israel and, with it, partially alters the multidirectional narratives that some actors in the postcolonial and anti-imperialist spectrum came to connect with the Jewish testimony of the Holocaust and, thus, with the profound changes prompted by the Eichmann trial. That is to say: a split begins to appear, a widening rift that, in this narrative, increasingly separates the State of Israel from the Jewish Holocaust as a representational referent.

Second, the gradual distancing between a sector of the Latin American intellectuality and the revolutionary imaginary, which began to be noticed around the Padilla case. Eventually, and towards the end of the 1970s, the dissolution of the revolutionary narratives, of the Third World utopias, began to take shape, and within the framework of its own narrative confrontation, the Latin American Cold War began to lay the foundations for what, in the transitions of the 1980s and 1990s, would lead to the rise of a liberal interpretation that would become hegemonic.

The dimension of this complex narrative confrontation could also be found, some time later, in Gabriel García Márquez, who, from a significantly different place of enunciation but clearly in dialogue with these postcolonial narratives of global scope, would refer to the tension between Israel's actions and the Palestinian cause by declaring: "I am no more afraid of the blackmail of anti-Semitism than I have ever been afraid of the blackmail of professional anti-Communism, which run side by side, and sometimes in a jumble, and always wreak similar havoc in this wretched world" (García Márquez, 1999, p. 311).

These two moments are key because they allow us to understand the narrative dislocation that occurred between the spectrum of anti-colonial and revolutionary actors and the liberal projects that achieved a hegemonic status from this period onwards, when an interpretation of the Human Rights discourse begins to proliferate that can be understood as "a more insidious means for promulgating a watered-down liberalism that broke with socialist and anticolonialist struggles" (Manfredi, 2018, p. 75-76). It is here where, in narrative terms, a gradual and decisive shift begins from a narrative of victory, centered on ideas of militancy and resistance, in the realization of a project yet to come, and the narrative of defeat, which is that of the victim, of the one who, erased in his otherness by an oppressive system, comes to consummate and fit into the narrative and institutional system that would be woven around this narrative during the following decades.

Conclusions

At a time when the intersection between seemingly dispersed causes and phenomena was so marked, it is pertinent to resituate the Eichmann trial within postcolonial debates. Thus understood, the trial transcends not only its legal character, but the limits of the event itself. Thus understood, the Eichmann trial is also myth, it is also *dispositif*, and it exists as a concrete moment, but also as a catalyst for debates and transformations that neither begin nor end with it, but require of it to be explained.

The Eichmann trial inserted the Jewish victims into the postcolonial scene when, on the basis of the massively disseminated testimonies, of the stories of repression and annihilation by a totalitarian power, of the reinsertion of what was lived, of the experience, on the level of the transmissible (the act of bearing witness), a wide range of actors involved in processes of decolonization or revolution in the Third World (and European intellectuals such as Jean Paul Sartre or Günther Anders) found a bridge between their own experiences, past or present, and that of the Jews. That bridge was built, narratively, on coincidences such as the enunciation of themselves as peripheral actors, a form of otherness within an unjust system of things, in which various repressive powers, "the folks called Mister", in Hughes' words, used all the means at their disposal to preserve that system, whether in the United States or in Algeria or in Latin America.

In this study, I endeavored to construct a reflective landscape around the Third Worldist project, aiming to elucidate two primary facets:

-Narrative transition and superimposition: The period under scrutiny witnessed a narrative transition where interpretations spurred by the Eichmann trial—like the testimonial turn—coexisted with parallel revolutionary narratives. In Latin America, the evolution of these tropes differed from their counterparts in Europe and the United States. Even without explicit references to the Eichmann case, there was a palpable overlay of debates. This superimposition, I argue, eventually faded alongside revolutionary utopias. The rich set of constantly contested narratives was supplanted by a more hegemonic one, which stripped away militancy and agency, replacing them with a dispossessed victim figure, more suitable within the outcome of the Cold War. This victim archetype would later be institutionalized in the region by international NGOs.

-The Russell Tribunal for Latin America as a transitional point: The Russell Tribunal for Latin America emerges as a transitional juncture between the two aforementioned narratives. Unlike its predecessor—the tribunal for Vietnam, which equated Vietnamese fighters with the Warsaw Ghetto resistance—this tribunal shifted its focus. While it no longer championed armed resistance, it still upheld the ideals of militancy and a Third Worldist, anti-imperialist agenda. Interestingly, although the Russell Tribunal sought inspiration from Nuremberg, its essence was more reminiscent of the Eichmann trial. The emphasis on spectacle, the prominence given to testimonies, the appeal to public opinion, and the trial's intent to inform and educate rather than merely pass judgment, all echo the Eichmann proceedings.

While Latin America, perhaps with the exception of Argentina, may not have engaged with the Eichmann trial as explicitly as the Arab world (which was geographically closer to Israel), the cultural and narrative shifts the trial catalyzed undeniably reached the region. These shifts were facilitated through the cultural exchanges characteristic of the Third Worldist spectrum during this period. Influences like *cinema vérité*, which inspired the New Latin American Cinema, and the emergence of testimonial literature, institutionalized in Latin America through awards like the testimonial literary prize of Casa de las Américas, are testament to this.

In essence, my argument navigates these intricate intersections, highlighting the profound impact of global events on regional narratives and vice versa, and underscoring the complex tapestry of influences that shaped Latin America during this transformative era. Just as Chile, after the coup, became a model of economic experiment that inspired similar exercises in, for example, Margaret Thatcher's United Kingdom, so too the adaptation and eventual institutionalization of a liberal, depoliticized version of Human Rights achieved much of its refinement and consolidation in Latin America, where organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch found, together with local and regional actors, a "less biased" way of processing and narrating their denunciation of authoritarian regimes in the region. The Latin American transitions played a decisive role in the global institutionalization of this narrative. In this process of consolidation, the Eichmann effect played its definitive role. When the "human" of Human Rights began to

mean, almost unequivocally, that which is not tied to any political project or condition of militancy, interpretable in its de-ideologized universality.

And it is there, at that critical juncture, as has been said before, where it is possible to find discontinuities and bifurcations. Where the revolutionary imagination begins to give way. Where a broad spectrum of actors had tried to articulate "military violence from an unequivocally political perspective, pointing out its role in the capitalist "counterrevolution" (Peris Blanes, 2008, p. 73), a universalist, liberal interpretation emerges, which responds to the framing, by the military regimes, of the disappeared and tortured as communist elements, part of a coordinated and dangerous regional exercise. And in that exercise,

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other organizations soon consecrated this point of view, giving it, moreover, a rhetoric and a protocol for action: it did not matter to which political project the violence was associated since, in any case, there were limits of dignity and physical integrity that could not be crossed, and the military government was doing so in an organized and systematic way (Peris Blanes, 2008, p. 74).

The Eichmann trial creates the intellectual conditions for narrative turns with a genuinely global scope, although it is then in the particularity of local and regional reinterpretations (inseparable from this global flow), in the interaction between actors with often contradictory projects, that the phenomenon acquires all its specificity. In the case of Latin America, a series of specific tropes, such as the simultaneous appearance of repressive governments; the Cuban revolution and the development of an anti-imperialist discourse formed in the light of U.S.

interventions in the region; the consolidation of a cultural scene in which Latin American intellectuals propose their own narrative and conceptual innovations, set against the global panorama through a constant reinterpretation and co-creation of terms and narratives (instead of a simple transposition, where the originality of the Latin American case would be easily diluted in the fiction of a globally homogeneous phenomenon).

Within this intricate landscape, figures like Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez emerged as intellectual beacons. Both contributed to key publications of the era, such as *Casa de las Américas* and *Tricontinental Magazine*, which served as platforms for narrative experimentation and ideological debate. These publications intersected with global conversations that the Eichmann trial had catalyzed, offering a unique Latin American perspective.

This is a story about ideas, imaginaries, intellectuals, but also about the connection between those ideas and the concrete realities with which they interacted; the systems and institutions within which they unfolded, and the historical circumstances that explain their rise, bifurcation or decline. Although the term lacks academic rigor, this is, therefore, a history of dreams. Dreams with global reach.

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