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Baud, M.

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Between Academia and Civil Society

The Origins of Latin American Studies in the Netherlands

by
Michiel Baud

Dutch Latin American studies as a field of academic teaching and research emerged in the late 1960s and became consolidated in the 1970s and 1980s. It began as a purely academic endeavor, but in a changing Dutch and global society in the 1970s it rapidly became connected to and influenced by social and political processes in Latin America. The strong Christian and social-democratic traditions in the Netherlands allowed for strong links between academic researchers and civil society organizations. This resulted in the productive coexistence of academic and more political objectives and activities and allowed Dutch Latin American studies to grow into a dynamic field. A review of this experience calls attention to the importance of local conditions for understanding the consequences of the Cold War for academic research.

Los estudios holandeses sobre Latinoamérica emergieron como un campo de investigación y enseñanza académica a finales de la década de 1960, consolidándose durante los setenta y ochenta. Comenzaron como una actividad puramente académica, pero en la cambiante sociedad holandesa y global de los años setenta, rápidamente se vincularon a y fueron influenciados por los procesos políticos y sociales de América Latina. La fuerte tradición cristiana y social-democrática de Holanda dio lugar a poderosos vínculos entre investigadores académicos y organizaciones civiles. Esto llevó a la coexistencia de metas y actividades académicas al igual que aquellas de índole más política, transformando a los estudios holandeses sobre Latinoamérica en un campo dinámico. Un vistazo a esta experiencia resalta la importancia de las condiciones locales para una debida comprensión de las consecuencias de la Guerra Fría en la investigación académica.

Keywords: Latin American studies, Europe–Latin American relations, Cold War, Netherlands

Today there is increasing interest in the everyday consequences and expressions of the Cold War. What did the ideological and geopolitical clash between West and East mean for local societies? What were the views and perceptions of local politicians, civil society organizations, and academics? There is growing awareness that the Cold War had many different faces and meanings—that in a way there were just as many cold wars as there are societies and political groupings (Garrard-Burnett, Lawrence, and Moreno, 2013). Looking at the

Michiel Baud was director of the Center for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) and professor of Latin American studies at the University of Amsterdam. He is grateful for the input of Geert Banck, Raymond Buve, Jan Kleinpenning, Dirk Kruijt, the late David Slater, Nico Vink, and colleagues Peter van Dam, Barbara Hogenboom, and Gert Oostindie.

relationship between the Cold War and the emergence of Latin American studies, we see similar processes. Within the large-scale parameters of the period, this relationship was determined by local political cultures, religious preferences, and academic traditions. This makes a European perspective interesting, first because Latin American studies in Europe were embedded quite differently than in the United States and second because European academic cultures and networks have shown marked differences from nation to nation.

In this article, the Dutch case will be presented as an example of this importance of the context for understanding the consequences of the Cold War for academic research. The focus will be on the emergence and development of Latin American studies and the complex interrelationship between academic research and civil society activism in the Netherlands. Latin American studies in the Netherlands emerged in the late 1950s and initially did not have much to do with (geo)political concerns. The field's first steps depended on a number of academics who were worried about the lack of knowledge about the region in the Netherlands. Their objective was to put an end to this ignorance and foster an academic research tradition on Latin America. The new authoritarian regimes in Latin America, with their systematic human rights violations, imposed political debates on academics working on Latin America. In this process Latin American studies were influenced by radical thinking about political, social, and economic issues, and new connections between academia and civil society activism emerged. In close contact with the increasing number of Latin American refugees, Dutch (and arguably European) Latin Americanists began to recognize and accept the political nature of their work. Thus Latin American studies became more integrated into Latin American debates such as so-called dependency theory and liberation theology. In the process, their emphasis gradually moved from history and anthropology toward geography, economics, and, especially, political science. Simultaneously, they forged stronger links to civil and political society both in Europe and in Latin America. The analysis of this process may shed light on the complex relationship between academic research and (human rights) activism during the Cold War.

THE NETHERLANDS AND LATIN AMERICA

It could be said that Latin America did not exist in Dutch public opinion and politics in the first period after World War II. Even the small Dutch colonies in the Caribbean were ignored under the weight of the rebuilding after the war and the fast-moving decolonization process in the East (Kruijt, 1988: 39–40). The Asian colonies, then called the Dutch East Indies, were occupied by the Japanese during the war, and afterward it took four years of bloody warfare and protracted negotiations before the Dutch accepted that they had irrevocably lost their Asian possessions. Although in this same period the first steps were made toward new political status for the Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, Latin America and the Caribbean were hardly discussed in the Netherlands.

This stood in stark contrast to the situation in the United States, which had a much longer history of interest in Latin America. In his recent study on the

beginnings of Latin American studies in the United States, Salvatore (2016: 2) writes that “by the time of the Second World War, U.S. scholars had established the infrastructure of Latin American studies: the institutes, the research centers, the experts, the university programs, and the library collections for sustained interdisciplinary research on the region.” In the European context, countries like France, Britain, and, because of its history and language, Spain had more historical ties to the region. These ties were mostly connected to economic (see Miller in this issue) and cultural relations. Apart from its small colonies in the Caribbean, in the Netherlands there was nothing of the kind.

This very gradually changed during the 1950s, when Dutch academics and authorities started to think about supplying aid to the Third World or, as it was called, the *achtergebleven gebieden* (backward territories) (Nekkers and Malcontent, 1999: 13). The University of Leiden, for example, established a department called “Sociology of Non-Western Territories” in 1955, and similar initiatives occurred in other universities. This new interest and its government funding were partly fueled by the idea that development aid could help to maintain Dutch influence in Asia and the world (for similar U.S. views, see Westad, 2005: 28 and *passim*). On the part of the authorities, it was certainly also connected to the incipient Cold War. The seminal 1954 Mansholt Report argued (Nekkers and Malcontent, 1999: 13, my translation):

If the noncommunist countries do not do something soon to make up the deficit in development of a considerable number of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, it will be easier for the communist countries with rapidly increasing productivity, especially Russia, to satisfy the needs of these backward countries, and this will result in a disruption of existing relations.

For Dutch governments of various political colors, development aid would remain the privileged instrument for connecting the Netherlands with the South for the remainder of the century. It was connected with the traditional two “faces” of Dutch foreign policy, that of the merchant and that of the missionary (see Hellema, 2014; Voorhoeve, 1979). In the postwar period it helped to reconcile two contrasting goals: contributing to the alleviation of inequality and poverty on a world scale and promoting the country’s economic and political interests. Underneath it also demonstrated the globally influenced pursuit of a new world order that would be less influenced by colonial relations and U.S. dominance (Van Dam and Van Dis, 2014). In this period the Christian and social-democratic parties were linked as coalition partners in Dutch postwar politics, and the focus on development aid helped to overcome the foreign policy differences between them. From the 1960s on, development aid, later called “cooperation,” became an important moral and ethical marker of Dutch foreign policy.

The importance attached to development aid in Dutch civil society thus had two main pillars. First and foremost was the religious persuasion of a majority of Dutch society. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches fostered strong missionary feelings among the Dutch population that led to feelings of global solidarity with the underprivileged peoples of the world. In the case of the Catholic population, this solidarity was supported by its own struggle for

emancipation in the originally Protestant-dominated country. Most Dutch development organizations had their roots in one of the country's religious denominations. The second influence was the social-democratic current in Dutch society. Inspired by the Dutch economist Jan Tinbergen, social democrats started to discuss the need to solve economic inequality on a world scale. The social-democratic tradition fostered an internationalism that in this period gradually changed its focus from socialism to the support of human rights and thus reinvented global solidarity. In the 1960s and 1970s an end came to Dutch "pacification" (or "consociational") democracy, and these two currents came under increasing attack from the left and the right. Nevertheless, they continued to be indispensable for explaining the "heyday" of human rights and internationalism in the 1970s (Baudet, 2016: 133).

In the focus on development aid in the Netherlands, Latin America always lost out to its poorer and more appealing African and, to a lesser extent, Asian counterparts. In the intensifying Cold War debates, however, Latin America quickly came into the spotlight. Latin America was the region in which the Cold War played a major role. Although it did not come to a battlefield situation as in Vietnam, it presented some of the most complex and intense confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the subsequent Cuba crisis were defining moments in that struggle between the superpowers, but the real struggle had started earlier, with the U.S.-initiated coup against Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, the first clear instance of Cold War politics and the military influence of the School of the Americas in the region. U.S. anticommunist interventionism would continue for the rest of the twentieth century and would remain a crucial issue in political debates on the region.

These developments attracted attention to Latin America in the Netherlands and the emergence of anti-United States ideas. Whereas in the first postwar decade the liberation and the subsequent Marshall Plan were the basis for strong pro-United States feelings, the concrete signs of U.S. imperialism in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s gradually changed that perspective in some sectors of the population. Dutch interest in Latin America began in earnest with the Cuban Revolution. Of course, the Dutch Communist Party would until its demise wholeheartedly support Castro's takeover, but the initial interest was much broader. The peace movement and intellectuals such as the Dutch novelist Harry Mulisch drew attention to the promises of the revolution and the ways in which the United States tried to suppress it (Van der Maar and Schaaper, 2017). Castro's support for the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 all but destroyed this solidarity with Cuba (Beerends, 1993: 218–290), but there is no doubt that the Cuban Revolution fostered new interest in the region, its problems, and its social and cultural expressions.

At the same time, radical Catholicism was very influential in the Netherlands. In a country dominated by religious ideas, the consequences of liberation theology, especially after its formal presentation during the Latin American Bishops' Conference in Medellín in 1968, were intensively discussed in both Catholic and Protestant circles. The 1968 essay by the Brazilian Bishop Dom Hélder Câmara, *Revolução dentro da paz*, was published in a Dutch translation in 1969.

Câmara received an honorary doctorate from Leuven University in that year and made a highly influential visit to the Netherlands (Van Dam, 2015). The ideas of Paulo Freire were widely disseminated, and Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary* was published in Dutch almost immediately after its Spanish publication in 1968.

It can therefore be said that early interest in Latin America was part of a more global tendency toward "Third Worldism," which, in the spirit of the Bandung conference of 1955, called for an end to colonialism and an independent voice for the global South (Moyn, 2010; Prashad, 2007; also Eckel, 2014). This focus on the autonomous postcolonial development of the global South combined a clear eye for the political inequality in the world with a desire to understand Third World economic underdevelopment. It linked a postcolonial political agenda with awareness that many political problems in the postcolonial world were closely connected with structural inequalities in the world economy. In Latin America it was associated with the ideas of Raúl Prebisch and the Economic Commission for Latin America. Eventually these ideas led to the so-called dependency theory, which sought to explain underdevelopment, poverty, and inequality as the result of economic inequality on a world scale. Peter van Dam (2015) has stressed that this awareness of global economic inequality led not only to state-organized development aid but also to the emergence of more civil-society-based initiatives toward fair trade. He suggests that in the 1960s concern for Latin America was embedded in a more economically oriented interest in the Third World.

This general interest in global inequality received a political impetus in the 1970s when it was linked to a growing concern for human rights (Featherstone, 2012). Moyn (2010) has even argued that the importance of human rights should be seen as a "modern" phenomenon, emerging only in the 1970s. Under the influence of the human rights violations of authoritarian regimes in Latin America, it became a new element of the Cold War. Whereas from 1948 on human rights had been associated with anticommunism (Moyn, 2010: 71, 140–141), the Latin American experience turned this around. They now also became a weapon against right-wing, authoritarian and United States-backed regimes in Latin America. Daniel Sargent (2015: 98) recently even postulated that the Chilean military takeover in 1973 was a defining moment in global human rights activism (see also Christiaens, Goddeeris, and Rodríguez, 2014: 9–10). "Human rights" became a label for transnational activism that would transform "not only activist vocabularies but also the moral imaginations of many throughout the world" (Kelly, 2014: 89 and *passim*).

Europe and the Netherlands thus gradually developed a political and academic interest in Latin America in the late 1950s and 1960s. This interest was the result of political and ideological developments on a world scale but also of the geopolitical repositioning of the Netherlands as a result of the loss of its colonial possessions in Southeast Asia and the growing interest in global inequality and underdevelopment. Academic interest in the region emerged in the same period, but, as we shall see, was the result not only of postcolonial and transnational activism but also of more local interpretations of the Cold War and the political and cultural polarization it entailed.

THE BEGINNING OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

In the early 1960s a number of young academics, mainly anthropologists, geographers, and historians, who were involved in academic research on Latin America decided to join forces. Some knew the region because they were involved in development cooperation; others had worked for international organizations, and some had developed academic interests on their own. They decided to set up the Center for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) in 1964. In 1972 CEDLA became an interuniversity research center with its own offices and library based at the University of Amsterdam. It was financed by the Ministry of Education and governed by all the relevant universities and research institutes in the Netherlands. Its aim was to create an area-specific library that would collect and make available books and documentation, becoming a focal point for a strong field of Latin American studies in the country. Its first director was Harry Hoetink, an anthropologist who had taught in Puerto Rico and would establish his reputation as a scholar of race relations in the Caribbean and Latin America in the late 1960s with the publication of *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations* (Hoetink, 1967). His intimate knowledge of Latin American reality and his firsthand experience with U.S. academia provided him with great authority. As an academic he had strong reservations about simplistic, uninformed views on Latin America, and his principal objective was to explain the complex cultural reality of Latin America to Dutch colleagues, students, and policy makers.

Most members of CEDLA's staff at the time were still working on their doctorates, and CEDLA's objectives were exclusively academic—fostering research, documentation, and academic networking. In its first years it expanded its library activities, laying the foundation of what would become one of the best specialized libraries in Europe. The *Boletín informativo sobre Estudios Latinoamericanos en Europa* testifies to this ambition; its first issues were full of bibliographic information. A second objective was to foment collaboration and networking among European Latin Americanists. The center played a crucial role in the foundation of the association of European Latin Americanists Consejo Europeo de Investigaciones sobre América Latina. Starting in 1974, it began to publish every five years a printed report called *Latinoamericanistas Europeos*, and the *Boletín* was transformed into a European academic journal.

Gradually a group of Latin Americanists emerged in the country. In the beginning, the Dutch Latin Americanist community mainly consisted of historians, anthropologists, linguists, and geographers trying, from their particular disciplinary viewpoints, to understand Latin American reality. Most of them did firsthand fieldwork in the region and forged intellectual networks with Latin American academics. CEDLA, for instance, had a program that annually invited guest researchers from Latin America who cooperated with Dutch researchers and gave lectures at the universities. The strictly academic and to a certain extent empiricist focus remained a general characteristic of Latin American studies in the Netherlands for a long time (Kruijt, 1988: 43). This did not preclude a clear eye for the politics of academic work during the Cold War. Dutch historians, for instance, actively participated in the founding of the

Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos (Association of European Latin Americanist Historians—AHILA) in 1970. Apart from encouraging Latin American studies in Europe, both organizations explicitly tried to bridge the East-West divide and forge links between Eastern and Western European Latin Americanists. Despite the political problems and Cold War biases, academics in East and West managed to keep in contact. These were real pan-European organizations that managed to maintain their network function despite Cold War political cleavages. Raymond Buve, one of the founders of AHILA, stresses that it was deliberately founded in Torun, Poland, in 1970 and that Dutch historians had intensive academic discussions with their Eastern European colleagues, who were permitted to work only on Cuba and, for a few years, Chile, who were often Communist Party members in their countries. AHILA also had direct contacts with historians of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow. “The Cuban support for the Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe was fiercely discussed and *bajo de la mesa* many of our Eastern European colleagues disapproved of it, but never officially of course” (e-mail, August 12, 2016).

In the meantime, the local context of academic work changed rapidly. All of a sudden, events in Paris, Athens, New York, or Mexico found their way into the Dutch media and public debates (Gildea, Mark, and Pas, 2011). Within the Netherlands, antiestablishment protests shook up Dutch society, causing what many have called a “cultural revolution” (Pas, 2008). The political polarization that was the result of these events did not leave the Dutch universities untouched. Socialist and internationalist ideas entered the universities, and students and activists pushed for radical change (Hellema, 2012). Students occupied the Catholic University of Tilburg and baptized it Karl Marx University. There was a general feeling of rebellion in Dutch universities in the 1960s. Students and (young) teaching staff protested against the political conservatism of university authorities and professors and demanded more socialist and less Eurocentric forms of teaching.

Latin American studies were influenced by these developments in different ways. The “cultural revolution” of the 1960s forced Dutch society out of its postwar insulation and connected it to the world, including Latin America, where for many Europeans real change was happening. At the same time, the repression of Mexican students in the Tlatelolco plaza in 1968, the Vietnam War, the postcolonial rhetoric of the Black Panthers in the United States, and the *négritude* movement in the French colonies reinforced the idea that this change needed a more concerted, global movement.

Some Dutch social scientists, through their more intimate connection to Latin America, were influenced by the dependency theory that dominated the Latin American development debate. The theory was picked up first by civil society organizations and donor organizations (Kruijt, 1988: 41) but rapidly entered the academic realm. The first explicit sign of this influence was a conference organized in Amsterdam in November 1973 on dependency and Latin America. The papers presented at this conference were immediately published and widely read. The participating scholars originated in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, two academic communities that had always been very closely related. No Latin American scholars participated in the publication, the

purpose of which was clearly to present and “translate” Latin American ideas for a European public. Although dependency theory was presented from an exclusively academic perspective, the contributors to this collection recognized its potential political consequences. The collection stressed the region’s internal political logic, paradoxically presenting dependency theory as a critical theory that would be acceptable to Latin American authoritarian leaders. The term “Cold War” did not appear in the papers, but implicitly there was a clear European rejection of U.S. imperialism. It allowed for a subtle academic criticism of U.S. anticommunist policies (and support for critical U.S. academics), on the one hand, and a clear idea of a special European position on Latin America, on the other. The influence of dependency theory on Dutch academia was consolidated when the University of Amsterdam gave a chair to one of its figureheads, André Gunder Frank, which he held from 1981 to 1994.

Another example of increasing political engagement within academia was presented by Gerrit Huizer’s (1973) *Peasant Unrest in Latin America. Its Origins, Forms of Expression, and Potential*, defended as Ph.D. thesis in 1970 at the University of Amsterdam and published as a Penguin pocketbook in 1973. Huizer had been working in agrarian development projects in several Latin American countries, and his book was a damning critique of Latin America’s rural inequality and a tribute to the potential for development among the rural population. The book was directly influenced by liberation theology and made a clear choice in favor of the poor and against large landowners, multinational enterprises, and imperial powers. It was widely read and discussed in the English-speaking world in its Penguin edition and, through its Spanish translation, in Latin America. Huizer became the founder and first director of the Third World Center that was established at the University of Nijmegen in 1973. The center became well-known for its creative mix of activism and academic research. For a long time it represented critical Third World studies in the Netherlands. As one of the first in Dutch academia, Huizer stressed the political implications of anthropology and the need to also do serious research about Western multinationals in the South (Huizer and Mannheim, 1979). His personal history also symbolized the way concrete experiences in development work and strong religious persuasions sometimes found their way into academic work.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH LATIN AMERICA IN THE 1970S

While Dutch Latin Americanists from different disciplines tried to make sense of the region, its place in the world economy, and its political contradictions, Latin America also became hotly debated within Dutch civil and political society. After the promise of the Cuban Revolution had faded, progressive economists and unions, supported by some religious groups, started to work directly with Latin American organizations. The first steps were mainly taken by two organizations, both connected to Christian socialism. The Dutch branch of the Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores (Latin American Workers’ Central—CLAT)) was more connected to the Christian-democratic unions,

while Solidaridad was inspired by liberation theology, sharing its support for Latin American social movements. Although these two organizations would go in different directions in the 1970s, in this early period they worked together in calling attention to the plight of the Latin American poor. Inspired by the connection between Christianity and socialism, people began to support the struggle for social justice as it was formulated by vocal Latin American priests like Câmara and Leonardo Boff (Beerends, 1993: 220–221). A Catholic organization such as CEBEMO, which had its roots in missionary activities, rapidly moved into development cooperation, assisting the poor in developing countries. At the same time, Dutch development cooperation with Latin America and non-governmental organization activity in the field of international social and economic relations increased. This created a group of young university-trained professionals who were intimately acquainted with Latin American reality and had real-life experience in the region. Some of them later entered the universities, fueling a new and engaged interest in the region, just as had happened earlier with the Peace Corps in the United States. The reverse also happened: as a researcher for the economy-oriented Tinbergen Institute, Jan Pronk went to Latin America in 1971. After having become a social-democratic politician, he again visited Chile during the UN Conference on Trade and Development in 1972 together with the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Joop den Uyl. Both were deeply impressed by the socialist experiment they witnessed. In May 1973 Pronk became minister for development cooperation in a cabinet led by Den Uyl, and they created the most visible human rights governments the Netherlands had ever had (Beerends, 1998: 12–13; Eckel, 2014: 231–232).

The real surge in urgency and interest in Latin America in the Netherlands came with the military coups in Chile in 1973 and Argentina in 1976 (see Groenendijk, 1984). Den Uyl's government had been a staunch supporter of the socialist experiment under the leadership of Salvador Allende. Progressive groups had also invested a lot of hope in the idea of a peaceful socialist revolution that they saw in Chile. Without much direct knowledge about Chilean politics, the public was shocked by the images of Pinochet's air force bombarding the presidential palace and his army rounding up idealistic youngsters many of whom looked very much like their counterparts in the Netherlands. The coup also confirmed the idea that the United States had transformed Latin America into a practice ground for its Cold War ambitions, which had become particularly strong after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba in 1961. Already on September 15, four days after the coup, a huge and broadly supported demonstration was organized that was joined and supported by the social-democratic-party-dominated government. The demonstration showed Dutch solidarity with Chile and the rejection of U.S. interventionism. In the years to come, the Chile movement became the core of a dynamic and activist interest in Latin America.

This was only strengthened after the Argentine coup in 1976. From 1979 on, a very influential group of women actively began to support the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. In many Dutch cities women of various social and political backgrounds demonstrated every Thursday wearing white kerchiefs. Human rights organizations, unions, and religious groups were urging Dutch politics and the corporate sector to take a stand, often referring to the recent Nazi

occupation. Interestingly enough, this solidarity movement, especially in its incipient stages, was linked to the crisis of democracy in southern Europe, where Greece, Spain, and Portugal suffered under authoritarian regimes. Supported by both the left and religious groups, a broad political and cultural interest in Latin America emerged that involved many mostly young people. This became a clear political struggle when in 1977 a more conservative government took power. Forced to present a report on Argentina in January 1981, it reluctantly tried to combine a defense of Dutch economic interests and a human rights agenda. Despite its disappointing content, this report showed that Latin America had become an urgent and much-discussed topic in Dutch civil and political society (see Baud, 2001: Chapters 8–10).

This movement was strengthened, both political and culturally, by the relatively large number of refugees from these and other countries. The European embassies in Santiago famously became places of safety for persecuted Chileans, and an estimated 200,000 Chileans fled to Eastern and Western Europe (Camacho, 2006; Christiaens, Goddeeris, and Rodríguez, 2014: 18–19). The progressive Dutch government accepted many refugees, often against the advice of its more conservative ambassadors. More than 2,000 Chileans were admitted to the Netherlands in the months after the coup (De Kievit, 2013). The Latin American exiles brought Latin America to the Netherlands. They imported ideas and cultural practices to an environment that was extremely receptive to their influence, and in this way they transformed the solidarity movement (see also Kelly, 2014: 94–97). They also helped to create a pan-European Latin American movement. A center for European coordination of information about Chile was established in Paris to circulate images of Chile to a European population. Three meetings of the Russell Tribunal on Latin America were organized by intellectuals of the New Left, who turned to the South to foster their revolutionary hopes (Klimke and Scharloth, 2008). The first one, against Latin American dictatorships, was held in Rome in 1973 and hosted by Jean-Paul Sartre. Two more would follow in 1975 and 1976. In 1974 a pan-European conference on solidarity with Chile was staged with the cooperation of the French Socialist Party leader François Mitterand in Paris as a collaborative effort of social-democratic and communist parties in Western and Eastern Europe. The fourth Russell Tribunal, on the rights of the Indians of the Americas, was held in the Netherlands in 1980. This tribunal, which was actively supported by refugees and academics, showed the influence of politically oriented activism on universities and academics in the field of Latin American studies. It was also symbolic for the cultural links that had gradually been built across the transnational networks. Sympathy for the indigenous cause was complemented by shared preferences for indigenous folklore, music, and literature. These preferences and, of course, many amorous relations characterized the activists as much as their social and political sympathies.

Just as we have seen with regard to academic contacts, European solidarity movements show many connections between Western and Eastern Europe, dismantling older images of a divided world during the Cold War and Europe as a divided continent. Christiaens, Goddeeris, and Rodríguez (2014: 33) stress that “issues beyond Europe and notably in the Third World offered an avenue and common ground for contacts and exchanges between Western and Eastern

Europe." A variety of transnational networks existed that connected activists within Europe and across the Cold War divide. They see a clear trend toward a "Europeanization" of the social movements based on memories of the Spanish Civil War and a shared history of fighting fascism in Europe.

TOWARD MORE ENGAGED LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE 1970S

It is difficult to assess exactly how Dutch Latin American studies were influenced by these developments. Centers like the Third World Center in Nijmegen were explicitly linked to the new transnational socialist and human rights movement. At the Protestant Free University in Amsterdam there was a noticeable influence of the ideas of Paulo Freire, but more conservative Calvinist ideas continued to have the upper hand. This situation was indicative of the academic climate of the period. There is no doubt that in most universities the political situation was polarized. The 1960s clearly represented a cultural and social rupture, and old and new ideas existed with difficulty side by side.

In this context, students flocked to Latin American studies out of political engagement and fascination with Latin American literature and music. Their political activism was inspired by the examples of radical Christianity, revolutionary fervor, and social commitment. Their fascination was linked to the literature of the Latin American "boom," which presented an alternative to what was seen as U.S. consumerist culture. Paradoxically, it sometimes resulted in static and exotic images of Latin America, stressing the difference between Latin America and Europe and accentuating the "otherness" of the region (Christiaens, Goddeeris, and Rodríguez, 2014: 24). Students were deeply engaged but often had little or very partial knowledge of the Latin American reality. Political engagement and academic rigor regularly came into conflict in Latin American studies, and the results often depended on the age and political engagement of the professors.

These fundamental questions and the concomitant tensions and opportunities were especially intense because so many Latin American refugees had found safe haven in the Netherlands. While CEDLA formally kept its focus on academic objectives and maintained its distance from public debates, the changing political context both in the Netherlands and in Latin America became noticeable within it. The library, with its many Latin American newspapers and journals, became a meeting place for Dutch students and (mostly young) Latin American refugees, many with academic degrees. Some of the refugees were given state-funded Ph.D. fellowships or temporary teaching positions at Dutch universities. This coincided with the emergence of a new generation of engaged students who wanted to break with the Eurocentrism of academic teaching and aimed at more cosmopolitan curricula, especially in fields such as anthropology and international relations.

As a result of these developments, the field of Latin American studies developed in two ways in the 1980s. On the one hand, it became more professionalized and integrated into mainstream research activities in Dutch universities. On the other, it became more connected to social and political developments in

Latin America itself and thus developed a more politically engaged profile. The former tendency manifested itself in the teaching curricula and the research output of Latin Americanists in the Netherlands. CEDLA started to offer courses in the early 1970s. This was a break with the past, when it was exclusively geared to research and documentation. Gradually its more politically outspoken researchers organized courses aimed at understanding and analyzing political events in the region. At the University of Leiden, with its focus on history, attention was given to the revolutionary tradition in Latin America and the social and political agency of peasant populations. Attention to agrarian relations in Latin America was stimulated by the appointments of Norman Long at the University of Wageningen and Jean Carrière at CEDLA. This field of interest remained important and received a further boost when in the late 1980s the Chilean-born Cristóbal Kay was appointed to the International Institute of Social Studies in the Hague.

The increasing number of courses on contemporary Latin American issues offered places where the Latin American political situation was hotly debated and interested students connected with Latin American refugees. In many ways, this new vibrant social and political confluence occurred in cafes and at concerts, solidarity meetings, and demonstrations, but it also touched academia. Political urgency thus radiated to academic research, gradually transforming Latin American studies into a more engaged and, one could say, political field of academic study. Some of the more outspoken critical academic voices also presented their ideas in the journal edited by CEDLA that in the 1970s published writers such as Alain Touraine and Fernando Henrique Cardoso but also Oscar Catalán and Jorge Arrate, both Chilean refugees (the latter the founder of *Chile Democrático* in Rome).

THE CONSOLIDATION OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE 1980S

The Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua in 1979 can be considered a defining moment in the transformation of Latin American studies in the Netherlands. The heroic, well-televised struggle of *los muchachos* against the archaic and nefarious Somoza regime and the cultural and liberal socialist agenda of the Sandinista government produced widespread support among activists, mainstream politicians, and academics. In many cities solidarity committees were formed and a great number of *stedenbanden* (twin cities) agreements were signed. The Dutch Nicaragua Committee became an important voice for Nicaragua and, one could say, Latin America in general. Academics and their students were equally enthusiastic. At the Free University in Amsterdam a group of economists had already begun doing research on agrarian reform and poverty alleviation in the 1970s. The revolution gave a strong impetus to this research, leading to formal collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma Nacional de Nicaragua in Managua and a great number of publications (Baud, 2002: 144–145). Right after the Sandinista victory, CEDLA organized a course entitled “Popular Mobilization and Political Change in Central America” in which special attention was given to the “people’s revolution” in Nicaragua.

The social and political engagement of Dutch Latin Americanists also became increasingly clear in their choice of topics. They began to work on themes such as urban and rural inequality, urban political culture, and the influence of neo-colonial, imperialist international relations. The interest in agrarian relations led to an increasing interest in issues such as peasant production, agrarian protest, and land reform, themes that were in the forefront of public discussion in Latin America at the time. In the late 1970s and 1980s, CEDLA researchers developed an interest in local political processes and popular perceptions. A conference was organized by CEDLA's Brazilianist, Geert Banck, in 1979 under the title "State and Region in Latin America: A View from Below." Although clearly embedded in academic debates, these activities were connected to the more activist and politically engaged interests of a new generation of Latin Americanists. As a result of this new interest, a number of staff members and Ph.D. projects began to focus on what were then called "new social movements." In 1983 CEDLA's geographer David Slater organized an international conference on this topic. The book that resulted from this conference (Slater, 1985) was widely cited internationally and symbolized the transformation in terms of research that the center had undergone.

All over the Netherlands, academics from various disciplines were teaching an increasingly engaged and numerous student population about contemporary political and social issues, often on the basis of their own profound local knowledge of particular Latin American countries. In this period a relatively large number of Ph.D. projects began to focus on an interdisciplinary understanding of societal changes and conflicts in Latin America. This led to dissertations on Nicaragua, social movements, peasant protest, urban conflict, and political processes (Baud, 2002). With the emergence of a more vocal and engaged generation of academics, research also acquired greater social visibility. The Chile Committee published a monthly bulletin that, briefly known as the "Inca Bulletin," was renamed *Alerta* in April 1978. In the process, it was transformed from an activist into an academically engaged journal with general information on Latin America. This allowed for collaboration with young academics who hoped to translate their academic knowledge for a more general interested public.

Latin American studies in the Netherlands continued to be characterized by a strong empiricist tradition that stressed relatively long periods of research and fieldwork in Latin America. In the late 1970s and 1980s this expertise was connected to a deeper political engagement with the social and political processes in the region. This forged strong links with the Latin American academic community but also enabled Latin American studies to connect with a growing group of interested students. The urgency of their topics of research and its innovative results imbued Latin American studies in the Netherlands with a clear political and social engagement. To this day it is characterized by strong networks in the region and a relatively strong position in the international academic community.

CONCLUSION

In a recent tribute to Kalman Silvert, one of the doyens of Latin American studies in the United States, Peter Cleaves and Richard Dye (2016) describe

how he struggled with the Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s as a social science program adviser for the Ford Foundation. Apart from the interesting insight it gives into some of the Foundation's choices, it shows how closely U.S. academia was engaged with Latin American politics and U.S. policies in the region. This connection, of course, had a long history, as Ricardo Salvatore (2016) has described so vividly. It is also a recurrent theme in James Green's (2010) analysis of U.S. opposition to the Brazilian dictatorship, in which he shows how U.S. engagement combined political, cultural, and academic elements. This situation mirrored the ideological polarity that characterized the conflict in the region and especially U.S. policy, which triggered passionate responses from the right and the left (Garrard-Burnett, Lawrence, and Moreno, 2013: 7).

In contrast, Latin American studies in the Netherlands (and, one could say, Europe) started relatively late and initially scarcely showed this kind of engagement. The field began with a number of academics pursuing their individual research interests in a variety of disciplines. With the establishment of CEDLA they hoped to coordinate their research efforts and provide Latin American studies a better infrastructure, especially in terms of a specialized library and an international academic network. European organizations such as the Consejo Europeo de Investigaciones sobre América Latina and AHILA tried to bridge the gap between Western and Eastern European academics, but the Cold War as such did not play an important role in Dutch academic debates.

With the solidarity and concern for human rights in Dutch civil society and the arrival of Latin American refugees, Latin American studies were drawn into the political debate. The military dictatorships in Latin America coincided with a political and cultural revolution in the Netherlands that led to more political interest in Latin America. This development culminated in the enthusiasm for the Sandinista Revolution in 1979. In the 1980s Dutch Latin American studies became more engaged with the region's political strife and social and economic problems, and this produced a closer connection between academics and the Dutch authorities, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation. As a result of these developments, Dutch politicians displayed a growing awareness of the crucial political position of Latin America also as a "neighbor" of the remaining Dutch Caribbean dependencies. In the process academics started to work more closely with civil society organizations and the government. This was especially clear in Central America and the Andean countries, which received considerable Dutch development aid.

The Dutch example has features that distinguish it from other cases and point to the importance of local conditions. While Moyn (2010) emphasizes the role of the United States and especially the government of Jimmy Carter to explain the emergence of human rights as a global discourse, in the Netherlands the importance of human rights and a discourse of equality originated more in the country's strong Christian and social-democratic traditions. This allowed Dutch organizations and academics to connect to the two strong Latin American ideologies of the period: liberation theology and dependency theory. In many ways, the Dutch situation mirrored the Latin American situation. Mor (2013) has stressed the importance of Latin American civil society activities both within and outside Latin America in the Cold War period, and the same

tendency is visible in the Netherlands. Here academic and civil society positions reinforced each other and merged in successful attempts to connect their work to Latin American movements and viewpoints. While initially their positions were mainly separate and even antagonistic, in the 1980s they became complementary, especially in the field of development cooperation. Where possible they worked together, and individuals moved from one sector to the other. In this way they managed to forge strong links with their Latin American counterparts both in academia and in civil society.

Dutch Latin American studies were strongly influenced by the growing anti-United States feelings that emerged in this period. Beginning with the Vietnam protests, the rejection of U.S. interventionism led to a kind of geopolitical solidarity with Latin American societies. They were representative of a more general tendency in European society, in which global Cold War antagonisms were increasingly interpreted from an anti-United States perspective. Activists wanted to free both European and Latin American societies from U.S. influence. In this sense, it could be said that Dutch solidarity with Latin America was based on a (sometimes romanticized) sense of a shared destiny. At the same time, it could be argued that, in many ways, the human rights discourse employed in Latin American studies was more directly connected to the emerging Third Worldism and radical theology than to the political antagonism of the Cold War. The Dutch moral framework was very much grounded in World War II, and the emphasis on human rights responded to the desire to combat authoritarianism and impunity. It created a common ground on which groups of different political and religious persuasions could collaborate. This led to a solidarity movement in which culture, religion, and political struggle were closely intertwined.

Latin American studies in the Netherlands began as an academic and quite apolitical specialization that only slowly and almost hesitantly ventured into social and political issues. When the connection to current events in Latin America became stronger in the 1980s, its political engagement developed into an important characteristic of the field. Engagement has remained a characteristic of much of the field's academic work. Latin American studies became the most "political" of all area studies and remained so until well into the twenty-first century, when development cooperation and human rights began to give way as drivers of Dutch foreign policy.

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