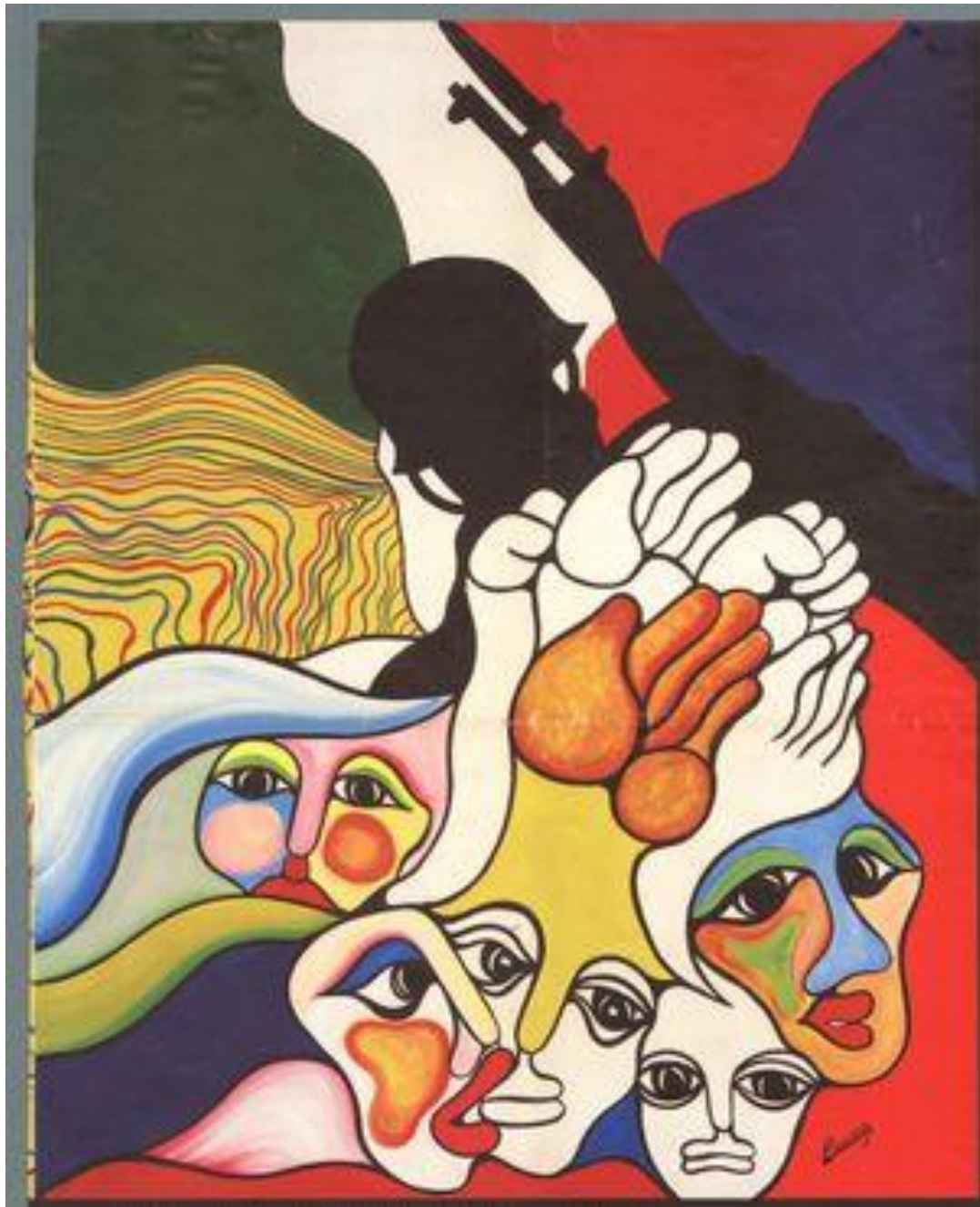


# From “Hitler-Regime” to “Human Rights Abuses”

*An Analysis of the Chili Komitee Nederland's Discourse in Addressing the Pinochet Regime  
1973-1989*



Enora Segeren

6169694

03-12-1998

Supervisor: Corina Mavrodin

## Abstract

The international reaction to Pinochet's coup d'état in Chile and its violent aftermath were an important catalyst for the promulgation of human rights culture in the '70s. International organisations, national governments and domestic solidarity committees started using a rhetoric of human rights, some exclusively, others as part of a wider arsenal of narratives that could be utilized in denouncing the Chilean junta and their policies. The protracted nature of the CKN activity, spanning some 16 years, has enabled us to see within a single organisation the rise of human rights rhetoric in the international system through their publications and propaganda materials. The progression is quite significant, from a more ideologically oriented contrast of leftist values versus capitalism (or fascism) to opting into the depoliticized human rights culture, albeit on their own terms. The committee was, however, remarkably late in making the switch to a messaging framework informed by concerns for human rights, even when compared to similar solidarity movements in other countries. This deviation from the general tendencies could be attributed to the existence of other adequate understandings of the Chilean situation in terms of fascism and anti-imperialism that were already shared among the different domestic and foreign networks, coupled with the fact that the depoliticized nature of human rights discourse did not mesh well with the explicitly political nature of the CKN's interest in Chile. During the '80s the focus of the committee's messaging increasingly came to lie with abuses in the realm of political and civil rights, partly because a rhetoric based on leftist ideals was losing relevancy and partly because the human rights discourse by that time had been firmly established and was more suitable to arouse engagement from the population.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Corina Mavrodin, for her support and guidance throughout this process and for encouraging me to expand my research methods into the field of oral history, which has greatly impacted the trajectory of my thesis.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Max Arian, Jan de Kievid and Herman Vuisje for inviting me into their homes to speak to me about their time as committee members and giving me valuable insights into the workings of the CKN.

Previous page: P. Madera, CKN poster for a 11 september manifestation in Amsterdam, IISG, BG D29/880, 1982.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/10622/N30051001488557?locatt=view:level3>

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## Introduction

In 1975 Dutch prime-minister Joop Den Uyl was invited to speak at a rally to commemorate the coup d'état that had taken place in Chile two years prior. The brutal overthrow had ended the life of president Salvador Allende and saw him replaced by an oppressive military junta who stayed in power for the following 16 years. At that time, there were many groups in the Netherlands who were in some capacity involved in activism against this new government and its international recognition, be it through small local committees, national movements or as a specialized commission within a larger institution. All this attention for Chilean affairs meant that the commemoration event was attended by many, and they all listened to Den Uyl's indignation against the coup and his pledge that the Dutch government would do everything in its power to thwart this regime in its foreign ambitions. The source of his outrage was the wave of brutal repression of all leftist elements in Chile that had followed the insurgence, and the prime-minister called for renewed "adherence to the principles of human rights and an end to the terror."<sup>1</sup> Nowadays the idea of 'human rights' – understood as a set of inalienable and universal freedoms and conditions that every person is entitled to – as something that every government and institution should be able to guarantee its citizens in order to be a 'just and fair' authority, is not a hugely controversial one. It is usual for states to be held accountable (or at least attempted to be) for not fulfilling their duties and obligations in promoting and safeguarding the articles defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and all subsequent treaties.<sup>2</sup> In present circumstances, where human rights form such a potent hegemonic framework for the accepted ethical behaviour of governments and are valid grounds for international condemnation, it is difficult to think back to a time when global concern about Chile on the same basis was a novelty.<sup>3</sup>

This framework, which is now so ubiquitous in foreign policy and international organisations (perhaps more in writing than in practice), did not suddenly appear, fully fleshed out, on the international stage but instead was formed by the circumstances which accompanied its rise during the last fifty years.<sup>4</sup> Historians of the modern period place the "breakthrough" of this new rhetoric within international and domestic politics in the '70s, when the concern for human rights "left the confines and corridors of international politics",<sup>5</sup> and evolved to become the self-evident paradigm that they are now. An important milestone in this trajectory was the international uproar that was caused by the ascension of a brutal and repressive junta in Chile, presided over by General Augusto Pinochet. Historians remark that this is the first time that a government had been so persistently condemned from multiple fronts (international organisations, bilateral diplomacy, NGO's and solidarity groups etc.) on the basis of human rights violations perpetuated by said administration.<sup>6</sup> Much like the Dutch prime-minister had been in 1975, the situation in Chile mobilised many different persons and groups into action, and together they became a driving force of the emergence of human rights narratives in condemning foreign regimes and institutions. Prior to this, criticism of other nations had often been expressed in terms familiar to the Cold War

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<sup>1</sup> IISG, APvDA 2485.

<sup>2</sup> The UN even developed a multi-year, cyclical review mechanism that all member states are subjected to, the Universal Periodic Review.

<sup>3</sup> Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *Human rights in the twentieth century* (Cambridge 2011). p.2.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick William Kelly, "Magic Words'. The Advent of Transnational Human Rights Activism in Latin-America's Southern Cone in the long 70s.', in: Jan Eckel en Samuel Moyn ed., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia 2014) 88-106. p. 89-90.

<sup>5</sup> Hoffmann, *Human rights in the twentieth century*. p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Notably Samuel Moyn and Jan Eckel in *The Last Utopia, The Ambivalence of Good, and Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* and Robert Brier in *Poland's Solidarity Movement and the Global Politics of Human Rights*.

mentality, denouncing state's behaviour vis-à-vis their citizens when they were part of the opposing block and focussing on the political and economic structures as a major factor in determining why a government was deserving of scrutiny.<sup>7</sup> The framework of human rights allowed for persons and networks with opposing worldviews to come together in opposition to the junta's actions by highlighting a more depoliticized concern for the wellbeing of Chileans citizens, relying on a seemingly neutral and agreed-upon set of standards that all states, irrespective of their political system, should adhere to.<sup>8</sup>

This growing importance of the language of human rights in activism for Chile was a gradual process that spanned several decades, and some group and institution were quicker in adopting this framework than others. The emergence of a rights-based discourse in Dutch foreign policy has already been researched from multiple angles,<sup>9</sup> but there has been no similar enquiry into Dutch civil society organisations' (CSOs) adoption or instrumentalization of this rhetoric. The Dutch government stood out as one of the first administrations to explicitly incorporate the promotion of human rights into its foreign affairs policy, not only in relation to Chile.<sup>10</sup> But did this tendency also extend to non-state actors in the Netherlands who might have a more explicit political stance towards the Chilean issue and were less beholden to party politics and the concern for re-election? The particular case of Chile and the many transnational solidarity movements it inspired has been the subject of some considerable research, mainly collected in the book *European Solidarity with Chile, 1970s – 1980s*.<sup>11</sup> However this publication is missing a Dutch perspective, which is remarkable as the Dutch CSO concerned with organising solidarity with Chile, the *Chili Komitee Nederland* (CKN), is one of the longest lasting committees of its kind. Its period of activity dates from before the coup to after Chile's transition to democracy, from 1972 to 1990. Did the unusual position of already being in existence as Pinochet took over power translate into a diverging approach to the new narrative of human rights? In other words, does the case of the CKN mirror the more general usage of this new rhetoric that is convalescing around Chile, or does it present an alternative progression towards this new paradigm? This thesis will attempt to fill this small gap in the historiography by analysing the publications and messaging of the CKN and through a discourse analysis of these sources the research will ask: *How and when did the CKN adopt and use human rights discourse in communication with the public and the writing of propaganda material?* In order to answer this question, the research has been further specified to ask: What were the dominant frameworks for activism of this movement? How does human rights language or discourse factor into this? Is there anything unusual in this trajectory?

Historians' interest in human rights gathered steam during the '90s, around the same time that an increasing number of foreign interventions were instigated under the pretext that they would serve to stave off a humanitarian disaster.<sup>12</sup> The first attempts at tracing the origins of the idea of universal rights applicable to all of mankind cast the net far into the past. Lynn Hunt, for example,

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Harvard 2012). p. 5-7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem. p. 140.

<sup>9</sup> See: Peter Malcontent, *Op kruistocht in de derde wereld, de reacties van de Nederlandse regering op ernstige en stelselmatige schendingen van fundamentele mensenrechten in ontwikkelingslanden* (1998); Floribert Baudet, *'Het heeft onze aandacht'. Nederland en de rechten van de mens in Oost-Europa en Joegoslavië* (2001), Peter Baehr et al., *Human Rights in the Foreign Policy of the Netherlands* (2002);

<sup>10</sup> Jan Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good: Human Rights in International Politics Since the 1940s* (Oxford 2019). p. 190-192, 199.

<sup>11</sup> Kim Christiaens, Idesbald Goddeeris en Magaly Rodriguez Garcia, ed., *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s - 1980s*. (Frankfurt 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Hoffmann, *Human rights in the twentieth century*. p. 2.

attributed early conceptions of inalienable personal rights and freedoms to Ancient Greek society or Enlightened thinkers and philosophers, from where it underwent different stages and evolutions before gaining real prominence the western worldview during the Modern period, cumulating with the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>13</sup>

More recent explorations of these origins, like Samuel Moyn has done in his influential book *The Last Utopia*, refute these claims, pointing out that despite the signing of the UDHR, human rights were not a serious topic of discussion and contention in international politics until much later. Additionally, these proto-rights often excluded large sections of a society, such as slaves, women or working class people, thus they miss the key factor of being “universal”. Moyn places the breakthrough moment in the ‘70s, which he described as the accumulation of the growing pull of a “last utopia”. Before this decade the practice of appealing to human rights barely held any political validity or argumentative power outside of the conference chambers of the United Nations (UN), before suddenly arriving onto the international stage and into public life.<sup>14</sup> In a time that ideologies like liberalism and communism, and the strong antagonism between the two as a driving force of international politics, were losing traction, human rights were seen as a new, depoliticized moral framework that states and organisations from all over the political spectrum could engage with.

Although the ‘70s as a “breakthrough” period for human rights has not been contested, some historians have pointed out that this decade receives an undue amount of attention at the expense of research into later decades. Robert Brier has most vocally called for histories of human rights that look to other periods in their own rights, not just as a lead-up to or a consequence of some other decade.<sup>15</sup> For instance he characterizes the ‘80s as a time of contestation still, when human rights, their practices and possibilities were getting established and activists began to experiment and understand how this new-found tool could be used and framed to their advantage.<sup>16</sup> It is in the spirit of these arguments that this thesis seeks to look beyond the ‘70s as a closed-off, self-contained period in terms of the evolution of human rights, and instead aims to focus on the transitional nature of that era, bleeding into the ‘80s, as a time where new discourses within activism were being shaped and found their audience.

Another marker of early human rights history is the historicist framing applied in a narratively satisfying manner, “describing an inevitable path to the current paradigm of international, universal human rights as the barometer for morality.”<sup>17</sup> Stefan Ludwig Hoffman wrote in his introduction on the Genealogy of Human Rights that in order to understand the phenomenon of human rights, historians have to step away from a triumphalist and teleological explanation and exploration of the emergence of human rights, instead allowing for contingencies, incongruencies and irregularities that their rise has encountered and produced along the way.<sup>18</sup> This call is echoed by historians like Jan Eckel, who in his historical account of human rights and foreign policy emphasizes how this new concept was not just used by governments and institutions out of “ideologically pure” humanitarian concerns, but especially gained traction because of its political usefulness. Appeals to the maxims expressed in the UDHR often served to hide self-

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<sup>13</sup> Ibidem. p. 4-6.

<sup>14</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia*. p. 121.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Brier en Sarah Panter, ‘Beyond the Quest for a “Breakthrough”’: Reflections on the Recent Historiography on Human Rights’, in: *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte / European History Yearbook. Band 16 Mobility and Biography* (Berlin, München, Boston 2016) 155-174. p. 158-162.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Brier, *Poland’s solidarity movement and the global politics of human rights* (Cambridge 2021). p. 3-5.

<sup>17</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia*. p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Hoffmann, *Human rights in the twentieth century*. p. 3-4.

interested policies behind a veneer of selfless care for people in need.<sup>19</sup> This led to a frequently inconsistent application of the defence of humanitarian principles by states, carefully avoiding clashes with interests of a higher priority while still profiting from the image of espousing ethical foreign policies.<sup>20</sup> This thesis will shed some light on this erratic history by examining how an organisation with political motives and goals engaged with this new framework of human rights and its presumed depoliticized nature. It adds to our understanding of the rise of human rights by looking at whether and how different forms of activism embraced or used human rights as a rallying and persuasion tool to gather support.

This thesis will rely on discourse analysis of material published and disseminated by the CKN between 1973 and 1988. The bulk of these sources consist of news bulletins, pamphlets, posters and other material that was aiming to persuade and activate the broader public. In order to get to a better understanding of the narratives and discourses used by the CKN and what role human rights language played here, the focus will be on the following questions: "Which were the dominant types of discourses found in the committee's material? When and how were these types of discourse employed, in what contexts were they (most often) used? How present is the usage of human rights language, and does this change over time? If, so, when and how? Phrases, arguments and language will be considered part of a human rights discourse when the rights and freedoms that are advocated for by activists are based on a claim of universal human dignity. Primary sources will be examined in chronological order to discern whether any shifts in discourse occur over time and in which period this takes place. This thesis is mostly concerned with primary sources that were meant to be shared and propagated throughout Dutch society, but other material such as minutes from meetings that pertain to the strategy and messaging activists agreed to use to frame their engagement will also be considered.

The *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* (IISG) in Amsterdam holds the entire archive of the CKN, although the surrendered materials from the '70s are less complete and structured than those from the '80s. This thesis will primarily rely on the information that has been gathered into this collection, with contributions found in other archives where they are relevant. For example, in addition to the committee's archive the IISG also has a specific collection around the theme of solidarity movements from the Netherlands, with a subsection of publications of groups related to Chile, which was extensively explored. The inventory of both of these archives can be assumed to be incomplete due to the amateurish nature of their safekeeping before the hand-over to the IISG. Especially documents regarding propaganda activities seem to be collected and organised in a rather haphazard fashion, with some years yielding much more material than others. Under these circumstances it is possible that the material present at the Institute might not be representative for the movement as a whole. However, the material that was collected for research was found to be sufficient and consistent enough for tentative conclusions to be drawn.

The choice was made to concentrate on specific types of documents that were part of the communications and propaganda strategy of the committee. This was done to get an idea of the narratives that activists and organisers at that time thought would provoke engagement and convince people to participate in their actions or, at the very least, take an interest in the issues presented. Subsequently this thesis will try to formulate a hypothesis to account for any changes and anomalies that might be unearthed. However, the difficulty with this type of discourse analysis is that often writers and organisers do not make these decisions in a conscious manner, in a way

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<sup>19</sup> Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good*. p. 340-342.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Malcontent, 'Nederland, mensenrechten en de revisionistische 'big bang' theorie', in: Jacco Pekelder, Remco Raben en Mathieu Segers ed., *De wereld volgens Nederland. Nederlandse buitenlandse politiek in historisch perspectief* (Amsterdam 2015) 128-151. p. 143-144.

that leaves a trace in the available sources. It is more likely for certain frameworks to just ‘make more sense’ in the context that activists were working in, and thus they naturally gravitated towards one or the other. In order to determine whether certain choices regarding what narratives to appeal to were made with intent and why this was or was not the case, the close reading of primary sources is supplemented by a number of interviews with persons intimately involved with the committee in different periods. For this research were interviewed: Max Arian, journalist and founding member of the CKN who stayed active until 1975; Herman Vuijsje, another journalist and primarily active around the CKN’s boycott activities, who remained involved until 1980; and Jan de Kievid, a member during the later phase of the committee, who began working as a volunteer in 1984 and quickly became a salaried staff member until Chile’s transition to democracy, starting in 1989. This oral history component will further explore how certain narratives came to be preferred over others.

This thesis will be divided into three chapters. The first will provide a more thorough exploration of the situation in Chile that led to such global outrage and the context that the CKN was operating in. Besides a brief history and overview of Chilean solidarity worldwide, this section will also offer a run through of the most important beats in the biography of the CKN in order to gain a better understanding of the background in which the studied sources were produced. The latter two chapters will expand on the results of the discourse analysis and interviews, separated into two distinct periods. The first period will span from 1973 to 1979 and the second from 1980 to 1989. These timeframes are distinct from each other in a number of ways, which will become apparent in the first chapter. The demarcation in the committee’s history is mainly based on difference in methods of framing, but also on the new cast of characters that came to populate the group in the ‘80s. Former members of the CKN also think about the chronology of the committee as existing of two “phases” along these same lines.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Personal interview with Jan de Kievid.



## The Coup and the Committee

### The Coup in Chile

On September 11<sup>th</sup> 1973, a violent military coup in Santiago overthrew the president of Chile, Salvador Allende, who had been democratically elected three years prior. He had won these elections with a programme inspired by socialist principles, that vowed to upturn capitalist economic structures and enact extensive land-reforms.<sup>22</sup> His government, which united members from six leftist parties in the Unidad Popular, was also removed from office. Allende's intention of creating a socialist nation had made him unpopular with the middle and upper classes, as well as the Chilean military, foreign businesses and anti-communist leaders abroad. The latter were concerned about the global implications of his rise to power and the US especially was anxious about the emergence of a socialist country 'in their backyard'.<sup>23</sup> However, he would never be able to fully implement the changes he desired, as three years after assuming the presidency, following a summer marked by political turmoil and increasing instability, Allende took his life in order to evade being captured by the army. He was replaced by a 4-man junta of commanding officers, of whom General Augusto Pinochet would emerge as the *de facto* dictator. Initially the junta's primary focus was on persecuting and exterminating any and all leftist elements within Chile, targeting politicians, activists, union leaders and those 'sympathizing with the left'. Forced exile, unlawful detention, often in concentration-like camps where suspects were systematically and brutally tortured, and summary executions became the order of the day for those who were now part of the opposition. Parallel to this crack-down, the new government sought to reverse Allende's economic policies by bringing back a free-market economy and re-establishing ties with foreign companies and investors.<sup>24</sup>

### The Coup abroad

On the day of the coup, many foreign reporters and journalists were already stationed in Chile on account of the months of political unrest and demonstrations that had preceded it. This meant correspondents were able to quickly notify media outlets, newspapers and broadcasting organisations abroad of the power-grab that was taking place. The coup provoked an immediate reaction from multiple states, with foreign governments and political parties calling for a restoration of democracy in Chile and massive protests being held in major cities in the West. This widespread indignation against the junta would, albeit with less fervour, keep its momentum during the following 16 years that Pinochet and his co-conspirators remained in office and rekindle whenever their violent conduct against the Chilean population worsened. Historians of the development of human rights, like Jan Eckel, describe the international effort to oppose the junta from abroad as one of the first global movements that systematically used the abuse of human rights as the foundation for denouncing and opposing a government.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jan Eckel, "Under a Magnifying Glass": The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies', in: Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge 2010) 321-342. p. 323.

<sup>23</sup> Paul E. Sigmund, *The United States and Democracy in Chile* (Baltimore 1993). p. 62-66.

<sup>24</sup> Eckel, 'Under a Magnifying Glass'. p. 323-324.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 321-323.

The international attention for the coup and the subsequent repression and human rights abuses is noteworthy for its time due to its potency and longevity, lasting until Chile's return to democracy in 1989. Other violent regimes that materialized around the same time did not provoke the same outrage and indignation, nor for such a long period.<sup>26</sup> This can be attributed to a number of converging factors. One is the unprecedented brutality of the regime, which, despite operating on a continent that had known a number of violent coups and military dictatorships around the same period, still stood out among them in cruelty, with the numbers of dead, disappeared or tortured victims numbering in the tens of thousands.<sup>27</sup> Not only was the regime vicious, but the international community was a witness to its ruthlessness. During his presidency Pinochet and his government continually allowed reporters and journalists to enter the country and while their visits were restricted and monitored, foreign correspondents still managed to catch a glimpse of the oppressive policies that Chileans were subject to, and reported on this once returned. Communication from internal human rights groups to foreign organisations was also less limited than one would expect, allowing for a constant stream of information to leave the country and fuel opposition movements abroad.<sup>28</sup>

International goodwill and interest for Allende's project also played a significant role in creating such a widespread opposition movement to his successors. As 'the first democratically elected Marxist president', as he was sometimes called, the execution of his policies was followed abroad by politicians and activists who were eager to see whether he would succeed in bringing socialism to Chile in a constitutional and legal manner. People from both the New Left movement and the more traditional leftist and social-democratic parties in the West, as well as Eastern Europe, were excited by the possibilities that Allende's rise to power presented. Mainly, the potential of a new trajectory towards a socialist society that did not entail violent revolution to achieve the desired outcome. The violent overthrow of his government also shattered the hope that he had inspired abroad, and the attention that had been concentrated on his political experiment quickly directed itself against the regime that had toppled him.<sup>29</sup>

One of the main types of groups that emerged to denounce Pinochet and his regime, as well as support oppressed Chileans, were national and local solidarity movements, to which the CKN belonged. This category was made up of smaller civil societies and committees, bringing together politicians, activists, journalists and engaged civilians from various parties, organisations and trade unions. As opposed to other areas of anti-Pinochet opposition that Eckel differentiates, like national governments and human rights NGO's, this category is more diverse in terms of the kinds of people and groups that were active for the cause. Broadly speaking they all shared a left-leaning or progressive tendency, hailing from a broad spectrum of more traditional communists to activists from the New Left, some more dogmatic in their politics than others, sometimes inspired by Christian morality or gathered in faith-based groups.<sup>30</sup> Their organisational efforts were focussed on a diverse group of tasks, ranging from disseminating information about the atrocities in Chile within their own countries, to collecting donations to support Chilean causes directly, as well as lobbying their governments or businesses that interacted with the Andean country.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good*. p. 4-6.

<sup>27</sup> Eckel, 'Under a Magnifying Glass'. p. 326-327.

<sup>28</sup> Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good*. p. 246.

<sup>29</sup> Jan Eckel, 'Allende's Shadow, Leftist Furor, and Human Rights: The Pinochet Dictatorship in International Politics', in: Kim Christiaens, Idesbald Goddeeris and Magaly Rodriguez Garcia ed., *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s-1980s* (Frankfurt 2014) 67-92. p. 67-69.

<sup>30</sup> Christiaens, Goddeeris en Rodriguez Garcia, *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s - 1980s*. p. 15-16.

<sup>31</sup> Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good*. p. 249-250.

### Anti-Pinochet activism in the Netherlands

The violent regime change and Allende's death provoked a response in the Netherlands similar to that in other European countries. The 15<sup>th</sup> of September saw the biggest number of demonstrators in the streets of major Dutch cities, gathering some 20 000 people outraged by what had perspired in Chile.<sup>32</sup> The Dutch government, which at that moment was headed by the leftist-progressive Den Uyl-coalition, vowed to stop any promised developmental aid from reaching the new regime, instead opting to redirect these funds to the reception of refugees and exiles or to support Chilean social programs and organisations. Prime-Minister Den Uyl initially wanted to refuse to recognize the junta government as a mark of protest against the coup. However, after deliberation with his minister of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch ambassador to Chile, he decided to change course, acknowledging Pinochet as the new leader but pledging to keep interactions with the government to a minimum. This would remain a point of contention between the cabinet and the civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who preferred to keep relations with Chile cordial.<sup>33</sup>

The biggest international solidarity organisation focused specifically on Chile in the Netherlands was the CKN, which turned its attention to its new perceived tasks of securing funds, providing information and organising protests and campaigns in opposition to the junta. The committee was already established in 1972 by a group of people originating from different leftist circles, who were inspired by Allende's rise to power and wanted to give support to it from the Netherlands.<sup>34</sup> After 1973 they switched gears and became the national campaigner of the anti-Pinochet cause, focussing on larger manifestations and projects in tandem with numerous local Chile committees located in cities and towns, who organised more small-scale (fundraising) events.<sup>35</sup> The group had close ties to the Dutch government and the Labour Party (PvdA), but this did not constrain the CKN from being overtly critical of official foreign policy regarding Chile when they did not agree with it.<sup>36</sup>

The committee was supported in its endeavours by the newly established Chili Beweging Nederland (CBN), a cooperation of the main leftist and Christian-democrat political parties, Dutch trade unions and other interested youth movements and political organisations that wanted to contribute to the cause. The CBN acted as a network that facilitated collaboration and funding between the different members, while the CKN was the main organising entity. The network mostly worked together during the launch of large campaigns and petitions or the planning of demonstrations. Other smaller groups also operated in the Low Countries, often focussed around a particular issue, such as the reception of Chilean refugees and exiles or cultural foundations that promoted Chilean arts.<sup>37</sup>

Internally the CKN was made up of a number of sub-groups which carried out different tasks and were overseen by a Board. There was the 'core group' that managed the daily running of the CKN; the 'documentation group' was mostly concerned with gathering information about events in Chile through their own correspondents and research, but also through reports of other organisations like Amnesty International or the UN; the 'culture group' who attempted to familiarize the Netherlands with Chilean culture through expositions, concerts, cinematic events

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<sup>32</sup> Peter Malcontent, *Op kruistocht in de derde wereld: de reacties van de Nederlandse regering op ernstige en stelselmatige schendingen van fundamentele mensenrechten in ontwikkelingslanden 1973-1981* (Hilversum 1998). p. 150.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 154, 162-164.

<sup>34</sup> IISG, DSN 100 – CKN, 'Jaarverslag 1973. Jaarverslag over de periode 1972-1973.'

<sup>35</sup> Hans Beerends, *Weg met Pinochet. Een kwart eeuw solidariteit met Chili* (Amsterdam 1998). p. 26-28.

<sup>36</sup> Malcontent, 'Op kruistocht in de derde wereld'. p. 150-151.

<sup>37</sup> Beerends, *Weg met Pinochet*. p. 33-36.

and other gatherings; the ‘action group’ was responsible for conceiving of, planning and coordinating national campaigns; and finally the ‘group for refugee aid’ took up the task of assisting refugees by supporting them or connecting them to local groups and institutions for help.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from organising coordinated campaigns, demonstrations and fundraising events, the CKN also had given itself the task of informing the Dutch public of the living conditions under the junta. Interested groups, schools or associations could request the committee to send a speaker who would give a presentation about the coup and the subsequent repression, illustrated with a slide show of pictures and followed by a group discussion or an exposé on the ways Dutch people could get engaged. They also produced a number of information maps or booklets filled with material relating to specific themes, such as Chile’s economic situation or the plight of detainees. These bulletins and pamphlets would be distributed among interested clubs or youth groups. Around the annual commemorations of the coup or the launch of big campaigns the committee would also publish one-off newspapers or take out space in journals, magazines or on radio broadcasts to remind people of what was happening in Chile.<sup>39</sup>

### **CKN’s history**

The first days after the coup were full of spontaneous demonstrations and meetings, quickly organised by political groups and movements shocked by what was happening, and attended by engaged citizens wishing to profess their solidarity. During these chaotic days the committee quickly had to reorient its core tasks to adapt to the new situation. Now the organisation of a vocal opposition to the junta’s violent repression and support for the Chilean resistance by the Dutch population and the government became the committee’s *raison d’être*. People eager to let their voices be heard easily found their way to the many events set up in rapid succession in different cities, which were attended in great numbers.<sup>40</sup> The rushed atmosphere and *ad hoc* decision making of that period has left little in the way of archived announcement and invitations to rallies. As the months progressed the CKN reorganised its structure and began the work of keeping the political crisis relevant for the public and convince them to continue engaging in local actions and contributing to fundraising efforts. From this period stems a steady stream of publications, notices and other written material distributed by the committee.

The CKN’s endeavours were maintained throughout the ‘70s amidst waning interest for their cause. As more years separated current affairs from the coup it seemed that international solidarity had done little to alleviate circumstances for Chileans, and the CKN saw dwindling numbers in attendance of their activities. The Chilean opposition in exile, which was the main benefactor of funds raised in the Netherlands, had failed to organise a united internal resistance force strong enough to withstand the junta’s ruthless repression of ‘political deviants’. This meant that from 1975 onwards the new regime had firmly established itself in Santiago and squashed any hope of a swift reshuffling of power.<sup>41</sup> As a consequence the focus of the committee shifted from aid to internal and external resistance to Pinochet on the American continent towards targeted and planned domestic campaigns. The goal was to reorient the nation’s attention back to the plight of

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<sup>38</sup> IISG, DSN 100 – CKN, ‘Jaarverslag 1973’.

<sup>39</sup> IISG, DSN 100 – CKN, ‘Jaarverslag 1973’; DSN 98-99.

<sup>40</sup> Beerends, *Weg met Pinochet*. p. 26-31.

<sup>41</sup> Personal interview with Jan de Kievit.



*Fig. 1: Picture of Dutch and Chilean protesters calling for a boycott of Chilean apples in front of a fruit auction, photographer unknown, IISG, Archief Chili Komitee Nederland, date unknown.*

oppressed Chileans with simultaneous events in different cities, which were highly publicized by the CKN and local solidarity groups.<sup>42</sup> Every year during the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September many events were planned and a commemoration of the coup took place to remind the public of what had happened, and was still happening, on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>43</sup> From 1975 onwards the CKN, in collaboration with the CBN and local committees, began to coordinate boycott actions against apples and other commodities that were imported from Chile and partly subsidized the unequal economic system that Pinochet had put in place. They also targeted Dutch companies that wanted to trade with or were contracted by the Chilean government. This strategy of financially impacting the junta as much as possible found an enthusiastic audience of people who were encouraged by the actionable resistance work that boycotting presented.<sup>44</sup> The active campaigning for apple boycotts in particular, which reached its height in 1977 and 1978, managed to revitalize the interest in solidarity work for Chile and mobilize people in a spectacular way and many new local chapters were founded to assist in this work.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> IISG, ACKN 6, report on the evaluation sessions.

<sup>43</sup> Beerends, *Weg met Pinochet*. p. 41-42.

<sup>44</sup> Jan Joost Teunissen, 'Nederlandse solidariteit met Chili', in: Oscar Catalan Aravena and Andre Frank ed., *Chili onder Pinochet. Een Latijnsamerikaans volk in gijzeling* (Amsterdam 1984) 153-170. p. 154-160.

<sup>45</sup> Beerends, *Weg met Pinochet*. p. 42-45.

During the '80s the trend of focused campaigns based around boycott activities and the economic isolation of Chile tapered off as the CKN began to diminish in relevancy. The beginning of the decade was characterized by a stabilizing of the numbers of participants, some 2.000, to commemorative events and protests and a shrinking of local committees. The movement was not attracting new people or occasional participants outside of the core members and Chilean exiles involved in activism, who were heavily invested in the cause. Nonetheless, where other national and local groups disbanded or severely scaled back their activities, the Chilean solidarity movements in the Netherlands still managed to persist and were able to maintain a large enough basis of support and contributors to keep their activism viable.<sup>46</sup>

Declining interest in the repression in Chile was due to a number of different factors. Internally in Chile persecution of political dissent had been waning since the late '70s. Having ruthlessly and thoroughly expunged the country of its opposition movement, it was simply less necessary to enforce disappearances or keep scores of prisoners in concentration and torture facilities. Although these practices never stopped, the junta did move to disband its secret police service, the *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* (DINA) in 1977 and replace it with the *Central Nacional de Informaciones*, which kept a lower profile. This was, however, more of a 'cosmetic' measure to placate the regime's critics. The prison population was never seriously brought down and exiles who had left the country in the previous years were prevented from returning by refusing to issue entrance visas.<sup>47</sup> The military regime was completely entrenched in their seat of power, which was coupled with a slight upturn in the economy, something Pinochet and his allies attributed to the neo-liberal economy they had introduced. The leadership felt so secure in their position that they organised a referendum on a new constitution which would legalize the junta's position in government. The referendum was heavily manipulated and the opposition barely had legal means to advocate for their position, but the overwhelming results in favour of Pinochet discouraged many activists in the Netherlands who felt that their work was not producing any noticeable results anymore.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, solidarity activists concerned with Chile were vying for attention amidst other high-profile cases of state terrorism or significant power changes. In Latin-America alone the Argentinian coup of 1976 with its subsequent, far more deadly, Dirty War and the Sandinista Revolution, which toppled the US-backed Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, redirected the attention of human rights and leftist solidarity activists away from Chile. In the slow years of the early '80s it was the small but very active community of Chilean exiles which held the remaining local committees standing. The CKN itself scaled back its activities and focused on lobbying the more conservative successor of the Den Uyl-cabinet to keep denouncing Chile internationally and try to correct the normalization of Pinochet's position.<sup>49</sup> During this period the committee intensified its collaboration with other Third World movements. For example, campaigns to boycott Chilean fruit were combined with boycotts of Argentinian produce and outback oranges from apartheid South Africa. There was also an increased cooperation with other solidarity movements focused on South-American countries and issues.<sup>50</sup> From 1978 onwards the Chili-focused bulletin of the CKN changed into a publication interested more broadly in Latin affairs, titled *Alerta*, which was the collaborative effort of 14 different country-focused committees.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibidem. p. 88-89.

<sup>47</sup> Eckel, 'Under a Magnifying Glass'. p. 336-337.

<sup>48</sup> Personal interview with Jan de Kievid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>50</sup> IISG, DSN 98 – Chili Algemeen; Arch 02498 AMA.

<sup>51</sup> Beerends, *Weg met Pinochet*. p. 88.

Chile began to attract attention again in 1983, when the economic upswing was followed by a recession which exacerbated problems of wealth inequality, extreme poverty and tough working conditions. Internal opposition began to rise again, spearheaded by labour unions and supported by a segment of the Catholic clergy. For the first time in years Chile experienced street protests and the accompanying violence, and self-organising groups, which had been growing in working class neighbourhoods, became more visible. In the Netherlands a concurrent increase in activities and interest could be sensed and the commemoration of 10 years of dictatorship attracted thousands of participants more than in the previous years despite the heavy rain that was forecasted. Participation in the committee's events and actions rose and fell with moments of increasing and declining political instability, as each year the CKN wondered in its papers if this was Pinochet's last period in power. The group started to struggle financially in the last years of the regime but managed to continue its work up until, and even after, the national referendum and the partial transition to democracy, which was started in 1989.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibidem. p.90-95; Personal interview with Kievid

## The First Phase 1973-1979.

It is remarkable that, in the CKN's busy first 7 years of post-coup activities, human rights language as a framework to condemn the junta's alleged abuses does not feature in the organisation's output. Instead, the group employed various recurring themes and tropes to portray the regime's past and present actions. There was some variance in the topics that were highlighted, but they reliably included: a short description the events of the coup, reference to Allende's death and loss of democracy; accusation of summary executions, acts of torture, and unlawful imprisonment structurally committed against political prisoners; and (later) the reversal of Allende's economic policies, which had plunged a significant part of the population into poverty. These were the most important facts and points of information that were regularly highlighted to convey the horrors that were taking place in Chile. In their coverage, the CKN seemed to prefer referencing specific crimes and cruelties committed by the army and the DINA. This becomes especially apparent in longer text formats, for example information booklets and brochures that were sold by the committee to groups and individuals wishing to spread awareness. These documents often featured personal testimonies of foreign journalists or Chileans who had been arrested and brought to one of the various detention and torture facilities operated by the DINA. They could go into gruesome detail about the various torture methods, the mistreatment of prisoners, and the toll on the families of victims.<sup>53</sup>

A significant part of the accusation they raised against Pinochet fall under violations of the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights and their enumeration resembles Amnesty International's strategy, which also tended to focus on bringing attention to specific cases of murder, torture and imprisonment against civilians. However, a topic that the CKN similarly pays frequent attention to is the economic reality of being ruled by the junta. In short summaries of what was happening under the military dictatorship the extensive liberalisation of the economy, and the detrimental effect this had on Chile's workers and farmers, were always mentioned alongside the crackdown on political opponents. This is a significant departure from what human rights organisations were doing, as their concern was not with the political system that was in place, but with the human suffering that was perpetuated in the name of national security.<sup>54</sup> In general this is one of the more significant distinctions between solidarity groups and human rights organisations in their activism and messaging. Jan Eckel remarks that, despite the differing objectives, many other national Chile committees also partially adopted the rhetoric of human rights abuses as a tool of denouncement.<sup>55</sup> Yet the CKN seems to avoid any allusions to the abuse of human rights, and instead turns to discourses of war (especially the Second World War) and imperialism to give additional meaning and urgency to the many descriptions of torture and despair, and to bring the discussion closer to the Dutch frame of reference.

### The CKN's framing devices

The framing that was most extensively used to convey the cruelty of Pinochet's regime was that of the Second World War. From constantly identifying the junta as a group of fascist leaders, to directly comparing the coup and its aftermath to what the Dutch population had suffered under the German invasion, the subject of WWII was interwoven in the CKN's communications from the very first days after the coup. Especially "fascist" as a qualifier for the junta or Pinochet's

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<sup>53</sup> IISG, ARCH 02498 AMA 'Chili Documentatiemap – 2'.

<sup>54</sup> Eckel, 'Allende's Shadow'. p. 76-79.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 79-83.





Fig 2: A CKN poster reading: "Chile. fascism then - fascism now", IISG, ACKN, illustrator unknown, 1978.

dictatorship often makes an appearance in texts or is alluded to on posters containing symbols and references to fascist imagery.<sup>56</sup> Whether or not Pinochet's policies or ideology can actually be considered fascist, the obvious connotation with leaders like Hitler and Mussolini, and the havoc they wrecked on the European continent, was extensively utilized. Moreover, these allusions were not subtle. A clear equivalency was frequently established between the Third Reich and Pinochet's Chile, something most evident in phrases like: "*what is happening there is as bad, maybe even worse than what we experienced in 1940-1945*"<sup>57</sup>, and "*that date, the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1973, will always be etched into the memories of Chileans, just like we in the Netherlands cannot forget what happened in May 1940.*"<sup>58</sup> These examples come from an information booklet and press releases meant to inspire people to support the CKN's activities financially or by becoming involved themselves.

Not only are the two events regularly connected, but the linkage is made to experiences specific to Dutch people who had lived through the war, what "*we*" had gone through, and thus, could empathise with. In an advertisement from 1977, addressed to Dutch grocers selling Chilean fruit, hunger in Chile is related to the Dutch "*Hongerwinter*"<sup>59</sup> of 1944-1945, and the regime there "*also*" detains and murders people in concentration camps, mirroring the actions of the Gestapo. Participating in trade of fruit and other goods from the Andean country was equalled to supporting a "*contemporary Hitler-regime*".<sup>60</sup> In another poster announcing a commemoration protest in Amsterdam entrepreneurs who continue to trade with Chile or use its exported goods were called "*collaborator*", a loaded term heavily tied to people who supported or spied for the enemy forces during the Occupation.<sup>61</sup> Occasionally this framing device was also emphasized as an ominous warning-signal, i.e. in phrases as: "*... and just like the dark days that preceded the second world war, such is the way that fascism is rearing its head and threatening to establish itself again.*"<sup>62</sup> These allusions would resonate with Dutch adults in the '70s, a significant number of whom had personally experienced the German occupation, or had grown up intimately knowing stories about that period.

Another important discourse that often appears in the campaigning material and is more particular to the leftist worldview is the rhetoric of anti-imperialism and the foreign interference in support of the coup on behalf of economic interests. During Allende's presidency many foreign investors and companies had pulled out of the country in the wake of sweeping nationalization decrees. Together with the American Department of State, they were concerned about Allende's economic policies and his rise in popularity in 'America's backyard'. It was an open secret that, prior to the coup, the CIA had many informers and provocateurs stationed in Chile who were helping organise an opposition movement to Allende's programme.<sup>63</sup> This, according to the CKN and other solidarity committees, had contributed to the destabilization of the Chilean economy and created an atmosphere of turmoil and social unrest in which the coup could take place. This narrative of US meddling in Chilean affairs on behalf of capital and to protect the economic world order was

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<sup>56</sup> Jan de Kievit, 'Posters of the Dutch Solidarity Movement with Chile (1972-1990)', *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (2013) 109-113.

<sup>57</sup> IISG, ACKN 30 – persberichten: "*Het is even erg, misschien nog erger dan hier in 1940-1945, wat daar nu gebeurt.*" Own translation.

<sup>58</sup> IISG, DSN 100 – CKN: "*Die datum, 11 september 1973, staat voor altijd in het geheugen van de Chilenen gegriift – zoals wij in Nederland niet kunnen vergeten wat er in mei 1940 gebeurde.*" Own translation.

<sup>59</sup> A period of severe famine during the last winter of the Occupation, especially in Dutch cities.

<sup>60</sup> 'Aan importeurs van Chileense Granny Smith appelen', *Volkskrant*, 04-03-1977.

<sup>61</sup> IISG, DSN 98 – Chili Algemeen.

<sup>62</sup> IISG, ACKN 30 – persberichten: "*...en zoals in de zwarte dagen die de tweede wereldoorlog vooraf gingen, zó heft het fascisme opnieuw zijn hoofd op en dreigt zich weer te vestigen.*" Own translation.

<sup>63</sup> Sigmund, *The United States and Democracy in Chile*. 64-80.

often used to provoke a response of indignation and worry.<sup>64</sup> Usage of this discourse could take on a foreboding tone, warning the reader of the implications of such overt foreign interference. One invitation to an information evening about the situation in Chile described the greater implications of the coup as such:

*Because the powers who toppled Allende and his supporters [...] are active throughout the world, even in our own country. We also have to be alert and [...] never cease fighting the powers of capital, bureaucracy, and large international corporations, who see us only as consumers and opportunity for profit.*<sup>65</sup>

A reworked edition of the CKN's information booklet on Chile, updated to reflect changes after the coup, also devoted multiple articles to unveiling the ways corporate, Brazilian and American interests had played a part in the junta's rise to power. One of the titles reads: "*coup d'état by and for American Capital*".<sup>66</sup> While not as ubiquitous as the Fascism/World War II framing, representing Chile as the country where the "hope" of workers for a more social and equal future had been destroyed by foreign forces, who had conspired through illegal means against a democratically elected government, was nonetheless a reoccurring narrative that was particular to the more politically oriented solidarity groups.<sup>67</sup>



Fig 3: The bowing Pinochet figure is saying: "everything will be business as usual again", text on the suited figures reads "KenneCott, I.T.T. and Anaconda Copper", Illustration from Chili Dokumentatie map 2, IISG, Archief Max Arian, illustrator unknown, 1974.

<sup>64</sup> Christiaens, Goddeeris en Rodriguez Garcia, *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s - 1980s*. p. 21.

<sup>65</sup> IISG, DSN 100 – Chili: "Want de machten die Allende en zijn medestanders wreed ombrachten[...] zijn [...] overal in de wereld aktief – tot in ons eigen land. Ook wij moeten waakzaam zijn en [...] onophoudelijk de strijd aanbinden met de machten van het geld, de burokratie, de grote internationale concerns, die ons slechts zien als konsumenten en winstobjekten." Own translation.

<sup>66</sup> IISG, ARCH 02498 AMA, in dokumentatiemap 2: "Staatsgreep voor en door Amerikaans kapitaal".

<sup>67</sup> Kelly, 'Magic Words'. p. 69.

### Where are the human rights?

The favouring of these particular themes over accusations based on human rights language is especially striking when compared to the discourses used by most other groups opposed to Pinochet. Human rights-centred NGOs like Amnesty International naturally employed this framework as the basis of their activism. But governments, political parties and other political and international institutions sympathetic to the cause also quickly, albeit not exclusively, adopted a rhetoric of human rights when dealing with Chile. Other national solidarity groups who denounced the junta from a similar, leftist point of view, also made more use of this narrative in combination with other themes.<sup>68</sup> In the Netherlands it was no different. For example, the Dutch Labour Party's internal committee on Chilean (and Latin-American) affairs, alongside mentions of the 'fascist leadership' and worrisome American interference, early on also voiced concerns about the human rights record under Pinochet in their communications with the party leadership.<sup>69</sup> And when prime minister Joop den Uyl was elected to speak at the second commemoration of the coup, he alluded to the need of "anti-fascist unity" in obstructing the junta, as well as calling for an end of human rights abuses, amongst a host of other demands.<sup>70</sup> In these cases the language of human rights was not the only grounds to denounce the junta's actions, but it was a tool in the arsenal of discourses and accusations which could be charged against Pinochet's regime.

It is also certain that members of the CKN were exposed to this usage of human rights language in the Chilean context. They monitored and responded to declarations made by their own government and Dutch political parties, as well as what was happening internationally with regards to anti-Pinochet activities. The INCA-bulletin, for instance, in its surveying of acts of international solidarity with Chile, often referred to other individuals or institutions that condemned the junta with explicit mentions of human rights abuses.<sup>71</sup> As most CKN members contributed in some way to each new INCA issue, and the bulletin probably was read by most members, it is safe to assume that the human rights culture that was starting to spring up around the Andean country did not go unnoticed. The committee also maintained contact with similar groups and activists abroad and regularly collaborated with the Dutch chapter of Amnesty, exchanging information for their coverage of Chile, or jointly speaking with the press to raise awareness.<sup>72</sup> Contrary to the general trend of adopting *some* human rights language as a strategy among solidarity groups, and despite this exposure to what other movements were doing and saying, the CKN itself barely, consciously or not, went along with this emerging discourse. During the interviews with former members of the committee it became clear that at the time there was little discussion about how the group's messaging should be formulated, from which angle they should try to present the Chilean case to Dutch citizens. These subjects were more of a self-evident given than something that was extensively debated. Nevertheless, some general tendencies and explanations can be gleaned to account for why the committee seems to be a bit of an outlier in this regard.

As was mentioned in the introduction, the strategy of appealing to concerns for human rights in demanding change from a particular government was especially useful because it provided a depoliticized language for activists to employ. This move away from ideological convictions and differences, and towards a more neutral focus on preventable human suffering, enabled a broad coalition of concerned citizens, institutions and statesmen to cooperate while staying away from

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<sup>68</sup> Eckel, 'Allende's Shadow'. p. 67-92.

<sup>69</sup> IISG, APvda 1495 – Latijns Amerika Komissie.

<sup>70</sup> IISG, APvda 2485.

<sup>71</sup> IISG, INCA-Bulletin and Chili Bulletin volumes 1-45.

<sup>72</sup> Personal interview met Max Arian.

politically charged discussions.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, a focus on human rights violations, often more preoccupied with political and civic rights, took attention away from underlying socio-economic factors that were at the root of structural inequality. Instead of framing the coup as a force that sought to prevent the institutionalisation of socialist principles in Chile, the fixation on political rights only centred the loss of democracy in the abstract. Concern for unlawful imprisonment and executions by Amnesty International did not highlight the fact that these atrocities were specifically committed against people with a particular political persuasion and agenda that sought to uproot the capitalist system in Chile. To be clear, the CKN also relied on graphic descriptions and reiterations of the junta's brutalities in their portrayal of the situation, but they always combined these with references to the new ultra-liberal economic system that Pinochet was putting in place. The structural economic oppression that lower-class Chileans faced was never left out of the conversation and was something that the CKN was particularly concerned with, especially as the boycotting of Chileans goods and produce became one of the central methods of activism for the group. This might be a reason why adopting some human rights language into the committee's strategy did not take place, its depoliticized nature leaving out key components of the situation in Chile that the group did not want to leave unaddressed.

Another interesting point was brought up by Max Arian during the interview, in which he stated that, as a movement that espoused a leftist worldview, at that time members were more concerned with instances or situations of 'exploitation' than of human rights violations.<sup>74</sup> Both of these concepts revolve around the unjust treatment of people under an oppressive power, but while the latter applies to any and all infringements of the UDHR, the usage of the former implies a reference to the whole exploitative economic structure as the root cause that keeps the lower class toiling for the upper class. Thus, a framework of 'exploitation' and anti-imperialism places the junta's methods of oppression into a wider political context that conforms to the worldview of many CKN members, something which human rights culture shies away from. This contrast can be glimpsed in one of the minutes of an early, pre-coup meeting of the group in which they discuss the organisation of a Russell-tribunal that was underway in Peru. This Tribunal would have the intent of officially investigating human rights abuses committed under Brazil's dictatorship and within the meeting some concerns were voiced that too much attention would be given to atrocities and not enough to the structural, material causes that had led to such a leadership. The wider political context of these violent acts would be overshadowed, but they did agree that such an endeavour could foster new interest in political developments on the continent.<sup>75</sup> This perfectly illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a human rights framework as a movement with strong political convictions and the CKN, albeit more instinctively than truly explicitly, chose to engage with other narratives.

These possible explanations all rely on trying to justify why human rights language was not employed by the group by looking at the implications of their depoliticized nature, but another part of the equation was also the pervasiveness of other effective narratives that predate the emergence of human rights. Within leftist circles of all nationalities and convictions there was a pronounced habit of referring to political opposition from the right, or all forms of coercive authority, as 'fascist'. In Chile itself the different political parties that made up the Unidad Popular also referred to their most right-wing opponents in this manner.<sup>76</sup> Or as Max Arian amusingly put

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<sup>73</sup> Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good*. p. 260.

<sup>74</sup> Personal interview with Max Arian.

<sup>75</sup> IISG, ACKN 1 – Vergaderstukken, 22-08-1973.

<sup>76</sup> For examples see the many speeches compiled in Patricio Guzmán's documentary *The Battle of Chile – Part II. The Coup d'état*.

it: “*Well, a military guy with a large cap very quickly became a fascist to us.*” Before Allende’s overthrow there was already a clear tendency in these spaces of identifying ones opponent with fascism, both domestically and internationally. This was not a one-off comparison particular to Pinochet’s regime, even though it did come to greatly permeate the narratives of domestic and exile activists.<sup>77</sup> In addition, this framework had the added benefit of conjuring the memory of a relatively recent experience with said ideology. Chilean communists, for example, explicitly preferred to refer to the junta as fascist because the language harkened back to a moment in the ‘30s and ‘40s when this growing threat enabled the formation of a front of liberal, Christian democrat and leftist parties who were united by a common enemy. By designating Pinochet in the same terms the hopes were that a broader spectrum of politically engaged people would rally to Chile’s defence.<sup>78</sup> The same can be said about the prevalence of the anti-imperialism framing. The United States especially was already a target of these kinds of accusations because of its involvements in numerous countries like Cuba and Vietnam in the decades prior. Thus, highlighting its role in the Chilean coup and the State Department’s continuing support of Pinochet’s regime intuitively fell into the repertoire of many movements on the leftist spectrum.<sup>79</sup>

In his chapter on the emergence of human rights discourse from activists in the Southern Cone of Latin America Patrick William Kelly differentiates a number of approaches to this relatively new framework. The most extreme approach was the wholesale rejection of human rights, which Kelly attributes to a continued dedication to armed struggle and the conviction that appealing to “bourgeois liberal rights” distracted from the more important material conditions of workers. In the second, more utilitarian, stance human rights were used as a strategical argument. Not the inherent worth and moral superiority of these rights was central, but how they could be used to further the revolutionary cause and win sympathy for the struggle. Lastly Kelly distinguishes how some actors began to adopt human rights not only as a convincing rhetoric, but also for its content, which could be adapted into a socialist worldview.<sup>80</sup> The case of the CKN falls in between the first two approaches, less than an outright rejection of human rights discourse, the committee was rather indifferent to it. Gravitating towards other frameworks that were already established within their ideological circles and fulfilled the aim of activating interested citizens through pointed comparisons with the past and references to shared concerns with the global world order. It seems more of an intuitive process had predisposed them to certain narratives that ideologically were closer to their understanding of the situation in Chile, and in which human rights did not have any relevancy.

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In contrast to other national solidarity committees and international activists involved with Chile from a leftist context, the CKN’s publications and materials do not contain any reference to human rights language as a basis of condemnation, making it an outlier when compared to established historiography. Even though they engaged in the same tactics as groups like Amnesty International by continually referring to the atrocities committed by the junta in the aftermath of the coup, these allegations are never placed in a framework of gross abuses of human rights in order to engage the public. Rather, the committee turned to already established narratives of fascism (and anti-fascist

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<sup>77</sup> Kim Christiaens, ‘European Reconfigurations of Transnational Activism: Solidarity and Human Rights Campaigns on behalf of Chile during the 1970s and 1980s’, *International Review of Social History* 63 (2018) 413-448. p. 424-425.

<sup>78</sup> Christiaens, Goddeeris en Rodriguez Garcia, *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s - 1980s*. p. 22.

<sup>79</sup> Christiaens, ‘European Reconfigurations of Transnational Activism’. p. 427-430.

<sup>80</sup> Kelly, ‘Magic Words’. p. 98-99.

unity) and anti-imperialism as the context for why Pinochet's regime should be stopped or at least counteracted by foreign government and movements. Although this inclination was an unconscious or intuitive one, interviewees and sources not pointing to any deliberate intent or discussion preceding this path, some contingent factors have been elaborated which may have contributed to this outcome. First, the depoliticized nature of human rights discourse did not mesh well with the explicitly political nature of the CKN's interest in Chile. Second, within the leftist worldview there already existed terms like 'exploitation' that referred to comparable situations without losing sight of underlying socio-economic structures. Lastly, there were already adequate understandings of the Chilean situation in terms of fascism and anti-imperialism that were shared among the different domestic and foreign networks that incapsulated why what was happening in Chile merited attention and activism outside of the country.

## The Second Phase 1980-1989

### Out with the old, in with the new

As was introduced in the first chapter, the '80s were a very different period for the CKN context-wise and strategy-wise. Almost a decade of international activism had not produced any significant results, general Pinochet still firmly held on to power, and the situation in Chile had seemingly normalized. The new CKN members experienced the '80s as a distinctive second phase compared to the make-up and tactics of the first phase.<sup>81</sup> The changing times were also reflected in the message and discourse the committee was putting out. Amidst a decreasing interest in leftist thought more generally, and Chile in particular, they adapted their language to maintain relevancy in the Dutch media landscape. Compared to the previous decade it is remarkable that the framework of fascism did not remain appropriate or useful in this decade. Where before nearly each mention of the junta or their government contained the qualifier 'fascist' in some capacity, the group increasingly began to refer to them with less extreme labels, such as 'military dictatorship' or 'authoritarian regime'. The comparisons and allusions to the Second World War also disappeared from descriptions of the conditions in Chile. In the '70s persons and institutions representing a (violent) authority were quickly and uncritically identified as 'fascist', but this tendency became outdated in the '80s. It had become so unusual that CKN member Jan de Kievid distinctly remembers a speech from former minister and CKN founding member Jan Pronk at a commemorative event of the coup d'état. The committee still helped organise activities each year on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, often involving speeches and performances from Chilean artists to keep the memory of Allende's demise alive. At this particular function in the mid '80s, Pronk referred to Pinochet and his allies as 'fascist' once or twice, something which at that point had become so antiquated that it stood out to De Kievid and he can still recall, some forty years later, how out of place this choice of words felt.<sup>82</sup>

Despite 'fascist' as a framing device being so ubiquitous during the '70s that no flyer or pamphlet seemed complete without it, the committee's discourse about Chile gradually made place for a reorientation towards human rights in the '80s. This new rights-cantered language became included in almost every form of publication, from brochures or posters to longer format newspapers and booklets written for special occasions. The first, unequivocal embrace of human rights culture was a 47-page brochure titled "*human rights in CHILE*". Published in 1980 as a clarification of a new rapport from the UN Working Group on Chile, the text begins with a translation of the introduction of this document, originally written by special rapporteur Abdulaye Dieye. In subsequent chapters the writers summarize some of the important findings of the UN document and supplement it with their own analysis of the situation there. The goal was to paint a picture of life in Chile under the supposed 'normalized' dictatorship, driving home the fact that political and socio-economic oppression were still commonplace there.<sup>83</sup> But it was not only in special editions that the CKN addressed human rights abuses. From 1983 onwards, publications about the new crisis of power and the brutal suppression of renewed protests and strikes increasingly referred to violations of political and civil rights. These mentions evolved from short sentences referencing the perpetuated offences, to taking up whole sections that elaborated on the different rights that were being neglected. For example, from 1985 onwards the small yearly newspaper that kept donors of the CKN informed of their activities reserved a paragraph to report

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<sup>81</sup> Personal interview Jan de Kievid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>83</sup> IISG, Bro N 519 B, *Mensenrechten in CHILI, 1980*.



on the number of new cases of imprisonment, deaths at the hand of the police or internal exile, the section simply being titled "*Human Rights*".<sup>84</sup>

But what is significant is not only that the specific usage of the human rights language dramatically increased in frequency, but also that the CKN began to identify itself with human rights culture more and more through the way they described their own activism. Going back to the newspaper for donors, the first edition in 1985 begins with a short description of the CKN's history, which portrays the post-coup period as: "[...] *we had to completely change our objective. Now we focus on [...] denouncing human rights abuses and supporting a return to democracy [...]*."<sup>85</sup> A few years later, in a small exhibition organised in honour of the CKN's 15<sup>th</sup> year of solidarity activism, one of the plaques explaining the group's history reads: "*after the coup the CKN began to expose and denounce violations of human rights and put pressure on the Dutch government [...]*."<sup>86</sup> This is an important departure from the way the CKN used to characterize itself. In a 1980 brochure the core objectives were framed as "*Supporting the resistance in Chile against the military dictatorship by campaigning for a political and economic boycott of the Chilean regime.*"<sup>87</sup> Looking back even further to 1975, in a summary of an evaluation session on the CKN's *modus operandi* the main tasks of the group were outlined as "*spreading information, translating it to the Dutch situation, coordinating and participating in protest movements and campaigns, and supporting the victims of the junta.*"<sup>88</sup> Comparing these snapshots of the different ways the committee has identified its core motives and values, it is remarkable how the members of the mid '80s retroactively portrayed their activism as an indictment of human rights abuses from the very beginning, whereas the texts of the earlier phase do not describe their activism and objectives in those terms at all.<sup>89</sup>

In taking on more human rights language in their discourse, the CKN began to slightly conform to the tendency of institutions like the UN and Amnesty International to focus on "classic" human rights. In their communications with the public they had always relied on listing the many gruesome acts perpetuated against what the junta saw as dangerous political dissidents. Executions, disappearances and tortuous ordeals were repeatedly recalled to rouse the Dutch population into action. In the later phase, however, the committee began to refer to specific freedoms covered by articles of the UDHR to qualify why these actions were unacceptable. For example, denouncing unlawful detentions or the closing of newspapers were explicitly linked to the right to a fair trial or freedom of press to further illustrate why the regime was in the wrong. This can be interpreted as recreating the "mould" of the UN's Ad Hoc Working Group reports on Chile, which took the specific articles enshrined in the Declaration as a guiding principle of which subjects or occurrences should be monitored. It meticulously covered how each article is found to be violated or adhered to during the investigation. Subsequent inquiries then evaluated whether these conditions had worsened or improved compared to the previous audit. This created a very factual document in which all violent incidents, and repressive laws were dealt with as long

<sup>84</sup> IISG, ZK 70229 – *Donateurskrant CKN, 1985-1989.*

<sup>85</sup> IISG, ZK 70229 – *Donateurskrant CKN, 1985. "... moest het CKN z'n doelstellingen totaal veranderen. Het gaat nu om [...] aanklagen van schendingen van de mensenrechten en steun [...] voor herstel van de democratie.*" Own translation.

<sup>86</sup> IISG, ACKN 96 – *expositie, "Na de staatsgreep begon het CKN de schendingen van de mensenrechten aan de kaak te stellen en druk uit te oefenen ..."* Own translation.

<sup>87</sup> IISG, ARCH 02498 AMA: "*Steun aan het verzet van het Chileense volk tegen de militaire diktatuur d.m.v. het propageren van een politieke en economische boycot van het Chileense regime.*" Own translation.

<sup>88</sup> IISG, ACKN 6 – *Notulen van vergaderingen subgroepen en evaluatiedagen, "informatie verschaffen, terugvertalen naar de Nederlandse situatie door onderwijs, vorming & cultuur, coördineren en begeleiden van en deelnemen aan de protestbeweging, steun aan de slachtoffers van de junta, sekretariaat buitenland, actie & propaganda.*" Own translation

<sup>89</sup> Personal interview Max Arian.

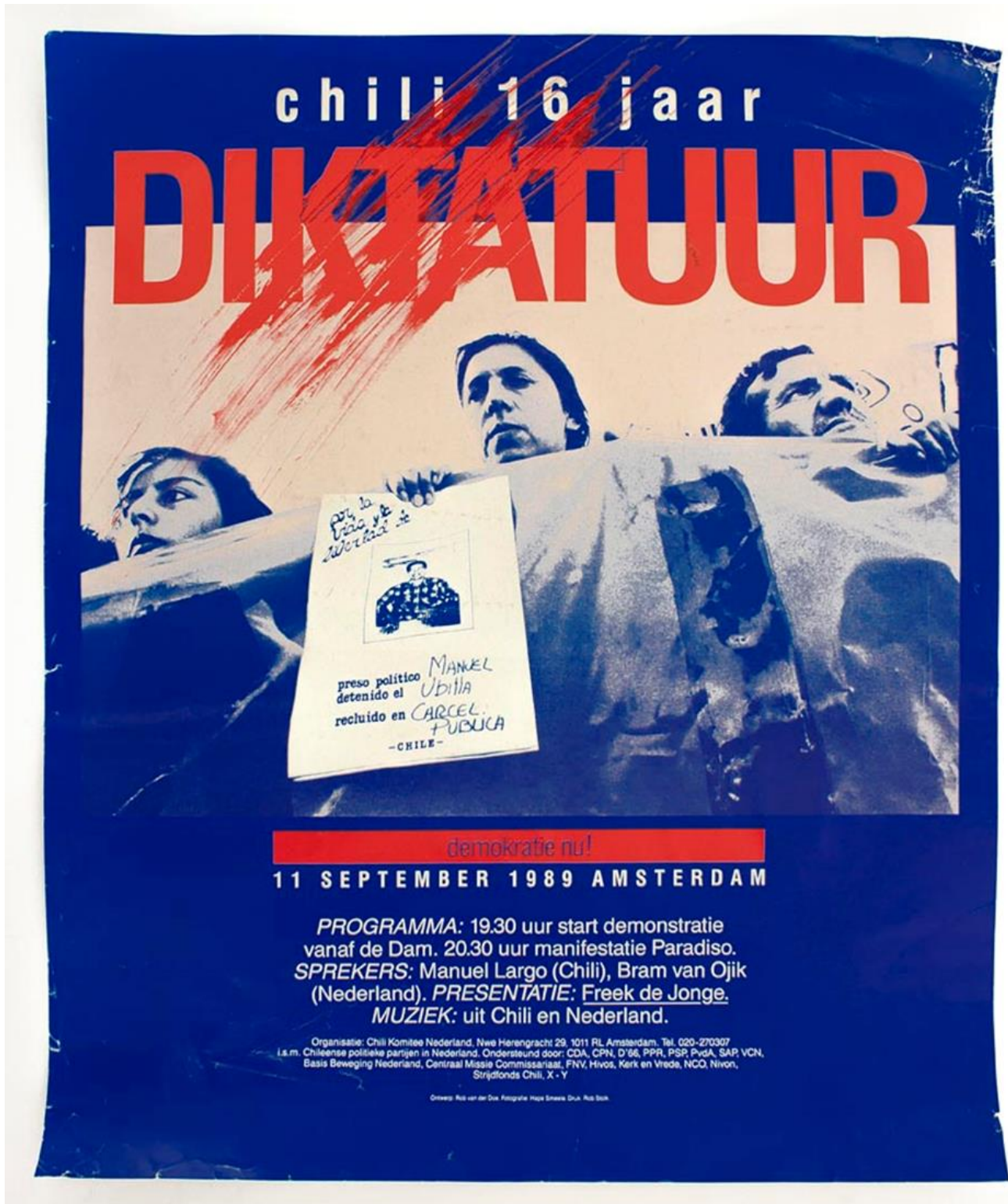


Fig 4: CKN poster, title reads: "Chile 16 years of dictatorship", photo is of women protesting for their disappeared loved ones, emphasis is on the word "dictatorship, which has red smears,, graphic designer unknown, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, 1989.

as they linked back to a specific subject in the UDHR.<sup>90</sup> The CKN's coverage of these rapports and events in Chile was not nearly as structurally rigid, but they did begin relating specific incidents to the distinct rights that were being infringed on in a similar fashion.

However, the CKN departed from the traditional working methods of the UN and other human rights focused organisations in the way they also continued to be engaged with the economic conditions in Chile, and how restricting legislature and the violations of rights affected Chilean workers in particular. Just like in its earlier years of activism, the committee made sure, especially in longer format texts, to follow mentions of political oppression with references to the country's highly privatized, neo-liberal economic structure and how it had wrecked Chile's working class. One of the ways they accomplished this was by including stories from Chileans living under the dictatorship and how their daily lives were influenced by these constraints. In a chapter on the undermining of labour rights and the right to free assembly through restrictive laws, for example, the writers of the piece took care to further explain how these directly impacted the lives of people involved in unions and labour activism. They did not halt their analysis at the explanation that these conditions were in defiance of articles in the UDHR, but they dove deeper into what this meant for workers and their families and how their economic position had worsened.<sup>91</sup> The group emphasized how large swaths of the population had been disenfranchised and exploited under Pinochet's rule, which had led to staggering poverty numbers. Additionally, the more general descriptions of developments in the country were supplemented with personal accounts from women, children, activists and workers to give more life and immediacy to the findings of the rapports.<sup>92</sup>

Within the network of different human rights treaties that the UN special rapporteur considered as the basis for the Working Group rapports were conventions that dealt with socio-economic or cultural rights. Nonetheless, NGO's focused on human rights work tended to focus more on the 'classical' rights that pertain to civil liberties and political freedom. The CKN, in contrast, even as it increasingly embraced human rights language, did not subscribe to the notion that these were the only pressing issues that deserved international attention. They explicitly made sure to utilise the extensiveness of all the subjects the UDHR covered, and tried to educate interested readers as well. This can be seen in a small zine, part of the committee's information package, in which the reader was acquainted with political and economic developments in Chile from '81 to '82. One of the sections of this analysis is devoted to human rights and reminded the reader of the breadth of categories that were covered by them. The writers give examples of freedoms that fall under socio-economic or cultural rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to education. Following this is a summary of some examples of grave violations of these rights under the junta, and a reminder that they did not only occur in the first chaotic and most violent years after the coup, but were recent findings reported on by the UN and Amnesty International.<sup>93</sup> This is a good illustration of how the CKN attempted to steer the human rights conversation towards a more expansive understanding of what they could entail.

### **Why this shift now?**

There were a number of different factors and developments starting from the late '70s that have likely contributed to the CKN's changing vocabulary in the subsequent decade. Much like the choice of words and narratives in the committee's initial years were not the result of open

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<sup>90</sup> IISG, ACKN, 'Documentatie' boxes 81-82

<sup>91</sup> IISG, Bro N 519 B, *Mensenrechten in CHILI*, 1980.

<sup>92</sup> IISG, Bro N 519 B, *Chili '81-'82, de diktatuur in crisis. Politiek, Economie, Mensenrechten*, 1983.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*.

deliberation but rather intuitively gravitating towards a suitable approach, the same can be said about this repositioning.<sup>94</sup> The gradual transition from avoidance of or indifference to human rights language to an outright self-identification with that same framework was not an intentional choice but born out of a changing context that the committee adapted to. An important occurrence was for example the publication of the first Ad Hoc Working Group rapport on Chile in 1978. Human rights were already the primary framework through which criticisms from national governments and in international organisations was voiced, but now there was also a comprehensive and non-partisan document which could be mined for data and sources on all the offences that have verifiably taken place. As the special rapporteur used the guidelines of the UDHR articles and other related treaties to inform which subjects were treated on what grounds, organisations and reporters gathering findings from this source would be conditioned to reproduce this structure, although probably less rigid than the presentation of the original document. The CKN held copies of all the Working Group rapports and often referred to them as sources to substantiate their claims about developments in Chile in the '80s, thus it is conceivable that they were much more exposed to this reporting style and that it started to creep into their own publications as well. 1978 was also the year that the Helsinki Accords were signed between European countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain. One article of this declaration stipulated that all signatory countries would strive to uphold human rights norms for their citizens. This particular moment is thought of as one of the 'breakthrough' occurrences in the '70s that elevated human rights as the new standards of ethical governance according to Moyn and Eckel, as it was the first time that respect for rights was incorporated into a multi-lateral cooperation agreement.<sup>95</sup>

However, these tangible declarations and documents are as much a product of their time as they are influencing a new course in international relations. The '80s more generally were a period in which leftist activism (and the worldview it invariably entailed) was decreasing in relevance and visibility. Samuel Moyn had pinpointed a number of trends in the '70s that made the ascension of human rights rhetoric within international (Western) activism possible. Notably the grand, ideological project of international socialism was beginning to show cracks. Soviet dissidents were increasingly exposing the contradictions and oppressive strategies of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact invasion that put an end to the Prague Spring made clear that communism under Soviet leadership was not open to reform.<sup>96</sup> This trend continued into the '80s as Lech Walesa's Solidarnosc union was prosecuted in Poland and was turned into a human rights icon by activists.<sup>97</sup> Some European leftist in the '60s had turned their attention to the Third World, where states newly liberated from their colonial masters were inspiring new alternative paths and methods of socialism. However from the mid '70s onwards these hopes were disappointed, as emerging socialism in these regions was either squashed or transformed into oppressive, totalitarian regimes.<sup>98</sup> By the '80s organising for ideals of anti-imperialism and from a strong leftist perspective had become outdated and the depoliticized messaging of human rights culture became a narrative that increasingly fit with the times.

The employment of human rights language was simply also much more ubiquitous than it had been at the start of the '70s. Where in the early days after the coup the human rights narrative had to 'compete' or was sharing the playing field of relevant and useful frameworks for activists

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<sup>94</sup> Personal interview Jan de Kievit.

<sup>95</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia*. p. 121, 149-150.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 135-136.

<sup>97</sup> Brier, *Poland's solidarity movement*. p. 189-190.

<sup>98</sup> Robert Gildea, James Mark en Niek Pas, 'European Radicals and the 'Third World'', *Cultural and Social History* 8 (2011) 449-471. p. 464-465.

with other interpretations, the '80s mark a time where they were at least much more ingrained in the global *Zeitgeist*.<sup>99</sup> South-America especially had become a space that was associated with human rights violations by junta's or dictators.<sup>100</sup> For Dutch people the linkage between Chile and human rights violations became an increasingly obvious one that the CKN could not ignore if it wanted to stay relevant and keep attracting engaged participants. The committee conceded that most of the attention for Chile in the '80s was based on continued imprisonment, torture and other political oppression and references to these were likely to attract the most people to their cause. So much became clear when widespread protests and strikes, which were aggressively suppressed by the Chilean police and army, prompted a big spike in attendance for the annual commemoration of the coup in 1983, held in Amsterdam, despite bad weather throughout the day.<sup>101</sup> In a period when the committee was struggling to keep the cause of solidarity with Chile alive the downsides of human rights culture (like the erosion of the political context and indifference to economic conditions) weighed less heavy than the need to adapt to a strategy that yielded better results. All the while the CKN found ways to incorporate this new framework into their activism without completely straying away from their founding principles.

Not fully giving in to human rights culture and remaining connected to their basis in leftist solidarity was a very intentional choice on the CKN's part. An internal document from 1985 in which the members wrote down their position on the subject of Chile and on their own methods and messaging makes that much clear. The text clearly states that:

*“The CKN is not a human rights organisation in the limited definition of the term. The CKN strives for [...] so called individual, or ‘civil’ human rights [...]. However the CKN understands human rights in a broader sense. These individual rights should be imbedded in socio-economic rights, such as the right to work, income, housing [...]. Only if these standards are met will it be possible for the so called individual rights to be enjoyed by everybody.”<sup>102</sup>*

Going back to Patrick Kelly William's three distinguishing approaches to a human rights framework from leftist activists, the CKN underwent a transition from an indifference to human rights language towards the third approach, a partial adoption of this narrative. Both out of utilitarian advantage but also out of conviction that striving for the respect of human rights was a worthwhile cause in itself, throughout the '80s the committee engages with the discourse more and more up to the point of self-identifying with the drive to address and improve issues of human rights. Yet their focus does not fully turn away from sympathy and solidarity with problems faced by the working class. By concentrating on subjects and themes that most human rights organisations do not cover as extensively, or in the committee's words 'by working with a broader definition of what falls under human rights', they manage to marry their own specific interest to the wider, established discourse of the primacy of human rights.

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As the times change and the dichotomy of capitalism (or fascism) versus socialism makes way for a more depoliticized dichotomy of democracy versus dictatorship, the CKN adjusts its discourse

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<sup>99</sup> Kelly, 'Magic Words'. p. 90.

<sup>100</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>101</sup> Personal interview with Jan de Kievid.

<sup>102</sup> Personal archive of Jan de Kievid, *Enkele punten voor de discussie over de situatie in Chili en de positiebepaling van het CKN*, 1985.

accordingly. A diminishing effect is seen in the usage of 'fascism' and fascist imagery until it becomes perceived as an outdated way of looking at the conflict in Chile, and with the declining appeal of leftist ideology the prevalence of an anti-imperialist frame is also reduced. Instead we see a growing inclination towards a rhetoric using human rights to condemn what is happening in Chile, the style of which mirrors, in a freer form, the structured recording of violations in the Final Rapports of the UN Working Group. The focus of the committee's messaging increasingly comes to lie with abuses in the realm of political and civil rights, partly because these are issues and stories that tend to generate the most support and garners the most interest from Dutch citizens. The motor of these changes is probably a gradual adaptation to the general changing attitude to activism, which the committee reflexively followed without particular deliberation on the matter. A particular choice that was, however, made with clear intention is the dedication to a broad understanding of human rights that gave socio-economic rights as much importance as the 'classical' human rights, which connected the seemingly neutral language of rights rhetoric to the more open political persuasion of the committee.

## Conclusion

The protracted nature of the CKN activity, spanning some 16 years, has enabled us to see within a single organisation the rise of human rights rhetoric in the international system through their publications and propaganda materials. The progression is quite significant, from a more ideologically oriented contrast of leftist values versus capitalism (or fascism) to opting into the depoliticized human rights culture, albeit on their own terms. One of the more noteworthy conclusions of the research has been the remarkable lateness of the committee in making the switch to a messaging informed by concerns for human rights, even when compared to similar solidarity movements in other countries. Whereas the historiography points to the mid '70s as the period that human rights language meaningfully found its way to Latin American activists, NGOs, governments and international organisations and came to dominate the debate around Chile, for the CKN it would not be until 1980 that they address these issues in the same terms (without paraphrasing other persons or institutions). Instead, the messaging strategies most actively employed were continually referring to the atrocities committed by the junta in the aftermath of the coup in order to engage the public. In addition attention was given to the economic realities of living under the junta's new neoliberal policies. The brutalities committed against Chilean supporters of Allende or people active in leftist circles were matched by reporting on the legislature passing laws liberalizing the economy in drastic ways, and how that impacted Chile's working class. The committee turned to already established discourses of fascism (and anti-fascist unity) and anti-to place their activism in a larger narrative to inform their ideological reasoning for denouncing the Pinochet regime.

Some possible explanations have been given for this apparent reluctance in engaging, at least in some capacity, in human rights discourse. These revolve around the idea that human rights violations were an inadequate explanation for why Chile merited attention. First, the depoliticized nature of human rights discourse prevented engagement with the explicitly political nature of the CKN's interest in Chile. In over-emphasising individual and civic rights, organisations using this framework usually disregarded the wider context of exploitative political and economic structures that were also put in place, and that formed an important part of the committee's gripe with Allende's successors. Second, within the leftist worldview there already existed terms like 'exploitation' that referred to comparable situations without losing sight of underlying socio-economic conditions. This stalled the need to adopt a new narrative that explained similar issues in a less materially conscious manner. Lastly, there were already suitable understandings of the Chilean situation in terms of fascism and anti-imperialism that were shared among the different domestic and foreign networks and that adequately explained why what was happening in Chile justified international backlash. These collective narratives also succeeded in getting the Dutch population to care about Chile with comparisons that hit close to home or ominous warnings about what Allende's overthrow symbolized.

As interest for the situation in Chile had started to decrease, however, the CKN needed to keep people active and engaged, and gradually opted for a more neutral positioning of its beliefs to attract more people. This entailed more allusions to the idea of human rights and how they were being violated in Chile. They were incorporated into the committee's messaging as previous narratives had become outdated and rested on ideological foundations that did not find much resonance in the Dutch population anymore. At that point human rights had become such a ubiquitous framing device for the kinds of issues that the CKN was concerned with that they could not afford to alienate a potential base of support by not employing a discourse familiar to most people and that they were more responsive to. The focus of the committee's messaging

increasingly came to lie with abuses in the realm of political and civil rights, partly because these were issues and stories that tend to generate the most interest and support. The motor of these changes was probably a gradual adaptation to the normalization of human rights and the publications of the first UN reports on Chile, which would become a major source of information for the group. This change in attitude seems to be a reflex to follow tactics that are proven to work, without a conscious decision-process between the members to do so. A particular choice that was, however, made with clear intention was the dedication to a broad understanding of human rights that gave socio-economic rights as much importance as the 'classical' human rights, which connected the seemingly neutral language of rights rhetoric to the more open political persuasion of the committee.

This malleability of the concept of human rights and the seemingly erratic way that some movements do catch on to it quicker than other reinforces Jan Eckel and Stefan Hoffman's understanding of the history of human rights as a fickle and non-linear process. Eckel's proposition that human rights were partly implemented as a rhetoric for utilitarian purposes instead of ideological convictions of the moral superiority of this framework is echoed in the CKN's trajectory. The group's lateness in opting for this strategy and refusal to, in the later years, completely conform with the norm of political and civil rights supremacy shows that, even within a 'breakthrough' period, much variance and divergence existed. This also ties in to Robert Brier's conviction that it is useful to break free from the 'breakthrough' mould that places the most important evolutions in human rights history in the '70s. This thesis has shown that the adoption of new human rights narratives was still contested within particular groups into the '80s, especially in terms of the scope of subjects covered by human rights activism.

What the results have been less able to definitively conclude is how intentional the early hesitation to human rights was. The examined sources do not reveal much about concerted deliberations or discussions on the matter of human rights, but the collection of minutes from meetings in the '70s has some large, significant gaps, leaving only a few documents per year whereas the CKN members convened almost every two weeks. This gap in the primary sources was supplemented by interviewing persons engaged within the committee through the years. This method enabled a better understanding, not only of the more general context of the CNK's workings and the members' motivation to participate, but also on the decision-making processes and ideological background of the group. The group of interviewees was, however, on the smaller side and left a period unaccounted for between 1978 and 1984. Future research could perhaps be conducted with a larger and more diverse group of participants to account for the lack of sources on this matter. This thesis also raises the question of how singular the CKN's position with regards to human rights usage is. It would also be interesting to see if comparative studies between multiple national committees involved with Chile could reveal what the similarities and differences were between the strategies and discourses of these groups and what this says about international solidarity networks in Europe and beyond.



## List of Abbreviations

CKN	-	Chili Komitee Nederland
CBN	-	Chili Beweging Nederland
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
DINA	-	Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	-	United Nations
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
IISG	-	Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis

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## PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

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Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

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- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
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- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

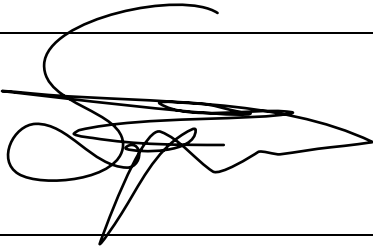
The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.	
Name:	Enora Segeren
Student number:	6169694
Date and signature:	30-06-2023 

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.