

# On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends of the IISH 2016 no. 32



internationaal instituut  
voor sociale geschiedenis

**Valencia**

11th ESSHC Research  
and Collections

**Peter Custers**

activism in  
Bangladesh

**Lectures**

on Education and  
popular edification

# Introduction

**Cover photo:**  
**Peter Custers**  
**(wearing an**  
**orange shirt)**  
**visits the**  
**chars in Bang-**  
**ladesh, 1992.**

The plans to have the KNAW humanities institutes team up in the KNAW humanities cluster are crystallizing in 2016. The institutions concerned are the ING Huygens, Meertens Institute, NIAS, and IISH. Exploring how these institutions will manifest jointly is a challenging plan: each has its own traditions and perspective. The common programme of scholarship devised bears the title 'Impact of Circulation'. People, ideas, and goods circulate, and these processes impact society, as visualized in social structure, culture, and language. Very generally, these are the highlights of the programme. Obviously, the new cluster will work intensively on much-discussed new techniques in humanities. The new institute will figure prominently in building the digital humanities infrastructure with CLARIAH and the national ESFR Roadmap programme. A joint operations desk will be set up, and the ING Huygens, Meertens Institute, and NIAS will be moving to Oudezijds Achterburgwal / Spinhuissteeg. The IISH, with its vast collections, will remain at the present Cruquiusweg premises. Some services will be concentrated at the new operations desk. Quite a few moves and transitions lie ahead.

One project you will hear more about in the future was launched last April. The Collection Development Department will systematically approach the main archive builders to secure the digital archives of these organizations. Examples include organizations such as the FNV and the IROC. In the recent past taking concrete steps has been difficult, even though most of those involved acknowledge the importance of this mission. We will be allocating human and other resources to ensure that these good intentions among all parties result in acquiring these archives.

Huub Sanders

## *About the Friends*

*Members of the Friends of the IISH pay annual dues of 100 or 500 euros or join with a lifetime donation of 1,500 euros or more. In return, members are invited to semi-annual sessions featuring presentations of IISH acquisitions and guest speakers. These guest speakers deliver lectures on their field of research, which need not be related to the IISH collection. The presentation and lecture are followed by a reception. The board may consult the Friends about allocation of the revenues from the dues and delivers an annual financial report in conjunction with the IISH administration.*

*As a token of appreciation for their great contribution to the Friends, Jaap Kloosterman and Jan Lucassen were appointed as honorary members in 2014.*

*The IISH was founded by master collector N.W. Posthumus (1880-1960) in the 1930s. For the past two decades, two of the institutions established by this 'history entrepreneur' have operated from the same premises: the Netherlands Economic History Archive founded in 1914 and the International Institute of Social History, which is now more than 80 years old. Both institutes continue to collect, although the 'subsidiary' IISH has grown considerably larger than its 'parent' NEHA. Additional information about the Institute may be found in Jaap Kloosterman and Jan Lucassen, *Rebels with a Cause: Five Centuries of Social History Collected by the IISH* (Amsterdam 2010). For all information concerning the Friends, see <http://socialhistory.org/en/friends>*

## Colophon



Cruquiusweg 31  
P.O. Box 2169, 1000 CD Amsterdam  
Tel.: + 31 20 668 58 66  
Fax: + 31 20 665 41 81  
[socialhistory.org](http://socialhistory.org)  
[info@iisg.nl](mailto:info@iisg.nl)  
Deutsche Bank Nederland N.V. 0555958892  
IBAN: NL11DEUT0555958892  
BIC: DEUTNL2N

**Editors:** Bouwe Hijma, Eric de Ruijter, Huub Sanders

**Translations:** Lee Mitzman

**Photography:** Hans Luhrs

**Design and layout:** Ruparo (Ivo Sikkema)

**Printed by:** Wilco, Amersfoort

**Website:** Jacqueline Rutte

**Financial administration:** Guusje Varkevisser and Tjerck Zittema

**Administrative and secretarial support:** Yvonne Bax, Ineke Kellij

**We wish to thank:** Frank de Jong, Lidewij Verheggen, Gerard Leenders, Marijke W. de Kleijn-de Vrankrijker en Christianne Smit

**Composition of the board:** Huub Sanders (chair), Wim Berkelaar, Bauke Marinus, Jacco Pekelder, Rinus, Penninx, Mieke IJzermans

Questions, including on subscriptions of *On the Waterfront*: [friends@iisg.nl](mailto:friends@iisg.nl)

*On the Waterfront* is supported by Koninklijke Brill NV

ISSN 15742156

# 11th ESSHC: ¡Valencia!

In 2014 in Vienna I spoke with a Finnish researcher who beamed when I asked her what she thought of the ESSHC: “It’s like a candy box!” She conveyed my own feelings perfectly. The vast selection, the surprising contributions, and the assembly of over 1,700 fellow professionals, all converge into a giant candy box that makes choices difficult. This year the congress alighted in Valencia, Spain’s third-largest city. The congress took place at the medical faculty, which easily accommodated the huge turnout and over 20 parallel sessions.

This population is also the most visible user group of the IISH, comprising historians interested in social history *and* methods from social sciences. Such is the structure. In practice, this gives rise to a vast selection of research. Open any random page in the exceptionally useful printed programme, and you will see what I mean. Interested in my own field of research, I selected the sessions “Narrative Explanations and Historical Objectivity” and “Storytelling as History and Interpretation.” Without elaborating on the content of the first session, I especially enjoyed when in response to the three speakers in the debate veering a bit too much toward “narrative,” somebody from the audience (i.e. Christopher Lloyd) argued that whatever one does, social sciences and theory are necessary in all varieties of historical scholarship, and that this understanding was what this conference was all about! The second session related closely to “history from below,” one of my favourite topics. Fortunately, my preference is not unique: I am probably very close in saying that this session was the most heavily attended at the conference. Well over 110 people were present, compared with barely twenty at most other sessions. Topics addressed included: how should historians handle personal emotions in their research? To what extent can you fill gaps in your own knowledge? The appealing hypothesis was that while imagining is acceptable, inventing is not. Dissatisfaction was very noticeable here regarding the academic strait jacket of publishing exclusively for fellow professionals. At this session historical scholarship was directly connected to the common man and what is called “public history” in the United Kingdom. Qualitative sources are more likely to be noticed here than quantitative ones. One member of the audience responded to this information that all the recent achievements of “big data” should not immediately lapse into oblivion. Once again, a balance was sought.

Readers of *On the Waterfront* may be interested to know that the author of this article organized a session dedicated specifically to current problems with sources and labour history. In six brief contributions, current developments were described from different perspectives. They covered databases and collabs; factory staff archives in Africa; sources on modern labour relations in China, the danger that data collection alone will



**Els Hiemstra in Valencia.**  
Photo Huub Sanders

not be conducive to progress, but that you need to formulate probing questions; that old papers and collections still contain infinite unknown data that are not easily retrieved with modern techniques; and that collecting modern materials from international organizations has become more difficult as a result of digitization and decline of these organizations. The intention to bring scholarship and collecting closer together, as the present IISH policy advocates was palpable here. Participants came from scholarly institutions and collecting ones, such as museum and documentation institutes, which was precisely the objective from the outset.

Another attempt to bring scholarship and collecting closer together was manifested by Frank de Jong, who wanted to gather databases from researchers on site to preserve at the IISH. This highly successful effort has already yielded serious contacts with 30 researchers interested in entrusting their databases. These initiatives will indeed bring scholarship and collecting closer together, one step at a time.

In conclusion, we are pleased to congratulate Els Hiemstra, who has once again organized a successful and flawlessly structured conference. We are also grateful to her team, comprising Ineke Kellij, Astrid Verburg, and especially Yvonne Bax. She was rightly thanked at the “general meeting,” as this marked her last ESSHC because of her upcoming retirement. This means that she will also be leaving the Friends and will be succeeded by Ineke. The Friends thank Yvonne for all her work, done in tranquil equanimity, a disposition that is very welcome even in our small organization.

Huub Sanders

# Thirty-second Friends' Day, 21 January 2016

## Presentation of the Acquisitions

### Bala Tampoe's beetle in 1979

#### A trade union on Sri Lanka

In 2015 the IISH received a vast archive from Colombo. It was part of the archive of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, a trade union presently known in full as the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers Union. One part of the archive pertains to the organization, while the other consists of the papers of the legendary trade union activist Bala Tampoe (1922-2014). The precursor of the CMU was founded in 1928 as a typical "white-collar" trade union. The union organized clerical staff from mercantile houses and offices. Its founder was the progenitor of the Sri Lankan labour movement Alexander Ekanayake Gunasingha (1891-1967). At first the union was small, with only 25 members, but it became an active partner during the labour unrest on Sri Lanka in the 1920s. Bala Tampoe, who became general secretary and founder of the CMU in 1948, thus did not have to build the union from scratch. Thanks to his extended involvement, however, the CMU became his very personal brainchild; he remained active there until his death at age 92.

Bala Tampoe came from an affluent Jaffna family and was born in Negombo. He attended the University of Ceylon and the University of London (1944), became active in the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and engaged in anti-war campaigns, including distributing anti-war leaflets among British soldiers. He was dismissed



from his first job as a lecturer on Botany and Horticulture for participating in a strike in 1947. Bala long remained politically active, advancing to member of the LSSP politburo. The LSSP was for many years an official member of the Fourth International, a movement that was always strong on Sri Lanka. In 1960 he stood for election on behalf of that party in the Colombo Central District but did not win. Political tensions ran high during the early 1960s. In 1963 Bala Tampoe led a strike by shipyard workers, defying an injunction, proclaimed via an emergency decree by the regime of Sirima Bandaranaike, who nonetheless requested support from the LSSP for its government in 1964. The party congress agreed, although Bala Tampoe did not and left the party with 159 kindred spirits. They founded the LSSP-R,

### BalaTampoe during a meeting





Top left and right: Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the CMU in 1998. Bala Tampoe with garland of flowers  
Down left: Signing of an agreement with Unilever, 1998

with the “R” denoting “Revolutionary.”  
Despite – or perhaps in fact thanks to – his revolutionary penchant, he was a practical and purposeful trade unionist. He is credited with organizing at least 70 strikes. In 1960 the CMU had 35,000 members, and in 1961 the trade union signed collective agreements with 67 companies. Bala Tampoe also read law and became an advocate in 1953. In addition to the many labour disputes in which he applied his skills, he started to address the legal aspects of the Tamil struggle in 1981/82. His papers include extensive records about matters relating to arrests of people suspected of connections with the Tamil Tigers.  
Following his divorce, Bala Tampoe remarried in 1966. His second wife, May Wickramasuriya, was a longstanding operator in the CMU and served as assistant General Secretary from 1956. Like Bala, she was active in Trotskyist circles. The two were legendary for their modesty. Many biographical sketches feature the VW beetle he received as a gift from the CMU members in the late 1970s and drove for decades to sites where CMU members worked.  
Only part of the archive has reached Amsterdam. Many important sections are being digitized on Sri Lanka first, including, for example, the minutes from the CMU Executive Committee,

which date back to 1935. The IISH does have a long series from the *Ceylon Labour Gazette*, a vast statistical source containing social-economic data. The archive also features many photographs and albums, recording the anniversaries and congresses of the CMU.  
The CMIGWU remains active, although its membership has declined since its heyday. The trade union is affiliated with IndustriAll. (HSA)

**Journalism and Politics.  
Eduard Polak, 1880-1962**

Eduard Polak, whose real name was Eliazer Polak, was born into a large diamond worker’s family in Amsterdam. His oldest brother Henri (1868-1943) was the most renowned in this family. Eduard was trained as a cigar maker and was expected to start work at age 12. Eager to learn, however, the inquisitive boy learned far more through self study than he would have just from working to earn his keep and support his family. In 1900 he joined the SDAP and chaired the newly founded youth organization “de Zaaier.” In those days members of the fledgling SDAP were expected to engage in activities besides writing and attending meetings. Polak teamed up with



Above:  
Eduard Polak  
(IISG BG  
B29/247)

Right: Letter  
of Annie  
Adama van  
Scheltema to  
Polak, March  
1908, on a  
contribution  
for de Notenkra-  
ker

Above right:  
Correspond-  
ence course  
in municipal  
politics

Paris 14 Maart 08  
Beste Edward,  
Ik zand je hierbij een stukje, vertaald uit  
't Fransch. Wil je 't eens inkijken of 't ge-  
schikt is voor de Notenkraaker? Er zijn  
wel wat veel veranderingen in, omdat in  
't oorspronkelijke stuk de tegenwoordige  
verhouding door mekaar gehandeld zijn, maar  
ik geloof dat 't toch nog wel duidelijk genoeg  
is om gelezen te kunnen worden.  
Dan heb ik gauw wel eens of je 't kunt op-

nemen, hi?  
Jaat 't goed met jou?  
Met beste groeten,  
Annie A. v. S.  
14 Rue des Ursulines

12<sup>e</sup> LES  
**SCHRIJFTELIJKE CURSUS IN  
GEMEENTEDOLITIEK**  
ONDER LEIDING VAN ED. POLAK  
VOOR DE VEREEN VAN SOC. DEM. GEMEENTERAADSLIEDEN  
GITGEGEVEN DOOR N.V. ONTWIKKELING AMSTERDAM

De Gemeente en de Volksgezondheid.  
Door A. E. J. DE VRIES-BRUNS, arts.  
(Voortzetting.)

Van de bestaande waterleidingen is slechts een be-  
trekkelijk klein gedeelte in handen van particulieren; de  
meeste behooren aan gemeenten of conglomeraats van  
gemeenten; in N.-Holland behoort de waterleiding aan  
de provincie. De oplossing in N.-Holland is een zeer  
gelukkiger men heeft er vroeger aansluiting, een  
maatregel, die maar zelden aandacht heeft gegeven  
tot mogelijkheden en waarvan alleen in bijzondere ge-  
valden kan worden afgeleid.

De gunstige invloed van deze algemene voor-  
ziening blijkt in deze provincie n.a. hieruit, dat niet-  
tegenstaande de bevolking toeneemt, er een duidelijke  
afname is van de infectie aan typhus. Men mag deze  
verhoeding niet alleen verklaren uit de gunstige  
watervoorziening, maar een belangrijk deel komt toch  
angewijfeld op rekening van het Prov. Water-  
leidingbedrijf. Zonder goed drinkwater is typhus-  
besmetting onmogelijk, dat staat wel vast.

Aantal typhusgevalen per 100.000 inwoners.

	Noord-Holland	Overige provincies	Het Rijk
1913	47,1	57	24,4
1914	20,1	24,9	27
1915	30,4	24,6	26,1
1916	24,9	21,1	23,7
1917	42,9	41,1	31,7
1918	30,4	31,5	43,2
1919	39	35,5	44,4
1920	47,8	29,4	32,1
1921	38,9	29,4	29,7
1922	23,4	16,3	16
1923	36,6	20,3	21,3
1924	28,9	16,2	16,2
1925	19,9	14,6	14,6
1926	17,1	17,8	16,2

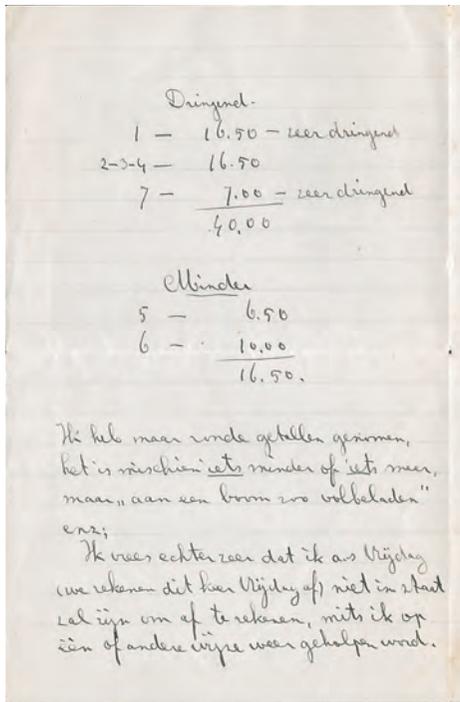
\* 1 Jan. 1919 is het Prov. Bedrijf van N.-Holland in exploitatie  
gekomen.  
(Overgenomen uit het verslag van de  
Prov. Waterleiding van N.-Holland 1926.)

Als we de verdeling van de centrale watervoor-  
ziening over het heele land nagaan, dan blijkt, dat

— 177 —

Carel Adama van Scheltema (1877-1924) to put up posters at night. Adama van Scheltema, a medical student, wore his good suit for this exercise and turned up at the faculty in the morning with starch all over his beard and clothes.

Eduard dreamed of intellectual pursuits. In 1902 his dream came true, when he was hired at *Het Volk* for a hybrid position as proof reader and reporter, earning a weekly wage of no less than 14.50 guilders. He also wrote for *Het Zondagsblad* and *De Notenkraaker*. Polak soon advanced to the editorial staff at *Het Volk*, where he worked with leading socialists, such as De Roode, Ankersmit, Tak, and Vliegen. His first marriage, to Esther Polak, lasted only from 1903 to 1905. Friction in his private life carried over to his professional life. In 1906 Ankersmit married Polak's first wife and in the preceding period the tensions within the editorial board of *Het Volk* rose so high that Ankersmit was exiled very much against his will to the editorial board in The Hague for a few years. Eduard Polak remarried in 1908, this time to the pianist Gerardina de Meijer. He and his second wife had two daughters. Some of the highlights in his career as a journalist are worth noting here. In 1903, for example, the editorial board dispatched him to report on the strikes at the Rietlanden port areas in the East of Amsterdam. To his amazement, he arrived simultaneously with the marines, who came to occupy the docklands. In 1909 he became entangled in the "lintjes affaire." This case arose from questions as to whether an important businessman had been awarded the military honour of the order of Orange Nassau after reportedly donating large sums of money to the ARP, [the conservative, protestant party]. While the allegation was never proven beyond any doubt, Abraham Kuyper was seriously discredited. Polak reported on the course of the Great War in Belgium and Northern France. He tried to get as close to the front as the authorities would let him. He would then speed back to the closest



Left: Letter of a party member to Polak with his financial needs and wishes

schools and encouraged other types of education, such as Montessori and Dalton. He opened schools for children of skippers and founded the Vossius Gymnasium (1926) and the 'Openlucht School' (1930), as well as many others. From 1931 to 1933 he served as alderman of Finance under particularly difficult Depression conditions. In addition, he was a member of the Provincial Council of North Holland and as such attended the opening ceremony of the IISH on 11 March 1937.

During the May 1940 invasion, Polak and his family managed to flee the Netherlands and survived the war by staying with a brother in Brazil. After the war he devoted his efforts mainly to journalism, producing a series of radio programs for the VARA broadcasting association about the history of socialism, on which he later based the book *De weg omhoog*.

In 2015 the IISH received a modest accrual to the papers of Eliazer Polak from his relatives. It comprised some notes from Annie Adama van Scheltema, as well as from Albert Hahn, a close friend of Polak. Discovering documents from over a century ago is a special experience. These are tiny pieces of a puzzle that enhance the appeal of early socialism. (HSA)

Dutch-Belgian border to telegraph his story to the editors the moment he crossed into the Netherlands.

One of his best-known statements is "Journalism takes you everywhere." In his case it took him to Amsterdam city politics. In 1913 he joined the city council for the SDAP, where he served until 1935. His contribution to the city as an alderman was far more important. As alderman of education from 1923 to 1931, he reconfigured the Amsterdam school system into a structure that remains discernible to this day. He built over 200

### Photographs from the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce, important gentlemen and fine automobiles

In 2015 the Netherlands Economic History Archive (NEHA) acquired a collection of photographs from the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce. See: <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/COLLO0085>. The collection consists of photograph



Staff in front of the 'Beurs van Berlage' 1945



**Left: Samuel Pieter van Eeghen**

**Middle: Ernst Heldring**

**Right: Gottfr. H. Crone**

albums and individual snapshots. The photograph albums were assembled in recognition of an anniversary or the departure of a board member, to commemorate a visit by a foreign delegation, or at the occasion of an international meeting, such as the Fifth Congress of the Amsterdam International Chamber of Commerce from 8 to 13 July 1929.

The individual snapshots are classified in the inventory according to chairmen, secretaries, and members of the Chamber, as well as by special events in which the Chamber was involved.

One photograph depicts Samuel Pieter van Eeghen (1853-1934). Van Eeghen was a merchant and banker and was raised in an affluent Baptist family in Amsterdam. In late 1875 he departed for the Netherlands East Indies, where he spent months touring tobacco firms and sugar factories. He was especially interested in crops produced in the Indies, such as tobacco and sugar cane, as well as copra, the fruit of coconuts, and a raw material for the emerging margarine industry. In 1880 he became a partner in Van Eeghen & Co. He chaired the Chamber from 1904 to 1920.

Another photograph features Ernst Heldring

(1873-1954), scion of a prominent family of entrepreneurs and preachers. His grandfather Ottho Gerhard Heldring (1804-1876) was a preacher, philanthropist, and trailblazer of the social Réveil. As a young man, Ernst Heldring journeyed extensively for his studies, not only to the Netherlands East Indies but also to British India. In 1899 he published *Oost-Azië en Indië. Beschouwingen en schetsen* about his travels. Heldring was a ship owner and bank president. As a ship owner he was the director of Koninklijke Nederlandsche Stoomboot-Maatschappij (KNSM) from 1899, co-founded the Java-China-Japan Line (JCJL) in 1902, and was closely involved in bailing out the South America Line endangered by German competition. Thanks to financial support from the Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM), of which his father Balthazar Heldring was president from 1880, the Line transitioned to the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd. In the 1930s Heldring served as a non-executive board member at De Nederlandsche Bank and became the head of the NHM in 1939. He was chairman of the Chamber of Commerce from 1922 to 1931.

The third portrait is of Gottfr. H. Crone (1884-1961). This director of a family-owned company specialized in importing crops from the Netherlands Indies, such as “tobacco, tea, rubber, cacao, kina, and spices” had his portrait done against an impressive Old Holland interior. Crone was in charge of the Chamber of Commerce from 1932 to 1940.

The biographies of these three chairmen from the first four decades of the twentieth century attest to the tremendous importance of the Netherlands East Indies for the Dutch economy.

The collection comprises more than portraits. One photograph features the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Chamber in 1936. Another fine contemporary impression appears in the photograph of Chamber staff being conveyed in a horse-drawn carriage of the Amsterdamsche Rijtuig Maatschappij (ARM). This photograph was taken in front of the Beurs van Berlage along the Damrak shortly after the Liberation.

Still another wonderful photograph was taken

**Party with Mayor and Queen Juliana, 1960**





at the Stedelijk Museum during a gathering in recognition of the tenth anniversary of the ‘Nederlandse Unie van Vrouwelijke Bedrijfschoufden’ on 4 November 1960. On the photograph Amsterdam Mayor Gijsbrecht van Hall appears with Queen Juliana in the foreground. The gathering took place in the restaurant in what was known at the time as the garden hall, with the “Appel Wall” in the background. This monumental mural was painted by Cobra artist Karel Appel in 1956.

The final two photographs I will mention were taken at the opening ceremony of the second Citroën Building (designed by architect Jan Wils) on Stadionplein in Amsterdam, performed by Prince Bernhard on 10 September 1962. One photograph offers a glimpse of various models of the Citroën 2cv, also known as the “ugly duckling,” while the other one features the Citroën DS, which was nicknamed “pike” in Dutch but is pronounced in France as “déesse,” meaning goddess.

This collection of photographs has been rescued and is now safe and sound at the NEHA/IISH. (BHi)

Dutch activists and the government.

The main reason he incurred the wrath of the Bengal government was that he fought for the farmers and the landless. In the Bengal delta water is constantly on the move: land is frequently lost, but new land is gained as well. When farmers lost land, they lost everything. Their only option was to occupy the chars: the new plots of land. Conditions on the chars were harsh: no ser-

**Citroën-gebouw, Amsterdam 1960s**

### Peter Custers, the Bengali Peter Da

In 2015 Peter Custers died. Known in Bangladesh as Peter Da, he left a fine collection about his activities there. In late 2015 this collection was entrusted to the IISH. It nicely complements other collections from Southeast Asia.

In 1973 Custers left for Bangladesh to work there as a journalist. The country had gained independence and was struggling with development issues. Custers was interested mainly in the emerging leftist social movements that were impacted by the poverty and helplessness of the local population. In the meantime, repression increased in the country, and coups followed in rapid succession.

Custers wrote articles for Dutch and foreign newspapers. He documented the movements and gave language lessons to poor farmers. Fluent in Bengal, he formed close ties with local initiatives promoting women’s emancipation and the struggle by farmers to obtain rights and land. But he was unable to escape the repression himself. In 1975 he was arrested and imprisoned, accused of organizing a leftist uprising. He was released only a year later, after massive pressure from



Above: Protest against the World Bank, which supports the Flood Action Plan in Bangladesh.

Under: Women demonstrating for land for the landless and more rights for women.

Both from: Peter Custers photo collection

vices were available, and vast areas were still under water. Landless founded their own organizations and tried to register the land as theirs. The collection of Peter Custers includes photograph albums of demonstrations and negotiations.

Custers also covered the ambitious plans of the Bengal government to develop the land. There were protests in Bangladesh against the vast scope of plans such as massive shrimp breeding, chemical farming, or a Delta Plan to prevent flooding. The protesters argued that they disrupted nature and reduced the income of local workers. Custers brought the disadvantages of these plans to the attention of Dutch and European politicians.

Finally, Bangladesh is obviously known for its textile industry. In the Netherlands Custers had founded the Bangladesh People's Solidarity Centre, which was dedicated in part to improving conditions in the Bengal garment industry and pursued this cause with other Dutch organizations, such as xminy, skk, and somo, of which the IISH holds the archives as well.

Just how interesting Peter Custers was has also been highlighted in the motion picture that premiered at the Venice Biennale in 2015. *Last man in Dhaka Central*, directed by Naeem Mohaiemen, is about his time in Bangladesh and how he came to terms with his imprisonment.

Once the Custers archive is processed in 2016, the exact contents will become clear. The above activities will be well documented, especially from the 1990s onward. This will also make it available for additional research. (EdR)

### Bart Huges, more than a hole

Bart Huges, who is known for drilling a hole in his head, made headlines again in 2015, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the event. Nice

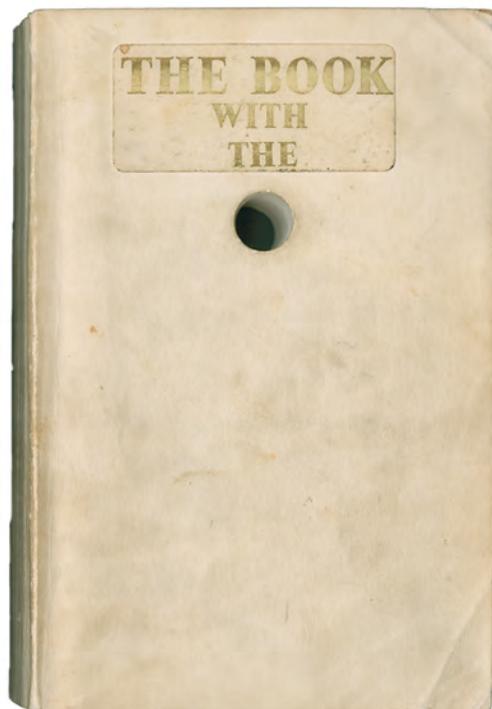
colour photographs by Cor Jaring, who had been present there, were exhibited. It was also noteworthy for the IISH, because a large section of his personal papers was received that same year. On the one hand, they make abundantly clear that he was obsessed with drilling in skulls (also known as trepanations), as well as that Huges took the exercise very seriously and was aiming for more.

The three crates are filled with letters, drawings, articles, invoices, and leaflets, tracing the course of Huges' life. The papers date back to around 1958, when he started experimenting with all kinds of drugs, together with his wife Barbara Mohr. Among them are order slips for the drug Mescaline. When their daughter was born, they named her Maria Juana, and the papers include documents filed to change her name later on.

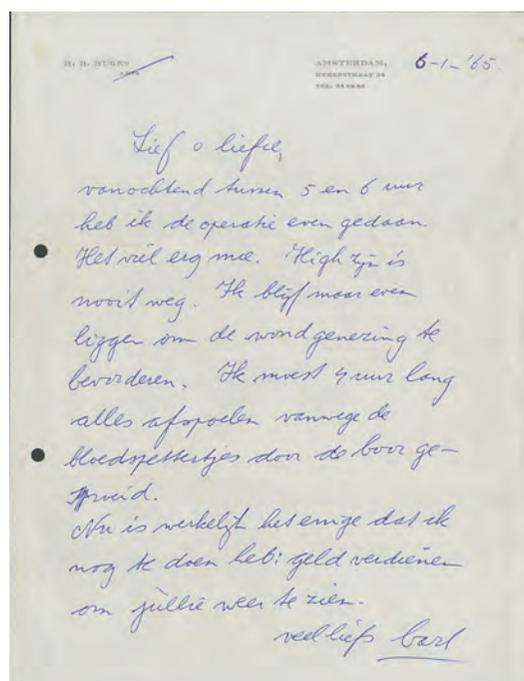
The decision to drill a hole arises directly from those experiments. The papers from that period also include extensive correspondence with his wife, friends, fans, and physicians, reporting on his experiences and trying to convince them of their scientific value.

From 1963 Huges tried to implement the idea of a hole in his head. He had discovered that standing on your head for forty-five minutes made you high. His theory was that a hole would make more space in your head, so that more blood would flow to your brains, generating additional oxygen and glucose and a constant sense of being "high." As a result, people would be able to do more and would become more creative. In addition to personal spiritual enhancement, this would lead to a social revolution and a better society. Huges approached physicians and friends, but nobody was willing to help him. He ended up doing it himself; 6 January 1965 is the date listed. In his autobiography *The book with the hole* he writes that he had difficulty getting everybody out of his house and did it at night. He describes it the next day in a letter to his wife (in his papers):

Left: The book with the hole, autobiography of Bart Huges, 1972. From: CSD Reference Library, publications on drugs



Right: Letter from Bart Huges to his wife, dated 6 January 1965, telling her about the operation. From: Bart Huges papers, box 3.1



“I performed the operation this morning between 5 and 6 o’clock. It wasn’t so bad. Being high never stops. I will lie down for a while, to let the wound heal. I had to keep rinsing for 4 hours because of the blood stains sprayed by the drill.” His papers also include several leaflets about drills, but they are probably from the late 60s, when he was apparently still very interested in the subject. The hole became his trademark, as the title of his autobiography makes clear. It helped him propagate his ideas but was also risky. Increasingly, his mental state was questioned, and there were even attempts to institutionalize him. The authorities issued a “don’t try this at home” statement. In the Netherlands Huges attained national renown by appearing on the television show hosted by Willem Duys. The invitation to appear is also in his personal papers, together with a curious reaction from a viewer interested in getting such holes for himself and his daughter as well.

Until his death in 2004, Huges continued trying to disseminate his ideas about trepanation. He made large rolls, featuring an illustrated explanation of his theory. He established the Foundation for Independent Thinking, which published scientific articles, such as “Trepanation: the cure for psychosis.” The foundation offered courses and exams about trepanation as well but was not very successful. Despite all his letters and articles, Huges did not convince scientists. Trepanation is used, but only to reduce cranial pressure. While Huges had some adherents in the United Kingdom and the United States, the website [trepan.com](http://trepan.com) is hardly dynamic. The social revolution has yet to materialize. (EdR)

### Rinus van Mastrigt, cycling to Batavia, weighing anchor for Argentina

In 2015 the IISG acquired the papers of Rinus van Mastrigt, born in Rotterdam in 1913 and deceased in Argentina in 2000. Between these two dates was the life of a man who never gave up. He lived his life on three continents. The personal papers of Van Mastrigt span 0.25 m. (<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH04366>).

On 26 November 1937 Rinus, unable to afford the five hundred plus guilders for a third-class ticket by boat, set off on his bicycle for the Netherlands East Indies from Rotterdam without any preparation. In this era of high unemployment, his degree in architecture offered few prospects. In the Indies Rinus hoped to find work and therefore brought along his proof of deletion from the register of the City of Rotterdam and his assorted diplomas and letters of reference. Rinus, who had hardly ever left the country before, also looked forward to the bicycle journey as a great adventure. His real excitement began in the Balkans. His experiences in countries such as Syria and Iraq are still more astonishing from the perspective of 2016. He also crossed Pakistan, India, Burma, and Thailand as if cycling through them was nothing out of the ordinary. In Singapore Van Mastrigt fell ill and had to stop. His girlfriend Ida came to visit him there. Together they



Various advertising leaflets featuring drills, ca. 1970. From: Bart Huges papers, box 2.1

reached Batavia (now Jakarta) on 1 December 1938. Rinus found work with the construction firm de Associatie n.v., and the couple married and had two daughters.

Meanwhile, the Second World War was raging. Bombs fell on Rotterdam, the city of his birth. In December 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. Dutch males in Batavia were required to report to representatives of the Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (KNIL, royal armed forces of the Netherlands Indies). Rinus, who was among them, was instructed to design several bridges. He was later taken prisoner of war by the Japanese, who transported him via Singapore to Japan. In the course of 1945 he was liberated by U.S. troops at Camp Niihama, where he had been performing forced labour in a copper mine. After recovering at a hospital in the Philippines, Van Mastrigt returned to the Netherlands East Indies, where he resumed working for the Associatie, first in Batavia, later in the port city Manado on Celebes. In 1947 he was repatriated from Batavia to Rotterdam.

After all his years in Asia, Rinus was unable to adjust to life in the Netherlands. But the Netherlands East Indies of the past was gone, and settling in independent Indonesia was not an option. An article in the periodical *De Internationale Echo* about Argentina’s President Perón and his five-year plan inspired Van Mastrigt (by then divorced) to emigrate to Argentina. He did odd jobs after arriving there. His two daughters followed later and settled in the Dutch Calvinist

Rinus with daughters Ida and Miep (left) in Batavia 1946. Photo from: Carolijn Visser, *Argentijnse avonden. Van de Zwart Janstraat naar de pampa* (2012).





**Proof of deregistration in Rotterdam of Van Mastrigt, 1937**

community at Tres Arroyos. Rinus often ended up at odds with his bosses. A Dutch childhood friend introduced him to Jan Polhuys, who ran a contracting firm in Tres Arroyos. In 1965 Rinus purchased this business form Polhuys. In 2000 Van Mastrigt passed away in Argentina.

The personal papers of this globetrotter consist mostly of correspondence. Along his bicycle journey, Rinus regularly wrote his parents and other relatives in Rotterdam, whether he was in Adrianople (now Edirne) or Baghdad, or on the boat from India to Karachi in present-day Pakistan. Other letters are from Singapore and mainly describe Rinus's state of health (e.g. from Reverend John G. Breman of the Borneo Faith Mission). Other documents concern the period immediately following the liberation in 1945, his subsequent repatriation to the Netherlands, and his later years working in Argentina.

The life story of Van Mastrigt is obviously about

**Article in the Rotterdamsh Nieuwsblad on the trip to Batavia**



an individual and is therefore anecdotal. Still, this life story of a man who lived and worked on three continents relates to the themes that are pivotal at the IISH: labour and migration.

Travel Journalist Carolijn Visser has written about the life of Van Mastrigt in her book *Argentijnse avonden. Van de Zwart Janstraat naar de pampa* (2012). Visser has also entrusted to the IISH the personal papers of Van Mastrigt kept by his daughter. (BHi)

### Bernhard Rubinstein, publisher of Russian authors in Berlin

Bernhard Rubinstein was well-known among Russians in Berlin in the period 1911-1933. His personal papers span 0.25 m. (<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO4364>).

Rubinstein was born in 1880 in the town of Wolmar in Latvia, which was part of czarist Russia at the time. Like his slightly younger brother Alexander Rubinstein (later Stein), he was active in the Russian labour movement. Following the Russian Revolution of 1905, the two brothers were forced to leave Riga and both settled in Germany. Alexander (1881-1948), who worked as a journalist, travelled via Zurich and Leipzig to Berlin. Persecuted by the Nazis, he subsequently moved to Prague (1933), Paris (1938), and New York (1940), where he died in 1948. The personal papers of Alexander Stein, which are also stored at the IISH, span over 1 m. (<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1377>).

Bernard Rubinstein operated as a publisher in Berlin. In 1905 in this city Iwan Ladyschnikow founded the Bühnen- und Buchverlag russischer Autoren Iwan Ladyschnikow. From mid-1911 onward, Rubinstein participated in this publishing company, by then known as I. Ladyschnikow Verlag G.m.b.H. From 1913 he was the sole shareholder and owner. In addition to specializing in publishing Russian literature and plays (some in Russian, some in German translation), the company bought and sold publication rights for these authors. The major authors included Leonid Andreyev, Leo Deutsch, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Maxim Gorky, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, and Anton Chekhov. One well-known title was Ladyschnikow's 1907 first edition of the German narrative *Der 9. Januar. Die Ergebnisse in Petersburg am 9. Januar 1905* by Gorky. The book is about a bloody Sunday in January during the 1905 Russian Revolution. All foreign translations were banned in czarist Russia. The first Russian edition was published in Soviet Petrograd in 1920. In 1926 a new illustrated edition was published by Malik Verlag in Germany, featuring a cover by John Heartfield.

Hitler's rise to power augured the end of the publishing company. Bernhard Rubinstein is said to have been among the first group of people arrested following the burning of the Reichstag in February 1933. His release is believed to have been mediated by the Hungarian consul or ambassador. After all, he had been a Hungarian citizen since he married a young Hungarian singer in 1909. Upon his release, he departed *post haste*



One of two remaining original photos with the staff of the publishing company. Around 1920. Rubinstein is not present on the pictures

for Paris, after entrusting two binders of papers to his daughter and urging her to keep them safe, because these documents would be very important, if the publishing company became operational again. At a certain point Béatrice emigrated to Paris. Her brother Nicolai escaped to Paris as well, continued on to Florence, and then settled in London in 1939, where he became renowned as a professor of medieval and Renaissance history. In late January 1944 Bernhard Rubinstein was

arrested in Paris at the Hotel Bonaparte. He was then deported to Auschwitz in early February 1944 and was killed shortly thereafter. This happened barely six months before Paris was liberated. Béatrice managed to avoid capture by the Nazis. The circumstances surrounding the arrest of Bernhard Rubinstein have been described in *Mes Justes*, the unpublished manuscript by his daughter Béatrice about life during the Nazi occupation and her father's arrest.



J. Ladyschnikow Verlag G. m. b. H.  
Berlin W 50, Rankestraße 33

	к. ф.
Давидъ Айзнайт, Терновый кустъ. Трагедия. (Въ Россіи конфисковано) . . . . .	1 50
Леонидъ Андреевъ, Апатемъ. Трагическое представлѣніе . . . . .	2 —
— Анфиса. Драма . . . . .	1 50
— Екатерина Ивановна. Драма . . . . .	1 50
— Елизаветъ. Разсказъ . . . . .	— 50
— Красный смѣхъ. Отрывки изъ найденной рукописи . . . . .	1 20
— Любовь къ ближнему. Шутливое представлѣніе . . . . .	— 50
— Мысль. Драма . . . . .	1 50
— Надмертвое. Возвратъ. Два разсказа . . . . .	1 —
— Не убій. Драма . . . . .	1 50
— Прогрессныя сабинянки. Историческое происшествіе . . . . .	1 —
— Прощеніе. Попугай. Два пьесы . . . . .	1 —
— Профессоръ Сторягинъ. Драма . . . . .	1 50
— Разсказъ о семи повѣнчаныхъ . . . . .	1 50
— Савва (Ісайа). Драма. (Въ Россіи запрещено къ постановкѣ) . . . . .	2 —
— Смыслъ человѣческой. Разсказъ . . . . .	1 —
— Такъ было. Очеркъ изъ французской революціи . . . . .	— 75
— Черныи маски. Представленіе . . . . .	1 50
Шалопутъ Аппъ, Мари. Романъ . . . . .	4 —
В. А. Вильбасовъ, Исторія Екатерины Второй. Томъ I и II . . . . .	25 —
— Исторія Екатерины Второй. Томъ XII. Часть I и II. Обзоръ иностранной о Екатеринѣ II. (Остальныя томы изъ печати не появились) . . . . .	25 —
В. А. Вильбасовъ-Гельбигъ, Русскіе избранники. (Въ Россіи конфисковано) . . . . .	7 50
— Барбарисъ. Пьеса . . . . .	— 90
— Мансінъ Горькій, Букомовъ. Очерки . . . . .	2 —
— Васса Желѣзнова. Опера . . . . .	1 50
— Враги. Сцены изъ жизни русскихъ рабочихъ. (Въ Россіи запрещено къ постановкѣ) . . . . .	2 —
— Городокъ Окуровъ. Хроника . . . . .	3 —
— Дачники. Спекль . . . . .	2 —
— С.-о. Илари. Очеркъ. (Въ Россіи конфисковано) . . . . .	— 60
— Дѣти солнца. Драма . . . . .	1 —
— Дѣтство . . . . .	2 —
— Жалобы. Въ 4-хъ частяхъ. Каждая часть . . . . .	— 60
— Жизнь неуужнаго человѣка. Романъ. (Въ Россіи конфисковано) . . . . .	4 —

Left: Example of a publication by Ladyschnikow Right: publisher's list

Letter to  
the Russian  
dramaturge  
Konstantin  
Trenjow  
(1876-1945)



The two binders containing Rubinstein's papers, which at some point reached Paris as well, were left behind in a storage area at Hotel Bonaparte and were somehow secured. These binders, basically the only personal papers of Bernhard Rubinstein and his Ladyschnikow publishing company, contain correspondence and especially contracts from the period 1905-1933. Many of these agreements are about rights, both for publication (in translation or otherwise) and performance of plays.

After the Second World War these personal papers were entrusted to Rubinstein's family in the United States. They later reached Hanna Papanek, who in the early 1990s corresponded with Nicolai ('Kolya,' 1911-2002) and Beate (Béatrice, 1916-2013), Bernhard Rubinstein's son and daughter. In 2015 Hanna Papanek donated the personal papers to the publishing company in Berlin, together with letters from Kolya and Béatrice to their uncle Alexander, as well as her own correspondence and documentation she had gathered, to the IISH. (BHi)

## Lectures

The lectures delivered at the Friends Afternoon on 21 January were dedicated to popular edification.

Lidewij Verheggen, director of the 'Volksuniversiteit Amsterdam' spoke about the history of the Volksuniversiteit, Gerard Leenders about popular edification in the labour movement. Marijke W. de Kleijnde Vrankrijker reported about her project cataloguing the NIVON archive at the IISH. Christianne Smit, author of *De Volksverheffers*, wrapped up with some concluding remarks.

### Lidewij Verheggen Education and popular edification

The *Volksuniversiteit* originated in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. A small group of scholars was concerned about the "concealed social dichotomy" that separated a small group of more or less academically educated from the large masses "of the people," the group of the ignorant, as they were known. Knowledge present within the universities was to be made available to society at large.

Arnold Toynbee exemplified the people from Oxford who came to London's East End in the late nineteenth century to impart knowledge to workers.

In 1892 the Netherlands followed suit, when the 'Vereniging Ons Huis' opened its premises on Rozenstraat. "An oasis amid that horrible

contrast between poverty and wealth, where one at least has a chance to forget for an hour the shame or annoyance about those differences," noted Héléne Mercier, social-liberal feminist, about her passion for *Ons Huis*.

The Toynbee project worked closely with like-minded organizations, such as the 'Volksbond' and the Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen', which had been founded in 1784.

Some affluent citizens and professors revived this work. Thanks in part to a visit that one of them paid to the 'Freie Hochschule' in Berlin, they decided to start a similar initiative in Amsterdam: the *Volksuniversiteit*.

The *Volksuniversiteit* was dedicated to the general objective of providing Amsterdam citizens of all classes with opportunities for general education and elevating civilization by attending courses in many different fields, devoid of any scholastic or coercive element.

This gave rise to the first *Volksuniversiteit* in Amsterdam in 1913. Others soon followed in Groningen (1914), Tilburg (1915), Assen and The Hague (1916), and Rotterdam and Utrecht (1917).

During their early years, these open universities served to enhance the general insight of individuals by increasing their knowledge. After all, this course was believed to be conducive to personal happiness and to social development in general.

The period following the Second World War was the heyday of the *Volksuniversiteit*, with the number of branches rising to 65. Partnerships with other institutions dedicated to enrichment and development efforts increased. The *Volksuniversiteit* establishments gradually drifted away from scholarship. By the second half of the 1950s their growth stagnated, due in part to the introduction of television and many new types of leisure pursuits.

Until the 1950s, the focus was mainly on the importance of imparting knowledge, largely unidirectional through what have come to be known as “lecture classes.”

By the late 1950s and early 60s, a far more pragmatic mindset was adopted: accommodating needs. All kinds of social trends, such as the democratization and emancipation movement and the rise of 2nd chance education, were major driving forces. Workshop courses were introduced as well.

The pioneer of this transition among open universities was Nico Wijnen, at the time director of the *BNVU* (‘Bond van Nederlandse Volkuniversiteiten’). He acknowledged the need to cater to students by offering an up-to-date and appealing selection.

Thanks to additional state funding, Dutch language courses were developed for foreign guest workers, special courses catering to those with only a primary school education, literacy courses, courses on women’s emancipation, and courses in arts and crafts.

The economic recession in the 1980s ushered in a neoliberal policy, driven by market forces. The first framework act on adult education was introduced in 1984, but the *Volkuniversiteiten* – classified as non-formal adult education – were barely mentioned in the new act. In 1989 government funding for the *BNVU* was discontinued, and *Volkuniversiteiten* had to resort to local – i.e. municipal and in some cases provincial – financial support initiatives. This situation has endured to the present day.

Since 2009 our enrolment has been dwindling. Many reasons are identifiable. Economic decline continues. People are losing their jobs. From 2016 we will be losing half of our remaining bit of funding. And the other half will disappear in 2017. The consequences will be very serious. We have considered whether we should shut down. We believe that we still have a role to play and must do so. Previously the watchword was “edification.” Now we talk about citizenship, participation, and reinforcing democratic values. We believe our role in those efforts is ongoing. We consult closely with the Amsterdam Public Library (the *OBA*) and hope to find “lodgings” at several branches of the *OBA* by the summer. We will teach our courses there, and the head office will be transferred to the main library on Oosterdok. We will remain the *Volkuniversiteit Amsterdam*, as an independent organization, featuring our own website and our own programme. All our staff will follow us to these “lodgings.” We hope you will share this experience with us.

## Gerard Leenders **Lief, Links en Lastig. Zeventig jaar Volksontwikkeling en Natuurvriendenwerk**

It has been 21 years since I spent months working on a commission from the *NIVON* together with my friend Jos Palm to write the booklet

*Lief, Links en Lastig* [Sweet, leftist and difficult]. The true archival research took place here, in this building. I was even given a small office of my own, where I toiled over minutes, letters, and notes regarding a certain subject, including extremely dull discourses from the board and interesting letters from members. I found everything largely by chance, as back in 1994 no actual inventory was available. Nor is there one today, from what I see on the website! I knew little about the *NIVON*. Yes, they ran houses for nature friends, but I had never slept in one, and yes, they organized walks, but I had never ventured onto the Pieterpad.

### Origins

The developments started back in the 19th century. The ‘Maatschappij tot nut van het Algemeen’ was one example, and the *Volkuniversiteit* had been founded in 1913. Still, the social democrats considered all this a bit too bourgeois and wanted a separate institute promoting edification of workers. In 1924 the ‘Instituut voor Arbeiders Ontwikkeling’ was opened to serve this purpose: the *I.V.A.O.*

The institute secretary was Koos Vorrink, the founding father of the ‘Arbeiders Jeugd Centrale’ (*AJC*). The ideal, according to a former member, was: “we wanted to be freed from bourgeois dominance.”

What did the Institute do?

### 1. Political and social edification and schooling

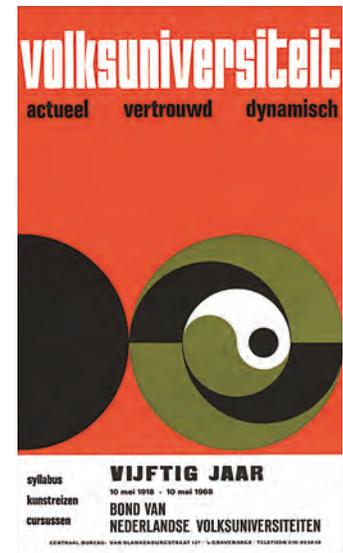
This was the most important branch of the institute in the beginning. The institute offered courses and lectures on subjects such as Great socialist thinkers, On the economic significance of reclaiming the *Zuiderzee*, about employee participation, etc. In 1932 the night school for workers opened. Most instructors were primary school teachers, catering to workers with no more than a primary school education. Enrolment peaked at 4,500 participants. There were also local academies, where the skills taught included how to write letters and take minutes.

### 2. Art and culture

Workers needed to be cultured, broadening their spiritual horizons with works by socialist poets, such as Gorter, Adama van Scheltema, and Henriette Roland Holst. There were also Sunday morning assemblies, featuring art, cinema, drama, and music. They became known as the “church attendance of the reds.”

### 3. Nature and recreation

This became popular thanks mainly to the merge with the ‘Nederlandse Arbeiders Reisvereniging’ [Dutch workers’ travel association],



Poster *Bond van Nederlandse Volkuniversiteiten*, 1968. IISG BG D 46/101



Poster *NIVON* ± 1985. IISG BG D41/719

composed mainly of nature lovers. They went on walks, attended lectures about nature, bee-keeping, plant and wildlife, etc. And there were ‘Houses of the Friends of Nature.’ The first one, Krikkenhaard, started in 1928. The Christmas and Easter camps were very popular as well.

#### After the Second World War

The NIVON remained active after the war, although social trends were an impediment. Public night schools opened, and radio and television broadened world horizons.

Houses for nature friends were restored following the war and drew over 100,000 overnight stays in the 1960s but then started to decline.

The name was changed in 1959 from IVAO to the ‘Nederlands Instituut voor Volksontwikkeling en Natuurvriendenwerk’ [Dutch institute for popular development and work by nature friends]. After 1968 the political outlook was revived. Firm discourse at a congress by former secretary Kees Cabout entitled: *How red is the NIVON?*

And a course in 1979: “History and future of the labour movement” by Trotskyist historian and IISH board member Theo van Tijn.

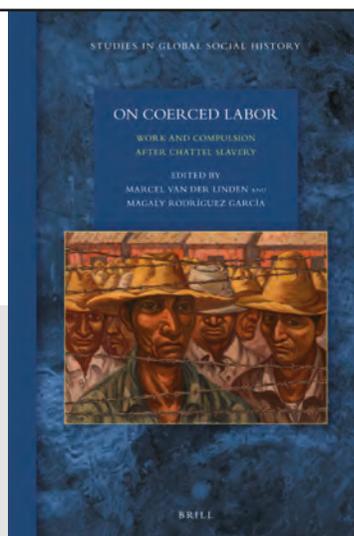
## Marijke W. de Kleijn – de Vrankrijker NIVON What has become of your historic tradition?

A group of volunteers arranges the NIVON archive at the IISH. The next time Gerard Leenders comes to examine the archive, he will work there far more easily!

In 2014 a small group of volunteers interested in history decided to take on the NIVON archive. A plan was drafted in consultation with Frank de Jong. Supplementing the archive figures among the objectives. Digitizing the journal *De Toorts* is on the agenda as well.

#### Christianne Smit

In her concluding remarks, Christianne Smit stressed the link between “the social issue” and the response from the bourgeoisie. She analysed the important mediating role of those “edifying the masses” between the “dangerous” working class and the “decadent” elite. The individuals “edifying the masses” aimed to preserve social stability and affirm their own social status.



- June 2016
- ISBN 978 90 04 31637 9
- Hardback (approx. 368 pp.; incl. 3 Maps, 8 Tables and 4 Figures)
- List price EUR 110.- / US\$ 142.-
- *Studies in Global Social History*, 25



## On Coerced Labor

### *Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery*

Edited by **Marcel van der Linden**, International Institution of Social History, and **Magaly Rodríguez García**, University of Leuven

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