On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends of the IISH 2021 no. 41

The IISH and the pandemic

A special find in a Little Free Library

Marx on tour
Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has kept the world under siege for about a year now, has had serious consequences for the IISH, just as for everything and everyone else. From 17 March 2020, the building at Cruquiusweg had to shut down entirely, for visitors as well as staff. The first lockdown kept the IISH closed until June, when we entered a stage of gradual reopening. Staff were able to return to the office premises cautiously and at their discretion, and limited numbers of visitors were admitted to the reading room by appointment. From September, even somewhat larger gatherings seemed possible. That hope proved short-lived when, late September, the second lockdown became inevitable and most restrictions that had been eased had to be reinstated. Like most other public buildings, businesses, and services, the Institute will now again remain closed until at least early March.

As we have mentioned before in our digital communications, the pandemic and lockdowns have drastic consequences for the Friends as well. The Friends last met up over a year ago, and, since then, communication has commenced predominantly via online channels. Fortunately, we have on the Waterfront as a way of informing our Friends and other interested parties about the latest developments and new acquisitions. Although the present extraordinary situation has delayed publication, we are happy that, thanks to the dedication of various staff members, we can now present you with this issue.

We start with a general overview of what the pandemic has meant for the Institute and its staff. In the presentation of acquisitions, Bouwe Hijma, one of the most committed contributors to On the Waterfront, who in fact retired last year, presents a major purchase that may shed new light on working relations in the Netherlands Indies. He also describes a special discovery made in one of the growing number of Little Free Libraries, while Frank de Jong explains the family connection between one of the best-known Dutch journalists and writers of the twentieth century and our country’s social democracy. Harriet Stroomberg describes the different ways in which two people who donated archives were involved with their collections, and Eef Vermeij relates how acquisitions in Hong Kong and Thailand continuously speak to current political events there. Eric de Ruijter closes this issue describing how, with the help of the Friends, the only object in the IISH collections with UNESCO world heritage status is now being preserved even better, while remaining available for lending.

Aad Blok

About the Friends

Members of the Friends of the IISH pay annual dues of 25, 50, or 100 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 Friends coordinator 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’s Five Centuries of Social History Collected by the IISH (Amsterdam 2010). For all information concerning the Friends, see https://iish.amsterdam/en/friends
The IISH and the Pandemic

The COVID pandemic and its consequences for public and private life have been talked and written about endlessly in the past year, from a great many different perspectives and views. Some of the most disputed statements were probably those arising from the recent curfew, introduced with parliamentary approval and compared by some to the situation under the German occupation. Although any such comparison falls short, this is actually the first time since May 1940 that the Institute has had to close its doors for an extended period; reason to consider how it has dealt with this and other consequences of the pandemic in the past year. To what extent did services to visitors and users of the collections continue, and what was still possible in collection development and cataloguing, research, and publications?

The blessings of the digital revolution during the pandemic

Fortunately, an event of such magnitude and global scope as the COVID pandemic is rare. In the past year, many obvious comparisons were made with the Spanish flu, which raged across the world between 1917 and 1920. Since the IISH celebrated its 85th anniversary last November, and therefore did not yet exist during that previous pandemic, we obviously cannot compare its impact on the Institute. Still, one major difference between 1917-1920 and 2020-2021 cannot be missed. Despite the present lockdowns and the closure of shops and offices, economic activity and working life have continued, at least to a large extent. The reason for this is quite obvious: the recent digitisation and online revolution now enable millions of workers in the Netherlands and billions more around the world to work from home. The same is largely true of most IISH staff members.

The IISH has been a trailblazer among its peers with regard to digitization and connectivity. Among archival and library institutions in the Netherlands and internationally, the IISH was one of the first to digitize its catalogue and to launch major digitization projects of its archival collections. Recently, the IISH website was completely restructured and is now based largely on state-of-the-art linked data technologies. Thanks to these developments our visitors and researchers have access to a wealth of digitized items, despite the lockdowns that have rendered most staff unable to come to the Cruquiusweg premises for much of 2020 and, so far, all of 2021.

A small number of staff are still allowed to come to the Institute regularly. For instance colleagues whose private situation makes working from home difficult if not impossible. Or reading room staff, who are working hard to scan and reproduce materials for visitors and researchers who urgently need items from our collections. While IISH researchers can continue much of their research making use of similar services at other archives and libraries, many colleagues who have been unable to commence their normal duties are now entering and improving metadata for collections, e.g. by adding titles and other information to visual materials, or producing transcriptions of handwritten documents.

The curses of the digital revolution

All this would have been impossible without the digital and online revolutions, a fact so obvious that we take it for granted even though it came about only recently. What we also tend to take for granted of these revolutions is that they are not exclusively advantageous for workers and certainly not for all workers. In our personal lives, we are experiencing how working from home can involve a complicated mixture of personal and professional spheres, and we struggle to limit our daily work hours to a reasonable maximum without that voice over the intercom informing us that the Institute will be closing in fifteen minutes. “Zoom fatigue” and similar symptoms of alienation and stress from solely interacting with colleagues via video calls, chats, and apps become inescapable side effects, which in the longer run may be detrimental to our health and motivation. As are their colleagues from the Humanities Cluster, the IISH management and staff are aware of these dangers, and initiatives have been developed to encourage staff to take regular walks outdoors, arrange the necessary office equipment at home, and organize social events online, such as a weekly coffee break, even if this means yet another video meeting.

At the same time, a large part of collection development and processing remains analogue, and therefore requires working at the Institute using the actual, physical materials. As this has now been nearly impossible for an extended period, inevitably large backlogs have formed and will present major challenges after the lockdowns end. As an institute dedicated to generating and offering reliable information and insights about the long-term origins, effects, and consequences of social inequality, however, we are not interested primarily in introspection. All of us are aware that at a more general, global level, for workers this pandemic has also disclosed far more serious effects of the digital and online revolutions. In one of the many recent comparisons with the 1917-1922 influenza pandemic, “Comparing COVID-19 and the Spanish Flu: Not so much the ‘Great Leveler’ but particularly hitting the poor”, IISH Senior Researcher Ulbe Bosma wrote how the influenza pandemic, commonly known in the West as the Spanish Flu, claimed several million more victims among the poorest people and countries than among the European and North American populations. His blog was the first in the new series IISH and the world, published on the new IISH website, as another sign of how the digital revolution enables us to provide new access to IISH research results. In the blog, Bosma warns that
May desire, requires a courier, delivery person or what have you, to do the analogue part of the work, which still needs to be executed regardless of how digital our modern world may seem. And every digital device we use to perform our now largely digitized work will still have been produced, assembled, shipped, sold, and installed by human hands, by workers who operate mainly in the lowest echelons and therefore hold the lowest paid jobs in the production chains. It is these groups that are at the centre of the Institute’s attention, in collection development as well as research policies.

For the duration of this pandemic and after, the IISH will keep striving to put the blessings of the digital revolution to work to help visitors and researchers from all over the world use the collections. We hope this will enable us as well as others to explore how social and economic inequalities have developed over time, and how working people have tried, and are still trying in many different ways, to cope with and fight against them.

Aad Blok

The present pandemic may well become an even stronger “Great Divider” than the Spanish Flu, as it becomes clearer by the day that COVID-19 is very likely to bring about even greater inequality than we have seen since the end of the last century. His perspective, comparing the COVID-19 pandemic with historical examples of pandemics, exemplifies the focus of IISH research on global social inequality.

This focus can also help us see the correlation, if not the causal links, between the digital revolution since the 1980s, the global rise and dominance of neo-liberal economic and political ideologies since the end of the Soviet Union and “real-existing socialism”, and the steep rise in social and global inequality since the end of the twentieth century. Closer to home, the “flexibilization” of labour relations has been noticeably stronger in the Netherlands than in other European countries, causing huge inequalities between workers with fixed employment and those forced to accept zero-hour contracts, or to scrape out an existence as so-called self-employed workers. Every online order placed for a book, a meal, or whatever goods or services we may desire, requires a courier, delivery person or what have you, to do the analogue part of the work, which still needs to be executed regardless of how digital our modern world may seem. And every digital device we use to perform our now largely digitized work will still have been produced, assembled, shipped, sold, and installed by human hands, by workers who operate mainly in the lowest echelons and therefore hold the lowest paid jobs in the production chains. It is these groups that are at the centre of the institute’s attention, in collection development as well as research policies.

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Aad Blok

Presentation of Acquisitions

Archives of firms in the Netherlands Indies: rise and downfall

In the Spring of 2020, the Netherlands Economic History Archive (NEHA) purchased several boxes filled with archival documents, photographs, and picture postcards at Arenberg Auctions in Brussels. These items had previously belonged to Joseph Bohyn, an agricultural engineer in Bandung on Java, in what was then the Netherlands Indies and is presently Indonesia.

This purchase reflects the policy of acquiring documents on the economic history of the former colonies in the East and West. The underlying idea is that, in this way, these materials enter the public domain, are made accessible, and consequently become available to researchers. In this case, research based on the newly acquired documents may shed new light on work and labour relations in the former Netherlands Indies. Additionally, these types of archives and collections figure in the current discussions about the colonial past and preservation of the heritage from this period.

The main character in this archive ([https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH04818](https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH04818) is Joseph Achille(s) Marie Bohyn, who was born in Kemzeke near Sint-Niklaas in Belgium on 8 April 1890. In the 1920s Bohyn, a French-speaking Belgian, worked as the manager of the Société Anonyme Compagnie Générale d’Exploitations aux Indes Orientales [N.V. General Society of Companies in the East Indies], on the rubber plantation Tjimangsoed in Tjipatat in the mountainous region Preanger near Bandung. In the 1930s he resided in Brussels. In the annual report for 1936, Bohyn is listed as a member of the Executive Board.

The archival documents include two laissez-passers, issued in 1920 and 1921 by the Belgian minister of Foreign Affairs and bearing many stamps, which Bohyn needed to present to travel between Europe and the Indies. Equally exceptional are a few archival documents concerning the Bohyn family baboe. In one of the documents she is described as ‘Mademoiselle Baboe Bawon, Javanaise (of Dutch nationality) born on Surabaya’ [Miss Baboe Bawon, Javanese (of Dutch nationality) born on Surabaya]. There is a ticket for the baboe to travel on the S.S. Johan de Witt from Genoa to Batavia in January 1927, as well as...
The collection also contains two important groups of other documents. First, documents that convey operating results expected and achieved for the firm as a whole and for various tea and rubber plantations in particular. Detailed charts from 1930 indicate the cost of maintaining the various plantations the firm operated, and of packaging and shipping rubber, tea, and quinine. Equally detailed charts reflect the salaries of the administrators and their assistants in 1938 and 1939. In addition, various plantings are described, and data provided about diseases, such as malaria, among the indigenous population, as well as preventive efforts. It is noted that some indigenous do not work enough on the plantation, because they are too busy tending their rice fields.

The collection also features many interesting photographs. A fine series of eleven photographs, with captions in French, conveys the ambience and festivities on 15 June 1924, marking the official opening of the new head office of the Société on the Tjimangsoed plantation, as well as that of the new water reservoir. Several photographs feature the Bohyn family, as well as the house where they lived. Other photographs reveal the festivities organized for the indigenous population on this special day. The photographs show the colonial relations that were apparently taken for granted and are presented as almost idyllic. Other photographs in the collection include a harrowing one of workers transporting timber to build a viaduct. The photograph of three gentlemen on an excursion, with horses and servants in tow, is similarly revealing.

In the Spring of 2020 another small archive of a firm in the Indies was donated to the NEHA. It comprises the archive of the N.V. Cultuur Maatschappij ‘Beran’ and the N.V. Suikerfabriek ‘Tandjong Tirto’ (see: https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH04809). Annual reports describe the management and production of the firm. Other documents concern the destruction of various sugar factories around 1950 and the winding up of securities holdings in the 1960s, including the claim for damages, submitted to the Indonesian authorities in 1963. The documents also shed light on the families and owners involved in these firms (Broese van Groenou, Le Roy, Pijnacker Hordijk, and Wieseman). (Bouwe Hijma)

Karl Liebkecht and his granddaughters on both sides of the Iron Curtain

One of my favourite pursuits is exploring the public bookcases in Amsterdam, where anybody is free to leave his or her discarded books to be taken in by a new owner. Sometimes my walks yield exceptional discoveries. In June 2020 I noticed Karl Liebknecht. Advokat und Parlamentarier mit Charisma, by Annelies Laschitza, published as Heft 15 in the series Rosa-Luxemburg-Forschungsberichte, by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Sachsen. I took this booklet home with me. Perhaps the IHSh did not yet own this regional publication. In fact, this title turned out not to be in the library. The IHSh does have several other titles by this
Author, about Karl Kautsky, Karl Liebknecht, and especially Rosa Luxemburg. Annelies Laschitza (1934-2018) was a historian affiliated with the Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus with the SED Zentralkomitee and the Historiker-Gesellschaft of the GDR. The booklet about Liebknecht (1871-1919), issued in November 2018, was her final publication. Laschitza, born in Leipzig, died in Berlin on 10 December 2018. In this booklet of barely one hundred pages she describes Liebknecht’s career as a lawyer and elaborates at length on his membership of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), of the Prussian House of Representatives from 1908, and of the Reichstag from 1912. On the eve of and during the First World War, Liebknecht was politically on the left wing of the SPD. He criticized the war loans and condemned the Turkish atrocities against the Armenian people. Liebknecht left the SPD in 1916 and joined the more radical Spartacus League. The IISH has a small archive on Karl Liebknecht (https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH00822).

This nice discovery obviously belongs in the IISH collection and has now been included as inventory number 166 in the ‘Germany, various manuscripts’ collection (https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH01730). Closer examination reveals how truly unique this find is, because the title page contains a dedication: ‘Kind regards to Elisa Külow from Maja-Karlena Liebknecht, Leipzig, 01.12.18 Marianne Liebknecht.’ Two names, ‘Maja-Karlena’ in neat, legible calligraphy, ‘Marianne’, more difficult to discern.

The countless volumes written about Karl Liebknecht and the murder of him and his companion Rosa Luxemburg in the night of 14 to 15 January 1919 are part of the leftist canon. But who are these unknown women Maja-Karlena and Marianne Liebknecht? Both are granddaughters of Karl Liebknecht. On 1 December 2018, one and a half months before the hundredth anniversary of this highly controversial double murder, they came to Leipzig at the invitation of the political party Die Linke, to meet with representatives of the generations after them.

A walk along the Karl-Liebknecht-Straße was followed by a gathering at the house where Liebknecht was born, at 15 Braustraße. This building has housed the party office of the leipziger branch of Die Linke for some time. The two granddaughters presented to the Stadtgeschichtliches [city history] Museum of Leipzig a portrait of Karl, painted by his son Robert (Marianne’s father) and an ivory writing board. Next, they recounted their own turbulent lives. Maja-Karlena talked about how her father Wilhelm, Karl’s oldest son, never got over the tragedy of the murder of his father and finally left for the Soviet Union in 1938, where his renowned surname protected him from the terror under Stalin. His daughter Maja, born in 1932, moved to the GDR to work as an interpreter at the house where Liebknecht was born, at 15 Braustraße. This building has housed the party office of the Leipziger branch of Die Linke for some time. The two granddaughters presented to the Stadtgeschichtliches [city history] Museum of Leipzig a portrait of Karl, painted by his son Robert (Marianne’s father) and an ivory writing board.

Two small biographies in a nutshell. The two biographies are unique and at the same time so exemplary of the twentieth century that they call for an extended, more detailed version. The report of this gathering in Leipzig, posted on the website of Die Linke, mentions that afterwards, Maja-Karlena and Marianne autographed a few dozen copies of Laschitza’s publication about their grandfather.
Jan Carmiggelt and the ‘Plan’

This extremely confusing period of the pandemic leads us to explore new opportunities for a major overhaul of the social-economic situation in the Netherlands. It also reminds us of the Depression of the 1930s, when unemployment soared in the Netherlands, and international ideas for extensive government intervention in the economy took shape. One of the remedies applied in those Depression years was the ‘Plan van de Arbeid’ [Plan of Labour] of 1935, jointly conceived by the social democratic party (SDAP) and the trade union movement (NVV). Journalist Michiel Zonneveld recently revisited the old ‘Plan’ to see how it might benefit us in the near future. His findings will be published as a manifest in 2021.

Acquiring new archives or adding to existing archives is difficult to plan. The offer of the minutes from meetings of the SDAP chapter in The Hague did not seem so exciting at first, and, moreover, the name Jan Carmiggelt was not immediately recognizable. Of course his brother Simon was a well-known journalist and writer, but who was Jan? Jan Carmiggelt turned out to be Simon’s elder brother. Born on 1 January 1910, Jan took his degree in economics in 1935 at the Nederlandsche Handels-Hoogeschool in Rotterdam, worked as economics editor first at Vooruit (the local edition of Het Volk published in The Hague) and later at the national edition of Het Volk in Amsterdam. In 1941 he started working on his PhD thesis about sociology of the local community.

In addition to personal correspondence, the archive, held by the family until March 2020, comprises mainly his scholarly works and correspondence with a great many prominent SDAP members. The minutes of the The Hague SDAP chapter, however, are not included, although extensive reports from the Van Gelderen study group are. This study group was active between 1933 and 1940, comprised over 30 members, and met nine times in various compositions at the home of Jacob (Bob) and Alexandrina van Gelderen. In 1933 the Van Gelderen had returned from the Netherlands Indies, and Van Gelderen was appointed at the Ministry of Colonies as head of the crisis affairs department, which also included economic relations with the Indies. The study group first met in July 1933 at Sweelinckstraat 142 in The Hague, and the topic of discussion was ‘the position of the socialist labour movement’. The report was drafted by Jan Carmiggelt and circulated among the members, who were asked to suggest additions and corrections. Before the second gathering, follow-up meetings were proposed. Carmiggelt mentioned that the national plan management would be on the agenda ‘since all participants are interested in economics and have different academic backgrounds, so that he has high expectations’. After the second meeting (about democracy) in November 1933, study group members Van Gelderen, Jan Tinbergen, Ed. van Cleeft, and Carmiggelt drafted a work plan and a work allocation schedule relating to ‘Plan management’.

Reading these documents now might suggest that the ‘Plan van de Arbeid’ was conceived in the home of Bob van Gelderen, thanks to Jan Carmiggelt. In some respects that was indeed the case, and the role of Van Gelderen and consequently that of Carmiggelt appears to have been overshadowed by that of two other study group members: Hein Vos and Jan Tinbergen. Early 1934, simultaneously with the plans being drafted within the study group, the SDAP party executive proposed setting up a bureau for academic affairs dedicated to performing ‘similar work for the Netherlands as is presently happening under the aegis of Hendrik De Man in Belgium.’ Hein Vos became director of the bureau of academic affairs, the board of governors comprised G. van den Bergh, Bob van Gelderen, Jan Tinbergen, and Th. van der Waerden, and an additional commission was composed of SDAP and NVV representatives. In a letter about a Dutch ‘Plan’, Jan Carmiggelt wrote that the source of the initiative was unknown, but that he believed the driving forces were Van Gelderen, Jan Tinbergen, and Hein Vos. This was to the credit of the modest young Carmiggelt. On 17 and 18 March 1934, the Van Gelderen study group met for the
third time, discussing the topic: ‘What can we learn from the De Man plan, in the interest of a Dutch plan?’ In addition to Van Gelderen, Jan Tinbergen, Dik Tinbergen, Klaas Kooij, Hein Vos, Bertus Willem Schaper, Garnt Stuiveling, Hein van Wijk, Douwe Groenveld and Jan Carmiggelt were present, and the group acknowledged the need for a Dutch plan. The chief objective was to create employment in the near future and to rationalize the abundance of small businesses. Structural adjustments through rationalization were deemed necessary in the food and garment industries. Solutions to the economic changes consisted of a work plan (conducting major public works) and a capital plan (setting up financing institutes such as an industry bank). The study group’s concluding idea was to found a central economic plan institute, consisting of an economic council and a planning bureau to evaluate the purpose of business plans. Land clearing was not envisaged as a solution to unemployment, since this would be insufficiently profitable. The capital needed for employment was more likely to be recovered through investment in residential construction.

Carmiggelt was tasked with drafting a report of the discussions and a schedule for a work plan. Van Gelderen, Jan Tinbergen, Van Cleeff, and Carmiggelt were then assigned to elaborate this design and to submit the final result to the by then established bureau of academic affairs and to the sDAP party executive. After this point, the plan appeared on the study group agenda on two more occasions. On 19 October 1935 ‘The Dutch Plan of Labour’ was discussed, and on 18 December 1937 the study group discussed: ‘In what measure, and on which points do the proposals contained in the Plan of Labour need to be amended or expanded, considering the economic changes in the Netherlands?’

In addition to contributing to the study group, Carmiggelt also worked on the actual creation of the ‘Plan’. He joined the sDAP Middenstandscommissie (commission of small business owners) chaired by F.M. Wibaut. As a result, this commission issued the brochure ‘Het Plan van de Arbeid en de Middenstand’ [work plan and small business owners]. In September 1936, Herman Bernard Wiardi Beckman (editor at De Arbeiderspers and Het Volk) provided Carmiggelt with suggestions to make the text more suitable for a general readership. After all, the ‘Plan’ would need to appeal to small business owners as well. The work expansion programme, aimed at getting 200,000 previously unemployed people back to work, would greatly boost purchasing power. Since 60 percent of income was spent via shops (food products, shoes, clothes, and household goods), small business owners would also benefit. Additionally, mutual cooperation was advocated to enable small businesses to withstand chain stores and unnecessary mutual competition from incompetent opportunistic retailers (jobless individuals who tried their luck as shop owners or retailers). Measures such as more accurate description of the branches, joint procurement, inventory maintenance, and advertising and regulating business locations by introducing a general permit system were expected to benefit small business owners. In the 1930s, independent shop owners still accounted for around 85 percent of retail revenues, the rest was spent in department stores, chain stores, and cooperatives.

Carmiggelt remained active behind the scenes when the ‘Plan’ was revised. In correspondence between 1935 and 1937 with Gerard Nederhorst, by then a member of the Van Gelderen study group and on the staff of the sDAP bureau of academic affairs, Carmiggelt wrote that ‘execution of any plan of ours appears exceedingly unlikely’. Only on 10 August 1939 was the sDAP able to join the government for the first time. Carmiggelt argued that ‘due to economic growth, the plan needs to be revised, preferably including a new work plan every year’.

Van Gelderen and Carmiggelt both met with tragic ends. The Van Gelderens committed suicide on 14 May 1940. Jan Carmiggelt joined the resistance and was arrested on 17 July 1943; he died of pneumonia in a labour camp at Moerdijk on 26 September 1943. In 1945 Hein Vos became minister of Trade and Industry in the Schermerhorn-Drees cabinet. One of his first actions was to establish a Centraal Planbureau (CPB) and appoint Jan Tinbergen as director. (Frank de Jong)

Jos Collignon’s collection of drawings
Those donating collections rarely help arrange the material, but last summer was an exception in this respect. Cartoonist Jos Collignon visited the iish and shared all kinds of interesting and useful information about his drawings. The collection, which will be entrusted officially to the NIBG in Hilversum in the spring of 2021, will be catalogued and stored at the iish.

As a law student at Utrecht University, Collignon (born in Maartensdijk, 1950) started writing texts and producing drawings for the university periodical. After his studies he took up drawing full time. For three years from 1977 he drew for the NRC Handelsblad, after which he transferred to De Volkskrant. In addition, he worked for a great many magazines, including
In addition to drawings for dailies and weeklies, Collignon’s collection includes works on commission and for institutions such as advertising agencies and municipalities. He produced a series of drawings for the City of Amsterdam, for example, informing residents about the growing litter problem in the city: ‘Afval dat pakken we samen aan’ [Tackling litter together]. In such assignments the work process of the artist is easy to trace. Both the onset of the first idea, depicted somewhat hesitantly in thin pencil lines, and the increasingly elaborate and perfected drawings and the final result are in the collection. Over the years, his drawing style became less cautious; lines appear in firm, solid brush strokes of black ink. The humorous content remains surprising and is not always easy to summarize. What is immediately obvious: nothing is off limits, and the delight in drawing bursts from the page.

A drawing on cardboard with movable characters on strings nicely captures Collignon’s mockery of power and labour relations. “De arbeidsmarkt verklaard voor 30-plussers” [the job market explained for those over 30] reveals the fate of a young employee. The employer, who is in control and has the money (the rolling gul- der), gives him at an advanced age a bad push to put him under social care of the government. In the early 1990s, at the request of FNV-magazine, Collignon began drawing a short comic strip. In the storyline “EB”, also published as the book Maar daarom niet getreurd (1997), the main character is CDA politician Elco Brinkman. Brinkman is depicted as an awkward sceptic, whose authority is eroded in many comical situations. Shades of Monty Python surface in a drawing about the Dutch Film Festival, “Silly walk of fame”, for which Collignon received an Award of excellence in the Entertainment Page category of de Volkskrant in 1999. Collignon has received several awards, such as the Inktspot award for best
A political activist. In her drawings from that period she tackles inequality, exploitation, and colonialism.

In two black-and-white drawings from 1969 she depicted herself beside her husband during the occupation of the Maagdenhuis university building in Amsterdam. Together with two other activists, they face off against those defending the authorities, anonymously seated on horses and inside a combat vehicle. The contrast between light and dark, depicted by the glaring headlights and flashing insignia on the police uniforms, make the event all the more dramatic.

From the 1970s onward, Hetty Paërl drew for the Aluminium Komitee. In an interview she elaborated on this: “One important product from Suriname is bauxite, which is used to make aluminium, so we decided to team up with others to found the Aluminium Komitee. It was soon renamed the Suriname Comité. We published the Surinamebulletin. Our objective was to prove that Dutch development aid favoured Dutch corporate industry. We sought to demonstrate that the Netherlands had a debt toward its colonies.”

To examine the specific situation in Suriname, she visited the country. Regular meetings were convened at the Paërl residence. In addition to drawings, she produced the comic “De geschiedenis van Suriname”[history of Suriname] for the Surinamebulletin, published as a book in 1975. Here, as described in the introduction “[…] 3 centuries of struggle by the Surinamese people against oppression by foreign tyranny” is summarized. The recently acquired drawing collection includes two drawings made for this comic (inv. nrs 14 and 37).

Several of the designs in the collection appeared on posters already included in the iish collection, such as “Suriname land van mogelijkheden, maar niet voor het Surinaamse volk. Stop de uitbuiting van Suriname! […]” [Suriname land
of opportunities, but not for the Surinamese people. Stop the exploitation of Suriname.

Paërl repeatedly used a visual theme of multinationals, depicted by a man shaped like a ship, looting natural resources and raw materials: "I made a poster, which featured on the cover of the Surinamebulletin, a ship that is also the large, well-filled stomach of a colonialist. This shows what Dutch companies are looting from Suriname: bauxite by Billiton, timber by Bruynzeel, sugar by the RCMA (Rubber Cultuur Maatschappij Amsterdam), rice by Wessanen, palm oil by hva [Handelsvereniging Amsterdam]." The design for the poster "De helft van de Surinaamse bevolking woont in krotten…" [Half the Suriname people live in hovels…] deplores the starvation wages Surinamese workers are paid for chopping trees. The owner of Bruynzeel, reclining in an easy chair, is holding a newspaper with a headline reading: "Ondernemer zijn is een fascinerende uitdaging" [being an entrepreneur is a fascinating challenge]. Smoking a cigar, this man contrasts sharply with the hard workers and their humble abodes.

Deplorable working conditions and inequality also feature on several collages of African miners inspired by a poem by the anti-colonial poet and politician Aimé Césaire, "Ziet de dragers langs de kade in lange rijen …" [See the long lines of porters on the quay]. Variants and studies of the same theme reveal how Paërl searched constantly for the most meaningful form and combinations of images and text.

From the late 1970s, the focus of Paërl’s works shifted. From that period, following her divorce, which left her responsible for raising her son, she had to subsist financially from her drawings, and she illustrated and wrote books and articles about puppet theatre. She excelled at this and received much praise. A list of her publications and activities from the 1980s reveals that, thanks to her drive and her love of work, she was enormously industrious and remained active into her twilight years. (Harriet Stroomberg)
In defense of Marxism, Vol. 4, Table of content:
Against opportunism, sectarianism and centrism.
Second part (1941-43) B. on organisation issues. The 12 essays listed are written mainly by Trotskyist leader Peng Shuzhi, criticizing the minority led by Wang Fanxi and Zheng Zhaolin.
This is only one volume of a multi-volume publication (Vol. 3 is present as well), which also includes articles by the minority.

and published in Chinese a couple of years ago; no English edition exists yet, and publications from the 1940s and 50s (some as so-called Tarnschriften). The Hong-Kong section is a large share of the archive of the early Pioneer group and comprises documents from the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the Revolutionary Marxist League (RML), the Young Socialist Group (YSG), the rift in the 1980s, early publications of the Pioneer group and the Pioneer journal (1984-2004), and some early underground Trotskyist publications from the 1950s. The collection was donated by Loong Yu Au.

Trotskyism truly came to the fore in China with the establishment of the Communist League of China as a result of the Unification Congress (instigated by Trotsky) in 1931. This joint alliance between four different groups emerged following the disastrous events of 1927, when the Guomindang persecuted its coalition partner the Communist Party of China (forced to participate in the coalition by the Comintern). The Communist League experienced persecution early on as well. Also in 1931, and in the next year, many leaders were arrested. The organization managed to survive, and some of the arrested leaders were released in the late 1930s, although by then theoretical differences had arisen. Despite the cooperation in 1941, the ranks were deeply divided over the course of the Sino-Japanese War, before the war spread throughout the Pacific. This resulted in the formation of two factions, the majority of which supported Peng Shu Zhi and the minority Wang and Zheng. When Japanese forces occupied Shanghai, the Trotskyist organizations de-facto ceased to exist until the end of the war. The Wang-Zheng minority group established the Communist League (later renamed the Internationalist Workers Party) and moved to Hong Kong just before the CCP takeover. This rift in

the movement also occurred in Hong Kong, to which many Chinese Trotskyists had fled, both around 1949 and later in 1952, when the CCP harshly repressed the remaining Trotskyists, who had gone underground after the victory of the CCP. In Hong Kong, Trotskyist activities surged slightly in the 1970s, driven mainly by the student movement and the side effects of the Cultural Revolution on the mainland.

A brief explanation about who is who in the archive: The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) was the original Chinese Trotskyist organization led by Peng Shu Zhi. Founded in China in 1948, the offices were moved immediately to Hong Kong, leaving only a provisional Committee in Shanghai. Peng was forced by the British to flee Hong Kong for Vietnam and then from Vietnam to Paris. The Revolutionary Marxist League (RML) was founded around 1973-4 by Wu, a young activist at the time. Originally with the RCP, he found the RCP leadership intolerable and left. The RML existed until 1991. The Young Socialist Group (YSG) was founded by a group of young activists from the RCP around 1974. Later, in 1978, the YSG merged with the RML youth group, while nearly all young members of the RCP joined the RML in the same year. But the RML disintegrated in the early
Thailand Protest Movement 2020: “Down with dictatorship, long live the people!”

In February 2020, new political protests erupted in Thailand in response to a ruling by the constitutional court to dissolve the Future Forward Party, which had done surprisingly well in the 2019 elections and became the third-largest party. Especially popular among younger voters, they campaigned on a platform of promises of reformist policies and made extensive use of social media. The dissolution, ordered by the court on the ground that a loan to the party was qualified as a donation (violating election rules), instigated an outcry among young people, who felt that their platform in parliament was being stolen by the authorities. This first wave of protests was largely brought under control by the upcoming covid-19 pandemic.

In early June, Thai activist Wanchalerm Saksaksit disappeared in Cambodia, where he was living in exile, having been charged in Thailand with violating Article 112 (*Lèse majesté*). He was abducted in front of his house by presumably Thai security forces while on the phone with his sister, who thus was a witness in absentia.

Whether this abduction triggered the new wave of protests is difficult to determine, but it was at least a catalyst. Nor were the pent-up frustration about the economic deterioration and government incompetence, the general climate of repression, or the aforementioned dissolution of the FFP conducive to stability. The ensuing wave of protests was totally unprecedented in Thailand. Although calm has been restored (including a break in protests until early January), that does not mean they are over. In the later stages counter-protests were organized and sponsored by the authorities as well, but that is not what we are dealing with here.

The protest movement expressed several demands for reform: dissolution of the current parliament, an end to intimidation of activists and citizens, and amendments to the military-backed Constitution. This last demand was made concrete by organizing a petition drive aimed at gathering a minimum of 50,000 signatures to force the government to debate these reform proposals (the corresponding campaign flyer is part of the collection). Another major issue was reform of the monarchy by curtailing its powers, holding it accountable to the people, and stripping it of extra-constitutional and unchecked authority. This was conveyed in a passionate and inspiring speech on August 10 by Panusaya ‘Rung’ Sithijirawattanakul, a young sociology student and one of the leaders of the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration, one of the organizations formed in the protests in what is generally seen as a leaderless movement. Her 10-point demands (https://prachatai.com/english/node/8709) were printed in a small booklet. Confiscated by the police prior to distribution (of the 50,000 copies printed), it has since become a collector’s item.

Booklet with 10-point demands by Panusaya ‘Rung’ Sithijirawattanakul

These demands were the public expression of what had previously been unmentionable. Given that open discussion and criticism of the monarchy were long suppressed through rigid *Lèse majesté* and cybersecurity laws, this was highly remarkable and not the end of the movement. While the current King had asked that the *Lèse
majesté law no longer be enforced, in recent weeks the government has decided to resume prosecutions, and dozens of people have already been summoned.

Hardly impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic, Thai citizens nationwide, including the majority Muslim South, have brought this movement to the streets and the social media. Weekly and sometimes even daily demonstrations were held for months, drawing large crowds. Mass arrests, emergency decrees banning public gatherings, physical confrontations with police, and increasingly aggressive dispersion tactics have not deterred the people.

The current collection at the IISH, though modest in size, reflects an attempt to do justice to this movement. It is comprised mainly of messages that are public, in the sense that they were intended for distribution (flyers, stickers, booklets, t-shirts, etc.). Abundant banners, cardboards, hand-made t-shirts, and the like have been collected locally and will be preserved in Thailand.

One symbol of the movement is the three-finger salute, taken from the motion picture The Hunger Games and already used in earlier protests against the military coup of 2014 (and officially prohibited in Thailand). The three-finger salute is analogous to the hand clappers used by the People’s Alliance for Democracy (a conservative pro-establishment movement) and the adaptation of that format as foot clappers by the Red Shirts in 2010. One of the most impressive examples of the three-finger salute was when high school students raised the three fingers in response to the national anthem every morning and used white ribbons as tokens of protest (also present in the collection).

I will highlight two additional highly symbolic items. One is a small replica of the new 1932 Revolution Plaque, also known as Revolution Plaque 2.0. A couple of years ago the original plaque at the Royal Plaza, the site where, in 1932, the People’s Party announced the replacement of the absolute monarchy by the constitutional monarchy in a manifesto in 1932, was suddenly removed and replaced by a new plaque with a slogan inspired by the monarchy. This figured within a far broader program to remove everything in Thailand reminiscent of the coup of 1932. In the early morning of 20 September 2020, protestors affixed a new plaque depicting a three-finger salute on Sanam Luang, the public plaza adjacent to the Grand Palace. The slogan on the new plaque reads (in translation): “Let all people know that our country belongs to the people – not to the king, as has been deceitfully claimed” (original slogan from the People’s Party in 1932). In doing so, the people challenged the feudalists and brought the king down to earth. Of course, the plaque did not last long; it was removed the next day by the police (the cement was probably still fresh). The removal then instigated a deluge of replica plaques of all shapes and sizes.

The second item is a voucher, or ‘banknote’ (printed in 3000 copies), distributed during a protest on 25 November at the head-office of Siam Commercial Bank (of which King Vajiralongkorn is a major shareholder). The coupon carries, among other things, the portrait of a rubber duck (with crown and tanktop, guess who that refers to) and an image of the short-lived People’s Party 2020 plaque. The ‘banknotes’ make fun of the government and are a direct reference to the enormous wealth of the Crown. The coupons were distributed so they could be used to purchase goods from vendors in the protest area, a practice common in many food courts and festivals in Thailand. It is therefore all the more ridiculous that the police shortly afterwards announced they would investigate whether this was in violation of the Currency Act.

The collection is still in progress, and more materials will soon be added, including some from the South of Thailand. (Eef Vermeij)
The Marx documents on tour

How often has the Rijksmuseum loaned out the Nightwatch in the past ten years? The iish holds the Marx archive, which contains the only remaining original page from the Communist Manifesto. Admittedly, this is not the Nightwatch, but it is still a special and valuable document. Its recognition as UNESCO world heritage in 2013 was certainly well deserved, and initially did not lead us to curtail lending the Marx-Engels archive.

On the contrary, interest has surged in recent years. There has been ample reason to commemorate anniversaries of the birth or death of Marx or Engels or of their publications. While at first this interest originated mainly from Germany, recently China has also discovered that the iish manages the archive, and we frequently receive requests for loans of the original archive documents.

Loans can generally be arranged, if the conditions are right. In recent years we have made our terms progressively more rigid. They are now more in line with museum loans in terms of the requirements set for handling, light, temperature, and insurance.

The growing interest from China made us realize that ensuring the right circumstances is more difficult abroad. In addition, the special status of the Marx archive as world heritage makes it still more important to take better care of the material than with ordinary standing loans.

In 2018, with a large exhibition at the National Museum of China which drew two million visitors, it was agreed that an iish staff member would be present when the documents were placed there, and again when the exhibition was dismantled. One of our staff flew to China with a specially designed small case and was met there by a local staff member who ensured safe passage to the museum. This cannot be arranged with every exhibition, however, and frequent and extended loans moreover meant that the documents were often exposed to changing conditions during travel and exhibits.

With a standing loan to an exhibition in Wuppertal in early 2020, we switched to using a climate box. The sheet of the Communist Manifesto, no larger than half a standard page, was transported in the case measuring one square metre and containing a special climate-control

Climate-controlled case for transport to Wuppertal. Photograph by Eric de Ruijter, 2020.
Worlds of Labour Turned Upside Down

Revolutions and Labour Relations in Global Historical Perspective

Editors: Pepijn Brandon, Peyman Jafari, and Stefan Müller

This volume offers a bold restatement of the importance of social history for understanding modern revolutions. The essays collected in Worlds of Labour Turned Upside Down provide global case studies examining:
- changes in labour relations as a causal factor in revolutions;
- challenges to existing labour relations as a motivating factor during revolutions;
- the long-term impact of revolutions on the evolution of labour relations.

The volume examines a wide range of revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, covering examples from South-America, Africa, Asia, and Western and Eastern Europe. The volume goes beyond merely examining the place of industrial workers, paying attention to the position of slaves, women working on the front line of civil war, colonial forced labourers, and white collar workers.

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