

{ } internationaal instituut
voor sociale geschiedenis



On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends of the IISH 2023 no. 43

Interview
Jack Hofman

Lavrov
A collection restored

Open Archief
RE: ACTIVATE RADIO

Introduction

Cover photo:
Portrait Petr
Lavrovič
Lavrov.
See page 6.

After two years of pandemic and lockdowns, the Friends were finally able to meet on 26 June of last year. Our staff was happy to be able to present a fine selection of acquisitions once again. Some of these acquisitions were brand new, while another was the result of a longer-term project to trace which books actually belong to the famous Lavrov collection. In this process, Marja Musson and Cornelia Dickhoff, with help from two interns, were able to identify how many items from the original private library were still present in the IISH collection, and which had disappeared as result of the wartime removal by the Nazis of large swaths of the IISH collections. The story of the reconstruction of the Lavrov library is thereby yet another contribution to writing the history of the Institute.

Another form of history writing appears in this issue in the interview with Jack Hofman, who retired in December last year, after working at the various collection departments over his forty years of employment at the Institute. Jack offers welcome insights into how much has changed at the Institute over these years, with several ruptures in the organization of collections, as well as in the outside world, in addition to those in his personal life.

Recent history was also the topic of the presentation that Thijs van Leeuwen organized on the Open Archief project, where artists reuse parts of the collection creatively, as an alternative to traditional use of archive materials. Femke Dekker showed how the recent history of the Amsterdam movement of squatters and activists movement inspired her to explore the reciprocal relationship between media and activism by creating four radio broadcasts, in which she reflected *inter alia* on the positions of the archivist as activist and the artist and activist as archivist. This relates directly to the reorientation taking place within the world of archivists, where diversity and inclusivity are just as relevant as in the 'real world.'

Apart from history, current affairs obviously remain a significant area of substantial interest for the organization. Having survived the lock-

downs relatively well, the IISH management has convinced the KNAW to increase the fixed funding of the IISH to cover the cost of innovation of the collection and data department and its structural embedding. Together with temporary extra funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for improving public services to better match citizens' expectations, this will offer our staff urgently needed means to continue to preserve the continuously expanding collections and make them available to everybody, including the Friends.

Aad Blok

About the Friends

Members of the Friends of the IISH pay annual dues of 25, 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 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, *Rebels with a Cause: Five Centuries of Social History Collected by the IISH* (Amsterdam 2010, 2016). For all information concerning the Friends, see <http://socialhistory.org/en/friends>*

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Interview with Jack Hofman

Jack Hofman studied social-economic history in Groningen from 1972 to 1979, worked for the research desk of the Pacifistisch-Socialistische Partij (PSP) from 1980 to 1982 as part of his alternative military service, and, while there, teamed up with others in writing a history of 25 years of the PSP. From the end of 1982 onwards, he worked at the IISH, where he headed up the archive department from 1992 to 2010, was head of Public Services from 2010 to 2017, and, from 2017 until his retirement in December 2022, worked in collection development, where he was responsible for the FNV archives project. In what is becoming a modest series of interviews with departing institute staff and, as such, is turning into an ongoing historiography of the institute, *On the Waterfront* asked Jack about his extended tenure at the IISH.

How did you join the IISH?

As a student, I wrote my master's thesis on employment projects in Groningen and the dismal working conditions among those assigned to work there. I also wanted to consult sources available at the IISH, which was still located on Herengracht at the time. The institute was considered to be Paradise for a politically concerned young social historian interested in the labour movement history. Especially for a relatively shy young student, it was also very difficult to access: everything was by appointment only. The few staff members in the reading room were not very helpful. Fortunately, when I contacted Anneke Welcker for an appointment, she expressed great enthusiasm about my research. As a student, I also became active in the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Sociale Geschiedenis, where Leontien Bijleveld and I were among the first students to serve on the board. Other board members included Rein van der Leeuw, general director of the IISH at the time, as well as Jan Lucassen. In addition, I became active in the PSP. As a conscientious

objector, I moved to Amsterdam, where together with others I wrote the book *Ontwapenend: geschiedenis van 25 jaar PSP* (Amsterdam 1982). The party was immensely popular back then, and the self-published book sold approximately 15,000 copies, a major success.

After that, I was unemployed for a while. Then, at the end of 1982, I heard from Jenneke Quast that the IISH was looking for somebody to work at the Dutch cabinet (department) for two months. Without going through the formal application process, I was hired on the spot. I shared an office with Jaap Haag and without any background in archives compiled the inventory of the AAVN archive during those two months. Next, I held a series of temporary appointments at the IISH until the reorganization in 1985, when I obtained a permanent position at the archive department.

I then attended an archive programme at the Hogere Archiefschool, which was a very traditional occupational training. As part of that programme, I did an inventory of the PSP archives as well, which had by then been entrusted to the IISH. That was how I cut my teeth working with archives. I had intended to write a PhD thesis on the Dutch peace movement, but that proved impossible to combine with my job and by then my family with children. I also realized that I enjoyed working with archives more than conducting research.

What was the institute like, when you started working there?

The institute was actually a strange place, when I arrived, although I did not realize just how unusual it was at the time. I reported to Mies Campfens, while Jaap Haag reported to Elly Koen, and those two openly argued in front of us. The way that employment contracts might or might not be extended and the conduct of the support staff were also odd. Those who did not know

Left: Jack at Jaap Haag's farewell reception in February 2001.

Right: Jack in his office in 1995.



you or like you would need a lot of urging before they did anything for you. Also working in this setting, however, was the world-renowned and courteous Boris Sapir, who always insisted that you enter or leave the elevator before him. It was truly a secluded bastion, full of barriers preventing outside researchers from accessing the material and the inventories. Getting things done required connections. Some staff members kept archives closed for ten to fifteen years for the sole purpose of composing source publications. Until they were done, these archives were inaccessible to outsiders. Research was mainly producing academic source publications.

In 1985, that changed drastically, when, as a result of a reorganization, departments were structured more logically, with more clearly circumscribed duties. A new research department was set up as well, under the aegis of Jan Lucassen, who devised a research programme with a dedicated agenda. That reorganization was very necessary indeed. Collection management in particular had been greatly impacted by the old compartmentalized structure. Thanks to the reorganization, the institute became far more open and accessible. This was enhanced by the onset



Jack working at preparing materials for the Metamorfoze project.

of digitization, starting with the catalogue.

In my view, that may have been the most important step towards improving access to the collections, because this enabled everybody to see what we held. I soon learned how to use database and word-processing programmes, which proved invaluable when moving the archives from the Kabelweg to the Cruquiusweg premises. Inventorying the archives could be done far more efficiently than before, although we also made our share of beginner's mistakes. For example, we continued to print out all inventories and placement lists and stored them in binders for people to consult in the reading room. Only years later did digital versions become available via the online catalogue.

Were some things better in the past?

Not compared to those early years. The period from the reorganization and especially after the

move to Cruquiusweg was a wonderful time in my working life. The newly set up archive department quickly became a well-functioning team, with Atie van der Horst succeeding Elly Koen as head and me as deputy head. Many others joined as well. My personal life suddenly ruptured in 1992, when my wife Pieterrol passed away unexpectedly. As a consequence, I took some time off. Upon my return, I first became acting head and subsequently head of the archive department until 2010, while the institute granted me ample opportunity to combine my work with my personal responsibilities caring for my children. Jaap Kloosterman as general director and Henk Wals as director of operations did much to accommodate freedom to make innovations possible, and as department heads we always felt the management supported us. During that period our department achieved significant progress by placing the archive inventories online. Both nationally and internationally, for some time the institute was in many respects one of the trailblazers in the entire digitization and online revolution occurring in library and archive circles. Via SGML and XML we were among the first to introduce EAD, while acquisitions increased rapidly, sometimes by 600 to 700 linear meters per annum. Arranging, cataloguing, and providing access to all that material was also organized rapidly and efficiently. Jaap Kloosterman was pivotal here, as somebody who noticed and embraced these new opportunities.

In addition to the innovations we achieved within the archive department in improving access to the magnificent archive collection by publishing the two large archive guides and presenting all collections via the online catalogue, I am proud of my role in external fundraising, via grants, to catalogue archives we acquired. With some minor and major acquisitions, such as the archives of Stichting Natuur en Milieu, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, the PvdA [Dutch Labour Party], and later on the FNV as well, we obtained project financing at my suggestion through various funds to arrange and inventory them. These operations are very labour-intensive and therefore also very costly. This money enabled us to recruit people to work temporarily on arrangement and cataloguing projects.

What do you consider to be your most important contribution to the IISH and to collection policy in particular?

I consider my work digitizing and professionalizing cataloguing and provision of access, including external fundraising, to be my most important contribution, along with the Metamorfoze project, which I headed up from 2010 to 2017. That project marked the next milestone in digitization: from making the archive descriptions available online to scanning and arranging online access to the actual archive material. In addition to Metamorfoze, there was the Centrale project, in which a core component of the IISH collection (the Centrale collection with the Marx-Engels archive) became available online and universally available for consultation.

In that period, I ran the Metamorfoze project while serving as Head of Public Services. After

first Henk Wals left in 2004 and then Jaap Kloosterman in 2008, much changed because of a new reorganization of Collections, under the aegis of the new managing director Erik-Jan Zürcher and Titia van der Werff as director of collections. In my view, looking back on that period, many changes that were made do not appear to have been for the better. What was known as the roco operation within the collection departments did not bring improvement, and the organizational changes mainly instigated protracted theoretical discussions, increasingly complicating getting the actual work done. As a supervisor, I was expected to conduct competency interviews with people from other departments, without having the slightest idea of their work. Following that reorganization, I was appointed Head of Public Services, a post I held until 2017.

How did you feel about this change of position?

Daily duties at Public Services are never finished. As there are always new questions to answer, no tasks ever conclude at the end of the day or week. I never found that part of the job very satisfying. As head, I dealt mainly with the problems arising from the work. Afelonne Doek, who succeeded Titia van der Werff as Director of Collections, suggested that I transfer to Collection Development. In 2017, I did so and then headed up the FNV archive project. The two objectives were: to gather, arrange, and catalogue the archives of FNV unions disbanded following a reorganization within the FNV and to devise a workflow for bringing new digital archives to the IISH. The former largely succeeded and has been completed but not the latter. Devising a procedure that organizes the inflow and then the arrangement and cataloguing, while guaranteeing sustainability of the materials and access in a way that is as good as with analogue materials turned out to be very difficult with both the FNV archive and digital-born archive material from other archive developers. The biggest problem and consequently also the greatest concern is that archive developers often do not manage digital material properly and sustainably. This entails the danger of losing important parts of an archive, which in turn impacts the *raison d'être* of the institute as an archive institution. One case in point is the collection of CAO (collective labour agreements) booklets that we have here at the IISH, which is an important source for research on labour relations in the Netherlands. Since around 2000, the FNV has stored those booklets digitally in a CAO databank. Archiving and cataloguing that databank via the IISH would appear logical. Unfortunately, agreements about doing just that have not been forthcoming, due in part to the enormous turnover within the FNV organization.

How do you believe collections and research relate to one another at the IISH?

In my work within the archive department and the projects I did, I was tasked primarily with arranging archives and making them available as quickly as possible, so that everybody could use them for academic research or based on any



Jack with members of the FNV team in 2019.

other type of interest or position. Such academic research may be conducted by IISH researchers, as well as by other external researchers, academic or otherwise. I certainly understand that IISH research has its own agenda, and that, for a while, IISH researchers therefore mainly conducted research outside IISH collections. Sometimes I regretted that researchers were not interested in the history of trade unions, social movements, etcetera. The increase in such interest in recent years, as apparent, for example, from the FNV research by Rosa Kösters, however, is very encouraging.

Do you have a personal favourite within the IISH collections?

My favourite would be the CNT-FAI archives. We worked with Almudena Rubio to perform a new inventory and make them digitally available as part of the *Metamorfoze* project. This collection epitomizes the relevance of the IISH in my view: preserving such important archives on the history of the Spanish Civil War from destruction and ultimately making them available for those in Spain and everywhere else who have always wanted to know and understand that history. And discovering the magnificent photograph collections of Margaret Michaelis and Kati Horna makes those archives still more impressive.

What will you miss most, after you leave, or will you not leave completely?

Of course I will miss interacting with my immediate colleagues and working on projects together most of all. I will always be interested in social history, and I will definitely stop by and will of course become a Friend of the IISH. But I will not become a volunteer at the IISH. The institute should accomplish projects such as the FNV one with new people. Nobody is irreplaceable.

I have always felt very privileged to work at the IISH. Both the content and the ambience have, of course, been a perfect fit for me. In addition, as an employer, the institute has given me wonderful opportunities.

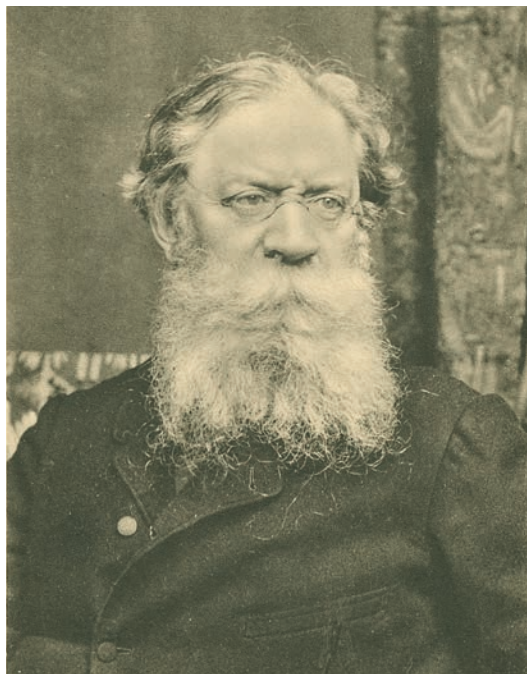
Aad Blok

Presentation of Acquisitions

Portrait Petr Lavrovič Lavrov.
ISH collection
IISG BG
A8/268.

The Lavrov-Goc library

The Lavrov-Goc library is known as one of the first private libraries about the labour movement and comprises ca. 13,000 titles. Its history begins around 1870 in Paris. The library was started as the personal collection of Petr Lavrov (1823-1900), one of many politically active Russian emigrants who fled tsarist from Russia to settle in France at the end of the nineteenth century. Thanks in part to his book *Historical Letters* (исторические письма), Lavrov greatly influenced the rise of social protest in Russia, climaxing in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917. From 1870, Petr Lavrov had amicable ties with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Two other names are associated with this exceptional library: Michail Rafailovič Goc (1866-1906) and Egor Egorovič Lazarev (1855-1937). Like Lavrov, they hailed from the broad field of socialist revolutionary movements in Russia. Following the death of Petr Lavrov, Michail Goc started running the library around 1900. By then, it was officially regarded as the party library of the PSR (the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries). Goc purchased books and also added his own collection to the library. Until 1920, the library remained in Paris, after which the collection moved to Prague with Egor Lazarev. The personal book collection of Egor Lazarev was thus incorporated in the library as well. Given the mounting political tensions in Europe, the Lavrov-Goc library was transferred to Amsterdam in 1939, as a temporary measure taken because of the imminent war in Eastern Europe. Safety in the Netherlands was relatively short-lived. Following the German invasion in 1940, the occupying forces seized control of the IISH premises on Herengracht, intending to transport the entire IISH collection to Germany. This plan was carried out only in 1944, however,

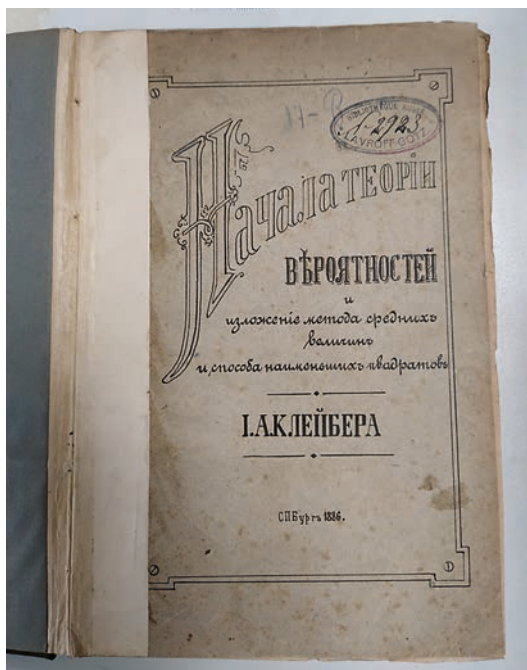


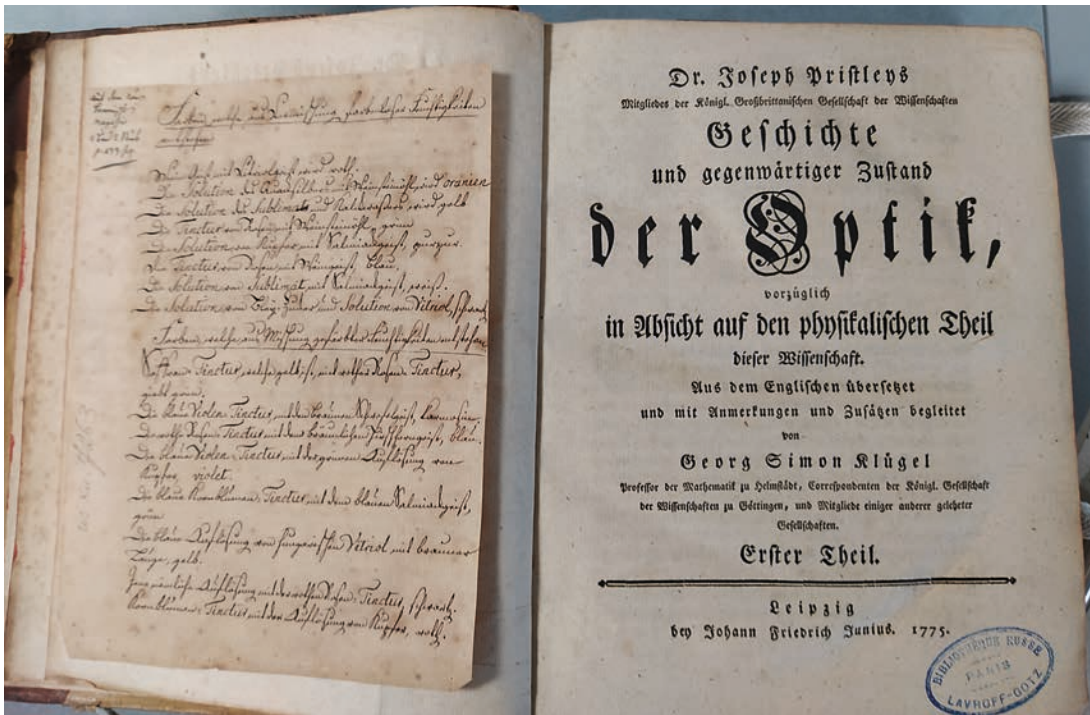
as the Germans were unable to agree on how to distribute the IISH collection in Germany. In 1946, most of the collection that had been removed was recovered from two Rhine barges near Hamburg; the books were returned to Amsterdam in 1,400 crates. The official acquisition date by the IISH is listed as 1956. Tracing PSR members and/or finding legal heirs after World War II was fraught with difficulties. A decade later, in 1966, the IISH annual report noted that cataloguing the Lavrov-Goc library was under way. Between 1966 and 1975, approximately 40 percent was described individually.

Left:
Dried flowers were found in the (unread) textbook on the history of religions.



Right:
On the unexpected topicality of an old collection: Lavrov-Goc 12609: *Bolshevism and the Occupation of Ukraine, Lviv/Kyiv, 1922.*





A history of optics, from 1775, with a handwritten sheet of recipes for mixing colors.

Reconstruction of the library (2017-2020)

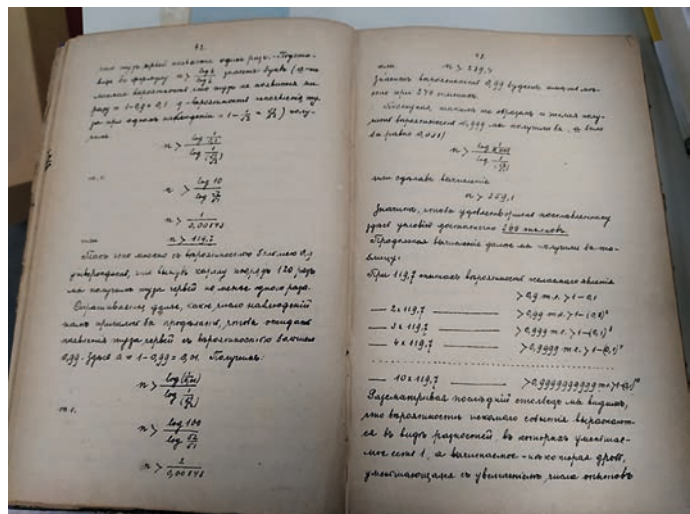
Based on the original, handwritten library catalogues, between 2017 and 2020 the library was fully reconstructed, and the remaining 60 percent received individual descriptions. Reading both the Cyrillic handwriting and the German Kurrent and Sütterlin script varieties presented challenges but, with considerable effort, the handwritten library catalogues were digitized. The reconstruction revealed that 33 percent was still present, while 27 percent had unfortunately disappeared. This means that 5,157 items appear in the Lavrov-Goc library catalogue, but that only 4,245 books are actually there.

With its emphasis on political and social issues in tsarist Russia, the library may rightly be considered one of the gems in the IISH library collection. It is also a universal library, covering absolutely every topic conceivable: natural sciences, linguistics, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, theology, literature, philosophy, poetry, and travel and language guides. The condition of the books ranged from moderate to fair: leather mould and decay necessitated rebinding about half of them in new covers or portfolios.

And this invaluable collection contains yet another gem: Karl Marx and Petr Lavrov were personal friends from 1870 onwards. As a previous extensive study by Hans-Peter Harstick has confirmed, the Lavrov-Goc library also comprised several titles from the library of Karl Marx. These are mainly books in Russian that were donated to the Lavrov Library after his death, at the suggestion of Friedrich Engels. Among the titles present at the IISH, 35 have been identified as originating from the library of Karl Marx.

With the completion of the reconstruction, a fine collection has become available and searchable for visitors to the IISH.

Cornelia Dickhoff



The papers of Asser Baars

In the spring of 2022, 78 years after the death of Asser Baars (1892-1944), his original papers were entrusted to the IISH by his grandson in a small case filled with carefully arranged documents, 37 years after the IISH received photocopies of those same documents from Asser's daughter Lucie Baars.

The Baars archive is a special collection, as Asser Baars was pivotal in several major events in the history of communism and made an important contribution to the field of economics in the Netherlands East Indies, the Soviet Union, and the Netherlands. Consequently, Baars has surfaced in a great many IISH and NEHA archives and collections, tracing back to his days as a student at the Delft institute of technology, when he joined the Sociaal-Technische Kring van Democratische Ingenieurs en Architecten¹

A handwritten mathematics book:

А.И. Клейбер, Начала теории вероятностей и изложение метода средних и способа наименьших квадратов (A.I. Kleiber, Beginning of probability theory and exposition of the method of averages and the method of least squares).

¹ See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1328>



Postcard from Henk Sneevliet to Baars, 21 September 1915 (inventory numbers 84-91).

and the Delft SDAP chapter.² At the end of 1914 he and his first wife To Cheriex departed for the Netherlands East Indies, where he worked for the railways as a civil engineer and later became a schoolteacher. Starting as a member of the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV), he eventually rose to chairman and as

2 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1293>

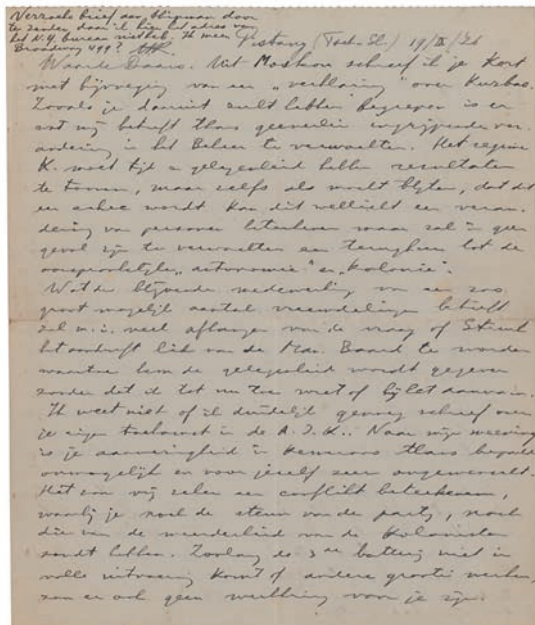
such made the acquaintance of Henk Sneevliet,³ Charles Cramer,⁴ and Raden Darsono Notosudirdjo.⁵ He was the editor of *Het Vrije Woord* and the two Malaysian journals *Soeara Merdeka* and *Soeara Ra'jat*. In 1920 he was active in transforming ISDV into the Perserikan Kommunist di India, later known as the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI). He also corresponded with prominent SDAP operators within the Netherlands, such as Willem van Ravesteyn,⁶ David Wijnkoop,⁷ and Sam de Wolff.⁸

In 1921, Baars and his second wife Onok Sawinah moved to the Soviet Union where he was hired as an engineer at the Autonomous Industrial Colony (AIC) in Kemerovo (Kuzbass, Siberia). He thanked this appointment to his contact with Sebald Justinus Rutgers in Moscow;⁹ in 1926 he also became acquainted with architect Johannes Bernardus (Han) van Loghem. In this period, his experiences with interminable participatory meetings and the increasing bureaucracy of the Soviet system led him to have profound reservations about the communist ideal, also for the Netherlands East Indies.

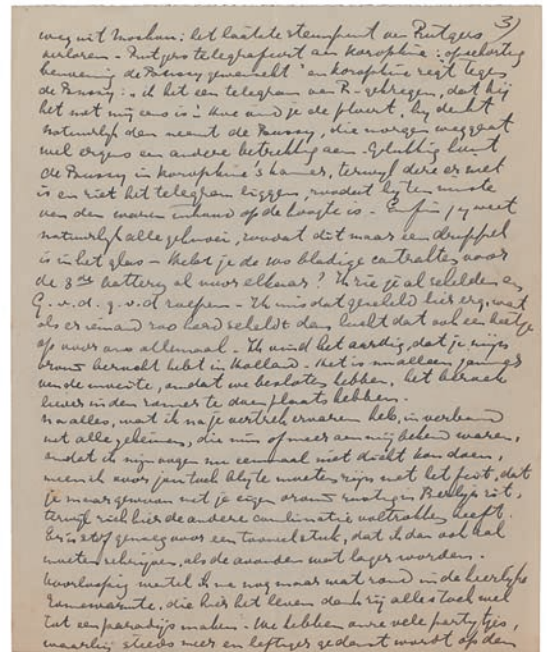
In 1927, Baars returned to the Netherlands, where he worked in commerce and as an engineer at various companies. In January 1928, he published a series of five articles in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* about his experiences in the Soviet Union, as 'Sowjet-Rusland in de practijk: Indië tot leering' [Soviet Russia in practice: a lesson for the Indies].¹⁰ From 1931, Baars was a regular contributor to the journals *De Economist* and *Economisch Statistische Berichten*, issued by the *Nederlandsch Economisch Instituut (NEI)*. In his

3 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO0984>
 4 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO0364>
 5 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO2476>
 6 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1169>
 7 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1802>
 8 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1653>
 9 See: <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCHO1226>
 10 Also published as a 48-page brochure, Rotterdam, 1928.

Left: Letter from Sebald Rutgers of 19 September 1926.



Right: Letter from Han van Loghem, 18 August 1926, inventory numbers 180-183.



writings, he was deeply critical of Sam de Wolff's book *Het economisch getij*. Baars argued for planning within the capitalist system but believed that full planning was impossible, even within socialism. With the use of good statistics, fluctuations in the business cycle could be accommodated by adjusting prices and extending credit. In his articles, he reveals himself as a strong advocate of the use of mathematics as an auxiliary science for economics. While employed by the NEI, he investigated ways to steer economic trends through government spending on major public works projects, a subject he later decided to do his PhD research on. On 20 October 1937 he defended his PhD thesis '*Openbare werken en conjunctuurbeweging*' [Public works projects and economic trends] in Delft.

Married by then to his third wife, Leida Lansink, in 1938 Baars travelled to the United States with the intention of settling there, but, being unable to arrange passage for his daughters from his marriage to Onok Sawinah, he returned to the Netherlands in 1939. After meanderings in Amsterdam, Vlaardingen, Apeldoorn, and Celle (Germany), in 1943 Baars was arrested in Amsterdam and deported via Westerbork to Auschwitz, where he perished on 6 March 1944.

In a great many ways, Baars was an exceptional individual, with a very exciting life course, thanks to his experiences in different countries and his many contacts. He was far from easy-going. If he disagreed with something, he lashed out in a torrent of personal criticism. He has been described as irascible, hateful, and irritating but also as having a sense of humour, brilliant, and incisive. In the *roman à clef* *Een beetje vrijheid*,¹¹ which Tini Schoorl Straub published in 1965 about her experiences in the AIC in Kemorovo, Baars figures as 'Bert Boers', and his wife Onok as 'Ni'. Boers is described as an invaluable pillar of strength for S.J. (Sebald Justinus Rutgers), complementing him in countless ways and with superior expertise. But Boers is overly aggressive and lacks the tact to be a good organizer or a politician. He is highly proficient in many languages, including Malay, Russian, Swedish, Spanish, German, English, French, and Dutch, and writes Hebrew as well. Boers is an amazing blend of audacity and weakness, of altruism and egotism, and of indifference and vanity. He is both a perfectionist and an idealist. Competent and meticulous, he refuses to tolerate others who are not fully committed. He enjoys nagging, has rows with practically everybody, and curses incessantly.

That same personality also emerges from the papers of Baars, the 'true' Boers. For instance, a letter from Sebald Rutgers of 19 September 1926 (inventory numbers 186-195) aptly conveys Baars's ideological struggle to realize a truly autonomous colony in Kemerovo on the one hand, and his impossible nature on the other. Rutgers' words made it perfectly clear that Baars was no longer welcome there:

Dear Baars, I wrote you a brief note from Mos-



cow, adding a 'statement' about Kuzbass. As you will have understood from it, in my view no drastic change in control is to be expected there. The K. regime must be given time and opportunity to produce results. Even if this turns out to be a failure, however, while the persons may change, returning to the original 'autonomy' and 'colony' is entirely out of the question.

And, further on:

I don't know whether I wrote clearly enough about your own future in the AIC [Autonomous Industrial Colony]. In my opinion, your presence in Kemerovo is now decidedly impossible and definitely not in your own interest.

Han van Loghem recalled Baars from the Kuzbass more fondly, when he wrote about his irascible nature:

I can see you cursing and shouting Goddamn, Goddamn [*g.v.d., g.v.d.*]. How I miss all that cursing here, for when anybody curses so loudly, we all feel a slight sense of relief.¹²

The Baars papers are certain to contain many more gems of anecdotes, which from now on are literally there for the taking.

Frank de Jong and Thijs van Leeuwen

The sobSI Congress of 1952 and high-ranking representatives from the Netherlands

This presentation was prompted by the donation of three photo albums from the estate of Cor Geugjes by his daughter Marina Geugjes (and via Harry Poeze). The albums convey the visit by Cor Geugjes and Joop Wolff to the sobSI National Congress in 1952. sobSI denotes Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia = All-Indonesian Federation of Workers' Organisations (sobSI).

Who were Geugjes and Wolff?

Geugjes (1922-1982) was a communist foreman from the Zaan region. He was active in the Resistance, led the prohibited CPN in the Zaan, and was co-organizer of the February strike. After the war, he became an executive of the Eenheids

I.S.D.V. members together on Wednesday 21 November 1917 in Semarang, during the Sneevliet trial, BG D91/91. (Photograph pasted on cardboard. Standing, left to right: Mrs. van Wezel, Coster, A. van Wezel, Brouwer, Mrs. Baars. Seated, left to right: Westerveld, Sneevliet, Hartogh, Asser Baars. During the Sneevliet trial.)

¹¹ Tini Schoorl Straub, *Een beetje vrijheid. Herinneringen van een Nederlandse vrouw in Siberië* (Laren, 1965).

¹² Letter from Han van Loghem, 18 August 1926, inventory numbers 180-183.

Vakcentrale (EVC) and director of the newspaper *De Waarheid* (1946-1957). In politics, he served on the Zaandam city council (1946-1950), became a member of the Dutch Senate for the CPN (July 1952 - July 1956 and November 1956 - December 1957), serving as the leader of the CPN group in the Senate (January-December 1957). He often attended congresses of sister parties of the CPN. Following an internal conflict, he was dismissed from his position as director of *De Waarheid*. He then resigned as party chairman, left the Dutch Senate, and subsequently joined the Brug group and later on the PVDA (Dutch Labour Party).

Joop Wolff (1927-2007) joined the resistance in Haarlem as a member of the CPN in 1943 and remained a party member until 1991. In 1947 he joined the party executive (-1982). He chaired the Algemeen Nederlands Jeugd Verbond (the communist youth league) for a long time. As parliamentary editor of *De Waarheid*, he followed the debates about Indonesia and from the summer of 1950 was stationed in Peking using the alias Jacob Goldstein as a liaison with the prohibited PKI. In 1952 he was succeeded there by Joop Moriën (alias Lacroix, July 1952 - March 1953).¹³

After the PKI established direct contacts with the Chinese and Russian parties, a Dutch office in Peking was no longer needed. Later, Wolff served as executive editor of *De Waarheid* (1958-1978, i.e. succeeding Geugjes), after working as a

journalist since 1945. In the period 1956-1957 he was a correspondent in Moscow, where he also lived at the time.

The personal papers of both Wolff and Geugjes reflect their visit to the congress. The archive of the EVC organization does not. I did not consult the CPN archive. Joop Wolff also recorded his experiences along this journey in his book *Uit het Rijk der Duizend Eilanden*, Amsterdam, 1954 (the IISH holds six other editions of this work, which apparently was never published in Indonesian).

SOBSI, the All-Indonesian Federation of Workers' Organisations

SOBSI was founded on 29 November 1946 as a comprehensive labour organization and to mobilize workers to defend the new Republic. In addition, it was the largest trade union organization in Indonesia.

SOBSI convened its 1st National Congress in Malang (16-18 May 1947). At this congress the guests from abroad included three Dutch trade union members, Berend Blokzijl (EVC), Nico Vijlbrief, and Ko Suurhof (NVV), as well as Evert Kupers, as vice-chair of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Following the Madiun uprising (September 1948) the activities of SOBSI were banned by the military. SOBSI was not officially prohibited, however, because the organization had not actively participated in the uprising.

SOBSI was re-established in September 1949, this time with noticeable influence from the PKI in its leadership. The federation expanded

¹³ For additional details and data confusion, see Jan-Willem Stutje – *De man die de weg wees. Leven en werk van Paul de Groot, 1899-1986*, 2000, pp. 290-317).



Max Meijer speaking in Surabaya.



Geugjes addressing the congress.



A model of the Zeven Provinciën (in remembrance of the mutiny in 1933) is carried along in a rally in Surabaya.



"Long live the solidarity between the Dutch and Indonesian working classes."

rapidly in the 1950s, claiming to have 2.5 million members in the mid-1950s, although this number is disputed.

Between 1950 and early 1952, SOBSI attempted to organize militant actions. Following a nationwide strike that culminated in victory for plantation workers, the military prohibited strikes in essential industries in some regions. In August 1951, 3,000 members were arrested in a crackdown over a possible leftist coup. There was little protest from within SOBSI against these arrests, which prompted the PKI to tighten its grip on the organization. On 1 March 1952 it condemned the SOBSI's activities as sectarian. Consequently, SOBSI was forced to adopt the line of the National United Front.

SOBSI held its First National Congress from 27 September to 12 October 1952, which established the change of course mentioned above. In addition, a new constitution was adopted, in which terms such as socialism, people's democracy, class struggle, and democratic centralism no longer figured. At the Second National Congress in 1955, these directives were ratified.

After the coup in 1965, SOBSI was obliterated, as were its 62 affiliated unions. On 3 November 1965 the activities of SOBSI were officially suspended.

The visit by Geugjes and Wolff came at a difficult time for the CPN and the EVC. First, in 1952, the fight against 'reviving fascism' proved to be in equal measure a battle against social democracy. Even though they trivialized the role of the SDAP in the Resistance, the CPN suffered additional losses in the elections of 1952. Following in the path of the CPN, the EVC lost influence as well. As we observed in the brief sketch above, this period was difficult for SOBSI as well, as it was just recovering from the wave of arrests in 1951 and the newly imposed United Front policy.

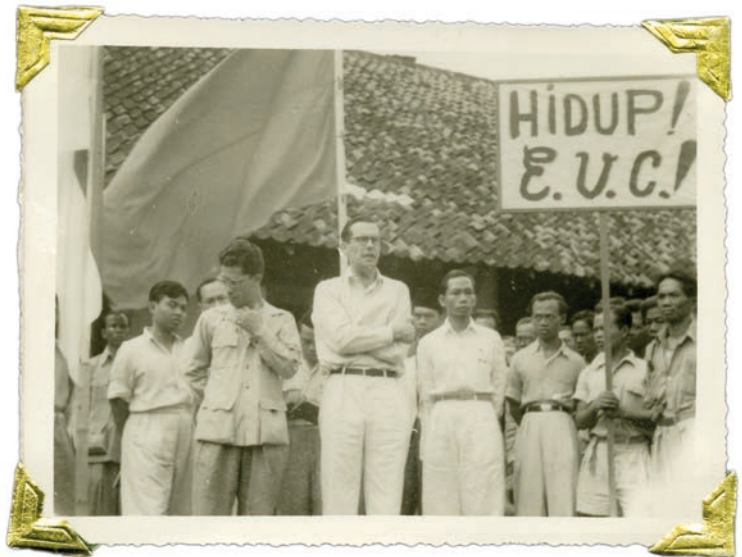
The albums

Album 1 appears to have been donated by SOBSI. The cover features a handwritten text that has become almost illegible over the years: 'Datuk e.v.c. / Photograph Album / C. Geugjes & J. Wolff (e.v.c.) / Yogyakarta 24 - 27 Oct. 1952 (incomplete)'. This album contains a small 'leaflet': 'Perkundjungan kawan C. Geugjes dan J. Wolff sebagai wakil e.v.c. di Jogyakarta 24-27 Oct. 52', with captions describing the scenes on 44 photographs (several photographs are missing from the album). The content consists primarily of photographs on which Geugjes and Wolff appear in the centre, shaking hands, watching, listening.

Album 2 covers the visit by the delegations to the SOBSI Congress, as well as the actual congress. Lacking an accompanying explanatory text, the persons introduced visually at the beginning of the album as apparently pertaining to visiting delegations have yet to be identified (with one exception).

Album 3 opens with a combination of tourist and architecture photographs and picture postcards of Surabaya, followed by mass gatherings, visits, speeches, and the like, as well as what seem like other (unidentified) visitors.

Thus, the three albums provide an impressive



visual account of the actual congress and the visit by the two Dutch comrades.

A further Dutch visitor

Aside from these three albums from Cor Geugjes, the IISH collection holds another album on the theme of the SOBSI Congress, in which it suddenly becomes clear that an additional EVC delegate had come along: Max Meijer. Describing this album (Call no. iisg bg T2/265) as being about the SOBSI Congress does not do full justice to the content. Each page at the right is about the SOBSI Congress, while each page at the left features all kinds of digressions, from the Spanish Civil War in 1936, London/England during World War II, to visits to Moscow, Budapest, Bucharest, etcetera. The album clearly illustrates the political life of Max Meijer.

Max Meijer was a member of the CPN and was active in the communist Resistance. He had fought in the Spanish Civil War (see: <https://spanjestridders.nl/bio/meijer-max>) and served on the EVC Foreign Desk in 1952.

The simple reason why Max Meijer is not mentioned anywhere in the press as attending the SOBSI Congress is that – given that he had fought in the Spanish Civil War – he did not have a passport (his Dutch nationality was restored in 1949). He may have travelled to Indonesia via the alternative routes still possible in those days (Eastern Europe?). For that reason, his presence there was not to be disclosed in the Netherlands. Even as late as 1959, his request for a passport was rejected, owing to: 'the suspicion that he intends to engage abroad in violations of the public order, peace, and safety of the Kingdom or of powers favourably disposed towards the Kingdom.' (Thanks are due to our former colleague Kees Rodenburg for sharing this insight.)

Let us conclude by quoting from the speech by Brandsen at the Third EVC Congress at the end of 1952, where, highlighting the visit by from the EVC delegation to Indonesia, he states with vehemence:

Their journey was certainly not one of solitude but turned into an unforgettable victory march. To catch a glimpse of them and to hear them speak, workers interrupted their duties, traffic was blocked by the massive crowds, and depar-

Geugjes speaking at a rally. Banner top right: Hidup! E.V.C.! [= Long live the EVC!]



The inevitable group portrait.



Painting banners.

tures of trains on which they were to continue their journey were seriously delayed in some cases. They received so many gifts from workers, farmers, and trade union chapters, including from ones not affiliated with the SOBSI, that they could not possibly take them all with them, and some had to be shipped to them afterwards [Wolff's papers contain a three-page list of all the gifts]. Wherever they went, the name of our trade union resounded, together with that of the Dutch peace activist Piet van Staveren. (ARCH00389, folder 5, p. 17)

Eef Vermeij

The Daniel Pereyra Papers

In the spring of 2022, the inventory of the Daniel Pereyra Papers was completed. The documents of this Argentinean Trotskyist comprise all the types of material one might expect: correspondence and documentation concerning his political activities both within Argentina and – after he fled the dictatorship – in exile in Spain. In addition, his personal papers include remarkable testimonies from his personal life.

Pereyra was born in Buenos Aires on 16 October 1927. He started his working life in graphics but then switched to the metallurgical industry. In this period he joined the Peronist union. He became involved with a small Trotskyist network, which came to be known by various names, the best known being the 'Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), the Argentinian branch of the Fourth International.' This

network considered infiltration an appropriate means for exerting a radicalizing influence on the policy of legal unions, so-called entristm. Impressed by Castro's victory in Cuba, where a relatively small group of militants had managed to overthrow a dictatorship, Pereyra's internationalist party thought that they would be able to form yet another socialist enclave, from which the revolution would spread across South America.

To this end, Pereyra was sent to Peru to serve as a military advisor to a sister organization that was supporting a peasant revolt there. His network hoped that his assistance would lead this revolt to escalate into a full-scale revolution. The fact that he had no military experience whatsoever did not raise any concern with him or with his party. He took part in a bank robbery to finance more serious action and was arrested, tortured, and sentenced. After being locked up for seven years, he was deported back to Argentina. With a solid reputation as a credible comrade, he joined the PRT again, the party that had sent him to Peru. Meanwhile, the political situation in Argentina was quickly deteriorating. Right-wing death squads spread terror among opposition movements long before the sinister practice was institutionalized under the dictatorship. Radical leftists fostered the hope that in this period of instability, Argentina might become the stage of the international revolution.

The bulk of Pereyra's papers cover these events: political documents – both published and private – with big ideas as well as serious theoretical analysis by hard-line activists concerning the struggle against repression and for a socialist future, provided that it was a Leninist one adhering to the Trotskyist model. Surprisingly, Pereyra's personal papers offer much more. I will highlight some documents attributable to meetings and long talks in a toy store.

In the years before Juan Perón returned in 1973, this toy store functioned as a safe house for the PRT-El Combatiente, the group that continued to advocate armed struggle following a rift in the PRT. This toy store was also where Pereyra met Roberto Omar Ramírez. A lifelong friendship developed between these two unlikely comrades, for Ramírez was a professor of architecture at the University of Buenos Aires and only theoretically a worker at the time.

How this friendship came to be is unknown, as most of the documents in the papers are from the period after they had both left Argentina following the takeover by the Junta. Pereyra was smuggled out shortly after the coup and ended up in recently re-democratized Spain. Here he became active in the Trotskyist organizations of Western Europe and in parallel networks of the Argentinian leftist diaspora.

Ramírez was less fortunate. Following an identity check in the street he was arrested, jailed, and tortured, as Pereyra had been in Peru. A solidarity campaign was rapidly set up, mostly initiated by the sister organizations of the Fourth International in Europe but also with help from fellow architects and human rights organizations. Ramírez was released and was granted safe passage to Sweden, where he had to cope



with the cold and desolation of Scandinavia. This ended when he came into contact with a group of exiled Uruguayan anarchists who ran a publishing house and offered him new warmth and a career as an illustrator.

Now both safely in Europe, Pereyra and Ramírez started exchanging letters, the ones from Ramírez often accompanied by beautiful illustrations or poems. The correspondence sharply contrasts with the cliché of Trotskyists as true hardliners, obsessed with ideological rigidity and fostering factional strife within their own organization, as well as within the target organizations of the entristm tactics. Instead, they write about



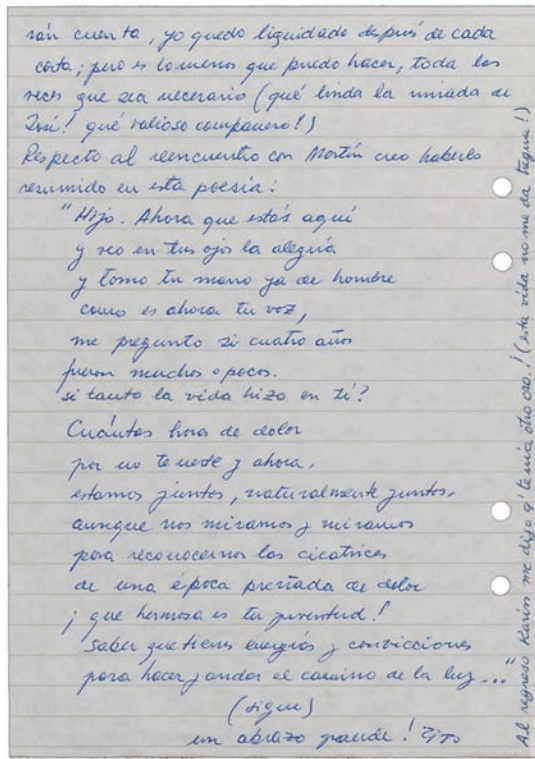
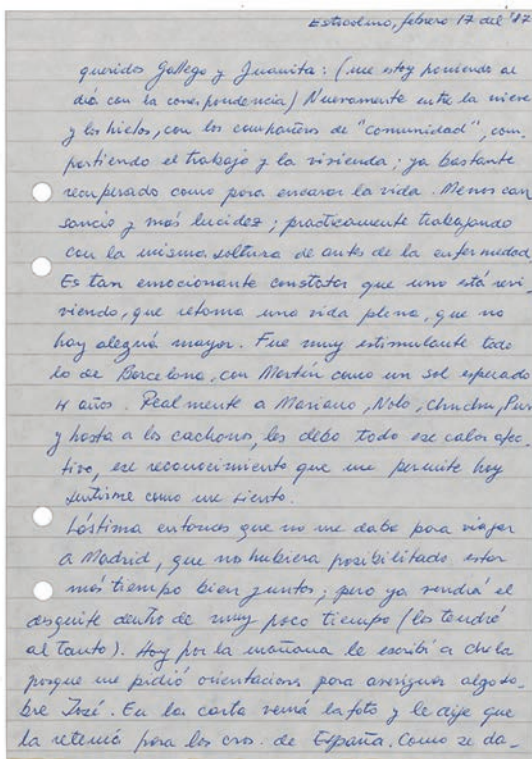
Left: One of the collages by Ramírez, sent as a New Year's Wish to Pereyra, ARCHO4365, inv.no. 47.

Right: Front cover of a children's book illustrated by Ramírez and published by the Uruguayan anarchists in Sweden, ARCHO4365, inv.no. 143.

how they miss Argentina, Ramírez's troubles in Sweden, comrades in prison, and other friends lost. Many are from the heart, especially when Ramírez falls ill and writes from the hospital.

As such, this part of the papers wonderfully exemplifies the potential added value of personal papers. They disclose aspects from the lives of militants that would have been hard to find, if, for example, the organization archives of the Fourth International network in Europe were our only source. If we were to restrict our efforts to processing those archives, our files would merely confirm a stereotypical impression of the men and women constituting the Trotskyist movement. Instead, making available parts of the private lives of these colourful characters opens up new avenues for research.

Papers processed by Lex Wouterloot, text by Lex Wouterloot and Simon Huber.



Last letter to Pereyra, sent by Ramírez from the hospital bed where he would die of complications from torture he had undergone in Argentina, ARCHO4365, inv.no. 47.

Open Archief

by Thijs van Leeuwen

Open Archief is a multifaceted collaborative project that explores innovation that can be inspired by making archive materials accessible to artists for creative reuse. It was initiated by the two Dutch heritage institutions Het Nieuwe Instituut (HNI) and Sound & Vision in 2019. The IISH joined the project in its second year and has been a partner ever since. Open Archief encourages media artists to use digitized and open archives and supports them in such endeavours. Through an artist residency program, an exhibition, and several workshops throughout the year, Open Archief brings together media artists and heritage institutions to discuss the importance of creative reuse of heritage and of making digital collections available.

IISH and artists

Before joining the Open Archief project, the Public Services department of the IISH had been working to accommodate new categories of users of the collections for several years. We welcomed student working groups with our hands-on workshops for dealing with archive materials. Especially through these workshops, art students increasingly found their way to the IISH, resulting inter alia in an exhibition of numerous publications reacting to content from the IISH collections. These results revealed the great extent to which the orientation of the IISH and its collections intrigued art students and inspired them to address questions of social and other forms of inequality.

These new approaches to our collections offered new impressions of the different types of users and their various perspectives on searching and using our collections, as well as on creative endeavours with them. In 2020, joining Open Archief was therefore the next logical step, delving into facilitating artistic research on archives in particular. By encouraging creative reuse of our collections through Open Archief, we learned both from types of use that were more uncon-

Photo from the opening exhibition of Open Archief, 27 October 2022 at Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam. Interview with the makers, from left to right Eleni Tzialli (interviewer), Remco Torenbosch, Daria Kiseleva, Simo Tse and Alice Wong. Photo by Rob Verkerk.



ventional to us and from their end products: the media works that were created in the process and how those media works related to our collections. Finally, teaming up with HNI and Sound & Vision brought new insights to the table as well.

Open Archief

Open Archief consists of an artist residency program and a public program. Through an open call, three media artists are invited to create new works using archive materials from the digital collections of the three institutes. The artists selected work closely with collection experts for at least six months, after which the end result of their work is exhibited at HNI in Rotterdam.

For the 2020-2021 edition, the project faced the challenge of Covid-19: except for the exhibition (fortuitously scheduled for the summer of 2021), all components were featured virtually. This also made the open digital collections more important than ever, as they were the only materials available with our physical materials in actual lockdown. The three artists selected – Jessica de Abreu, Michiel Huijben, and Femke Dekker – offered a contemporary vision and critique of archives and heritage institutions combined with current social developments. As it turned out, all three artists focused on activism and on representations of that theme in the three institutes and beyond.

Open Archief 3.0 is now ongoing. Four new artists were selected in March 2022: the duo Alice Wong & Simo Tse, Remco Torenbosch, and Daria Kiseleva. Their works are exhibited at Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Re:Use Clinics

In addition to the artist-in-residence program, Open Archief runs the public program of Re:Use Clinics. These clinics are a series of public events for heritage professionals and parties interested in creative reuse of heritage collections. They address matters that are essential for reusing collections and for the creative process.

In the past two editions of Open Archief the clinics revolved around two themes. Together with rights organization Pictoright, a clinic was held about copyright, while together with arts platform ARIAS we hosted a clinic about the ethical questions underlying the reuse of heritage material. Experienced guest speakers were invited to elaborate on these issues. We asked questions such as: What is the future of copyright? How can inherently violent colonial imagery be addressed in archives? And: How can archival engagement offer different perspectives on and critique historical narratives, identity, and representation? Most of all, the Re:Use Clinics were meant to inspire visitors from both sides and to have them inspire each other: the heritage professional and the artist.

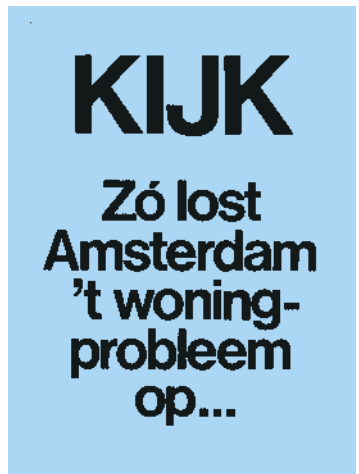
Open Archief is an important project for the IISH, because it generates direct insights into the usability and visibility of its open digital collections. It has enhanced our insight into the varying search methods by users and has raised the question of how to facilitate those methods in our virtual research environment. Encouraging creative reuse through both the artist residency and the public program has made clear the widely shared desire and willingness to address questions concerning the reuse of archives from many perspectives. The works that resulted from Open Archief 2020-2021 emphasized an important feature of archives: that they are alive and are continuously (re)activated.

(Re)activating research

Reactivating archive materials is indeed the ambition of Femke Dekker in her project RE: ACTIVE RADIO, in which she focuses on the reciprocal relationship between the media and activism. Activists have always made strategic use of mass media as a platform to propagate their ideas. Dekker's project explored the notions of both mediated activism and activist media.

In the initial phase of her research at the IISH, Dekker encountered the Staatsarchief (named after the Staatsliedenbuurt, although it translates intentionally to State Archive), the archive of the Dutch squatter and activist movement. It contains the vast audio archive of Radio de Vrije Keyser, which began broadcasting on 13 January 1980 from De Groote Keijser, a complex of six squatted buildings on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam.

The radio archive appeals to Dekker's interest in counterculture and represents the suitability of radio to function as a call to action and a tool for community building. In this respect, the top-



ics discussed in these radio broadcasts from the 1980s (e.g. gentrification, the housing shortage, and the need for grassroots activism) remain every bit as relevant today.

In addition to providing access to recordings of Radio de Vrije Keyser broadcasts, Dekker produced four radio programmes that were broadcast on the online station Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee. These broadcasts reflect on the materials Dekker found and address the positions of the archivist as activist and the artist and activist as archivist. In the first episode, for example, Dekker asks archivists from the three institutes: 'what is archival research?' and 'who is in charge of the archive?' and 'what material are they disclosing?' and 'how are they telling their stories?'

While listening to the archive material, Dekker was intrigued by the two broadcasters Els and Evelien from Radio Vrije Keyser. She tried to contact them for her radio shows. This proved quite a challenge, because in their effort to conceal their identities (and squatting activities) from the police, the broadcasters had used only first names or pseudonyms. Via a highly circuitous approach, Dekker finally tracked down Els, who turned out to be as feisty as ever, as she demonstrated in Dekker's final radio episode.¹⁴

Dekker's main approach, 'reactivating' radio broadcasts from the 1980s to show their continuing relevance in today's context, exemplifies the power of 'open archives.' Dekker sees radio as a tool for activists and as a medium for community building.¹⁵ In her exhibition space, Dekker also used another important tool: posters from the squatter movement. All her activities for Open Archief revolved around reactivating the materials by talking about them, providing access to them (sometimes through innovative methods), and reusing them in the exhibition.

By choosing the medium of radio as her main focus, Dekker, a radio maker herself, chose something close to her heart. Remarkably, she sees her work here as 'perhaps a call for subversiveness but not activism.'¹⁶ In the final episode

'Kraak' and 'Kijk': two posters from Femke Dekker's exhibition, 2021, based on BG E35/170 and BG D77/302, respectively, designed by Marius Schwarz with Femke Dekker.

Poster from Femke Dekker's exhibition, 2021, based on BG D66/300, designed by Marius Schwarz with Femke Dekker.



¹⁴ <https://www.openarchief.com/news/re-activate-episode-03>

¹⁵ <https://www.openarchief.com/blog/radio-activism-and-archives>

¹⁶ *Ibidem*



Poster announcing the Open Archives 2022 exhibition, Marius Schwarz.

with Els, the current need for counterculture in urban environments suffering from housing shortages and gentrification is discussed in detail. Dekker shows the possibilities of radio in her work to inspire new generations of activists.

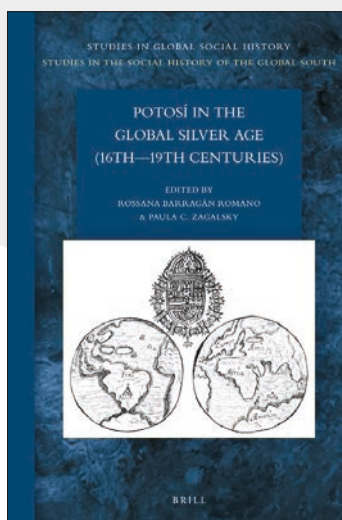
What's next?

Open Archief 3.0 is on display from 28 October 2022 to 26 March 2023 at Gallery 0 at HNI. Next

year, the project Open Archief will focus on becoming a platform for sharing knowledge on reuse of archives. Read more about the project at: <https://www.openarchief.com/>.

Femke Dekker's radio broadcasts may be found on the Open Archief website, as well as an interview with her by Warda El-Kaddouri, from which sections are quoted in this article.

Dekker is currently expanding her archive research in the collaborative project *The Right to the City xxx*, a seven-part audio series that explores Amsterdam's grassroots resistance to homelessness and unaffordable housing and its consequent fuel of counterculture platforms in the city, from the first rent strikes of the 1930s until today. The series merges her work with the long-term practices of collaborative partner Werker Collective, which investigates the role of archives as tools for resistance and political imagination. An edition of screen-printed bandanas has been designed by Werker to help spread the sound waves through the city. Dekker is also extending her research to listening as an artistic practice, and how listening is in fact a call to action.



Potosí in the Global Silver Age (16th—19th Centuries)

Editors: **Rossana Barragán Romano**, International Institute for Social History and **Paula C. Zagalsky**, Universidad de Buenos Aires

Potosí (today Bolivia) was the major supplier for the Spanish Empire and for the world and still nowadays, boasts the world's single-richest silver deposit. This book explores the political economy of silver production and circulation illuminating a vital chapter in the history of global capitalism.

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The main focus is on the set-up of a complex infrastructure at the site, its major changes, and the new human and environmental landscape that emerged for the production of one of the world's major commodities: silver. Eleven authors from different countries, present their most recent research based on years of archival research providing the readers with cutting-edge scholarship.

Contributors are: Julio Aguilar, James Almeida, Rossana Barragán Romano, Mariano A. Bonialian, Thérèse Bouysson-Cassagne, Kris Lane, Tristan Platt, Renée Raphael, Masaki Sato, Heidi V. Scott, and Paula C. Zagalsky.