

On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends of the IISH 2024 no. 45



internationaal instituut
voor sociale geschiedenis

A never-opened
book by
Viktor Chernov

Archive
Klaas de Jonge

Ulbe Bosma
on
The World of Sugar

Introduction

Frontpage: Klaas de Jonge, portrayed on a poster announcing an exhibition of his collection of African masks in Belgium, 2019. Photographer unknown. See page 10.

The final months of 2023 were dominated by the preparations for the evaluation of the IISH that will take place in March 2024. KNAW institutes undergo evaluation by an international committee every six years. At the IISH this committee examines not only the results of the research department but also those of the collection department. A self-assessment report has been drafted to assess to what extent the five main goals have been met in the strategic programme for the past five years. The significant increase in outreach activities in recent years means that an important recommendation of the previous evaluation committee has been fulfilled.

On 1 January 2024, Frank de Jong started at Collections as Sustainable Accessibility Programme Manager. Thanks to temporary extra funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science toward improving public services to better meet the expectations of the general public (see *On the Waterfront* 43, p. 2), the IISH can invest in improving accessibility of the collections in the coming years. Acquisition and processing of collections, for example, will be organized more in cooperation with users and will thus become accessible to broader groups. The projects Frank will be managing relate to all facets of work at the Data and Collections department (collecting, managing, adding metadata and making materials available quickly) and are conducive to the sustainable accessibility of our collections. Innovations in accessibility and enhanced search options will be the topic of a presentation at the upcoming Friends Meeting, in which Richard Zijdeman and Ivo Zandhuis of the Data and Augmentation department will explain what Linked Open Data (LOD) entails.

This issue includes a report on the presentation by Ulbe Bosma at the previous Friends Meeting about his book *The World of Sugar*, two reports presenting new acquisitions, as well as an interview with Ed Kool, another long-time staff

member who retired recently. His responsibilities included arranging transport of many acquisitions over the past four decades. The article by Maxim Waldstein, a visitor of the Reading Room, on a never-opened book by Viktor Chernov, breathes new life into the section 'From all nooks and corners', while the interview with Sjoerd van Veen offers a first example of a Friend explaining his reasons for joining our colourful group.

Aad Blok

About the Friends

Members of the Friends of the IISH pay annual dues of 10 (for students), 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.

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://iisg.amsterdam/en/friends>

Colophon



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Interview with Ed Kool

Ed Kool retired on 17 September last year. Although the length of his tenure is not an absolute record among IISH employees, his forty years of service do place him among the longest-serving staff members here. With such vast knowledge and experience, a great many co-workers have repeatedly expostulated since September: 'Oh, Ed would have known more about this!' or 'Ed would have known how to fix this.' That he made an indelible impression was also clear from the number of co-workers and former co-workers who attended his farewell reception. Ample cause to interview him as well and thereby another opportunity to record a section of IISH history.

How did you join the IISH?

At first, I hoped to study archaeology, for which art history was a prerequisite. After a few years, I abandoned that and found a job, because I had met Elja by then and wanted to start a family. Initially I worked at a bank briefly, but I found that neither interesting nor substantive. In 1983, a temporary employment agency sent me to the IISH, located on Kabelweg back then, where they needed somebody for what was known as the

library signatures project. Because library material had been arranged alphabetically until then, and that system increasingly led to material getting lost, the items started to be organized numerically via library call numbers instead, including the periodicals, and temporary staff were recruited to this end. I immediately enjoyed the scent of old paper and a range of pleasant and special colleagues. After several temporary positions, I was hired permanently during the reorganization in 1985 and was placed in charge of the archive stacks and the reading room. In 1986, I married Elja, and in the years that followed we became the proud parents of a daughter and three sons.

What did the work for the stacks entail, especially in the period surrounding the move to the Cruquiusweg premises? Which challenges did you face?

In 1988, I was sent on ahead with some colleagues to the King William I warehouse at 31 Cruquiusweg to help coordinate the move. Some of the collections had already been transferred while the warehouse was still being converted. As soon as some of the stacks were ready, the storage devices were set up, and sections of the



Ed Kool at his desk on one of the last days before his retirement. Photo by Rose Spijkerman.

On the Rue Jacques-Boyceau in Versailles, March 2004, in front of number 8, the house called 'Les Tilleuls' (The Linden), residence of the Prudhommeaux family, see <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH01091> and <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH01090>. Photo by Hans Drieman.



collections were moved and placed in the new stacks. In the room next to the loading dock, we had arranged a makeshift cafeteria. Because there was no heating yet, I placed a paraffin stove there at the time, on which the concierge Gerard Langendijk could heat up soup, and where we could keep warm. Because no telephone had been installed yet, and speedy communication was essential for consultation in the

building and with our co-workers at Kabelweg, we resorted to one of the first versions of mobile phones, which back then could be purchased only illegally. Despite the thick concrete walls, our range extended throughout the building and well beyond. This project often required finding swift practical solutions to unexpected problems. That pursuit tied in nicely with my practical disposition and interest in technology.

Is that also why you soon became responsible for organizing and often also carrying out those transports at the Institute?

Back in 1980, I had obtained my driver's licence for trucks. This was obviously useful, whenever archive materials needed to be collected in the Netherlands or in Europe, at a reasonable distance from Amsterdam, from people or institutions that wanted to entrust their collection to the Institute. Over the years, I regularly accompanied acquisition missions, often with co-workers from Collection Development, such as Mies Campfens, Kees Rodenburg, Touraj Atabaki, Eef Vermeij, Emile Schwidder, Götz Langkau, Huub Sanders, and others. I have picked up many archives, both in the Netherlands and abroad. They include the personal papers of Joop den Uyl from his home in Buitenveldert, the collection of Vernon Richards in England, the Brunn-Harris-Watts Collection, and the Wolfgang Harich Papers in Berlin, the Baader Meinhof Group archive (which had been placed in Hamburg and Bremen) temporarily, as well as a great many other collections, far too many to list here.

Many of those journeys were special, particularly because I regularly fetched items from people's homes, and some materials turned out to be stored in the strangest places and ways. Once I fetched the archive of a descendant of the shah of Persia, who lived in a lovely old building in Versailles. The material was in an attic that was dusty and difficult to access, and it was a very hot summer day. I was exhausted and drenched with sweat by the time I got it all loaded into the truck. Luckily, I had noticed a wonderful bathtub as I passed through the elegant home, and I had a delightful opportunity to rest up and refresh myself in the antique French bathroom of an imperial Persian before starting on the return trip. Another time, I brought a load of archive boxes to the home of Roel van Duijn for him to pack up his personal papers. He found the boxes very difficult to fold, and asked me to do that for him, while he played Chopin on the piano for me, a special type of exchange for live Arbeidsvitaminen ('Work vitamins').

After several transports, I soon learned that archive givers and Collection Development staff often had difficulty assessing accurately the physical quantity to be picked up. I learned to increase the estimate by 50 to 100 percent to ensure that everything could be brought back in a single trip.

Did you receive specific logistics training to do this work?

No, I just had that driver's license for large vehicles, and the general mindset about many



Visiting Bernard Schalsa, March 2004, to collect the papers of his father-in-law, the French Trotskyist Michel Ravelli, see <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH02728>. Poster in the background commemorates the Sobibor uprising on 14 October 1943. Photo by Hans Drieman.

practical things to be done within the Institute was ‘we can do that ourselves,’ a sort of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture that has always appealed to me. That was also how the transports for the Institute went: I checked everything necessary for the IISH to obtain customs clearance and exemptions. That same DIY culture led me to initiate equipping the entire fifth floor with pallet racks and to purchase a forklift truck. I made sure I got a driver’s license for that vehicle.

Aside from working on the stacks and transports, did you hold other positions at the Institute?

I worked at the archives department for about 18 years, in the period that Jack Hofman was in charge. During that time, I enjoyed providing access to a great many archives and sets of personal papers. I also attended the Archive school in The Hague for a year and completed the Paleography and Archive Sciences module, but history exam turned out to be an obstacle. Generally, it was difficult to combine with my busy life working full time while raising a family.

Are there any archives to which you provided access particularly memorable?

At least two of them are. The first is the archive of the Vereniging van KLM Boordwerktuigkundigen [Association of KLM flight engineers]. I identified with the technical nature of this occupational group: I recall that two former board members, who stopped by to tell us about the archive came to the Institute in an old vw bug and a vintage motorboat. This truly appealed to me, as I love tinkering with cars and motorcycles! The second is the archive of the Bond van Medewerkers in Kerkelijke en daaraan Verwante Arbeid [League of employees at churches and related work]. Because I have always been reli-

giously affiliated, I know the circles of Protestant churches, organizations, and movements fairly well, and archives from this section of society were likely to be assigned to me. At the presentation of the inventory in honour of the 60th anniversary, I informed those present that the league had in fact been established one year earlier.

I always found working to provide access to archives to be one of the most enjoyable activities. That is why in my free time, I continue to manage the archive of the PKN Church in Diemen. Since my retirement I have caught up with the backlog I accumulated there. Unfortunately, this kind of substantive access to archives and consequently the archives department, as I knew it in the eighteen years I worked there, has largely disappeared.

I believe that many co-workers who have experienced you over the past forty years see you as somebody who has held many different positions and has done all different kinds of work and has always been very hands-on. Do you see yourself that way?

Yes, that is probably true. I did first aid and was an emergency response officer for twenty-five years. That also needs to happen at an organization such as the IISH. As I am interested in practical technology and odd jobs, I always had fun doing maintenance and repairs on the audio and video equipment at the Institute: ensuring that obsolete systems no longer available commercially remain functional, so that old tapes can still be played. I will undoubtedly continue doing these types of chores at home and for my family after my retirement, so I cannot imagine I will grow bored.

Aad Blok

Why become a Friend of the IISH?

Interview with Sjoerd van der Veen

Sjoerd van der Veen (1940) has been a Friend of the IISH since 2019. After living in Roosendaal in North Brabant for a long time, he moved back to Amsterdam North some years ago. How did a retired chemistry teacher and book collector become a Friend of the IISH, what led to his interest in the history of socialism and the labour movement, and where does a collector store his surplus books after moving?

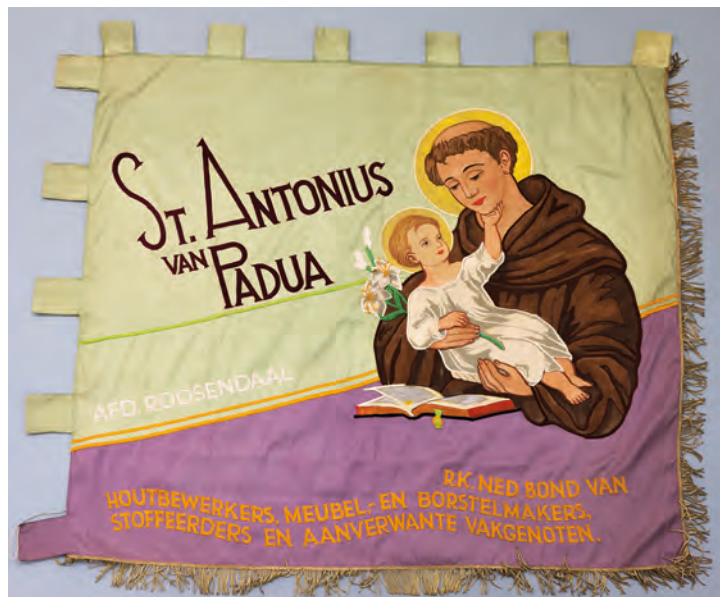
‘After secondary school I hesitated between history and chemistry as a course of study. Following careful deliberation, I chose chemistry and embarked on a career as a chemistry teacher in Brabant until I retired in 2004. I have been a trade union member throughout my working life. I have also remained interested in history,

especially in books on the history of socialism and the labour movement. These were few and far between in the South of the Netherlands. The Catholic Index long prohibited all socialist, communist, or anarchist writings there, until it was abolished in 1966. Even in the Randstad, such works were often difficult to find. I managed to locate new books from publishers such as SUN, SUA, Pegasus, and Polak & Van Gennep. Mainly, however, I was looking for used books and was quite successful. A PvdA [Dutch Labour Party] member of the House of Representatives, for example, provided me with copies of the journal *De Nieuwe Tijd* from 1896, together with the early volumes of *De socialistische gids*. A former director of Pegasus cleared out old stock as well, as did the CPN Groningen party office (in-

Cover of Sjoerd van Veen's commemorative book on the Catholic trade union movement in Roosendaal in the period 1961-1972, published in 2022 by the FNV. IISG 2014/351 fol.



Banner of the Nederlandse Roomsche Katholieke Bond van Houtbewerkeren, Meubel- en Borstelmakers, Stoffeerdere en Behangers en aanverwante vakgenooten "Sint Antonius van Padua". Afdeling Roosendaal. IISH collection, IISG BG 11/429.



cluding interesting brochures).

Having a personal library is wonderful, and selecting a volume now and then is a delight. Gradually, however, the house filled up, and I started contemplating my golden years. What would I do, rattling around in such a huge home? By this time, I had married my childhood sweetheart Miep Homan. The flat we found measured 83 m² and is in Amsterdam North: too small for those thousands of books and brochures. I had no choice but to downsize my library, but how?

The A.M.de Jongmuseum in Nieuw Vossemeer agreed to take a few books but not enough to make a difference. Oxfam Novib was interested in *De socialistische gids* but not in *De Nieuwe Tijd*. An sp staff member was clearly enthused to receive an old second edition of *Wij slaven van Suriname*

by Anton de Kom (fortunately, I still have the Pegasus edition from 1934).

Thanks to my close ties with the Saint Joseph's Church in Roosendaal, several of my books have been included in the book sales they regularly organize to fund the restoration. The bishop allowed them to be stored in a side aisle, provided they were covered by a (red!) cloth.

I was also a regular at the FNV Vakbondshuis [trade union centre] in Roosendaal, where the rooms were wall-papered with photos of leather book jackets in a bookcase. The trade-union leaders agreed with me that this looked ridiculous. As a result, I managed to give them six linear metres of genuine books, plus an actual bookcase, enabling me to clear out substantially.'

From chemist to historian

'Once I retired, I started subscribing to *op Brood & Rozen* – where Bob Reinalda served on the board of editors – and have enjoyed this introduction to social history. Others had by then understood my penchant for written texts. So in 2005, I eagerly agreed, when chairman Jan Sebregts asked me on behalf of the board of the Roosendaal chapter of the construction and timber union [FNV Bouw- en Houtbond] to write a commemorative booklet in honour of their 90th anniversary. Jan explained that he was asking me, because I knew all about history (as a chemistry teacher!). After all, in 1991, as one of the speakers at the FNV trade union school, I had enlightened those enrolled about the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical as requested by the FNV. My listeners had comprised several local trade union executives, including Jan.

At the first consultation about the commemorative booklet, local trade union executives presented me with the books of minutes from the R.K. Gildenbond [Roman Catholic society of guilds] and the Nederlandse Katholieke Metaalbewerkerenbond [Dutch Catholic metalworkers' union] "St. Eloy", as well as far more archive materials. Considering their local nature, I ultimately entrusted those items to the Roosendaal archive. Following the request from FNV-Bouw, the PvdA and the POR (= Groenlinks) in Roosendaal, asked me to provide them with commemorative booklets as well. To find the archive of the local SDAP/PvdA, however, I had to go all the way to the IISH and therefore to Amsterdam, which is where I was born in early 1940, just before the war broke out. I immediately felt at home there, also when I received a guided tour there later on as a member of the Vakbondshistorische Vereniging (VHV), now the Friends of the History of the trade union movement. In addition, the IISH staff helped me photograph banners, including one of St. Antonius van Padua, patron saint of woodworkers, for inclusion in the commemorative booklet. So becoming a Friend of the IISH came naturally for me in 2019. After a friendly welcome interview, Jan Lucassen of the IISH immediately filled the gaps that had emerged in my library, including a copy of *Rebels with a Cause* about the IISH collections.'

Aad Blok

From all Nooks and Corners

Viktor Chernov, his 'Unopened' Book, and the Legacy of Russian Non-Bolshevik Socialism

Several weeks ago, while exploring the connections between the European Left and the beginnings of the science of sociology in the IISH collections, I came across a red-cover paperback book written by the early twentieth-century Russian politician and social theorist Viktor Mikhailovich Chernov (1873-1952). It immediately struck me how fresh and untouched this slim volume looked. As I examined the book closer, I realized it remained largely unread for almost a century after being published in 1925 in Prague. Except for the first 10 pages, most of the pages have not yet been cut open: the folded fronts of the quires have not been cut with a plough or guillotine before sale. Until today, no reader or librarian had ever cut them off with a paper knife. Constructive Socialism is the title of the book. Why has this book remained unopened? How does this relate to its author's legacy? As I held this slim reddish volume for the first time, these were the questions that crossed my mind.

It is presumptuous of me to claim that I have the answers to these questions. It is not (yet) my expertise to discuss with authority Viktor Chernov or the broader Narodnik (often translated as 'populist' or 'rural socialist') and Neo-Narodnik movements he is associated with. Nevertheless, I am curious. What I'd like to share with the reader is a sketch of the story of the book's author and the reasons for my curiosity.

Viktor Chernov is one of those historical figures whose name is known by practically every educated person in his country of origin, Russia. Yet, besides the name, not much comes to mind, unless you are a specialist on the relevant historical period. Chernov is known as the leader of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, or the SRs. Almost a year after the February Revolution of 1917, he led his party to an impressive victory in the elections for the Constituent Assembly, arguably the only Russian parliament ever elected in free and fair elections. The SRs got 40 percent of the vote (58 percent with their allies), while the Bolsheviks, who were already effectively in power, got only 24 percent. Elected chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Chernov was the president of the Russian Republic for one day.

That's as much as most educated people in Russia, and Russia-experts globally, would probably come up with if asked about Viktor Chernov. Even less is known about him as a thinker, sociologist, and social theorist. These observations may provide some context, although by no means an explanation, for the 'unread' status of the SR leader's magnum opus that I came across in the IISH. Yet, none of the facts outlined above compel one to put aside the reddish paperback and perpetuate the relative obscurity of its author. An inquisitive person might even be trig-

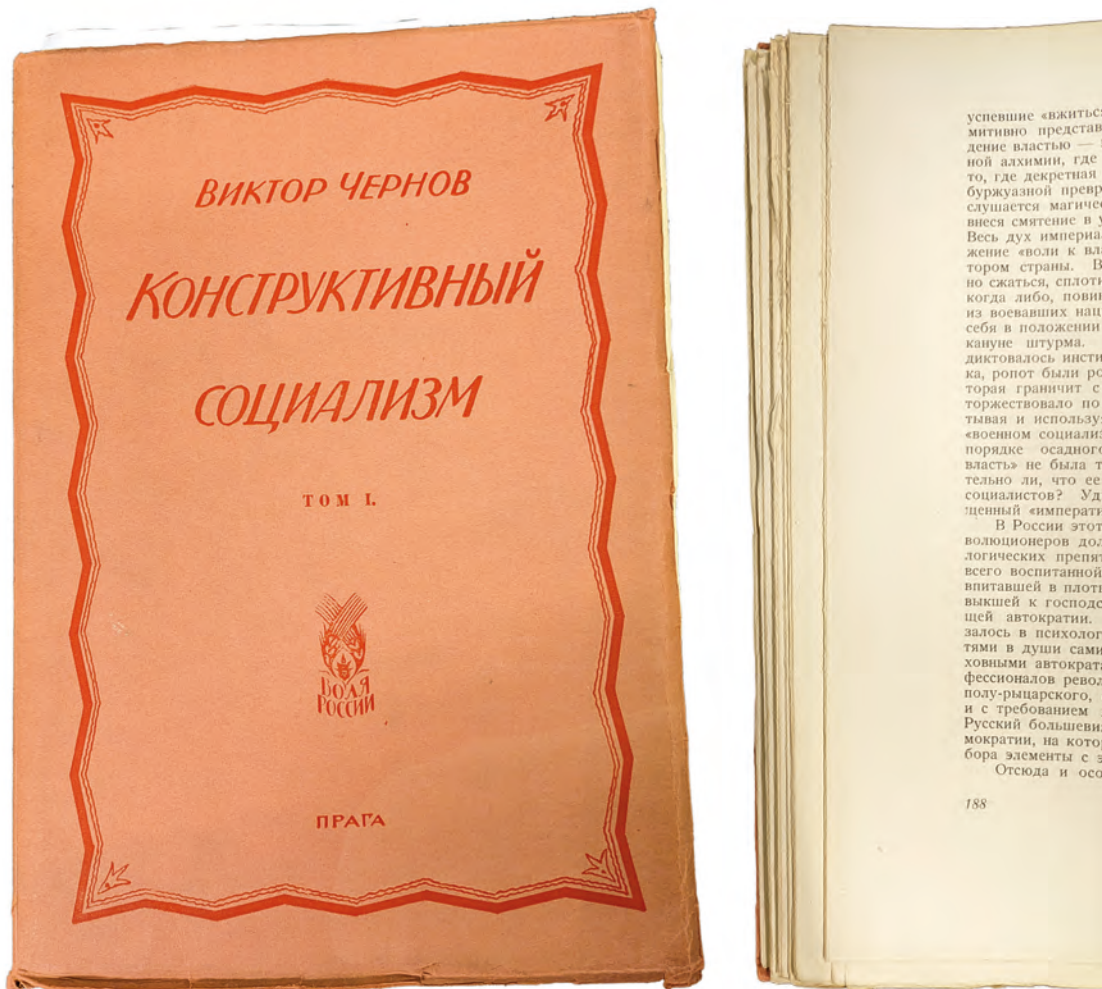
gered by this knowledge to ask questions: who were these SRs? Why did they win elections and lose not only power but, eventually, everything? Does their brand of leftism still resonate in contemporary society?

This contribution is not the place to address these questions to any satisfactory degree. Yet perhaps I can provide enough data to water the mouth of a curious reader. The party of socialist revolutionaries, established in 1902 and illegal in Russia until 1917, is often associated with multiple acts of 'individual terror', first against Tsarist and later against Bolshevik authorities. Its left wing, the Left SRs, shared a coalition government with the Bolsheviks briefly in 1918 and arguably played a formidable role in establishing the USSR's notorious secret police. On the other hand, the party evokes images, or fantasies, of the alternative, more democratic and more peaceful, path towards a non-Bolshevik version of socialism. This apparent tension in the history and perception of the SR party has a direct bearing on the biography of Viktor Chernov. A supporter of militant revolutionary action, right after the February 1917 revolution he found himself among the leaders of the Petrograd Soviet (or the Council of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' deputies). Yet, soon after, Chernov was among the left-wing leaders to join the coalition-and-compromise based Provisional Government

Portrait of Viktor Chernov, by Y.K. Artsybushev, in a series of portraits of political figures, made during the State Meeting in Moscow, 14 August 1917.



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in effort to build bridges between increasingly polarizing social forces and avert the threat of civil war. These efforts were to be crowned with the election of the Constituent Assembly, which was seen as the only legitimate vehicle for implementing radical political and economic reforms. This was not to be. Deeply divided, and outmanoeuvred by the Bolsheviks, the SR party proved to be incapable of being the 'third force,' the alternative to the Reds and the Whites. Harassed by both, Chernov and other SR leaders ended up in exile.

But what was it that Chernov and his comrades proposed as an alternative to imperial autocracy, global capitalism, and Leninist 'pseudo-socialism'? Some Chernov admirers in contemporary Russia – many of them 'new refugees' themselves – tend to speak about his 'democratic socialism with Russian characteristics'. The second part of this definition is a little problematic, considering that related ideas were also widespread among the non-Russian peoples of the empire and even beyond its borders. After all, in 1917-1918, many leaders of the first government of independent Ukraine were members of the Ukrainian socialist revolutionary party. As for 'democratic socialism', this label helps to account for the alliance, in 1917, between the Chernov-led SRS and the moderate social democrats, the Mensheviks, for their common advocacy of the peaceful and democratic path to socialism, and for their shared opposition to 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.

The label of 'democratic socialism' inscribes the SRS into the context of the European non-communist left. Thus identified, the SR tradition might become more intelligible but also less distinctive and, frankly, less interesting. What is so interesting about yet another local and politically unsuccessful center-left movement?

However, Chernov and the socialist revolutionaries' legacies do not fit into the familiar categories and oppositions we habitually use to describe the political and intellectual left: radical versus moderate socialists, statist versus anarchists, or orthodox versus revisionist Marxists. In this unclassifiability, and in many other characteristics, the SRS are worthy heirs to the 'populist', or 'Narodnik', movement of the late nineteenth century. Indeed, to understand the SRS, you must know something about the Narodniks. 'Neo-Narodnik' is the label often applied to the political, intellectual, and cultural movements of which the SRS and Chernov were notable members.

Who were these Narodniks? This question is much easier to answer than those about the SRS and Chernov. The Narodniks are remembered and relatively well-known around the world, at least among left-wing activists and academics. Associated with such militant revolutionary organizations as 'Land and Freedom' (Zemlya i volya) and 'People's Will' (Narodnaya volya), the Narodniks were revolutionary activists famous and notorious for their virulent attack on the Russian

autocracy in the 1870s, resulting, in 1881, in the assassination of the reformist tsar Alexander II. As social and political thinkers, they are known in the West thanks to writers such as Isaiah Berlin and Tom Stoppard. The names of Alexander Herzen, Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and even Peter Lavrov are by no means forgotten. A debate between the Narodniks and the Marxists about the possibility of a non-capitalist path of development and the role of the agricultural commune as a proto-socialist phenomenon drew the attention of Karl Marx in his later years. On these issues Marx may have rather sided with the Narodniks, than with the self-proclaimed orthodox Marxists. There is no doubt that this debate prefigured many of the later debates among the political and academic left: those about uneven development and peripheral capitalism, singular and multiple modernities, environmentally sustainable growth and degrowth, postcolonialism and decoloniality. A long time before Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the Russian and Ukrainian Narodniks raised the question of whether the oppressed, the subaltern, and/or the indigenous could speak for themselves or if they needed the intelligentsia, the educated class motivated by guilt over their privilege, to represent their grievances.

Most of these statements about the Narodniks apply to the neo-Narodniks, too. After all, Viktor Chernov and his colleagues saw themselves as the carriers of the Narodnik torch to the new, twentieth century. Did the SRS add anything new to the legacy of their mentors? To be honest, I am not yet ready to give a confident response to this question. Instead, to round up this essay, I would like to go back to the barely read Prague publication I started with, Chernov's *Constructive Socialism*. I have only started reading the book and therefore have only preliminary impressions to share. These impressions of a novice might help other potential readers to follow in my footsteps and begin familiarizing themselves with Chernov's life and oeuvre.

So far, I have three major impressions of *Constructive Socialism* and of Chernov's work in general.

- (1) The writing style of the author strikes me as a bit dry and unimaginative, not entirely on par with the literary flourish or rhetorical power of such other SRs, or SR fellow travelers, as Nikolay Mikhaylovsky, Chernov's mentor and the 'father of Russian sociology', Pitirim Sorokin, the sociology mentor of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, or Viktor Shklovsky, a leading Russian Formalist who revolutionized literary theory. This observation may be in line with the 'untouched' status of the IISH copy. Yet, my two other impressions are more conducive to further exploration of Chernov's writings and legacy.
- (2) His vision of socialism is nothing but highly ambitious. He positions his 'constructive socialism' as a continuation of the lineage from utopian socialism to Marxism to 'beyond Marxism'. While critiquing not only the Bolshevik but also Marx's own theory and practice, he offers the most developed and perhaps even persuasive argument I have seen so far for the



'Choose Socialist Revolutionaries'. Poster 1917, Lenin Museum Collection/Political Posters, State Historical Museum.

need to complement political democracy with workplace democracy. Concerning the contemporary Netherlands, he would probably argue that, as workers and employees, we live under the 'autocracy' of the management, slightly tempered by the elements of 'constitutionalism' (staff representation, work councils). The workplace as a democratic commune or cooperative, an element of the decentralized and 'federated' democratic republic, is an achievable, or 'constructive' option he advocates.

- (3) Finally, what I consider pursuing as my next research project, is the neo-Narodnik's response to the 'nationalities question', confronted most acutely by the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires in the early twentieth century. The distinctively federalist – as opposed to unitarist and nationalist – solution Chernov and his colleagues advocated with respect to ethnic and national self-determination squares well with his vision of a socialist economy and society. An intriguing case study of this vision may be found in the IISH file on Chernov's visit to Palestine in 1934-1935 and his encounters with both Jewish and Arab labour leaders. This trip – barely reported on, not to mention analysed by researchers so far – looks like a promising window into the vexed relations between (non)Marxist socialism, (anti)nationalism, (anti)racism, and (anti)Zionism.

Overall, there is much to discover here. I am open to collaboration with those who have similar interests.

Maxim Waldstein
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Presentation of acquisitions and special findings

In *De koerier van Maputo* [The Courier from Maputo] published in 2021 by Uitgeverij Podium, journalist Jenne Jan Holtland goes back to Africa with Klaas de Jonge, combining the story of De Jonge's past of anti-apartheid activism with South African history and trips to Mozambique, Zambia and Angola. Cover design by Rob Westendorp. IISG collection, call number 1985/3719.

Personal papers of Klaas de Jonge

On 5 May 2023, Klaas de Jonge passed away. He was one of the best-known anti-apartheid activists in the Netherlands. Following his death, his personal papers were entrusted to the IISG, where they became part of the institute's permanent anti-apartheid and southern Africa collection. This was done in close consultation with the immediate family of Klaas and his partner Elli Izeboud. The archive is an important source for research on the involvement of the Netherlands in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century and on Klaas de Jonge's leading role in the effort. In the Netherlands and beyond, Klaas de Jonge rose to fame mainly when he spent over two years (from July 1985 to September 1987) at the Dutch embassy in Pretoria, where he had sought refuge after having been arrested and interrogated by the South-African secret service about his active involvement in the armed liberation struggle of the African National Congress (ANC).

After studying sociology and anthropology in Amsterdam and Paris, De Jonge initially worked at the African Studies Centre in Leiden, after which he worked for a few years in Mozambique for the Ministry of Information for the country that had become independent in 1974. Here, he and his second wife, H el ene Passtoors, made friends with the prominent ANC activists Joe Slovo and Ruth First. After First was murdered by the South-African secret service, the couple became active in the ANC armed struggle against the apartheid regime, including smuggling arms and explosives from Zimbabwe to South Africa.

While material about De Jonge's activities in

Klaas de Jonge on the phone in his room at the Dutch embassy in Pretoria. Photographer unknown.



Mozambique is relatively scarce in the archive, we find documents about his work as a history teacher in Zimbabwe, which had also recently gained independence. Much of the material relates to his arrest in 1985, his escape to and sojourn at the Dutch embassy, and his ultimate release and return to the Netherlands following a complicated prisoner exchange, in which France was involved as well. His personal papers throughout this long, drawn-out matter account for a large share of his archive: in addition to diaries (ca. 1,300 pages), including excerpts and summaries (by theme), his correspondence (such as the many cards sent to him in late 1985 and early 1986 in response to an appeal from anti-apartheid groups from the Netherlands and elsewhere), the written account of discussions about resorting to violence in a war of liberation, as well as material revealing the complicated relationship that De Jonge had with the Dutch embassy and government and with the military police that guarded him in the embassy. There are also ca. 25 tapes of recorded phone interviews he had from within the embassy with VARA radio staff member Karel Roskam during these two years. Roskam used these recordings for regular broadcasts about Klaas de Jonge's sojourn at the embassy. A wealth of material (newspaper clippings, videos of television broadcasts, etc.) covers interest in the issue in public opinion

in the Netherlands, South Africa, and internationally, both during his custody at the Dutch embassy and relating to his release and return to the Netherlands. The archive also includes scrapbooks and a file of photographs assembled by De Jonge and by his father. Some of this material the Rijksmuseum used in 2017 for the Good Hope exhibition on historical ties between the Netherlands and South Africa.

In 1985, H el ene Passtoors, by then divorced from Klaas de Jonge, was arrested by the South-African police and one year later was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment; in 1989 she was released early. The archive contains various court documents and the report ‘The Passtoors trial’ by Willem van Manen, as well as reflections by Klaas de Jonge and others about this period. Many of the documents are focused on whether the use of violence and the resulting victims were justified.

After returning to the Netherlands, De Jonge remained active in solidarity campaigns for southern Africa, some in conjunction with the Anti-Apartheid Beweging Nederland (AABN) and the Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika. In December 1987 he was closely involved in the conference and festival Culture in Another South Africa (CASA) that the AABN organized. Later, he also worked on the Shell blockade in April 1989 and on all kinds of local groups and information gatherings, such as at secondary schools. His papers reflect his work for the ANC (e.g. for the Arusha conference organized in Tanzania in December 1987 and for the International Solidarity Conference in Johannesburg in 1993) and his involvement in Operation Vula, which served to bring leading ANC officers to South Africa to be covert drivers of domestic resistance against apartheid. In 1988 De Jonge also trained ANC officers in the GDR in this context, and he was a member of the CPN working group on South Africa. In this period he lost his sight in his right eye, possibly as a consequence of the toxic substances administered to him by the South-African secret service.

Between 1989 and 1994, De Jonge was also an African studies guest lecturer and a researcher on racial relations at the History Department of the University of Brasilia. As such, he became active with trade unions and progressive black movements in Brazil. The archive contains materials to prepare his book * frica do Sul: apartheid e resist ncia* (S o Paulo, 1991) and various articles about racism in Brazil.

After the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, De Jonge contributed to the VPRO radio programme *Standplaats Mozambique* in 1994-1995. The archive includes these tapes. In addition, as a researcher from the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA), he participated in various investigations requested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996 and 1997 on the attacks by the South-African apartheid regime against inter alia Dulcie September, on South-African involvement in the assassination of Olof Palme, and on the secret South-African chemical and biological arms programme. His notes for these investigations are included in his personal papers.



In the first decade of the twenty-first century, De Jonge worked for Penal Reform International in Rwanda and on the investigation into the genocide suspects in the context of the truth, justice and reconciliation process (Gacaca) in Rwanda; he did similar work for other countries, contributing to conferences and the like.

In addition to material about his activism and his research, the archive contains also personal correspondence from after 1987, conveying his complicated ties with his girlfriends and his children, as well as some biographical material about his childhood and the development of his own political orientation.

Kier Schuringa, Aad Blok

An anarchist in Hong Kong: the archive of Mok Chiu-Yu

About forty years ago, I worked at the local bookstore Fort van Sjakoo and became interested in China. Back then, Sjakoo sold the publications of a rather obscure Hong Kong collective. The periodical was imported by Bas Moreel, who if I recall correctly once translated an issue into Dutch as well. One weekend the editor of that journal happened to be in Amsterdam, and I was asked to show him around of the city. We started talking about his archive and his plans to deposit it in Japan, although transitioning Hong Kong to

Chris Hani (left, with sunglasses) and Klaas de Jonge (right) at an ANC rally in Lady Frere, South Africa in november 1990. Photo by Pieter Borsma. Chris Hani was a prominent political and military leader of the ANC and the SACP (South African Communist Party); he was assassinated in April 1993.



Mok, probably at the Anarchist conference in Venice, 1984. There’s a separate archive collection on this event at the Centro Studi Libertari – Archivio Giuseppe Pinelli.

the People's Republic of China was still a long way off back then. That editor was Mok Chiu-yu, his full name was Augustine Mok Chiu-yu, Mok for short.

Fast forward to the early years of this century, when my work for the IISH took me back to Hong Kong, where a good friend of mine turned out to be friends with Mok as well. During the interim, my old friend Tjebbe van Tijen (when he held a temporary teaching appointment in Hong Kong, and I was visiting on behalf of the IISH) had already taken me to see Mok, but nothing had truly materialized at the time. At this new encounter, I reminded Mok about his old idea of depositing his archives in Japan – he was probably considering the O'Hara Institute or perhaps CIRA-Japan. After beating about the bush for a while at each of my visits, Mok finally agreed to have his collection digitized and brought to the Netherlands. That project turned out to be very ambitious. Much of the collection had been placed temporarily at the Baptist University of Hong Kong, which was in the process of digitizing documents (<https://digital.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/mok/home/languages/en/>), and one of the professors had the collection on standing loan, while she wrote Mok's biography. The first step was to gather all the materials. The next step was to sort, organize, and scan the items. And this was only the part about Mok's political activities; his later pioneering work in Asian street theatre has yet to arrive here. At my previous visit, in the autumn of 2022, Mok asked me to reconstruct once more how everything had come about, and how we had reached this point; his memory was starting to fail...

Brief history

In 1841, Hong Kong, as one of the side effects of the British occupation, became a hotbed of revolutionary ideas among the Chinese population, who by then were outside the Qing rule. A group of students known as the Four Bandits (Yeung Hok-ling, Sun Yat-sen, Chan Siu-bak, and Yau Lit) spoke openly about overthrowing the Qing

dynasty. In 1905, these bandits, together with the Chinese anarchist Zhang Renjie, were among the founding members of the Tongmenghui resistance group. In 1907, Zhang joined the Hong-Kong branch. The anarchist Liu Shifu had moved to Hong Kong as well in 1906 but was imprisoned for three years following a failed attempt to assassinate military commander Li Chun. In 1909, he returned to Hong Kong, where together with Chen Jiongming he formed the anarchist militant group the Chinese Assassination Corps, which disseminated propaganda about the act. Upon the outbreak of the revolution against the Qing Dynasty in 1911, Shifu returned to China, where the Assassination Corps continued its activities.

Anarchists also figured in the Hong-Kong seamen's strike of 1922. During the strike in Canton Hong Kong, Zhang Renjie succeeded the recently deceased Sun Yat-sen as chair of the Guomindang, in which alongside Li Shizeng, Wu Zhihui, and Cai Yuanpei he brought clear anarchist leadership to the party. Chiang Kai-shek, however, became increasingly powerful within the Guomindang and deposed the Four Elders, which marked a shift to the right wing inside the party. After the end of the Chinese civil war, when the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in 1949, many anarchists fled to Hong Kong. Despite the escalating violence between nationalists and communists in the colony, Hong Kong soon became a safe haven for those fleeing the repression in the People's Republic of China.

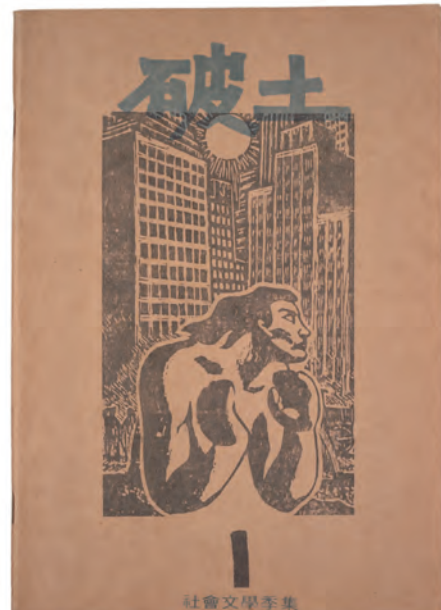
Reintroduction

Mok hailed from the lower middle class and had studied economics in Australia (far less expensive than in the United Kingdom). He had initially embraced the New Leftist ideal and had joined the anti-Vietnam War movement there. After returning to Hong Kong, he and a group of friends launched a newspaper (*The 70's Biweekly*), mainly in Chinese but partly in English as well. The periodical was radical, anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, anticolonialist, and definitely strongly critical of

Left: *Minus 9*. *Minus* was a series of radical magazines that counted down to 1984 (year zero), starting in 1975. Each series had an irregular number of issues.

Middle: *The 70's Bi-weekly*. First issue of the new series, published in 1978. The coverphoto shows a statue of Queen Victoria adorned with some slogans and found objects.

Right: 石皮土 (Gravelly soil) [Social Literature Quarterly], no. 1



the Chinese communist party. During the 1970s, some front members of the collective surrounding the newspaper opted for more libertarian orientations, while others became Trotskyists (Loong Yu Au, whose collection on Trotskyism in Hong Kong is at the IISH, initially served on the board of editors as well). Around 1974, this led to a rift in the group, and both factions went their separate ways. Most of the Trotskyists joined the Revolutionary Marxist League. Efforts to continue *The 70's Biweekly* following the rift soon ran aground (from 1978 a few more issues appeared, making for very confusing numbering). An attempt to launch a new journal with the title 80's resulted in only a single issue, and from 1980 a few issues appeared of another initiative, *The Undercurrent*, which was published irregularly. Another periodical launched after *The 70's Biweekly* was *Minus*, of which a few issues usually appeared each year, counting down to 1984. So the first issue, *Minus 9*, appeared in 1975, *Minus 8* in 1976, and so on. Because *Minus* was in English and was sent to comrades all over the world, it generated a great deal of interest in the group. In this respect, the material from Mok consists not only of personal papers but also sheds light on the ins and outs of some related activities of the collective (publishing books, the '1984' bookstore, the Black & Red, and so on) and discloses a good cross section of the activism in Hong Kong in the 1970s and 80s. In addition, the group became more involved in cultural pursuits, such as producing short motion pictures. In 1984, for example, members of the collective attended the anarchist gathering in Venice and produced a motion picture about that as well (which has by now been digitized).

The 70's Biweekly was a profoundly DIY operation. It was only published for a few years. But its radical politics, and the networks of students and workers it helped to form, had an outsized impact that survives to this day. The collective's members and those inspired by the magazine have helped to define what the Hong Kong left could be.

Following the end of *The 70's Biweekly*, the group became increasingly convinced that performing arts were a more flexible medium, with an energy and broad resonance that immediately appeared more relevant and more attractive to young people. Accordingly, they started experimenting in this field. Mok founded the People's Theatre, hoping to increase their focus on political issues, thereby intervening in social movements. The People's Theatre started performing on stage, on the street, at universities, and within local communities. The New Asia Amphitheatre was one of their venues. Simultaneously, the band Blackbird they had formed at the same time in the late 1970s toured the university circuit, featuring songs by inter alia John Lennon, Bob Dylan, The Clash, and Tom Robinson, a repertoire that made them trailblazers among the avant-garde at the time. In 1979, the two groups teamed up: Blackbird regularly provided music for the People's Theatre, while members of the People's Theatre joined Blackbird during band performances. The *Biweekly* crew from the 1970s



also produced video projects, such as *Blackbird: A Living Song*, which alluded to their origins in the written word as a form of political intervention. But:

'The theatre and the band eventually split, owing to different stances on the band's insistence of self-reliance survival and the theatre group accepting government and foundation funding, and went their separate ways. The theatre ceased its activities long before the [political power] handover, while the band disbanded in 1999 after finishing the last recording "Singing in the Dead of the Night" (Broken Wing Music, Hong Kong). The on/off declamations about anarchism by our band were always met with apathy,' he said. (from an interview with Lenny Kwok or Guo, by Norman Nawrocki in 2009)

Lenny Kwok was another protest-movement veteran and differed from Mok in his opinion regarding the issues mentioned in this section quoted above. I met him in Taipei earlier this year. Even though he said at the time that he no longer has personal papers, I still have hope.

Role in modern protest movements

In 1978, the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping caused a wave of economic liberalization that has become known as 'socialism with Chinese features'. The new regime signed a statement ensuring that Hong Kong would be transferred to the People's Republic. The left wing of the Hong-Kong political movements was split into a pro-democratic and a pro-Beijing contingent. Anarchist collectives, such as Autonomous 8A, became part of the broad opposition movement. Since then, anarchists took part in several campaigns against rising authoritarianism in Hong Kong, including Occupy Central, the Umbrella Revolution, and the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement. These were not necessarily anarchist actions or actions arising from an anarchist movement, although they clearly manifested important elements deriving from anarchist ideology. And traces remain of all these actions and movements in the IISH collections.

Eef Vermeij

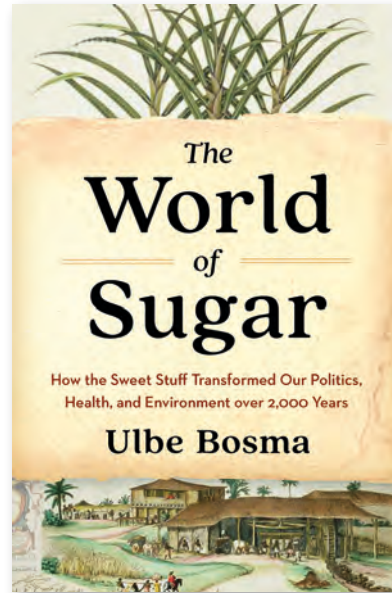
Mok enveloped in film, 1994.

Lecture Ulbe Bosma on The World of Sugar

In May 2023, Harvard University Press published *The World of Sugar: How the Sweet Stuff Transformed Our Politics, Health, and Environment over 2,000 Years*, written by IISH senior researcher Ulbe Bosma. In his presentation at the Friends' Meeting, he recounted the story of how, from the Industrial Revolution onwards, the world got hooked on sugar, at the cost of widespread ecological damage, extreme social inequality and exploitation of workers, and nowadays a growing global obesity pandemic.

Cornflakes and yogurt, ketchup and salad dressings, sodas and sports drinks: what do they all have in common? Lots and lots of sugar. The sweet stuff is all around us. It wreaks havoc on our bodies and contributes to obesity. This history is actually rooted in a food system that has long reproduced systemic inequality: from slavery to colonialism to our modern food industries that have made sugary food cheap and easily accessible to marginalized communities. Indeed, we might think craving sweetness is innate, but that is far from the whole story. And in this story, the Dutch have played a major role.

For most of human history, crystalline sugar simply did not exist, and people were happy with honey, sweet beans, glutinous rice, barley, or maple syrup. More than 2,000 years ago, however, peasants in Bengal learned how to boil cane juice into a raw dark sweet mass. But that



alone didn't drive sugar consumption. Indeed, just two centuries ago even in the wealthiest countries, people rarely consumed more than a few kilograms a year – while today, in many high- and middle-income countries, people annually consume 30 to 40 kilograms, and in the U.S. more than 45 kilograms. And this figure does not include High Fructose Corn Syrup, a caloric sweetener widely used by the U.S. beverage industry. This has led to an alarming rise of obesity on a global scale, which the World Health Organization now has labelled as a pandemic.

How sugar became the world's most traded commodity

This explosion of sugar consumption was entwined with imperialism and the rise of modern industrial societies, where sugar became a cheap supplier of calories for urban workers and industrialization enabled the mass production of refined sugar.

Initially, white crystals of purified sugar were so precious that emperors, rajahs, and caliphs ordered it to be moulded in sculptures to decorate their lavish dinner tables. Sugar was also coveted as a medicine. Dissolved in a bit of water it did wonders for people suffering from intestinal diseases, and generally reinvigorated exhausted human bodies.

Across Asia, long caravans crossed the deserts loaded with sugar and other spices and precious metals. Indeed, Europe was entirely marginal to this history of sugar. That all changed after the 15th century, when sugar gradually became part of urban consumption in Western Europe.

By 1500, demand in Europe outgrew production in the Mediterranean region and it was not long before sugar production found another frontier: the Americas. Capitalism is believed to have had an important starting point in the sugar plantations in the Caribbean. The explosive demand for labour led to the enslavement and transportation of millions of Africans. Overall, of the approximately 12.5 million people who were kidnapped in Africa and survived their transport across the Atlantic, nearly two-thirds ended up on sugar plantations. Conditions were horrible



Sugar bowl with a text inspired by the abolitionist boycott of cane sugar produced under slavery. British Museum, asset nr. 33583001.



Women working in the sugar cane fields in the 1920s in Java. Photo from *De Suikerfabrieken Watoetoelis en Poppoh in beeld* (The Hague, 1926). IISH Collection, call number NEHA L 15/256.

at plantations of all kinds throughout the Americas, but those on the sugar plantations were the worst. Dutch slave traders and plantation owners had a significant share in the development of the sugar frontier. The elite in the Dutch Republic earned a large part of their fortunes in the sugar trade.

In the nineteenth century, the consumers of sugar in Philadelphia, London, and Paris became more and more aware of the horrors of the conditions of enslaved sugar plantation workers, while being informed about frequent slave rebellions by the rapidly growing printed press. A vocal minority of literate, urban people in Europe and the U.S., especially Quakers, increasingly protested slavery as a mortal sin. A popular pamphlet condemned the consumption of sugar 'stained with spots of human blood'. Thanks to dozens of petitions with hundreds of thousands of signatures, in 1807 the British Parliament decided to ban the slave trade in territories under its control. Such a large scale abolition movement remained largely absent in the newly created Kingdom of the Netherlands, where the consumption of sugar remained comparatively low, due high excise taxes.

But sugar production and consumption endured and expanded worldwide. The German inventor Karl Franz Achard developed an industrial process for extracting sucrose from beet roots instead of sugar cane. It first became popular in continental Europe, when in the Napoleonic era cane sugar imports were blocked by the Continental System. Other enthusiastic entrepreneurs advocated opening up trade with India, arguing that sugar could be obtained there in much larger quantities and at a lower price. Neither Indian sugar nor beet sugar could make slavery disappear. By the 1860s, half of the sugar consumed by the industrial workers in Europe and North America was still produced by enslaved people. It was the world's most traded commodity. Sugar production and coerced labour remained inextricably linked after the formal abolition of slavery. Millions of hands remained necessary to grow and harvest cane and beet. In the Dutch East Indies, sugar production made up an important part of the infamous Cultivation System, while labour conditions for rural workers in the sugar beet production remained harsh well into the twentieth century.

Government subsidies helped to ensure its overproduction, leading to steadily declining prices, which facilitated consumption. In late nineteenth-century Europe, farmers switched from wheat to beets to create beet sugar, resulting in beet sugar making up 50 percent of all internationally traded sugar by 1900. Throughout the twentieth century the world's largest beet and cane sugar exporters tried to rein in overproduction and sugar dumping, notably through the Brussels Convention of 1902 and the International Sugar Agreement of 1937. These treaties did not hold, however, and the flooding of the world with cheap sugar continued.

From the 1960s, Western Europe, and now including the Netherlands, saw a short-lived revival of consumer activism around sugar production.

Zondag 13 Januari 1929 - DE TELEGRAAF - Tweede Blad.

BIETSUIKER BEDREIGD DOOR RIETSUIKER.



De lage productiekosten van een overvloedigen rietsuikeroogst doen onze inheemsche beetwortelcultuur de toekomst met schrik tegemoet zien. Zal de Regeering helpen?

Cartoon by Louis Raemaekers in De Telegraaf, January 1929: 'The low production costs of a bountiful cane sugar crop are scaring the future out of our indigenous beetroot culture. Will the government help?'

Cane sugar became one of the focal point for pleas for fairer world trade, with fair wages for cane sugar workers in what had then become the Third World.

How sugar became dominant in the modern food system

But what about the consumers? How did they become accustomed to devouring so much sugar,



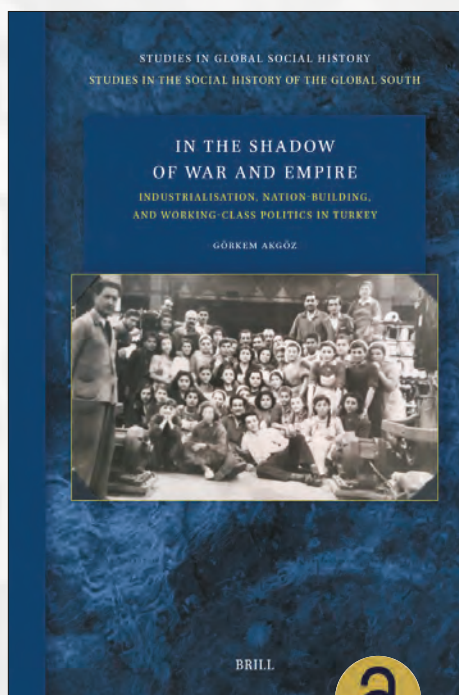
Demonstration organized by the Vereniging Van Dienstplichtige Militairen (VVDM), the Dutch Association of Conscripts, to promote cane sugar and protest against subsidizing beet sugar. IISH collection.

from a spoonful per week by 1800 to almost a kilogram every week for the average American today? In the nineteenth century, urban workers were often undernourished and lacked energy. According to the medical wisdom of that time, all a proper diet needed was a fair amount of calories, and sugar was the cheapest and fastest way to achieve this. The U.S. army leadership – as well as their counterparts in Europe and Japan – added sugar to the rations of recruits, to increase their endurance. From there runs a straight line to the chocolate bars and Coca-Cola that travelled with GIs liberating Europe from the Nazi regime.

Yet stuffing our food with sugar did not happen unaccompanied by any warnings. By the early nineteenth century, the medical profession already guessed a significant correlation between sugar, obesity, and what's now known as type 2 diabetes. The first low-carb, non-sugar diet was published by Britain's William Banting in the 1860s and achieved wide popularity. But his work was almost forgotten in the subsequent decades.

Of course, people did know that sugar in large quantities could make you fat and sick, but the sugar industry, and the beverage industry, devoted marketing efforts to convincing people of the opposite. Sugar corporations, for instance, contributed to research that identified fat and not sugar as the real danger to our heart and veins, while beverages are too often advertised as delights and part of sportive lives.

And yet, the history of sugar has an important reminder for navigating this health crisis today: it shows that there is nothing natural about the amount of sugar we consume now; it is the result of a confluence of political, social, and economic forces. We need to understand that our overconsumption of sugar is only to a limited extent a matter of individual choice and very much the result of how over the past centuries much of our food has become an industrial product. Sugar played a central role in it. The next chapter in the history of sugar is up to us, particularly as citizens summoning our governments to protect not only industrial interests and but also our public health.



In the Shadow of War and Empire

Industrialisation, Nation-Building, and Working-Class Politics in Turkey

Görkem Akgöz

In the Shadow of War and Empire offers a site-specific history of Ottoman and Turkish industrialisation through the lens of a mid-nineteenth-century cotton factory in the “Turkish Manchester,” the name chosen by the Ottomans for the industrial complex they built in the 1840s in Istanbul, which, in the contemporary words of one of the country's most prominent contemporary Marxist theorists, became “the secret to and the basis of Turkish capitalism” in the 1930s.

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