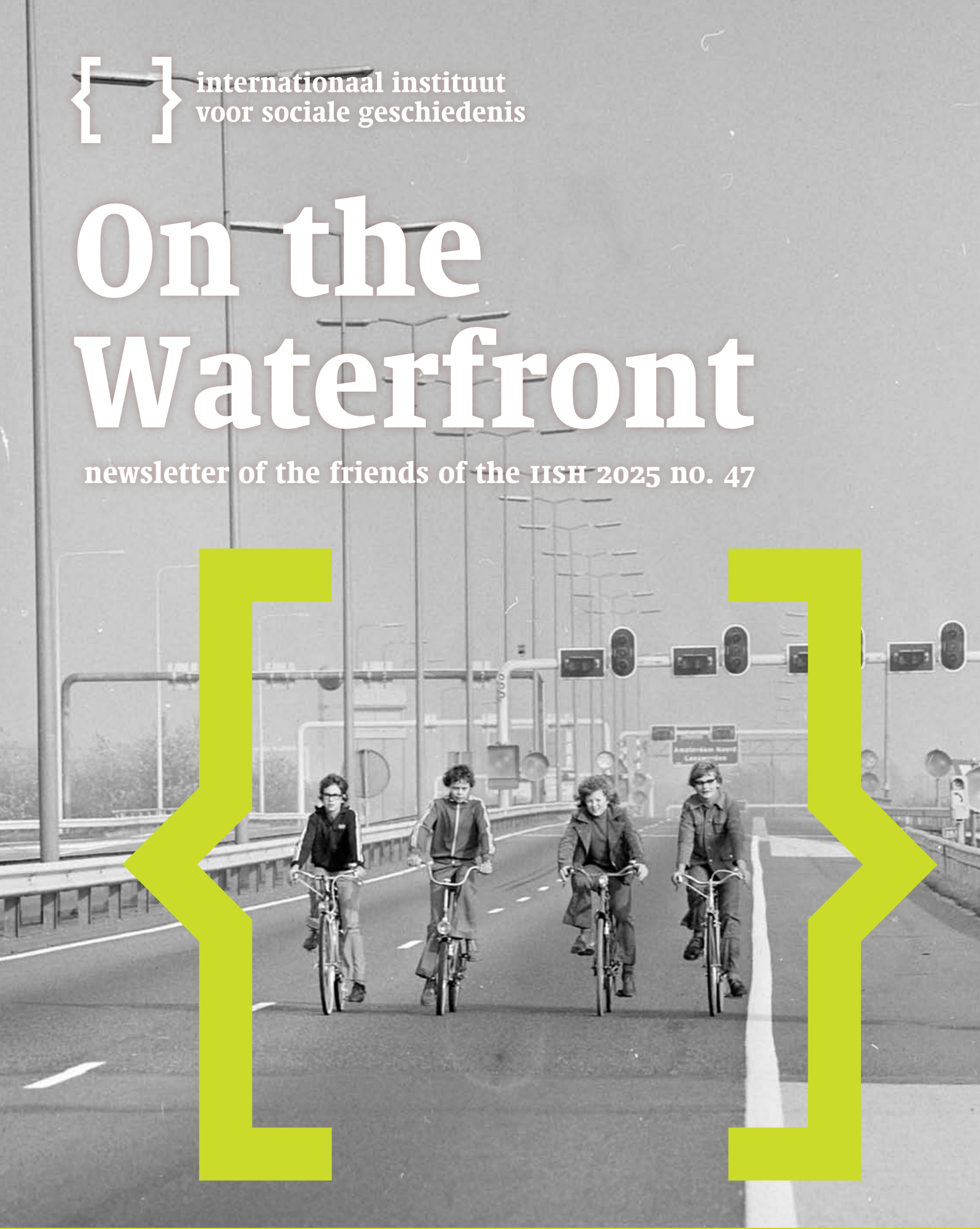
internationaal instituut
voor sociale geschiedenis

On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends of the IISH 2025 no. 47



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on microfilm

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Introduction

Front page: Cyclists on a motorway during the car-free Sunday, 4 November 1973. Collection Nationaal Archief, CC0; 926-8045. See page 9.

Current events in the world outside the Institute have had a major influence on the IISH since its inception, and this is no different today. The link between history and current affairs was addressed in two different ways at the recent Friends meeting.

The appalling developments and situation in Gaza, recently described by Amnesty International as genocide, prompted us to ask our colleague Leyla Musson, instead of the usual collection presentations, to discuss the various ways in which the State of Israel, since its inception, has actively tried, and continues to try, to erase the Palestinian historical heritage by making all kinds of source material disappear or inaccessible for research, a clear form of cultural genocide.

Thematic presentations by Sarah Verveer and Peter van Dam focused on another topical issue: climate activism. An interview with Peer de Rijk, a long-time climate activist who is still active, also links the past with the present. We open this issue with an interview with our colleague Erhan Tuskan on the occasion of his retirement, in whose history as a political prisoner in Turkey in the 1980s Amnesty International played an important role. This ties in nicely with Michelle Carmody's article describing her first dive into the Amnesty International archives at the IISH.

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*

Corrigendum

In *On the Waterfront* 46, we mistakenly omitted author Pieter Steenbergen's name at the end of the article on the Coop archive (pp. 3-5).

Colophon

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No guru, no method, no teacher

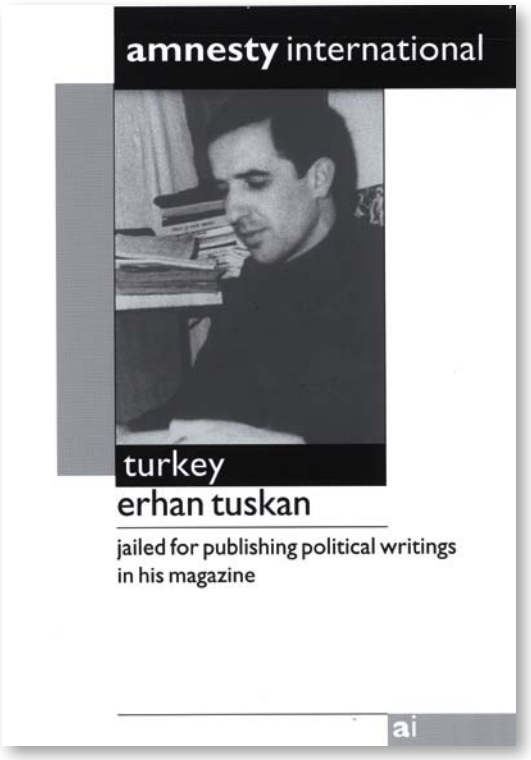
Interview with Erhan Tuskan

I was born in a family of farmers in the village of Honaz in the Province of Denizli. In 1923-1924, my grandparents were moved from the area of Thessaloniki in a large exchange of people between Turkey and Greece under the Treaty of Lausanne. Although we spoke Greek at home, I learned Turkish at primary school. Because as the youngest in our family I was a good student, I was sent to boarding school after primary school. That was where I became involved in left-wing politics. After secondary school, I moved to Istanbul to study economics. Political activism prevailed over attending classes at the university, and I became involved with the youth periodical *Ilerici Yurtsever Gençlik* (Progressive Patriotic Youth), the organ of the TKP (Turkey Communist Party) youth organization. In 1979 I became the responsible editor of the periodical.

The next year, on 12 September 1980, the military coup took place. What had previously been tolerated in some measure became punishable under the new regime, and I was sentenced to serve 124 years in prison, mainly for disseminating communist propaganda. I spent the first five years in two different military prisons in very bad conditions. Then I was transferred to a different prison, where conditions were better. I was able to study there and learned English, among other subjects. I was allowed to receive letters there as well, such as from Amnesty International, including from the Netherlands (finding documents about myself in the Amnesty archive was a strange experience). I also had a tiny radio here, on which I could receive three Turkish stations. That was how I first listened to Van Morrison. The album's title was especially appealing: *No guru, no method, no teacher*. I realized that I had become more discerning about my earlier communist positions. The dogmatic edge had faded. Of course, at the time I could not imagine that some six years later I would be working in an institute in the Netherlands that held the manuscripts of the founder of communism.

In 1991 I was released, thanks to an amnesty arrangement. I had been incarcerated for a total of ten years and eight months. And on top of that, I was still required to serve in the military. I spent two years performing menial tasks (translations, editing, news reports for Turkish radio broadcasts by the BBC) with old acquaintances. Thanks to my contacts at Amnesty and my Dutch girlfriend, I came to the Netherlands in August 1993.

Possibly by coincidence, part of the TKP archive, which was kept in Germany after the Wall fell, arrived at the IISH around the same time. At the time, Erik-Jan Zürcher was the subject specialist for Turkey. I knew the people from the



Poster from Amnesty International's 1991 poster campaign 'No more Excuses!', figuring Erhan.

TKP, and the IISH needed somebody who spoke the language and was familiar with the organization and the material. In September I started arranging this archive, under the aegis of Jaap Haag and Jack Hofman, embarking on a career at the IISH that lasted 31 years. This first appointment was temporary, and work on the TKP archive concluded after about a year and a half. Although I had not completed my formal education, I had acquired extensive knowledge and experience in prison. The archival work I learned on the job. Jaap and Jack saw my talents and potential. My contract was extended several times, but my employment became permanent only in 1998, after four or five temporary contracts and after overcoming various obstacles. During that period, I also performed an inventory of the archive of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) – which initially spanned about 220 metres and by now exceeds 630 metres – as well as that of the Vereniging van Dienstplichtige Militairen [association of conscripts] (VVDM).

In addition to my work in the archives, I became increasingly interested in technology. I joined an automation group set up at the institute by Jaap Kloosterman, and started studying Business Informatics in 1997. In the 1990s the rapid progress in automation brought new challenges for archives. Back then, the IISH was using

Erhan at work on the third floor of the IISH, 2005.

WordPerfect 5.1 to generate archive descriptions – inventories. Working with a text processor required extensive attention to layout, at the expense of structure, uniformity, and standardization. To this end and to facilitate exchanges of archive descriptions, the standard EAD (Encoded Archival Description) was introduced in archiving in 1998. Jaap Kloosterman closely monitored the developments, and the IISH was among the first institutes in Europe to adopt this technology. Although I did not participate from the start, I became deeply involved in applying EAD a few months later and remained so, until my last day at the IISH.

Introducing EAD was undoubtedly a quantum leap forward but also entailed some disadvantages for us as one of the early adopters. Given the knowledge available at the time, some mistakes were made that would continue to present problems for us for years. First, the institute needed to convert about five hundred archive inventories from WordPerfect 5.1 to SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language). We also had dozens of typed or handwritten lists, including those of the Karl Marx archive. Thanks to the intermediary services from a Dutch company, they were transcribed in EAD structure by students in Romania based on our instructions. Validating and processing converted files in the SGML editor was a daunting task in itself. Lacking good editors, we continued to create archive descriptions in WordPerfect (by then with Version 8.1 and self-built templates). In 2002 a new version of EAD was issued in XML format, and only then did we get the opportunity to start using XMetal. XMetal remained in use until 2022, when we switched to the database-type application ArchivesSpace.

After the TKP archive, I no longer worked on specifically Turkish topics. Then, in 2004, in recognition of the fortieth anniversary of the recruitment treaty between the Netherlands and Turkey, the IISH was asked by the Inspraakorgaan Turken in Nederland [participation body of Turkish people in the Netherlands] (IOT) to depict the experiences of the first generation of Turkish guest workers in the Netherlands based on both official and personal documents. Jan Lucassen, who led this project, asked me to gather photographs, letters, contracts, and travel documents within the Turkish community for this project. I received some names from the IOT and also went to mosques and other organizations. The participants were very eager to share their stories. The result consisted of 26 portraits, published in the book *Lied uit den Vreemde – Gurbet Türküsü. Brieven en foto›s van Turkse migranten 1964-1975* [Song from the foreign land - Gurbet Türküsü. Letters and photos of Turkish migrants 1964-1975].

In addition to this project, during my final years here I had the opportunity to work on various other projects (which in my view were very useful), such as: the website Vijfeeuwenmigratie [five centuries of migration] 2009-2010; the Delivery 2011-2013 reservation system; making EAD records available on Archives Portal Europe 2014 and MARC records in WorldCat 2015; converting and integrating collections of the Staatsarchief (the archive of the Dutch squatter movement) and NEHA 2018-2019; and implementing the archive management system ArchivesSpace 2020-2022. Nearly all projects included strong IT components and were conducted together with co-workers from DI, especially Lucien van Wouw. These efforts also served to test the quality of our metadata. Two skilled students from Delft University of Technology designed the basis structure for Delivery. WordCat required adapting 1.1 million records, and the same basically held true for 5,000 EAD records during the migration to ArchivesSpace. Such large-scale adaptations improved the quality of the metadata in the IISH catalogue considerably. Standards need to be applied properly, because, as in the Turkish adage: if the first button is off centre, the whole shirt hangs askew.

Overall, I have been busy all those years. The institute was also a pleasant place to work, with nice co-workers, the ambience was informal and relaxed. I have often felt, however, that the institute tried to accomplish too much in collecting, providing access, and applying the new technologies, considering the expertise and capacity present.

I do not have plans, now that I am retired. I

Front cover of *Lied uit den Vreemde*.

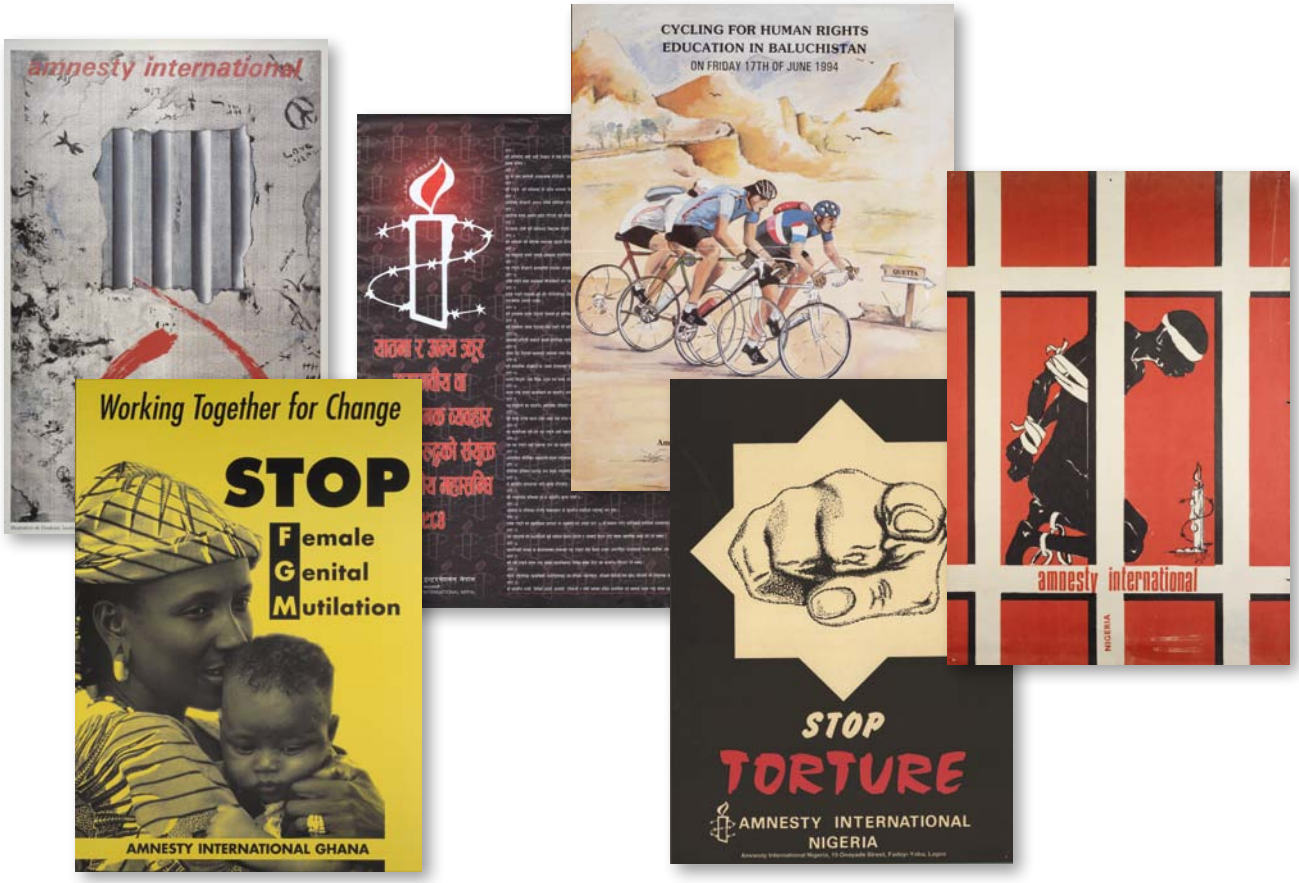
will see what comes my way. Things always take an unexpected turn anyway. Nor do I fear a void. Perhaps because I always feel subconsciously that the worst is behind me. On the other hand, I expect to continue three activities: playing tennis as long as I can, attending Van The Man's concerts as long as he can still perform, and singing the Turkish songs I know from my childhood, and which you have had to listen to in recent years.

I basically arrived together with the TKP archive; possibly by coincidence, the archive was transferred to Turkey one month after I retired. (MJS)

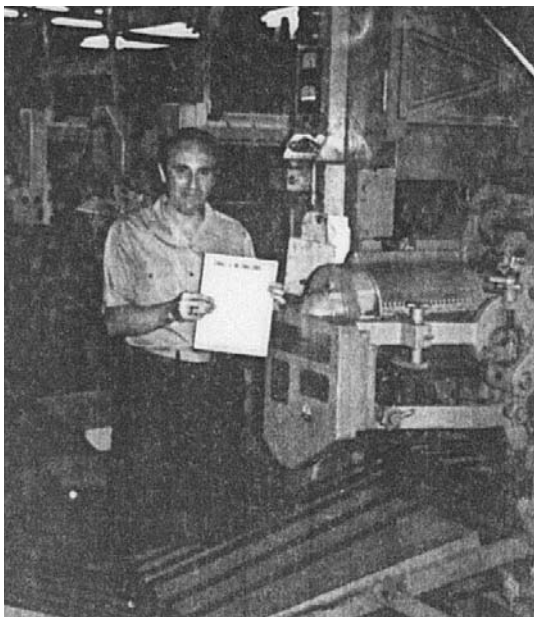
A deep dive into the archives of Amnesty International

Amnesty International is one of the best-known human rights organisations in the world. It was created in 1961 in London, with 'sections' (national branches) being established across the world in the decades after. The archives of the International Secretariat (IS), the London-based administrative nerve centre of the international organisation, are held here at the IISH, as are the papers of the Dutch national section. Individually, each collection provides an important window onto the history of this world-leading organisation. Together, the collections provide even deeper insights into the *international* history of the organisation, and indeed of human rights.

I came to Europe from Australia in 2022 to carry out a project called 'Making Amnesty international: connections, disconnections and the uneven geography of a human rights organisation', funded by a Marie Curie fellowship from the European Commission. This project asks why the organisation became international, and how activists built enduring ties across geographical, socio-economic and cultural borders and barriers. While I am mainly interested in reconstructing the process of making the organisation international from the perspective of its sections in the Global South, the IS archive at the IISH was my first port of call. When I arrived, however, much of the collection was closed for a digitisation project. That forced me to turn to two alternatives: the Dutch section papers, and the microfilms of the collection of the International Secretariat.



Campaign posters from local Amnesty branches in Algeria, Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan. IISH Collection, call numbers BG D29/88, BG D29/72, BG D85/324, BG D29/72, BG D55/495, BG D29/180.

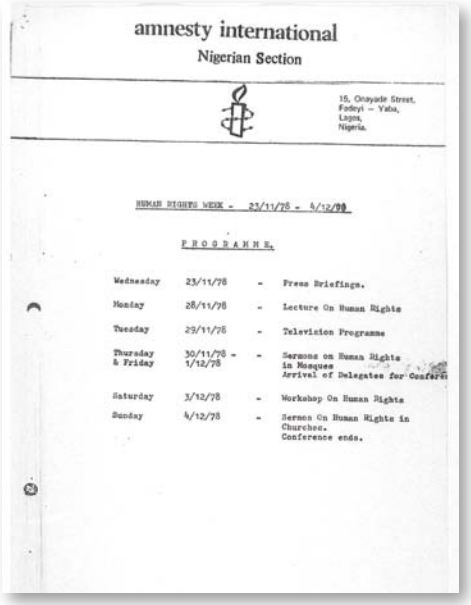


The first issue of the Costarican newsletter comes off the press. IISH Collection. Amnesty International. International Secretariat Archives, ARCH00200, Microfilm 248.

The Dutch section papers revealed much about the human work of building an international organisation. Dutch Amnesty members were very active in running the international organisation: they took positions on different committees and regularly went to countries in the Global South to help train others in running an Amnesty section. One of these members was Nelleke Dieleman, who was on Amnesty's Section Development Committee and had responsibility for monitoring the formation of national sections in Africa. In the Dutch section archive I found a folder of her correspondence and paperwork relating to the Sierra Leonean section. Dating from between 1988 and 1992, these materials allowed me to reconstruct the work the Sierra Leoneans had been doing to set up a local Amnesty section, and the ideas that they had around how the organisation could grow in West Africa.

This material does not exist elsewhere. In Sierra Leone, the period immediately following the Amnesty section's formation saw the intensification of the civil war resulting in mass destruction of infrastructure across Freetown and the mass exodus of its population, including Amnesty section chairman David Gbao, to neighbouring countries like Guinea. The Amnesty office and all documentation were destroyed.

Even in other places, the basic infrastructure for safe record keeping was absent. In a document from the archives of the International Secretariat I read about a visit to the Nepalese and Pakistani sections in the early 1980s. The visitor noted that the section offices were little more than a small room at the workplace of key members, sometimes with a desk and chair but often without a filing cabinet or the human resources needed for organising and preserving documentation. This uneven distribution of the resources needed for archiving meant that the IISH collections became even more important to my project.



amnesty international
Nigerian Section

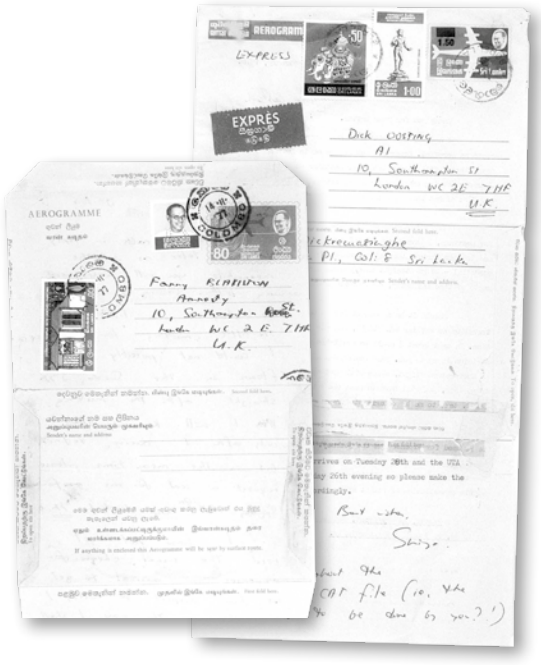
15, Onayade Street,
Fadeyi – Yaba,
Lagos,
Nigeria.

HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK - 23/11/78 - 4/12/78

PROGRAMME.

Wednesday	23/11/78	-	Press Briefings.
Monday	28/11/78	-	Lecture On Human Rights
Tuesday	29/11/78	-	Television Programme
Thursday & Friday	30/11/78 - 1/12/78	-	Sermons on Human Rights in Mosques Arrival of Delegates for Confere
Saturday	3/12/78	-	Workshop On Human Rights
Sunday	4/12/78	-	Sermon On Human Rights in Churches. Conference ends.

Programme of the Human Rights Week organized by the Nigerian section in 1978. IISH Collection. Amnesty International Archive, Microfilm 248.



Aerogrammes to and from the Sri Lankan office as shown on microfilm. IISH Collection, Amnesty International Archive, ARCH00200, Microfilm 551.

This is where the microfilms of the IS collection came into play. While the paper IS archives held by the IISH are extensive (around 210 meters), the microfilms contain all that material plus more: much correspondence and many discussion papers and memos seem to have only survived on microfilm. These are the very materials that are invaluable in reconstructing a global history of the organisation, as they give insight into the thinking of key members and leaders from across the world.

In particular, the microfilms allowed me to access the perspectives of key Amnesty members from the Global South. For example, these files contain communications between Sri Lankan Amnesty member Suriya Wickremasinghe and others throughout the organisation. Wickremasinghe was deeply involved in the organisation throughout the 1970s and 1980s, first organising in her own country and the broader South Asian region, and later at the

international scale after being elected to the International Executive Committee, Amnesty's governing board, in 1978. This was a time of great change in human rights more broadly: Amnesty had been awarded the Nobel Prize in 1977, catapulting it to even greater prominence and the US government was embracing human rights in its foreign policy. At the same time, many authoritarian governments were arguing that human rights were a western imposition with little relevance to their societies and cultures. Wickremasinghe was a key figure in the process of conceptualising the organisation's response to these changes. She advocated for an understanding of Amnesty, and human rights, as having international relevance, while urging the organisation to understand the different contexts that gave rise to violations in non-western countries and to adjust their techniques accordingly.

Overall, then, it was quite a happy accident that the IS files on paper were unavailable when I started the project. It led me to explore deeper into the IISH Amnesty holdings, and facilitated the methodological aim of 'decentring' the history of the organisation by looking at it from the perspective of members from the Global South.

The International Executive Committee of Amnesty International receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo 10 December 1977. Suriya Wickremasinghe is in the middle. Photo: Amnesty.org.

Michelle Carmody

Upholding archival responsibility and epistemic justice

During the last Friends meeting I presented a short, incomplete history of the systematic looting and destruction by Zionists of heritage in Palestine. The systematic destruction and looting of cultural objects, including archival records and books, is a tool of colonialism.

In my presentation, I argued that myth-making and symbolic annihilation are processes of colonialism. While other such processes or tools, such as systematic dispossession of land, forced displacement, and ethnic cleansing, understandably receive more attention, I chose to talk about these two particular processes of colonialism. These two elements are especially important for the IISH as an institute and for its staff, because they relate directly to knowledge production and thus to archives and collections. As they directly affect the tasks of information workers, they concern the archival responsibility and accountability entrusted to a collection-holding institute and the broader context of European colonialism and archival decolonization. Finally, archival practices and knowledge production bear a moral obligation to strive for epistemic justice. Even though universities, libraries, archival repositories, and other institutes engaged in knowledge production often claim that their work disseminates and advances knowledge, in reality most remain silent. In doing so, they enable the ongoing genocide in Gaza, Palestine, and Lebanon. This is not new: over the past century there have been continuous attempts to erase Palestine and Palestinians, first and foremost by Zionist settlers. Institutions within Israel and around the world, however, have also contributed to this process, by remaining silent about the erasure of Palestinian heritage and memory. This motivates the following appeal:

*(…) call out the silent complicity of archival professional and academic institutions and spaces and the hypocrisy and racism that underpin this silence. We call on educators, researchers, scholars, institutions, and power brokers in the archival and aligned memory and information fields to end the prevalent disregard and erasure of Palestine and Palestinians in our spaces. For too long, the archival, information, and memory fields have institutionalized and normalized a tacit policy of ignoring and enabling Israeli colonization, land theft, ethnic cleansing, and displacement. We reject with sadness and anger the hypocrisy of those academic, professional, and governmental institutions and personalities who claim to be working for equity, inclusion, decolonization, antiracism, and social justice while remaining silent or enabling the Gaza genocide and the colonization of Palestinian history, culture, knowledge, and land. **

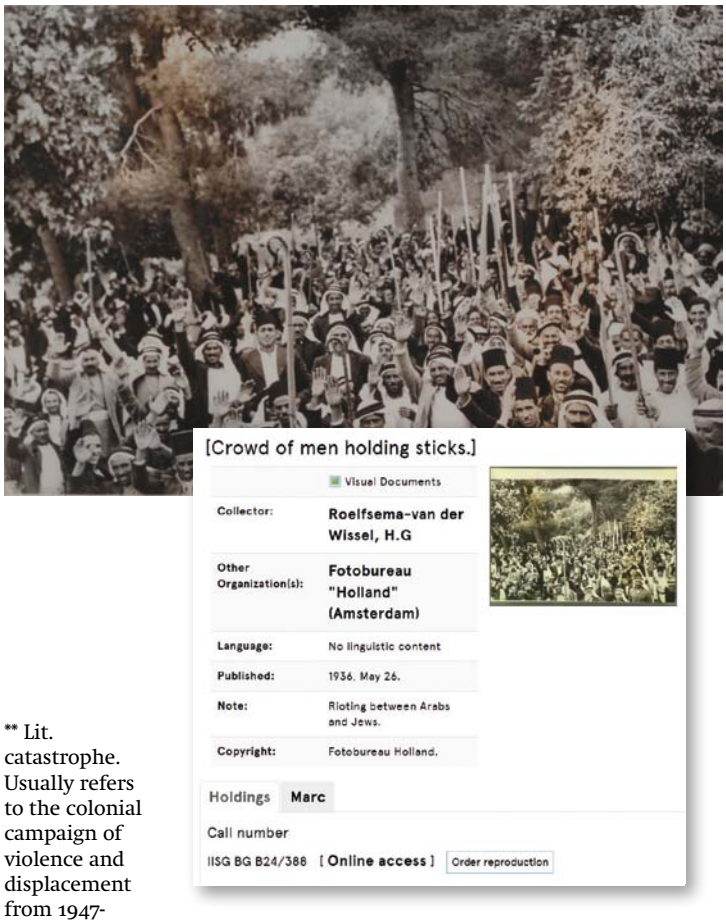
The intentional destruction of cultural heritage has been recognized as a war crime. During the case recently raised by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, South Africa requested that measures be taken against Israel for committing genocide, including cultural genocide.

* Source: A Call to Archive Against Genocide: Archivists and Memory Workers in Solidarity with Palestine and Palestinian Colleagues – Signatures 4 June 2024

*Cultural genocide extends beyond attacks upon the physical and/or biological elements of a group and seeks to eliminate its wider institutions ... Elements of cultural genocide are manifested when artistic, literary, and cultural activities are restricted or outlawed, and when national treasures, libraries, archives, museums, artifacts, and art galleries are destroyed or confiscated.**

Attempts to erase indigenous peoples are made in various ways. One is theft or destruction of archives, as a way for colonizers to control the (historical) narrative. Archival records represent evidence, items of belonging, identity, or memory – also referred to as archival functions or values in archival science.

The settler-colonial project of 'Israel' has amassed thousands of records seized from



Palestinian homes and organizations during its colonial campaign in Palestine. During the 1948 Nakbeh** alone, an estimated 80,000 books, manuscripts, and newspapers were stolen from Palestinian homes and organizations. 'Official' looters arrived shortly after villages had been ethnically cleansed by Zionist militias: librarians and archivists went from house to house to collect and 'safeguard' 'abandoned' Palestinian belongings, including records, photographs, and books (Pappe, pp. 239-240). Many of these records were transported over several months to the Hebrew University National Library and its archive or to the Israeli Military Archive, where archivists and librarians were tasked with appraising, classifying, and describing the thousands of records and around 30,000 books confiscated (Kuntz, 2021, p. 17). Subsequently, the Zionist National Library was tasked with collecting property looted from the indigenous Palestinian population, which was then labelled as 'abandoned property' (books and records were marked with the abbreviation AP). Terms such as the 'right' to collect or 'abandoned' (Amit, 2011a, p. 14) show how language plays an important role. Later, terminology such as 'saving' books and records was used by the occupying Zionist forces.

In her work, Michelle Caswell, a scholar of archival studies at UCLA, uses the term 'symbolic annihilation'. Symbolic annihilation both precedes and follows actual annihilation, rendering communities nonexistent, invisible, or dispensable, before they are subjected to violence and then, after the violence has taken place, its acts are often rendered invisible or expunged from the record, magnifying and mimicking the violence itself (Caswell, pp. 21-22).

With this definition in mind, this is exactly what we have seen happen continuously with regard to the Palestinian people over the past eighty years. Palestinians have been dehumanized, made invisible, and misrepresented in (colonial) archives, while at the same time being actually annihilated. The last part of the above-mentioned definition of symbolic annihilation is linked to colonial myth-making, where slogans such as 'a land without a people for a people without a land' have been invoked by the colonizers. Here, I would also like to refer to Gloria Wekker's book *White Innocence*; the white innocence from her title corresponds perfectly with the last part of the definition of symbolic destruction.

Based on the way items are described in the IISH catalogue, the Institute has also contributed to misrepresentation and silencing of Palestine and Palestinians. I will give a few examples selected at random.

In this photograph's metadata in the IISH catalogue, consider the description in square brackets and in the Note field. Placing this photograph in the context of Palestinian history, with the year in which it was taken and what we see on it, it most likely depicts a moment during the Great Revolt (1936-1939). During this revolt there were many protests, as well as a general strike throughout Palestine against British rule and dispossession by European settlers. The metadata that we find with this photo reveal something about the worldview of the archival repository and/or the person who added them. The word 'Arabs' (rather than 'Palestinians') is copied from the occupier's lexicon. Most importantly, what is written in the Note field reproduces the colonizer's narrative and contributes to the erasure of Palestinian history and identity, and to symbolic and physical annihilation. An alternative description might be: 'Indigenous Palestinians protest colonization and land theft.'

In the second example, examine the description in square brackets. Alternatively, it could read: [Land that has been set on fire by Palestinian freedom fighters to protest occupation and land theft by settlers].

Bearing in mind the guidelines and rules for describing archives and visual material, these examples show how language matters and might

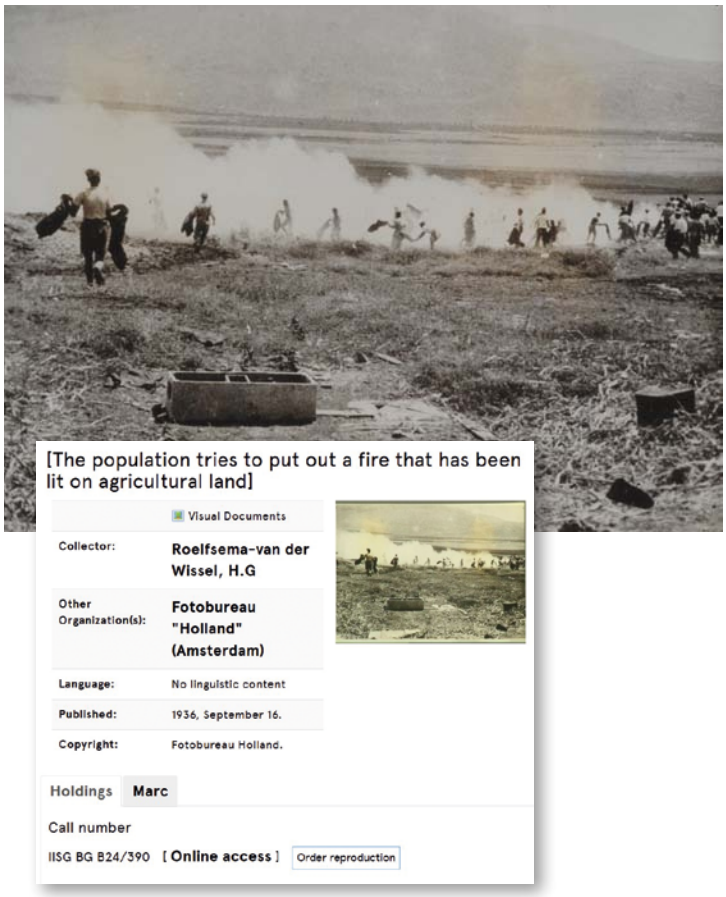
* David Neressian, "Rethinking cultural genocide under international law", Human Rights Dialogue (Spring 2005): para. 3. Retrieved from http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/publications/dialogue/2_12/section_1/5139.htmlpara. 3)

** Lit. catastrophe. Usually refers to the colonial campaign of violence and displacement from 1947-1949, which is still ongoing, and in which thousands of Palestinians were killed in massacres, and some 800,000 (two thirds of the population) were forcibly expelled by Zionist militias in an ethnic cleansing of Palestinian lands from the indigenous population.

contribute to misrepresentation or symbolic annihilation.

The IISH as an institute urgently needs to engage with current debates on heritage in general and archives in particular. This involves upholding principles of social justice – including epistemic justice – or at least not contributing to erasure, symbolic annihilation, and colonial myth-making. This includes calling for a total and complete end to the Israeli occupation, for the right of return of all Palestinians to be respected, and for the return of the land and the displaced and stolen records.

Leyla Musson



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Environmental activism in the IISH collections

Why we wanted carless Sundays (or not) - presentation by Peter van Dam

The activists from Milieudefensie [environmental defence] and Stichting Stop de Kindermoord [foundation to stop child murder] were certain that the world would never be the same after 4 November 1973. On that Sunday, the Dutch government ordered its citizens not to drive their cars. Remarkably, many welcomed this measure. 'Finally, a true day of rest, after six days of danger, noise, and pollution, one person marvelled in a letter to *Trouw*.[1] In the area of The Hague, most of the population enjoyed the carless Sundays or in any case did not object to them.[2] Those positive experiences offered the perfect opportunity for efforts toward a permanent reduction in car use. That was exactly what Milieudefensie and Stichting Stop de Kindermoord aimed to achieve in the

1 'Rampzalig', *Trouw* 31 January 1974, 2.

2 Nederlandse Stichting voor Statistiek, *De autoloze zondag: Reacties van inwoners van de Haagse agglomeratie op het zondagsrijverbod, deel 1* (The Hague: Nederlandse Stichting voor Statistiek, 1974).

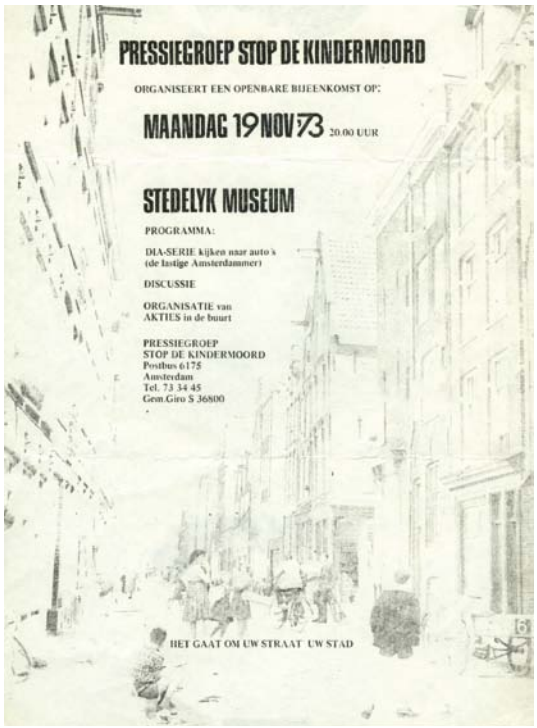
A group of people picnic on the motorway during the car-free Sunday of 4 November 1973 in connection with the oil boycott. Collection Nationaal Archief, CC0; 926-8015.

'Zonderdag' [day without] campaign in 1974. Although their campaign was successful, they did not manage to make a monthly carless day compulsory in the end. What are we to make of this apparent failure?

On 30 October 1973, the Den Uyl government decided to introduce carless Sundays, fearing an oil shortage. Early that month, war had broken out between Egypt and Syria against Israel in the Middle East. Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) proclaimed an oil boycott in response to the support for Israel from the Netherlands and other Western nations.[3] Private car ownership in the Netherlands had soared since the end of World War II. In 1945, there were 11,000 private cars on the road in the Netherlands, whereas by 1973, there were nearly three million.[4] Curtailing private car use had been a tried and tested measure in efforts to avert imminent shortages since it was first applied in 1939. Under these new circumstances, this approach seemed even more promising, because the impact would be far greater.

Still, the government changed course after two months. Reservations about the carless Sundays highlight the increased importance of cars in the daily lives of many Dutch people. Representatives from the hospitality industry led the protest against the measure, because they were losing income from those who would use their cars for Sunday drives. Although the ANWB had provided its members with 'tips for the carless Sundays', vice-chair F.H. van der Linde van Sprankhuizen nonetheless sided with the hospitality industry entrepreneurs. In his view, recreation in the dense Randstad was definitely no longer possible region without a car. He argued that if petrol consumption had to be curtailed, petrol distribution was a far more equitable method. Each car user could then choose the best way to use the petrol.[5] There were also practical objections to continuing the carless Sundays, as, within a few weeks, about 120,000 official exemption requests had been filed – exceeding the civil service processing capacity.[6]

Faced with these practical objections and considerations as to the most equitable method, the Duch government decided to change course in early 1974: instead of compulsory carless Sundays, petrol was rationed. This led Prime Minister Joop den Uyl to deliver a passionate speech on television, warning that the world would never be the same as before the oil crisis. In his analysis, the oil crisis made tangible what the Report from the Club of Rome had theoretically already made clear in 1972: the world's natural resources were insufficient to sustain the level of consumption to which the Dutch had become accustomed since the 1950s. He told viewers: 'We will need to remain focused on a new way of life, in which we use natural resources and energy more frugally. This will change our existence.



Poster of Stichting Stop de Kindermoord calling for a public gathering for discussion and the planning of actions, 1973. IISH collection, call number BG H1/665.

Some prospects will disappear as a result. But this need not make our lives less fulfilling.'[7]

That the changes would not come about that quickly became clear soon after Milieudefensie and Stop de Kindermoord launched the Zon-

3 Duco Hellema, Cees Wiebes, and Toby Witte, The Netherlands and the Oil Crisis: Business as Usual (Amsterdam University Press, 2004), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46mzm8.

4 Cf. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/statistische-trends/2019/de-groei-van-het-nederlandse-personenautopark.

5 'Aanpassen aan omstandigheden en rij-omgeving', *De Kampioen*, December 1973, 780-782.

6 '"Alleen die benzine wilde maar niet schaars worden": tien jaar na de oliecrisis', *Het Vrije Volk*, 14 October 1983.

7 Panoramiek (NOS), 1-12-1973, Beeld en geluid op school, https://beeldengeluidopschool.nl/#/details/program/urn:vme:default:program:2101608040029628631 (accessed on 16-7-2021).

'One car-free day a month, is that too much to ask?' Campaign advert asking people to sign in support of Zonderdag. Milieudefensie, 1974. IISH collection, call number BG D9/437.

Sticker by Stop de Kindermoord and Milieudefensie, 1974. Design Nico Hey. IISH collection, call number BG A49/486.

derdag campaign in Nieuwspoort in The Hague on 17 April 1974. The campaign aligned with the positive responses among the Dutch population, claiming that 7 million Dutch people – 67 percent of the population at the time – were willing to forego using their cars one day a month and therefore urged the government to adopt a monthly carless Sunday. The campaign was aimed at increasing political pressure by gathering support for a monthly carless Sunday. Local actions, Parliamentary questions, support from Dutch celebrities such as Willem Drees senior, ice skaters Atje Keulen and Ard Schenk, and cabaret artist Wim Kan, as well as premiering a song by the group Farce Majeure on prime-time television drew massive attention to the initiative.[8]

The message of the Zonderdag campaign was noticeably different from the one conveyed by Den Uyl. Rather than a 'prophesy of doom' and a call for sacrifices, the activists invoked the benefits of (temporarily) foregoing cars. Reducing car use would enhance safety and generate more living space. With fewer cars on the road, daily life would be calmer and quieter. Less car use would moreover improve our health by reducing pollution, and people would get more exercise, reasoned the activists.[9]

In an ambitious action at train stations throughout the Netherlands, the campaign team called attention to the Zonderdag. Activists distributed forms explaining the campaign and asking recipients to support it by signing. While this did not yield the desired 350,000 signatures, on 21 May 1974 the activists did present 158,238 signatures to Prime Minister Den Uyl. Although he had greatly enjoyed the carless Sundays himself, he was unwilling to make firm commitments.

The authorities needed to be very cautious about imposing 'coercive measures taken to promote people's well-being', he put forward.[10]

A discussion with Minister Irene Vorrink of Health and Environmental Hygiene also revealed that many within the government had profound reservations about the proposal to introduce at least one compulsory carless Sunday a month. Vorrink wondered how great the impact of not driving one Sunday a month would be. Was this worth all the administrative hassle it would entail? She expected that car owners would not passively accept the measure anymore, now that the oil shortage was no longer imminent. The representatives of Stop de Kindermoord and Milieudefensie replied that a voluntary carless Sunday would not work, because the cars on the road anyway would undermine the potential benefits. Was it truly unreasonable to expect drivers to relinquish a tiny bit of freedom once a month? After all, they would retain their stranglehold over society all the other days of the month. The discussion appeared futile. The only subject of universal agreement was that more research would be a good idea.[11]

Although the path to oblivion is paved with such studies, this case was different. An ambitious team of the Social and Cultural Planning bureau (which had been founded shortly before) drafted a carefully considered analysis of ways to curtail car use. The Zonderdag activists were disappointed at the conclusion that carless Sundays were not a very suitable measure. The authors of the report expected that kilometre levies,

8 IISH: Milieudefensie, file 591: Zonderdagkrant [April 1974].

9 IISH: Milieudefensie, file 590: De zonderdagactie, 8 April 1974.

10 'Zonderdag maakt nog kans bij kabinet', *Volkskrant*, 24 May 1974.

11 IISH: Milieudefensie, file 590: Summary of the discussion between the minister of Health and Environmental Hygiene with Vereniging Milieudefensie (VMD) and Stop de Kindermoord (SdK) about action zonderdag (ZD) on 8 May 1974.

Campaign poster for a more recent car-free day in Amsterdam, 2001. Vereniging Milieudefensie and Landelijk Overleg Autovrije Zondag. IISH collection, call number BG D47/462.

alternative modes of transport, and carpooling would be more effective in reducing the number of kilometres driven and also advocated measures to mitigate the disadvantageous effects of car use, such as carless city centres, areas where car use would be restricted, other traffic rules, and technical improvements to the vehicles.[12] Since the 1970s, traffic policy in the Netherlands has often aligned with these ideas. This reveals that the view that car use needed to be curtailed became increasingly popular. Such policy easily reconciled appreciation of cars with the quest for liveable surroundings restricting car use only through local measures, such as carless city centres, bicycle paths, and residential zones. In retrospect, were the activists wise to prioritize the wellbeing of the Dutch in their campaign? Such wellbeing could easily be promoted without fundamentally calling the position of cars into question, as the activists had in fact wanted. The history of the carless Sundays thus also sheds light on the risks of efforts to extend a campaign to a broader group of people.

The carless Sunday lived on as a local initiative, sometimes supported for a while by a group of people or an entire community. In the context of the *European Mobility Week*, cities throughout Europe now organize carless days. These outcomes are indicative of the history of environmental activism: campaigns such as the Zonderdag action regularly proved successful but were just as frequently unable to avert new, often unforeseen problems.

Peter van Dam

12 Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, *Autogebruiksbeperking: mogelijkheden en aanvaardbaarheid* (The Hague: SCP, 1976).

Environmental activism against Hoogovens – presentation by Sara Verveer

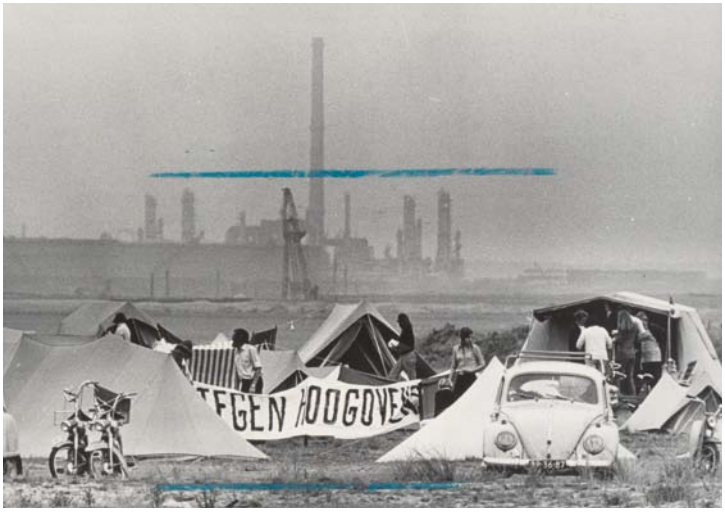
Rolandsduin campsite with Hoogovens in the background, 1987. Photo Rob C. Croes / Anefo, collection Nationaal Archief, CCo, 933-8733.

While, in 1970, guests at the Rolandsduin campsite in Wijk aan Zee were enjoying a longstanding tradition of recreation right next to Hoogovens, the Centraal Aksiekomitee Rijnmond organized a protest camp against plans for a second Hoogovens on the Maasvlakte. The steel company, currently known as Tata Steel, intended to expand in the Rijnmond area, but surrounding residents objected, fearing the pollution, noise, and stench the factory would cause. What about the tens of thousands who lived, worked, and vacationed in close proximity to Hoogovens already present in the IJmond region? In my master's thesis, I explore how they dealt with the pollution caused by the factory in their residential and working environments. At which moments did they launch actions, via which groups, and in what format did their protests manifest? In answering these questions, I use different archival collections of the environmental movement and the trade unions that have been entrusted to the IISH, where the archives and publications of e.g. Milieudefensie, Greenpeace Nederland, and Stichting Natuur en Milieu are available for consultation.

Such organizations are part of the environmental movement and are among the groups that have been speaking out on societal issues from the 1960s onward. Like the women's movement, the peace movement, and the squatters' movement, the environmental movement originated from the new, educated middle class that crystallized in postwar consumer society. The environmental movement has focused mainly on 'green' subjects, such as the environment, saving the planet, nature preservation, and plant and

animal rights. What has already been written on the history of Dutch environmental activism relates mainly to the ideas, organization, and actions of large and well-known national environmental movements. In my master's thesis, I interpret environmental activism more broadly, i.e. in relation to environmental justice. Research on environmental justice revolves around the ways that social issues converge with environmental ones. The underlying idea is that social inequality coincides with unequal exposure to environmental issues, and that marginalized groups in their local residential and working environments are more negatively impacted by environmental pollution than other groups in society. This perspective has also informed various studies conducted on 'labour environmentalism', which examined concern among trade unions about environmental and health problems.

Hoogovens is an interesting case study from an environmental justice perspective. The factory is both the largest employer and the worst polluter in the region. Hoogovens was established in 1918 but experienced most of its growth following the Second World War. In its heyday, 25 thousand people worked there, some living in the immediate vicinity, in workers' housing developments built for Hoogovens in Velsen-Noord, Beverwijk, Heemskerk, and Uitgeest. Accordingly, the factory deeply influenced socioeconomic and spatial planning in the region. Over time, all kinds of environmental problems arose as well. Surrounding residents objected in some but not in all cases, and some problems remain cause for concern. Dune areas, for example, were lost as a result of factory construction and expansions. Pollution persists, manifesting as stench and release of fine particulate, heavy metals, soot precipitation, and CO2. The factory also contributed to the acid rain problem in the 1980s, while polluted sludge contaminated soil and water. Finally, the noise coming from the factory has occasionally woken neighbouring residents of Wijk aan Zee from their sleep.



The protest camp on the Maasvlakte. Fotocollection *Het Vrije Volk*, inventory number 1306. Nationaal foto-persbureau NV-Amsterdam.

During my archival research at the IISH, I found several accounts of protests against the polluter, revealing the field of tension between factory, surrounding residents, and employees. I will discuss three examples.

The local Werkgroep [working group] Hoogovens, a subdivision of the Milieudefensie Kerngroep IJmond, was active in the IJmond region between 1974 and 1978. These local activists invested their energies mainly in tightening the environmental requirements for the permits that Hoogovens had requested from the Provincial Council. In the national Milieudefensie magazine, I found an alarmist article about the far-reaching expansion plans of Hoogovens, which the working group published in 1975. The Wijk aan Zee residents would suffer far worse pollution, noise, and nuisance, if the government did not intervene. The article outlined how some had no choice but to remain in the village, because they earned a living there in the leisure sector or even worked at Hoogovens. According to the working group, the negative effects of pollution and economic dependence of surrounding residents could not be considered in isolation.

In addition to in the surrounding residential areas, concerns about the pollution were expressed at the workplace. Trade unions have always played a prominent role within Hoogovens, but no studies have been conducted yet about how they addressed environmental and health problems. One of the indications that the Industriebond [industrial union] NVV Bedrijfsledengroep [member companies group] Hoogovens dealt with the working conditions is the name change from 'Commissie Ziekte en Verzuim' [sickness and absenteeism commission] to 'Commissie Veiligheid en Gezondheid' [safety and health commission] in 1976. The new commission tried to bring safety and health to the attention of the management. Trade union officials used external scientific knowledge via the Wetenschapswinkel [science desk] in Amsterdam, which was affiliated with the University of Amsterdam. This ranged from general information disclosure about the dangers of chemical substances to specific studies

Front cover of Milieudefensie magazine of January 1975, with a historic photograph of the dunes near Wijk aan Zee before the factory was built.

Health and Safety as part of the 'Werkplan 1980-1985' for executives, Bedrijfsledengroep Hoogovens of Industriebond NVV. IISH Collection, Industriebond FNV archive, COLL00605.

on working conditions. In 1982, for example, the brochure *Werken op de kraan. Een onderzoek bij Hoogovens* was published, detailing back and neck aches among crane operators caused by continuous vibration of the cranes.

Environmental activism against Hoogovens also manifested through alliances between different environmental organizations at different levels in the organization. National environmental movements, their local chapters, and independent local environmental action groups dealt with the same themes concerning Hoogovens, both separately and jointly. The same held true for the Industriebond NVV, later the Industriebond FNV, the Bedrijfsledengroep Hoogovens, and employees within the divisions. The Landelijke Adviescommissie Veiligheid and Gezondheid [national safety and health advisory commission] of the Industriebond liaised with district managers at Hoogovens about health problems, while employees reported their health problems to the Bedrijfsledengroep. The environmental movement and the trade unions were in contact with each other to some extent as well. This is illustrated in the minutes of the Werkgroep Hoogovens of Milieudefensie addressing the Hoogovens expansion plans in 1976, at which an Industriebond NVV trade union member was present: 'Comment from Gerard (Industriebond NVV). Considers MD [Milieudefensie] to be one of the most suitable counterparts for dealing with companies and authorities.'

The archival collections of the environmental movement and the trade unions at the IISH provide me with the opportunity to study environmental activism against Hoogovens from the broad perspective of environmental justice. How do you deal with pollution arising from the largest employer in the region? People have lived, worked, and enjoyed recreation under the Hoogovens smokestacks for decades, but I explore the moments at which surrounding residents raised the alarm and organized resistance to the environmental problems caused by the steel factory. Nor have tensions between industrial areas and surrounding residents disappeared. In recent years, Tata Steel has often featured in the news as a polluter with a huge impact on its surroundings, while Wijk aan Zee continues to draw many of those seeking to enjoy the sea and the dunes. Understanding the extended history of environmental activism, work, and economic interests relating to industrial areas is essential to achieve a clean and equitable future.

Sara Verveer

Interview with Peer de Rijk

Peer de Rijk is a senior campaigner and expert on large polluting companies at Milieudefensie. He was interviewed by Sara Verveer and Peter van Dam.

Activists in front of the nuclear power plant in Borssele during the 1987 blockade. Photo: Rob Bogaerts / Anefo, Nationaal Archief, The Hague, CCo.

Can you tell us a bit about how you became an environmental activist?
In 1980, when I was 14, I participated in an action against nuclear energy for the first time. Known as the Dodewaard blockade, the movement was very large for that period, in which grassroots groups opposed nuclear power. We lived in Deventer, and my two sisters belonged to a *basisgroep* [basis group] there. As I obviously did not want to join either of my sisters, I became a member of a third group. For years I engaged in every possible action, especially against nuclear energy.

After secondary school I went to Amsterdam to attend university but dropped out within three months. Everything happening there in terms of activist movements was completely different from those in Deventer and was far more interesting to me. I started organizing actions myself, initially mainly through the basis groups. At the time, new nuclear power plants were already planned in addition to those in Borssele and Dodewaard. Moerdijk was one of the proposed sites, and we set up an action camp with the national basis group movement on the plain where the new plant was to be built. Even though I had moved to Amsterdam (to the Bijlmer neighbourhood) only recently, I became a regional contact immediately.

Did you see yourself as an environmental activist at the time? How did you and the people in your basis group define the kind of activism you engaged in?
At the time, 'green' environmental groups were distinguished from 'grey' ones, with the former

more focused on nature and its intrinsic value and protection. The grey environmental movement specifically attracted people whose activism arose from a political analysis that was also about power relations: who is in control, and who decides where and how energy is produced? Who benefits from it, and which forces drive this process? Somewhat by coincidence, I ended up among the activists dealing with nuclear energy. I was very young, of course, so those analyses came only later. In any case, I felt very much a part of that more politically oriented grey environmental movement. Nuclear power symbolized a system that allowed energy to be produced in a way that was not only unsafe but also highly undemocratic.

You joined Milieudefensie in the 1990s. Why Milieudefensie, which is both 'green' and 'grey'?
This was largely connected to the spirit of the times. I worked mainly on nuclear energy, but there was a lot of overlap with other movements. You would almost automatically be involved in anti-militarism, squatting, and trying to make Shell leave South Africa as well. All these social organizations and action groups were closely intertwined. And I felt a bit stuck in that constellation. There was a lot of mutual struggle and measuring each other up to see who was the most politically correct. Milieudefensie had always manifested as mainly a grey environmental group, basing its work on political analysis. I did not know the organization very well, but I was interested in seeing whether I could shape what I wanted to achieve there. I was hired as an educator, which was similar to my current position as a campaigner. My duties consisted mainly of developing prospective actions for local groups on energy and climate. Milieudefensie had a strong network of groups all over the country, and my job involved devising actions and ideas for them.

Poster for 'Aktie schoonstroom. Schone energie maakt kernenergie overbodig' [Action Clean Energy. Clean energy makes nuclear power redundant]. Milieudefensie, 1986. IISH Collection, call number IISG BG D47/455.

At dawn on 10 February 1987, an ultimatum demanding the closure of the Dodewaard and Borssele nuclear power plants by April 1 was nailed to the front door of the villa of Minister of Economic Affairs De Korte in Wassenaar. Peer de Rijk, front right, protects his ears from the hammering. Photo: www.stopkernenergie.nl.

After a few years, you left to work for WISE, which campaigns against nuclear power and for clean energy worldwide. Twenty-three years later you returned to Milieudefensie. Can you describe how the organization has or has not changed in the meantime?
I left Milieudefensie in 1997 but continued to serve on their board for five more years, thereby extending my involvement there. When I returned four years ago, after more than twenty years, I found a very different organization. Or rather, part is very different. A lot has remained the same: the culture, the internal struggles and debates, the immense commitment and the perseverance of the people. At the same time, however, the organization has become far more professional. In recent years, climate justice has received strong emphasis: we analyse how the climate problem comes about, who plays a role in it, and how to work on a solution from the perspective of justice.

When Milieudefensie listed a vacancy on the team working on the case against Shell, I thought 'I really want to do that'. I had previously worked to oppose Shell in South Africa and had always cared deeply about that cause. I longed for another opportunity to win against Shell. And with Milieudefensie I did exactly that, at least at the district court level. Then Shell appealed. Much of the verdict made crystal clear that large polluting companies have a responsibility to cease activities that are causing the climate crisis. A campaign plan was drafted according to that position, and I work on that team now. This focus on climate justice emphasizes the role and responsibility of corporations and also contrasts them with the burden on citizens. The necessary transition is complicated and can succeed, only if the burden is distributed fairly.

What kind of historical research would Milieudefensie like to see or find useful? Or is that outside your area of engagement?
Our engagement with historical research is far too little. Our learning capacity is very limited. This is intrinsically understandable; as each generation needs to follow its own course. Still, learning from a historical perspective about the traditions we come from or about concrete actions in the past would be helpful and might also teach us about effectiveness. When I think about

those working at Milieudefensie today, very few know this archive exists, and still fewer are interested in exploring it.

Is an organization like Milieudefensie raising the question as to 'what are we actually leaving behind'? Should that be considered important?
I am working on a book about the anti-nuclear movement and see how valuable these archives are for learning and browsing. Of course, the same holds true for Milieudefensie. In today's digital age I fear that much is being lost. Fortunately, someone within Milieudefensie is responsible for the archives, and this person also works closely with the IISH. The material here is invaluable and includes highly strategic material.

You have seen how your own actions can end up in an archive. Is there any action that you think you would not have performed, had you known at the time that it would end up in the archive?
No, I am generally proud of what I have done, what we have done, and I am very open about it. Recently, many archives from the Department of Homeland Security were released and turned out to include an extensive large file about me. I was surprised at how much they knew about me and shocked to see how far the service went to obtain information, and what was visible there. This definitely gives one pause. Personally, however, I am not worried. I can look at myself in the mirror. (MJS)