

On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends
of the IISH 2012 no. 23



international institute
of social history

Introduction

This issue of *On the Waterfront* reflects that the Friends' Day of June 23, 2011 was dedicated to the Yiddish and Jewish collections of the Institute. Rena Fuks-Mansfeld and Karin Hofmeester presented an overview and offered a few surprising examples of the richness of this *Fundgrube*. Our selection of recent acquisitions was inspired partly by the same theme. As announced earlier, we intend to highlight special areas of the IISH collections in the next few meetings, continuing with the topic of women's history, and especially women's work in the Dutch Republic – a privileged field of research since the Friends generously funded a major program a decade ago.

*Members of the Friends of the IISH pay annual dues of 100 or 500 euros or join with a lifetime donation of 1,500 euros or more. In return, members are invited to semi-annual sessions featuring presentations of IISH acquisitions and guest speakers. These guest speakers deliver lectures on their field of research, which need not be related to the IISH collection. The presentation and lecture are followed by a reception. In addition to these semi-annual gatherings, all Friends receive a 40 percent discount on IISH publications. Friends paying dues of 500 euros or more are also entitled to choose Institute publications from a broad selection offered at no charge. The board consults the Friends about allocation of the revenues from the dues and delivers an annual financial report in conjunction with the IISH administration. – 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 76 years old. Both institutes continue to collect, although the 'subsidiary' IISH has grown considerably larger than its 'parent' NEHA. Additional information about the Institute may be found in Jaap Kloosterman and Jan Lucassen, *Rebels with a Cause: Five Centuries of Social History Collected by the IISH* (Amsterdam 2010). For all information concerning the Friends, see www.iisg.nl/friends.*

Colophon



international institute
of social history

Cruquiusweg 31

P.O. Box 2169

1000 CD Amsterdam

Tel. +31206685866

Fax +31206654181

socialhistory.org

info@iisg.nl

ABNAMRO: 0555958892

IBAN: nl69abna0555958892

BIC: abnanl2a

Editors: Jan Lucassen and Jaap Kloosterman

Translations: Lee Mitzman

Photography: Hans Luhrs

Image referencing: Ditty Mulder

Production coordination: Aukje Lettinga

Design and layout: Ruparo (Ivo Sikkema)

Printed, with generous support, by: A-D Druk B.V. Zeist

Website: Monique van der Pal

We wish to thank Aad Blok, Lex Heerma van Voss,

Bouwe Hijma, Gijs Kessler, Piet Lourens, Hans Luhrs,

Jenneke Quast

Financial administration: Guusje Varkevisser and

Tjerck Zitteema

Administrative support: Yvonne Bax

Composition of the Board: Jan Lucassen (chair/

treasurer), Jaap Kloosterman (co-chair), Bart Hageraats

(secretary), Wim Berkelaar, Pieter Jacobs, Bauke

Marinus, Jacco Pekelder

ISSN 1574-2156

From All Nooks and Crannies

In 2011 Claire Posthumus donated her personal papers to the Institute. She long served as head librarian of the International Archive of the Women's Movement, which was co-founded in 1935 by her mother, Willemijn Posthumus-van der Goot, the second wife of IISH founder Nicolaas Posthumus. Claire's collection is full of memorabilia of interest to the Institute. Its many assets include a vast number of photographs of her father, multiplying those known to us by an order of magnitude. We will come back to this in a later issue of *On the Waterfront*. In this issue, we would like to call attention to a document presented to Claire's mother upon becoming the first woman to obtain a doctorate degree in economics in the Netherlands. She defended her thesis on *De besteding van het inkomen* (How Incomes Are Spent) on December 11, 1930. Her thesis advisor was her future husband, the first professor of economic history in the Netherlands.

Probably on that same day in December, she received the certificate reproduced here, which illustrated her career up to that moment with gentle irony. It was signed by friends and family, perhaps the attendees at a celebratory dinner. One of them was, interestingly, Joris Ivens, a promising Dutch film director who would go on to win the Soviet Lenin Prize. We were not aware of his special relationship with Willemijn, but it may have had two grounds. First, both had begun their study at the *Nederlandse Handelshoogeschool* in Rotterdam in 1919 (like Arthur Müller Lehning, the future anarchist, who would be among the IISH's first staff members). Ivens became student president there. And second, he certainly had a special relationship with Willemijn's paranimf, Welmoedina ("Quick") Nolthenius de Man-Welsch: she was, according to Ivens' biographer, his first love in Rotterdam.



Certificate for Willemijn van der Goot (IISH, Claire Posthumus papers)

Twenty-third Friends' Day, 23 June 2011

Presentation of recent acquisitions

Walloons in Waubach

In the nineteenth century, Walloon brickmakers were to be found in many European countries, including Russia, as well as overseas. Yet little is known about where and how these specialists migrated in the early modern period, or how they organized their work. There is the odd mention of a brickmaking Walloon in the Dutch Betuwe (the area between the Rhine and Waal rivers some 150 kms north of Liege) at the end of the seventeenth century and of the employment of a large group

of Liegeois men and women as brickmakers in Geldern in 1714, when the town (120 kms northeast of Liege) had just been ceded to Prussia. That is about all for the period before 1800. Recently a bit more has come to light from a report from Waubach, just north of Kerkrade in southern Limburg, which figures in an eighteenth-century ledger bought at a Brussels auction (NEHA BC 775).

In the eighteenth century, Waubach was a hamlet of a few hundred souls dependent on the abbess of Thorn. In 1706 a

rectory was established, with its own clerk, which grew into an independent parish only in 1802. The Van Werdens were the chief landowners in Waubach, and it was one of their scions, Petrus, who served as rector from 1723 to 1780. Around 1738 he had a new rectory or *Rectoralhaus* built from bricks produced on his own land by brickmakers brought first from nearby Kerkrade, then from Liege (some 50 kms to the southwest). We know little more about the gang from Kerkrade, consisting of

four individuals, than that they received piecework wages and were paid in money as well as in rye, buckwheat, and beer. They were expected to make 3,000 bricks a day but did not come anywhere near meeting this goal. At the end of the season their output did not even come close to the agreed number and quality. When in the next year they tried to compensate but then demanded higher wages, the rector was through with them.

He then turned to the Walloons, who had apparently already established a reputation in his region. Together with the sheriff, he concluded a written agreement with the Liegeois master Jean Bertram (“Meister Johan Bertram von luttich ziegelbecker”) for the production of 120,000 high-quality bricks (“alle wol accommodirt”), which would be paid at 5 pattacons (a large common silver coin) per 10,000, with an additional jug of beer per 25,000. Moreover, the rector had to provide the necessary equipment, the clay, and the

coal used to fire the shaped clay. Fortunately for him, the mines were so close by that he could send his own carrier to fetch the coal.

No sooner said than done, Master Bertram arrived with a gang of eight people (whose gender and age are sadly unknown) and got down to work on April 9. That they were seasonal labourers is demonstrated by another obligation of the rector, who had to provide them with sheets and straw for sleeping as well as salt for cooking (“auch den arbeitsleuth fourneren dreij paar lacken und notigs stroh vor zu schlaffen, auch saltz vor zu kochen”). By June 18, enough bricks had been shaped and dried on tracks (“banen”), and construction of the kilns could be started. The 26 or 27 persons needed for the job remain obscure; they were likely locals working under the direction of two Walloon masters. The latter, one of whom was almost certainly Bertram, received room and board at the rector’s place and supervised the firing day and night.

The Walloon brickmakers, men and women working together, reflect an interesting contrast with respect to their colleagues from the principality of Lippe-Detmold, who had become known throughout Northern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Germans, convinced that admitting women would automatically depress wages, were exclusively male. On June 20, 2011, Piet Lourens and Jan Lucassen launched a website with data on around 50,000 of such Lipper workers (see www.iisg.nl/migration/ziegler).

Dorsman’s Booklet

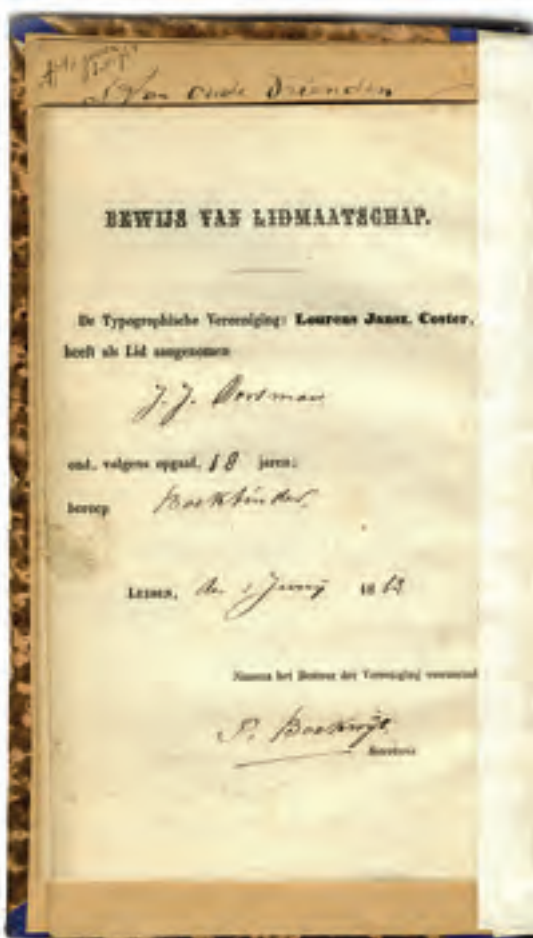
On the previous Friends’ Day, our board member Bauke Marinus donated to the Institute a small book inscribed with a dedication, dated 1904, to the members of the Typografische Vereeniging Lourens Jansz Coster at Leyden (*On the Waterfront* 22, 2011, p 12). It stated that the person who had brought together this pamphlet volume joined the typographers’ association as a bookbinder at the age of 18, on

June 1, 1863. All Bauke could tell us about the booklet’s origin was that he had received it from his maternal grandfather. Today we know far more about Joannes Jacobus Dorsman and his volume thanks to the website of the Municipal Archive of Leyden, which features digital editions of the two major local newspapers, the *Leidsch Dagblad* and the *Leidsche Courant*.

Part of the booklet had already prompted the conjecture that Dorsman, when he was around 20, made a long journey passing through Leipzig, Vienna, and Prague in 1864-1865. From his visit to Leipzig he kept the *Statut der Krankenkasse der Buchbinder-Gehülfen* of January 1, 1864, which indicates that he continued to practise his profession abroad as a *compagnon*. The contents further suggest he visited the other cities as a tourist: in Vienna he saw the famous Kapuzinergruft with the Habsburg tombs and in Prague the cathedral with the tomb of Johannes Nepomuk. He was not a Catholic, though, and his critical notes in a pamphlet concerning the papacy suggest he was not about to become one either.

We may also assume that Dorsman passed through Paris and perhaps through the Alsatian town of Sélestat: on December 5, 1871 in the French capital, he married Eugénie Barbe Baumgartner, who came from what the Prussian conquerors had by then named Schlettstadt. This was seven months after the end of the Franco-Prussian War and half a year after the repression of the Paris Commune (see *On the Waterfront* 15, 2007, pp 3-4, 6, for eyewitness accounts). The couple announced the news of their wedding in the papers of Dorsman’s home town. Yet our migrant did not merely communicate with family and friends through advertisements (sometimes in Dutch, sometimes in French); he used the Leyden press in other ways as well. We find articles he wrote and others written about him, and even notices to pick up undeliverable mail – imagine such a newspaper service today. This allows us to infer certain facts and to construct a cameo of

Dedicatory page from Dorsman’s booklet (IISH, coll Nederland, kl arch, personen, 225)



this Leyden bookbinder.

His father, Pieter Jacobus, had fought in the Ten Days' Campaign at around age 20, earning the *Metalen Kruis*, a military decoration. This is likely to have facilitated his obtaining a job at Leyden University, where the students had enthusiastically endorsed the campaign (*On the Waterfront* 15, 2007, p 5). Dorsman père eventually became amanuensis at the chemical laboratory and served as such for half a century. Jacob Maarten van Bemmelen (1830-1911), professor of organic chemistry, considered him a friend, and when the son came from Paris in 1895 to bury his father, he expressed pride in his social advancement ("Kransen sierden het lijkkleed niet. Dat was dan ook niet nodig want de schoonste en grootste krans welke de overledene indertijd werd geschonken was die van Prof. van Bemmelen toen deze hem zeide dat hij niet zijn bediende, maar zijn vriend was. Die zo van ons heengaan blijven nog lang in dierbare herinnering!"). The family continued this course of progress: in the wedding announcement of his oldest son, who was born in Paris, Dorsman fils presented him as an architect.

We have no information about how Dorsman fared in Paris, although he did not keep silent. His public appearances dated back to the annual meetings of the typographical association in Leyden, at which he performed as an actor every year from January 1860 (before becoming a member) until January 1864. In Paris he was in the spotlight when he had the Calvinist minister Edouard Sautter pray for the recovery of the young Queen Wilhelmina at the Chapelle Millon in 1902 and drew still more notice at the World's Fair of 1900. He twice caused a scandal supporting the Boers at the South African pavilion. On one occasion, he addressed a perplexed group of English men and women, who were mocking the Afrikaans language, crying in French, "Long live President Kruger! Here is a man with a noble and brave heart, a man who does not steal gold, but

gives an honest battle, who does neither rob nor plunder!" Small wonder, then, that he was allowed to welcome the Boer generals Botha, De la Rey, and De Wet, when they visited Paris after their defeat in 1902. Still, Dorsman was not just a man of grand gesture. On December 5, 1901, in an advertisement thanking all those in Leyden who had sent congratulations and gifts to his son at the occasion of his wedding, he added nostalgically, "I wish everybody a happy Saint Nicholas as well."

Fading Away

On October 6, 2008, we lost Daisy Devreese at the age of 65. She joined the Institute as head of its section of International Organizations in October 1974, formally left as a research fellow in 1993, but stayed on as a volunteer on several projects related to the history of the International Working Men's Association, the First International. Before she came to Holland, she had been a student and assistant of Jan Dhondt (1915-1972) at the University of Ghent. She was married to Theo van Tijn (1927-1992), who taught social and economic history at the University of Utrecht and long served on the board of the IISH. Their son, Theo Jr, donated many of his parents' books and papers to the Institute.

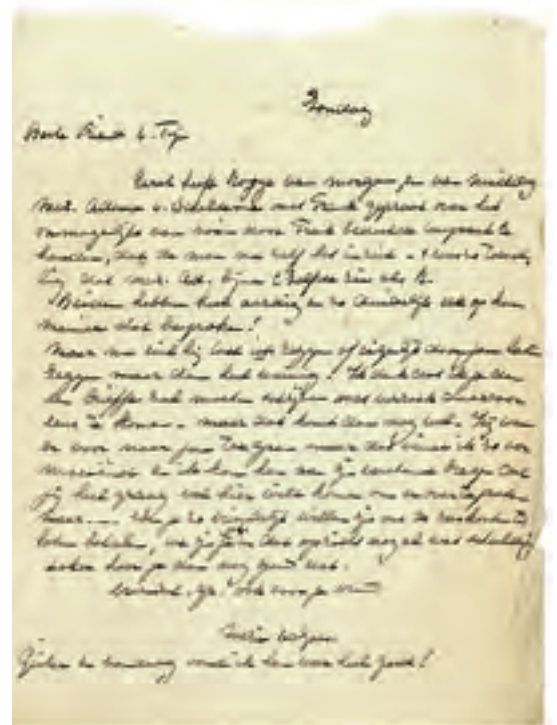
Naturally, Daisy's papers comprised many items relating to the Belgian sections of the First International, which were prominent from the outset in 1864, both domestically and internationally. Some documents are truly unusual, such as a handwritten list of the Brussels affiliates of the organization and a police file on Karel de Boos (1842-1897), one of the leaders of the early labour movement in Ghent, whose entry in the Belgian national dictionary of biographies is by Daisy. Here, however, we will address a voluminous file of a different origin.

These are the papers concerning Frank van der Goes (1859-1939), a freethinker and translator of William Morris and Karl Marx, who became one of the founders of the

Dutch social democratic party, the SDAP. An eternal dissident, in 1932 he co-founded a new left-wing organization, the Independent Socialist Party or OSP, which in 1935 merged with another, Trotsky-leaning group to form the Revolutionary-Socialist Workers Party (the RSAP). Dissatisfied, Van der Goes left this group almost immediately to establish the League of Revolutionary Socialists (the BRS), which published *De Socialist*. In this last break-away he was accompanied by Elias van Tijn (1902-1945), the father of Theo. Eli, as he was known, was a primary school teacher who had become head of the Kraaipanschool in Amsterdam's Transvaal quarter. A former board member of the OSP, he became an editor of the BRS paper, in which he published under the pseudonym Piet Marsman. In the Second World War he transformed his school into a centre of underground resistance, until he was betrayed to the Germans in 1943. He was sent to Auschwitz, where he perished a few days before the end of the war.

The file we mentioned was created by Eli, and is almost entirely about 1939. In this year Van der Goes, who was already very weak, celebrated his eightieth birthday on

Undated letter from Marie van der Goes to Elias van Tijn (IISH)



February 13 but died a few months later, on June 5, at his home in Laren, some 25 kms southeast of Amsterdam. Apart from documents concerning the birthday festivities – there was an official meeting in the Krasnapolsky Hotel in Amsterdam – the file contains a series of letters to Eli that vividly illustrate the final months of a very active life. Despite his deteriorating health, Van der Goes continued to announce articles for the party paper and made preparations for public speeches. Sometimes Marie, his wife since 1893, wrote separate notes to cancel what Frank had promised. In one of them, reproduced here, she mentions a visit from Annie Adama van Scheltema, the first librarian of the IISH, who “very kindly” helped persuade her husband not to deliver a speech he had been planning. Yet even then, he had had second thoughts, and a new round of persuasion appears to be in the making. Clearly, Van der Goes was like those old soldiers who never die. Annie Scheltema made sure his papers ended up at the Institute, where Eli’s file now adds an emotional chapter.

Jewish in Warsaw

In the spring of 2011 the Friends funded the acquisition of an original typescript by Nadja Strasser (1871-1955). It tells the story of Nadia Ossipovna, known as Dina, who grew up in the Russian provincial town of Novodub (modelled on the author’s birthplace, Starodub) between the 1870s and the 1890s. The story describes Nadia’s breaking away from the confining surroundings of her early youth, and eventually joining the subversive, politically active Jewish intellectual circles of Warsaw in Poland. After returning briefly to her family, she enrolls at Vienna University. The story breaks off at this point. As Rabbi Pini Dunner of London’s Saatchi Synagogue said, “The narrative is extremely evocative, and the protagonist is an intelligent, perceptive young woman who reacts with sensitivity to the world around her and the people she meets. It seems that the narrative, although fictional, is nevertheless

somewhat autobiographical.”

The manuscript is significant because it recalls the position of Jews in Eastern Europe and the expectations young people had of socialism and feminism. It describes the people Strasser met in Warsaw and especially her acquaintance with Vladimir Medem, a Russian-Jewish politician and ideologue of the Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeyter Bund. Strasser understood how important a Yiddish culture and literature was for the development of the Jewish labourers in Russia, Poland and Lithuania.

We have little information about the later life of Nadja Strasser. We do not even know how she got her name. She wrote *Die Russin: Charakterbilder*, appearing in 1917 at the Fischer Verlag, which also published her volume of lyrical essays *Das Ergebnis*. She translated works by Andrei Bely and Fyodor Dostoyevski, as well as those by the Jewish writer Shemarya Gorelik. After some years of living alternately in Vienna and Berlin, she went to Palestine with the architect Alexander Levy in 1920. Both returned to Berlin in 1927 for lack of money; both went into exile in Paris in 1933. In August 1942, Levy was transported to Auschwitz, but Nadja survived in France. After the war she went to London. She eventually returned to Berlin in 1951, where she died in 1955.

Some years ago Strasser was rediscovered in Germany by

Birgit Schmidt (or Schmitt), who published on her in the journals *Jungle World* (2004) and *Aschkenas* (2006). Schmidt, however, saw only the sections of Strasser’s memoirs that survived in the papers of Rudolf Rocker, held at the IISH. The typescript now acquired consists of 176 pages; it was long part of the collections of the London School of Jewish Studies. For a brief archival description, see www.iisg.nl/archives/en/files/e/10778150.php.

Strategic Waves

In our previous issue we wrote about Annie Diaz-van der Goot, the sister-in-law of IISH founder Nicolaas Posthumus, who made large parts of the Institute’s enormous serial collection accessible (*On the Waterfront* 22, 2011, pp 10-11). While researching this item, we happened upon a small archival collection entitled “F. van der Goot, Bandoeng” (NEHA BC 241). It turned out that it had been donated to the Netherlands Economic-History Archive in 1941 by B.M. van der Goot-Hartog, the widow of Fiepko van der Goot, who was Annie’s father. Ms Hartog, who was born on Ambon, became Fiepko’s second wife, after he divorced Annie’s mother, Elisabeth Castens.

Van der Goot (1869-1940) was an engineer who travelled to South Africa in 1896 to take charge of signalling at the Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij in the

First page of a photo album offered to Fiepko van der Goot in 1925 (NEHA BC 241, 3)



Transvaal. Soon war broke out and the British sent him packing in 1900. In 1904 he took his family to the Dutch East Indies, where he worked on the inter-insular telegraph system and eventually became the head of the colony's telegraphy until he retired in 1925.

The war that had driven him from South Africa had upset the Dutch not only because, as we saw earlier in the case of Dorsman, many sympathized with the Boers, but also because it had made painfully clear that the world's telegraph system, on which they depended for overseas communications, was controlled almost entirely by the British. Van der Goot's files at the Institute reveal that in January 1900 a group of Dutch businessmen, among them the presidents of the *Amsterdamsche Bank* and the *Nederlandsche Handelsmaatschappij*, began discussing a strategy to remedy this. They saw Germany, which would benefit from a good connection to the East Indies, as the most likely partner, and at the end of 1901 sent out feelers to Carlswerk at Mülheim/Rhein (now part of Cologne), a major cable supplier.

The timing was somewhat unfortunate, as at this very moment the future Nobel laureate Guglielmo Marconi announced that he had successfully sent a wireless message from Cornwall to Newfoundland. The people at Carlswerk were not impressed: on 31 December 1901 they questioned his statement and, more generally, the feasibility of "wireless telegraphy" across long distances ("Vorläufig halten wir es nicht vor erwiesen, dass Marconi wirklich die Uebertragung telegraphischer Signale mittelst seines Systems von Penzance nach Neu-Fundland hat nachweisen können, aber selbst angenommen die Richtigkeit der Marconischen Behauptung, so bezweifeln wir ebenso sehr wie die electrischen Fachblätter es bezweifeln, die Möglichkeit der praktischen Ausführung der drahtlosen Telegraphie auf grosse Entfernungen."). Today we know of course how the story ended.

All the same, cable re-

mained in use for a long time, including between the islands of the East Indian archipelago, which were by then being connected by Van der Goot. After the First World War, however, the authorities started building what at the time was a very large radio station for the communication between metropole and colony. The transmitter was situated at Malabar, near Bandung, and used German *Telefunken* technology. Van der Goot supervised the operation, which was scheduled for completion in May 1923. Lightning during a tropical storm caused some delay, but eventually Van der Goot could retire contentedly. On finishing the job, he was offered a beautiful photo album documenting the entire construction process, with a calligraphed title page showing (on the left) the Malabar station and (on the right) the equally new Kootwijk station in the Netherlands, long the country's centre of overseas radio communications and now a protected architectural monument.

The Future is Ours

The Institute holds a considerable collection in and on Esperanto, a language that was always more than just that: from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century it was also intended as an instrument for international peace and understanding. This made it popular among certain groups, especially in the labour movement, and aroused suspicion among others, such as the dictators of Interbellum Europe. Hitler, Stalin, and Franco all attempted to suppress Esperanto.

The collection is regularly supplemented by donations (or an occasional purchase, see *On the Waterfront* 14, 2007, p 5). Recently, for example, we received a booklet of *La Estonto Estas Nia* (*The Future is Ours*), which contained, in addition to the rules, a catalogue of titles available in its library in the mid 1930s. Some years ago, the records of the oldest Esperanto organization in the Netherlands, *Unua Amsterdama Societo Esperantista* (First Amsterdam Esperantist Association, the original name

of *La Estonto Estas Nia*), which had disappeared during the war and were being returned from Moscow, were deposited at the IISH. Among them was an unknown portrait of Esperanto's founder, Lejzer Levi Zamenhof (1859-1917), by Ludovic Rodo[lphe Pissarro] (1878-1952), a son of Camille and an active Esperantist. A slightly different portrait by Rodo was used on stamp-like propaganda labels.

One special reason to highlight the collection is that this year marks the centenary of the foundation of the *Federacio de Laboristaj Esperantistoj* or *Federatie van Arbeiders-Esperantisten*. The initiative arose from Jacob Leendert Bruijn



(1880-1954), an accountant in The Hague. In 1902 he had married Anna Elizabeth Emma Veen (b 1880), an obstetrician, whom he divorced in 1915. A year later he remarried; his wife this time was Elisabeth Susanna Bruggeman (b 1886), also an obstetrician. All three were members of the Dutch League of Vegetarians.

In 1906 Bruijn became acquainted with Esperanto during his stay in the anarchist colony *L'Expérience*, discussed in *On the Waterfront* 13, 2006, pp 4-5. Founded the year before, the colony, with the Rabalaisian "*Fais ce que voudras*" (Do what you will) as its motto, was located near Brussels, first at Stockel, then at Boitsfort. Its initiator was Emile Chapelier

Portrait (etching) of L.L. Zamenhof by Ludovic Rodo (IISH BG H14/898)

Picture post-card showing an esperanto lesson at the Colony l'Expérience at Stockel (IISH BG A43/64)



D. V. D. 1748
 L'Esperanto. — Liberecna komunista kolonio, (provisore en Stockel-Arbejo). L'Esperanta kurso.
 L'Expérience. — Colonie communiste libertaire, (provisoirement à Stockel-Bois). Le cours d'Espéranto.

(1870-1933), a former miner, who taught Esperanto to its members, as illustrated by our photograph. His regular visitors included a group of youngsters – one of them the son of Russian exiles, Viktor Kibalchich, later known as Victor Serge – who soon moved to Paris and achieved notoriety as the *bande à Bonnot*, but for the time being helped operate the colony's printing press. Chapelier's great success was *Ayons peu d'enfants : pourquoi et comment* (Let's have few children: why and how), which sold perhaps 60,000 copies, thanks in part to a fierce response from the Catholic authorities. But demand for *Les Libertaires et la langue internationale esperanto*, quickly translated as *Anarchists and the International Language Esperanto*, justified several print runs and editions as well.

On his return to Holland, Bruijn became a tireless propagandist and journalist of Esperanto. From 1909 to 1911 he was the editor of *Internacia Socia Revuo*, the journal of the international Esperantist workers' organization Paco-Libereco (Peace and Freedom). On May Day 1911 he organized the founding meeting of the *Federacio de Laboristaj Esperantistoj* at the Geheelonthouders Koffiehuis (Temperance Coffee House) in the Nieuwe Molstraat at The Hague. Soon, however,

he became more interested in the movement in general. From 1911 on, he ran an Esperantist bookshop, eventually establishing the *Centra E-Librejo* as a commercial operation. After the war, he served as secretary to the Twelfth International Esperantist Congress held in The Hague in 1920.

Aside from Bruijn, the most prominent organizers among the Dutch Esperantist workers before WWI were Wiebe Nutters (1872-1926), a typographer and journalist, and K.H. Meijer, a plasterer. Later Frits Faulhaber (1893-1979), a house painter, became chairman and an important textbook author. By its 25th anniversary, the *Federacio de Laboristaj Esperantistoj* in its *Jubileumboek 1911-1936* claimed a membership of around 4,000 in over 130 sections. In 1994 the federation eventually merged with the *Nederlando Esperanto Asocio* to become *Esperanto Nederland*, of which the records are at the IISH. An attempt at international coordination at first seemed promising, when the 1921 congress of Esperantist working men in Prague formed the *Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda* or *International World-wide Association*; but under the pressure of political developments in the Soviet Union this cultural organization disintegrated at its Eleventh Congress,

which was held in Amsterdam in 1931.

Refractories

Last year the Friends funded the copying of nine documentary films by Bernard Baissat, a French director born in Tunisia in 1943. Initially a teacher of Italian and French, in 1967 Baissat became a journalist and filmmaker dedicated to distinctly pacifist and libertarian ideals. He worked for the ORTF and France-3 and taught at the *Institut national de l'Audiotvisuel*. His work is especially interesting to the IISH, however, because of a series of films he made in the 1980s and 1990s, featuring portraits of old anarchists and pacifists active throughout much of the existence of the French and international movements.

Baissat visited us in 1995, when the Institute organized an exhibition on Neo-Malthusianism in France and the Netherlands on the occasion of the publication of the index to the Eugène and Jeanne Humbert papers. The transfer to Amsterdam of this collection had been authorized by Claude Villon (Lucette Humbert), the couple's daughter, and was organized by Francis Ronsin, their biographer and the driving force behind the exhibition. (An extended version of the Dutch part of the

story, curated by Hugo Röling, is online at the IISH website in both Dutch and English, see www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/neo-malthusianism; the French version will follow in due course.) Baisat had travelled to Amsterdam because we were screening his film on Jeanne Humbert, which has now been copied for the Institute.

Many of the Neo-Malthusian propagandists in France at the end of the nineteenth century were anarchists or were committed to very similar principles; indeed, the first of them, Paul Robin (1837-1912), had been a member of the secret societies of Mikhail Bakunin. Since most politicians supported the idea of a more populous France that would be able to resist Germany, advocates of birth control were routinely detained, even before 1920, when contraception and abortion were actually prohibited. In addition, anarchists were specifically targeted by the repressive *lois scélérates* introduced in 1893-1894 and formally in effect for nearly a century. Since Eugène (1870-1944) and Jeanne (1890-1986) Humbert were Neo-Malthusians as well as anarchists, they spent quite some time in prison or exile. In spite of this, they never gave up.

Neo-Malthusianism had theoretical underpinnings, chiefly explained in journals and pamphlets, as well as the very practical aspect of selling contraceptives. Propagandists also organized an occasional banquet, of which the remaining photographs leave an unmistakable impression of merriment. It is all the more fitting that Baisat's *Écoutez Jeanne Humbert* was in fact recorded largely during a party to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of the title's heroine in 1980. At the time Jeanne was still active in the publication of *le Réfractaire*, an anti-militarist paper founded in 1974 by May Picqueray (1898-1983), another luminary of French anarchism present at the festivities. So was Marcel Body (1894-1984), a French typographer who became involved in the Russian Revolution, served as an aide to Aleksandra Kollontai when she was Soviet ambassador in Oslo,

and from the 1960s on worked as a translator for the *Archives Bakounine*, an IISH project to publish the collected works of the Russian revolutionary.

Picqueray and Body were both immortalized by Baisat in documentaries, which are now also at the Institute. The other newly acquired films are on Mireille Jospin-Dandieu (1910-2002), the mother of Lionel and a militant advocate for sexual freedom and the right to die with dignity; the Swiss anarcho-syndicalist André Bösiger (1913-2005); Jorge Mac-Ginty (1911-2004), a close friend of Salvador Allende; and Baisat's own mother, Maurice Girard, a teacher who is featured revisiting the Tunisia of her youth. In addition, there is *Non à toutes les guerres*, a film on women's anti-war protests (2010); and *Jean-Baptiste André Godin : l'homme qui réalisa son utopie* on the experiment of the "Familistère de Guise," which began in the 1860s and lasted more than a century.

Japan Go Home

On November 8, 2010, Peter Boelsma from Rijswijk wrote a letter to the IISH ending, "All that remains is for me to wish you success in your important work." Attached to the letter were two stencilled leaflets he had received from his grandfather, Hendrik Pieter van Vliet (*1870), who had been Japan's Consul General in Rotterdam before WWII. Boelsma described him as "a typical rep-



écoutez

JEANNE HUMBERT

un film de Bernard BAISSAT

avec Francis RONSIN

57 min., 1981, DVD vidéo

resentative of the Rotterdam establishment."

The Consul had no doubt preserved the leaflets because they refer to a demonstration in front of his residence, at the premises of the shipowners Phs van Ommeren on the Westerkade. "Protest against the imperialist war," it read, "by Rotterdam workers demonstrating at the Japanese Consulate on March 8, 1932." On the necessarily primitive drawing of the building's front, a banner bearing a similar slogan appears to be affixed to the door: "Down with the war. Hands off China and Soviet Russia." This was in fact the banner used by the

Jeanne Humbert in the unlikely role of movie star (IISH)



Anti-Japanese protest, Rotterdam 1932 (IISH, Coll Nederland, kl arch, organisaties, 118)

“revolutionary workers” who took part in the demonstration and additionally broke a few windows, according to the communist newspaper *De Tribune* of March 10. The leaflet sports a hammer, sickle, and (surely red) star as well as the abbreviation RVO (Roode Vakbewegings Oppositie or Revolutionary Union Opposition). We had not previously seen either of the two titles, neither *De Stempelbroeder: uitgave Adviescommissie Crooswijkscheweg* nor *De Bouwvakarbeider: oppositieve orgaan van alle oppositionele bouwvakarbeiders in de bonden en stempellokaalen*.

The appeal seems to be motivated by the proclamation, on February 18, of the new state of Manchukuo as a result of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. Conceivably, however, this was not the whole story. Ever since the steam engine was introduced in shipping, sailors from the rich North had to compete against those from poorer countries, often willing to work for lower wages to earn a living. In his *Hand aan Hand*, published by the IISH in 2009, Matthias van Rossum noted that precisely in March 1932, after a lost strike, Dutch sailors had to accept wage cuts of no less than 9 per cent. The strike failed primarily because of the abundance of non-unionized staff, especially

from Asia. After the wage cuts, the Central Union of Transport Workers (CBTA, a social democratic union affiliated to the NVV confederation) asserted that “at the beginning of February, when the ship-owners got ready to enforce the reductions they demanded, the supply of Chinese was assured.” One may ask, then, whether the communists might have wanted to stress their differences with respect to the social democrats by proclaiming their solidarity with China. Or did they hope to appeal to Rotterdam’s widespread distrust of the Japanese variety of the Yellow Peril?

Black Phoenix

Russians have figured prominently in the history of anarchism: one has only to think of Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910), and Pyotr Kropotkin (1842-1921), or of Emma Goldman (1869-1940), Aleksandr Berkman (1870-1936), and Nestor Makhno (1888-1934) in the next generation. At the same time, Kropotkin’s funeral in Moscow on February 13, 1921, with Goldman and Berkman in attendance, was generally considered its last public display before Bolshevik repression banned every libertarian manifestation from the country. The subsequent story of anarchism in the Soviet Union was captured in the title of Grigorii Maksimov’s book *The Guillotine at Work* (1940).

When in the 1980s *perestroika* made it easier for Russians to organize, anarchism started to make a comeback. In addition to renewed academic interest, part of a more general movement of catching up with history, anarchist groups sprang up in many parts of the country. They soon revived most traditional tendencies – individualism, anarcho-communism, anarcho-syndicalism – and added new ones, deriving mostly from modern youth culture. Many observers undoubtedly had difficulty distinguishing typically anarchist publications among the ephemeral newspapers, fanzines, pamphlets and the like that flooded Russia. The Institute tried to document some of this but was not in a position

to do so systematically.

The acquisition of the personal collection of Aleksandr Ermakov, an activist in the democratic and anarchist movement of St Petersburg from the late 1980s to the mid-2000s, is a quantum leap. The collection consists mainly of anarchist, anti-fascist, democratic, and left-wing leaflets, periodicals, and other publications from St Petersburg and other cities and regions within the Russian Federation, as well as from other former republics of the Soviet Union. In addition, the collection contains a sizeable body of materials pertaining to the activities of the St Petersburg branch of the Democratic Union (*Demokraticheskii Soiuz*), the first independent political movement founded in the Soviet Union during the years of *perestroika*. Apart from leaflets, pamphlets and other such material, these include minutes of meetings, correspondence, and other unpublished material. Assembled over the course of almost twenty years, the Aleksandr Ermakov collection offers broad territorial coverage of the activities of grass-roots democratic and left-wing movements during Russia’s democratization wave of the 1980s and 1990s.

Our reproduction features the cover of the first (December 1993) issue of *Chornaia Liniya* (Black Line), a popular-scientific journal, of which 999 copies were published in St Petersburg. The journal honoured an old tradition by publishing materials by and on Tolstoy, Kropotkin, and Makhno, among other subjects.

Multicultural Egypt

Less than a week after the previous Friends’ Day, Tahrir Square, in the centre of the Arab world, became the new face of the Arab Spring, easily outshining the already spectacular events in tiny Tunisia that had started it all. We vividly remember how on February 11, after two weeks of demonstrations, Hosni Mubarak was forced to resign. The mass movement, which extended well beyond Cairo (recall the one million people

Sample from the Aleksandr Ermakov collection (IISH)



demonstrating on February 1), was triggered by the bombing of a Coptic church on January 6 (Christmas), several self-immolations, and of course the Jasmine Revolution that caused the fall of the Tunisian president.

What was remarkable about the Egyptian revolt was its organization. Its secret weapon was not to be found with the opposition parties, the trade unions, or other organizations but consisted of the new media as exemplified by the Facebook page “We are all Khaled Said.” When Egypt’s military council declared the movement over, promising free elections in exchange for an end to the demonstrations, serious questions arose as to which organizations would be strong enough to shape the political future of the country. The military decided that only parties with 5,000 members in at least ten provinces would be allowed to participate.

In the West, many voiced fears that there would be only a single candidate: the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928, which in fact transformed into a regular political party on April 30 (with a Copt as vice-president). In Holland, one Christian Democrat MP urged that the elections be postponed to get more competitors to stand in them. One wonders how awful things really are in a country that introduced universal suffrage in 1956. It is true that a state of emergency was declared after the killing of Anwar Sadat in 1981, but does Egypt’s history warrant the suggestion that its citizens are incapable of political organization, except along radical religious lines?

In at least one case, primary sources in the IISH collections make answering that question possible. This case concerns the Communist Party, which started functioning in 1922, six years before the Muslim Brotherhood. Thanks to Roel Meijer, who from 1996 to 2009 collected Arab materials for the Institute, and to the French connections of Kees Rodenburg, researchers may consult an impressive manuscript and documentation collection concerning the Egyptian com-

munists. The Egyptian Communists in Exile (Rome Group) Archives consist of 6 linear meters covering party history from 1945 to 2004. Separate but closely related, the Trials of Egyptian Communists Collection contains 2 meters of files on 30 court cases against communists of every shade from 1951-1958 and 1973-1989. Here, we shall consider briefly the role of Jewish Egyptians, and more in particular that of Henri Curiel.

Traditionally, in addition to its large Sunni majority multicultural Egypt had considerable Christian (chiefly Coptic) and Jewish minorities: about 18m, 1.5m and 100,000 Egyptians, respectively, around 1950. Jewish Egyptians were prominent in the communist movement. This was one ground for the remarkably close ties between Egyptian and Israeli communists. The Egyptian communists in Paris, for example, actively supported Yusuf Hilmi’s Partisans of Peace, advocating peace with Israel.

Henri Curiel (1914-1978), long the undisputed leader of the Egyptian movement, was also of Jewish origin. This made him even more vulnerable than he already was because of his political convictions. During and after the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948, most prominent communists, many of them Jewish, were arrested and eventually exiled. In 1951 they founded the Rome Group, which played a role in the fall of King Faruk the next year. In spite of its name, the group was based in Paris for very practical reasons. In his youth, Curiel, who was the son of a Francophile banker, had been sent to French schools in Cairo, including the Jesuit Lycée. In the words of Gilles Perrault: “An Egyptian paradox: this staunch nationalist has married an upper class Egyptian whose family speaks French to distinguish them from the Arabs, and who, brought up by a Swiss nurse and an English governess, today speaks only basic Arabic and can just manage to read a few lines of the Qur’an.”

The Rome Group was expelled from the party in 1957; one year later Jews were



purged from the leadership. The French exiles changed their name to Groupe des Démocrates égyptiens d’Origine juive. Extending their activities, they supported the rebels in Algeria and later (as “Solidarité”) various Third World liberation movements, among them the African National Congress. Curiel made efforts to facilitate peaceful contacts between Israel and its neighbours. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he was incarcerated in Fresnes and, from 1977 on, placed under house arrest in Digne (Alpes-de-Haut-Provence). On May 4, 1978, he was shot and killed in the lift of his apartment building; the perpetrators were never caught. Perrault, his biographer, suspects either the hawks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the South-African intelligence service.

Henri Curiel on board the ship that took him into exile from Egypt in 1950 (IISH)

Unknown Sources of Jewish History Hidden in the Collections of the IISH

By Rena Fuks-Mansfeld

At the last meeting of the Friends at the IISH, on June 23, 2011, Karin Hofmeester and I presented some interesting sources for Jewish history in the 20th century from the collections of the IISH. Karin highlighted the contribution of Jews in the early social-democratic movement in the Netherlands, and I presented some hitherto unknown sources for the his-



Raphael R. Abramovitch (IISH BG A1/35)

tory of Jewish social-democrats and anarchists and of social-democrats in Palestine during the Second World War.

The first important document can be found in the archives of Raphael Abramovitch Rein, better known as Raphael Abramovitch (Dvinsk 1880–New York 1963). From his early youth he was a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Party and of the Bund, the Jewish division of that party. When the Bund sided with the Mensheviks, he became a well-known Menshevik political leader, first in Russia and after his flight from Russia in 1911 in France and Germany. After the outbreak of the Russian revolution in 1917, he returned to

Russia and joined the Petrograd Soviet. He was arrested by the Bolsheviks in 1918 and escaped execution thanks only to the intervention of important European socialists. He fled to Berlin, continued to work for the Menshevik party in several capacities, and became a member of the executive of the Socialist International. In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, he fled to Paris, leaving behind his library and papers. Part of these were rescued by N.W. Posthumus and his staff and brought to Amsterdam, together with several other endangered archives, including those of the German socialist party and other leftist groups.

While in Paris, Abramovitch immediately contacted his comrades in many countries. In a letter of July 2, 1933, to his old friend N. Chanin in New York, one of the editors of the *Forverts*, the influential Yiddish socialist daily in the United States, he wrote: "... During the recent catastrophe, the archives of the Bund narrowly escaped destruction thanks to the energetic help of Franz [Kursky] and Leon Blum. The archive is now safely in Paris and nothing got lost. It has not yet been decided what will become of it. Perhaps it will stay in Paris and it could be lodged with the Bibliothèque Nationale, or it will go to Poland..."

The decision on the final destination of the Bund archive was deferred, however, causing serious difficulties for Franz Kursky, the long-time custodian of the Bund. In dire financial straits, he had no funds to pay the rent of the storage area. Kursky (Courland 1874–New York 1950) was from 1899 onward librarian and archivist of the Bund, first in Vilna and from 1900 in Geneva, where the foreign secretariat of the Bund was established, safe from per-

secution by the Tsarist secret police. After the first Russian revolution in 1905, the Bund operated more or less openly as a political party, with Vilna as its headquarters. During the first years of the Russian Revolution and the war with Poland, Vilna was situated between the two armies. Kursky fled with his treasures to Berlin and stayed there until 1933.

By 1934, there still was no decision about what to do with the Bund archive. Kursky was desperate and looked for a worthy new owner of the collection. A solution was found when Annie Adama van Scheltema, archivist of the Social-Democratic Party of the Netherlands, who visited Paris at the time, heard of Kursky's predicament. She told Posthumus about the matter, and he went to Paris in November 1934 and purchased sections of the Bund archive and library from Kursky for 88,000 French francs, a substantial sum of money in those days. Kursky started to send the materials to Amsterdam, but there appeared to be far less than agreed. The archive of the IISH holds lengthy correspondence between Posthumus and Kursky, who reluctantly continued to send more materials until 1939.

Kursky's motives for double-dealing with his Dutch saviours are impossible to ascertain by now. He apparently never told his comrades in the United States and Poland that he had sold part of the collection and sent to Amsterdam only the materials forwarded to the Bund in Geneva from 1898 until 1914, many pamphlets and brochures of all kinds, and a collection of propaganda materials from Poland and the Baltic states in the Interbellum, when the Bund was an official political party and participated in the parliaments and city

councils as part of the Jewish national minority.

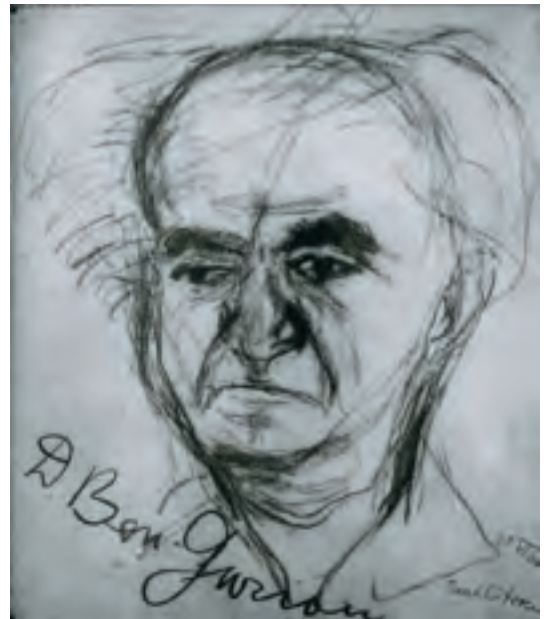
The Bund collection in the IISH experienced the same eventful fate as the rest of the collections at the Institute. It lay, still unpacked, in its storerooms when Nazi troops invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940. By July 15, 1940 the Institute was shut down by officials of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg in the Netherlands. The staff was dismissed and denied further entry, and the entire collection was shipped to Germany between 1941 and 1943 to be distributed among several Nazi institutions. After the fall of Germany, parts of the IISH collection were retrieved and brought back to Amsterdam, among them the Bund collection.

Only when I started to inventory the Bund archive did I perceive the coherence of the material: it appears that from 1898 onward all socialist groups of the tsarist empire had sent the Bund their publications. From the depths of Siberia to the borders with Germany, leaflets and pamphlets had been sent. They are now a rare and precious source on the history

of the socialist movement in Eastern Europe.

A different but equally interesting historical source are the rare and very early Yiddish anarchist pamphlets used for propaganda among Jewish workers from Eastern Europe in London and Leeds in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. After 1880, young Jews began to emigrate to the United States en masse, and quite a few emigrants were stranded in England. They found work in the numerous small workshops in the clothing and tobacco industry and continued to live in their own Jewish surroundings and in the same dire poverty they had fled. The only advantage of life in England was the political freedom, in which anarchist and socialist propaganda could reach the workers.

Jewish anarchists and socialists alike understood that before the workers could truly be instructed in political theory, they had to be weaned from their traditional religious lore. Both groups, therefore, used traditional Hebrew religious rituals to propagate their new political and social message. The Jewish Passover rituals



Ben Gurion, portrait by Paul Citroen, 1960 (IISH BG A2/36)

commemorating the exodus of the Hebrews from the Egypt of the Pharaoh was highly conducive to this purpose. One of the earliest examples of this kind of political propaganda is the anarchist Pesach haggadah published in London in 1888. It reads in part like the traditional text but adds an entirely new interpretation. The liberation of the working man should not come from God by



Anarchist Pesach Haggadah, propaganda issued as a Passover prayer book, London 1888 (IISH BRO 323/3)



Title page of the anarchist journal *Germinal* (IISH ZK 6229)



Franz Kursky, from Franz Kursky Gezamelte Shriften, 1952. (USH 1998/5256)

way of a chosen leader but by their own struggle for a better life. Foreign oppressors were replaced by shop owners and other exploiters of workers, all receiving assistance from religious authorities and rabbis.

The Bund, the Jewish social democrats in the Russian empire, followed the example of

the anarchists and published similar texts but reflecting a different interpretation. The tenor of the text published in Geneva in 1900 stressed the meaning of Passover as a feast of liberation from poverty and powerlessness by way of organization and education. Both booklets were small and easy to carry, making them easier to smuggle in large numbers into the Russian empire. When discovered, they could easily pass as genuine prayer books, with their Hebrew title-pages and traditional layout.

In England and the United States many Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were drawn to the anarchist movement. One of their most popular and respected leaders became Rudolf Rocker (1873-1958), a German radical thinker, who had fled Germany in 1893 because of persecution. After a short stay in Paris, where he first encountered Eastern-European Jewish workers, he went to London. There he met his lifelong companion Milly Witkop, a Jewish girl from Russia, who taught him Yiddish and introduced him to Jewish immigrants.

Rocker, though not Jewish himself, became the anarchist 'rabbi' of his flock and a much-loved leader and teacher, who remained true to his principles throughout his life. Rocker did everything in his might not only to instruct his followers in anarchist politics but also to introduce them to European culture. His German background as a typesetter helped him to publish many political tracts, as well as an anarchist journal in Yiddish, *Germinal*, which appeared in Leeds from 1900 until 1904. The journal contained Yiddish translations of classical anarchist tracts by Kropotkin, Bakunin, and other political luminaries, in addition to essays, poems, and stories. It was well-printed and produced and maintained a high cultural standard in all four volumes. Many of the other publications by Jewish anarchists have become extremely rare, as well as issues of the daily *Der Arbeter Fraynt*, which appeared in New York, too. Rocker published as much as he could.

The literature of the Jewish anarchists in England and the United States was added to



the IISH collection as part of large anarchist libraries and archives rescued after 1933 from the hands of the Nazis. After the Second World War, the archives of Rudolf Rocker and several American-Jewish anarchist organizers found their way to Amsterdam. These collections consist of much interesting correspondence in Yiddish. I have set up a new database of all Yiddish letters in the IISH archives, in which reproductions of the letters come with brief descriptions of their contents.

Finally, I would like to call attention to a quite different but nonetheless most interesting collection in the IISH. While cataloguing the Hebrew books and brochures a couple of years ago, I noticed some forgotten shelves with Hebrew pamphlets in a storeroom. This appeared to be a collection of 37 published speeches by David Ben Gurion delivered between 1942 and 1944 at meetings of the Israeli Worker's Party, MAPAI, of which he was the leader. Generally, literature published in Palestine during that time is difficult to find in



European libraries and we will never know how these booklets found their way to Amsterdam. The collection is immensely important for historical research, because the texts contain a blueprint for the policy of the State of Israel that was later proclaimed in 1948.

Ben Gurion had a clear vision of the course that Israeli politics would take. He never

doubted that a Jewish state would emerge and knew that this state would have to be governed by the Israeli workers and the worker's party. This vision is most clearly expressed in the brochure *Ha-mediniyut ha-tsiyonit u-poaley Erets-Yiskrael (medina yehudit o du-leumit?)* [Zionist policy and the workers of Palestine: a Jewish state or a bi-national state?], which appeared in Tel-Aviv in July 1944. By that time, the victory of the Allies over Nazi Germany was already certain and Ben Gurion outlined his views of the future. He was firm about the already controversial form of a future Palestine: free of English dominion. The idea of a bi-national state in which Palestinians and Jews would live democratically together – an idea very dear to Martin Buber and other idealist Zionists – was not feasible. The new Israel was to be essentially a Jewish state, a socialist country for a young and free people. It might not become a haven for the remnants of Nazi persecution that survived in Europe. The Jewish state of the future must be a place only for young and strong people able to help construct the new life.

This was the vision of David Ben Gurion in 1944. Later political developments necessitated a different course of Israeli politics, but Ben Gurion and his socialist party remained in power long enough to realize part of his vision.

Rudolph Rocker (IISH BG B3/558)

p 14 left: MAPAI publication, 1944 (IISH BRO 4177/9)

p 14 right: Bund Pesach Haggadah (IISH BRO 3225/5)

Left: Letter about the Bund collection, 7 February 1933 (IISH, R. Abramovich Papers, 3)



S

H

S

Buy a Historical Poster

www.socialhistoryshop.com

