Fighting against Empire in Mokum: Transnational anti-colonialism and space in Amsterdam, 1920s-1930s

Vliet, Dana van

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Name: Dana van Vliet
Student number: S1362976
Research MA Colonial and Global History
Email: d.van.vliet.2@umail.leidenuniv.nl
Supervisor: Dr. C.M. Stolte
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[1] Cover image: Meeting of the Roode Hulp (IRH) in Carré Theatre.
Source: Roode Hulp, 'Foto's, die ervan getuigen, dat de Roode Hulp haar plaats in de rijen van 't proletariaat heeft veroverd', vol.2:7 (1928), 4-5.

Abbreviations

ANDB	Algemene Nederlandse Diamantwerkersbond (General Dutch Diamond Workers' Union)
AOC	Anti-Oorlogs Comité (Anti War Committee)
APV	Algemene Plaatselijke Verordening (General Location Regulation)
ARP	Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti Revolutionary Party)
CAOC	Centraal Anti-Oorlogs Comité (Central Anti-War Committee)
CPH	Communistische Partij Holland (Dutch Communist Party)
CI	Centrale Inlichtingendienst (Central Intelligence Services)
IAH	Internationale Arbeiders Hulp (International Workers' Aid)
ILD	International Labor Defence
IRH	Internationale Roode Hulp (Dutch International Red Aid)
KLM	Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij (Dutch Royal Airlines)
LAI	Liga Tegen Imperialisme en Koloniale Onderdrukking (League Against Imperialism)
MOPR	International Red Aid
NAS	Nationaal Arbeiders-Secretariaat (National Workers' Secretariat)
NRH	Nederlandsche Roode Hulp (Dutch Red Aid)
PI	Perhimpoenan Indonesia
RAI	Rijwiel- en Automobiel-Industrie (Bicycle and Car Industry)
SDAP	Sociaal Democratische Arbeiderspartij (Social Democratic Labour Party)
VnN	Verbond van Nationalisten (Nationalist Bond)

Introduction

On the 13th of June 1932, a remarkable duo set out from Vienna on a journey which would take them across West-Europe. The first was an Austrian labourer left disabled from a war-wound, the second his companion who pushed the cart in which the labourer moved around. Originally, they had been on their way to Paris, where they were to hand over a memorandum to the French Prime Minister Édouard Herriot of the Parti Radical, warning against the dangers of world war. When the duo got news of an upcoming anti-war congress in Geneva, however, they changed their route and set off to their new destination.[2] The 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War would be held in Geneva in July and would be attended by prominent anti-colonial and anti-militarist activists and intellectuals from across the globe. Some high-profile names included the French writers Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland and the Russian writer Maxim Gorki.[3] A few days before the start of the congress, however, it became known that the Swiss authorities had prohibited the congress in Geneva. The duo then set of to Berlin, but changed route again when word reached them that it had finally been decided that Amsterdam would host the congress. After 1200 kilometres and weeks of travelling, they arrived at their destination.[4] Their journey had been a remarkable one, but they were far from the only international participants. In late-August, people arrived in Amsterdam by bike, train, car and even plane. About 1400 people flocked to Amsterdam from Europe and beyond, united in their fight against imperialism and war.[5] For a few days, Amsterdam was the centre of transnational anti-imperialist activity.

The internationalism of anti-imperialist conferencing seen in Amsterdam in August 1932 was a sign of the times. In the aftermath of the First World War a multitude of internationalisms had emerged across the political spectrum: "Socialist and communist internationalisms developed alongside and in tension with liberal capitalist and imperialist forms."[6] Imperialism became an internationalist project, while on the other hand anti-colonialists and colonial dissidents developed their own internationalisms. The development of such internationalisms was further aided by technological advancements making long-distance communications and mobility possible, as well as the emergence of "new metropolitan elites" which were closely connected to international circulations of information and the global exchange of ideas through newspapers and education.[7]

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[2] De Tribune, 'Oorlogsinvalide in wagentje van Weenen naar het anti-oorlogscongres', 29 August 1932, 6; De Tribune, 'Te voet van Weenen naar Amsterdam', 1 September 1932, 8.
[3] De Tribune, 'Wereldstrijdcongres tegen den imperialistischen oorlog,' 24 May 1932, 3.
[4] De Tribune, 'Te voet'.
[5] Nationaal Archief (NA), Ministerie van Justitie, Verbaalarchief, 1915-1955; Kabinetsarchief, 1915-1940, cat.ref. 2.09.22, inv.no. 16785; Huygens ING, Reports of Central Intelligence communications, 1919-1940, huygens.knaw.nl.
[6] Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century,* (Berkeley, 2015), 13.
[7] Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier (eds.), *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s-1930s,* (Basingstoke, 2012), 14.

Such developments of increased mobility and migration and global information networks transformed major European cities into 'hubs' of transnational anti-colonialism. As historian Daniel Brückenhaus explains:

> … European metropolitan countries played important roles as breeding grounds of internationalist anti-imperialism … Britain, France and Germany became the hubs of anti-imperialist networks, from which the spokes of extensive communication channels radiated out to many other parts in the world.[8]

According to historian Michael Goebel, the imperial metropolis was not only "a hub from which ideas resonated more widely, but also a generator of new anti-imperialist narratives through exchange."[9]

This thesis maps and traces networks of transnational anti-colonialism in interwar Amsterdam, researching the organizations and individuals connected to anti-colonial movements within the space of Amsterdam and bringing together local and global networks and movements. This study aims to give an answer to the question how transnational anti-colonialism was performed and experienced in the city of Amsterdam in the interwar years of 1919-1939.

In recent years, there have been various studies into the connections between anti-colonialism and the European city, centralizing the European city as a 'hub' of transnational anti-colonialism. In his review article of studies on international networks of anti-colonialism, Brückenhaus argues that the focus on a single European city allows scholars to "provide a micro-analysis of an urban environment, demonstrating in depth how activists from different countries and colonial territories used the city as a meeting place."[10] In recent years, a number of studies have focused on the European metropole as a space of anti-colonial activity and a 'hub' of anti-colonial networks. In his book, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*, Michael Goebel has explored the transnational networks of non-Europeans in interwar Paris, focusing on intersecting migrations as an "engine of ideological change."[11] Historian Jennifer Anne Boittin has examined the role of colonial migrants in Paris. She argues that, by their proximity to the 'hub' of imperial government and to sites of anti-imperial and feminist organizations, they were able to "play urban and overseas connections off of one another as they searched for effective arguments and united fronts."[12] Boittin ties phenomena of black culture in Paris to the politics and social lives of anti-imperial and feminist migrants.[13] Historian Ole Birk Laursen has studied spaces of Indian anti-

[8] Daniel Brückenhaus, 'Challenging Imperialism Across Borders: Recent Studies of Twentieth-Century Internationalist Networks against Empire,' *Contemporary European History,* vol.29:1 (2020), 104-115, 106.
[9] Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism,* (Cambridge, 2015), 6.
[10] Brückenhaus, 'Challenging', 105.
[11] Goebel, *Anti-Imperial,* 6-13.
[12] Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris,* (Lincoln, 2010), xv.
[13] Boittin, *Metropolis,* xvii.

colonialism in both Paris and London. In his 2021 study, 'Spaces of Indian Anti-Colonialism in Early Twentieth-Century London and Paris', Laursen takes a transnational comparative approach to gain "a deeper understanding … of how specific urban geographies within these imperial metropoles enabled the development of forms of Indian anti-colonial resistance in exile."[14] He focuses on "socio-economic and political divides between Indian nationalists, inter-revolutionary alliances and networks, and the praxis of Indian anti-colonial resistance in exile."[15] Another study on London is found in the 2015 book *Black London* by historian Marc Matera, which presents the city as a key site of black internationalism and anti-colonialism. He argues that the imperial metropolis was "a site of African diasporic formation, intellectual production, and political organization where the larger context of empire represented the generative common ground for African and Afro-Caribbean intellectuals' and artists' imaginations of a global black community."[16] Matera traces black Londoners to "interconnected sites of intellectual and cultural production in the imperial metropolis [focusing on] daily interaction and the organization of social relations within these sites …"[17] Berlin, another metropole of transnational anti-colonialism, has been studied by historian Fredrik Petersson. In his 2014 study, 'Hub of the Anti-Imperialist Movement', Petersson focused on the International Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism (LAI), located in Berlin, to examine the city as a 'hub' of anti-colonial activism. He argues that "the LAI and its International Secretariat in Berlin aspired to contact, use and organize individuals in the anti-imperialist movement, with Berlin as the place that made it possible for such activity to take hold, flourish and then diminish."[18] He presents Berlin as a "sanctuary for anti-imperialist activists in the 1920s," in which a large number of political refugees and colonial students were able to develop a 'socio-political microcosm' which made the activities of the LAI in Berlin possible.[19]

Evidently there have been quite a few studies tracing transnational and migratory networks and anti-colonial movements to major European cities. The city of Amsterdam has been omitted from the research on European anti-colonial 'hubs'. The transnational history of anti-colonialism in Amsterdam – or, more broadly, in the Netherlands – has been mostly limited to the work of historian Klaas Stutje on Indonesian nationalism. Stutje has explored transnational connections and activities of Indonesian students, reaching beyond the Netherlands and Dutch colonies. He argues that this transnational approach informs "how the rise of nationalism inspired the creation of new networks extending beyond the Netherlands and the Netherlands Indies."[20] In a more recent book, *Campaigning in Europe for a*

[14] Ole Birk Laursen, 'Spaces of Indian Anti-Colonialism in Early Twentieth-Century London and Paris', *Journal of South Asian Studies,* vol.44:4 (2021), 634-650, 634.
[15] Laursen, 'Spaces', 636.
[16] Matera, *Black London,* 4.
[17] Ibidem, 1-2.
[18] Fredrik Petersson, 'Hub of the Anti-Imperialist Movement: The League Against Imperialism and Berlin, 1927-1933', *Interventions,* vol.16:1 (2014), 49-70, 54.
[19] Petersson, 'Hub', 55.
[20] Klaas Stutje, 'Indonesian Identities Abroad: International Engagement of Colonial Students in the Netherlands, 1908-1931', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden,* vol.128:1 (2013), 151-172, 152-153.

Free Indonesia, he adds that "Indonesian nationalism and anticolonialism did not develop in isolation, but emerged against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving global context and in relation to other political movements and networks."[21] In this book, Stutje traces the activities of Indonesian students to multiple West-European sites of anti-colonialism, identifying "significant encounters between Indonesian nationalists and other anticolonial activists…"[22] Doing so has allowed Stutje to study the dynamics of transnational networks of anti-colonialism in the Indonesian context.

Research centring Amsterdam as an anti-colonial 'hub' is thus lacking. However, like the major European metropoles of London, Paris and Berlin, Amsterdam very much became part of the internationalist world during the interwar period. According to historian Mariëlle Hageman, Amsterdam became an international 'hub' in the early 1920s. Travel to Amsterdam was made easier and cheaper by the modernization of the nineteenth-century railways and the establishment of Schiphol Airport. The city also invested in international collaborations in the fields of economics, science and culture, including the organization of the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam. Importantly, Amsterdam developed as both an important gateway to Europe and an international business centre.[23] The growth of Amsterdam into a global city was reflected in the urban development of the city, as new neighbourhoods were built and surrounding municipalities were absorbed as a result of the city's expansion.[24] An examination of these developments in city planning and social relationships relating to neighbourhoods in Amsterdam may explain how Amsterdam functioned as a 'hub' of transnational anti-colonialism. Analysing the spatial relationship to anti-colonialism in Amsterdam from below helps to interpret the role of local networks in the international movement in new ways.

This thesis takes a spatial approach to the study of anti-colonial internationalism and the European anti-colonial 'hub,' adding a new perspective to the historiography of transnational anti-colonialism. In recent years, the emergence of transnational history has led to a new questioning of the concept of 'space' in anti-colonial historiography. This new interpretation of space understands it as a socially constructed concept in which "different spaces are produced by a variety of actors and social groups… They are changeable, and indeed changing, and usually not neatly bounded, but rather overlapping and in competition."[25] Space is an abstract concept which relates to the idea of place. Geographer Tim Cresswell explains that terms such as space and place are interrelated concepts with contested definitions. Simply put, place is "space invested with meaning in the context of power."[26] On a local level, place and space come together to form sites, which are "designated for some specific kind of

[21] Klaas Stutje, *Campaigning in Europe for a Free Indonesia: Indonesian Nationalists and the Worldwide Anticolonial Movement, 1917-1931,* (Copenhagen, 2019), 2.
[22] Stutje, *Campaigning,* 3.
[23] Mariëlle Hageman, *Amsterdam in de wereld. Sporen van Nederlands gedeelde verleden*, (Amsterdam, 2017), 83.
[24] Geert Mak, *Een kleine geschiedenis van Amsterdam,* (Amsterdam, 1995), 302.
[25] Antje Dietze and Katja Naumann, 'Revisiting transnational actors from a spatial perspective,' *European Review of History,* vol.25:3-4 (2018), 415-430, 417.
[26] Tim Cresswell, *Place: a short introduction,* (Malden, 2004), 12.

activity."[27] These can be everyday sites for everyday activities or diplomatic sites for activities of politics and governance and everything in between.[28] Space and place are dependent on each other. Thus, the space of the 'international' is interconnected with the place, in this case the city of Amsterdam. Treating space and place as interrelated concepts allows the scholar to "interrogate the relationship between internationalism in the abstract and the geographical specifics of its creation in particular sites."[29]

Researching anti-colonial internationalism from a spatial perspective gives new insights into the interconnectedness of internationalism and specific sites. Transnational organizations and actors who formulated and propagated ideas on anti-colonialism were always grounded in spatial contexts. According to historians Antje Dietze and Katja Naumann, "[n]o matter how mobile, or how strongly engaged they were in building connections, their activities were usually also embedded in local, national, regional or otherwise bounded contexts."[30] Marc Matera applies this idea to the history of black internationalism in London. He argues that the history of anti-colonialism and "black politics … emerged in multiple spheres and from an array of intellectual and cultural sources in London; as such, it is an intellectual history grounded in social relationships and spaces."[31] These interactions and spaces were central to the formulation and development of ideas and practices on anti-colonialism and the subaltern position in the colonial metropole. According to Matera:

> To appreciate the reach, evolution, and limits of their intellectual and political imagination requires careful attention to where these intellectuals lived, ate, danced, debated, studied, and loved in the metropolis – in sum, to the "political and affective consequences of social embeddedness."[32]

Social relations and the formulation of ideas on anti-colonialism became tangible during events and meetings. These were also embedded in spatial contexts. In his book on international diplomacy, political scientist Iver B. Neumann argues that "[e]vents depend on their sites. The site shapes the event and the event shapes the site. Creating and maintaining sites therefore are at the very heart of diplomatic work."[33] The maintenance of sites includes what Neumann calls 'mundane stuff': "Infrastructure – transport, sleeping quarters and restrooms – must be overhauled; food and drink must be at hand; places for … fringe meetings must be available; … security must be in place."[34]

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[27] Iver B. Neumann, *Diplomatic Sites: A Critical Enquiry,* (London, 2013), 4.
[28] Neumann, *Sites,* 4.
[29] Jake Hodder, Stephen Legg and Mike Heffernan, 'Introduction: Historical geographies of internationalism, 1900-1950', *Political Geography,* vol.49 (2015), 1-6, 4.
[30] Dietze and Naumann, 'Transnational actors,' 416.
[31] Matera, *London,* 6.
[32] Ibidem, 6-7.
[33] Neumann, *Sites*, 5.
[34] Idem.

According to Neumann, diplomatic sites are always contested, as different groups – diplomats, media, activists, military, businesspeople – will "attempt to access and shape diplomatic sites."[35] Neumann distinguishes between two forms of contestation: attempts to shape sites and attempts to shape representation of events.[36] Groups have different ideas about the accessibility or security of sites. They also have different perspectives on the news coverage of diplomatic events. According to sociologist Peter Cox, "infrastructure in inherently political [and] the ways in which different infrastructures permit some courses of action and deny others, how they route and re-route mobile practices, and how and what any given infrastructure makes possible, are matters of justice and injustice."[37]

The approach to space and spatiality in this thesis is inspired by the research project 'Conferencing the International: A Cultural and Historical Geography of the Origins of Internationalism, 1919-39', which ran between 2015-2020 and was funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). This research project was led by geographers Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan and Benjamin Thorpe of the University of Nottingham. They approached internationalism from a geographical perspective, studying how divergent forms of internationalisms manifested themselves in international conferences in the interwar period. The research team argues that geography has been absent from studies of internationalism and has suggested three methods for the application of historical geographies of internationalism. First, geographical perspectives are able to "address new geographies, spaces and sites of the international" to rethink the diverse manifestations of internationalism.[38] Second, geographical perspectives may "interrogate the relationship between internationalism in the abstract and the geographical specifics of its creation in particular sites."[39] In this way, scholars are able to examine how abstract notions on internationalism interacted with specific spatial contexts. Third, the geographical framework helps to understand how internationalism intersects with diverging political projects, examining how specific spatial political and social norms, values and movements influenced notions of internationalism.[40] The research project resulted in the book *Placing Internationalism*, which collects a number of studies that apply a geographical perspective to case studies of international conferencing. These studies follow four main methodological approaches: the centralization of material factors and logistics necessary to the functioning of conference spaces; a focus on questions of subalternity; an attention to the theatricality of conferencing and the ways in which conferences functioned as lived places; and an examination of emotions and atmospheres in context of the 'para-conference' spaces in which delegates moved.[41] Through the analysis of the "nature, form and

[35] Neumann, *Sites,* 6.
[36] Idem.
[37] Peter Cox, 'Theorising infrastructure: a politics of spaces and edges,' in: Peter Cox and Till Koglin (eds.), *The Politics of Cycling Infrastructure: Spaces and (In)Equality,* (Bristol, 2021), 15-34, 15.
[38] Hodder et al., 'Historical geographies', 3.
[39] Ibidem, 4.
[40] Idem.
[41] Mike Heffernan et al., 'Introduction,' in: Stephen Legg et al. (eds.), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World,* (London, 2022), 1-10, 7-8.

organization" of international conferences, this collection examines the ways in which space informs and shapes political events and how these events were actually experienced.

The geographical approach of the 'Conferencing the International' research project shines a new light on the study of the European city as a 'hub' of transnational anti-colonialism. Placing space in the centre of the analysis, new questions and perspectives emerge on the ways in which anti-colonialists in the interwar period made use of – and were shaped by – the local urban space in which they moved. In this thesis, this approach is applied to the study of Amsterdam as an anti-colonial 'hub'. Informed by both the research project, the book *Placing Internationalism,* and the project's virtual exhibition,[42] this thesis examines the relationship between transnational anti-colonialism and the spaces of anti-colonial activity in Amsterdam.

Like Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe, this thesis approaches anti-colonialism 'from below' to understand the embeddedness of the transnational anti-colonial movement in various spaces and places in Amsterdam. This spatial approach paves the way for new insights into local manifestations of anti-colonialism. In the analysis of events and sites in Amsterdam, this thesis combines elements of social networks, logistics and power dynamics to examine the different functions of space in context of anti-colonial activity and the ways space and place connect and overlap. However, where the research project 'Conferencing the International' focuses on the topic of international conferencing, this thesis applies their theoretical framework to the question of the European 'hub' of transnational anti-colonialism. It thus introduces a spatial approach to the historiography of transnational anti-colonialism in the European metropole, taking a new perspective to the questions of connectivity and interaction, political organization, anti-colonial culture and sociability and urban geography. The aim of this thesis is to place Amsterdam in the historiography of European sites of transnational networks of anti-colonialism by identifying sites of anti-colonialism in Amsterdam as well as global networks coming together in this urban space.

This thesis takes a broad interpretation of what constitutes anti-colonial activism, arguing that it was more comprehensive than its ultimate goal of independence for the colonies. As historians Marc Matera and Susan Kingsley Kent point out: "Opposition to colonialism and imperialism took many forms, and its goals were equally varied. It included movements to obtain complete independence but also efforts to secure rights and representation within existing imperial arrangements and administrative structures."[43] The multiplicity of anti-colonialist goals within communist circles becomes clear from the colonial program of the Communistische Partij Holland (CPH; Dutch Communist Party), written in 1928 for the general elections. Their program consisted of nine points, of which only the first two referred to

[42] University of Nottingham, 'Spaces of Internationalism,' via https://spacesofinternationalism.omeka.net/, accessed 30 November 2021; University of Nottingham, 'Conferencing the International', via https://www.nottingham.ac.uk, visited 30 November 2021.

[43] Marc Matera and Susan Kingsley Kent, *The Global 1930s: The International Decade,* (London and New York, 2017), 71.

the party's demand for the "full and immediate independence of Indonesia and other overseas territories."[44] The other points on the electoral program related to human and labour rights, including the rights of association and assembly; the right of demonstration and freedom of press; a general pardon for political dissidents, and undoing of their internment or exile; the abolition of all corporal punishments; investments in public housing and public health; and the introduction of the eight hour workday. The program, in line with international communist programs, also contained demands for the dismantling of capitalist institutions in Indonesia. In communist ideology, ideas of imperialism and capitalism were very much entangled. Along those lines, the CPH called for the elimination of the institution of privately owned lands and restitution of these lands to the local population, as well as a ban on the forced lease of locally owned land to western capitalist businesses.[45]

The activities of the International Red Aid (MOPR) are another example of connections between anti-colonialism and humanitarian aid. This organization of the Comintern was established in 1922 to "provide relief and aid for thousands of Communist and non-partisan revolutionaries who were subjected to the persecutions of 'bourgeois class justice' and 'white terror'."[46] The International Red Aid organized global campaigns for famous causes, such as Sacco and Vanzetti, the Scottsboro Boys, Tom Mooney and the Spanish Civil War. The organization was a successful "instrument of Comintern agitation and propaganda."[47] The organization depended on its local and national chapters, creating an organizational network across Europe, Northern America and China and Japan.[48]

This thesis shows the overlapping goals of anti-colonialists in Amsterdam as well as the embeddedness of the local anti-colonial project within communist, anti-militarist and human rights movements. It thus includes a number of actors and organizations from a variety of movements within Amsterdam, traces the connections between them and analyses the ways in which they shared the anti-colonial spaces. Taking a broader view of what constituted anti-colonial activism gives a more comprehensive view on the networks active in Amsterdam and the ways they intersected. Anti-colonialism was often integrated into the rationale and practices of a range of organizations and networks, even if it was not their main focus. Efforts of pacifist and anti-militarist networks contained strong elements of anti-colonialism, for example when protesting the deployment of military equipment and personnel to the colonies. Others sought to improve human rights and conditions in the colonies while independence was not yet on the horizon, or assist colonial subjects in the metropole, such as the

[44] Nationaal Archief (NA), Ministerie van Justitie, Verbaalarchief, 1915-1955; Kabinetsarchief, 1915-1940, catalogue reference 2.09.22, inventory number 16644; via Huygens ING, Reports of Central Intelligence communications, 1919-1940, huygens.knaw.nl.
[45] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16644.
[46] J. Martin Ryle, 'International Red Aid and Comintern Strategy, 1922-1926', *International Review of Social History,* vol.15:1 (1970), 43-68, 43.
[47] Martin Ryle, 'Red Aid,' 43-44.
[48] Ibidem, 49-50.

Committee for Indonesian Exiles in 1927, which assisted political dissidents exiled to Amsterdam and other Dutch cities.[49]

This thesis draws on a variety of sources, including the memoires, correspondence and other writings of individual anti-colonialists; reports, minutes and other documents from organizations active in anti-colonialism; newspaper articles; and reports and documents from state surveillance and intelligence services. The personal archives of many prominent Dutch anti-colonialists, as well as international organizations, can be found in the International Institute of Social History (IISG). Newspaper articles and other media sources come from a variety of media outlets, but mainly from Dutch socialist and communist newspapers and periodicals, such as *De Tribune* – affiliated with the Dutch Communist Party – and *De Vrije Socialist*. Sources from Dutch intelligence services, located at the Dutch National Archives, have been accessed through the databases of the Central Intelligence Services (CI), provided by the Huygens ING, a Dutch research institute. The CI was active between 1919 and 1940 as a distribution centre for information concerning domestic security.[50] The sources include information on Dutch and foreign individuals within the Netherlands, including members of the Dutch branch of the LAI. The database not only includes sources from the intelligence service, but also documents from the individuals themselves, such as pamphlets and articles on their activities and ideologies.

The interwar transnational anti-colonialism located in Amsterdam is studied in three thematic parts. Chapter 1 focuses on the material factors which inform the conference spaces in Amsterdam, analysing the logistics of the organization, as well as the networks behind the logistical organization. Additionally, the chapter examines the infrastructures which allowed delegates to move to and within Amsterdam, and the ways in which the state sought to obstruct their mobility. Chapter 2 centralizes the venue as a unit of analysis, examining where, why, and how locations in Amsterdam were used as spaces of anti-colonialism. This chapter focuses not only on venues of international events, but also on those of local meetings and on 'behind-the-scenes' venues, such as offices and secretariats of anti-colonial organizations. Finally, chapter 3 traces the spaces 'in between', or 'para-conference' spaces. This chapter analyses how the Amsterdam space was used for outside activism, celebrations and social activities integral to the anti-colonial movements. Moving beyond formal activities of anti-colonialism, this last chapter questions how everyday practices of anti-colonial networks were informed by – and likewise shaped – the local space.

[49] Nationaal Archief (NA), Ministerie van Justitie, Verbaalarchief, 1915-1955; Kabinetsarchief, 1915-1940, cat.ref. 2.09.22, inv.no. 16604; Huygens ING, Reports of Central Intelligence communications, 1919-1940, huygens.knaw.nl.

[50] Huygens ING, 'Rapporten Centrale Inlichtingendienst 1919-1940', via http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/, accessed 30 November 2021.

1. Material factors: World Congress Against Imperialist War, 1932

An important aspect of international conferencing, according to Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe, were the "material factors necessary for conference spaces to function: the logistics, networks and infrastructures required."[51] This chapter analyses these material factors and logistics of organizing an international conference through a case study of the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War, held in the RAI in Amsterdam. Researching the interplay between local organizations and networks, as well as state and municipal surveillance, it traces the ways in which the logistical organization of the congress was rooted in the local space and networks.

a. Organizing a congress in Amsterdam

Image 1: The 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War in the RAI – *Het Parool, 'Moskou maakte een vuist tegen oorlog, in het Amsterdam van 1932, 17 February 2022, via https://www.parool.nl, accessed 1 July 2022.*

In the summer of 1932, Amsterdam suddenly found itself in a bustle. Days before the start of the World Congress Against Imperialist War, to be held in Geneva on the 28th of July, it was announced that the Swiss authorities had prohibited the congress. *De Tribune* blamed the League of Nations, arguing that they had pressured Swiss authorities to prevent the congress from happening.[52] In any case, a new location had to be found immediately. In the first week of August, the decision was made to organize the congress on the 27th and 28th of August 1932 in Amsterdam.[53]

[51] Heffernan et al. , 'Introduction', 7.
[52] De Tribune, 'Het anti-oorlogscongres te Genève verboden', 19 July 1932, 1.
[53] De Telegraaf, 'Wereldstrijdcongres tegen den oorlog', 9 August 1932; De Tribune, 'Het anti-oorlogscongres te Amsterdam', 9 August 1932.

The World Congress Against Imperialist War was organized in response to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931.[54] The congress established the World Committee against Imperialist War, which later merged with the European Workers' Anti-Fascist Union to form the World Committee Against Imperialist War and Fascism.[55] Also known as the Amsterdam-Pleyer Movement, they sought to "generate a broad-based movement uniting disparate progressive and left-wing groups, including communists and socialists."[56] Its aim was to establish an umbrella organization in opposition to war, imperialism and fascism. Although at the time of the Amsterdam congress the focus was on anti-imperialism and 'revolutionary pacifism,' the movement developed into a mainly anti-fascist movement due to the rise of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy.[57]

Who exactly was behind the organization of the congress long remained a mystery to the outside world. Publicly, the initiative for the congress lay with Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland. They led the international committee which also included Upton Sinclair, Madame Sun Yat-sen, Theodore Driser, Albert Einstein, Paul Langevin, John dos Passos, Frans Masereel, Eleonore Despard and Jane Devanny.[58] Behind the scenes, however, the German communist Willi Münzenberg played an important role in the organization of the world congress: "An organizational genius, a brilliant tactician, and an expert in modern propaganda technique, Münzenberg orchestrated the vast assembly of 'intellectual and manual workers' without the full consent of the Comintern."[59]. Münzenberg was the brains behind the establishment of the League Against Imperialism (LAI) in 1927. The LAI was to be a supplement to the activities of the Comintern's International Workers' Aid (IAH), broadening their agenda to include questions of colonialism with the aim of gaining access to colonial countries. Although by 1932 the LAI had largely crumbled, it was involved in both the political groundwork and the logistical organization of the Amsterdam congress.[60] Münzenberg was a contested figure in the anti-colonial movement. As a committed communist on the Comintern's payroll, he sought to secure Comintern control of the LAI. On the other hand, "Münzenberg intended to use socialists within the LAI as a means to demonstrate its non-political and non-partisan composition."[61] By 1932, however, the Comintern had moved to a more radical non-cooperation strategy, which made collaboration between communists and socialists more complicated and less desirable on both sides.[62] As such, it made sense that Münzenberg's role in the

[54] David James Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), 159.
[55] Thomas Davies, *NGOs: A New History of Transnational Civil Society,* (London, 2013), 115.
[56] Fisher, *Rolland,* 158.
[57] Ibidem*,* 159-161.
[58] De Vrije Socialist, 'Het Congres Barbusse-Rolland', 20 July 1932, 1-2; De Tribune, 'Wereldstrijdcongres tegen den imperialistischen oorlog', 24 August 1932, 3; Fisher, *Romain Rolland,* 158.
[59] Fisher, *Romain Rolland,* 158.
[60] Petersson, 'Hub,' 51-68.
[61] Michele Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism: Nehru, India, and Interwar Internationalism,* (Cambridge, 2018), 73.
[62] Louro, *Comrades,* 141.

organization of the Amsterdam congress was downplayed, as the organization sought to present a non-partisan front.

The logistical organization on the ground lay in the hands of a committee in Amsterdam. They were left with less than a month for preparations. A congress office was set up at Prinsengracht 1083 of which Simon David 'Bob' Neter was to be the secretary.[63] Neter was a Jewish communist and architect and had been active in the Amsterdam anti-colonialist networks for some time, including as treasurer of the Amsterdam chapter of the LAI.[64] The local organization was responsible for the logistics of organizing the conference in Amsterdam. This was what Neumann called the 'mundane stuff' which nevertheless was crucial in shaping sites of anti-colonial conferencing.

A location had to be found which would allow for enough space to accommodate the expected 2,000 international delegates. For this purpose, the RAI exposition hall in the south of Amsterdam was rented for the weekend. RAI – short for 'Rijwiel- en Automobiel-Industrie' (Bicycle and Car Industry) – owned an exhibition hall of 13.000m^2 on the Ferdinand Bolstraat, which also functioned as a conference hall.[65] The hall also had to be prepared for the conference, which involved building a stage, setting up seating arrangements and decorating the hall. Other logistical arrangements included sleeping arrangements, catering, the printing of flyers and programs, transport and the reception of foreign delegates arriving in Amsterdam. These aspects of the logistical organization will be discussed at length in the subsequent paragraphs.

Even during the preparations in August, it was uncertain whether the congress would be allowed to continue in Amsterdam. The Nationalist Bond (VvN), a small fascist political party, made an attempt to convince the Dutch government to ban the congress. On August 24th, the VvN sent their protest to the Ministries of Interior and Justice, arguing that the congress was financed with Soviet money and would mean a mass gathering of communists and communist influences and should therefore be prohibited.[66] The Dutch government declared that it would not restrict or obstruct the congress as oversight of the congress lay with the municipal authorities rather than with the national government. The government did seek to limit the movements of foreign communist participants to the congress through passport restrictions.[67]

The uncertainty of the location, both due to the late choice for Amsterdam and the resistance of the VvN and the government, complicated the logistical organization. The organization wrote: "The organization in Holland was exceedingly hindered by the uncertainty in which we found ourselves in

[63] De Tribune, 'Het wereldstrijd-congres tegen den oorlog te Amsterdam', 15 August 1932; Huygens ING, 'Lijsten van revolutionairen in Nederland', via https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl, accessed 17 May 2022.
[64] Huygens ING, 'Lijst van revolutionairen'.
[65] RAI Amsterdam, 'Historie,' via https://www.rai.nl, accessed 20 May 2022.
[66] Huygens ING, 'Repertorium kleine politieke partijen 1918-1967: Verbond van Nationalisten', via http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/, accessed 12 March 2022; Het Volk, 'De fascisten, banger dan Ruys', 25 August 1932, 3.
[67] Het Volk, 'Visa worden geweigerd', 24 August 1932, 1; De Tijd, 'Het communistisch anti-oorlogscongres', 26 August 1932, 2.

the last days before the congress … especially because we still did not have any certainty that Amsterdam was absolutely fixed [as the location]."[68]

The logistical difficulties of preparing for a major international conference in so little time become clear when looking into the finances. The World Congress left the organizational committee with quite a debt. The Central Anti War Committee (CAOC), established as a result of the congress, immediately had to deal with the payment. They soon reached out to their international networks. The French Anti War Committee agreed to pay part of the debt, as did the American committee. Willi Münzenberg, the initiator of the congress, was less willing. Initially, he had promised to send a sum of five thousand francs, but soon afterwards he voiced his concerns over the correctness of the expenses. According to him, the cost of the printed materials and the food had been calculated incorrectly. In addition, he argued that "the food on the second congress day was so bad, that you could have done something; at least you should not have paid the whole amount."[69] The disagreements over the debts led to problems for the local organizers, as suppliers threatened with legal action. "The supplier of the mass quarters in the schools will take legal action against Mrs. van Gelder, a sympathetic comrade from the Amsterdam University, who ordered these things for us," they wrote to Münzenberg, urging for a resolution.[70] The carpenter who worked on the construction of the meeting hall also threatened to sue. For the most part, Bob Neter was personally responsible for the debts made by the organization's committees. In addition to the financial difficulties this could inflict on him, he feared a scandal if the creditors would go to court. Rather than letting it come to a court proceeding, it would be better to pay now, argued Neter. He proposed to ask the national committees affiliated with the International Anti-War Committee to each pay a small amount of one hundred guilders, which together would be enough to pay the debts. The CAOC, however, agreed with Münzenberg that the accounting and financial record keeping was not up to scratch. In a report on the financial management of the congress, the committee complained that the audit of the finances was made impossible due to amateurism by Neter and the congress' treasurer Heleen Ankersmit. Often, audit evidence supporting the financial statements lacked. The audit committee of the CPH concluded that:

> Since the financial administration … left much to be desired and to mention one strong example, the leader, party member Neter … destroyed a large number of anti-war stamps [after the congress] and tore up the left-over entrance tickets of the congress, so that any verification was impossible, we believe that we do not exaggerate with our assertion that the leadership was not … equal to the task.[71]

[68] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16785.
[69] Idem.
[70] Idem.
[71] Idem.

The logistical organization of the Amsterdam congress was thus greatly hampered by the last-minute change of location from Geneva to Amsterdam. The change of location required a new organizational committee who knew the Amsterdam space and networks. The uncertainty of whether or not the congress would be allowed to continue added to the organizational hurdles. In the end, the congress was able to go on in Amsterdam, possibly due to the spatial distance from the League of Nations in Geneva as well as differences in political attitude towards the congress. Still, the organization and delegates to the congress were confronted with state surveillance and police obstruction, which is examined in the subsequent paragraphs.

b. Local networks in Amsterdam

Much of the 'mundane stuff' which came with the logistical organization of an international congress relied on the participation of local networks. The role of these networks in shaping Amsterdam's position as a 'hub' of transnational anti-colonialism in the interwar period can be explained through the lens of the city's urban development. Historian Peter Jan Knegtmans explains the urban development of Amsterdam in those years: "New neighbourhoods had been built, canals filled in and through-ways created for traffic; the city became more accessible due to the construction of large canals and railways; and the building of large offices, warehouses and hotels led to suburbanisation."[72] The 1920s were a period of large-scale building and construction of new neighbourhoods outside of the city centre. In the early 1920s, the city had become larger through the annexation of surrounding municipalities like Sloten, Watergraafsmeer, Buiksloot, Nieuwendam and Ransdorp. Consequently, the municipal government of Amsterdam now had access to a lot of cheap land on which they could construct new buildings and houses. Led by the social-democratic council member Floor Wibaut, the municipality got to work on the execution of major plans for social housing and urban development. At the same time, the decaying quarters of the city centre were cleaned up and restructured, directed by another social democratic council member: Monne de Miranda.[73] One of the neighbourhoods to undergo transformation was the Jordaan. Here, a large number of houses was declared uninhabitable, and a total of 1300 were demolished during the 1920s. Still, the conditions in the Jordaan remained rough, with the highest population density and the least number of rooms per house. There was little in the way of ventilation, heating, and other modern appliances.[74]

In the early 1920s, local networks were still largely connected to neighbourhoods in Amsterdam like the Jordaan. During the decade, however, this so-called 'buurtcultuur' (neighbourhood society) slowly started to decrease as people moved to newly erected neighbourhoods at the outskirts of the city

[72] Peter Jan Knegtmans, *A History of Student Life in Amsterdam,* (Amsterdam, 2017), 31.
[73] Mak, *Amsterdam,* 302-306.
[74] Wolf Kielich, *Jordaners op de Barricaden: Het oproer van 1934,* (Amsterdam, 1984), 21.

and new connections were formed outside of the neighbourhoods through political parties, associations, and sports clubs. These new connections started to replace the neighbourhoods as the centre of social and political life. However, these shifts happened gradually over the interwar decades and communist organizations continued to take a neighbourhood-centred approach in their local political work.[75]

In the new neighbourhoods, leftist political parties did well. While in other major cities in the Netherlands, such as Rotterdam, the communists had difficulty to gain a foothold, in Amsterdam they established quite a presence. When they gained two seats in the Lower House at the 1918 national elections, half of the votes cast to their party came from Amsterdam.[76] In the Amsterdam municipal government, the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP) was dominant since 1921, when they secured a third of the city council.[77] The CPH was a much smaller party, although they increasingly grew during the interwar years. The unemployment caused by the Great Depression led to an exponential growth in members. Between 1930 and 1932, membership of the CPH increased fivefold. The subscription of CPH's newspaper *De Tribune* grew from 5000 in 1931 to 20.000 in 1933. Many of these new members came from Amsterdam, which housed two-fifths of the CPH's supporters.[78] The communists were mainly located in Amsterdam's working-class neighbourhoods. In 1935, the Dutch intelligence services identified working class neighbourhoods such as the Jordaan, the Indische Buurt and the Islands of Kattenburg, Wittenburg and Oostenburg, which previously had been designated as social-democratic areas, now as mostly communist districts.[79] As the CPH's membership base grew in Amsterdam, communist-affiliated organizations established local chapters in the capital. The LAI-Holland established its first local chapter in Amsterdam in November 1927 under the leadership of Barend Engelander.[80] The establishment of local chapters was monitored by the national organization, who instructed their local chapters on how to arrange their establishment. In instructions from the board of the LAI-Holland, members were advised that local chapters should be established during a founding meeting, where a local board of at least three members would be chosen. The national chapter was to be informed about the identity of the local board as well as the number of members. Decisions about contributions was in the hands of local chapters, with a minimum of five cents per week. Every month, 50 percent of local contribution proceeds had to be paid to the national chapter.[81] Local chapters arranged events and activities ranging from neighbourhood meetings to social activities. These activities will be

[75] Mak, *Amsterdam,* 292.
[76] Harm Kaal, *Het hoofd van de stad: Amsterdam en zijn burgemeester tijdens het interbellum,* VU Research Portal, (Amsterdam, 2008), 21.
[77] Mak, *Amsterdam,* 302.
[78] Kielich, *Jordaners,* 61.
[79] Centraal Archievendepot van het ministerie van Defensie, Alg. Hoofdkw./ Generale Staf, Sectie III, [Rapportage van de C.I. over de onder de Nederlanders heersende geest], inv. no. 56; via Huygens ING, Reports of Central Intelligence communications, 1919-1940, huygens.knaw.nl. N.B. archive has been transferred to the National Archives of the Netherlands, but has not been found there.
[80] De Tribune, 'Liga', 30 November 1927, 2.
[81] NA, Collectie 480 P.J. Schmidt, cat.ref. 2.21.300, inv.nr. 10.

discussed in subsequent chapters. For now, it should be said that, while the national organization decided on policies and organized meetings and events on a national scale, actual recruitment and the practices of anti-colonial activity and meetings often happened at the level of the local chapter. These local chapters also played a significant role in the logistical organization of international events.

In the introduction of this thesis, the importance of infrastructure and logistics as part of the practice of transnational anti-colonialism has been discussed. In the introduction to their book *Placing Internationalism,* Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe argue for the need to pay closer attention to the organization of international conferences, as this gives insight into the way events were grounded in space and place and how they can be analysed as lived places.[82] Later in the book, Latin Americanist Joanne Crow notes that "when we are studying conferences we need to go beyond their principal organizers, leading delegates and keynote speakers, and scrutinize as wide a range of actors and interventions as possible."[83] In context of the organization of conferences, attention is thus given to the role of local networks and the people 'behind the scenes' who attributed to the logistical organization on the ground. These local people in Amsterdam had a crucial task in the logistics of preparing the conference hall, the sleeping arrangements and other material factors.

Major international meetings and conferences heavily relied on the participation of these local networks in Amsterdam. Locals sympathetic to anti-colonialism and related causes were called upon to assist in the practical organization of such events. For the preparation of the RAI building, in which the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War would be held, the organizational committee called on local carpenters and builders to help with the construction and furnishing of the conference hall. Calls published in national communist newspaper *De Tribune* asked builders from Amsterdam to come to the small auditorium in the RAI building on the 25th of August with their work tools. Additional builders were asked to come on the 27th.[84]

Local networks were also instrumental in the organization of sleeping arrangements during international meetings and conferences. More well-off attendees might be able to afford staying in a hotel. Many of the participants, however, did not have that option. The organization of the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War was expecting some 1400 foreign participants. Many of these came to Amsterdam "absolutely without a penny."[85] The main form of sleeping accommodation during international events was private lodging, relying on local 'kameraden' (comrades) in Amsterdam to provide a sleeping place in their home. This was a cheap option, both for the organization and the participants, but did depend on the willingness of the Amsterdam networks to provide these lodgings.

[82] Heffernan et al., 'Introduction,' 2.
[83] Joanna Crow, 'Contesting representations of indigeneity at the First Inter-American Indigenista Congress, 1940', in: Stephen Legg et al. (eds.), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World,* (London, 2022), 55-69, 65.
[84] De Tribune, 'Oproep aan timmerlieden en andere bouwvakkers', 23 August 1932, 4; De Tribune, 'Het wereldstrijdcongres tegen den oorlog', 23 August 1932, 4; De Tribune, 'Bouwvakkerarbeiders van Amsterdam!', 27 August 1932, 4.
[85] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16785.

In 1932, when it became clear that the World Congress Against Imperialist War would have to be moved from Geneva to Amsterdam, a housing committee was set up to arrange sleeping arrangements. Throughout the month of August, the socialist and communist population of Amsterdam were called upon to provide lodging through pleas in national newspapers, mainly the communist newspaper *De Tribune*.[86] In addition, the committee send out cards to its networks in Amsterdam, asking for accommodations. Social-democratic newspaper *Het Volk* notified its Amsterdam readers that these requests were also being made to members of the SDAP, warning them of the congress' communist tendencies.[87] The organization of sleeping accommodations on such short notice proved challenging. Even on the day before the arrival of the delegations, the housing committee published an urgent plea in *De Tribune*, as they were still a thousand addresses short to accommodate all the expected delegates. The committee announced that the bureau of the housing committee on the Prinsengracht 1083 would stay open until 10 P.M. that evening. "To work!" they called.[88] Fearing a shortage of accommodations, the committee decided to rent rooms in a local school, which were fitted with matrasses and sheets. Delegates sleeping in the school would also be provided with free breakfast. In the end, the last-minute appeal for lodging was successful enough that most of the delegates were able to sleep at the private homes of Amsterdam participants and sympathizers. The school, though, was still half-full with delegates.[89] Sleeping arrangements in schools were not unheard of. During the 1928 Olympics, some athletes also slept in Amsterdam school buildings. School buildings were cheap options for accommodations and were empty during the Olympics due to the summer holidays. Participants were mostly housed in schools located in the south of Amsterdam, in the Lutmastraat, Karel du Jardinstraat and the Jekerstraat.[90]

The logistics of organizing international events were thus embedded in the local space and local networks. The presence of local organizations in Amsterdam allowed them to play an important logistical role in the preparations for the 1932 World Congress. The logistical organization was centred around the office of the organizational committee on the Prinsengracht. From there, the organization was able to guide the practical side of the logistical organization. Communist newspapers were another way of reaching locals willing to assist in the preparations. The limited time allowed for the preparations rushed and hurdled these preparations, resulting for example in the decision to use a school building as makeshift sleeping arrangements. These changed the lived experience of the congress for those who made use of it.

The people behind-the-scenes, made up from local Amsterdam sympathisers and party-members, shaped the logistics behind the 1932 congress and the ways in which the congress was experienced by

[86] De Tribune, 'Oproep voor Logies!', 17 August 1932, 7; De Tribune, 'Logies gevraagd voor het anti-oorlogs-congres', 18 August 1932, 4; De Tribune, 'Noodkreet! Logies. Logies', 25 August 1932, 1.
[87] Het Volk, 'Congres tegen den oorlog', 19 August 1932, 9.
[88] De Tribune, 'Logies! Logies!', 26 August 1932, 1.
[89] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16785.
[90] Paul Arnoldussen, *Amsterdam 1928. Het verhaal van de IXe Olympiade,* (Amsterdam, 1994), 75.

its delegates – for example through the construction of the conference hall and the accommodation of delegates through private lodging. In this way, local networks were connected with the international movement.

c. Travel

In the days before the start of the congress, Dutch newspapers announced the arrival of the plane *De vliegende vleugel* (The Flying Wing) of the Dutch Royal Airlines (KLM) at Schiphol Airport. This plane carried Vithalbhai Patel, founder of the nationalist Swaraj Party in India, who had been travelling to the United States and a number of European cities, "where mayors of important cities usually received him."[91] The trips to European cities included a visit to Amsterdam for the World Congress. A photograph in *Het Volk* showed Patel descending the steps of the airplane.[92] For Patel, Schiphol Airport was the first encounter with the city of Amsterdam. It was a new and modern way of entering the city. Civil aviation at Schiphol had only recently taken off with the establishment of the KLM in 1919. Although it was established as a private business, within six months the KLM relied on government subsidies, which the Ministry of Waterworks granted with an eye on a possible direct air service between Amsterdam and Batavia. The development of Dutch air travel was thus very much connected to Dutch colonial interests. The professionalization of civil aviation at Schiphol had an unwelcome consequence for colonial authorities, as these faster and better connections between colony and metropole could also be used by political dissidents and anti-colonial activists.[93] Schiphol had started out as a military aircraft base in 1916, consisting of a grass field and a few small hangars. After the end of the First World War, civil aviation took off with KLM's first air service between Amsterdam and London. The first commercial flight landed in Schiphol on 17 May 1920.[94] In 1926, the management and exploitation

Image 2: Vithalbhai Patel arrives at Schiphol Airport - *Het Volk, 'N/A', 26 August 1932, 1.*

[91] Du Beat, 'Vithalbhai Patel: The Forgotten Indian Leader,' via https://dubeat.com, accessed 15 March 2022.
[92] Het Volk, '[No title],' 26 August 1932, 1.
Newspapers consequently misidentified Vithalbhai Patel as his brother, Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, President of the Indian National Congress, who was at that time imprisoned in India with Gandhi: Rajmohan Gandhi, *Patel: A Life*, (Ahmedabad, 1990), 214.
[93] Marc Dierikx, 'Struggle for Prominence: Clashing Dutch and British Interests on the Colonial Air Routes, 1918-42', *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol.26(2) 1991, 333-351, 335.
[94] Oneindig Noord-Holland, 'Van Vliegweide tot Airport City', via https://onh.nl, accessed 17 March 2022.

of Schiphol came into the hands of the municipality of Amsterdam.[95] From that point onwards, the city of Amsterdam and Schiphol Airport would become increasingly connected. For the municipality, civil aviation at Schiphol was of great importance for the position of the city in international trade and prestige.[96] The immediate instigator for the rapid development of the airport was the organization of the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam. Paved platforms were built, the runways were fitted with specially designed lighting systems for night-time landing and a stone terminal building was built, including a control tower. This terminal building, complete with restaurant, offices and ticket counters, was opened right before the start of the Olympics and represented the position of Schiphol as a major airport in Europe.[97] Likewise, the Olympics were also cause for the modernization of Amsterdam Central Station, with the electrification of the railway network.[98] However, for a long time, the accessibility of the airport remained a problem. Historians Koos Bosma and Martijn Vos describe the journey from Schiphol to Amsterdam as follows:

> Until the late-1920s, the journey from Amsterdam to Schiphol took forty-five minutes by road. The travellers had to brave narrow drawbridges, toll booths, farm wagons and many potholes to reach Schiphol via the village Sloten. The transportation to the airport was by horse-drawn tram (until Sloten) or car.[99]

With the rapid development of the airport, civil aviation at Schiphol grew exponentially in the 1920s and 1930s. The number of passengers at the airport increased from 440 in 1920 to 10.793 in 1928 and 91.793 in 1936.[100] This was reflected in the organization of the World Congress of 1932. According to information from the CI, the organizational committee used their business contacts, amongst which a representative of KLM, "who is willing to give a discount for air travel for delegates."[101] It remains unclear whether this actually happened. Although air travel was modern and increasingly popular, civil aviation remained unprofitable. The economic crises of the 1930s hampered aviation and shrunk the number of passengers. In 1932, air travel was expansive, uncomfortable, and for many unreachable, as airlines to Amsterdam had yet to be established.[102]

The train remained a more common way of transportation. Railways had been established throughout Europe by 1850 as the main way of passenger transport and the second half of the nineteenth

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[95] A.A.A. de la Bruhèze, et al. (eds.), *Techniek in Nederland in de twintigste eeuw. Deel 5. Transport, communicatie*, *(*Zutphen, 2002), 122

[96] Koos Bosma and Martijn Vos, 'Een Amsterdamse snelweg door de lucht. De hoofdstad van Nederland en de nationale luchthaven 1919-1999, *Historisch Tijdschrift Holland,* vol.32:3/4 (2000), 183-205, 187.

[97] Bosma and Vos, 'Snelweg', 188-189; Bruhèze et al., *Techniek,* 122-123.

[98] Arnoldussen, *1928,* 63.

[99] Bosma and Vos, 'Snelweg', 189.

[100] InfoSchiphol, 'Geschiedenis', via http://www.infoschiphol.nl, accessed 17 March 2022.

[101] NA, Collectie 372 C.J.M. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, cat.ref. 2.21.244, inv.no. 113.

[102] Marc Dierikx, *Bevolgen jaren. Nederlandse burgerluchtvaart tussen de wereldoorlogen,* (Houten, 1986), 14;92-94.

century saw the emergence of international railway networks. In the Netherlands, international railways had been established, for example between Amsterdam and Cologne in the 1860s.[103] European railway administrations, particularly in central Europe, also established regional alliances after the First World War in an attempt to connect European travel routes. Such regional alliances reinforced long-distance international railway travel and the emergence of international sleeping car services aboard trains.[104] Often, these international railway connections were accompanied by ferry crossings, both in case of routes through continental Europe and between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.[105] For example, the British delegation to the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War, travelling by train, connected through Harwich, Hoek van Holland and/or Vlissingen.[106] Harwich and Hoek van Holland were connected by ferry.[107] The journey of British delegation to Amsterdam in 1932 was organized by the British Anti-War Council, who arranged a train journey by group ticket. P.S. Wilde, the delegate from the South West London Anti-War Committee, received a 'party ticket' for the train from London Liverpool Station to Amsterdam Central Station or Weesperpoort. On the second-class train ticket from the London and North Eastern Railway Company it was stated that the ticket was "on the outward journey only available when the holder travels with a party of 20 or over."[108] The cost of the individual tickets amounted to £3-18-0 and included a sleeping berth. Wilde also received a receipt for a cup of coffee at Amsterdam Central Station on the 27th of August.[109]

For those travelling by train, Amsterdam Central Station was their entry-point to the city, as was the case for Indonesian communist Soekaesih and her Dutch husband J.H. Philippo. In 1937, they travelled by train from Genova to Amsterdam Central Station, where they were met by the representatives of the Dutch Red Aid (NRH) who had invited them to speak at their congress about Soekaesih's experiences in the Digul camp, more on which will be discussed in Chapter 4.[110] Soekaesih and Philippo came to Amsterdam from Genova by train. The journey through Italy and Germany became increasingly dangerous in the late 1930s, especially for communists like Soekaesih and Philippo.[111]

[103] Christian Wolmar, *Blood, Iron and Gold: How the Railways Transformed the World,* (London, 2009), 135-138; 164.
[104] Irene Anastasiadou, *Constructing Iron Europe: Transnationalism and Railways in the Interbellum,* (Amsterdam, 2011), 141-149.
[105] Wolmar, *Blood,* 164.
[106] HistoryHaze, 'The Balham Group and the World Anti-War Congress of 1932', 6 November 2017, via https://perrytwinkle.wordpress.com, accessed 18 March 2022.
[107] A.J. Veenendaal, *Railways in the Netherlands: A Brief History, 1834-1994,* (Stanford, 2001), 142.
[108] HistoryHaze, 'Belham'.
[109] Idem.
[110] Het Volksdagblad, 'Uit het Digoelkamp naar Nederland', 14 October 1937, 1.
[111] Het Volksdagblad, 'Digoelkamp,' 4.

Image 3: Soekaesih (middle) and Philippo (left) arrive at Amsterdam Central Station - *Het Volksdagblad, 'Uit het Digoelkamp naar Nederland', 14 October 1937, 1.*

Apart from the dangers of the journey, another hurdle for anti-imperialists travelling to Amsterdam was state surveillance. Passport restrictions were a valuable tool for restricting transnational movements of anti-colonialists. According to Daniel Brückenhaus: "… the imperial governments of Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands used the existing passport system … to control [the movements of activists] through denying visas to those whom they wished to keep out of – or within – certain locations."[112] In the case of the 1932 congress, the Dutch authorities used passport restrictions to obstruct the movements of foreign delegates coming to Amsterdam. Although the VvN had not been successful in their campaign to stop the congress, the Dutch government did decide to reject all visa requests for foreign nationals travelling to the Netherlands for the congress. In particular, "the delegation from the Soviet Union would on no account be able to receive a visa."[113] Now, only foreign delegates who did not need a visa were able to travel to the congress.[114] These restrictions were a source of much indignation in the communist press, calling the decision "an eternal shame" and a "sabotage of the anti-war congress."[115] Worst, in the eyes of the communist press, was the decision to deny a visa to Maxim

[112] Daniel Brückenhaus, 'British Passport Restrictions, the League Against Imperialism, and the Problem of Liberal Democracy,' in: Michele Louro, Carolien Stolte, Heather Streets-Salter and Sana Tannoury-Karam (eds.), *The League against Imperialism: Lives and Afterlives,* (Leiden, 2020), 187-211, 188.
[113] De Tribune, 'Ruys-regeering weigert Russische delegatie toegang tot Nederland', 23 August 1932, 1.
[114] Het Volk, 'Visa'.
[115] De Tribune, 'Ruys-regeering'; De Tribune, 'Leve het wereld-strijdcongres!', 27 August 1932, 1.

Gorky, the prominent Russian writer, who was to be one of the headliners of the 1932 congress. On the 26th of August, one day before the start of the congress, Gorky had arrived in Berlin from Russia, where he was told that the Dutch authorities "deemed his presence at the congress in Amsterdam undesirable."[116]

Some delegates, having been rejected entry to the Netherlands, took the underground route to Amsterdam. *Het Volk* published an account of Italian delegates on their way back home after the congress aboard the night boat from Amsterdam to Rotterdam. As travelling by train meant regular police surveillance and passport controls, the night boat – mostly a cargo ship with two cabins for passengers – was an effective mode of underground travel. The Italian passengers had not been allowed entry to the Netherlands and were dodging passport control by travelling by night boat to Rotterdam and from there to Belgium, bypassing checkpoints. They were probably aided by local sympathizers, as the reporters noted that the Italian delegates were helped on board by a "young man with the insignia of the communist anti-war congress on the chest …"[117]

Not everyone was able to avoid Dutch police. *De Tribune* made multiple mentions of people being stopped and forced back at the Dutch border. German delegates were forced to turn back by border police at the border crossing near the village of Glanerburg, "even though the passes were in order."[118] At Bergen op Zoom, three Polish women, having crossed the border by car, were arrested and searched.[119] For foreign delegates to the congress, it could thus be a challenge to even reach Amsterdam. And when in Amsterdam, state surveillance and municipal policing continued to challenge the mobility of delegates to the congress.

d. Surveillance and policing

In the 1920s and 1930s, surveillance of communist activity in the Netherlands was in hands of the CI. Its rather small staff maintained close contact with a large number of informants across the country, including amongst police. Throughout the interwar period, the CI built an archive with information on 100.000 persons.[120] The CI relied on its connections with local police, especially those in major cities like Amsterdam. The intelligence work was usually outsourced to municipal police forces.[121] The CI followed the movements of Dutch revolutionaries abroad, particularly Indonesia, as well as the

[116] De Tribune, 'Leve'.
[117] Het Volk, 'Op reis met de nachtboot', 1 September 1932, 2.
[118] De Tribune, 'Duitsche gedelegeerden aan de grens teruggekeerd', 20 August 1932, 4.
[119] De Telegraaf, 'Late congressisten', 2 September 1932, 6.
[120] Kielich, *Jordaners,* 62.
[121] C.W. Hijzen, *Vijandbeelden: de veiligheidsdiensten en de democratie, 1912-1992,* (Amsterdam, 2016), 68.

movements of foreigners "who, in this country, conduct political or other propaganda or other actions (espionage)."[122]

In general, Dutch surveillance was not particularly effective. Historian Igor Cornelissen argued that Dutch counterintelligence "did not amount to much."[123] A tight budget was one of its logistical constraints. The CI had little resources, which limited their operations. This scarcity of money was a consequence of the lack of commitment amongst the Cabinet and ministries. The CI was not able to grow its operations since the money for the CI came from the covert assets of the War Department. Any enhancements of the CI's budget would thus come from those covert assets and would lead to scrutiny from parliament. As the CI was not officially an existing organization, such questions would be uncomfortable for Cabinet. Another issue with the CI's covert status was the fact that Cabinet and its ministers were unwilling to shoulder any political responsibility of the CI. The Dutch intelligence services thus lagged behind those of other major European countries like Great Britain and France, especially in their work on counterintelligence and espionage. The reason for this lay with administration of the respective empires. While the British and French had established comprehensive counterintelligence and security apparatuses to retain control and order over their colonies, the Dutch intelligence service in Indonesia was much less developed.[124] The CI's main function was as a central point for gathering information on leftist and far right organizations, which relied on the work of municipal police forces in gathering intelligence. Their main products were the blacklists and regular overviews of political activities of organizations. For the World Congress Against Imperialist War, the CI collected a list with information on Dutch and foreign committee members.[125]

In addition to state surveillance, delegates to the World Congress also had to be aware of municipal policing. Communist newspapers often complained about police repression. In 1931, *De Tribune* wrote:

> Lately in Amsterdam government fascism has again gone a step further … It started with police censorship on political rallying cries, which are being carried during canvassing and demonstrations of the IAH … If the IRH carries a flag to … protest against white terror, THE POLICE PROHIBITS THIS.[126]

Protest to surveillance was not only aimed at the national government and the police, but also at the municipal government and the mayor. The mayor of Amsterdam was a man called Willem de Vlugt from the Anti Revolutionary Party (ARP) of Abraham Kuyper. De Vlugt was mayor between 1921 and

[122] Nationaal Archief (NA), Ministerie van Justitie, Verbaalarchief, 1915-1955; Kabinetsarchief, 1915-1940, cat.ref. 2.09.22, inv.no. 16693; via Huygens ING, Reports of Central Intelligence communications, 1919-1940, huygens.knaw.nl.
[123] Igor Cornelissen, *De GPOe op de Overtoom: Spionnen voor Moskou, 1920-1940,* (Amsterdam, 1989), 55.
[124] Hijzen, *Vijandbeelden,* 64-79.
[125] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 113.
[126] De Tribune 'Een brede volksbeweging noodzakelijk', 27 March 1931, 1.

1941, when he was removed from office by the Nazi regime after the February Strike of 25 and 26 February 1941.[127] As an anti-revolutionary, De Vlugt was a proponent of strict laws and regulations, which would become a source of much discussion in context of maintaining public order. In his management of policing social unrest in the city, he sought to limit discussions in the municipal government by excluding the city council from formulating decisions and cooperating directly with the chief of police. In his view, "the capability of law enforcement would be undermined when their actions would be a subject of political and public debate."[128] De Vlugt was right to expect political debate from the city council. He was in a contested position as an ARP mayor in a municipal government where the ARP was one of the smallest political parties. In its heyday, ARP "won only four out of the forty-five seats in the city council."[129] Indeed, his decision to exclude the city council from decisions on public order would lead to protest from the social-democratic and communist members of the city council.

About the policing of political manifestations, historian Harm de Kaal writes:

> Apart from outside political manifestations, political parties in these years also organized numerous meetings in locations like the Concertgebouw, Bellevue in the Marnixstraat, Harmonie on the Rozengracht, Handwerkersvriendenkring on the Nieuwe Achtergracht, the Diamond Exchange on the Weesperplein, the RAI-building in the Ferdinand Bolstraat and from 1934 onwards also in the Apollohal. Sometimes these meetings were followed by a procession through the city, which, as a rule, was supervised by police, who oversaw compliance with the rules concerning the route and the makeup of the procession. Most of these rules were stipulated by the city council in the General Location Regulation (APV) and drafted by the committee for criminal procedures, chaired by De Vlugt. Often, these rules had been prescribed by the chief of police and then introduced into the committee by the mayor.[130]

When these rules were not followed and demonstrators clashed with the police, mayor De Vlugt and chief of police Aart Marcusse agreed that police should take firm action. De Vlugt "said he did not believe in the Rotterdam approach [where] police [had], as an experiment, not intervened during demonstrations to prevent an escalation of disturbances."[131] Communist newspapers reported on clashes between police and anti-colonialists, complaining about the conduct of the police.

[127] Harm Kaal, 'Religion, Politics, and Modern Culture in Interwar Amsterdam,' *Journal of Urban History,* vol.37:6 (2011), 897-910, 280-284.
[128] Kaal, *Hoofd,* 97-98.
[129] Ibidem, 904.
[130] Ibidem, 98-99.
[131] Ibidem, 99.

Image 4: Police presence at a IRH demonstration in Amsterdam, 1927 – *Roode Hulp, 'De Roode Hulp op pad', vol.1:5 (1927), 1.*

During the World Congress Against Imperialist War, *De Tribune* reported that French participants were ambushed by the police on their way to their lodgings. According to the newspaper, the police had beaten the delegates and dispersed them. Afterwards, the Kalverstraat was closed down. The justification for this action, *De Tribune* wrote, was the singing of communist fighting songs. Another incident happened later in the evening when a group of fifty foreign delegates was dispersed by police.[132] The newspaper wrote that Hendrik Versteeg, who had succeeded Aart Marcusse as chief of police in 1928, had prohibited the gathering of large groups of delegates in the city during the congress and had instructed the police to disperse all such gatherings.[133]

While delegates of the World Congress certainly would have encountered the Amsterdam police in the streets of Amsterdam, overemphasizing police brutality and injustice in newspapers was also a technique to bolster the idea of camaraderie, the idea of 'us versus them'. Geographer Mariana Lamego argues that newspapers can be understood as agents of conferencing, having an "active presence in the unfolding of the conference, beholden to its own interests and capable of influencing proceedings by helping to shape certain narratives and scripts."[134] During conferences, the newspaper would act as an

[132] De Tribune, 'De sabotage van het wereldcongres', 30 August 1932, 4.
[133] De Tribune, 'De sabotage van het wereldcongres', 31 August 1932, 8.
[134] Mariana Lamego, 'Between camaraderie and rivalry: Geopolitics at the eighteenth International Geographical Congress, Rio de Janeiro, 1956' in: Stephen Legg et al. (eds.), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World,* (London, 2022), 118-134, 120.

"essential vehicle for the diffusion of event propaganda."[135] It was also in the interest of newspapers like *De Tribune* to emphasize the idea of 'camaraderie' in their reportage of the conference."[136] Exaggerative reporting on police brutality against delegates to the congress thus fit with the narrative of camaraderie at the congress.

The fear of municipal policing also informed the logistics of the organization. The organization of the World Congress anticipated police surveillance and actions and took it into consideration whilst planning. The organization was mainly concerned with passport checks and sought to limit the movements delegates had to take outside of the conference building by providing buffets at the RAI's cafeteria.[137] Not everyone did make use of these buffets. Of the eight hundred meals per day ordered by the organization, five hundred were actually consumed.[138] It is possible that mainly foreign delegates ate their meals at the RAI, especially those who had come to Amsterdam illegally and without visa. Delegates from Amsterdam, however, probably had more breathing space and were more able to come and go as they pleased.

e. Conclusion

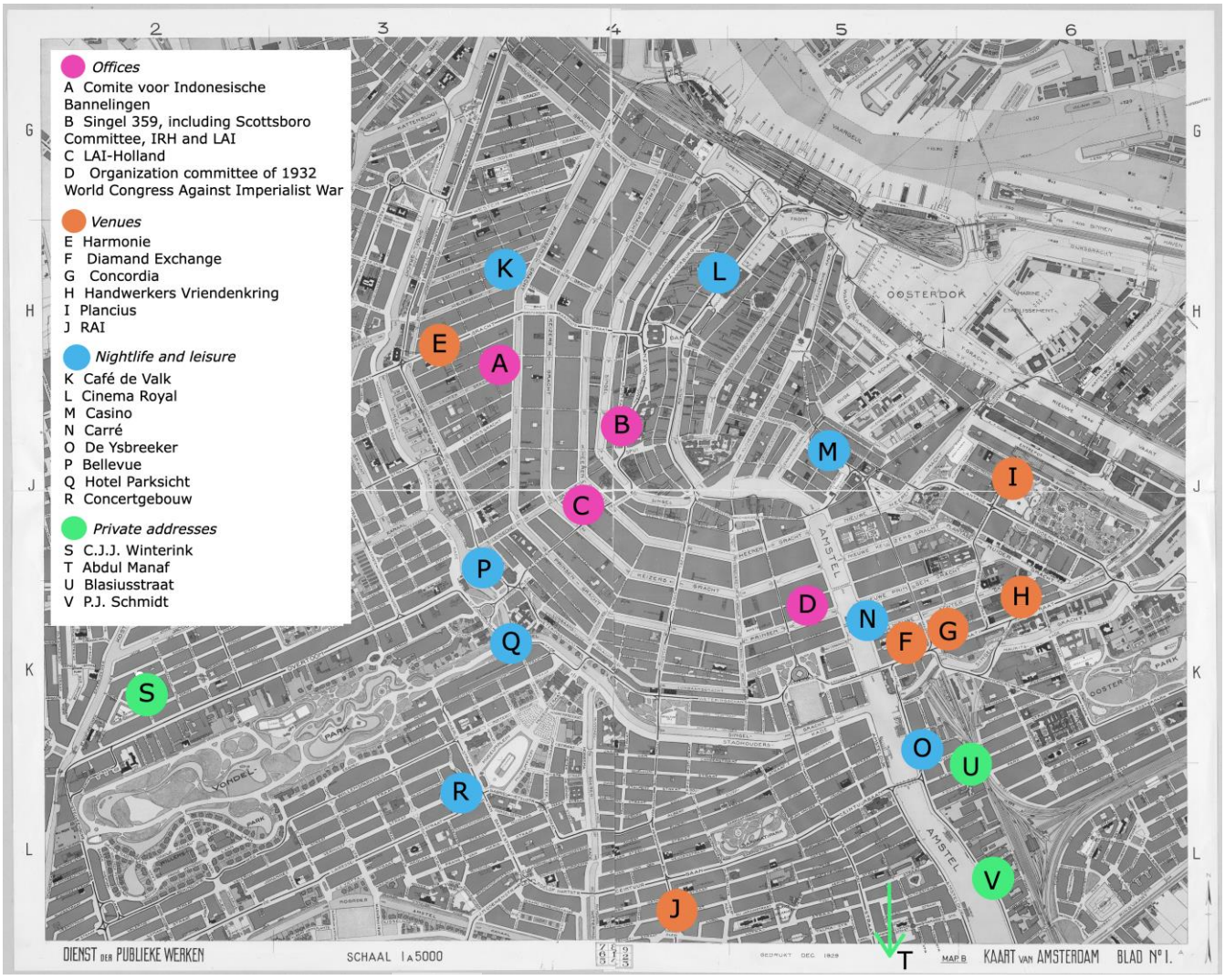
In their book *Placing Internationalism*, Heffernan et al. approach material factors and logistics as an essential part of the space of international conferencing. Conferences took place not only in the conference hall, but in the spaces connected to logistical organization as well. Like the conference hall, these spaces were locally embedded. Indeed, the organization of the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War was very much shaped by the geographic specifics of the local space. Amsterdam's connections to the outside world, both through infrastructures and anti-colonialist networks, meant that the city was a viable option for a large conference on an international scale. The logistical organization of the 1932 World Congress was centralized at Prinsengracht 1083 and heavily relied on the cooperation between the local organizational committee and the local networks who supplied the organization with labour and sleeping accommodations. This shaped the conference both as a political event and as a lived experience. The analysis of the logistics of the 1932 World Congress sheds light on the interrelations between the abstract of internationalism and the geographical specifics of Amsterdam. Infrastructure, sleeping arrangements, transport and security were integral parts of logistics. These were shaped by the geographical specifics of the local space, and in turn shaped the space of international conferencing. The comparative liberalism in the Dutch government as opposed to the Swiss authorities, as well as the underdevelopment of Dutch intelligence services, meant that the congress' organization had some space

[135] Lamego, 'Camaraderie', 124.
[136] Ibidem, 131.
[137] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16785.
[138] Idem.

to organize a large-scale international congress in relative openness. However, the government's denial of visa for foreign delegates combined with the harsher attitudes of municipal law enforcement meant that mobility to and within the city had limitations. Thus, the spaces of international conferencing in Amsterdam were often contested, as both the organization of the world congress, communist media outlets and municipal law enforcement sought to claim them. Such contestations shaped both the logistical organization and the representation of major events.

2. In the meeting room: the international Scottsboro campaign

Anti-colonialists in Amsterdam came together in locations across the city. The choice of location for their political activities reveals information about the nature of organizations and events. Location is political and symbolic. Where meetings took place, and why, is an important question for understanding the ways in which space intertwined with anti-colonialism. This chapter analyses the locations of meetings in connection to the Scottsboro Campaign of the early 1930s.



Map 2: Inside sites of anti-colonialism in Amsterdam - *Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Collectie Stadsarchief Amsterdam: kaarten van Amsterdam, schaal 1:5.000 vervaardigd door de Dienst, der Publieke Werken en rechtsopvolgers, cat.ref.10048, inv.no.120.*

a. Ada Wright comes to Amsterdam

On the evening of June 15th 1932, Ada Wright, mother of two of the 'Scottsboro boys', addressed the crowd gathered at the Diamond Exchange on the Weesperplein. "Thousands of Amsterdam workers and working women, many Indonesian and Surinamese comrades filled all corners of the main hall of the Diamond Exchange…" wrote *De Tribune* on their front page.[139] The Scottsboro case had filled Dutch communist newspapers for months. A year before, nine young black men and boys had stood trial for the rape of two white women on a train travelling between Tennessee and Alabama. Eight of them had been found guilty and been convicted of capital offenses and received death sentences. In response, a global defence campaign was launched, led by communist organizations, mainly the International Labor Defence (ILD), International Workers' Aid, the International Red Aid (MOPR) and the League Against Imperialism. The defence campaign connected the Scottsboro case to the "global struggle against 'imperialism'."[140] As part of the defence campaign, the ILD and the MOPR organized a tour of Europe with Ada Wright and J. Louis Engdahl, representative of the MOPR. Starting in Hamburg, Wright and Engdahl travelled across the European continent over the course of six months. On multiple occasions on her tour of Europe, Wright was "turned away from halls under legislation that barred agitators from addressing meetings."[141] In Amsterdam, though, the evening was able to go through as planned. After the meeting, a demonstration proceeded from the Weesperplein towards the city centre. *De Tribune* put the number of demonstrators at six to seven thousand, although *Het Volk* gave a more moderate estimate of two thousand participants.[142]

The Scottsboro Campaign was a major example of the MOPR's most successful form of agitation: the international campaign. Its effectiveness lay in its ability to connect people with emotional issues. The international campaigns were first introduced in 1925 and were episodic in nature. J. Martin Ryle explains: "The new type of campaign might last several days, weeks, or even years. It was organized around a specific issue and continued until the issue was won or lost or until the campaign no longer could draw mass support."[143] While some campaigns were general in nature, the most effective campaigns revolved around 'bourgeois class justice' and 'white terror'. Methods included the establishment of local and national committees in multiple countries who planned protest activities, such as demonstrations, petitions, and fund collections. Such committees often were collaborations between MOPR members and representatives of other organizations.[144]

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[139] De Tribune, 'Scottsboro', 16 June 1932, 1.
[140] Susan Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain,* (Princeton, 2009), 20-24; Marc Matera, *Black London,* 45-48.
[141] Pennybacker, *Scottsboro,* 27.
[142] Het Volk, 'Ada Wright te Amsterdam,' 16 June 1932, 13; De Tribune, 'Scottsboro'.
[143] Martin Ryle, 'Red Aid,' 65-67.
[144] Ibidem, 65-66.

Brian Vick has argued for the importance of analysing lower-level meetings and a wider range of actors, shifting the focus from "highest-level summit meetings of rulers and ministers, to networks of actors and institutions one or two levels lower on the diplomatic scale…"[145] According to Vick, this new perspective sheds light on the ways in which politically engaged people sought to influence public opinion on various levels through print, speech, associations and meetings.[146] Although Vick deals with lower-level diplomatic meetings in context of the Congress of Vienna, his ideas on the influence of lower-level meetings and actors can also be applied to the study of anti-colonial meetings in Amsterdam. Analysing the local meeting space can explain how international campaigns of anti-colonialism interacted with the local space, both informing and enforcing one another. It is thus important to study the role of local meetings in recruitment and influencing public opinion, which underlay international connections.

The meetings held in connection to the international Scottsboro campaign ranged from large, national meetings to small-scale community meetings in Amsterdam neighbourhood cafés such as Café de Valk in the Jordaan.[147] Neighbourhood meetings often had the purpose of either preparing local networks for major national or international meetings or to reflect on such major events afterwards. A secondary aim was recruitment. Anti-colonial and communist newspapers paid close attention to recruitment during local meetings. According to *De Tribune*, the Diamond Exchange meeting with Ada Wright generated three hundred new members for the IRH, although these numbers were probably somewhat exaggerated.[148] For newly established organizations, the registration of new members was especially important. *Recht en Vrijheid*, the periodical of the LAI, often reported on the recruitment of new members. In March 1928, the periodical informed the reader that a public meeting of the Amsterdam chapter had resulted in the registration of sixty-one new members. They also reported on recruitment numbers in other local chapters in the Netherlands.[149] In March 1929, a newspaper article of *De Tribune* on the Amsterdam chapter of the LAI had the headline: "A meeting of the League. 24 new members."[150] Thus, local meetings were a means of strengthening local networks and recruiting new members. Indeed, the IRH argued in an article on their Amsterdam chapter: "The Red Aid propaganda strengthens feelings of solidarity and class amongst labourers, this is essentially the task of our Red Aid chapters."[151] Solidarity on the local level also benefitted the proceeds from contributions and membership fees, as well as collections. It was therefore vital to have a "strong, tight-knit IRH-

[145] Brian Vick, 'Ambassadors, activists and experts. Conferencing and the internationalization of international relations in the nineteenth century,' in: Stephen Legg et al. (eds.), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World,* (London, 2022), 39-54, 39.
[146] Vick, 'Ambassadors', 40.
[147] De Tribune, 'De Scottsboro-moord moet worden afgewend!' 25 April 1932, 2.
[148] De Tribune, 'Scottsboro'.
[149] Recht en Vrijheid, 'Schitterend geslaagde vergaderingen der Liga!', vol.1:14 (10 March 1928), 4.
[150] De Tribune, 'Een vergadering van de Liga', 19 March 1929, 1.
[151] Roode Hulp, 'Uit de afdeeling Amsterdam', vol.1:7 (1927), 7.

chapter…"[152] Thus, the expansion of membership on the local level created possibilities for national and international activity and meetings.

Being the Dutch capital, Amsterdam was also the centre for national organizations and the site of national meetings for the Scottsboro campaign. The presence of national organizations and local anti-colonial networks made the Amsterdam space accessible for international and national meetings. Venues of various shapes and sizes catered to these organizations. Anti-colonial movements and networks thus shaped the ways in which venues functioned as sites within the anti-colonial spaces of Amsterdam. In turn, these venues also shaped how anti-colonial activity functioned and was experienced by local and transnational networks.

b. Venues of anti-colonialism

In his book *Diplomatic Sites*, Neumann switches the usual approach to international diplomacy from an emphasis on state interaction to an analysis of the diplomatic site.[153] This spatial turn put the venue central in narratives of diplomatic interaction. According to historian Giles Scott-Smith, "[t]he venue becomes the basis for analysing the membership, mandate, output status, rules of procedure/operating procedures and legitimacy of a particular interaction."[154] The meeting locations in Amsterdam for the Scottsboro Campaign differed in scale and purpose. Analysing the different types of meeting spaces shows the various ways in which these spaces operated and functioned within the anti-colonialist movement in Amsterdam.

The venues used for anti-colonialist meetings in Amsterdam reflected the types of meetings and conferences held there. Large, prestigious theatres like the Concertgebouw, Bellevue and Carré hosted national or even international conferences and events. Carré Theatre was the venue for the Second Congress of the IRH in 1928. This event was widely promoted by the IRH in their periodical *Roode Hulp*, which dedicated an entire issue to this major event and featured a page-size picture of the building on the front cover.[155]

[152] Roode Hulp, 'Uit de afdeelingen', vol.N/A:7 (1931), 8.
[153] Neumann, *Sites,* 4.
[154] Giles Scott-Smith, 'Re-situating Bretton Woods. Site and venue in relation to the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, June 1944', in: Stephen Legg et al. (eds.), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World,* (London, 2022), 160-177, 161.
[155] Roode Hulp, '[…]', vol.2:6 (1928).


1928: No. 6. PRIJS 5 CENT.

ROODE HULP

Orgaan van de Internationale Roode Hulp (I.R.H.) Afdeeling HOLLAND.

Redactie en Administratie: Amsterdam, Gelderschekade 78. Telefoon 48978.

HIER IS

THEATER CARRÉ

WAAR OP 11 MAART a.s., ZONDAGMORGEN 10 UUR

de CONGRESMEETING plaats vindt van de Internationale Roode Hulp (I.R.H.)

Het geweldige gebouw, waarin een der grootste theaters van Amsterdam is ondergebracht en waar twee duizend personen zullen getuigen van hun sympathie voor de I.R.H.! Op de bres voor algeheele en directe amnestie voor alle politieke gevangenen en bannelingen in Indonesië! Op voor de slachtoffers van den bevrijdingsstrijd in China!

Image 5: *Roode Hulp, 'Hier is Theater Carré waar op 11 Maar a.s., zondagmorgen 10 uur de congresmeeting plaats vindt van de Internationale Roode Hulp (I.R.H.)', vol.2:6 (1928), 1.*

The theatre could house two thousand participants at the congress, which was so popular that the IRH warned its members to buy their tickets quickly before they ran out.[156] Another important IRH event took place in Carré in 1931, which was headlined by André Marty – MP for the French Communist Party and a leading figure in communist circles. Marty came to Amsterdam for the celebration of International Women's Day to speak about colonial violence in Indonesia and French Indochina.[157] His visit to Amsterdam was widely reported on in the communist press, hailing him as the hero of the Black Sea mutiny of 1919.[158] These were clearly important IRH events with speakers of national and international standing. Names such as André Marty and Ada Wright were sure to attract a large number of people to the meeting hall and the events where they spoke were promoted as must-attend occasions. The venue facilitated this sense of importance and prestige. Events and conferences on this scale not

[156] Roode Hulp, 'Ons Tweede Congres', vol.2:6 (1928), 2-3.
[157] De Tribune, 'André Marty komt!', 12 February 1931, 1.
[158] De Tribune, 'Veerman en Meier moeten vrij!,' 9 February 1931, 5; Libcom.org, 'The Black Sea mutiny: the Marty myth and the role of the anarchists' 20 June 2011, via https://libcom.org, accessed 23 April 2022.

only required adequate space, but an atmosphere of importance as well. The Carré Theatre had been built in the late-nineteenth century in the classicist style, with a domed ceiling of thirty-seven metres wide. The dome and walls were decorated with frescos. The seats were upholstered with leather and red velvet.[159] The architecture and décor of these major theatres provided an atmosphere of elegance and prestige to the anti-colonial events held here.

Theatres like Carré and the Concertgebouw were mainly used for major national and international events, which was not often. More regularly, anti-imperial meetings in Amsterdam were held in meeting centres or association buildings. Frequently used venues included Harmonie, Concordia, Handwerkers Vriendenkring and Casino. Rather than the prestige of major theatres, these venues reflected the local networks active in anti-imperial meetings. Many of these venues were intricately connected to Amsterdam's working classes and communist networks. Harmonie, for example, was located right in the working-class neighbourhood Jordaan. In 1934 Harmonie was the location of the start of the so-called 'Jordaanoproer' (Jordaan Uprising) during a meeting held here by an unemployment committee of the CPH.[160] Handwerkers Vriendenkring, which will feature in the paragraph 3.c more substantively, was a major institution of charity and aid and was well-known among the working classes of Amsterdam.[161]

These venues knew their audience well. They regularly catered to a communist and socialist clientele and targeted this audience through advertisement. Meeting centre Harmonie, for example, advertised throughout the 1920s in the national communist newspaper *De Tribune*. In May 1924, after renovation, Harmonie put out an advertisement in this newspaper, promoting their meeting rooms seating 40 to 400 people, including the large meeting hall with four hundred seats and a stage, all with central heating. For workers' organizations, Harmonie offered special conditions and rates.[162] Concordia also promoted their meeting rooms through advertisements in the periodical of the syndicalist National Workers' Secretariat (NAS). In 1929, an advertisement for Concordia read: "rooms for meetings, gatherings, conferences and parties."[163]

The choice of location reinforced the idea of camaraderie which communist and anti-colonialist organizations and newspapers sought to emit. Locations like Handwerkers Vriendenkring and Harmonie, which were intimately connected with the Amsterdam working class, were welcoming to the workers which anti-colonialist organizations sought to attract. It signalled to the world that the Amsterdam workers were an integral part of the organization and that their struggles were linked. It

[159] Historiek, 'Oscar Carré en zijn circustheater in Amsterdam', 5 December 2021, via https://historiek.net, accessed 23 April 2022.
[160] Kielich, *Jordaners,* 96.
[161] Selma Leydesdorff, *Wij hebben als mens geleefd: Het Joodse proletariaat van Amsterdam, 1900-1940,* (Amsterdam, 1987), 236; Philo Bregstein and Salvador Bloemgarten (eds.), *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam,* (Amsterdam, 1978), 149.
[162] De Tribune, 'Feest- en Vergadergebouw "Harmonie"', 8 May 1924, 4; De Tribune, 'Feest- en Vergadergebouw "Harmonie"', 6 November 1925, 4.
[163] De Arbeid, 'Gebouw Concordia', 8 June 1929, 4.

lowered the threshold for the working-class to attend anti-colonialist meetings, as they were familiar with the locations and – especially in the case of Handwerkers Vriendenkring – made use of their services already.

This idea of emitting an aura of camaraderie was enhanced by the coverage of meetings in the communist press or in the organizations' periodicals. As mentioned in Chapter 1.D, Lamego has argued that such media sought to shape narratives, reinforcing the idea of camaraderie. In *Roode Hulp*, the periodical of the Dutch chapter of the International Red Aid, there regularly appeared photographs of participants of anti-colonialist meetings, which reinforced this narrative of camaraderie:

Image 7: P.A.S.-gebouw*; Roode Hulp, 'De I.R.H. in Amsterdam', vol.1:5 (1927), 5.*

Image 8: Theater Bellevue*; Roode Hulp, 'Sacco en Vanzetti', vol.2:2 (1928), 4- 5.*

Image 9: Handwerkers Vriendenkring*; Roode Hulp, 'N/A', vol.1:7 (1927), 5.*

Thus, the choice of location was intimately connected with the atmosphere the organization sought to emit, as well as the type of public they wanted to attract. Famous, luxurious theatres were chosen to give a sense of importance to the event, while locations connected to the Amsterdam working class were more suited to local meetings and inviting to the working-class public. The choice of location was also dependent on the whether or not the event had an international character. Events featuring prominent transnational figures such as Ada Wright and André Marty required a different setting than local or national events which were more exclusively aimed at the own members. Thus, the location shaped the event and vice versa.

c. Jewish socialism on the Weesperplein

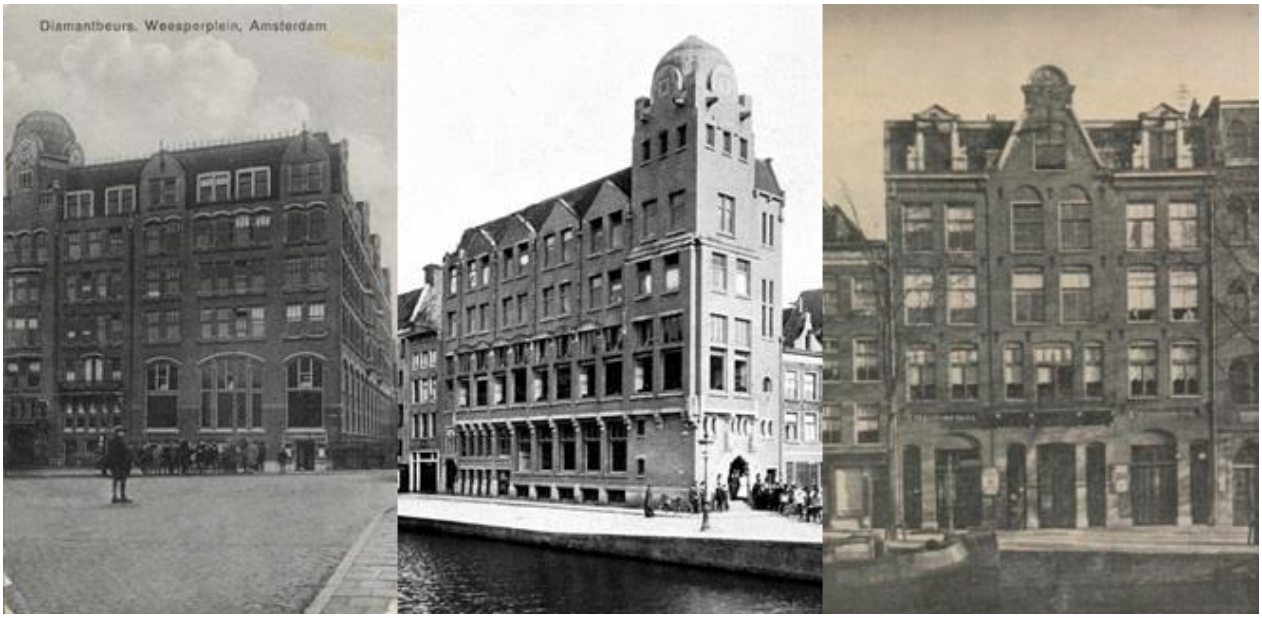

Image 10: Diamond Exchange ca. 1920 - Joods *Cultureel Kwartier, 'FO13380: Prentbriefkaart met een foto van de Diamantbeurs op het Weesperplein in Amsterdam, ca. 1920', via https://jck.nl, accessed 27 June 2022.*

Image 11: Concordia - *Bonas, 'Diamantclub Concordia Weesperplein 1 Amsterdam' via https://bonas.nl, accessed 27 June 2022.*

Image 12: Handwerkers Vriendenkring - *Geheugen van Oost, 'Lezing over de Handwerkers Vriendenkring', via https://geheugenvanoost.amsterdam, accessed 27 June 2022.*

The Diamond Exchange, in which Ada Wright addressed Amsterdam, was located at the intersection of the Weesperplein and the Nieuwe Achtergracht, an important site of anti-colonial activity in Amsterdam. Here, anti-colonialists came together in three buildings: the Diamond Exchange, Concordia and Handwerkers Vriendenkring. All three buildings were, in some way or another, intimately connected to the diamond trade and the Jewish socialist community.

Amsterdam was home to a substantial Jewish community, totalling about 10 percent of the total population of the capital in 1920. This made Amsterdam the city with the highest percentage of Jewish citizens in Europe. More than half of the Dutch Jews lived in Amsterdam. The traditional 'Joodse Buurt' housed the majority of Amsterdam's Jewish population, although the period between 1889 and 1920 saw the large-scale relocation of many inhabitants to the Oosterpark-, Indische - and the Transvaal neighbourhoods.[164] This period also saw large-scale estrangement of the urban Jewish community from the Jewish faith and customs and the assimilation in 'mainstream' Amsterdam society. Still, the Jewish population in Amsterdam retained a sense of community even when moving away from the traditional 'Joodse Buurt'. They often moved to neighbourhoods close to the traditional Jewish centre, close to each other. One local remembered: "In the ghetto you mostly lived protected by each other. When we moved, … you did not move to a neighbourhood where there lived no other Jews."[165] The 'Joodse Buurt' thus moved with its population to new areas of the city, blurring its borders. People spoke of living *in* the 'Joodse Buurt' or *near* the 'Joodse Buurt' – around the Waterlooplein or the Weesperstraat – indicating that these newer neighbourhoods were still very much associated with its Jewish population.[166]

The social make-up of the Jewish population of Amsterdam also differed from other major West-European cities. For a long time, Amsterdam was the only city in Western Europe where the working class formed the majority of the Jewish population. This changed only in the late nineteenth century with the migration of Russian Jewish refugees to cities like London.[167] Additionally, the social position of Amsterdam Jews differed from their counterparts in cities like London and Paris. In Amsterdam, the Jewish population was more integrated into society and spoke the Dutch language. They did not form a separate legal entity and thus enjoyed equal rights from their non-Jewish counterparts.[168]

From the 1890s onwards, the Jewish working class became increasingly involved in the socialist movements in Amsterdam. According to writer and filmmaker Philo Bregstein and historian Salvador Bloemgarten, the sense of community transformed from a religious one to a socialist one.[169] The diamond industry was key in laying these connections. In the late-nineteenth century, Amsterdam had the world's largest diamond industry, stimulated by a growing international demand for diamonds. The diamond industry became a major employer in the late-nineteenth century, especially among the Jewish population of Amsterdam (see table 1).[170]

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[164] Karin Hofmeester, '"Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben..." De verhouding tussen joodse arbeiders en de arbeidersbeweging in Amsterdam, Londen en Parijs vergeleken, 1870-1914,' UvA Digital Academic Repository, (Amsterdam, 1999), 23-25; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering,* 11.
[165] Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering,* 17-23; 183.
[166] Leydesdorff, *Geleefd*, 143.
[167] Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering,* 11.
[168] Karin Hofmeester, *Van Talmoed tot Statuut: Joodse arbeiders and arbeidersbewegingen in Amsterdam, Londen en Parijs, 1880-1914,* (Amsterdam, 1990), 83.
[169] Adriaan van Veldhuizen, *De partij: over het politieke leven in de vroege S.D.A.P.,* Leiden University Repository, (Leiden, 2015), 60-61; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering,* 21.
[170] Karin Hofmeester, 'The Impact of the Diamond Industry and the Diamond Workers' Union on Jewish Life in Amsterdam, 1894–1920', *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies,* vol.3:3 (2020), 46-69, 47.

	of the male population	of the female population
of the total population of Amsterdam	5.4%	1.5%
of the Jewish population of Amsterdam	29%	10%

Table 1: Employment by the Amsterdam diamond industry - Hofmeester, 'Impact', 47.

This Jewish working-class community became involved in the development of early social democracy in Amsterdam and played a crucial role in the establishment of the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP) in 1894. In the same year, the General Dutch Diamond Workers' Union (ANDB) was established by Jewish socialists like Henri Polak, one of the founder members of the SDAP. The ANDB was the first Dutch union to include a large number of Jewish workers. Through the ANDB, many diamond workers became actively involved in the Amsterdam chapter of the SDAP. By 1898, more than half of the Amsterdam members of the SDAP was also a member of the ANDB, most of whom were Jewish.[171] Many of the new neighbourhoods to which the Jewish working-class moved in the early-twentieth century were or became known as 'red' social-democratic or socialist neighbourhoods. Amsterdam's place in global society, its international appeal, and its function as a breeding ground for social and political activity came together in the Blasiusstraat. For many Jewish migrants, the Blasiusstraat was a point-of-entry, as this part of Amsterdam already housed a large Jewish, working-class community. According to historian Adriaan van Veldhuizen, the Blasiusstraat thus had a central function in the early municipal social democracy of Amsterdam, as well as in the international connections of city. The practices of socialist life in the Blasiusstraat took place in cafés such as De Ysbreeker, which also functioned as a socialist meeting location.[172] The entanglement of Jewish and socialist life in Amsterdam was also visible in such locations as Plancius, formerly a synagogue, which was used as a socialist stronghold.[173] Such spaces reinforced the connections between the Jewish community and socialist networks in Amsterdam.

The buildings which housed the Diamond Exchange, Concordia and Handwerkers Vriendenkring were located in the centre of Jewish-socialist life. The neighbourhoods Weesperbuurt and Plantage attracted many members of the Jewish community of Amsterdam who relocated in the early twentieth century. In the 1920s, the Jewish community amounted to 40 to 60 per cent of the population in these neighbourhoods.[174] Weesperplein and the adjacent canals became part of the new 'Joodse Buurt' after the slum clearances in the traditional 'Joodse Buurt'. The streets surrounding the Weesperplein were

[171] Veldhuizen, *Partij,* 64-65.
[172] Ibidem, 57-67.
[173] I Amsterdam, 'Gebouw Plancius (building),' <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/amsterdam-qr/centrum-oost-de-plantage/gebouw-plancius>, accessed 5 October 2021.
[174] Richter Riegholt et al., *Wonen en wetenschap in de Plantage: De geschiedenis van een Amsterdamse buurt in driehonderd jaar,* (Amsterdam, 1982), 49.

home to many diamond workers, tradesmen, and craftsmen. The Nieuwe Achtergracht likewise housed a large Jewish population.[175]

The Diamond Exchange and Concordia were both erected in 1911 on the Weesperplein, right across from each other, "bearing witness to the confidence the diamond workers and the diamond manufacturers and dealers had in the future of the diamond industry and trade in Amsterdam."[176] The Diamond Exchange was built to accommodate the growing Association for the Diamond Exchange. The building served as both a centralized place for diamond trading and business and as a social gathering place. The building, designed by Gerrit van Arkel, combined styles of Jugendstil and 'het Nieuwe Bouwen'. The clocktower with its green brass dome still is an Amsterdam landmark. A monumental staircase led to the main hall, which featured "delicately ornamented pillars, … huge windows on the north, which provided the best light for examining the tiny diamonds, and … fine chandeliers …"[177]

Image 13: Interior of the Diamond Exchange, 1918 – *Joods Cultureel Kwartier, 'F010385: Interieur van de Beurs voor den Diamanthandel aan het Weesperplein, 1918', via https://jck.nl, accessed 27 June 2022.*

The Diamond Exchange was very much connected to the Jewish community, explains writer Henriëtte Boas: "Though membership of the society was not limited to Jews, some 98% of its 1.200 members

[175] Leydesdorff, *Geleefd,* 142-143; Joods Amsterdam, 'Nieuwe Achtergracht', via https://www.joodsamsterdam.nl, accessed 13 March 2022.
[176] Henriëtte Boas, 'Review: Jews and the Amsterdam Diamond Trade,' *Studia Rosenthaliana,* 26:1-2 (1992), 214-223, 214-215.
[177] Joods Amsterdam, 'Weesperplein,' via https://www.joodsamsterdam.nl, accessed 24 April 2022; Boas, 'Jews', 214.

were Jews, as were all members of its Board. The Diamond Exchange was closed on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays and the restaurant was kosher."[178]

Concordia was located directly at the intersection of Weesperplein and Nieuwe Achtergracht. Built in the same year as the Diamond Exchange, it became known as the 'Small Diamond Exchange' or the 'Kinnesinnebeursje' (little exchange of envy). This building was designed by Harry Elte in the Art Nouveau style.[179] The Association Diamond Club Concordia located here had a more exclusive character than the Diamond Exchange association, although "in contrast to the latter already in 1919 admitted a woman diamond broker as a member …"[180] However, Concordia never reached the success of the Diamond Exchange. "Already in 1926 the building had to be sold publicly and the Concordia members joined the Diamond Exchange."[181] However, the Concordia building remained a location of anti-colonial meetings until at least 1929. Between 1927 and 1929, the Concordia building was the venue of regular meetings and conferences of the LAI and Perhimpoenan Indonesia (PI). This included a public meeting by the LAI-Amsterdam on Indonesia, a public meeting by the PI on Digul and a meeting of the LAI, PI and other communist and anti-militarist organizations in preparation for the Youth Conference of the LAI-Holland in July 1929.[182]

Further along the Nieuwe Achtergracht at number 140-144 was located the Handwerkers Vriendenkring, an association established in 1869 which concerned itself with the improvement of living conditions of the Amsterdam working class. Although not strictly speaking a Jewish organization, 95 per cent of its members were Jewish, many of them working-class, and the organization developed strong ties with the ANDB as its members consisted mainly of diamond workers.[183] Its work included social housing, health care, financial support, and education. The organization established funds for financial assistance to widows, the disabled and the unemployed, as well as a health insurance fund and a building fund. Building affordable housing became the main focus of the organization in the 1920s, mainly in the Transvaalbuurt and Uilenberg.[184] Additionally, Handwerkers Vriendenkring organized lectures, courses, and excursions as part of their education schemes and their association building included a library where members were able to borrow books cheaply. When Handwerkers Vriendenkring moved into their own association building on the Nieuwe Achtergracht in 1899, the building immediately became a meeting place for social democrats and trade unions. In 1909, the Social Democratic Party, predecessor of the Dutch Communist Party, was established in the main conference

[178] Boas, 'Jews,' 215.
[179] Saskia Coenen Snyder, '"As Long as It Sparkles!": The Diamond Industry in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam,' *Jewish Social Studies,* vol.22:2 (2017), 38-73, 50; Joods Amsterdam, 'Weesperplein'.
[180] Boas, 'Jews', 219.
[181] Idem.
[182] De Tribune, 'Indonesië en de taak der Liga', 31 December 1929, 4; De Tribune, 'Een vergadering der Perhimpoenan Indonesia', 30 October 1929, 5; De Vrije Socialist, 'Tegen het Imperialisme', 12 June 1929, 3.
[183] Ons Amsterdam, 'Een bijna vergeten geschiedenis', 30 October 2015, via https://onsamsterdam.nl, accessed 13 March 2022; Leydesdorff, *Geleefd,* 120.
[184] Ons Amsterdam, 'Vergeten'; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering*, 176-177.

hall of Handwerkers Vriendenkring. The main conference hall could accommodate 700 people and housed a stage, and was therefore an ideal location for large meetings.[185] The hall was "20 by 14 meters, equipped with a stage and the room can, by division panels, be split in two separate parts."[186] This main conference hall was regularly rented to social-democratic and communist organizations and thus became an important space of anti-colonialist activity. For example, this hall was used by the Amsterdam chapter of the IRH for their 1932 commemoration of the Paris Commune, which was dedicated to the Scottsboro Campaign.[187]

Through the examination of locations such as the Diamond Exchange, Concordia and Handwerkers Vriendenkring in context of anti-colonial activity, the significant role of the Jewish-socialist community in transnational anti-colonialism in Amsterdam becomes clear. This interrelation between location and network worked both ways: the use of locations in the centre of Jewish life for the purposes of anti-colonial meetings made these events more accessible to the Jewish-socialist public, while the presence of the Jewish-socialist community in anti-colonial activity made locations like Handwerkers Vriendenkring more viable and accessible places of anti-colonialism. As has been described in chapter 1.C, the Jewish community of Amsterdam had largely assimilated. Their religious-cultural ties had often been replaced by a shared 'socialist culture'. However, many Amsterdam Jews preferred to live in areas with large Jewish populations. Historian Selma Leydesdorff argues that one could therefore speak of a "Jewish-socialist lifestyle; whereby integration into the non-Jewish environment had had such little success that people still mainly lived with and surrounded by Jews."[188] The Diamond Exchange, Concordia and Handwerkers Vriendenkring, being located in the heart of the new 'Joodse Buurt,' clearly fit into this Jewish-socialist lifestyle. By situating their meetings and events at these locations, the anti-colonialists of Amsterdam were located right in the middle of these networks and communities. This situation was unique to Amsterdam and its geographical specifics shaped the ways in which anti-colonialism in the city was practiced.

d. Behind the scenes

The centrality of the venue in the analysis of international interaction is not only useful in the study of major conferences and meetings. While venues like the RAI, Handwerkers Vriendenkring and Concordia were sites of organized interaction, the organization of events and conferences took place in office spaces, private homes, and other such spaces. These 'behind-the-scenes' venues tell an interesting

[185] Ons Amsterdam, 'Vergeten'; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering*, 149.
[186] Het nieuws van den dag, 'Handwerkers Vriendenkring', 23 October 1899, 22.
[187] Chapter 4 further discusses the role of commemorations in anti-colonialism; De Tribune, 'Commune-herdenking te Amsterdam', 17 March 1932, 1.
[188] Leydesdorff, *Geleefd,* 156-160.

story of day-to-day interaction and connection. On their virtual exhibition, the 'Conferencing the international' research team mention:

> International conferences … relied not only on the participation of delegates, but also on a whole industry of people working behind the scenes to ensure their smooth functioning. These conference staff were crucial to the operation of internationalism, but had varying levels of prestige, and have tended to be left out of written histories of internationalism.[189]

Permanent secretariats were crucial in the international space, fulfilling "the various functions of a transnational bureau."[190] Amsterdam was the site of many local and national secretariats, including that of the IRH and the LAI. Locations of secretariats included the Keizersgracht 441 (LAI-Holland, 1927) and Lauriergracht 28 (Comité voor Indonesische Bannelingen, 1928).[191] Other locations included the home addresses of the organizations' secretariats or administrators, which served as contact points for members. These included the addresses of various leading members of the LAI-Holland: Weesperzijde 90 (P.J. Schmidt); Rhijnvis Feithstraat 43 (C.J.J. Winterink) and Vechtstraat 37 (Abdul Manaf).[192] These addresses were often located outside of the city centre. Schmidt, Winterink and Manaf all lived in neighbourhoods in the south of Amsterdam. Neighbourhoods in this area, like De Pijp and the Rivierenbuurt, were typical middle-class and working-class neighbourhoods.[193] By contrast, he offices of the secretariats were located right in the city centre along the canals. These offices were focus-points for Dutch activists and the organizations' members. They were the administrative and organizational centres of local and national activism. Not only were these the administrative spaces for secretariats and committees, they were also connective spaces between national organizations and local members. These were the places where members could buy tickets for conferences, meetings, and social events, including for the Scottsboro meeting with Ada Wright in the Diamond Exchange.[194] For Dutch anti-imperialists outside of Amsterdam, the secretariats were their point of contact for events and activities organized in the capital. Whereas Amsterdam residents could easily get their tickets for events at the secretariats, those living outside of Amsterdam had to make more of an effort. For the above-mentioned 1928 IRH congress in Carré, special attention was paid to the question of how to acquire tickets if living outside of Amsterdam. The IRH asked these people to write to the secretariat with a "clear specification of the

[189] University of Nottingham, 'Behind the Scenes – Conference Staff,' via https://spacesofinternationalism.omeka.net, accessed 9 May 2022.
[190] University of Nottingham, 'Conference staff'.
[191] Recht en Vrijheid, 'Mededeelingen van het bestuur', vol.1:4 (22 October 1927), 2; NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16604.
[192] Recht en Vrijheid, 'N/A', vol.1:9 (31 December 1927), 3; Recht en Vrijheid, 'N/A', vol.1:13 (25 February 1928), 8.
[193] Is Geschiedenis, 'Amsterdamse Pijp: Villawijk of arbeiderswijk', via https://isgeschiedenis.nl, accessed 26 May 2022; Joods Amsterdam, 'Rivierenbuurt algemeen', via https://www.joodsamsterdam.nl, accessed 26 May 2022.
[194] De Tribune, 'De negermoeder Ada Wright in Weenen', 8 June 1932, 6.

number of required tickets."[195] The tickets would then be sent by post.[196] This special attention suggests a distinction between Amsterdam and the rest of the Netherlands in terms of participation in anti-colonial activity in the capital.

Local and national organizations located in Amsterdam were very much interconnected, both in terms of network but also in terms of space. Even when organizations were not cooperating in the organization of events or campaigns, the connected spaces within the city often meant that people from various organizations regularly met. In a letter to Henk Sneevliet, Henriëtte Roland Holst recalled that a few days before,

> … I shortly met Mr. Le Febvre. This happened when the IAH meeting came to a close and the people who were going to establish the League came into that same room. He immediately came up to me to greet me and mentioned that we had met each other in 1903.[197]

Such encounters thus gave members of various movements the opportunity to catch up and reconnect. In addition, secretariats of various organizations were often spatially connected. The most telling example of this is found at a canal-side building located at Singel 359. At least in 1932, this building contained the offices of various organizations. Both the LAI-Holland and the IRH had offices here.[198] Also located here were the offices of the Scottsboro committee, which was a cooperative effort of various communist organizations. These included the LAI and IRH, but also various youth organizations and trade union organizations like the Communistische Jeugdbond, Revolutionaire Vakbeweging Oppositie and Landelijk Werklieden Strijdcomité.[199] Finally, Singel 359 housed the offices of the CAOC and the Student Anti-Oorlogscomité.[200] Locations like Singel 359 also revealed the interconnectedness of Amsterdam anti-colonialists and their involvement in multiple organizations within the anti-colonial movement. This interconnectedness is exemplified by the activities of Simon de Jong. A lawyer from a local Jewish family, De Jong became involved in local and national communist activity in the early 1920s. He was

Image 14: Simon de Jong in 1937 - *Het Volkdagblad, 'Getuigenis voor democratie en menselijkheid', 18 October 1937, 1.*

[195] Roode Hulp, '[…]', vol.2:6 (1928), 8.
[196] Idem.
[197] Henriette Roland Holst, Buissche Heide, to Henk Sneevliet, Amsterdam, 25 July 1927, in: Nico Markus, *'Waarom schrijf je nooit meer?' Briefwisseling Henriette Roland Holst – Henk Sneevliet,* (Amsterdam, 1995), 349.
[198] Liga, 'Nieuws van de organisatie', 1:1 (May 1932), 8; De Tribune, 'Kaarten van de Scottsboro-meeting afrekenen!', 10 June 1932, 6.
[199] Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG), Collection Komintern – CPH/CPN, cat.ref. ARCH01337, inv.no. 578.
[200] De Tribune, 'Anti-oorlogsfront', 8 July 1932, 7; De Tribune, 'Studenten tegen den oorlog', 24 June 1932, 7.

part of the group within the Jewish community which did not practice their faith and had assimilated into mainstream society. In 1924, he had become a member of the CPH, where he served as legal advisor and pro bono attorney to communist workers accused of sedition.[201] He also became active in the IRH and the LAI, where he was secretary in addition to his work on the LAI's periodical *Recht en Vrijheid*.[202]

These snippets into the lives of 'behind-the-scenes' actors give some insight into the interconnectedness of local organizations and people. However, little is known about people like De Jong, who worked in the anti-colonialist movements in Amsterdam. In general, research has focused on prominent or well-known actors in transnational anti-colonialism rather than on the people 'behind the scenes'. Not much has been written about people like Simon de Jong. Also, as these people rarely left personal archives or memoires, little can be known about their day-to-day activities and role within the Amsterdam anti-colonial scene. The lack of personal archives or information might be a consequence of the Holocaust, as many people active within the Amsterdam anti-colonial movements were part of the Jewish community and, during the Second World War, were arrested, transported, and murdered in concentration camps. Simon de Jong and Bob Neter were amongst those murdered in Auschwitz.[203]

Without the secretariats and the people 'behind the scenes,' conferences and events such as Ada Wright's visit to the Diamond Exchange would not have been possible. As such, their locations were an integral part of the anti-colonialist make-up of Amsterdam, integrated into the transnational anti-colonialist movements. They did not exist by themselves, but formed a network of organizations and people across the city.

e. Conclusion

Venues are at the heart of the spatial analysis of international political activity. Centralizing the venue allows the abstract of transnational anti-colonialism to be examined through their local manifestations. The meeting locations in Amsterdam give insight into the political and symbolic motivations of organizations and their events. The occasional choice for luxurious locations such as the Concertgebouw or Carré reflected the sense of importance which the organizers of events sought to emit. More regularly, however, organizations sought to create a sense of camaraderie and togetherness through their events. Such events were consequently located at working-class institutions and meeting halls which were part of the local anti-colonial networks. These clearly located and demarcated indoor spaces thus become the unit of analysis for researching many forms of local manifestations of transnational anti-colonialism, including membership, operating procedures, and legitimacy. Such local manifestations are

[201] Cornelissen, *GPOe,* 112.
[202] Recht en Vrijheid, vol.1:1 (10 September 1927), 1; Huygens ING, 'Lijst van revolutionairen'.
[203] Joods Monument, 'Simon David Neter,' via https://www.joodsmonument.nl, accessed 26 May 2022; Joods Monument, 'Simon de Jong', via https://www.joodsmonument.nl, accessed 26 May 2022.

interconnected with venue. The choice of venue may shape and be shaped by the target audience and aims of events. Local networks also influence the venues chosen for local meetings. Many of the venues used for anti-colonial events in Amsterdam were part of the Jewish-socialist space in Amsterdam. The regular choice for these locations reveals the interconnectedness of the Jewish-socialist community and the transnational anti-colonialist movements unique to Amsterdam.

3. ‘In between’: Digul

In between international conferences and local meetings, anti-colonial activity in Amsterdam took the form of outside campaigning, celebrations, and social events. These activities were firmly rooted in the local space and in their turn transformed the space in which they took place. This chapter analyses these ‘in between’ spaces through the case study of the campaign against the Digul camp in New Guinea.

a. Campaigning against Digul in Amsterdam

Wilhelmus of Nassauwe,
I sing because I must
Loyal to the homeland
That drank my brothers’ blood
The servants of Orange
Left me unharmed
The judge said, I exile you
So that you suffer there.[204]

This adaptation of the Dutch national anthem spoke of a practice of colonial policing which came under attack in the late-1920s and 1930s. On the edge of empire, far from the administrative centre of colonial rule in Batavia, the Dutch authorities had built an internment camp for political dissidents, communists, and nationalists from Indonesia. It was, as political scientist and historian Takashi Shiraishi puts it, “a concentration camp for troublemakers.”[205] Digul was located at the province of Tanah Merah in New Guinea, “on the easternmost island of the huge Dutch Indies archipelago, 450 km up the Digoel River, in the deepest of the jungles.”[206] The journey from the river mouth to the camp took more than three days by police ship.[207] In fact, it was so far removed and difficult to reach that Dutch medical doctor L.J.A. Schoonheyt, resident in the camp in 1935, wrote about the journey: “Thanks to bad connections, it may take longer to get from Batavia in the easter direction to Boven Digoel than it takes on modern ship to get from Holland to Batavia.”[208] According to Shiraishi, the camp “had no need of barbed wire

[204] DNBL, ‘Digoel Wilhelmus,’ [adapted from Marnix van St. Aldegonde]; via https://www.dbnl.org, accessed 27 May 2022; Gerard A. Persoon, ‘“Queen Wilhelmina, Mother of the Mentawaians”: The Dutch National Anthem in Indonesia and as Part of the Music Culture of Siberut’, in: Bart Barendregt and Els Bogaerts (eds.), *Recollecting Resonances: Indonesian-Dutch Musical Encouters,* (Leiden, 2014), 61-86, 81.
[205] Takashi Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul: Policing As Politics in Colonial Indonesia, 1926-1941,* (Singapore, 2021), 19
[206] Rudolf Mrázek, ‘Boven Digoel and Terezín: Camps at the Time of Triumphant Technology,’ *East Asian Science, Technology and Society,* vol.3:2 (2009), 287-314, 289.
[207] Shiraishi, *Phantom,* 41.
[208] Mrázek, ‘Digoel,’ 288; L.J.A. Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel,* (Batavia, 1936), 23.

… Instead, the physical limits were set by nature … to hem in its prisoners, who were allowed free movement within a 25 kilometre radius and encouraged to develop their own colony and thereby created a semblance of normalcy."[209] A second camp was built for the more rebellious internees at Tanah Tinggi, which was another five hours by motorboat from the main camp. The internment camp of Boven Digul had been built in response to the communist uprising of 1926. Less than a week after the revolt started on Java, the Council of the Netherlands Indies decided to establish an internment camp as a location for "interning the principal communist leaders [of the revolt] on a large scale."[210] Internment was seen as the only viable solution, since the authorities acknowledged that they lacked the legal evidence for prosecution. Digul was not a penal colony, as internment in the camp was "not a penal sanction but an administrative measure, invoked by the governor general's extraordinary powers to require an internee to live in a certain place."[211] Internment and exile had been longstanding practices of colonial policing, as these measures did not require a trial and were therefore a much easier way of handling political dissidents. With the establishment of the Digul camp, internees were concentrated in one remote place. Officially, internees were not criminals, as they had not been tried in court. However, this also meant that "no time limit was set to the internment."[212] The aim of the camp was to remind and re-educate internees of the socially accepted political views and ways of life. To that end, the camp had to mirror as much as possible the 'normal world' and was set up as an artificial village, including shops, schools, and a soccer club. Internees were encouraged or forced to play along, receiving better treatment if they participated in 'village'.[213]

In the Dutch imagination, exoticism was dominant in the views on Digul. The camp, located in the vast jungles New Guinea, called-up images of "tropics, cannibals, mosquitoes, orchids, birds of paradise, dark-skinned bodies, and hazy horizons."[214] The Papuans who populated the island "had a reputation for savagery, meaning unfriendliness to invaders at best and cannibalism at worst."[215] Opponents of the Digul camp used the exoticism and remoteness of the camp to underscore the 'barbaric' treatment of internees by the Dutch colonial authorities. The IRH called the camp "a concentration camp in the wilderness."[216] In their periodical *Roode Hulp*, they wrote:

> Apart from naked Papuans there live 150 people from various regions, including women and children. Fifty of them [are] servants of the armed forces and in addition [there are] Catholic

[209] Shiraishi, *Phantom,* 19
[210] Ibidem, 32-38.
[211] Ibidem, 29-32.
[212] Ibidem, 29-30; Rudolf Mrázek, 'Say "cheese". Images of captivity in Boven Digoel (1927-43)' in: Susie Protschky, *Photography, Modernity and the Governed in Late-colonial Indonesia,* (Amsterdam, 2015), 255-280, 255.
[213] De Correspondent, 'Hoe Nederland zijn strafkamp in Nieuw-Guinea trachtte te vermommen', 7 March 2018, via https://decorrespondent.nl, accessed 19 March 2022.
[214] Mrázek, 'Digoel', 289.
[215] Idem.
[216] Roode Hulp, 'Het zich wrekend gezag in Indonesië', vol.1:9 (1927), 2-3.

> missionaries, civil servants, and tradesmen … For postal communication etcetera they rely on Merauke: a three day's march or else twenty hours by fishing boat. Of course this is not allowed for our comrades. Incidentally: ocean before [you], forest to the left, right and behind [you]. Jungle. Jungle – and … mosquitoes.[217]

Organizations like the IRH protested against the practice of the 'exorbitante rechten' (exorbitant rights) which allowed the Dutch authorities to intern political dissidents. *Roode Hulp* regularly reported on decisions of internment and exile by colonial authorities, as well as cases of maltreatment and death in the camp.[218] However, protest against the Digul camp not only came from organizations such as the IRH and LAI. Initiatives were also organized by local networks of students and intellectuals. In February 1927, a group of artists and intellectuals came together in Hotel Parksicht in Amsterdam to form the Committee for Indonesian Exiles. Amongst the participants was the famous architect Berlage and the writer Is. Querido, who became part of the executive committee. In Hotel Parksicht, the gathered intellectuals connected the question of Digul and internment of political dissidents with their demands of freedom of press and freedom of association and assembly in Indonesia.[219] Another prominent opponent of the Digul camp was the poet Jef Last, sometimes called the 'Digul poet,' who wrote the adaption of the national anthem mentioned earlier. In 1933, he also published a poetry collection, *De koperen ploert*, containing militant poetry and songs about the Digul camp.[220] In this way, art, poetry, and literature became part of the campaign against Digul.

Indeed, campaigning against the Digul camp contained much more than the organization of local, national, and international conferences in indoor spaces. The anti-colonial space was not limited to the conference hall or meeting room. The book *Placing Internationalism* refers to "the gamut of para-conference spaces in which delegates moved while at the conference but not *at* the conference."[221] These were the spaces 'in between' formal or organized political activity. In the book, Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe argue for a "widening of focus from the 'business' sessions of international conferences to the receptions and social programme that invariably accompanied them…"[222] They analyse emotions and atmospheres as part of the lived experiences of international conferencing. Applying this approach to the study of transnational anti-colonialism in Amsterdam allows for a broader understanding of the activities and atmospheres of anti-colonial political activity. In this chapter, the analysis of 'in between' spaces includes aspects of outside political activity – demonstrations and canvassing – as well as sociability, celebrations, and leisure. These activities were integral to the local manifestations of

[217] Roode Hulp, 'Indonesië', vol.1:5 (1927), 8.
[218] Roode Hulp, 'De terreur in Indonesië', vol.1:6 (1926), 7; Roode Hulp, 'Indonesië', vol.1:7 (1927), 7.
[219] NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16604.
[220] *De koperen ploert* translates as 'the copper sun' and was a reference to the tropical sun in Indonesia – Ensie 'Koperen ploert', via https://www.ensie.nl, accessed 19 March 1922; Joop van den Berg, 'Jef Last, de "Digoeldichter"' *Indische Letteren,* vol.6:3 (1991), 136-141, 137.
[221] Heffernan et al., 'Introduction', 8.
[222] Idem.

transnational anti-colonialism. As cited in this thesis' introduction, Marc Matera has argued that an understanding of social interactions and spaces, which were embedded in local spaces and contexts, is crucial in the examination of the interactions between political activity and sociability.[223] Such expressions of anti-colonialism could appear in the same indoor spaces in which conferences and meetings were held, thus transforming the role of these venues to include 'para-conference' activities. Often, however, these activities were not located in the meeting venue, but rather in outside or social spaces. Shifting the focus from the indoor space to the 'in between' space sheds light on the role of emotions and atmospheres on anti-colonial activity and on the interconnectedness of political activism and sociability. The remainder of this chapter thus maps the para-conference space of Amsterdam through these forms of practice, sociability, and art.

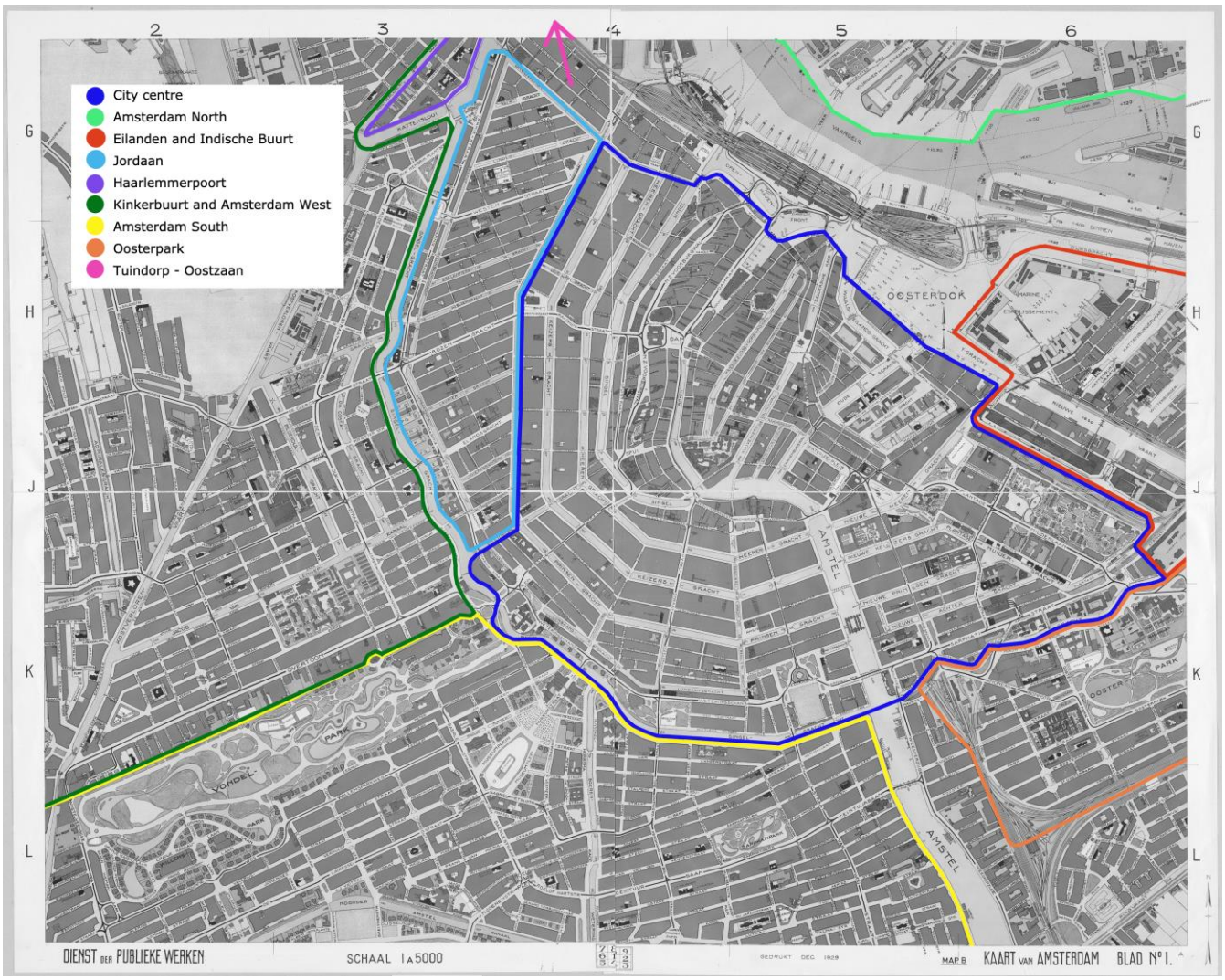
b. The outside spaces

The outside spaces of Amsterdam – its streets, squares, and parks – tell a lot about practices of anti-colonial activity and the formation of local networks and sociability in the local context. These practices of anti-colonialism are forms of what Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe refer to as 'para-conference' spaces. Often, initiatives of 'para-conferencing' or anti-colonial activism in the outside spaces were organized by neighbourhood. For example, during the International Solidarity Day of 1932 the IAH organized 'propaganda marches' throughout a number of districts of Amsterdam, including Amsterdam North, Kattenburg and the Islands in the city centre, the Indische Buurt, Oosterpark and the Jordaan. These marches – lasting between two and four hours – featured 'five minute speeches' on multiple locations throughout the neighbourhoods.[224] Along the way, participants might be able to make connections and socialize. The streets of Amsterdam neighbourhoods thus became 'para-conference' spaces and sites of sociability, as well as spaces of anti-colonial activism.

The communist tactics of neighbourhood-centred working-class organization and resistance was a widely used practice. In his article on neighbourhood organization by the Italian Communist Party in Turin, historian Antonio Sonnessa emphasizes the importance of "community-driven forms of sociability and solidarity to the success of political … organization …"[225] According to Sonnessa, "[t]he working-class neighbourhood acted as a cultural space in which collective identity and action were fostered an networks of sociability and solidarity were created."[226]

[223] Matera, *London,* 6-7.
[224] De Tribune, 'De Internationale Solidariteitsdag in Noord-Holland Utrecht', 8 June 1932, 6.
[225] Antonio Sonnessa, 'Factory Cells and the Red Aid Movement: Factory and Neighborhood Forms of Organization and Resistance to Fascism in Turin, 1922–1926', *Science & Society,* vol.70:4 (2006), 480-508, 481.
[226] Sonnessa, 'Factory', 482.

The outside spaces were thus divided by neighbourhood or district for the purpose of anti-colonial activism and propaganda. The IRH, for example, had nine local sections within Amsterdam.[227]



Map 2: IRH discricts in Amsterdam - *Roode Hulp, 'Uit de afdelingen', vol.N/A:2 (1932), 3*; *Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Dienst der Publieke Werken en rechtsopvolgers, cat.ref.10048, inv.no.120.*

These sections not only informed the organization of anti-colonial protest. They were also defined spaces for 'colportage' – canvassing or the selling of propaganda material on the street. Anti-colonial activism included regular canvassing on the streets of Amsterdam. Often, political parties or anti-colonial organizations made available newspapers or brochures on specific topics for canvassing. For example, the LAI printed large quantities of articles published in their periodical *Recht en Vrijheid* to be distributed throughout the Netherlands. Canvassers were called upon to contact the LAI's office at the Keizergracht 441 in Amsterdam to request copies for distribution.[228] In October and November 1927, the LAI provided a brochure by J.D.L. Le Febvre on the communist uprising in Sumatra. The brochure

[227] Roode Hulp, 'Uit de afdelingen', vol.N/A:2 (1932), 3.
[228] Recht en Vrijheid, 'De Internationale der Gekleurde volken', vol.1:2 (24 September 1927), 2.

was priced at 5 cents.[229] In January 1928, an article written by Indian nationalist Jawaharlal Nehru was canvassed by LAI supporters.[230] The aim of canvassing was not only to spread awareness, but also to recruit new members and subscribers to their newspapers and periodicals. "RECRUIT SUBSCRIBERS" was the message of the LAI concerning the canvassing of Nehru's article.[231] The financial goals of canvassing become clear from the appeal of the LAI in their issue of May 1928, asking canvassers to pay for the sold issues as soon as possible, as "the continuation of the periodical for a large part depends on it."[232] In the case of *Recht en Vrijheid*, the attempts to raise sufficient funds through canvassing was unsuccessful. The periodical was disbanded in 1928 after twenty issues.[233]

'Colportage' was intimately connected with the outside spaces of Amsterdam. Amsterdam locals who wanted to participate in canvassing had only to look in *De Tribune* to find out where and when they were able to participate and where to meet up. In the months between October 1928 and February 1929, at least five canvassing actions were organized in Amsterdam by the IRH for the Digul campaign. Of these five moments, four started from their meeting points right between the Jordaan and Amsterdam West – the annexed district of Sloten.[234] Clearly, the working-class neighbourhoods of the Jordaan and Amsterdam West were prime locations for 'colportage'. Likewise, canvassing was organized for the Scottsboro campaign by the IRH, LAI and Communist Youth Association in various Amsterdam neighbourhoods. Meeting places for canvassing included Oostenburggracht (Eilanden-Indische Buurt), Kwakerplein (West) and Westermarkt (Jordaan and city centre).[235] The focus on working-class neighbourhoods for 'colportage' proved lucrative. The IRH sections mentioned above all participated in 'colportage' for the International Winter Aid Campaign of 1931-1932. It appears that their efforts were mainly focussed on the working-class neighbourhoods. The IRH raised the most money in the neighbourhoods Tuindorp-Oostzaan and Kinkerbuurt-West, both newly built or sanitised neighbourhoods with a lot of social housing aimed at the working class.[236] 'Colportage' was not only a financial activity, but a social one as well, connecting participants with one another, as well as with the Amsterdam population they encountered while canvassing.

Apart from canvassing, anti-colonialists also organized so-called 'propaganda bicycle tours'. For example, during the World Congress Against Imperialist War, the Amsterdam chapter of the Anti-War

[229] Recht en Vrijheid, 'Colporteurs', vol.1:4 (22 October 1927), 6; Recht en Vrijheid, 'Colporteurs!', vol.1:5 (5 November 1927), 6.
[230] Recht en Vrijheid, '[…]', vol.1:10 (14 January 1928), 8.
[231] Idem.
[232] Recht en Vrijheid, 'Aan de colporteurs', vol.1:19 (26 May 1928), 8.
[233] Elsbeth Etty, *Liefde is heel het leven niet. Henriette Roland Holste 1869-1952,* (Meppel, 1996), 458.
[234] De Tribune, 'Uit de I.R.H'., 6 October 1928, 2; De Tribune, 'Uit de I.R.H'. 10 December 1928, 6; De Tribune, 'Uit de I.R.H'., 22 December 1928, 6; De Tribune, 'Uit de I.R.H'., 12 January 1929, 3; De Tribune, 'Uit de I.R.H'., 11 February 1929, 4.
[235] De Tribune, 'Scottsboro-actie te Amsterdam', 24 June 1932, 6.
[236] Roode Hulp, 'Afdelingen'; IAmsterdam, 'Tuindorp Oostzaan', via https://www.iamsterdam.com, accessed 26 April 2022; Gemeente Amsterdam, 'De oer-Amsterdamse Kinkerstraat, 22 January 2020, via https://www.amsterdam.nl, accessed 26 April 2022.

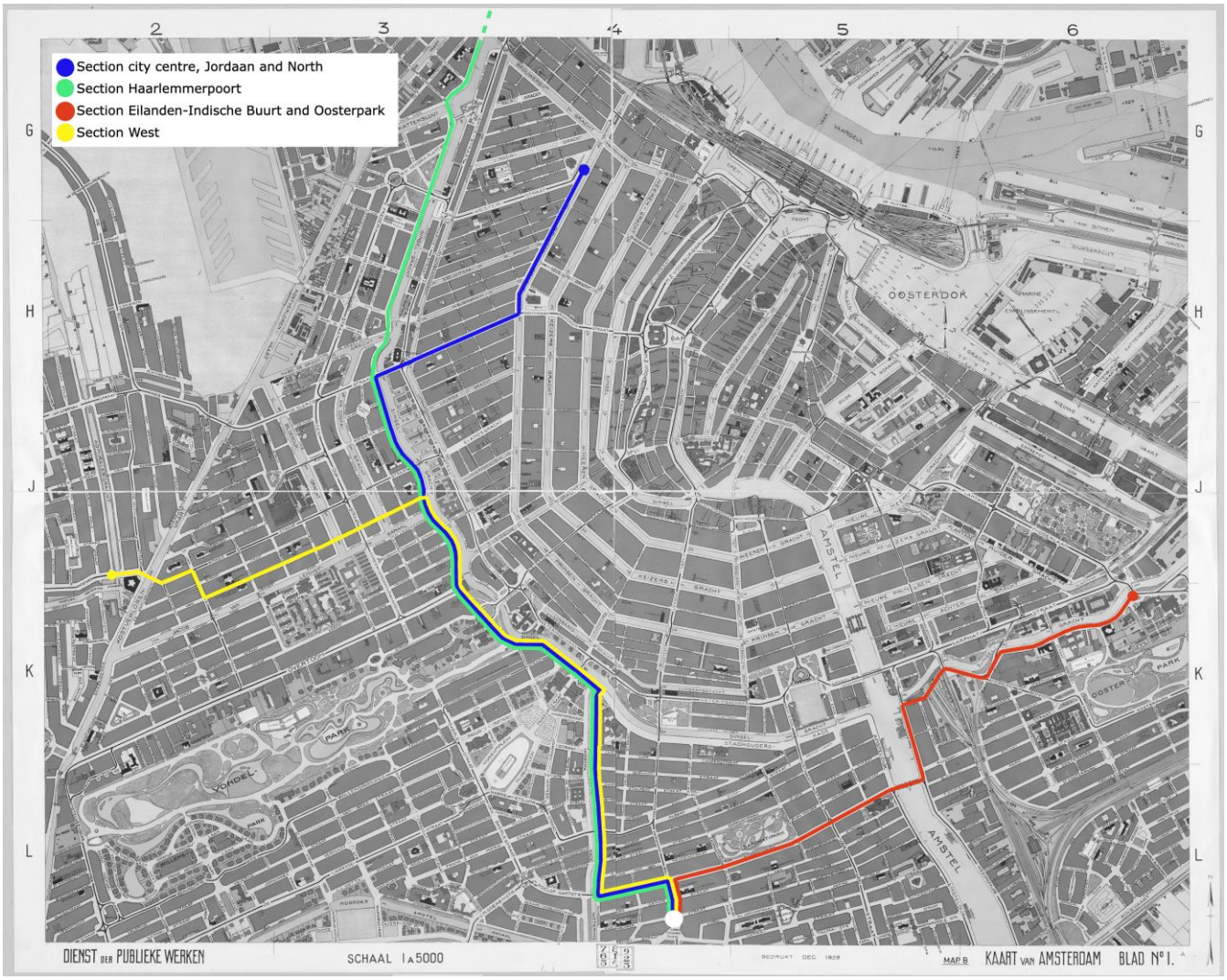
Committee (AOC) organized such a bicycle tour to raise awareness for the congress. The tour started from the Westermarkt at the border of the Jordaan.[237] The AOC also organized other bicycle tours in Amsterdam. Sometimes such tours were combined with open-air meetings, for example in the case of their bicycle tours in Amsterdam North in June 1932.[238] Often, these bicycle tours were organized by local neighbourhood chapters of organizations. The bicycle tours in Amsterdam North were organized by the AOC chapter 'Amsterdam above the IJ'. Tuindorp-Oostzaan was another chapter of the AOC which organized bike tours in the district Amsterdam North.[239]

Travelling by foot or bicycle was not unusual in Amsterdam. Since the early 1920s, many inhabitants of Amsterdam had moved from the city centre to new neighbourhoods. In order to connect these newer neighbourhoods, a network of trams and busses had been built. Another new development was the use of the car in the city, which led to the installation of traffic lights, crosswalks and the like.[240] Cycling, however, became an important mode of transportation within the city of Amsterdam after the end of the First World War, when bicycles became cheaper thanks to German imports, and therefore more available to the middle class and working class. Meanwhile the price of public transport grew, making the bicycle an attractive alternative, not only for sport and leisure, but as a mode of transportation within the city.[241] One local remembered: "The … tram was too expensive, of course. So you cycled or walked. I [remember having] bought a bicycle on credit!"[242] The number of bikes in the city grew explosively during the 1920s and 1930s. Another local described: "That endless, uninterrupted row of three, four cyclists side by side along the entire Weteringschans."[243] Amsterdam was a suitable location for bike transport, as it was very flat and compactly built, so that the distance between locations was manageable on bike or foot.[244] Unlike other major European cities, Amsterdam did not undergo the major transformation of the nineteenth century which preferred broad boulevards and large squares as a way of regulating transportation. As journalist Fred Feddes, mobility expert Marjolein de Lange and scholar of Urban Studies Marco te Brömmelstroet argue, "Such boulevards unintentionally paved the way for mass motorisation: when motor cars arrived, these spacious layouts offered significant absorption capacity before the city became congested."[245] The necessity for such transformations was not as strong since Amsterdam – unusually for a capital city – was not the seat of parliament and ministries and was not the centre of diplomacy in the Netherlands, which instead lay in The Hague. Investments in the spatial layout of Amsterdam was therefore not much of a priority. In addition, the

[237] De Tribune, 'Congresberichten', 25 August 1932, 4.
[238] De Tribune, 'De anti-oorlogsactie', 10 June 1932, 6; De Tribune, 'Organisatie-nieuws', 20 June 1932, 6.
[239] De Tribune, 'Amsterdamsch Vereenigingsnieuws', 7 May 1932, 4.
[240] Kaal, *Hoofd,* 52.
[241] Pete Jordan, *De Fietsrepubliek,* (Amsterdam, 2013), 13.
[242] Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering,* 182.
[243] Jordan, *Fietsrepubliek,* 13.
[244] Idem.
[245] Fred Feddes, Marjolein de Lange and Marco te Brömmelstroet, 'Hard working in paradise. The contested making of Amsterdam as a cycling city,' in: Peter Cox and Till Koglin (eds.), *The Politics of Cycling Infrastructure: Spaces and (In)Equality,* (Bristol, 2021), 133-156, 135.

city lacked the resources to join the 'boulevard trend'. The spatial layout of the city was therefore more suited to bicycles than cars.[246] Thus, for many people cycling and walking were the main ways of navigating the city.

The compactness of the city also meant that parts of Amsterdam could be crossed on foot. For the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War, the Amsterdam participants went to the RAI on foot. From four meeting points across the city, groups of delegates walked through the streets of Amsterdam towards the location of the congress in the south of the city. On the way, three of these met at the Singelgracht, and together they moved as a large procession towards the RAI.[247]



Map 3: Walking routes to the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialism - *De Tribune, 'Naar de anti-oorlogsmeeting!' 27 August 1932, 4*; *Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Dienst der Publieke Werken, cat.ref.10048, inv.no.120.*

[246] Fred Feddes and Marjolein de Lange, *Fietsstad Amsterdam: Hoe Amsterdam de fietshoofdstad van de wereld werd,* (Amsterdam, 2019), 15.
[247] De Tribune, 'Naar de anti-oorlogsmeeting!' 27 August 1932, 4.

In these ways, the outside spaces of Amsterdam became part of the para-conference space. Walking from the city to the conference hall allowed participants from Amsterdam and abroad to socialize and connect. As various routes met, more people met along the way. This contributed to the atmosphere of the 'para-conference'. Thus, the conference shaped the outside spaces and in turn the outsides space shaped connections lasting throughout the conference and beyond.

c. Celebrations and the Digul campaign

> Comrades, this we must understand today,
> Today, the First of May,
> When we take up our smock and tools:
> ‚one creature, humankind, still is not free!'"[248]

On the 1st of May 1932, a car was removed by the police at the start of a procession through the working class neighbourhoods of Amsterdam West. The procession was part of the International Workers' Day demonstration of the CPH. The car depicted 'Dutch colonial authority': a man, dressed in the Dutch tricolour, stood on the car holding in one hand a whip and in the other the ropes on which three Indonesian women were chained. The car was also adorned with gallows, referencing the Indonesian communist revolt of 1926-7. Although the car was removed by the police, the displays and decorations – including the gallows – were carried along the route by demonstrators.[249] The people who had been standing on the car continued the route on foot, shouting slogans such as: "Safe us from the claws of red, white and blue."[250] On the Kwakersplein, just west of the city centre, the police again intervened, removing the displays from the procession amidst loud protests from participants.[251] In addition to the Indonesia car, the procession also included a Scottsboro car, which displayed a young black man laying "as a victim on an American flag."[252] It seems that this display was not removed by the police.

One of the more evocative examples, the Indonesia car of the 1932 International Workers' Day demonstration shows how celebrations and holidays were used as occasions to call attention to the Digul campaign. Anti-colonial activism was often a part of such celebrations. In the case of the Indonesia car, the anti-colonial agenda was very clearly integrated into the May Day celebrations. Indeed, communist and anti-colonial organizations clearly sought to use the 1932 International Workers' Day not only to

[248] Jan W. Jacobs, 'Meilied', in: Recht en Vrijheid, vol.1:16 (7 April 1928), 3.
[249] De Tribune, 'Roode Strijd-Mei in Amsterdam', 2 May 1932, 1; Nationaal Archief (NA), Ministerie van Justitie, Verbaalarchief, 1915-1955; Kabinetsarchief, 1915-1940, cat.ref. 2.09.22, inv.no. 16776; via Huygens ING, Reports of Central Intelligence communications, 1919-1940, huygens.knaw.nl.
[250] De Tribune, 'Strijd-Mei'.
[251] Ibidem; NA, Justitie / Verbaal en Kabinet, 2.09.22, inv.no. 16776.
[252] De Tribune, 'Strijd-Mei'.

call attention to workers' rights, but also to the agenda of anti-colonialism and independence. De IRH wrote:

> May Day is being "celebrated" and people speak of the "celebration" of the First of May. Still, we should remember that the idea of STRUGGLE is at the root of May Day, that of class struggle. … And because we are the Dutch section of the International Red Aid we should not fail, during those May Day meetings, to shed a clear light on the ways the DUTCH bourgeoisie and its accomplices use terror to enslave Indonesia.[253]

Organizations like CPH and IRH put out slogans to use during the day's demonstrations which reflected that agenda. The CPH labelled May Day that year as the 'International Day against the war'. It's slogans included: *Fight against the imperialist war!* and *Indonesia independent from the Netherlands – now!*[254] The IRH paid attention to the Digul campaign through their slogans: *For the direct release of all pollical prisoners!* and *For the immediate closure of the Digoel camp!*[255] Furthermore, the IRH called on the readers of *De Tribune* to stand with their working-class peers in Indonesia and the Digul camp by fighting against imperialist and fascist terror.[256]

International Workers' Day was not the only celebration which was employed for the promotion of the Digul campaign. On communist commemoration days for the Paris Commune of 1871, Digul and other anti-colonialist causes were put at the centre of the celebrations. While in the early years after the First World War, the focus was still on the remembrance of the Paris Commune, these commemorations later shifted to focus on present-day political issues and causes. The 1920 commemoration in Handwerkers Vriendenkring was still very much a remembrance of the Commune and its long-term effects on the Communist International.[257] At the commemoration in 1925, also in Handwerkers Vriendenkring, poet Henriëtte Roland Holst connected the state terror of 1871 with the capitalist 'white terror' and state violence now displayed in Indonesia, demanding amnesty for all political prisoners in the colony.[258] Even later, in 1933, the commemoration organized by the Amsterdam chapter of the IRH was "less than ever a 'commemoration', and more a signal, a call of alarm!"[259] Held in the Cinema Royal on the Nieuwendijk, the program consisted of a combination of political speeches, theatre and film, focussing on a number of anti-colonial and communist causes, amongst which the Digul camp and the

[253] Roode Hulp, '1 Mei en de ,,Int. Roode Hulp"', vol.2:8 (1928), 2.
[254] De Tribune, '1 Mei: Internationale Strijddag tegen den Oorlog', 22 April 1932, 1.
[255] De Tribune, 'Demonstreert op den 1en Mei tegen klassenjustitie en fascisme!', 29 April 1932, 6.
[256] De Tribune, '1en Mei'.
[257] De Tribune, 'Commune-Herdenking te Amsterdam', 22 March 1920, 3.
[258] De Tribune, 'Commune Herdenking te Amsterdam,' 20 March 1925, 1.
[259] De Tribune, 'De I.R.H. herdenkt de Parijsche Commune', 7 March 1933, 8.

Scottsboro campaign.[260] The aim of the event was "a mass expression of solidarity with … the thousands of political prisoners in Indonesia and the exiles in Digul …"[261]

Celebrations and commemorative days like May Day and the commemoration of the Paris Commune were important practices of MOPR agitation and propaganda. The Paris Commune, in particular, became a cornerstone of MOPR activity in the early 1920s. MOPR, urged on by the Comintern, circulated directives for the organization of campaigns during the Paris Commune commemorative days.[262]

Image 15: The IRH protesting against Digul during International Women's Day, 1931 – *Roode Hulp, 'De demonstratie op 8 Maart, eenige minute na de eerste aanval door de politie', vol.N/A:4 (1931), 5.*

Another holiday which suited the anti-colonial aims of protest and propaganda was International Women's Day. Although the first celebrations of International Women's Day dated to 1909, the holiday emerged in the Netherlands as a communist holiday in the early 1920s, becoming an official holiday of the Comintern in 1922 under the influence of the German women's rights activist Clara Zetkin.[263] According to historian Temma Kaplan, these types of holidays were established to promote communal traditions and "unite the popular community around a set of common goals."[264] As with other holidays and celebrations, International Women's Day was regularly used by anti-colonialist activists in Amsterdam to bring attention to current social justice issues in Indonesia. During International Women's

[260] De Tribune, 'Parijsche Commune'.
[261] De Tribune, 'De Commune van Parijs', 16 March 1933, 8.
[262] Martin Ryle, 'Red Aid', 50-51.
[263] Temma Kaplan, 'On the Socialist Origins of international Women's Day', *Feminist Studies,* vol.11:1 (1985), 163-171, 164-165.
[264] Kaplan, 'Women's Day', 164.

Day in 1928, there was some attention for the condition of Indonesian women and for the Digul camp at the meeting of the regional chapter of the CPH in Odeon, as well as in newspaper articles.[265] Three years later, this side-line attention had developed into a large-scale demonstration through the streets of Amsterdam. This demonstration, organized by the IRH, protested against "police terror and class justice [in the Netherlands] and in the colonies."[266] A large meeting at Carré preceded the demonstration. *De Tribune* wrote: "Carré was filled to the brim with a mass of fervent workers."[267] Interestingly, on this meeting on International Women's Day, all speakers were men. In fact, not much reference was made to the fact that it was International Women's Day, although newspaper *De Tribune* did mention the presence of flags related to the holiday during the demonstration.[268]

Not only socialist or communist celebrations were used as moments for campaigning. During Christmastime, end-of-year celebrations and meetings were usual among anti-colonial organizations. At the Christmas meetings of the IRH, the Digul campaign and other themes of anti-colonial activity were a central feature. At the IRH's Christmas meeting of 1926, Henriëtte Roland Holst used the ancient Christmas myths of resurrection of the light to the fight against colonialism, capitalism, and fascism.

> We, who live in these tough, troubled, and great times, we witness the resurrection of the light not in nature, but in humanity. Those [who have been] humiliated and oppressed amongst all races and peoples are standing up across the world and the wish, which has been cultivated for thousands of years by the very best of humankind, is now being realised. It is only the beginning, it is still dark across the whole world … in many countries the ousting of the night has yet been unsuccessful … Also in Indonesia more people are starting to resist the imperialist oppression. And this resistance is legitimate.[269]

Celebrations and commemorations brought together meeting spaces and social spaces. The locations discussed in Chapter 2 thus transformed from a formal meeting space to a celebratory social space. Demonstrations brought these celebrations to the outside space. This integration of anti-colonial politics in existing international celebrations was very much localized. Amsterdam was often the focus point for national and international celebrations, especially the working class districts. Celebrations thus became part of the anti-colonial social space.

[265] De Tribune, '8 maart te Amsterdam', 10 March 1928, 6; De Tribune, 'De Internationale Vrouwendag', 3 March 1928, 4.
[266] De Tribune, 'Tegen politieterreur en klassejustitie!', 9 March 1931, 1.
[267] De Tribune, 'Politieterreur'.
[268] Idem.
[269] Roode Hulp, 'De kerstmeeting der I.R.H'. vol.1:9 (1927), 4-5.

d. Social spaces and art

Social life and nightlife had greatly developed in Amsterdam in the early 1900s. As Peter Knegtmans explains: "… there was a whole world to discover … in pubs, wine bars, more or less respectable *café-chantants* and … in artists' societies."[270] Night life centred around squares such as the Rembrandtplein and Leidseplein. The famous Café Américain at the Leidseplein was the place to be for "the crème de la crème of the city's male and female artistes …"[271] Two of the main centres of night life were located close to spaces of Jewish and socialist life: the Rembrandtplein-Amstelstraat and de Plantage. Locations like Handwerkers Vriendenkring and Concordia were also spaces of nightlife, where rooms could be rented for music and dance parties.[272]

Another important space of social life was the movie theatre. Film was working-class entertainment par excellence. During the interwar period, movie theatres popped up in Amsterdam working-class neighbourhoods. In 1925, Amsterdam housed twenty-five movie theatres, amongst which the famous Tuschinski Theater in the Reguliersbreestraat.[273] Usually, however, the working class of Amsterdam did not attend the luxurious Tuschinski. Rather, they went to cheaper cinemas, such as Cinema Royal. Seating 1400 people, Cinema Royal was located at the Nieuwendijk, a three minute walk from the Dam Square. Right in the heart of the Amsterdam working-class social life, the cinema catered to the so-called 'petjespubliek' – the working class living in the neighbourhood. Entry prices were thus relatively cheap and the interior of the cinema was sober. One of the selling points of the cinema was its orchestra, which accompanied film screenings. The Cinema Royal orchestra was a cheap alternative to a night out at the Concertgebouw. Regularly, the cinema showed Russian movies, including the 1928 anti-colonialist Soviet propaganda movie *Storm over Asia.*[274] This combination of film and politics was part of the movement of 'gemeenschapskunst' (community art) which emerged among Dutch socialist networks as a form of political sociability. The idea of 'gemeenschapskunst' had emerged in the late-nineteenth century and was introduced by people like socialist architect H.P. Berlage and others in the Netherlands, becoming popular within Dutch socialist networks. The idea behind community art was that art should be an expression of society's fundamentals and principles. Jef Last wrote about the role of film and cinema as part of community art, arguing that this modern and democratic art form was greatly suited to the socialist agenda.[275]

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[270] Knegtmans, *Student Life,* 31.
[271] Ibidem, 33.
[272] Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering,* 221-235.
[273] Oneindig Noord-Holland, 'Bioscoop, dat is vermaak voor kwartjesmensen', via https://onh.nl, accessed 20 May 2022.
[274] Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld & Geluid, 'Jubileumfilm Cinema Royal Amsterdam (1947), 11 January 2021, via https://www.youtube.com, accessed 20 May 2022; AnZdoc, 'Het orkest van Cinema Royal', via https://adoc.pub, accessed 20 May 2022; Theo Bakker 'De Amsterdamse bioscopen in het verleden en heden', via https://www.theobakker.net, accessed 20 May 2022, 121.
[275] Céline Linssen, Hans Schoots and Tom Gunning, *Het gaat om de film! Een nieuwe geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche Filmliga, 1927-1933,* (Amsterdam, 1999), 189.

Movie nights were a regular occurrence in the social life of anti-colonialists. Naturally, the movies shown tied into themes of anti-colonialist activity. The second congress of the IRH in 1928 opened with the showing of the movie *Java*, "which provides an impression of the beautiful country where the Dutch oppressors are suppressing a population of millions."[276] The movie was accompanied by music: a violin solo by a well-known conductor from the Cinema Royal, as well as songs by opera baritone Emile van Bosch of the Flora Theatre. Movie and music were not only for entertainment and leisure, as the IRH wrote: "This meeting will be a worthy and earnest opening to our second Congress."[277] The combination of movie and music was not unusual. On 16 May 1928, the Amsterdam chapter of the IRH organized a meeting in Concordia which combined song and piano music with slideshows of colonial terror in China.[278] Another such evening was organized in June 1928.[279] Film was also used as a medium of propaganda. The IRH filmed parts of the demonstration organized during their second congress. The film was shown in Cinema Royal, where viewers saw the procession with banners reading "Away with the Digoel camp!" and "Free the Indonesian students!"[280] Thus, IRH methods of agitation were not limited to international campaigns and protest activities. Martin Ryle explains: "Lectures were held, films shown, and concerts and plays staged by various sections in order to place the organization before a wide audience."[281]

Image 16: Agitprop theatre group 'Ontwaakt' performs at Cinema Tuschinski – *Roode Hulp, vol'.N/A', N/A:7 (1931), 3.*

[276] Roode Hulp, 'Ons Tweede Congres', vol.2:6 (1928), 2-3.
[277] Roode Hulp, 'Tweede'.
[278] Roode Hulp, 'Uit de afdeelingen', vol.2:8 (1928) 8.
[279] Roode Hulp, 'Uit de afdeelingen', vol.2:9 (1928), 8.
[280] Roode Hulp, De film v/d I.R.H.-demonstratie op 11 maart', vol.2:7 (1928), 8.
[281] Martin Ryle, 'Red Aid,' 67.

Apart from film and concerts, a major form of anti-colonial sociability was theatre. On the 15th of October 1933, the IRH organized an afternoon of theatrical and literary performances dedicated to their Indonesian campaign. In their announcement, Red Aid promised poetry, Indonesian krotjong music and agitprop theatres "with scenes on Indonesia."[282]

Agitprop – or agitation propaganda – refers to strategies used by communist networks "in which the techniques of agitation and propaganda are used to influence and mobilize public opinion."[283] In the case of the IRH's programme, agitprop took the form of political theatre. Theatre theorist John McGrath explains agitprop theatre as an "aggressively interventionist form of performance [that] was especially popular in Germany and Russia in the 1920s…"[284] Agitprop theatre groups such as 'Ontwaakt' and 'Alarm' regularly performed at meetings of the Amsterdam chapter of the IRH, and were engaged in canvassing and walking or bicycle tours in Amsterdam.[285]

Especially in the 1930s did agitprop theatre expand in the Netherlands. According to historian Frans de Smit, the year 1932 saw at least 126 performances from thirty-two different theatre groups.[286] De Smit explains the role of agitprop theatre at political meetings as follows:

> The groups played short scenes in which the societal problems of the day were raised broadly … The quality of the scenes and the play should not be overestimated. Most plays functioned as décor for a meeting, the piece 'in between'. Some groups played scenes which were probably of a higher quality, particularly the agitprop groups 'Alarm,' 'Ontwaakt' and 'Dynamo'.[287]

Dynamo was a rather unique group, as it was the only group performing modern dance theatre, led by the married couple Ulco Kooistra and Maja Mogroby. The couple established Dynamo in 1933 and held rehearsals with the group – mostly amateur dancers from the Amsterdam working class – at their home at the Plantage Middellaan 125 in the Amsterdam neighbourhood Plantage.[288] At the 'Indonesian Afternoon' of the International Red Aid in October 1932, held in Handwerkers Vriendenkring, Dynamo closed the meeting with their performance.[289]

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[282] De Tribune, 'Haast u! Het loopt storm!,' 16 October 1933, 4.
[283] Britannica, 'Agitprop (Soviet history),' https://www.britannica.com, accessed 15 March 2022.
[284] John McGrath, 'Agit-prop revisited: John McGrath's The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil (1973)', in: Michael Patterson, *Strategies of Political Theatre: Post-War British Playwrights,* 109-124, 113.
[285] De Tribune, 'Tribune-colportage te A'dam,' 7 May 1932, 4; De Tribune, 'Groote I.R.H.-meeting te Amsterdam, 10 October 1931, 3; De Tribune, 'Vrijlating'.
[286] Frans de Smit, 'Spelen voor de revolutie. Het arbeiderstheater in Nederland en Groningen, 1932-1960', in: Gerrit Voerman, Eddy de Jonge and Henk van der Veen (eds.), *Tussen Moskou en Finsterwolde: Over de geschiedenis van het communisme in Oost-Groningen,* (Scheemda, 1993), 31-49, 37.
[287] De Smit, 'Spelen', 37-38.
[288] Ibidem, 38; Theater Encyclopedie, 'Ulco Kooistra', via https://theaterencyclopedie.nl, accessed 15 March 2022.
[289] De Tribune, 'Indonesische kunstmiddag van de I.R.H'. 17 October 1933, 5.

Other forms of anti-colonial sociability included the bazaar. With some regularity, bazaars were organized by organizations such as the IRH. The IRH bazaar of September 1929 was held in Handwerkers Vriendenkring and lasted four days. The event combined leisure with activism. An exhibition showed photographs, brochures and objects made by political prisoners. In terms of leisure, the bazaar included a 'wheel of adventure,' a shooting gallery, a fortune teller and tug of war. There was music and food.[290]

As Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe argue, a spatial analysis of internationalism should address the 'cultural facets' which place anti-colonial conferencing and activity. The location in which anti-colonial sociability takes place shapes this social space. In the case of Amsterdam, sociability and theatricality combined elements of communist and Indonesian art, performance, and sociability. Located in the working-class neighbourhoods of the capital, anti-colonial sociability was rooted in working-class lifestyle and catered to working-class wants and needs. The combination of activism and entertainment within the same meeting places meant that these spaces became lived places in a broad sense, bringing together anti-colonial activity with leisure and sociability.

e. Conclusion

As part of the examination of emotions and atmospheres in context of transnational anti-colonialism, the spatial analysis in this chapter has been shifted to what Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe refer to as the 'para-conference spaces'. These 'in between' or outside spaces appeared outside of the formal inside spaces in which conferences, events and meetings took place, but still were part of anti-colonial activity. These spaces show how transnational anti-colonialism was embedded into Amsterdam. The anti-colonial activities in the outside space where very much rooted into the local working-class neighbourhoods and, although the traditional 'buurtcultuur' was changing in the interwar period, activities were still informed by these neighbourhood structures. This working-class approach was further aided by the compact build of the city, which allowed for outside activities done on foot or bike. People who could not afford cars or public transport could thus easily participate in these activities. The analysis of 'in between' spaces also allows for the examination of the role of sociability in transnational anti-colonialism. Anti-colonial politics was embedded in social spaces and relationships. As such, the examination of holidays and celebrations, as well as nightlife and leisure are integral to the analysis of locally rooted political and intellectual activity. Communist celebrations in Amsterdam became increasingly connected to anti-colonial activity during the interwar period. These celebrations combined political activity with sociability and leisure. In addition, anti-colonial meetings and events were often combined with elements of sociability. The anti-colonial social space was very much rooted in working-

[290] Roode Hulp, 'Bazaar tentoonstelling I.R.H. Amsterdam', vol.N/A:9 (1929), 4.

class entertainment, leisure, and sociability. The cultural blend of communist, Dutch, and Indonesian forms of art and performance, combined with the active social- and nightlife spaces of an urban centre, shows the geographical specifics of anti-colonialist practice and sociability in Amsterdam.

Conclusion

Van Heutsz lives! Stop all forms of racism! Next stop: Coentunnel

These words were written in red paint on the Indies Netherlands Monument on the Apollolaan by protestors in the summer of 2020. The text combines elements of anti-colonialism and anti-racism found in present-day political protest. The damaging of statues has been a feature of the intensification of the public debate surrounding colonial statues. In the case of the Indies-Netherlands Monument, this debate goes back almost a hundred years and illustrates how colonial and anti-colonial spaces remain contested. Protest against the monument has been part of its history even before it was unveiled in 1935. The monument was first erected as the Van Heutsz Monument, commemorating General J.B. van Heutsz. Between 1904 and 1909, Van Heutsz was Governor General to the Netherlands Indies, but he became famous – or infamous – for his role in the annexation of Atjeh. Immediately after his death in 1924, plans were made to erect a monument dedicated to him in Amsterdam.[291] In protest, the CPH submitted their own design for the monument in which Van Heutsz is standing atop a pillar surrounded by skulls, with a text reading: "Behold the hero who let the defenseless perish and in death is raised upon the death."[292] The protest against the proposed monument was supported by the SDAP and LAI. In March 1928, the SDAP organized a meeting in Carré to protest against the monument. The Amsterdam chapter of the LAI wrote objection letters to the Amsterdam municipal government.[293] After the monument was built, protest continued throughout the twentieth century and up to today. In 1967 and 1984, the monument was the target of failed bombings. In the years after, the monument was robbed of its plaque as well as letters spelling Van Heutsz's name. When the municipal government announced plans to renovate the monument in 1997, a new wave of protests ensued. In 2004, the monument was renamed and became known as the Indies Netherlands Monument. However, the 2020 protest action shows that resistance against the colonial association of the monument continues to this day.[294]

The issue of the Van Heutsz Monument illustrates the ways in which space may be contested. Ever since the plans for the monument were formed there has been continued discussion regarding the use of physical spaces in Amsterdam for the commemoration of Van Heutsz. Throughout the years, different groups have sought establish contesting narratives around the figure of Van Heutsz and his connections to Amsterdam. Thus, the Van Heutsz Monument is a very visible example of the clashes between imperial and anti-colonialist spaces in Amsterdam.

[291] NOS, 'Monument Indië-Nederland in Amsterdam beklad van rode verf', 21 June 2020, via https://nos.nl, accessed 30 June 2022; Andere Tijden, 'Van Heutsz', via https://anderetijden.nl, accessed 30 June 2022.
[292] De Tribune, 'Onze prijsvraag', 23 April 1928, 1.
[293] Het Volk, 'De Indonesische meeting in Carré', 26 March 1928, 4; Recht en Vrijheid, 'Geen Van Heutsz-Monument!', vol.1:14 (10 March 1928), 5.
[294] Stadscuratorium, 'Monument Indië-Nederland', via https://stadscuratorium.nl, accessed 30 June 2022; NOS, 'Monument'; Andere Tijden, 'Van Heutsz'.

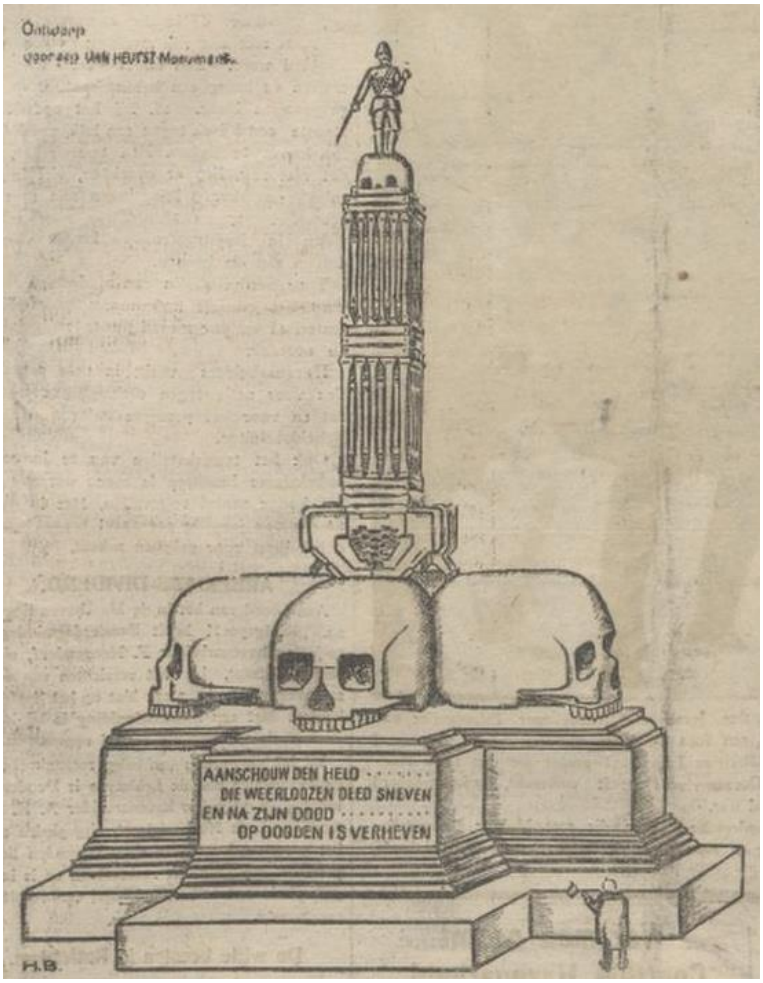

Image 17: The CPH's design for the Van Heutsz Monument -
De Tribune, 'Onze prijsvraag', 23 April 1928, 1.

This thesis has examined how transnational anti-colonialism was performed and experienced in Amsterdam. The research has taken a spatial approach to these questions, analysing the ways in which the transnational anti-colonial movement connected with the practices of the Amsterdam space. This is a new approach to the historiography of transnational anti-colonialism in the European metropole, which allows for the examination of geographical specifics of anti-colonial activity. The spatial approach of this thesis was inspired by the work of the research project 'Conferencing the International' and its subsequent book *Placing Internationalism.* In their work, Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan and Benjamin Thorpe analysed the relations between internationalism in the abstract and its applications in specific geographical contexts through the examination of material factors and logistics; questions of subalternity; the function of conferences as lived spaces; and emotions and atmospheres in context of 'para-conference' spaces. In this thesis, these approaches have been applied to the context of transnational anti-colonialism in Amsterdam, to examine ways in which anti-colonialism related to the geographical specifics of the Dutch capital.

The logistics of anti-colonial activity were rooted in the local space of Amsterdam. The Dutch capital was a relatively liberal city in West-Europe. International anti-colonial events – such as the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialist War – were possible in Amsterdam, but not in Geneva. The Dutch government was less willing to ban such events and Dutch intelligence services were less equipped to deal with anti-colonialists, although municipal policing and the government's denial of visa for foreign delegates remained a hindrance to logistical organization and mobility to and within the city. This combination of both tolerating and obstructing anti-colonial activity was geographically specific to Amsterdam and thus inform the ways in which transnational anti-colonialism related to the local space.

Logistics were also very much dependent on the participation of local networks. As Crow has argued, the question of logistics cannot be examined without taking into account a wide range of actors and networks. Without considering the role of local carpenters and builders, as well as locals accommodating foreign delegates in their homes, the geographical specifics of logistical organization cannot be analysed.

The anti-colonial movement was very much connected to the local working class. This was not only reflected in the participation of local networks in logistical organization, but also in the spaces of anti-colonialism in the city. The analysis of venues for anti-colonial activity brings this relationship to light. Political and urban developments led to the growth of Amsterdam as a global city with networks and infrastructures in place to facilitate large-scale international conferencing. But this global position of the city remained rooted in local spaces of the working class. The connection between anti-colonialism and the working class meant that working-class venues were more familiar to the anti-colonial networks in Amsterdam and thus a logical choice of venue. Such venues were cheaper and more accessible to the working class. Also, the choice of working-class reflected the rhetoric of camaraderie between the anti-colonial movement and the local working class. As argued by Lamego, fostering this sense of camaraderie was a tactic to strengthen local networks of anti-colonialism. Space became part of these tactics. Choosing familiar venues was a way to attract the working class to anti-colonial events. At the same time, the choice of venue was part of what Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe called the theatricality of international conferencing. The choice of location was a political and symbolic choice which could either convey an aura of importance and grandeur or a sense of familiarity. Such choices thus shaped the lived experiences of these events.

While these indoor spaces were part of the lived experiences *at* the conference or meeting, the analysis of the 'in between' spaces informs the practices of transnational anti-colonialism outside of these formal structures and locations. Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe refer to 'para-conference' spaces to include all spaces in which participants of international conferences moved outside of the conference hall. This thesis has applied the idea of 'para-conference' spaces to the context of transnational anti-colonialism to include activities of anti-colonialism in the outside spaces, as well as spaces of sociability and leisure. Social relationships were an integral part of anti-colonial political life and these relationships were rooted in the local space. Activities of sociability and leisure took place in anti-colonial venues or

locations connected to working-class entertainment, such as the Cinema Royal. These activities combined political activity with entertainment and leisure, which were culturally specific, combining Dutch, Indonesian and communist forms of art and performance. The integration of political activity and sociability in the 'para-conference' spaces strengthened local networks of anti-colonialism and expanded anti-colonial activism beyond the meeting room.

The 'para-conference' spaces were also connected to the outside spaces of Amsterdam. The compactness of the city allowed activists to cross the city easily by bike or on foot. Anti-colonialist activity was sometimes focused on the city centre, but mostly on the working-class neighbourhoods. To that end, anti-colonialist organizations took a neighbourhood-centred approach to their outside activities. The working-class neighbourhoods of the Jordaan, Kinkerbuurt-West and Plantage were especially central in their activities. Celebrations and commemorations were used as opportunities to organize anti-colonial demonstrations and processions in these neighbourhoods. Likewise, the anti-colonial social space was located within working-class neighbourhoods and in buildings which catered to a working-class audience. This centralization of the working-class audience thus shaped the practices of anti-colonialism in Amsterdam. In turn, these working-class neighbourhoods were shaped by the anti-colonial activity that took place here and were thus integrated into the outside spaces of local anti-colonialism.

Amsterdam has largely been omitted from studies of transnational anti-colonialism. This research shows the ways in which the city of Amsterdam was part of the networks of European 'hubs' of anti-colonialism. In addition, the use of the spatial approach as proposed by Legg, Heffernan and Thorpe has introduced new ways of understanding the relationship between transnational anti-colonialism in the abstract and the geographical specifics of local spaces. Centering questions of logistics, venues, lived spaces and emotions and atmospheres gives new perspectives on the historiography of the European city as a 'hub' of transnational anti-colonialism.

Questions of subalternity have been beyond the scope of this thesis. These questions have previously been part of the historiography of the European 'hub' in studies by Jennifer Anne Boittin, Marc Matera and Klaas Stutje. These crucial studies centring subaltern transnationals in the anti-colonial movements could benefit from a spatial approach in order to ask new questions and gain new insights into the ways in which the subaltern connected to local spaces and networks.

This thesis did examine the close connections between the anti-colonial movement and the local Jewish-socialist population, which constituted a unique element of the anti-colonial space in Amsterdam. Their presence in the anti-colonial networks of Amsterdam shaped the movements' relationship to the local space. Amsterdam had the highest percentage of Jewish inhabitants in West-European cities, and – for a long time – the only West-European city where the Jewish population was mostly made up of working-class people. The Jewish population of Amsterdam also was very much assimilated into mainstream society and many of them had traded their religious community for the socialist one. The spatial approach in this research shows how the integration of the Jewish-socialist

community shaped the practice of anti-colonialist activity in Amsterdam and explains the choice of venues connected with the Jewish working-class.

Due to the interconnectedness of Jewish socialism and anti-colonialism, the Second World War had a major impact on anti-colonial networks and spaces in Amsterdam. On the Holocaust Names Memorial appear the names of Barend Engelander, Simon de Jong and Bob Neter. The monument is located in the Weesperstraat, just a few minutes' walk from some of the important locations of anti-colonial Amsterdam at the Weesperplein. Neter's old office at the Prinsengracht 1083 is just across the Amstel River. The monument is located in the old 'Joodse Buurt,' but is also part of the anti-colonialist spaces of Amsterdam through people like Engelander, De Jong and Neter. When the Nazis occupied the Netherlands in May 1940, people like Engelander, De Jong and Neter were vulnerable to persecution not only due to their Jewish background, but also because of their communist and anti-fascist political activities.[295] The Nazi persecution of the Jewish population of Amsterdam was unprecedented in comparison to other major cities in West-Europe. Between July 1942 and September 1943, a major part of Amsterdam's Jewish community was deported. By September 1943, about 8.600 Amsterdam Jews remained out of a community of 87.000. Seventy-five percent of deported Jews from the Netherlands would not survive the war.[296] Amsterdam's communists were also target to persecution during the war. The Dutch Communist Party had been abolished by the Nazis and gone underground as a resistance group. In the first year of the Nazi occupation, many Jewish communists in Amsterdam were active in the resistance, which shows the continuing connections between the local Jewish and communist networks.[297]

In recent years, the rigid periodisation of the interwar years has come under scrutiny. Scholars seek to move away from the idea that the Second World War led to a definite break in transnational connections and internationalism. In the case of Amsterdam, however, the war clearly broke down the networks and spaces of anti-colonialism. Spaces of interwar anti-colonialism were lost during the war. From Amsterdam Central Station, which had been an entry-point for many transnational anti-colonialists, trains now departed to the concentration camps Vugt and Westerbork and beyond.[298] Sites of anti-colonial activity closed down. Handwerkers Vriendenkring was closed on 5 November 1941 by the Nazi occupiers and did not return after the war.[299] Some Jewish-socialist institutions and sites did return, but struggled as most of the Jewish population of Amsterdam had died in concentration and extermination camps. One such organization was the Joodsche Invalide, a health care organization

[295] Eric Brothers, 'Heroes or Victims? The Role and Antifascist Culture of Jews in the German Democratic Republic,' *European Judaism,* vol.25:2 (1992), 21-27, 21.
[296] Scott A. Swartsfager, *Promoting Normal: Jewish Culture in Occupied Amsterdam,* ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, (Dallas, 2019), 11; 106; 125-128.
[297] Hansje Galesloot and Susan Legêne, *Partij in het verzet: de CPN in de Tweede Wereldoorlog,* (Amsterdam, 1984), 24; 127.
[298] Swartsfager, *Promoting,* 118.
[299] Joods Monument, 'Handwerkers Vriendenkring', 19 October 2017, via https://www.joodsmonument.nl, accessed 28 June 2022.

which had taken over the premises of Concordia in 1933.[300] Thus, the integration of Jewish and anti-colonial networks meant that the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust had a major impact on the networks and spaces of transnational anti-colonialism in Amsterdam, which in many ways could not be undone after the war.

Still, transnational anti-colonialism in Amsterdam never really went away. The example of the Van Heutsz Monument shows that new anti-colonialist movements have emerged which address present-day issues of racism, new imperialism and the decolonisation of the public space. Although the city has changed since the days of Concordia and Handwerkers Vriendenkring, many of the anti-colonial sites and spaces remain present throughout the city. Walking through the Jordaan and the Weesperbuurt, one can retrace the steps of the Amsterdam anti-colonialists of the interwar years. A possible walking route is attached in the appendix as an invite to explore the spaces of anti-colonialism for oneself.

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11 February 1929

19 March 1929

30 October 1929

31 December 1929

22 March 1920

9 February 1931

12 February 1931

9 March 1931

27 March 1931

10 October 1931

7 March 1932

17 March 1932

22 April 1932

25 April 1932

29 April 1932

2 May 1932

7 May 1932

24 May 1932

8 June 1932

10 June 1932

16 June 1932

20 June 1932

24 June 1932

8 July 1932

19 July 1932

9 August 1932

15 August 1932

17 August 1932

18 August 1932

20 August 1932

23 August 1932

24 August 1932

25 August 1932

26 August 1932

27 August 1932

29 August 1932

30 August 1932

31 August 1932

1 September 1932

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16 March 1933

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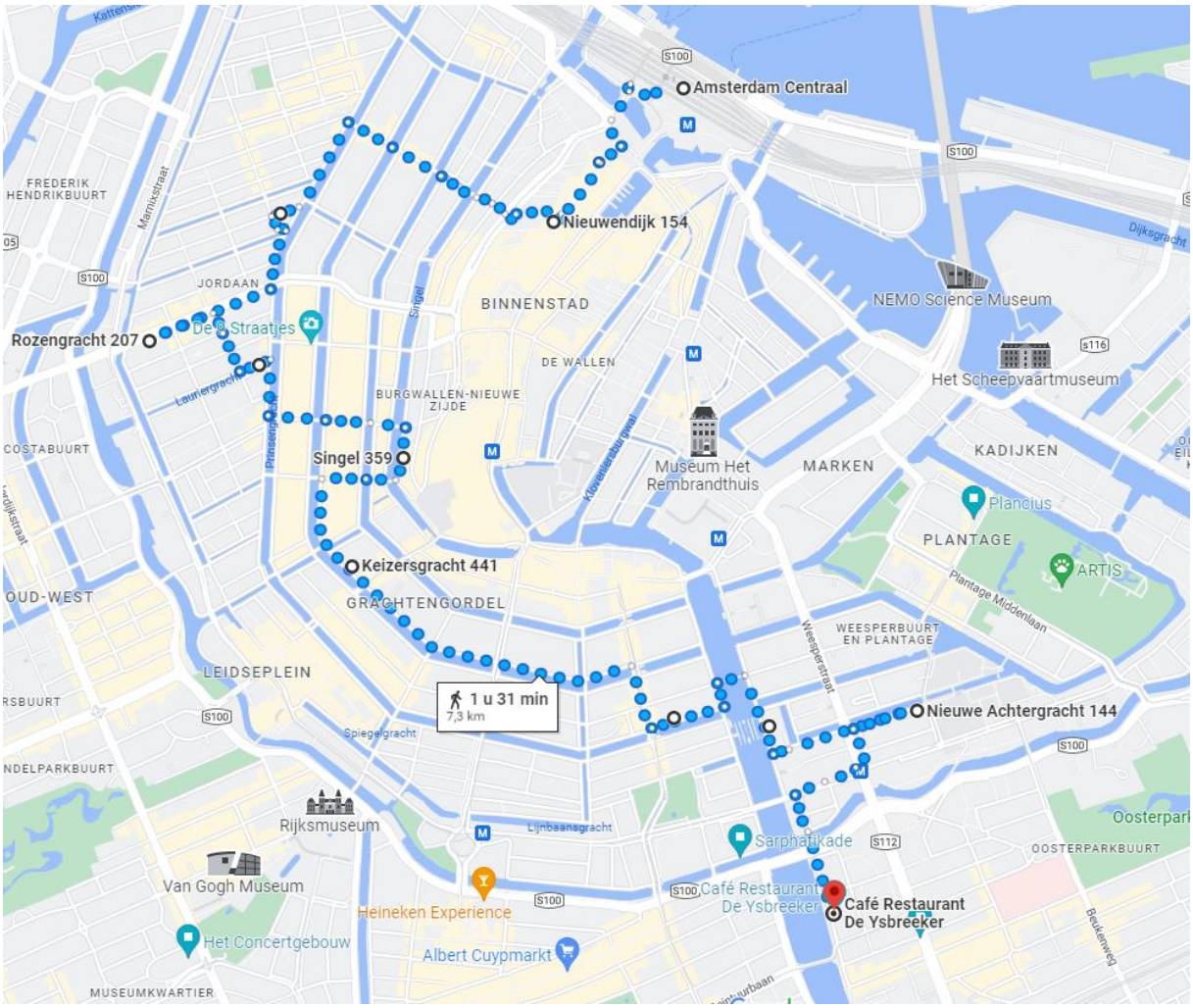
Appendix: Walking through anti-colonial Amsterdam



1. Amsterdam Central Station — Stationsplein
2. Cinema Royal — Nieuwendijk 154
3. Café de Valk — Nieuwe Leliestraat 34
4. Harmonie — Rozengracht 207
5. Comité voor Indonesische Bannelingen — Lauriergracht 28
6. Scottsboro Comité, IRH and LAI — Singel 359
7. LAI-Holland — Keizersgracht 441
8. Committee of the 1932 World Congress Against Imperialism — Prinsengracht 1083
9. Carré — Amstel 115
10. Diamond Exchange — Weesperplein 4
11. Concordia — Weesperplein 1
12. Handwerkers Vriendenkring — Nieuwe Achtergracht 140-144
13. Café Restaurant de Ysbreeker — Weesperzijde 23