



CALL FOR PAPERS

**Voices of resistance in and against Dutch empire,  
1600-2020s**

Utrecht University, 12-13 September 2024

Throughout the long history of Dutch empire starting in the early seventeenth century and extending into the postcolonial present, various people both in imperial dependencies across the globe and the metropole have resisted the logics and realities of oppression and exploitation. While colonisers' perspectives have received plentiful attention, this conference puts the often marginalized voices of resistance in and against Dutch empire front and centre. Drawing on recent trends in the intellectual history of anticolonialism, the conference will chart and discuss the intellectual interventions of actors who agitated against the Dutch empire and its legacies.

We invite contributions on the **ideas, practices and networks of anticolonial actors** who navigated the Dutch empire from the seventeenth century up to today, including freedom fighters and poets, religious leaders and (formerly) enslaved rebels, artists and activists, musicians, political thinkers and intellectuals, journalists and writers. We thus interpret voices of resistance broadly, ranging from political protest to works of fiction and from artistic and literary forms of expression to philosophical tractates as well as pamphlets and other forms of ephemeral writing. We aim to take a long-term perspective from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century and combine East and West that have often been treated as separate sections of the historiography of Dutch empire.

Anticolonial stories have long served as chronicles about heroic resistance such as that of the nineteenth-century Javanese Prince Diponegoro or have confirmed teleological narratives 'from empire to nation state'. We aim to contextualize such narratives by looking into related memory practices in anticolonial and postcolonial settings and by examining the **transnational and transimperial entanglements of anticolonial networks**. Besides contributions focusing on better-known anticolonial agitators and their networks, we are also interested in bringing together more subtle stories of, for example, legal resistance and more local accounts of religious defiance or economic subversion. Furthermore, we are interested in exploring not only what voices of resistance were fighting *against* but also in analysing the constructive agendas they put forth. From histories of political thought to meaningful

practices of artistic, religious, and literary resistance, the conference will examine how anticolonial actors in transimperial contexts criticized and shaped the (end of the) Dutch empire.

The conference, which will be held on **Thursday 12 and Friday 13 September 2024**, at Utrecht University, The Netherlands, is a critical follow-up to the international conference “Visions of Empire in Dutch History”, organized in 2016 at Leiden University, and the resulting edited volume *The Dutch Empire Between Ideas and Practice* [Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies] (Palgrave, 2019). **Keynote speakers** are Marjoleine Kars (MIT) and Lin Hongxuan (NUS).

### **Call for papers**

We invite proposals for papers on the following range of topics:

- languages, ideologies and conceptual histories of resistance
- ideas articulated in the context of political protests, (labour) strikes, violent rebellions
- anticolonial or decolonial scholarship, including history writing, social sciences, humanities
- artistic and literary expressions of resistance, including fiction, poetry, songs, visual arts
- memory and memorialization of acts of resistance
- demands for symbolic and financial forms of reparations and/or restitution

We furthermore encourage:

- long-term and diachronic perspectives (1600-2020)
- comparative and/or interconnected perspectives from East and West, including the Indian Ocean region, the Indonesian archipelago, Cape Good Hope/South Africa, the Dutch Atlantic and Dutch North America, the Caribbean, Surinam, Dutch Guyana and Brazil
- transimperial perspectives of voices that operated within the Dutch empire but agitated against other empires or imperialism more broadly, and of those actors who operated in other imperial spheres, but whose efforts were aimed against the Dutch empire
- paper proposals by junior researchers (at RMA or PhD level) as well as more senior scholars, from different backgrounds (also outside academia)

Individual paper proposals should consist of an abstract (200-250 words), a brief biography (50-100 words), and contact information. Proposals should be directed to the organizational committee: dr. René Koekkoek, dr. Grace Leksana, dr. Anne-Isabelle Richard, and dr. Arthur Weststeijn at [a.v.weststeijn@uu.nl](mailto:a.v.weststeijn@uu.nl).

**Deadline proposals: 1 April 2024.** Notification of selected proposals will be given by 1 May 2024.