

List of the archives of the WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL (WRI) 1921-1991

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INTRODUCTION

The War Resisters' International (WRI) was founded in 1921 by Kees Boeke and others under the name 'Paco' (Peace in Esperanto) at Bilthoven, The Netherlands, at a small conference of representatives of some European radical peace organizations. Two years later the secretariat moved to Enfield, a suburb of London. On this occasion the organization changed its name into War Resisters' International. It went to London in 1968, where it stayed until 1974, then it was located at Brussels. The secretariat returned to London in 1980.

The WRI is the oldest and most stable undenominational international federation of national and some regional and local radical pacifist organizations in the world. Originally the assistance to Conscientious Objectors (CO's) and the struggle for the recognition of conscientious objection as a human right stood on the foreground. Later the non-violent action against (nuclear) war, war preparation, militarism, arms industry and arms trade and all causes of war became major points.

The WRI cooperated with a number of congenial international organizations, such as the anarchist International Anti-Militarist Bureau and the christian International Fellowship of Reconciliation. It was a participant in some organized concerted actions, like the Joint Peace Council and the Rassemblement Internationale contre la Guerre et le Militarisme. WRI introduced the Broken Rifle as its symbol in 1932. WRI published the annual Roll of Honour (of war resisters in prison) and celebrated the yearly Prisoners of Peace Day (1st December). Its strongest affiliated groups ('sections') were in Western Europe and the United States of America.

The IISH collected WRI documents from its start in 1935. These were amalgamated with the WRI archives, that were transferred to the IISH in consequence of an agreement of this institute with Myrtle Solomon, then chairwoman of the WRI in the year 1985. Accruals were received since 1986.

The archives consist of documents concerning the foundation of Paco, records of the Triennial Conferences, minutes and other documents of the Council and the Executive Committee and of other committees, files on study conferences, files on individual cases, peace marches, records and other documents of mostly affiliated regional, local and national pacifist and peace organizations in various countries, circulars and correspondence, leaflets and some reports issued by the secretariat and WRI-periodicals. Documents of some other organizations can be found in the appendix, such as the No More War International Movement and the World Peace Brigade. For the period before 1952 the archives are far from complete.

This list gives a concise survey of the contents of each portfolio only. A more detailed (handwritten) list of the archives is available at the IISG archives department. See also the lists of the accruals in 1991, 1994 and 1997.

A copy of the microfiche collection *The Archives of the WRI (1923-1977)* published by Harvester Press, is also available.

Many books and pamphlets published by and on the WRI can be found in the library of the IISH as well as most of its periodicals. A number of photographs regarding the WRI can be seen in the audiovisual department.

In some other archives at the IISH additional data of different importance regarding the WRI may be found. Among them: Ir. Cornelis (Kees) and Beatrice Boeke-Cadbury, Fritz Lieb (both re Paco), the ANVA, Rev. J.B.Th. Hugenholtz, the IAMV, Jo B. Meijer, John Front, Pierre Ramus, the Sozialistische Jugend-Internationale, the Vereniging Dienstweigeraars, Romke de Waard and J.H. (Hein) van Wijk. Some of these archives are not entirely open to

the public.

The size of this part of the WRI archives is 28 m; the total size (in 1999) is 43 m.

Access

All WRI-files older than twenty years as well as the files containing printed matter only, such as books, pamphlets, periodicals, press releases, the Honour Rolls and all documents in the appendix are freely accessible. All other files can be seen with a written permit of the WRI only.

INTRODUCTION accrual 1991 (inv.nrs. 445-497)

In 1991 an accrual was received by the IISH. This accrual covers the same period as the part already present at the IISH. For a complete survey of the records both lists have to be consulted. The accrual also contains papers of Myrtle Solomon, chairwoman of the WRI, which includes some personal correspondence and documents, and a file on Leo Tolstoj and Vladimir Čertkov.

Photos and some taperecordings of the 10th-14th Triennial Conferences have been transferred to the iconographic department of the IISH. Amanda Elsinghorst made the descriptions of the first part, Henk Hondius described the Solomon papers.

The accrual of the archive is 6.60 m.

Access

The only restriction to the accessibility of the archive applies to the file marked with a * in no. 473: this file will be closed until 2030.

INTRODUCTION aacrual 1994 (inv.nrs. 498-529)

This (second) accrual covers mainly the period 1975-1988. For a complete survey of the records all available lists have to be consulted. In 1994 this accrual was given to the IISH. Posters and some photos have been transferred to the iconographic department of the IISH. A large amount of books, pamphlets and periodicals has been transferred to the library of the IISH.

The size of the accrual is 4 m.

Access

The only restriction to the accessibility of the archive applies to the files marked with a * in the nos. 499, 503, 511, 525 and 526. These files will be closed until 2035.

I N T R O D U C T I O N accrual 1997 (inv.nrs. 530-590)

The accrual to the archives of the War Resisters' International arrived at the IISH in 1997. Posters and photographs have been transferred to the audiovisual department of the IISH and books, pamphlets and periodicals to the library of the IISH.

The size of this accrual is 3 m. Consultation

Permission of the WRI is required for consultation of the archives.

Henk Hondius Amsterdam, 1997

International organizations

Sections **159-422.**

Documents concerning national, regional and local sections. 1923-1991.

225. Germany, Federal Republic. A-Bimpage. 1946-1977.