

## THE LEIDEN AUSTRIA CENTER IN 2020-2021

### Introduction

If the academic year 2019-2020 was an 'annus horribilis', then the academic year 2020-2021 was an 'annus horribilissimus': the COVID-19 situation had a grave effect on academic and social life, and live events and meetings were not possible throughout the entire year. We were also missing the wonderful social gatherings traditionally offered by Hugo and Heidi Weiland; who nevertheless continued to take part in the life of the Foundation as usual and gave moral support, this time from a distance. Moreover, we were fortunate to enjoy the hospitality of our new Ambassador, her excellence Astrid Harz, who has shown great interest in the activities of our Foundation from the very outset of her tenure. Despite the numerous difficulties, the academic year started with wonderful news: our former student assistant and participant in the 2019 Annual Convention in Vienna, Frederique Visser, was announced by the Institute of History as the winner of the coveted Fruin Prize, which is awarded for the best MA thesis completed in the previous academic year. Frederique's thesis, "'The Watch on the Danube': a Bridge between Stability and Conflict -- Territorial Identification in Linz, 1908-1928" was supervised by our colleague Dr. Eric Storm. We would like to thank Prof. Dr. Marija Wakounig for her advice and hospitality which Frederique could enjoy as her academic guest in Vienna in 2019, something that surely contributed to this success.

### The Annual Convention

The unpredictable situation arising from the COVID-19 outbreak made necessary the postponement of the XIV Annual Convention originally planned for 21-24 October 2020 in Leiden. Intensive preparations are well underway, so that we would be able to welcome our guests here in Leiden between **20-24 October 2021**. Unfortunately, however, at the time of preparing this report it cannot yet be said with full certainty whether the Convention can go ahead in Leiden this year or whether it can only take place as an online event.

### Key Leiden Events

#### Second Annual Lecture

On 2 December 2020 we held the Second Annual Austrian Studies Lecture delivered by Dr. Gábor Egry (Director, Institute of Political History, Budapest) on: "The Empire's New Clothes? How Austria-Hungary's Legacy Kept the Successor States Running" which this year had to take place on Zoom. Despite the hectic process to move the planned event online very quickly and without previous access to the necessary technology, the event turned out to be a success: it attracted 67 attendants literally from all over the world. This was no small feat at a time when 'Zoom fatigue' started to impact the entire academic community. We were obviously delighted to 'meet' our friends and colleagues from the other Austrian Studies Centres, and equally happy to connect

with participants from numerous universities and research institutions in Europe and North America.

### **Publication of First Annual Lecture**

The first Annual Austrian Studies Series Lecture was delivered by Professor Mark Cornwall (Southampton University) in 2019, on *A Typology of Traitors in Late 19th Century Austria-Hungary*. The text of the lecture is available both in a printed form as a booklet and online at: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/geesteswetenschappen/institute-for-history/annual-lecture-2019.pdf>

### **Hugo Weiland Prize 2019**

The Hugo Weiland prize was awarded, on the basis of the jury's unanimous decision, to the above mentioned MA thesis of Frederique Visser, who thus collected her second prize within a year. The jury also awarded an honourable mention to Michael Rowland (UvA) for his BA thesis supervised by Dr. Eva Stanczyk, "Young angry people'. The representation of Anglo-American Pop-Rock in Przekrój, 1964-74".

**The Central and East European Studies Center (CEES)** contributed to the webinar on 12 March, 2021 on the East European Politics Special Issue "Towards Open Access Social Orders in Eastern Europe" with the participation of Antoaneta Dimitrova and Dimiter Toshkov. The webinar built on a special issue that investigates the interplay between domestic socio-political orders and changing external influences of the EU, Russia, Turkey and other external actors in Eastern Europe. On 21 May, 2021 a roundtable was organised with the participation of Isabela Mares and Lauren E. Young who discussed their new, award-winning book *Conditionality & Coercion: Electoral clientelism in Eastern Europe*. The book investigates vote buying and electoral coercion in Hungary and Romania. The roundtable attracted 25 participants and was hosted by Maria Spirova, Antoaneta Dimitrova and Petr Kopecky, who also acted as discussants. Moreover, Antoaneta Dimitrova and Petr Kopecky took part in the Editorial Board Meeting of the same journal on 9 April, 2021.

### **Guest Professor**

In the academic year 2020-2021 our guest professor was literary scholar Prof. Dr. Uta Degner from Salzburg. Her stay included quarantine and involved online teaching -- not the most pleasant circumstances, and we thank Ute for having made most of it nevertheless. Together with our curator Johannes Müller Ute taught the first-year course *Das Eigene und das Andere – Medien, Kultur, Identität*, which focused on German and Austrian cultural history in a comparative way. Moreover, for third-year students she offered the seminar *Elfriede Jelinek – Ästhetik und Autorschaft*, which offered an overview of Jelinek's most important novels, essays and plays. Ute

also contributed to the film event of a student organization where she gave an introduction to Michael Haneke's film *Die Klavierspielerin* which is based on Jelinek's novel. Moreover, on 27 May 2021 Ute will give an online lecture on Ingeborg Bachmann's "Malina 50 Jahre später" which is organised in cooperation between our Foundation and the Austrian Embassy.

### **New in the team**

Caroline Schep was appointed as our new student assistant who (3.6 hours per week), whose work had to take place online. She is a student in the ResMA History: Politics, Culture and National Identities, and is preparing for her thesis on the fashion department of the Wiener Werkstätte.

### **Special Chair teaching and supervision activities**

In addition to the teaching of our guest professor Ute Degner, in 2020-2021 Monika Baár taught the third-year BA course *Vienna through the Centuries: Politics, Culture and Society*. The course was attended by 18 students, who particularly appreciated the guest lectures given by Willemijn Tuinstra and our chair, Steven Engelsman. Willemijn shared her expertise on 'Green Vienna' with the group, while Steven discussed various theoretical and pragmatic issues that related to his unique experience as Director of *das Weltmuseum* in Vienna. Of the students from this group who are writing their BA thesis under the supervision of Monika Baár, two promising students hoped to undertake archival research in Austria (in the Bruno Kreisky Archives in Vienna and the Austrian Alpine Association Museum respectively) with the support of our Foundation. However, this was not possible because of the restrictions. They managed to adjust their topics imaginatively to these circumstances which resulted in a slight shift of focus. Steven Verburg currently is finishing his thesis which offers a new interpretation of Bruno Kreisky's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and we are grateful for Professor Rathkolb's expert advice for his study. Wander van der Bos is completing a thesis on "Separate or Similar? Dutch Women in the Austrian mountains (1903-1945)". The other course Monika Baár taught was the MA option *History of Everyday Life under Authoritarianism* which likewise included 18 students, resulted in some excellent essays and one of the students was admitted to pursue a PhD in the history of Southeast Europe at King's College, London.

Monika Baár supervised Marian van den Pluijm, who in 2020 attended Marija Wakounig's MA course and in the current academic year completed a brilliant thesis on "The Polish Flood of 1884: Urban flood relief in Partitioned Krakow and Warsaw during the Vistula flood of June 1884." Marian utilized 19<sup>th</sup> century primary sources in her thesis, for which she learned Polish with remarkable speed. Moreover, in 2021-2022 she will be able to enhance her Hungarian skills as a student on the full-year Hungarian language, literature and culture course offered by the Balassi Institute in Budapest, for which she received a prestigious scholarship by the Hungarian state.

### **Plans for 2021-2022**

Our greatest hope for the next academic year is to be able to organize the Annual Convention in Leiden, if necessary, perhaps in hybrid form. Furthermore, we look forward to the next selection round for the Mr H. Weiland Prize now including Flemish universities.

The Third Annual Austrian Studies Lecture will be held by Professor Howard Louthan, director of our sister institution in Minnesota. This time we would like to expand the remit of these lectures by focusing on the early period. Details will be announced and shared with the other centres in due course.

**The guest professor in 2021-2022 will be Professor Peter Berger** from Vienna. We look forward to welcoming Professor Berger in the second semester.

Two seminars were planned to be organized in 2020-2021 as part of a collaboration between our former Guest Professor Marie-Agnes Dittrich and Monika Baár on behalf of their respective institutions. The chosen topic was music & cultural studies & marginality and special emphasis will be placed on female composers and composers in displacement / emigration. Part of the funding has been offered from the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien. We expected to offer an opportunity to six candidates from Leiden and six candidates from Vienna. Unfortunately, the nature of this event made the organization of an online substitute neither possible nor feasible. We will explore if in the academic year 2021-2022 if a comparable collaboration, perhaps on a smaller scale, can be realized.

CEES will continue to act as a hub for events focusing on contemporary issues thereby maintaining connections with other institutes and faculties.

### **In conclusion**

We warmly thank the Austrian ambassador, Astrid Harz for her support. Finally, we repeat our warm gratitude towards our Viennese sponsors and friends Dr. Christoph Ramoser, Dr. Felix Wilcek, and Florian Gerhardus.

MONIKA BAÁR