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In memoriam

Arend van de Poel 1948-2023

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We mourn the loss of our friend and comrade Arend van de Poel who passed away on 4 January 2023. He first became politically active in 1966 when he joined protests against the US war in Vietnam. He joined the independent Socialist Youth and some years later was a founding member of the Internationale Kommunisten Bond, the Dutch section of the Fourth International. Arend, who worked as financial specialist for the municipality of Amsterdam, was also an active trade-unionist.

In recent years, Arend worked as the librarian in the IIRE. We remember him as a dedicated, consistent, erudite comrade with a dry sense of humour. He will be missed.- IIRE

On 21 August 1968. Warsaw Pact tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia to end an experiment in democratic reform. That same afternoon, twenty members of the Socialist Youth (SJ) stood on the Dam Square in Amsterdam with protest signs, flags and a banner. That same evening on the front page of Het Parool there was a picture with Arend van de Poel, among others.

On 4 January 2023, I received the news that Arend had died. I had feared it; he had been in a coma in hospital for some time. The last time I spoke to him was on 15 December at a book launch at the IIRE. His foot had been ailing lately, but he was in good spirits, he was feeling a bit better.

The first time I spoke to Arend was at a meeting of the SJ in late 1966. Like me, he had joined the SJ, the independent left-socialist youth organisation of the time. After that, we saw each other more and more often. He also lived in Amsterdam West, and together we joined the leadership of the branch. Arend came from a dissident communist nest, with ties to the 'Bridge Group', later the Socialist Workers Party – a group that had left the Communist Party in the late fifties. In the autumn of 1968, Esjee, the SJ's magazine, published an article by Arend about the Scholieren Kern Groep. Many students from his high school would become members of our branch. When the SJ-leadership wanted to abandon the course towards a new revolutionary socialist party, Arend was part of the emerging opposition. At a chaotic congress in September 1969 we were expelled from the SJ. Together with others, we formed Revolte, first as a federation, later with the title 'revolutionary communist youth organisation'. Arend was active in the Amsterdam branch and in its daily leadership. The speed at which he cycled through Amsterdam was legendary.

Arend was also the one who read the most books of all of us, and certainly on a wider range of subjects, from Nordic Sagas to Ben Traven, from classical Russians to modern English. And from Luxemburg to Mao. Not surprisingly, his party name in the 1970s was Wieland.

For some time, Arend had also been a member of the left-socialist Pacifist Socialist Party. When inside PSP the action group Proletaries Links (PL) was formed, he joined it. Active both through Revolte and PL, he contributed to the creation of a new united section of the Fourth International in 1972, the Revolutionaire Communistenbond. The RCB merged with PL in the formation of the IKB (Internationale Kommunisten Bond - International Communist League) in 1974. Going forward, he wrote for its magazines and held various positions in the Amsterdam branch.

Arend van de Poel was above all a rock-solid and reliable party-activist. Not one for hyper-activism, on the contrary. If things got too busy for him, he sometimes took a time out. Then he always came back. But if, for understandable reasons, there was some resistance to our fast pace, he didn't think you had to have a different policy because of it.

In recent years, I saw him less often. Arend remained a member of Grenzeloos, I did not. He became the librarian of the IIRE. There we still spoke to each other regularly. Always in broad agreement when it came to the broader view of the world, Arend always equally sharp and erudite. He had an almost British kind of humour. We know we will always miss that now.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [Grenzeloos](#).*

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