

IIAS Fellowship Programme

In the spotlight

The International Institute for Asian Studies annually hosts a large number of visiting researchers (research fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations. Meet our fellows at www.iias.asia/fellows



Oliver
Crawford

*Indonesian Translations
of Marx and Engels*

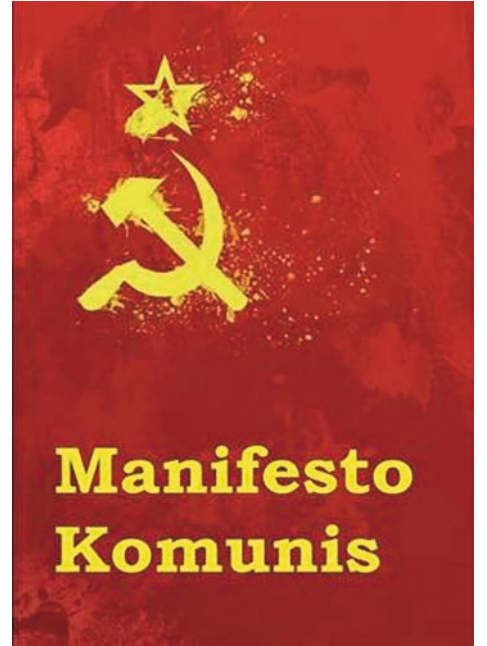
My research in Leiden explores translations of *The Communist Manifesto* made in Indonesia from the 1920s to the 1960s. During these tumultuous years, which saw the growth of the Indonesian nationalist movement, the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic (1945), and the initial period of democracy and 'Guided Democracy' after independence (1950-65), Marx and Engels were not only two of the most influential Western political thinkers in Indonesia, they were also the most translated. Their *Communist Manifesto* was translated into Malay and Bahasa Indonesia in 1923, 1925, 1946 (twice), and 1948, with various reprints being published until 1964.

These translations offer a valuable insight into how Indonesians engaged with Marxism and how this engagement evolved over time. Translators frequently noted the difficulty of translating the Marx and Engels texts, due to their heavy use of terms that referred to European history, society and politics, which had no obvious Indonesian equivalents. Yet the text itself seemed to invite translation, offering a universal schema of historical and social development that applied to all nations, including Indonesia. Indeed, many of the versions of the text that reached Indonesia were themselves Dutch and English translations of the German original, underlining the *Manifesto's* translatability.

Through my research I will investigate the different approaches adopted by the Indonesian translators. Which terms were considered entirely foreign and so untranslatable? Which were exchanged for vernacular words? What role was there for Javanese and Arabic terms? Did the translations notably change between the 1920s and the 1960s? Answering these questions will show how Indonesians mediated between Western culture and their own, and how they attempted to make the writings of two nineteenth-century German philosophers comprehensible in a mainly Islamic, Southeast Asian country.

My project is a case study in a 'global' approach to intellectual history, which seeks to understand how transnational ideologies, such as Marxism, interacted with existing patterns of religion and culture as they spread, rather than treating these ideas as unproblematically universal. As such, my research fits with the IIAS's 'Global Asia' project's stated goal of seeing the circulation of ideas through Asia not as a hegemonic transmission of ideas from West to East but as a dialogue, in this case a dialogue between Marx and his Indonesian interpreters.

Leiden is the ideal place to conduct this research because many of the Indonesian translations of *The Communist*



Indonesian translation of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Manifesto are available in the collections of Leiden University. Leiden also has a distinguished history as a centre for the study of Indonesian history. I look forward to contributing to the vibrant intellectual community in Leiden and furthering our understanding of a central strand of Indonesia's intellectual history.



Gul-i-Hina
Shahzad

*China's Belt and
Road Initiative*

My research stay at IIAS has been incredibly enriching. While working on my doctoral research project on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), I had a tremendous opportunity to be a part of and benefit from the ongoing project *Building the New Silk Road. China's Belt and Road Initiative in Context* at IIAS under the guidance of Prof. Richard Griffiths, who is coordinating the project. This project aligns aptly with my research goals as I analyze the BRI and its domestic political implications in the participating BRI countries focusing on two specific aspects, namely its impact on the processes of democratization and regime change in the countries involved. Specifically, I take the case of Pakistan to examine the variation as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is considered to be the flagship project of the BRI with its huge investment and infrastructure development. Prof. Griffiths has been generous enough to provide me with his time and constant feedback on my research and data collection.

The IIAS fellowship has not only enabled me to conduct my research in a conducive environment, but it also provided me with a dynamic platform to engage and connect with a relevant community of scholars. I was fortunate to participate in organizing the event for the Chinese delegation of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) only after two weeks of joining the IIAS fellows team. In this event, I presented my preliminary work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and discussed the pertinent opportunities and challenges for Pakistan. This discussion allowed me to situate the case of Pakistan in a broader context.

During my stay at IIAS, I have spent most of my time in the IIAS office or the library, writing in beautiful Leiden and The Hague. My personal favorite has been the *Asian Library* at Leiden University which holds an immensely rich collection of Asian studies, including China. The Sinology collection of the library is one of the largest in the country with its indispensable sources, books, journals, and articles on Chinese Studies and several databases available both in English and Chinese languages.

Besides my research, I have also enjoyed exploring the local culture and travelling around the Netherlands. Other than visiting the major cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Haarlem, I ventured upon a road trip to a small Dutch village, Volendam, where I tried on the traditional Dutch costume and jewelry, and walked on the old sea dike alongside a stretch of colorfully painted houses. I also visited

the beautiful historical fortified city Sloten in the Province of Friesland, and managed to attend the Chinese New Year celebration in the northern Province of Groningen. I value such cultural experiences immensely, for they are an essential part of living in a new place and equally crucial for one's learning and growth.

After my IIAS fellowship, I will be spending the next months in Milan, Italy, to continue working on my PhD research project. Later this year, I also intend to visit Pakistan and spend some time in Gwadar, Balochistan for my research. I am thankful to the IIAS team for making my research stay intellectually stimulating and rewarding. The staff and a vibrant group of fellow researchers have been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration for me. I will cherish the time spent here in the Netherlands as I continue on my academic journey.



The old silke rout as seen from Karakorum Highway. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.