

# The Roosevelt

The Newsletter of the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies

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DECEMBER 2017

*New Staff*

*New Mission*

*New Era*



## A LETTER FROM THE BOARD

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For decades the Roosevelt Study Center played an important and successful role in promoting the study of American history and the history of transatlantic relations in the Netherlands. The world of research and research funding is changing, however, and as a consequence the RSC has transformed itself into the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies (RIAS), a research institute with more room for younger scholars, guest professors from the United States, and a wide range of exciting new activities. The RIAS has also established a strategic relationship with Leiden University, which has resulted in the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Professor of American History at Leiden, Damian Pargas, joining the leadership of the institute.

The Board of Trustees is very happy to see the results of this transformation presented here in *The Roosevelt* newsletter. We thank Damian Pargas and Giles Scott-Smith for their successful leadership in 2017. A new postdoc, Cees Heere, has brought fresh energy to the Institute and soon four PhD students will be working on pathbreaking topics in American history. A number of activities have been successfully organized and executed this year. This would not have been possible without the continuing financial support of the Province of Zeeland and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, for which the RIAS is infinitely grateful. We look forward to a bright future!

Wim van den Doel, Gerard van Harten, and Arendo Joustra

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTORS

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As the Directors for the new RIAS, we can look back at an intensive, challenging, and highly successful first year.

Following the Institute's successful public launch in April, we have selected our first PhD students, held two international PhD seminars, hosted American visiting professors Bruce Kuklick and Justin Hart, and have closed off the year with a high-profile conference on the Rooseveltian Century.

We would like to join the board in thanking the Province of Zeeland, Leiden University, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science for the ongoing support, and we look forward to 2018 with great confidence and enthusiasm.

Damian Pargas and Giles Scott-Smith



# THE RIAS AT A GLANCE

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## 4 Events & Activities

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A busy year at the RIAS. Conferences, lectures and public events have marked the beginning of a new era.



## 10 Education & Innovation

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Students' seminars and visits make the RIAS a hub for the study of American history, politics and culture in Europe.



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Postdoctoral and doctoral researchers have joined the RIAS and expanded the breadth of its research agenda.

## 14 Publications

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RIAS scholars maintain a steady output of quality publications. Check out this section for the latest news.



## 15 Grants & More

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The RIAS continues to provide research grants for visiting scholars to use its expanding resources.

# EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



## The Launch

The RIAS officially opened its doors to the public on 20 April 2017. The Institute is the successor to the Roosevelt Study Center established in Middelburg in 1986, but thanks to a strategic partnership with Leiden University, it has a broader mission and a more ambitious goal, summarized by its new motto: Pursuing the Rooseveltian Century.

The RIAS will commit itself to further scholarly investigation into the history of the United States and its significance for the wider world, structured around the life, times, and legacy of the three principal Roosevelts, and to position itself as one of the leading educational and research institutes for American studies in Europe.

The official launch served to reaffirm the Institute's standing as a leading research institute for the study of the United States in the Netherlands, as well as point the way towards exciting future developments, including the establishment of a graduate school in American studies.

The day's event featured a welcome from Professor Wim van den Doel, of the RIAS Board of Trustees, and additional addresses from Professor Carel Stolker, Rector Magnificus of Leiden University, Han Polman, King's Commissioner in Zeeland, Giles Scott-Smith, Academic Director of the RIAS, as well as a special guest lecture by Bruce Kucklick, the RIAS Visiting Roosevelt Professor. Karel Leeftink recited a poem specially composed for the occasion.





## The Rooseveltian Century: A New Historical Framework?

The Rooseveltian Century is a new concept for contemporary history which seeks to connect the emergence of the United States as a global power to the development of progressive politics, both at home and abroad. It examines the three most prominent Roosevelts – Theodore, Franklin, and Eleanor – as a “collective agent” who changed our understanding of the responsibilities of government and the global role of the United States. It links the three Roosevelts not only by name but also by belief, purpose and worldview.

The use of a century to mark a specific view on U.S. history is well-known. There is the idea of a “Wilsonian Century,” first put forward by Frank Ninkovich, closely associated with President Woodrow Wilson’s crusade to “make the world safe for democracy” after WWI. There is also the “American Century” of Henry Luce, promoting the productivity and abundance of consumer capitalism, and the self-confidence of a nation destined to lead.

In contrast, the Rooseveltian Century is a historical framework that makes use of the three Roosevelts to view, critically consider, and explore progressive themes in U.S. history and international relations,

without necessarily stating that the three acted in unison or that they expressed the same views or policies. Hence, the Rooseveltian Century is framed around three broad themes to make its case: security, equality, and freedom.

The three Roosevelts collectively changed thinking on security, both expanding the reach of U.S. power and influence abroad while taking up the cause of individual security at home. They applied measures to ensure equality: Theodore went against big business with his trust-busting legislation, Eleanor challenged social norms on class, race, and gender relations, and Franklin went so far to oppose the interests of Wall Street that in a famous campaign speech at Madison Square Garden in 1936 he declared: “They are unanimous in their hate for me – and I welcome their hatred.”

The Roosevelts also held profound beliefs on the cause of freedom, ranging from Theodore’s Square Deal, to Franklin’s Four Freedoms, to Eleanor’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, each in their own way extending the rights of citizens to basic needs, and underscoring the duty of government to provide them.





In order to test the validity of the Rooseveltian Century as a historical frame, the RIAS organized a world-class conference on 30 November - 1 December, during which distinguished guest speakers, RIAS staff members, and graduate students engaged with a series of topical questions: What are the strengths and limitations of the Rooseveltian Century as a historical label? What does looking at the twentieth century through the prism of the Roosevelts allow us to emphasize? And what does it overlook?

Over the course of the two days, some of the most prominent historians of the New Deal, the Progressive movement, and U.S. foreign relations debated the significance, impact, and legacies of the Roosevelts.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the conference was its structure. It featured four "keynote dialogues," each focusing on a specific theme, while five different panels provided examples of historical research putting the Rooseveltian Century paradigm into practice.

On the first day, Frank Costigliola and Mary Dudziak expounded on the idea of security, while Petra Goedde and Kiran Patel addressed the controversial issue of equality.

On the second day, Lisa McGirr and Justin Hart presented on the Roosevelts' visions of freedom, followed by Michael Cullinane and Elizabeth Borgwardt who examined their global legacies. A final roundtable led by David Woolner, together with Mario Del Pero, Michael Hopkins, Sylvia Ellis, and Laura Belmonte, wrapped up the discussions.



The conference generated a vibrant response from all participants. Most agreed that the Rooseveltian Century idea has genuine merit, but a better historicization is needed.

As a novel interpretive category, it is a valuable tool to understand the connections between the rise of the United States as a world power through the twentieth century and some of the most important developments in the American democratic system, such as the expansion of executive power and the emergence of "personal politics."

The historical feasibility of the Rooseveltian Century idea still needs to be clarified through further research and debate. Nevertheless, this ground-breaking conference successfully situated the RIAS at the center of the U.S. history community on both sides of the Atlantic, giving it a prominent position from which to lead this ongoing reconsideration of U.S. history and its wider meaning.







## Lifelong Equality

On 24 May 2017, the RIAS, in cooperation with the University College Roosevelt and with the support of the Roosevelt Foundation, the Middelburg City Council, and the Province of Zeeland, hosted "Lifelong Equality," an international policy workshop devoted entirely to the study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) elderly care in a transatlantic perspective.

Since the sexual revolution of the 1960s, LGBTQ people have been fighting against social stigma, exclusion and discrimination. The first generation of LGBTQ rights advocates has lived to see same-sex marriage and many other basic rights being granted in several parts of the world, but is now well beyond retirement age. It is therefore this generation that now requires a particular attention.

In the Netherlands, the Algemene Nederlandse Bond voor Ouderen, the national association for elderly people, and the COC, the national organization for the LGBTQ community, have launched an initiative to certify those facilities that have undergone changes to become more inclusive. The certificate is called the Roze Loper and it includes extra training for personnel and the organization of activities that cater towards the specific needs of the group.

In the United States, lobby groups have supported legislative changes aimed at improving the lives of senior LGBTQ citizens. Several American universities and research centers, meanwhile, have conducted nationwide studies to single out the most critical areas of intervention.

This policy workshop not only provided an analysis of the state-of-the-art of LGBTQ elderly care both locally and nationally in the Netherlands and the United States, but also, through a comparison between different national contexts, allowed the sharing of operative knowledge and methods, and the identification of best practices that can improve local and national regulations.



## The RIAS in the Media

The arrival of the RIAS transformation has not gone unnoticed. RIAS researcher Dario Fazzi even made international waves with his op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*, in which he assessed how Melania Trump measures up to past First Ladies.

The RIAS has also expanded its presence on social media. Already active on Facebook and Instagram, it also joined Twitter in 2017, where it shares updates on events, news, and the lives and times of the Roosevelts. Follow us at @RIASMiddelburg.

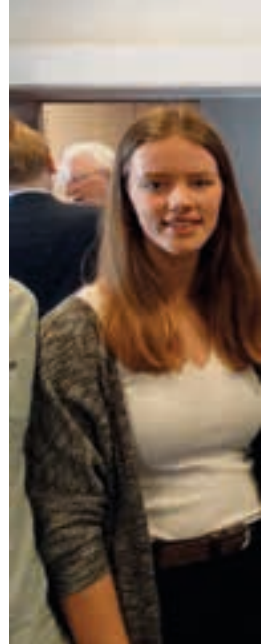
Perhaps most excitingly, the RIAS now also makes its public lectures available online, in collaboration with the internet broadcaster TXTRadio. You can now listen back to our latest events, starting with Professor Justin Hart's lecture on the "Rooseveltian Century in the Age of Trump" by searching for "RIAS" at TXTRadio.nl. All RIAS lectures will now be recorded and made publicly available via the TXTRadio website.

## Transatlantic Connections

During March-April Giles Scott-Smith and Dario Fazzi gave a series of lectures for groups of American tourists passing through Zeeland on a Dutch-Belgian river tour.

The RIAS pair, who spoke on the tour boats when they stopped in Middelburg, talked about the origins of the Roosevelt family connection with Zeeland and the mission of the RIAS.

The audience often contained some surprises: there was one who had heard Eleanor Roosevelt speak at their college, plus the granddaughter of U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root, and the cousin of a staff member at the Roosevelt residence in Warm Springs. The audience enthusiastically participated in a Roosevelt quiz at the end of the lectures.







## The Roosevelt Lectures

In its new incarnation, the RIAS continues to share its work on American history and politics with the wider public.

To this end, 2017 saw the start of a new public lecture series, "The Roosevelt Lectures," in which prominent speakers from Europe as well as the United States explore the historical significance, and contemporary meaning, of the Roosevelts, the America they created, and the world they collectively envisioned.

On 10 May Professor Bruce Kuklick, Nichols Professor of American History Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and the Visiting Roosevelt Professor at the RIAS, delivered the first Roosevelt Lecture, entitled "Fascism Comes to America."

In a lecture enlivened by his liberal use of classic Hollywood movies (from *All the President's Men* to *The Producers*), Professor Kuklick showed how American politicians, novelists, filmmakers and television producers have been both repelled and fascinated by fascism.

The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States stunned friend and foe alike, and has left us all wondering about the impact that the Trump presidency will have on American politics, transatlantic relations, and the wider world.

In a booked-out event on 4 October, Dr. Justin Hart, Associate Professor of History at Texas Tech University, and RIAS Visiting Roosevelt Professor, attempted to make sense of it all in a

lecture on "The Rooseveltian Century in the Age of Trump."

While some of its critics have approached the Trump administration as a radical departure from the American tradition, as Professor Hart pointed out, history echoes through Trumpism and the way it sees America's role in the world.

Following his lecture, Dr. Hart was interviewed for the "American Dreamers" section of *Elsevier Weekblad*.



# EDUCATION & INNOVATION

## International PhD Seminars

In order to accomplish its broad educational mission, the RIAS organizes and hosts two international PhD seminars per year. The seminars are open to PhD candidates whose research covers any aspect of U.S. culture, society, domestic policy, or foreign relations and/or transatlantic-related subject areas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The RIAS international PhD seminars are meant to help doctoral students in U.S. history, politics, and culture present their ongoing research projects, test their preliminary findings, and discuss their primary sources with a larger academic community made of peers and experienced professors. At the same time, these seminars are a unique opportunity to sharpen up oral and presentation skills and to refine research questions.

In the spring, the RIAS welcomed PhDs from the Geneva Graduate Institute, Harvard University, Aarhus University, University of California Berkeley, Heidelberg University, and Oxford University. The presentations spanned a variety of themes concerning U.S. foreign policy, transatlantic relations, cultural integration, U.S. national identity, politics and society.

In the fall term, the RIAS hosted PhD candidates from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Oxford University, the University of Edinburgh, SciencesPo in Paris, the London School of Economics, Leiden University, and the University of New Hampshire. On this occasion, the research presentations focused on political culture, popular history, formal and informal diplomacy, slavery, radicalism, and intellectual exchanges.

During both of the seminars, the invited PhD students had the opportunity to share their research results not only with the RIAS academic staff, but also with a few guest professors. In particular, this year professors Justin Hart and Bruce Kuklick actively participated in these seminars and provided the PhD candidates with insightful advice, constructive comments, and helpful remarks.

The participants greatly enjoyed their stay in Middelburg and valued the experience as extremely useful to enhance the scientific quality of their ongoing research. The RIAS staff will circulate the 2018 call for papers through its website and social media platforms; further inquiries can be sent to [rias@zeeland.nl](mailto:rias@zeeland.nl).





## The Theodore Roosevelt American History Award

Every year the RIAS presents the Theodore Roosevelt American History Award (TRAHA) for the best Master's thesis written by a graduate student at a Dutch university on an American history topic. The award is sponsored by the Theodore Roosevelt Medora

Foundation, the American Embassy in The Hague, and the Province of Zeeland. Designed to stimulate the study of U.S. history and culture in the Netherlands, TRAHA also encourages students to use the unique RIAS archival resources.

TRAHA 2017 was awarded to Renee de Groot, a graduate student of the University of Amsterdam, for her thesis "The Rewritten War: Alternate Histories of the American Civil War." The RIAS staff congratulates Renee and all the nominees of the TRAHA.



## Internships

The Roosevelt Institute for American Studies offers library internships for a period of three months, to a student enrolled in American studies, history, or international relations at a Dutch university.

Along with the library internship, the RIAS recurrently offers research internships in which students undertake short research assignments, write research papers, contribute to the digitization of the RIAS collections, and help the RIAS academic staff with their own research projects.

This year, the RIAS hosted two research interns from Erasmus University Rotterdam and one student from University College Roosevelt. We look forward to hosting more students in the future.

## Students and Public Visits

The RIAS serves both an academic and a public function.

Alongside conducting and facilitating research and acting as a meeting point for scholars, the Institute also plays an important regional role in Zeeland. Together with its Rooseveltian partners – the Roosevelt Foundation and University College Roosevelt – the RIAS organizes public events and raises awareness of the Roosevelt legacy and its ideals through a variety of outreach activities, including students' visits and social events.

This year, the RIAS has opened its doors to student groups from Berkeley, Groningen, Leiden, Nijmegen, and Rotterdam. In addition, the RIAS has welcomed guests of Rooseveltian descent looking for the *Zeeuwse* roots of their genealogy.

In addition, the Institute has welcomed FDR's grandson, Christopher du P. Roosevelt and former *Washington Post* managing editor Robert G. Kaiser along with their wives, Professor Hannah Jopling at Fordham University, and Roddy Roosevelt.





# RESEARCH PROJECTS

## Our New PhDs

In July the RIAS advertized for several PhD positions under the theme of the Rooseveltian Century. The positions covered two broad fields: the Century's domestic dimensions, including political history, the role of government, media, citizenship, religion, gender and race relations, and popular culture; and the international dimensions, including U.S. foreign policy, international organizations, military capabilities and global security, international law, soft power, public diplomacy, trade, and finance.

On 1 November the RIAS welcomed its first two PhD candidates. Paul Brennan (MA Leiden) began working on "Progressive Continuity within a Rooseveltian Century: Progressive Reformers and the New Deal." Paul: "I aim to analyze the continuities and discontinuities between the two great American reform movements associated with the presidencies of

Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, the Progressive era and the New Deal, in order to follow how reformers from the first era responded to the second. I use their biographies and writings to assess the relationship and connections between the two political movements. There were Progressives who criticized the New Deal because it was too radical, while others criticized it as not being radical enough. A third group were satisfied enough to support, or even take part in, the New Deal."

Celia Nijdam (MA Amsterdam) has started her project entitled "'It's Not Happy the Way We're Living Now': Langston Hughes and John Dos Passos and the Art of the Labor Play." Also focusing on the New Deal era, it explores the response of key playwrights Dos Passos and Hughes to the economic realities and social challenges of the 1930s, including the appeal of communism.

Celia: "Their theatrical works reflected Leftist ideologies that rose to prominence within American culture at that time. One of the broader themes of this research will be how individual artists engaged with the American public to encourage change and an embrace of Leftist or communist ideologies. Both Dos Passos and Hughes used their works to address the flaws they identified in the American political system when it came to economic equality, social injustice and issues of systemic discrimination.

The social context in which these plays were made, their interpretation of the New Deal era, the reactions of audiences and critics, and the subsequent disenchantment of the authors with communism raise many fascinating questions." Both Paul and Celia received four-year RIAS scholarships, and will aim to defend their PhDs at Leiden University in 2021.





## The RIAS Postdoc

In May 2017, the RIAS team was augmented by the arrival of Dr. Cees Heere, who joined the Institute as a full-time postdoctoral researcher.

Originally from Drenthe, he came to Zeeland via a five-year diversion in London, where he acquired first his Master's degree and then his PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science. We sat down with Cees to ask him about the new RIAS, his research, and life in Middelburg.

*How did you come to the RIAS?*

"I've kept in touch with the RIAS – or the Roosevelt Study Center, as it was – since 2014, when I participated in one of its international PhD seminars. What struck me then about the Institute was its commitment to collaboration and dialogue, which is still surprisingly rare in academia. You can imagine then that I was delighted to join the RIAS after finishing my PhD, particularly as it is going through its relaunch. The experience has been incredibly rich so far: between the events we're organizing, the arrival of the new PhD students, and my own research work, there's never a dull moment."

*Can you tell us something about your own research?*

"I work on international history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the very time at which the United States first begins to assert itself as a global power. Theodore Roosevelt therefore plays a big role in my doctoral thesis, which explored the changes in the political dynamics of the Pacific that accompanied the rise of Japan."

*How are you experiencing life in Middelburg?*

"It was quite a change of pace after living in London. But I'm from a smaller town originally, so in many ways it has been a return to form. Middelburg is small, but perfectly formed: it's a beautiful town with a lot going on, and had begun to feel like home even in the short time I've lived here."

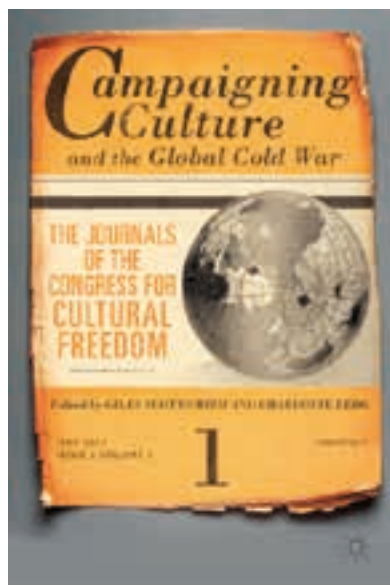
## American Bases in the Netherlands

In October 2017, RIAS researcher Dario Fazzi submitted an NWO-VIDI proposal under the title "The U.S. Among Us: Assessing the Impact of American Military Bases in the Netherlands, 1954-1994." This project aims to offer a tridimensional analysis of the ways in which the American military outposts in the Netherlands have affected the local economy, favored the occurrence of cross-cultural encounters, and impacted the surrounding environment. Dr. Fazzi's project conjoins traditionally separated subfields such as diplomatic, economic, and environmental history. The wide geographical distribution of American military outposts has indeed provided the footing upon which much of U.S. foreign and national security policies have stood.

But American bases have not exhausted their function in the geostrategic realm. They have entangled Dutch-American relations in informal exchanges, interdependences, and mutual influences. This new RIAS project will provide an overarching and genuinely multidisciplinary analysis that will do justice to the subject's complexity.



# PUBLICATIONS



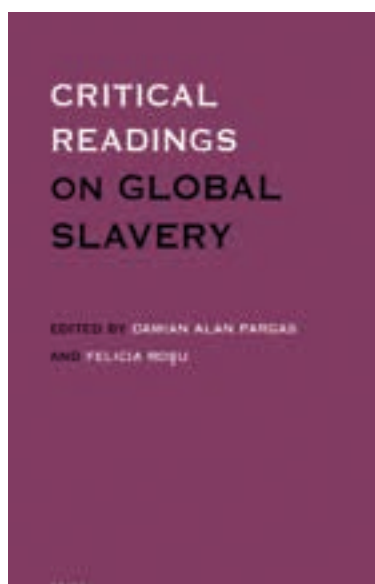
Three publications by Academic Director Giles Scott-Smith arrived in 2017, each one marking the completion of a research project sponsored by the RIAS. *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, edited by Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte Lerg (Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich), explores the legacy of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a CIA-funded organization that published an influential series of journals around the world to promote liberal values in the battle of ideas with Communism.



*Global Perspectives on the Bretton Woods Conference and the Post-War World Order*, edited by Giles Scott-Smith and J. Simon Rofo (SOAS, London), repositions the groundbreaking Bretton Woods conference of July 1944 as the first large-scale multilateral North-South dialogue on global financial governance. Looking beyond the usual focus on Anglo-American interests, the book lays the groundwork for a more comprehensive analysis of Bretton Woods in international history.



*Global Exchanges: Scholarships and transnational Circulations in the Modern World*, edited by Ludovic Tournès (University of Geneva) and Giles Scott-Smith, examines the scope, scale and evolution of organized exchanges around the globe through the twentieth century. It emphasizes their essential role in knowledge transfer, cultural interchange, and the formation of global networks.



The study of slavery has grown strongly in recent years, as scholars working in several disciplines have cultivated broader perspectives on enslavement in a wide variety of contexts and settings. RIAS executive director Damian Pargas coedited a volume titled *Critical Readings on Global Slavery*, which offers a rich collection of previously published works by some of the most preeminent scholars in the field. With contributions covering various regions and time periods, this anthology encourages readers to view slave systems across time and space as both ubiquitous and interconnected.





# GRANTS & MORE

## RIAS Research Grants

Each year, the RIAS offers a limited number of research grants for scholars and students based in Europe to visit the Institute in Middelburg.

This fulfills one of the Institute's key functions: to act as a major depository of materials on U.S. history on this side of the Atlantic. Scholars at all stages in their careers (Masters and PhD students as well as scholars preparing a publication) are invited to apply.

The grants cover travel expenses, include a *per diem*, and researchers are meant to spend one full week of research at the RIAS. Applications should be submitted at least two months prior to the intended visit.

In 2018, the RIAS will also launch its first Marilyn B. Young Research Grant, which will be awarded to the most promising research in the field of social and civil rights. The late Marilyn Young was a historian of American foreign relations and professor of history at New York University. She was a long-time RIAS friend and supporter, and her work has inspired generations of scholars. The RIAS staff is therefore glad to honor her memory by granting financial support to those ongoing research projects that overlap with Professor Young's broader research interests.

## Leon Gordenker's Donation

Leon Gordenker, Professor Emeritus of Politics at Princeton, has been a friend, research associate, advisor and supporter of the RIAS for a long time. In September he generously donated his book collection to the Institute's library.

As well as his complete personal oeuvre of publications, it includes many useful titles on the history of international organizations with a special focus on the United Nations. An expert on the UN, Professor Gordenker worked there in the Department of Public Information from 1946, and was a UN correspondent during the Korean War.



## The Kennedy and Roosevelt Collections

Over the course of the year, the RIAS library has expanded its collections through several substantial donations.

We were especially grateful to receive a selection from the personal collection of Curtis Roosevelt (1930-2016), the son of Anna Roosevelt and Curtis Bean Dall, and the eldest grandson of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

The RIAS also received a collection of books and memorabilia on the

presidency and assassination of John F. Kennedy.

For this, the RIAS is grateful to Peter Visbach and Jack van Eekelen. The latter was a journalist with the *Eindhovens Dagblad* and chief editor of the weekly *Facilitair*





# Roosevelt Institute for American Studies

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