

Dirk

Dirk van Hogendorp was an abolitionist at the turn of the 18th century: He opposed slavery. Was the freedom that Dirk wrote about the same as what enslaved people were fighting for?

Dirk lived in Surabaya where he worked for the Dutch East India Company (VOC). There he 'owned' 153 people. Influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, he proclaimed that there was no place for slavery in an ideal society, and that the system could be abolished in twenty years' time. He tried to reach a larger audience with a theatre adaptation of his father's novella *Kraspoekol* about a cruel Indo-European female slaveholder in Batavia. His ideas, however, found little support.

Twenty years later Dirk started Novo Sion, a coffee and orange plantation in Brazil. His cash books show that while he employed free workers, he still bought people. He complained that he had no other choice because free people always 'ran away' from him. Dirk expected unconditional loyalty and service from free people.

Theatre Adaptation *Kraspoekol*, Dirk van Hogendorp, 1800.

Dirk van Hogendorp at Novo Sion, c. 1820.

Portrait of Dirk van Hogendorp, Christoph Suhr, 1813.

Three people are recorded in an 1822 cashbook from Dirk van Hogendorp's Novo Sion plantation as 'my slaves', with no names given.