

## Background

In 2019, the Libraries purchased a collection of about 500 leftist political posters. These posters mostly originated from Europe, but the collection has an international scope. We set up a workflow that started with the Conservation department unrolling and flattening the posters, me cataloging them, and lastly, the digitization team creating images for our digital repository. As the only graphics cataloger, the original plan was for me to catalog these by myself and have batches of posters scanned by our digital imaging team as I completed cataloging. However, COVID-related work-from-home orders changed how this could be done.

## Creating a workflow

As with many campus libraries, the MSU Libraries staff were sent home in March of 2020. The Head of Cataloging needed remote cataloging projects for our team. My supervisor and I identified posters as a good option for remote cataloging work. Posters typically only require one image (as opposed to books, which require a number of pages be scanned). Additionally, only two fields are required that cannot be assessed from a digital image easily - dimensions and form of production - two things that can be recorded as they are photographed.

We decided to start with the leftist political posters because they are a high priority collection. We also have a staff member who is knowledgeable in German, so we could leverage her language expertise through this project. Additionally, the vendor had created an inventory that included dimensions as well as distinguishing characteristics about the poster. I modified this spreadsheet by adding columns for catalogers to claim an item for cataloging by entering their initials, and locked the descriptive fields. I also wrote out my procedures for cataloging and created a constant data template, paying special attention to details needed for this specific collection.

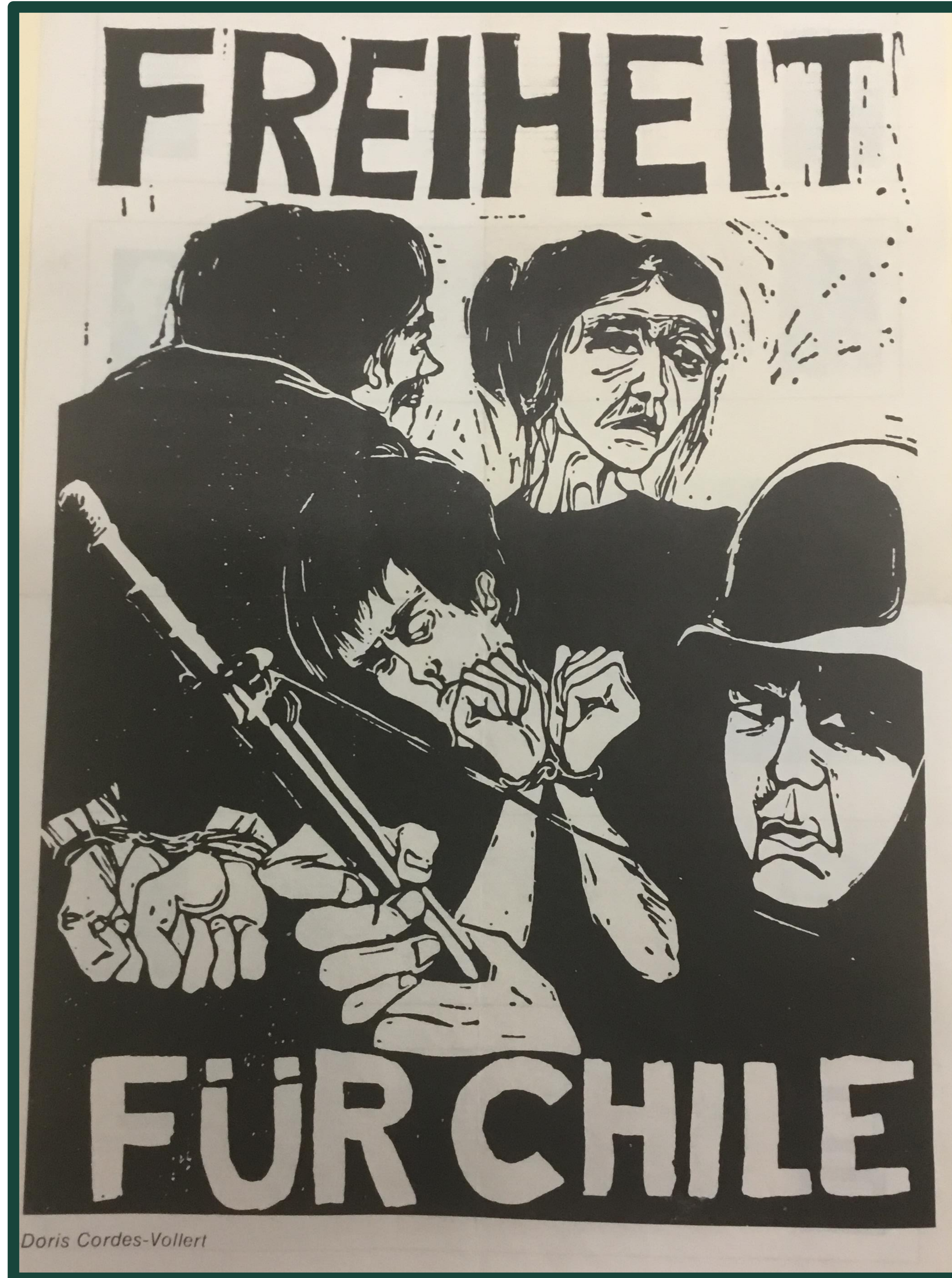
Conservation continues to flatten and label posters and bring them to the cataloging flat files. From there, I take photographs using my iPad. Once home, I rename the files to their call numbers and upload them to a shared drive. Having dual monitors is extremely helpful in accomplishing this work. This way, cataloging software can be on the main screen, and the image of the poster can be on the other.

## Results

To date, we have cataloged roughly 90 posters through this pilot. Given that the scope is 500, we are on track to complete cataloging by this year. Our goal is to have them all cataloged by the time the digitization team returns to working onsite (exact date TBD).

When photographing for cataloging, we learned it's important to not only take a picture of the entire piece, but also close up pictures of small font. Because these photographs aren't high resolution, zooming in can only accomplish so much.

We also plan to use this as a template for further remote work. I am currently photographing posters from other collections to create a backlog for the upcoming year when we'll likely continue to work from home.



Example digitized poster

**Author:** Cordes-Vollert, Doris, 1943- artist.  
**Title:** Freiheit für Chile.  
**Publisher:** [Groningen (Netherlands)] : [publisher not identified], [1970 to 1979?]  
**Citation:** [Cite this item from WorldCat](#)

LOCATION	CALL #	STATUS
MSU SPECIAL COLLECTIONS	MSS.719-012	LIB USE ONLY <span style="color: red;">Get it</span>

**Description:** 1 poster : 42 x 30 cm  
**Format:** still image  
**Text:** unmediated  
**sheet:** unmediated  
**Description:** paper ink  
**double sided:** unmediated  
**Series:** Leftist political posters collection.  
**Radicalism posters collection.**  
**Note:** Title from poster recto.  
"Doris Cordes-Vollert" - bottom left.  
**Summary:** Recto of poster shows soldier in helmet armed with a rifle. He is guarding a man and boy (each in handcuffs) standing beside an arm-pushed-looking woman. Verso of poster lists some titles offered by "importboekhandel Sterboek, Oude Kijk 'nt Jatstraat 46, Groningen tel. 050-120924 Postbus 1099" on Marxist-Leninist philosophy, fascism, capitalism, etc.  
**Subject:** Chile -- Politics and government -- 1970-1973 -- Posters.  
Chile -- History, Military -- Posters.  
Posters, Dutch.  
1970-1988  
**Genre:** Military history.  
Political posters.  
Posters.  
Political posters.  
**Added Author:** Sterboek (Groningen, Netherlands) : issuing body.  
**Permanent record link:** <http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/record=b13526449-539>

Example record

Confluence Home Spaces Apps Create

MSU-15 Pandemic Op... MSU-15 Pandemic Operations / ... / Projects

Catalog Leftist political posters collection (MSS 719)

Created by Nicole Smeltekop  
Last updated Jul 23, 2020 · 3 min read

Email your supervisor to sign up for this project!

- Staff needed for project variable
- Staff currently working on project: Nicole Kote

**Software and/or materials required**

- Original cataloging
- Slerra
- Connexion
- Internet browser

**Project lead**

Nicole Smeltekop  
nicole@msu.edu

Please contact this person(s) with questions about project instructions.

**Project summary/background**

This is a project to catalog posters from MSS 719: Leftist political posters collection.

**Project instructions**

- Pre-work:
  - Open Connexion and download the shared poster constant data to your local constant data (Cataloging>Search>Online constant data>Posters)

**Project status**

Ongoing as of 4/16/2020

MSU Libraries TS procedures for cataloging posters.

Rec stat n	Entered 20191003	Replaced	Lang
Type k	ELvl l	Src e d	Audn
BLvl m	Form	GPub *	Time
Desc i	Mat	Tech n	Dist
007	k #b k #d c #e o		
040	EEM #b ang #e rda #c EEM		
041	[LANG] #a [LANG]		
043	[GEOGRAPHIC AREA CODE]		
050	4 [L C Call #]		
059	MSS 719-###		
049	EMJ		
100	[CREATOR], #e [RELATIONSHIP DESIGNATOR]		
245	1 [TITLE] #b [SUBTITLE] / #c [STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY]		
254	1 [PLACE] #b [PUBLISHER], #c [DATE]		
300	1 poster : #b color, #c [HEIGHT]x[WIDTH] cm		
336	still image #b sti #2 rdacontent		
337	unmediated #b #2 rdacontent		
338	sheet #b nb #2 rdacarrier		
340	paper #c ink #2 rdamat		
340	#k single-sided #2 rdabay		
500	Title from [POSTER RECTO?]		
520	Poster shows [CONTENT]		
500	[QUOTES]		
500	[ADDITIONAL NOTES]		
546	[LANG NOTE]		
650 0	[TOPIC] #z [PLACE] #v Posters.		
651 0	[PLACE] #v Posters.		
650	Posters, [NATIONALITY] OR Political posters, [NATIONALITY]		
655 7	Political posters. #2 legit		
700	[PERSONAL NAME], #e [RELATIONSHIP]		
710	[CORPORATE NAME], #e [RELATIONSHIP]		

Shared constant data template

Screenshot of shared spreadsheet