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Maarten van Dullemen (1936-2021)

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Man with the wild hair led the way in protest against the Vietnam War.

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Doctors Without Borders, the Red Cross, Flying Doctors, Oxfam Novib, the Netherlands-Vietnam Medical Committee, which continues to support people who need help as a result of the Vietnam War; Ariëla Legman, who entered Maarten van Dullemen's life at the age of five when Maarten started a relationship with her mother, can best describe the world he envisioned by the charities to which he donated. "The common thread is that he wanted to help people in the developing world who are already disadvantaged at birth due to war, disease and hunger."

Maarten van Dullemen was a journalist and activist who was primarily concerned with the fate of Vietnamese. An estimated two and a half million Vietnamese lost their lives in the Vietnam War, which lasted 20 years and ended in 1975. According to Hans Beerends, author of *The Third World Movement. History and future*, Van Dullemen was the stimulator of almost all protests against the war in Vietnam [in The Netherlands].

A view across the border

After breaking off his medical studies, Van Dullemen started working for the weekly magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer*. There he threw open the shutters with his attention to news from distant foreign countries. 'Maarten taught me to look far beyond the border,' says his colleague Geert Mak at the time.

Wild hair, colorful knitted sweaters. A man of few words, clumsy to deal with. An inner fat that could suddenly explode, says Legman, "and then you better walk around him with a big bow." His unbridled work ethic was also characteristic. "He worked so hard that he often fell asleep over his plate at dinner."

His father was Attorney General at the Amsterdam Court of Appeal, his mother wrote novels and poems. "A neat family of officials," he thought. Writer Inez van Dullemen, his sister eleven years older, died ten days before Maarten. He married Legman's mother, dance expression therapist Sima Colcher. Together they had a son, Mischa. Sima Colcher passed away in 2017.

After *de Groene*, Van Dullemen worked for the Netherlands-Vietnam Medical Committee. In Vietnam he visited eye clinics. Many children were born with vision problems as a result of the defoliant code-named Agent Orange, which the Americans had sprayed millions of liters on North Vietnam. Mak: 'Where others continued to talk and write, Maarten drew conclusions.'

Vietnamese pottery

With his retirement in sight, Van Dullemen threw himself into the trade in hand-painted Vietnamese pottery. He drove across the country in a dilapidated bus carrying vases, dishes and tea sets. Legman: "Nobody expected that from him, it didn't suit him at all, and that made the fun he had in it all the more."

Van Dullemen died on December 4 [2021] at the age of 85 from the consequences of corona. He had been vaccinated twice, but not yet boosted. Not long before that, he had transferred an amount to Giro 555. Legman: 'He had heard that there are countries where only 1 percent of the population has been vaccinated against corona. He wanted to know whether that was correct before entering the amount.'

In recent years, Van Dullemen lived in the Vondelstede nursing home in Amsterdam South. As a result of some brain haemorrhages, his physical condition had deteriorated dramatically. In the run-up to the elections, he left a poster of the SP in his window, he could no longer do that himself. He marked the spot to the centimeter on the window of his room on the chic Vondelstraat.

The man of few words found it increasingly difficult to speak. "But one word was enough for him to give the conversation a different turn," said Max Arian, another former colleague of *De Groene*, at the funeral.

Jaap Stam

P.S.

• Volkskrant.nl. 18 januari 2022, 17:19

<https://www.volkskrant.nl/mensen/man-met-de-wilde-hardos-ging-voorop-in-het-protest-tegen-de-vietnamoorlog~b8875f16/>

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