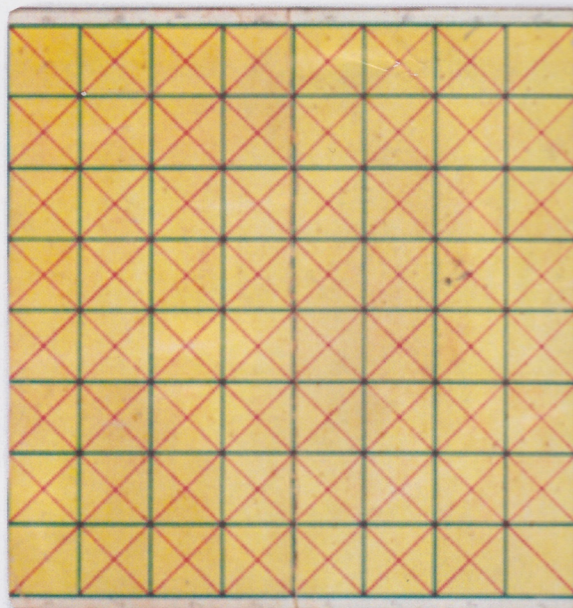


THE LEVEN PUZZLE

Article by Fred Horn



Leven puzzle rules and playing grid

In December of 2018

my good friend Geert Bekkering visited me all the way from Enschede after doing more research on the 'Kinder-Courant' in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague. He brought along a bag full of games in which there was one very interesting small cardboard item.

This puzzle was immediately recognizable as one of which had been published as a 'problem for Christmas' beginning in 1921 in the Dutch Magazine "HET LEVEN" (published 1906-1941). It is a pity that we cannot trace the exact year this one was published in the magazine.

In 1925, the magazine offered a nice picture of a puzzle:



Photo: Spaarnestad

However, this had nothing to do with the annual puzzle published around Christmas from 1921 on, and for which the magazine offered a monetary prize to anyone who could solve the puzzle, (which one reader did accomplish).

All of the puzzles we are aware of were published as an extra to the magazine, and were represented on a small piece of cardboard. The solution had to be written down on a special extra paper, which was part of the magazine. Once filled in, the submission would be sent to the magazine, and only one solution per mailing was allowed. Thus, to get additional chances to win one had to buy more magazines!

The first published puzzle was in 1921. No example of it yet has been found, but the magazine presented some public-relation photographs—one of actress Caroline van Drommelen, and another (both in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek) showing some women (of the company) playing the game.



Actress Catherine van Drommelen



Playing the game!



OPSTELLING DER PUZZLE (Arrangement of the puzzle)

This clipping survived and is part of my collection in the Vlaams Spellenarchief Brugge. It provided an area for one's answer and specified the terms for the prize along with the address to send in one's entry.

And that was no minor task as the photograph at right depicts. (It looks like potential solutions for the 1932 puzzle) >>

ALS HEEL NEDERLAND GE-LEVEN-PUZZELD HEEFT!

(When All The Netherlands Has LEVEN-PUZZLED!)



The first LEVEN PUZZLE published in 1921 is the well-known hexagonal puzzle. It was comprised of 20 hexagons, each of its six sides a different color, number, or picture.

The next one we are aware of also comes from my collection—the 1926 puzzle:



Front side



Reverse side



Ad in "Algemeen Handelsblad"

The puzzle was made by slicing off the ten columns, each containing five pictures, and then braiding them into a 5x5 square in such a way that the pictures end up in their right order. The game was announced in an ad in the *Algemeen Handelsblad*.

As well, at right is a picture of the magazine from Zaterdag 12 Maart 1927 (Saturday, March 12, 1927) where a solution to the puzzle and the winner is published.



Among the collection of my friend, Eric van Waarden, the puzzle from the year 1930 can be found. This puzzle was announced in an ad in the daily paper *De Telegraaf* on Vrijdag 19 December 1930 (Friday, December 19, 1930).



Front side



Reverse side

In this puzzle's text there is a reference to the "Volkenbond" ("League of Nations"). The flags of the countries are in disorder, and the goal of the puzzler is to rearrange their flags into the correct order, into 4 x 4 squares of similar flags.

On the reverse side, arranging the pictures (using the 2 x 1 pieces) could help in solving the problem.



Just Secret from the Stars, the Life Puzzle - 1931

In 1931, a picture of the LEVEN PUZZLE (pictured above) can be found in the archives of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague.

To solve this puzzle, one needs to place the 12 (cut-out) circles onto the "empty" spaces on the board so that four large concentric circles, depicting the signs of the Zodiac, are put in their proper order.

We only have the front side of this cardboard puzzle. This also counts for the next and last puzzle from 1932 which can be found in the archives of *Het Arsenal*.

We assume that, as is the case with the cardboard puzzles of 1926 and 1930, there is also a hint to solving the puzzle printed on the reverse side. Text on the front side of this puzzle states, "Look at the other side!"

Here is an advertisement which announces the puzzle for 1932:

And pictured below, another colorful cardboard puzzle.

This time the 20 square numbers must be cut out and replaced in such a way that horizontally (6 numbers) and vertically (7 numbers) are formed which all can be divided by the number 7.

More solutions are possible and the reader who sent in the most solutions could win 1,000.00 Guilder.



The Egyptian King's Tomb, Life Puzzle 1932

From the probable 20 puzzles (each year from 1921 to 1940) we now know of six published puzzles with five of these also dated. It would be wonderful if in the near future more puzzles and information on the subject became available. >>

N.B.
Many thanks to Rob van Linden and Geert Bekkering for providing the basic information for this article. [AGPI](#)

Additional information:
The magazine "*Het Leven*" existed from 1906 through World War II up to the year 1941. In 1940 the Jewish workers had to leave and in 1941 the Nazis ordered a publication ban.



This photograph illustrates one of the ways the magazine advertised itself.

Het Leven did not survive the War. The first pages of the magazine were always full of advertisements, thereafter come the reports, articles, etc. A typical front page:

