

On the Waterfront

newsletter of the friends of the IISH 2023 no. 44



internationaal instituut
voor sociale geschiedenis

Here comes the
militia!

A new home for
The Moscow Times
archive

The FNV Project:
an update

Introduction

**Zwanenberg
meat factory,
1947.**
See page 15.

In the first half of 2023 IISH resumed an activity that the pandemic had rendered impossible since 2020: organizing a large international conference where participants meet in person. From 12 to 15 April, the 14th European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC), organized by IISH's Els Kuperus and Ineke Kellij-Vos, with support from Astrid Verburg and many other colleagues, brought together over 1,200 people in Gothenburg. It was good to see that gathering to discuss new social science history research remains as appealing as it was at the previous conference in Belfast in 2018. The IISH was present again with our own stand, where buttons produced on site were in great demand. This ESSHC was also the last one for Ineke, who retires this summer.

Three new books have been published by IISH researchers in the past half year, each one an important contribution to the growing field of Global Labour History. Rossana Barragán edited with Paula Zagalsky Potosí *in the Global Silver Age (16th – 19th Centuries)* (Brill, 2023), which explores the political economy of silver production and circulation, illuminating a vital chapter in the history of global capitalism. In May, the first volume in the new, open access IISH book series *Work Around the World: Studies in Global Labour History* was published by UCL Press, London. In *The World Wide Web of Work: A history in the making*, former Director of Research and currently IISH Research Fellow Marcel van der Linden discusses core concepts such as 'capitalism', 'workers', and 'coerced labour', explores connections between labourers in different parts of the world, and addresses the many forms of resistance and acquiescence among workers in a book that may be considered the sequel to his seminal *Workers of the World* (2008). Finally, IISH senior researcher Ulbe Bosma published *The World of Sugar: How the Sweet Stuff Transformed Our Politics, Health, and Environment over 2,000 Years* (Harvard University

Press). In a presentation at the Friends' meeting in June of this year, he will explain how the transformation of sugar from a luxury commodity into a major source of calories had major consequences: large-scale plantation slavery and forced labour, massive environmental damage, and by now an uncontrollable obesity pandemic.
Aad Blok

About the Friends

Members of the Friends of the IISH pay annual dues of 25, 100 or 500 euros or join with a lifetime donation of 1,500 euros or more. In return, members are invited to semi-annual sessions featuring presentations of IISH acquisitions and guest speakers. These guest speakers deliver lectures on their field of research, which need not be related to the IISH collection. The presentation and lecture are followed by a reception. The Friends coordinator may consult the Friends about allocation of the revenues from the dues and delivers an annual financial report in conjunction with the IISH administration.

As a token of appreciation for their great contribution to the Friends, Jaap Kloosterman and Jan Lucassen were appointed as honorary members in 2014.

The IISH was founded by master collector N.W. Posthumus (1880-1960) in the 1930s. For the past two decades, two of the institutions established by this 'history entrepreneur' have operated from the same premises: the Netherlands Economic History Archive founded in 1914 and the International Institute of Social History, which is now more than 80 years old. Both institutes continue to collect, although the 'subsidiary' IISH has grown considerably larger than its 'parent' NEHA. Additional information about the Institute may be found in Jaap Kloosterman and Jan Lucassen, *Rebels with a Cause: Five Centuries of Social History Collected by the IISH* (Amsterdam 2010, 2016).

For all information concerning the Friends, see <http://socialhistory.org/en/friends>

Colophon



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Cows led to the slaughterhouse at the Veemarkt-terrein, 1930s. IISG collection, call number NEHA BG D91-401.

Old photographs, the return of old barriers, and the end of the IRSH Bibliography

Two 1930s photographs of the immediate surroundings of the building on Cruquiusweg that have housed the Institute since 1989, purchased by Jacques van Gerwen at an auction, were one of his last acquisitions as curator for the NEHA before he retired in January 2022. Both feature cattle en route to Veemarkt-terrein, where the first municipal slaughterhouse in Amsterdam had been located since the 1880s. But the photo shown above also reveals something else: behind the tracks of the freight line along which cattle were transported there is a partition wall separating off the depot or transshipment port that developed in the Eastern Docklands from 1898 onwards.

Cruquiusweg became a bustling street and central commercial hub in the first half of the twentieth century. The municipal abattoir and customs bonded warehouses were pivotal in facilitating the movement of goods. The abattoir served as a central location for livestock slaughter, while the bonded warehouses were used for storing goods in transit, often awaiting customs clearance. As long as the goods remained in the warehouse, no import duties were payable. A

photo from 1969 shows a section of the partition wall in front of one of the warehouses adjacent to the present IISH premises. It was located there until the 1970s. Such dedicated transshipment ports have largely disappeared and have been replaced by customs areas with bonded warehouses, in part as a result of globalization and concomitant trade liberalization.

But trade and transport barriers are resurfacing in other forms. And some of the Institute's activities are influenced by this reverse development in a rather specific way. Since Brexit, books and other materials transported from or via the United Kingdom are henceforth subject to new customs clearance fees and obscure bureaucratic procedures and forms to ensure delivery of the goods. Privatization of postal and courier services has led courier services to proliferate, each with their own set of procedures. Since Brexit, the IISH have had to invest considerable effort and expense to get materials delivered, even those with little or no commercial value.

One specific victim of this development has been the annotated Bibliography, published in the IISH flagship journal the *International Review*



Overview of the warehouses still separated by a wall 'Maandag/Dinsdag' (right), 'Zondag', and 'Koning Willem I' (far left, now housing the IISH) of the Nieuw-Entrepot from the Cruquiusweg side (photo RDMZ, G.J. Dukker, 1979).

Presentation of acquisitions and special finds

Here comes the militia!

Many of us have heard the song *Daar komen de schutters* [Here comes the militia], as sung by Willeke Alberti, cast as Rooie Sien in the homonymous motion picture from 1975. The actual song dates back much further and was in fact recorded in a songbook in 1904 by poet-singer-illustrator Koos Speenhoff, one of the founders of Dutch cabaret. How pivotal this song was in his vast oeuvre is clear from the title he gave his memoirs, which were published two years before his death: *Daar komen de schutters. Herinneringen* (The Hague: A.A.M. Stols, 1943). The song mocks the municipal militia, the deeply unpopular citizen militia, to which former conscripts were required to sacrifice an additional five years of their leisure time to take part in ridiculous refresher drills and march in pointless parades.

In the third verse of *Daar komen de schutters* something remarkable occurs. It mentions a militiaman on clogs, Speenhoff's reference to a historical reality that, thanks to the song, would also acquire a metaphorical meaning. This 'militiaman in clogs' came to symbolize the good-natured Dutchman, hardly combative and averse to militarism and merciless discipline. The historical fact underlying the song was the provision in the militia regulations ensuring that the authorities issued arms and a uniform to all militiamen. These regulations did not, however, stipulate footwear: militiamen were responsible for that

of *Social History* (IRSH). Launched in 1936 as part of the Institute's *Bulletin*, for many decades the Bibliography was of great value to researchers and librarians eager to stay abreast of relevant literature in the broad field of international social and labour history. From the outset, the Bibliography was also an important source of acquisitions for the IISH library. Publishers were requested to send review copies of the books to be annotated, and these copies were then added to the library. Since Brexit, this free flow of review copies has suddenly been impeded. As most North-American publishers ship their books through the United Kingdom, this has severely impacted the IRSH Bibliography. In addition to other developments, such as digitization of book publishing and library services, this course of events has led us to decide, in agreement with the journal's publisher, to discontinue the annotated IRSH Bibliography as of 2023. We are currently exploring options to continue this service together with international partners in a new online form.

Aad Blok

part of their attire and in this respect had some latitude for provocative gestures.

In the last three decades of the nineteenth century there are several mentions of individual militiamen who appeared at roll call wearing clogs: in Amersfoort (1870), Amsterdam (1876), Delft (1883), Sittard (1888), and Meppel (1895). This practice sometimes confused their officers, often caused outbursts of rage, and generally resulted in punitive exercises and fines. Wherever the public got wind of such a spectacle, sensationalist onlookers were guaranteed to turn out in droves.

The IISH collection comprises a large photograph album once gifted to socialist leader Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (BG T2/433). The album contains portrait photographs of admirers, friends and kindred spirits from the Netherlands and abroad. Two photographs are especially remarkable, as they feature a rider on horseback, an uncommon sight for socialists. Domela Nieuwenhuis' newspaper *Recht voor Allen* relates the story behind the photographs.

On Tuesday afternoon 8 April 1896, the militiamen of The Hague were summoned to a massive exercise on Malieveld. Because pamphlets announced a demonstration against the citizen militia, large numbers of policemen were present. Socialist Gerard Duivenstijn, age 29, unobtrusively slipped into a café in civilian attire and emerged in a militia uniform. Outside, a fellow



Left and below: Gerard Duivenstijn on horseback at Malieveld, 8 April 1896. IISH collection, call number IISG BG A4/2823 and 283.

party member led an impressive dray horse by the reins. On horseback, Duivenstijn appeared before the troops as the militia general. On his chest tins of shoe polish gleamed as medals. On his feet he wore a pair of freshly sanded clogs in the largest size he had managed to find in The Hague.

The punitive exercise that Duivenstijn then performed in clogs was a veritable slapstick. As hundreds of militiamen and the audience watched, splitting their sides from laughter, the general in clogs ‘forgot’ the difference between left and right and tripped at each retreat, consistently raising his clogs high in the air. The newspaper report mentions two more remarkable details: afterwards somebody had apparently

asked to photograph the militiaman in clogs. In addition, ‘a well-known comedian’ was said to have visited Duivenstijn, hoping to record details to include in his verses. This is very likely to have been Koos Speenhoff. During the summer following this first performance, Duivenstijn and his comrades found additional opportunities to poke fun at the citizen militia. When he was court martialled, when he departed to serve his prison sentence, and again upon his release, new street theatre performances were staged, many featuring horse-drawn carriages, some also with Duivenstijn astride a large wooden hobby-horse. He appeared before the court martial on horseback wearing a top hat, but even then wore his distinctive wooden clogs.



What about the horse? More about the horse emerged much later. On 22 February 1913 a socialist from The Hague, Janus Deegens, died at age 65. A former coachman, he had been demoted to an errand boy. He had never taken centre stage in the movement, but upon his death it was noted that, in 1883, he had generously taken former *communarde* Louise Michel on a tour of The Hague in his coach. And when the socialists of The Hague ventured on membership drives to a reactionary bastion such as Leiden, Deegens provided transport by towing them in a cart. The horse on which Duivenstijn produced such a spectacle had belonged to Deegens as well.

Initially, Gerard Duivenstijn benefited from his sudden fame and became the owner of an abstinence pub on Nieuwe Molstraat. He had five children and lived to see the citizen militia definitively disbanded in 1907. On 18 February 1913 the erstwhile militiaman in clogs shot himself in the head in the Scheveningse Bosjes with a revolver and died. He was 46 years old.

Dennis Bos

A New Home for *The Moscow Times* archive

Sometimes it seems like a miracle that any of what follows below could have happened. How was it possible that *The Moscow Times*, Russia's leading independent English-language newspaper, appeared and survived in Russia in the early 1990s, when there were not enough readers in Moscow yet, much less advertisers for this newspaper? It should not have survived after 2004, when it was sold to the Finnish company Sanoma. Which turned out to be run by completely unprofessional managers.

The Moscow Times should have disappeared after 2015, when it briefly ended up in the hands of a corrupt media manager. *The Moscow Times* should not have survived the early 2020s, when Putin imposed real censorship in Russia, and many expats left the country. Especially after Putin unleashed a war against Ukraine, and everything

European became the 'enemy', the survival of the paper archive of this newspaper that existed since 1992 became even more remarkable.

The Moscow Times survived all these troubles, thanks to the talents of *The Moscow Times* founder Derk Sauer, the enthusiastic dedication and professionalism of his international team, and the help of the many friends the publication has made in its 30-year history. Among these friends is the IISH, which will now house *The Moscow Times* archive, following its move from Moscow to Amsterdam after the outbreak of the war.

An adventurous beginning

The most exciting and romantic period in the history of *The Moscow Times* were the first years of the publication during the early 1990s. This period in Russia was, by Derk's definition, 'an absolutely terrible time': the country was falling apart before our eyes, old institutions of the Soviet state barely functioned, and new ones had yet to be established. This applied to both the public and the private lives of citizens. The few foreigners arriving here at the time were struck most of all by the absolutely empty grocery store shelves – an unbelievable sight for residents of Western Europe.

Derk, a successful Dutch journalist and editor, came to Moscow toward the end of the Soviet era. As is often the case in success stories, his arrival was completely by accident. It all started when a delegation from the Soviet Union of Journalists came to Amsterdam. Mikhail Gorbachev had proclaimed perestroika and glasnost in the USSR, and everyone in the West was very curious about what was happening behind the Iron Curtain. Derk organized several roundtables with journalists from the Soviet Union. At the end of their visit, the Soviet Union of Journalists asked him: 'Why don't you come to Moscow and make a newspaper with us?' Sauer's boss at the VNU publishing house was delighted with this idea and agreed to send Derk to the USSR and to allocate funding toward the new project. Derk had never been to Russia before and spoke no Russian at all. The venture was a gamble.

The first shock in this unknown country came very quickly. The people from the Soviet Union of Journalists, with whom Sauer intended to set up a new business, were not at all who they claimed to be. Derk had hoped they were journalists and editors, but they turned out to be bureaucrats. He was required to hire them anyway. According to Soviet law, foreigners could work there only by embarking on a joint venture with a Soviet institution and hiring Soviet citizens. Derk's first project in Russia was *Moscow Magazine*, a joint venture between the Soviet Union of Journalists and VNU. Names from the Union of Journalists were listed in the publication (and paid a salary), but Derk was producing the magazine with entirely different people.

In early August 1991, Derk began publishing the weekly English-language newspaper *The Moscow Guardian* in parallel with *Moscow Magazine*. And then, a coup d'état nearly took place, when a group of high-ranking Communist Party leaders announced that Soviet President Mikhail Gor-

Derk Sauer at the printing house with the first issue of *The Moscow Times*, March 1992. Photograph *The Moscow Times*.





**Newsroom of
The Moscow
Times in 1997.
Photo by The
Moscow Times.**

bachev was to be deposed, and the State Committee for Emergency Situations was formed. Tanks appeared on the streets of Moscow. The putschists wanted to restore the country to the communist path of development, but the people had already had enough of communism. Tens of thousands gathered outside the Russian government headquarters in Moscow, which became the main focus of anti-Communist Party resistance. For three days, the people guarded the building with their bodies, and the generals did not issue orders to shoot peaceful civilians. The crisis ended with the arrest of the putschists, and Gorbachev returned to Moscow. But the days of the Soviet Union were numbered.

The defeat of the putschists in the final throes of the Soviet Union was followed by a surge of civil unrest, associated with hopes for improvement in the very near future. This sentiment encouraged Derk in his idea of launching a daily newspaper in Moscow.

The USSR collapsed in December 1991. In the spring of 1992, as soon as the law was amended to allow foreigners to do business in Russia without setting up joint ventures with local partners, Derk founded the Independent Media group. He registered *The Moscow Times* with the Russian press ministry without any problems, and work quickly gained momentum.

Sell the house and save the business

The Moscow Times started with \$300,000 in funding. Derk invested everything he had, about \$20,000, and the rest was contributed by his friends from the Netherlands, who believed in the new publisher. Issues of *The Moscow Times* started to be published immediately following its registration in March 1992, initially twice a week, then five times a week from 2 October onward.

One could probably have followed the well-trodden path taken by publishers of many

English-language newspapers in non-English-speaking countries: not hiring a large staff of journalists but simply reprinting news agency reports and translations from local newspapers. Operations would have been much cheaper that way. But Derk wanted to produce a quality newspaper: 'If you want to do something, do it well. Otherwise, why do it?'

This approach – professional management, efforts to run businesslike operations, and commitment to the highest standards of journalism – enabled *The Moscow Times* to weather all crises. The first crisis occurred eight months later, when the newspaper was on the verge of bankruptcy. Derk turned out to have overestimated financial prospects for an English-language publication in Russia. Far less advertising was forthcoming than he had expected, and it was all for barter. He had a pile of unpaid bills on his desk and was choosing which ones to pay now and which to put off. But Derk believed in *The Moscow Times*. To cover its debts and pay the salaries in Moscow, he sold his house in Amsterdam. His partners invested extra money as well. Gradually, business improved.

This was in part because in Russia, expenses in us dollars were incredibly low in the first half of the 90s. A salary of \$30 a month (i.e. \$1 a day) was considered very good. Even with a small investment in hard currency, you could afford a lot.

So the first office of *The Moscow Times* opened in a new four-star hotel not far from Kievsky railway station. Not in the hotel's business centre (there were no business or office centres in Moscow in the early 90s) but in the hotel itself (which also lacked customers, as there were few foreign tourists and businessmen). The journalists worked from hotel rooms from where the beds had been removed, with each room having its own bathroom.

The role of The Moscow Times

In 1994, the expanding TMT editorial board moved to Moscow's 'Fleet Street' (Pravda Street), where the offices of the major Soviet newspapers had been located. TMT took over the premises of the main Communist newspaper Pravda, which had by then gone bankrupt and ceased publication. Soviet newspapers did not have newsrooms as we know them. Their journalists sat in separate offices. To form a newsroom according to Western journalism standards, Derk had to rent Pravda's former accounting office. In Soviet times, 75 accountants had worked in this huge room.

By then, *The Moscow Times* had already established its reputation as the most authoritative publication about Russia in English. Its readership, however, extended beyond expats and diplomats working in Moscow. The newspaper was distributed free of charge at hotels and restaurants in the capital and had acquired an unexpected category of readers: young Muscovites who used *The Moscow Times* as an aid for learning English. Internet did not exist yet, and the only two alternatives were textbooks published in the USSR (written in rather twisted English) or foreign textbooks (which were scarce and very expensive for most Russians).

In *The Moscow Times*, young Russians not only read the news in a global language and improved their English. They also scrutinized its Job Ops section, which listed vacancies at global companies seeking new Russian employees for their expanding offices. The newspaper had become a very important tool for international companies to find new employees in Moscow and a good source of income for the publisher. I know more than one person who found his first job at a foreign company thanks to *The Moscow Times* and then built a career in international business.

And of course *The Moscow Times* brought standards of quality journalism to Russia, including to Russian-language media. Since the time of Peter the Great, a journalist in Russia found the news himself and explained it to readers. (Peter the Great launched the first Russian newspaper *Vedomosti* and served as its publisher, editor, and even correspondent, for example reporting personally about the Battle of Poltava against the Swedes.) Since then, there had been no separation between news and opinion in Russian journalism. And in the Soviet Union, the media was transformed from an instrument of information into a centrally controlled propaganda vehicle. Russian journalists who had experienced the school of *The Moscow Times* would then introduce these standards in journalism to new Russian media.

The Moscow Times without Derk

In only ten years, Derk and his partners grew *The Moscow Times* into Russia's largest publishing holding, Independent Media, publishing dozens of titles and employing over 1,000 people. VNU, Derk's former employer, became a minority shareholder in Independent Media. In 2004, Independent Media's founders sold it to Finland's Sanoma (as part of a deal for the Finns to buy VNU's

entire publishing business). As the company's founder, Derk remained on Independent Media's board of directors, along with new members appointed by the new owners.

The new owners and their managers, however, turned out to lack the level of competence present in companies they bought. As the new managers made more and more mistakes at an ever-higher cost, the growth of the Russian media that were part of Independent Media began to falter. The solutions Derk proposed were incomprehensible to Independent Media's new managers, and the ones they proposed in turn horrified Derk. A few years later, Derk left Independent Media.

At the same time, the Putin regime was tightening media censorship. Independent Russian media outlets that rejected the Kremlin's control (and 'help') found it increasingly difficult to operate. In 2014, Russia amended the law 'On Mass Media' that banned foreign publishers from owning a share greater than 20 percent in Russian media outlets. Sanoma sold the Independent Media business piece by piece in 2015. The glossy titles were sold to one owner and the dailies (including *The Moscow Times*) to Demyan Kudryavtsev, a former manager of 'Yeltsin's grey cardinal' Boris Berezovsky. These two years turned out to be the worst in the newspaper's history. Fortunately, Derk Sauer repurchased his brainchild in 2017.

A New Home for The Moscow Times

Upon repurchasing the publication, Derk stopped issuing its print edition. Fewer and fewer expats lived in Moscow, young people were learning English from other sources, and most readers of *The Moscow Times* were already abroad in the United States, Britain, and Canada. Developing the online edition of the TMT became necessary. As a result, the archive of the daily newspaper that the IISH has received ends in 2017. In 2018, *The Moscow Times* published a special print issue on the FIFA World Cup, which was hosted by Russia that year. From 2017 to 2020, *The Moscow Times* printed a monthly edition in Chinese.

In January 2022, *The Moscow Times* launched a Russian-language online edition. Weeks later, on February 24, Putin invaded Ukraine. We had to evacuate our journalists from Moscow quickly to avert the risk that they might be imprisoned merely for calling the war a war. Despite these challenges, traffic to the English and Russian-language editions of *The Moscow Times* has increased almost twentyfold over the past year.

Amsterdam has become our new home for the time being. We will definitely return to Moscow, because we are *The Moscow Times*, even if we cannot predict when that will be. But the unique archive of *The Moscow Times* will remain in Amsterdam at the IISH. The collection consists of 75 volumes, spanning about four metres altogether. This archive is very likely one of only two that survive of the publication. The other is believed to be at the Russian State Library in Moscow.

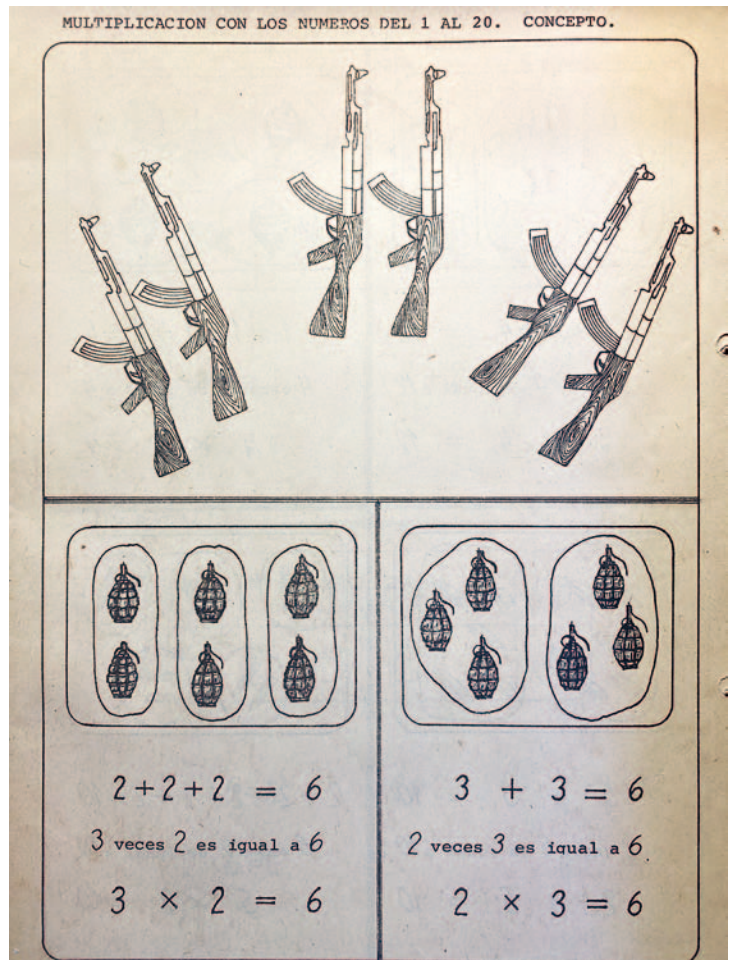
Alexander Gubsky, Publisher of The Moscow Times

Schoolbooks from the 1981 Nicaraguan Literacy Campaign

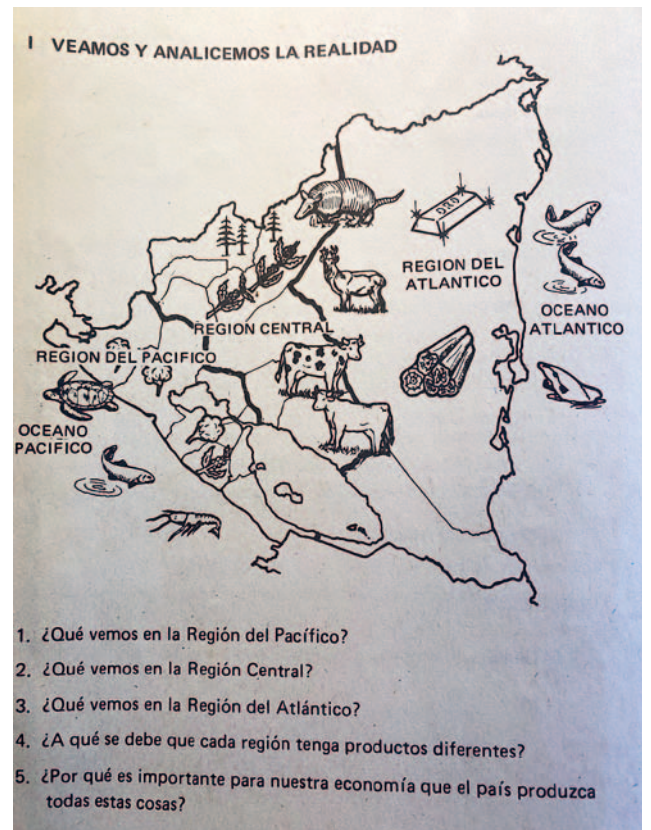
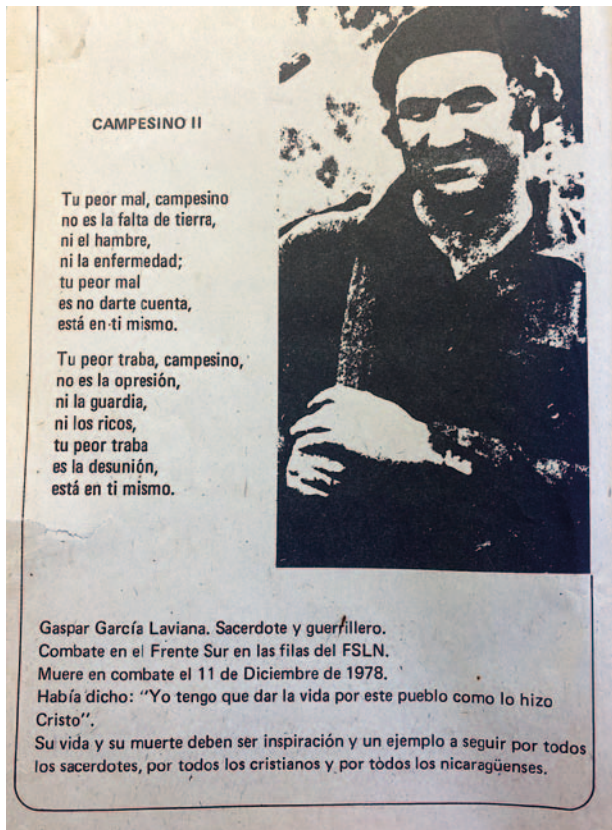
Literacy is crucial to the emancipation of socially disadvantaged groups. Eradicating illiteracy is therefore a central policy aim of social movements such as those struggling for liberation. The Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is a case in point. The schoolbooks from the 1981 FSLN literacy campaign are now available at the IISH.

Illiteracy in Nicaragua was addressed after a long period of unrest and civil war, which ended when the dictatorship was ousted in 1980. By the early 1970s, the Nicaraguan Somoza dictatorship had already started to lose its grip. In 1972, criticism of the Somoza regime rose internationally, after the devastating earthquake in Managua left an estimated 10,000 dead and 300,000 displaced. The extensive damage to the city and human suffering had brought substantial international emergency funds to Nicaragua, which disappeared into the pockets of the Somoza family. Moreover, while most medical supplies in Nicaragua were in desperately short supply after the earthquake, they allegedly sold imported emergency blood plasma abroad. When Somoza finally left in 1980, Managua was in ruins, and revolts were widespread among Nicaraguans.

The FSLN, which had been fighting the Somoza government since 1963, gained momentum and support in the aftermath of the Managua earthquake. Because of human rights abuses and especially after the televised killing of American journalist Bill Stewart by Nicaraguan soldiers in 1979, the Somoza regime lost all support from the United States under President Carter,



Pages from textbooks and exercise books used in the CNA literacy campaigns.



leaving Somoza without allies and supplies and causing the collapse of the dictatorship. In the ensuing power vacuum, the FSLN established a revolutionary government under a junta of national reconstruction.

Educating the Nicaraguan proletariat was a key objective of the FSLN government. In 1980 the successful literacy campaign *Cruzada Nacional de la Alfabetización* (CNA; National Literacy Crusade) was launched. In the past, expansion and democratization of the education system had been blocked under the Somoza regime, while the overall state of the education system remained abysmal. An estimated 50 percent of the total population was reportedly illiterate, and in rural areas the rate soared to 75 and sometimes even 90 percent. The Sandinistas promised to bring massive improvement to the Nicaraguan education system through the CNA, especially for those living in rural areas. The campaign also involved special programs for the blind and for homeless children. First, the focus was on children (ages 10 to 14) and on training *brigadistas* to work as educators. Thanks to an impressive mobilization campaign, the FSLN managed to send 90,000 secondary school and university students and lecturers to the countryside to teach basic levels of reading and writing and arithmetic.

From 1981, the CNA shifted its efforts to the adult rural population. This is noticeable in the many pictures taken during the campaign and within the material of the textbooks and exercise books. These books contain easily accessible assignments and explain, for example, the importance of poetry while also teaching farmers how to fertilize their fields and grow a variety of crops. Whereas children were drawn to the program by a message of hope and a brighter future, outreach efforts to adults comprised useful practical knowledge for their daily lives. This did not mean that the books were depoliticized. Imagery of Kalashnikovs and grenades reveals that armed struggle was a visual complement to instruction in basic mathematics. Key words such as *la revolución* not only contained all the vowels of the alphabet but were also vital for political messaging. Politics, social reality, and education blended into a widely successful literacy campaign. In the new census after the 1981 campaign, illiteracy had declined from 50 to 13 percent, for which UNESCO awarded the Nicaraguan government the Nadezhda K. Krupskaya literacy prize.

As an archivist, a former tutor in the primary and secondary school system, and a historian, I derive particular inspiration from the CNA schoolbook collection and its history. The consequences of illiteracy and the huge effort needed to eradicate it are described in *The Nicaraguan Literacy Campaign: The Power and Politics of Literacy* by Delane Bender-Slack. Bender-Slack's book and the Nicaraguan school books in the IISH collection (COLL00683) raise awareness of the importance of having access and the right to education and literacy. In addition, Nicaraguan schoolbooks show how prominent archivists are in forming collections. Initially, the materials were identified as periodicals. Only upon closer inspection did their true identity come to light. Listed as

periodicals, the story of the literacy campaign would have been lost in the restricted material descriptions. Discovering sources, reading these new materials, and making their histories accessible are very rewarding to archivists.

Tim Ruting

Ratchaprasong Notes (Say Hi to the Leaders)

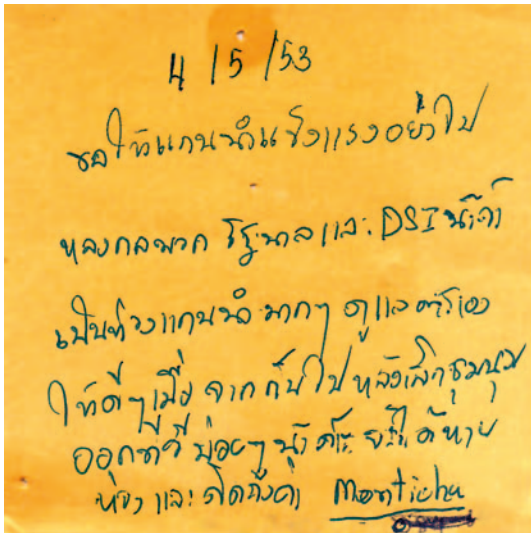
I first noticed the 'Say Hi to the Leaders' signboard on one of my visits to the Ratchaprasong protest site in Bangkok, Thailand, in April-May 2010. My immediate thought was that this sign should be preserved. It featured a unique collection of handwritten post-it notes pinned on large plastic sheets that formed a large signboard on the corner of Ratchaprasong in front of the Gaysorn shopping mall. The post-it notes are filled with messages to the Red Shirt leaders.

The next time I saw the signboard was during a television broadcast on 19 May, the day the Thai army suppressed the protest and overran the protest site with armoured vehicles. Over the course of the protests (April-May) 87 people were killed (79 civilians, 8 soldiers). This time, the board was positioned just off the Ratchaprasong intersection on Ratchadamri Road.

I went there the next day with a friend to try to salvage the board and the post-it notes pinned to it. Arriving at the crime scene, I was surprised to find the board still intact and back at its old place in front of Gaysorn. A few metres away from the board stood some armed soldiers, but my intuition told me we probably had no cause to fear them. They most likely had specific instructions regarding when to intervene. A *farang* (foreigner) behaving oddly would not be among their reasons to act. My friend and I used some tools to dismantle the board, including a sign with images from the shootings at the Khok Wua intersection on 10 April. The soldiers looked slightly surprised but did not react.

As we walked away, a man who seemed like an officer called us over and pointed to the sign I was carrying. I told my friend to walk on and ignore the soldier. I approached the officer, who explained that in addition to the signboard with photographs, I was to surrender everything I had with me. I gave him only that particular sign but kept the board with post-it notes, ignored him, and walked on. In response (apparently, he had to remain at his post), he shouted to the soldiers at a roadblock further down the street. Not understanding what his problem was, they let us pass. We made it through another four or five roadblocks just as easily. We decided to drop off the board at a friend's apartment nearby. The excited reactions of the street vendors and the cleaners of the friend's apartment when they realized what we were carrying was heartwarming. (From a tourist visiting Bangkok in the period of April-May 2010.)

The 1,099 post-it notes that came off the board ultimately reached the IISH in Amsterdam. Staff translated and scanned the material, and performed an inventory with images, translations,



and the original text in Thai (some telephone numbers have been removed to ensure privacy).

There must have been many more messages, as the board had been there for at least 2-3 weeks, since our observer first noticed it. Unfortunately we have not been able to explore the background to this initiative, whose idea it was, how long the board was there, whether the messages actually reached the ‘leaders,’ whether earlier notes were removed and stored somewhere, or whether the 1,099 post-it notes (plus the few that were lost during the transport on foot) were all that were ever there.

The sign on top of the board – where the post-it notes were attached – read ‘Say Hi to the Leaders.’ While a clear or hierarchical distinction

between the leaders and the common folk who could address them by posting notes may seem somewhat contradictory, that does not detract from the sincerity of the messages. They are moving, emotional, damning, scolding, hopeful, sexually explicit, jovial, in some cases homophobic (mostly when Prem Tinsunalond is targeted, the head of the privy-council at the time and accused of being a master schemer), some contain *Lèse majesté* content (paragraph 112, the Royal Defamation Law, stipulating severe punishments for offenders).

In short, it is beautiful primary source material from the heart of a protest movement that surfaces in many forms in the IISH collection.

The movement

The 2010 Thai protests were a series of political demonstrations organized by the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD, also known as the ‘Red Shirts’) in Bangkok, Thailand, from 12 March until 19 May 2010. They were directed against the Democrat Party-led government. The UDD demanded that Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva dissolve parliament and call early elections (originally scheduled to take place in 2012). The reasons behind these protests, which started in 2009, were the controversial 2008 ‘judicial coup’, which banned the Palang Prachachon Party (or People’s Power Party), and the ‘silent coup’, which allowed the Democrats to form a coalition government. The PPP was the successor of the Thai Rak Thai Party, led by Thaksin Shinawatra, who governed from 2001 to 2006 and was ousted by a military coup. The UDD demanded that the government stand down, but

Post-it Note 00030 ขอให้แกนนำแข็งแรง อย่าไปหลงกลพวกรัฐบาลและ DSI นะคำ เป็นห่วงแกนนำ ขอให้มากอดดูแลตัวเองให้ดีๆ เมื่อก่อนกันไปหลังเลิกชุมนุมออกทีวีบ่อยๆ น่าจะจะได้หายห่วงและคิดถึงคำ [= I wish the leader to be strong, and don't be fooled by the government and DSI. I care very much about you. Please take good care. After the rally is finished please be on TV regularly, so I'm not concerned too much.]





Dismantling the 'Say Hi to the Leaders' board by the tourist from the story.

negotiations to set an election date failed.

The protesters had set up camp first at the Phan Fa Lilat bridge in downtown Bangkok but later moved to the Ratchaprasong intersection, around which they set up barricades and roadblocks to secure an area of a few square kilometres. The protests escalated into prolonged violent confrontations between the protesters and the armed forces, and attempts to negotiate a ceasefire failed. More than 80 civilians and six soldiers were killed, and over 2,100 were injured by the time the armed forces violently ended the protest on 19 May.

Now, 13 years and another coup later, elections

are taking place again in Thailand (14 May 2023), and one of the parties that challenged the old elite and the armed forces is participating, again under a different name and headed by Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn (in between, Thaksin's sister Yingluck headed the government), but this time, as in 2019, others are involved as well.

The 2019 elections were skewed in many ways and were won by the military-aligned Palang Pracharat. The Pheu Thai party and the new Future Forward party came in 2nd and 3rd, but PP formed a coalition government with several smaller parties. Since then, many things have happened. The youth took to the streets in protest (cut short by the pandemic in 2020), and the unspeakable was being said and questioned aloud. The genie is safely out of the bottle. The Future Forward party was disbanded and has been replaced by the Move Forward Party, canvassing for votes from the younger generation. How the position of the opposition parties on Article 112 (the *Lèse majesté* article) will influence the final results will be interesting.

Although the polls predict a win for the opposition parties, the armed forces still control the Senate. By the time this edition is printed, the outcome will be known. Perhaps the post-it notes from 2010 and the emotions they conveyed have found new expression in the recent youth protests.

Eef Vermeij

The FNV archives project, an update

by Jack Hofman

Now that more than half of the FNV archives project has been completed, the time has come for an update. In March 2017, the FNV and the IISH reached a covenant to work together on research and archiving. The objective was described as: 'Promoting the study of the history of the FNV and its predecessors by securing the historical legacy of the FNV and ensuring access for members, researchers, and other interested individuals; setting up and carrying out joint projects relating to the historical development of the trade union movement.'

This partnership was instigated by bringing about the new organization of the FNV in 2015. The existing trade union merged with the ABVA-KABO, FNV Bondgenoten, and FNV Bouw unions and somewhat later with FNV KIEM and FNV Jong as well. This merge led old buildings to be vacated, and archives, libraries, photograph collections, and objects needed to be entrusted for preservation elsewhere. IISH and FNV staff visited offices, basements, archive rooms, and large

storage repositories at industrial sites to conduct an inventory. Frank de Jong and Jack Hofman drafted a project proposal for selecting and arranging the materials. The FNV approved the proposal, which concerned nearly three kilometres of paper archive materials, including materials previously entrusted to the IISH but still awaiting arrangement, comprising about 30 archives altogether. This major project was expected to take five years and was to be carried out by a team of four or five staff members. The cost was estimated at nearly 2 million euros, financed almost entirely by the FNV. Part of the budget was allocated toward digitizing, and the FNV and IISH would also reach new agreements regarding future transfer of digital archive materials.

This project is unique in the IISH Collections Department, because of the vast size and close collaboration with the archive builder (FNV). In addition, it relates very closely to the research field of the IISH. As they had been commissioned by the FNV, IISH researchers drafted the report



Precaire Polder (2018), an account of an exploratory historical study of the recent history of Dutch and other trade union movements, listing important sources as well.

Selection challenges

Selecting documents proved a significant problem in arranging and describing the archive. By no means everything needs to be kept, but how does one draft guidelines and criteria to safeguard and accelerate the selection process? To this end, Moira van Dijk, one of the authors of Precaire Polder, did a preliminary study, based on existing literature, random samples from the material, and conversations with experts from scholarship and the trade union movement.

The outcome indicated that macro-selection (i.e. storing only certain parts or random samples) is impossible. The content of the archives is too diverse for this, and the many records about CLA's and companies are too interesting for research to destroy entirely or in part. The conclusions even revealed that the content of the current archives is in fact too limited in scope. Material from executives, groups of trade union officials, works council members, membership data, or records about individual protection of interests are important but are currently often missing.

The remaining option was to arrange the material based on the existing IISH list for performing selections in organization archives, which is aimed at preserving activities and policy in

IISH staff visiting a warehouse where FNV archive was stored at the start of the FNV project. Fourth person from the right is Jack Hofman. Photo by Frank de Jong.



Shelves with documentation materials at the FNV office, with notes indicating the materials' destination. Photo by Frank de Jong.



Poster of the **Industriebond FNV** from the 1980s, when job loss as a result of automation was already considered a risk for office workers. IISH collection, IISG BG D3/875.

general and destroying purely administrative and irrelevant documents (e.g. room reservations, travel expenses, invoices, building management, and the like), as well as a great many duplicate documents. Most of the materials predate copy machines and printers, so that documents were often produced and stored in large quantities. Moreover, documents from agencies such as the SER, the Stichting van de Arbeid, public, semi-public, and private advisory bodies, and the NVV or FNV are already well archived in the archives belonging to these agencies and therefore do not need to be preserved in their entirety in all other archives as well. They have been arranged in accordance with the recommendations from Precaire Polder for preserving sources about the union's structure and course of development and specific themes, such as flexibilization, globalization, changes in membership, work by trade union officials, actions, membership files, member surveys, and evaluations.

Results

The project has been ongoing for over four years now. Clearly, it will not be completed according to the original schedule. The reasons include the COVID lockdowns, during which work was suspended for months, excessively optimistic scheduling of the number of hours available, and

turnover among the team members. Completion will take at least another two years, and sufficient resources are available.

The results to date appear in the attachment. Red archives are still awaiting arrangement. Major archives that have already been arranged are those of the NVV, FNV, Dienstenbond FNV, FNV Bouw, ABVAKABO, and FNV KIEM, including their predecessors. Altogether, about 2,100 metres have been processed; with about 950 metres remaining following their arrangement. Substantial tasks that have yet to be performed include the Industriebond FNV, FNV Bondgenoten, FNV Vrouwensecretariaat, and Mondiaal FNV, spanning a combined total of about 880 metres of archives.

In addition, Kier Schuringa at the IISH Collection Development Department has compiled lists from the NVV/FNV Image & Sound collections, as well as from various other unions. On the Dienstenbond FNV, for example, see this link: <https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/COLL00607>, or on the NVV-FNV photograph collection: <https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/COLL00607>. In this last one, in addition to a great many photographs of trade union activities and gatherings, a wealth of very lovely photographs features occupations and aspects of work.

This new approach to producing collection descriptions has also been applied in arranging large collections of publications and brochures from the trade union movement. Examples of these lists include those of the FNV (<https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/COLL00608>) and of the Dienstenbond (<https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/COLL00634>).

Significantly, individual descriptions for a great deal of material (books, brochures, journals, photographs, and posters) appear in the IISH catalogue.

The archives arranged to date abound with information about the policy and management of the organizations, about CLA's and terms of employment, about campaigns and strikes, about courses and training, about female members, young adults, officials, foreign workers, and the like, as well as about old books of minutes from chapters and districts. One exceptional discovery, for example, concerns the report about the events after Dolle Dinsdag [Mad Tuesday] (5 September 1944) at the head office of the Nationaal Arbeidsfront (NAF) in Amsterdam, where great panic and chaos ensued. This report, written by somebody who was clearly well connected with the members of the NVV executive, appears as inventory number 4957 in the NVV archive.

Future

In addition to arranging the final series of archives, a few items remain for the future. First, plans need to be drafted for digitizing important sections of the archive. These include central sections, such as meeting documents of the board and the executive committee and important working groups and committees, documents about congresses, and circulars. Printed annual reports and congress proceedings are significant as well, and work on these will begin in 2023.

Much of the nvv archive has been available online since 2014.

Other very urgent tasks include reaching agreements with the FNV regarding future archive transfers. Extensive new archives have been formed about the period since 2015 and are now undoubtedly all digital. The IISH has joined an FNV taskforce to improve their archive building. Unfortunately, however, no actual progress has been achieved yet here. Poor information management by the FNV greatly complicates transferring new material. This situation is very disconcerting because of the risk of losing information that is important for the future.

The IISH faces the task of equipping the search systems for born-digital material and for searches in OCR files. The entire FNV archive from 1999 to 2005, for example, has been stored digitally in Decos, the system in use at the time. The IISH has a digital copy, but enabling researchers to work in this system is not yet possible.

We hope to complete the archive project by the end of 2024, and at that point in any case to have the paper legacy of the FNV and its predecessors available for researchers, FNV members, and other interested individuals.

Poster of the Jongerenbeweging within FNV. The small print reads: 'Dismissal. The chief draws a serious face at it. But Rikkie knows what's behind it. They can get plenty of people. Who kick less of a joke. Bootlick. Or are cheaper. Employers benefit from unemployment. On your own you can't do anything about it. But that's why there is the Youth Movement.' IISH collection, IISG BG D43/167.



Research using the FNV archives

by Rosa Kösters

Changes in work lead to rising insecurity, and the trade union movement faces major challenges. Large-scale social and economic processes such as globalization, automation, and flexibilization are important factors here. But when did these changes occur, and how did workers and trade unions react to them?

In 2017, the project Historische Verkenningen Vakbeweging conducted a preliminary study on the recent history of the Dutch trade union movement within the alliance between the FNV and the IISH to promote research on the origins of the trade union movement in the Netherlands. The research objective was to explore the historical development of the practice, constituents,



Zwanenberg meat factory, 1947, Oss. Cutting room staff on the escape stairs at the back of the cutting room. Photo by Gijpink (Nijmegen). Collection Stadsarchief Oss.

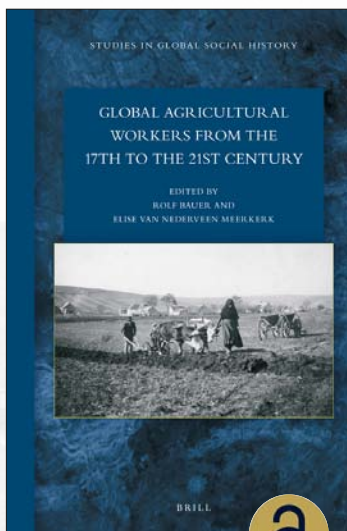
and position of the trade union movement in recent decades (circa 1980-2015), based on trade union archives that have yet to be examined. After working on that project, I wrote my master's thesis on the transformation of work at Hoogovens and Philips (1973-1985), for which I received the Trade Union Movement Thesis Award (2018). Currently, I am working on a PhD project on the impact of the transformation of work in the Netherlands on workplace relations and opportunities for organized solidarity.

To understand these changes, I conduct long-term research in my PhD project on the transformation over the period from 1970 to the present. The 1970s mark the transition. Over the course of that decade, standard employment relationships eroded. Labour relations, which have changed dramatically since then, are an international phenomenon. The intensity and scope of this transformation in the Netherlands, however, has been especially striking, compared with other western industrialized nations.

In my project I present three cases studies

covering two major Dutch brands. The first is Unox, a meat processing company owned by the multinational Unilever. Albert Heijn is the largest supermarket chain in the Netherlands. I study Albert Heijn supermarkets and distribution centres. By combining these cases, the project reflects the fact that the transformation impacts workers in all kinds of sectors and companies. Different groups of workers were employed at these sites, from men living in the immediate vicinity of the Unox factory to women and young adults in supermarkets and migrant workers at the distribution centres.

The underlying exploratory study (Historische Verkenningen Vakbeweging) revealed that the FNV archives (previously overlooked) contain extremely interesting material that can provide new insights on the development of labour and workplace relations and the position and role of the trade union movement. In my PhD project, my research therefore draws on these and other archives on the history of work, workers, and unions.



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Global Agricultural Workers from the 17th to the 21st Century

Editors: **Rolf Bauer**, University of Vienna and
Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Utrecht University

Agricultural workers have long been underrepresented in labour history. This volume aims to change this by bringing together a collection of studies on the largest group of the global work force. The contributions cover the period from the early modern to the present – a period when the emergence and consolidation of capitalism has transformed rural areas all over the globe. Three questions have guided the approach and the structure of this volume. First, how and why have peasant families managed to survive under conditions of advancing commercialisation and industrialisation? Second, why have coercive labour relations been so persistent in the agricultural sector and third, what was the role of states in the recruitment of agricultural workers?

Contributors are: Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Josef Ehmer, Katherine Jellison, Juan Carmona, James Simpson, Sophie Elpers, Debojyoti Das, Lozaan Khumbah, Karl Heinz Arenz, Leida Fernandez-Prieto, Rachel Kurian, Rafael Marquese, Bruno Gabriel Witzel de Souza, Rogério Naques Faleiros, Alessandro Stanziani, Alexander Keese, Dina Bolokan, and Janina Puder.