
In Place of an Editorial

To Marcel van der Linden – the Global Labour Historian, Encyclopedist of Critical Thought, and Global Networker

We have dedicated this issue of *Sozial.Geschichte Online* to Marcel van der Linden. We are a group of befriended social scientists, the ITH,¹ and the Foundation for Social History.² In this issue, we consider his body of work and outline his political and intellectual career. We demonstrate how Marcel van der Linden's research has inspired our own work, how we have collaborated with this global networker, and what we have learned from him. For this we've sought an occasion and found it in the beginning of his sixth decade.

David Mayer and Berthold Unfried represent the ITH, housed in Vienna and a well-known name for its annual Linz conferences on the history of labor and social movements. In the 1990s, when the future of this institution was in question due to political changes, Marcel van der Linden increasingly got involved, offering a vital impetus for a new thematic direction. The *International of labour historians* has joined forces with the global labour historian Marcel van der Linden in order to transform *labour history* into *global labour history*. This new direction is based on critical engagement with eurocentrism, methodological nationalism, and the question of how new, transnational research can be implemented.

Since 1989, Marcel van der Linden has also served as an inspiration, guide, and sympathetic critic of the Foundation for Social His-

¹ Internationale Tagung der HistorikerInnen der Arbeiter- und anderer sozialer Bewegungen / International Conference of Labour and Social History, Vienna.

² Stiftung für Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts / Foundation for 20th Century Social History, Bremen.

tory. When the Foundation found itself in a difficult position during the 1980s, it sought and received his advice and support, which has lasted to this day. Initially, the passionate journal editor fervently dedicated himself to the Foundation's periodical, *1999. Zeitschrift fuer Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*. He became a member of the editorial staff and a joint publisher in 2003, until the reins were handed to a younger generation, which now publishes the journal online. Since 2005, he has served on the board of the Foundation for Social History; as such, he has overseen the general direction of research as well as specific research projects, publications, and the library and archive. In appreciation of his long-term support, we have dedicated this issue of *Sozial.Geschichte Online* to him.

Karl Heinz Roth has made the effort to reconstruct the political and scholarly journey of Marcel van der Linden. He tells the story of this cosmopolitan from the bottom up, so to speak: it is the story of a young man born into a middle-class, rather conservative household in the Dutch countryside, his involvement with the Dutch student movement and the New Left, and his evolution into an encyclopedist of critical thought. He was involved with the Left while at the same time critically questioning its authoritarian and dogmatic currents. Karl Heinz Roth traces the subjects of Marcel van der Linden's research, the questions he has confronted and learned from, and his methodical approaches. Marcel has continuously and critically dealt with Marxism and all its currents and he has studied the history of the Soviet Union from its beginnings. But his greatest topic of research is the global history of labour – a true lifetime achievement. Karl Heinz Roth's essay honors the critical thought of an encyclopedist, analyzing how Marcel systematically built and expanded the research project of global labour history. We hope this appraisal will lead to a broader reception of Marcel's ideas in the German-speaking world. Though we are mindful of the fact that such an undertaking is not without risk, we do hope that Marcel will appreciate our outside view of him.

Andrea Komlosy of the *Wirtschaftshistorisches Seminar* in Vienna addresses a research question that is central to Marcel's work as well. In her essay, she discusses a new concept of labor and the transfer of value in capitalism. She adopts a broad definition of labor and does not limit the appropriation of foreign labor income to the wage-work relationship. Instead, she includes all labor conditions in which an employer accumulates wealth. Andrea Komlosy examines this transfer of value – “defined as a collective term for those values an entrepreneur (capitalist) may usurp by accessing the wages of others” – by providing a systematic and theoretically founded synopsis. Applying empirical, socio-historical research, she offers suggestions for an operationalization. Can there be a better gift to a researcher than discovering one's approaches in a colleague's work?

If Marcel van der Linden is a global labour historian, then Dirk Hoerder, also associated with the Foundation for Social History, might be called a global migration historian. Dirk has offered a survey of *Migration Research in Global Perspective*. Due to their shared interests, the research areas of Marcel van der Linden and Dirk Hoerder have repeatedly touched and overlapped: migration plays a significant role in global labour history, and global migration history's central categories – including forced and free migration, gender, and agency – are also meaningful to global labour history. Dirk Hoerder discusses the significance of transnational, translocal, trans-regional, and transcultural influences on migration systems. He also addresses issues associated with statistics and sources, correctly pointing out that historiography inadequately relies on textual representations as source material. His survey concludes by considering the present, as the current global economic crises, the banking crisis in particular, have an immediate effect on the new migratory patterns.

The current editorial staff has contributed the essay, “Bread and Freedom: Protests ‘Against the High Cost of Living’ in Burkina Faso.” The author, Bettina Engels, explores the question of why

In Place of an Editorial

the extreme increase in the cost of living evident between 2007 and 2011 triggered protests in some countries, but not in others. Marcel van der Linden has also researched the causes of synchronicity in the social protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Bettina Engels, only the political and economic macrostructures, the history of the actors, and an appropriate framing can explain the differing extent of food riots in different countries. The revolts in Burkina Faso were also about the desire for improved education, health care, and living conditions, as well as human rights.

We wish Marcel van der Linden, the global labour historian, encyclopedist of critical thought, and global networker, *bon chance* for many more fruitful years of research.

Angelika Ebbinghaus
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