

New book: "Workers of the World"

Friday 6 March 2009, by [van der LINDEN Marcel](#) (Date first published: 4 March 2009).

Dear friends and colleagues,

Please allow me to draw your attention to my new book: *Workers of the World* (ISBN 978 90 04 16683 7). I think that this is the most important thing that I have written thus far.

With the fourteen studies offered in this volume, I want to contribute to a Global Labor History that transcends Eurocentrism and methodological nationalism. Using literature from diverse regions, epochs and disciplines, I provide reasons and conceptual tools for a different interpretation of history – a labor history which overlaps with the history of slavery and of indentured labor, and which pays serious attention to divergent yet interconnected developments in different parts of the world.

Three questions are central to my inquiry:

- What is the nature of the world working class, on which Global Labor History focuses? How can we define and demarcate that class, and which factors determine its composition?
- Which forms of collective action did this working class develop in the course of time, and what is the logic of that development?
- What can we learn from adjacent disciplines? Which insights from anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists are useful in the development of Global Labor History?

This collection of essays cannot hope to answer these three questions exhaustively, but I do mark out a direction that could orient future research. All chapters can be read separately from each other, although they form a connected whole.

The **book's structure** is as follows:

1. Introduction

Conceptualizations

2. Who are the workers?

3. Why 'free' wage labor?

4. Why chattel slavery?

Varieties of mutualism

5. The mutualist universe

6. Mutual insurance

7. Consumer cooperatives

8. Producer cooperatives

Forms of resistance

9. Strikes

10. Consumer protest

11. Unions

12. Internationalism

Insights from adjacent disciplines

13. World systems theory

14. The Iatmul experience

15. Entangled subsistence labor

16. Outlook

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Unfortunately, the publisher has decided to make this a very expensive book (see also <http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=28984>), but perhaps your institution's library will be able to buy a copy. I hope that *Workers of the World* will stimulate further debate.

Warm regards,

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