

The International  
Institute of Social  
History 2007-2011  
and Beyond



# A Global Player



international institute  
of social history





### **The Mission of the Institute**

The International Institute of Social History documents and investigates the way in which the modern world has been shaped by the struggle and the labour of working people.

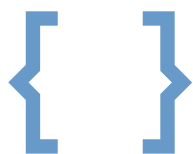
Historical evidence is most often preserved, and history written, by those in power.

As a neutral, independent institution the IISH preserves the vulnerable historical heritage of people who were not in power and who have struggled for emancipation in one way or another. It is the only institution to fulfil this mission on a global scale.

A Global

# Player

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# Preface

This is a report on the developments at the IISH in the past five years and on the major policy decisions that will determine our outlook for the near future. These developments and policies are set off against the recommendations that emerged from the mid-term review conducted in 2007 and the review of our collections in 2008. The report was drawn up by the IISH management and submitted to the academic advisory board of the institute for its advice, after which it was submitted to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences for use in the evaluation of the academy's humanities institutes in November 2011.

While the report was written primarily for the use of the evaluation committees for research and collections respectively, the text will also serve as the basis for discussions within the various departments of the institute for the purpose of drawing up the institute's next strategic plan.

The report comprises four sections. The first is a general overview of the developments at the institute. The second section is about research and the third about collections. The second and third sections are structured with the guidelines of the SEP (Standard Evaluation Protocol) and the new evaluation protocol for collections of the academy in mind. The fourth section consists of a number of appendices in which facts and figures about the IISH are presented.

**Erik-Jan Zürcher**

General Director

September 2011



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# Introduction: The General Policies of the Institute

## What is the IISH?

The International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam is one of the world's largest documentation and research centres in the field of social history. It forms part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). Since its foundation in 1935, the institute has dedicated itself to the collection, preservation, and making available of the heritage of social movements worldwide. The institute is independent and reputable, which makes it a natural depository for the frequently threatened cultural heritage of the labour movement and other emancipatory groups and currents. The research department of the institute focuses on the history of labour relations and organizes international projects in this field. The collection takes up well over fifty kilometres of shelf space.

While the academy owns the building in which the institute is housed, employs all the tenured staff, and pays for the infrastructural outlay, the Foundation IISH (Stichting IISG), which is an independent institution, actually owns or keeps the collections. The acquisitions budget is channelled through the foundation, which also employs most of our temporary staff. The reason for this twinned structure is that, historically, it has been very important for many of the individuals and organizations that bequeathed their material to us that the institute should be an entirely independent organization not linked to any state or government. The institute also manages and makes available the holdings of the Netherlands Economic History Archive (NEHA) and the Netherlands Press Museum.

journal. The institute is also considering creating full Open Access online book series in cooperation with AUP.

### Teaching

Although the institute is well connected with Dutch universities, more is possible. The IISH is exploring the scope for cooperation with the University of Utrecht. The institute also supports the research masters degree in “Global Economic and Social History” offered by the N.W. Posthumus Institute (since 2011).

## Staff

### Staff composition

The total size of the research department has increased slightly over the past five years (40 in late 2007; 46 in late 2011); this includes administrative staff and visiting fellows. The number of “pure” researchers oscillates between 25 and 30. The introduction of senior researchers/collectors for several regions in the Global South and additional measures have had important consequences for the composition of the research staff:

- First, the number of tenured researchers has increased from 7 to 14.
- Secondly, a research shift has been taking place across the department. In 2007 half the research staff focused on Europe and North America; by late 2011 this was one-fifth.
- Thirdly, the number of staff members with a “non-Dutch” background has increased slightly.

However, at least three significant issues need to be tackled.

- Compared with universities and other large academic institutions, the institute’s size is quite small. Our role is therefore quite often to “accompany” talented researchers for a while on their career path and then losing them to our larger “competitors”. For instance, Marco van Leeuwen, whose ERC Advanced Research Grant was written while he was at the institute, and discussed internally, became a full professor at the University of Utrecht. Similarly, Jan Luiten van Zanden accepted a Distinguished Professorship at the same university, which resulted in losing our main player in the field of global economic history. Naturally, these departures have affected the department significantly; on the other hand, we continue to

work closely with these top researchers, and their departure allows us to recruit younger scholars

- Although the number of tenured female researchers has increased from 1 to 3, this is still less than a quarter of the tenured staff.

### **Reputation and prominence**

On an international scale, staff members are quite influential in labour-history networks.

- Staff members are editors or co-editors of the *International Review of Social History*, *History of the Family*, and *International Labor and Working-Class History*. The research director is editorial adviser or corresponding editor of almost every academic labour-history journal worldwide.<sup>12</sup>
- Numerous keynotes have been delivered at the principal conferences in Europe, Asia, and North and South America.
- In 2008 Danielle van den Heuvel (now at Cambridge University) was awarded the Thirsk-Feinstein Dissertation Prize for her Ph.D. thesis on female traders in the northern Netherlands, c. 1580-1815, which she wrote during her years at the IISH.

On a national scale, the staff's scholarly influence is considerable.

- Together with the Netherlands Economic History Archive (NEHA), the IISH issues the leading Dutch-Flemish journal on economic and social history: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*.
- Staff member Jan Lucassen was elected chair of the N.W. Posthumus Institute, the Dutch-Belgian graduate school for social and economic history (2010).
- The research group of the Historical Sample of the Netherlands, led by Kees Mandemakers, received the first Data Prize awarded by the Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS) for qualitatively good and durably stored research data (2010).
- In 2010 we initiated the *Volkskrant-IISG* prize for the best MA thesis on history written at a Dutch university, which has received significant publicity.

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12 Associate Editor *International Labor and Working-Class History* (USA); corresponding editor of *Arbetarhistoria* (Sweden); *Brood & Rozen. Tijdschrift voor de Geschiedenis van Sociale Bewegingen* (Belgium); *Dissidences* (France); *Historia Social* (Spain); *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* (UK); *Social'naia Istorii* (Russia); *Labour History* (Australia); *Labour History Review* (UK); *Labour/Le Travail* (Canada); *Soathar* (Ireland); *Revista História Social* (Brazil); and *Revista Mundos do Trabalho* (Brazil). The most important exceptions are the US journals *Labor History* (invitation not accepted) and *Labor*, and the French journal *Le Mouvement Social*.

# System Conditions

**Labour Division**

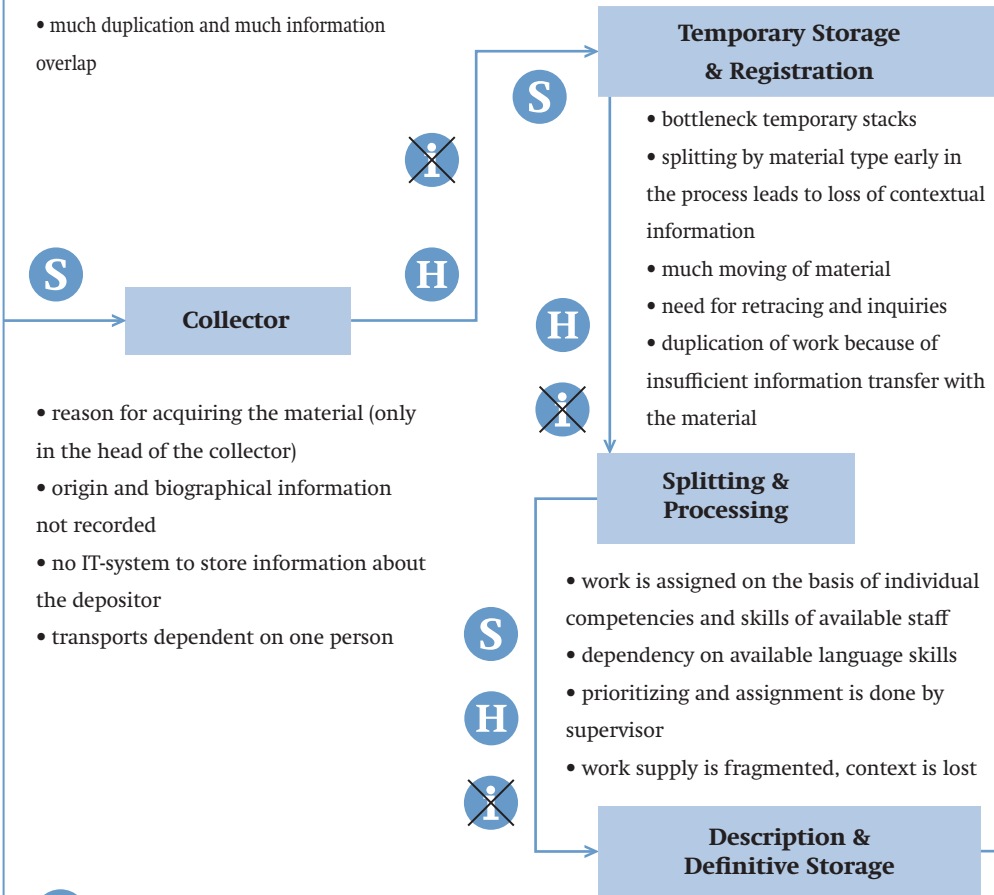
**Dependency on Specific Individuals**

**Lack of Performance Measures**

- many different temporary storage areas
- a lot of registration in many different systems
- much duplication and much information overlap

- many selection moments (when re-packaging material)
- little contact between collector and processing department
- questions about the reason behind the acquisition and relationship with collection profile and criteria

Deposits



**S** = Selection / cleanup

**H** = Handling of physical object

**i** = Information loss > “information does not travel with the material, but with the persons involved in the process”

- reason for acquiring the material (only in the head of the collector)
- origin and biographical information not recorded
- no IT-system to store information about the depositor
- transports dependent on one person

**Temporary Storage & Registration**

- bottleneck temporary stacks
- splitting by material type early in the process leads to loss of contextual information
- much moving of material
- need for retracing and inquiries
- duplication of work because of insufficient information transfer with the material

**Splitting & Processing**

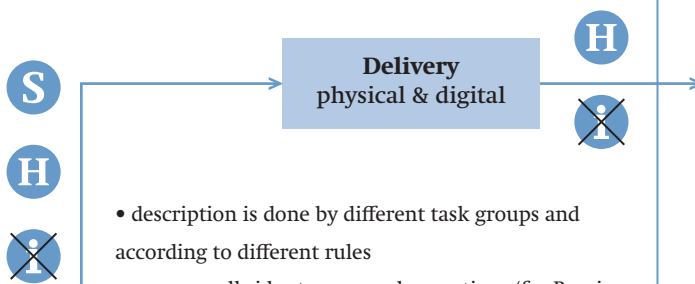
- work is assigned on the basis of individual competencies and skills of available staff
- dependency on available language skills
- prioritizing and assignment is done by supervisor
- work supply is fragmented, context is lost

**Description & Definitive Storage**

**Material Type and Size  
are Driving the Proces**

**Strong Dependency on  
or Lack of ICT-Systems**

- much variety in the user requests
- many pass-backs
- unclear practical info on the website
- description level of detail sometimes insufficient
- no coherent knowledge of the collections



- description is done by different task groups and according to different rules
- many small side streams and exceptions (for Russian material; duplicate policy of specific collectors)
- many decision moments (uncertainty and creating new piles of unprocessed material waiting for clarification)
- duplication of admin (forms, reports, lists)
- dependency on specific individuals for specific crucial operations (distribution of call-nummers)

**Value Requests 56%**  
**Failure Requests 43%**

**Requests**

This figure sketches the results of the Vanguard analysis of the collection-processing workflow. It shows the bottlenecks and the system conditions that cause the bottlenecks.

How does one measure the impact of the collections on research or on society? The institute tries to collect as much relevant evidence as possible: it keeps copies, for example, of all the articles in newspapers, journals, and reports in which the collections of the IISH are mentioned. As regards the exhibitions featuring IISH materials, how does one measure the impact of these exhibitions on society? The IISH also tries to collect copies of all publications based on the use of its collections. These are interesting sources and possible indicators, but it is not clear how one should interpret them. What types of insight can they provide about how well the institute is achieving its mission, or, for that matter, how it could improve what it does? It is clear that collecting metrics is one thing; making good use of them is quite another.



# Appendices

- 98 **Appendix 1**  
**Book series edited by**  
**IISH staff (2007-)**

**International Studies in Social History (Berghahn: New York and Oxford)**

8. **Angel Smith**, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction. Catalan Labour and the Crisis of the Spanish State, 1898-1923* (2007). 418 pp.
9. **Ulbe Bosma et al.**, *Sugarlandia Revisited. Sugar and Colonialism in Asia and the Americas, 1800 to 1940* (2007). 240 pp.
10. **Laurence Fontaine (ed.)**, *Alternative Exchanges. Second-Hand Circulations from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (2008). 280 pp.
11. **José A. Piqueras and Vicent Sanz Rozalén (eds)**, *A Social History of Spanish Labour. New Perspectives on Class, Politics and Gender* (2007). 336 pp.
12. **Bert de Munck et al. (eds)**, *Learning on the Shop Floor. Historical Approaches on Apprenticeship* (2007). 242 pp.
13. **Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner**, *Unruly Masses. The Other Side of Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (2008). 184 pp.
14. **Pieter C. van Duin**, *Central European Crossroads. Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Presburg), 1867-1921* (2009). 546 pp.
15. **Patricia van den Eeckhout (ed.)**, *Supervision and Authority in Industry. Western European Experiences, 1830-1939* (2009). 244 pp.
16. **Keith Mann**, *Forging Political Identity. Silk and Metal Workers in Lyon, France, 1900-1939* (2010). 280 pp.

**International Comparative and Social History (Peter Lang: Berne [etc.])**

9. **Jan Lucassen (ed.)**, *Global Labour History. A State of the Art. Second printing* (2008). 790 pp.
10. **Jan Lucassen (ed.)**, *Wages and Currency. Global Comparisons from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (2007). 474 pp.
11. **Donald Filtzer et al. (eds)**, *A Dream*

*Deferred: New Studies in Russian and Soviet Labour History* (2008). 508 pp.

12. **Jasmien Van Daele et al. (eds)**, *ILO Histories. Essays on the International Labour Organization and Its Impact on the World During the Twentieth Century* (2010). 539 pp.
13. **Kristoffel Lieten and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk**, *Child Labour's Global Past, 1650-2000* (2011). 714 pp.

**Studies in Global Social History (Brill: Leiden and Boston)**

1. **Marcel van der Linden**, *Workers of the World. Essays toward a Global Labor History* (2008; paperback 2011). VIII + 469 pp.
2. **Marcelo J. Borges**, *Chains of Gold. Portuguese Migration to Argentina in Transatlantic Perspective* (2009). XVI + 355 pp.
3. **Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, and Patrick Manning (eds)**, *Migration History in World History* (2010; paperback 2011). X + 290 pp.
4. **Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen (eds)**, *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective* (2010). XX + 452 pp.
5. **Heike Liebau et al. (eds)**, *The World in World Wars. Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia* (2010). X + 613 pp.
6. **Steve Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt (eds)**, *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940. Preface Benedict Anderson* (2010). LXXIV + 434 pp.
7. **Marcel van der Linden (ed.)**, *Humanitarian Intervention and Changing Labor Relations. The Long-term Consequences of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (2011). XVII + 558 pp.
8. **Donna R. Gabaccia and Dirk Hoerder (eds)**, *Connecting Seas and Connected Ocean Rims. Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans and China Seas Migrations from the 1830s to the 1930s* (2011). XII + 552 pp.

## Appendix 2

100 **Thomson-Reuters  
Journal Citation  
Report 2010. Ranking  
by Impact Factor**

1.	American Historical Review	Chicago	1.907
2.	Cliometrica	Elsevier	0.957
3.	Comparative Studies in Society and History	Cambridge	0.638
4.	Journal of Global History	Cambridge	0.625
5.	Journal of African History	Cambridge	0.611
6.	History Workshop Journal	Oxford	0.500
7.	<b>International Review of Social History</b>	<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>0.477</b>
8.	Journal of Family History	Sage	0.442
9.	Journal of Modern History	Chicago	0.438
10.	German History	Oxford	0.421
11.	Journal of American History	Self-published	0.415
12.	English Historical Review	Oxford	0.403
13.	Journal of Interdisciplinary History	MIT	0.400
13.	Journal of British Studies	Chicago	0.400
15.	Journal of Contemporary History	Sage	0.397
16.	Journal of Victorian Culture	Taylor and Francis	0.389
16.	Mediterranean Historical Review	Taylor and Francis	0.389
18.	Environmental History	Oxford	0.388
19.	Social Science History	Duke	0.364
20.	Rural History	Cambridge	0.333
21.	Journal of Social History	Self-published	0.328
22.	Journal of the History of Sexuality	Texas	0.324
23.	European Historical Quarterly	Sage	0.300
24.	War in History	Sage	0.265
25.	Past and Present	Oxford	0.253
26.	Le Mouvement Social	Editions Ouvrières	0.196
27.	Journal of Australian Studies	Taylor and Francis	0.188
28.	Praehistorische Zeitschrift	Walter de Gruyter	0.176
29.	Historia y Politica	CEPC	0.174
30.	Revista de Historia Económica	Cambridge	0.172
31.	Labour History	Sydney	0.167
31.	Scandia	Self-published	0.167
33.	Ethnohistory	Duke	0.140
34.	Trabajos de Prehistoria	CSIC	0.128
35.	Journal of the Econ. & Soc. Hist. of the Orient	Brill	0.114
36.	Acta Historiae	Primorska	0.108
37.	Historical Social Research	Self-published	0.099
38.	The Legal History Review	Brill	0.088
39.	Historia Critica	Los Andes	0.070
40.	Anuario de Estudios Medievales	CSIC	0.054

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