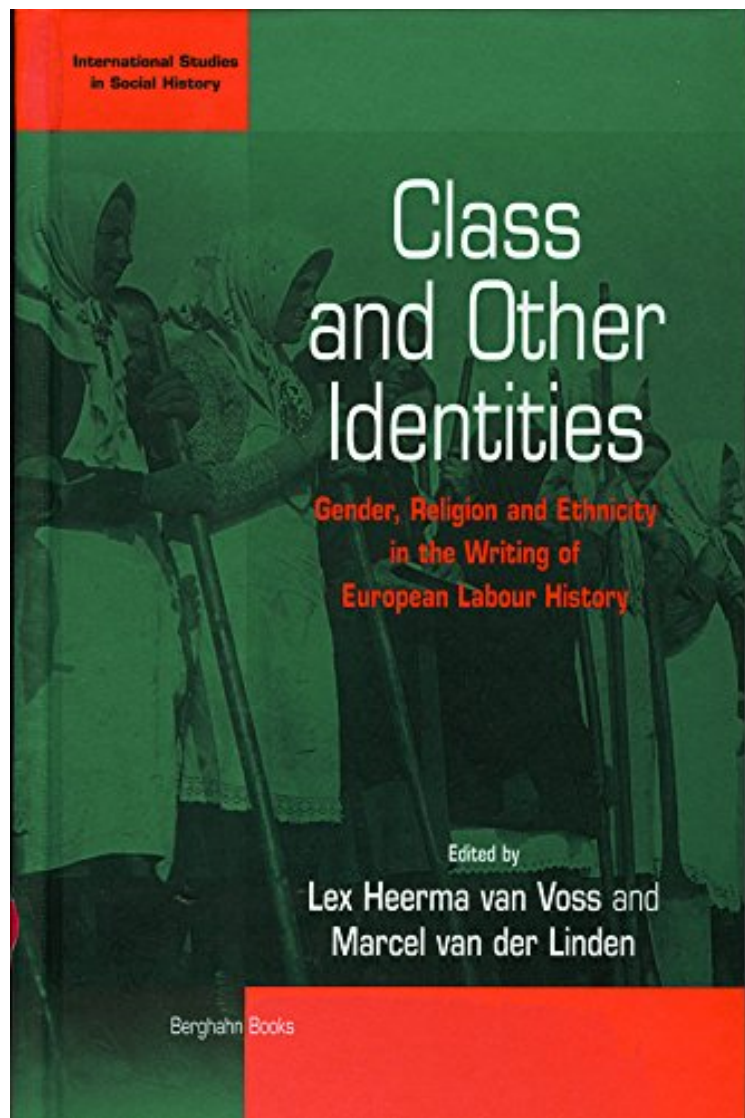


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With the onset of a more conservative political climate in the 1980s, social and especially labour history saw a decline in the popularity that they had enjoyed throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This led to much debate on its future and function within the historical discipline as a whole. Some critics declared it dead altogether. Others have proposed a change of direction and a more or less exclusive focus on images and texts. The most constructive proposals have suggested that labour history in the past concentrated too much on class and that other identities of working people should be taken into account to a larger extent than they had been previously, such as gender, religion, and ethnicity. Although class as a social category is still as valid as it has been before, the questions now to be asked are to what extent non-class identities shape working people's lives and mentalities and how these are linked with the class system. In this volume some of the leading European historians of labour and the working classes address these questions. Two non-European scholars comment on their findings from an Indian, resp. American, point of view. The volume is rounded off by a most useful bibliography of recent studies in European labour history, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity.

"For starters, the annotated bibliography is invaluable...A second excellent morsel is the 'Brief Guide to Relevant Websites' which highlights online tools for labour history researchers ... Finally, the back of the book gives an inventory of the 'Main West European History Periodicals 1911-2000', which is also a delight to read...All this is to say that what happens at the end of the book is just as interesting as what happens at the beginning of the book." *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* "This fine collection of essays by some of the leading labor historians of Western Europe offers various assessments of the current state of the field of labor history and cogent discussions of the new challenges faced by labor historians in light of contemporary political and academic trends ... an excellent introduction ... Accompanying the essays are several very useful reference materials ... a valuable resource for all labor historians." *Choice* "This book will be a valuable asset to scholars and, in particular, to students preparing for preliminary examinations and dissertation research. The essays offer thoughtful evaluations of past and present research in European labor history and suggest important new areas of investigation. The bibliographic tolls alone ensure the book a wide audience inside and outside the field." *Journal of Social History* About the Author Lex Heerma van Voss is a Fellow of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Marcel van der Linden is a Fellow of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. He is also Professor of the History of Social Movements at the University of Amsterdam and the editor of the *International Journal of Social History*.