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van Dam, P.

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Peter van Dam

Chapter 11

Dutch Unions' Solidarity with the Third World (1950s – 1970s)

Reappraising Transnational Solidarity as an Entangled History of Globalization

If the trade union movement and its members here in the Netherlands were truly solidary, they would introduce an additional charge to their membership fee, in order to support the trade union movement in developing countries. But that is impossible. The people don't want to and the unions don't dare introduce such an additional fee.¹

This plea for more far-reaching solidarity with the Global South addressed all the members of Dutch Catholic trade unions in 1972. Clearly, the editors of the Catholic trade union periodical which published this message were not satisfied with the extent of the solidarity of the union's leadership and rank and file. Why did they think that appeals for radical solidarity with workers in the developing world were worthwhile? And why did their overtures fail to produce the desired results? From the 1950s through to the 1970s, the major Dutch trade unions attempted to mobilize their members in support of development aid projects for workers in the Global South. At first undertaken by the separate Catholic, Protestant, and social democratic trade union federations, these initiatives eventually converged in a joint attempt by the three main Dutch federations to foster support for assistance to workers in developing countries during the 1970s. Although radical union members were highly critical of the results, the attempts to mobilize union members in support of the Global South in fact highlight the remarkable revaluation of a global framework in the post-war Low Countries.

International solidarity in the Low Countries has recently drawn renewed interest from historians. Trade unions stand quite awkwardly in this burgeoning field of transnational activism, however. They have often been contrasted with new social movements, which are commonly regarded as the cradle of transnational activism. Although trade unions have usually operated under the assumption of a joint cause that workers share across national borders, this transnational engagement has not usually been a primary concern in their

¹ Amsterdam, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG), L11/674: *ONKERST. Gezamenlijke uitgave van de NKV bladen* (1972).

actual operations. Moreover, the enthusiasm among officials and the rank and file for such issues has not been unequivocal. However, it is exactly this ambiguity which enables a better understanding of how transnational frames of reference are connected to the local and national in people's daily lives. From the 1950s until the 1970s, transnational frames subjoined rather than supplanted other spatial markers of solidarity. Expanding the history of solidarity to include different spatial frames of reference, a broader range of social movements, and a longer time-frame, the history of transnational activism becomes relevant to a social history of globalization during the post-war era.

This chapter first demonstrates how the concept of transnational solidarity provides a better understanding of the growing importance of a global perspective among trade unions during the 1950s and 1960s. Subsequently, it analyses the attempts at radicalizing the unions' solidarity with the Third World within the three main Dutch trade unions. These attempts to foster solidarity among trade union members call into question the historiographical divisions between old and new social movements. The eventual failure to promote a more radical interpretation of solidarity within ranks of the trade unions during the 1970s forces us to rethink the ways in which the local, national, and transnational have been balanced. The chapter concludes by demonstrating how this history of transnational solidarity calls for an integration of the compartmentalized histories of civic activism and a reassessment of the ways in which a global framework has impacted postwar society.

Conceptualizing transnational activism: the roots of union solidarity

The history of trade unions' initiatives for solidarity across national borders cannot be properly understood within a framework which separates movements with a local or national focus from those with a transnational perspective. Whereas an obligation towards workers in other parts of the world was broadly acknowledged among trade union members, the extent of this obligation and its concrete consequences were apparently contested. An analysis of the attempts to promote radical solidarity with the Global South among trade union members has to account for the rise of a global framework next to local and national frames of reference in thinking about solidarity.

Employing the notion of transnational solidarity, this chapter connects notions of international solidarity which were prevalent in the history of trade unions to the methodological concept of *histoire croisée*. According to this ap-

proach, in each investigation, an observer assesses which spatial frameworks were relevant to the subject, and subsequently determines their relative weight and specific interpretation by historical actors.² It follows that perspectives beyond the local and the national do not have to be a dominant presence in order to be of significance. On the contrary, the successful integration of transnational and local perspectives with national histories requires us to view these frameworks not as mutually exclusive, but as entangled frameworks.³ The notion of transnational solidarity thus highlights how international solidarity became entangled with perspectives on local and national solidarity.

Post-war initiatives for international solidarity were built on transnational relations which had been established during the nineteenth century, encompassing an astounding range of issues and groups especially since the second half of the nineteenth century. Corresponding to the expansion of the number of civic organizations and the range of their concerns on a local and national level, international cooperation around economic issues, labor, intellectual issues, religious views, and humanitarian and peace activism developed.⁴ Such cooperation was often closely entwined with the colonial networks which were developed not just by state officials, but also by religious organizations, trade unions, and political parties. These pre-war networks provided activists in the

2 Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der 'Histoire Croisée' und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002): 628–629; Erik Swyngedouw, "Neither global nor local: 'glocalization' and the politics of scale," in *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, ed. Kevin R. Cox (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 137–164; Charles Tilly, "Social movements and (all sorts of) other political interactions - local, national, and international - including identities," *Theory and Society: Renewal and Critique in Social Theory* 27/4 (1998): 453–480; Saskia Sassen, "The many scales of the global: implications for theory and for politics," in *The Postcolonial and the Global*, ed. Revathi Krishnaswamy and John C. Hawley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 82–93; Angelika Epple, "Lokalität und die Dimensionen des Globalen. Eine Frage der Relationen," *Historische Anthropologie* 21/1 (2013): 4–25.

3 I have explored the perspective of *histoire croisée* in "Vervlochten geschiedenis: Hoe *histoire croisée* de natiestaat bedwingt," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 125/1 (2012): 97–109 and the consequences of the application of this perspective to the history of third world solidarity in "The puzzle of postcolonial entanglement: fair trade activism in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Politics of Entanglement in the Americas: Connecting Transnational Flows and Local Perspectives*, ed. Lukas Rehm, Jochen Kemmer and Olaf Kaltmeier (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2017), 115–128.

4 Francis Stewart Leland Lyons, *Internationalism in Europe, 1815–1914* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1963).

Netherlands with the knowledge and contacts to recover and develop initiatives for transnational solidarity after the Second World War.⁵

The trade union movement had presented itself as an international movement from its very inception in the nineteenth century and had built up relations across national borders accordingly. Organizations such as the Socialist Internationals and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) played an important role in its history.⁶ After the Second World War, the Social Democrat Dutch Association of Trade Unions (NVV) joined the anticommunist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), whilst the Protestant National Federation of Christian Trade Unions (CNV) and the Catholic Workers' Movement (KAB, Dutch Catholic Trade Union Federation (NKV) since 1964) rejoined the IFCTU, of which the KAB-official Jos Serrarens and his colleague Herman Amelink of the CNV were prominent officials.⁷ The CNV was also the most active member of the Protestant Workers International, which it promoted next to the IFCTU by strengthening international relations between Protestant union members and deploying its officials in countries such as Canada and New Guin-

5 Marc Frey, "Control, legitimacy, and the securing of interests: European development policy in South-East Asia from the late colonial period to the early 1960s," *Contemporary European History* 12/4 (2003): 395–412; Corinna R. Unger, "Histories of development and modernization: findings, reflections, future research," *H-Soz-Kult*, 2010, <http://www.hsozkult.de/literaturereview/id/forschungsberichte-1130>; D. J. B. Trim and Brendan Simms, "Towards a history of humanitarian intervention," in *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*, ed. Brendan Simms and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–24; Jone Bos and G. H. A. Prince, "Partners in ontwikkeling. De beginperiode van het (kerkelijk) particuliere ontwikkelingswerk," in *De geschiedenis van vijftig jaar ontwikkelingssamenwerking 1949–1999*, ed. Jan Nekkers, Peter Malcontent and Peer Baneke (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999), 163–182, 361–362; J.J.P. Jong, "Onder ethisch insigne. De origine van de Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking," in *De geschiedenis van vijftig jaar ontwikkelingssamenwerking 1949–1999*, ed. Jan Nekkers, Peter Malcontent and Peer Baneke (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999), 61–81, 351–355; Jan A.B. Jongeneel, "Nederlandse kerkelijke en para-kerkelijke zending na 1945," in *Twee eeuwen Nederlandse zending 1797–1997. Twaalf opstellen*, ed. Thomas van den End (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1997), 225–240.

6 Magaly Rodriguez Garcíá, ed., *Labour Internationalism: Different Times, Different Faces*, special issue of *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 84/4 (2006); Geert Van Goethem, *De Internationale van Amsterdam. De wereld van het Internationaal Vakverbond (IVV), 1913–1945* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2001); Patrick Pasture, *Histoire du syndicalisme chrétien international. La difficile recherche d'une troisième voie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999); Peter Waterman, *Globalization, Social Movements & the New Internationalisms* (London: Mansell, 1998), 15–44. Cf. Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

7 Ernest Huetting, Frits de Jong Edz, and Rob Neij, *Naar groter eenheid. De geschiedenis van het Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen 1906–1981* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1983), 218–225.

ea – although to little avail.⁸ These international organizations were predominantly rooted in the West, but they developed a strong interest in the rapidly decolonizing Global South during the 1950s, competing for a foothold in countries in Asia, Africa and South-America among each other and with communist organizations. Similar to their Belgian colleagues, Dutch union officials were active participants in these international efforts.⁹

Although international activities did not dominate the work of the national unions, transnational relations indeed became a familiar topic within the organizations and their publications during the 1950s.¹⁰ Union officials like the NVV-secretary Jan van der Wouwen voiced a strong sense of obligation towards the so-called developing world. “The industrially developed countries have the duty to help the millions of inhabitants of the large parts of the world which have not benefited from the industrial revolution,” he noted in an internal memorandum in 1956, approvingly citing a resolution by the ICFTU.¹¹ That same year the annual general congress of his trade union federation adopted a resolution which stated that “the peoples of the world are increasingly constituting one international society, in which the wealth of each depends on the cooperation between and the stability of national economies.” Therefore, the resolution continued, it was “the joint duty of all peoples (...) to raise the standards of living in the underdeveloped areas in accordance with the international capacities of production available and to the decrease the disparity between these standards of living.” The resolution finally called on the federation to prioritize this issue in its internal and external communication.¹²

8 Karst Dijkstra, *Beweging in beweging. Het CNV na 1945* (Utrecht: Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond in Nederland, 1979), 241–258; Gerrit Pruim and R.E. van der Woude, “Van monddood naar mondigheid: 40 jaar CNV-Actie Kom Over en CNV-Internationaal,” in *Grenzeloos christelijk-sociaal. Internationale activiteiten van de christelijke vakbeweging*, ed. G.J. Schutte (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009), 83–85.

9 Peter van Dam, *Religion und Zivilgesellschaft: Christliche Traditionen in der niederländischen und deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Münster: Waxmann, 2010), 187–190.

10 Cf. IISG, NVV, internationale dienst, 102: Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (1949–1959), map ontwikkelingssamenwerking 1951–1956: H. Oosterhuis, “Nota inzake de hulp aan de economisch minder ontwikkelde gebieden,” 8 November 1951; “Trade unionism in under-developed countries,” *Labour News from Britain*, 10 July 1952.

11 IISG, NVV, internationale dienst, 102: Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (1949–1959): J.G. van der Wouwe, “Hulp aan onder-ontwikkelde gebieden. Actie der internationale vakbeweging,” 6 November 1956.

12 *Ibid.*: “Tekst van de resolutie, aangekomen op het jubileumcongres van het NVV.”

The unions' focus on solidarity across national borders connected with a sentiment prevalent among the Dutch public at the time.¹³ For example, after help for the victims of a large flood in the southwest of the Netherlands had come from all over the world, the periodical *Vrij Nederland* appealed to its readers: now it was their turn to provide "help to a world which called for general solidarity." According to Chief Editor Johan Winkler, the Dutch should take the lead in global politics by establishing international solidarity as a fixed item of the national budget.¹⁴ Such sentiments were especially widespread among supporters of the Labor Party, which had merged social democrat and leftist Christian groups in 1946. The renowned economist Jan Tinbergen and some of his close collaborators were influential members of the party. Tinbergen had taken up a professorship with the division for Balanced Economic Growth in Rotterdam, where he worked on the international coordination of economic policies in particular. He championed a specific version of socioeconomic modernization, which revolved around an international division of labor, in which each country would benefit from producing according to its economic strengths within a global economy coordinated by international institutions. This view became an important vantage point in the thinking about development in the Netherlands in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁵

The interweaving of international solidarity and development points towards an important shift in the thinking about transnational solidarity in the postwar era. The process of decolonization within the context of the Cold War transformed the way in which the moral obligations towards distant others were perceived. This was already visible in the much-publicized manifesto by the newly founded peace movement *De Derde Weg* ("The third way"), which appeared in 1952. Its predominantly left-leaning authors stated that the growing polarization between the East and the West set the world on a course to a third world war. Its members hoped that the decolonized states of the South would take the lead in overcoming this divide through independent policies and criticized the govern-

13 Niek Pas, *Aan de wieg van het nieuwe Nederland. Nederland en de Algerijnse oorlog 1954–1962* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2008), 12.

14 Johan Winkler, "Nu Wij," *Vrij Nederland* 13/28 (1953): 1.

15 Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld. Beeldvorming en beleid in Nederland, 1950–1990* (The Hague: SDU, 1994), 15–18; Greetje Witte-Rang, *Geen recht de moed te verliezen. Leven en werken van Dr. H. M. de Lange 1919–2001* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2008), 64–65; Jan Tinbergen, *The Design of Development* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958); *Id.*, *Ontwikkelingsplannen* (Zeist/Amsterdam: De Haan/J.M. Meulenhoff, 1967).

ments in the West for setting a bad example to these countries by discouraging or even violently repressing their calls for independence.¹⁶

Around the same time, the Catholic pastor Simon Jelsma regularly drew a crowd for his speeches at the square in front of the High Court of Justice in The Hague. His speeches stressed the unity of mankind, which implied that the poverty of one person presented a responsibility for any of his fellow Christians. The duty of solidarity was thus not bound to national borders, but universal. To Jelsma, this was not just right in principle, but also in practice. For if poverty were allowed to persist, this global inequality would eventually cause a new global conflict which would also threaten the lives of those who were now well-to do.¹⁷ Regarding its political dimension this perspective was less radical than that of *De Derde Weg*. The call for the global as the dominant framework for solidarity was, however, at least as far-reaching.

The group of activists which gathered around Jelsma initiated several organizations which would become standard-bearers of transnational solidarity in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1956, the Protestant minister Han Hugenholtz connected with them to found the National Organization for International Assistance (NOVIB). Hugenholtz' initiative was inspired and facilitated by his participation in the international peace movement. The attempt to establish an organization which would muster public support for international aid was particularly inspired by attempts in Norway, where the staff-member of the United Nations Secretariat Aake Anker Ording had initiated the United Nations Appeal for Children fundraising campaign.¹⁸ Taking up a similar call for an ethos of global responsibility as Jelsma had promoted, the global outlook conveyed by NOVIB and its periodical *Onze Wereld* ('Our World') had remarkable resonance. In 1962, a survey among the Dutch population found that only 15% of those questioned were categorically opposed to contributing to aid for developing countries. The same questionnaire underlined the fact that there were many reasons why people considered providing aid: compassion, concerns about international security and welfare, economic and political motives all figured among the reasons people gave for considering support.¹⁹

16 Wiebe Bijl, "Verdwaald in niemandsland. Het morele idealisme van vredesbeweging 'De Derde Weg' 1951–1965," *Skript* 31/1 (2014): 234–246.

17 Simon Jelsma, *Bezit en vrijheid. Een reeks pleinpreken* (Bussum: Brand, 1957).

18 Wouter van Dis, "Gideons bende of nationale instelling. De wisselwerking tussen de overheid, ngo's en het Nederlandse ontwikkelingshulpbeleid - 1950–1976" (MA thesis, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2014), 20–24.

19 *Opinie-onderzoek inzake hulpverlening aan ontwikkelingslanden in opdracht van de Stichting Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand* (The Hague: Nederlandse Stichting voor

NOVIB and similar organizations which promoted transnational solidarity through development aid in many regards were not new movements. Although development aid as such was a new issue, it was intimately connected to the older themes of peace, charity, humanitarianism, and internationalism. The activists who joined this organization were often introduced to them through the networks which had been built up around these older themes, presenting their understanding of transnational solidarity against that background. This connection to older themes and networks enhanced the acceptance of the new issue, but it also prefigured considerable tensions over motives and favored approaches for providing aid. In 1958, the CNV-official Anton Borstlap wrote an article for NOVIB-periodical *Onze Wereld* which reacted to the turmoil which surrounded NOVIB. Catholic pundits had presented the organization as a leftist enterprise which was a threat to Catholic missionary undertakings.²⁰ Borstlap argued that Christians could not ignore poverty in other parts of the world, referring to the Charter of the International Labour Organization: “Poverty, wherever in the world it exists, threatens the welfare of all.” In his view, therefore, one could never do enough: “every worker in the Netherlands, who still knows about the circumstances in which his grandfather lived and worked, will contribute to the international aid his trade union is providing, as well as support the NOVIB.”²¹

Transnational solidarity became increasingly politicized during the 1960s. Above all, this was the result of the emergence of a group of self-conscious Southern political leaders, who refused to align with the Cold War opposition between the East and the West.²² Instead, they insisted on foregrounding their own

Statistiek, 1962). On motives for providing development aid, see: Peter van Dam and Wouter van Dis, “Beyond the Merchant and the Clergyman: Assessing Moral Claims about Development Cooperation,” *Third World Quarterly* 35/9 (2014): 1636–1655.

20 Hans Beerends and Marc Broere, *De bewogen beweging: een halve eeuw mondiale solidariteit* (Amsterdam: 2004), 34.

21 Anton Borstlap, “Een boodschap voor heel het volk,” *Onze wereld* (1958) April, 1.

22 Recent historiography on international solidarity has called attention to the direct and indirect influence of the South on the North: Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Kim Christiaens, “States Going Transnational: Transnational State Civilian Networks and Socialist Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua Solidarity Movements in Belgium (1960s–1980s),” *Belgisch tijdschrift voor filologie en geschiedenis/Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 89/3–4 (2011): 1277–1306; Giuliano Garavini, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South, 1957–1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

joint position as postcolonial countries in international politics.²³ These non-aligned countries effectively played out their new-found majority within the United Nations to demand an international conference on trade and development. At this stage, however, the limits of the bargaining power of the “Group of 77” which had demanded the conference painfully showed. Squaring off against the economic interests of Northern countries, the representatives of the Global South did not achieve tangible improvements during either the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964 or the second conference in 1968.²⁴

The rise of a self-conscious Third World nourished the hopes of radical activists, who anticipated their capacity to overcome the existing political balance of power and the Cold War stalemate between the capitalist West and the communist East.²⁵ More moderate activists were also inspired by the demands for a more just global economy voiced by Third World countries and set up a host of initiatives to aid these countries through direct financial support, political lobbying, and raising public awareness. These initiatives were embodied by organizations such as NOVIB, but also by trade unions, political parties, and religious organizations. Development cooperation thus became an important issue in the Netherlands during the 1960s. This was mirrored by the appointment of an undersecretary for development aid in 1963, followed by the appointment of a minister of development in 1965 in the Dutch national government.

In summary, the threat of the global Cold War and concerns about global economic inequality fostered initiatives for international solidarity within Dutch civil society since the 1950s. Some of these attempts were of an explicitly political character, focusing on the possibilities of establishing a third way between capitalism and communism. Others were of a more moderate nature, addressing global inequality through collaboration with (former) colonies, emergency relief, development aid or solidarity with aggrieved individuals and groups. In practice, radical and moderate initiatives would often overlap, as would the carriers of

23 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), 31–115; Mark Berger, “After the Third World? History, destiny and the fate of Third Worldism,” *Third World Quarterly* 25/1 (2004): 11–23.

24 Sönke Kunkel, “Zwischen Globalisierung, internationalen Organisationen und ‘Global Governance’. Eine kurze Geschichte des Nord-Süd-Konflikts in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 60/4 (2012): 555–577.

25 Robert Gildea, James Mark and Niek Pas, “European Radicals and the ‘Third World’: Imagined Solidarities and Radical Networks, 1958–73,” *Cultural and Social History* 8/4 (2011): 449–471.

these initiatives, which could be found within existing organizations such as trade unions and churches as well as in newly established groups.

Between old and new social movements: radicalizing union solidarity²⁶

During the 1960s, a more radical interpretation of solidarity emerged in connection with the critiques of global politics voiced by representatives from the Global South. The need for more radical forms of solidarity also gained a foothold in many civic organizations which had initially adopted a moderate approach. Attempts to foster solidarity with the Global South could thus forge coalitions across old and new social movements. The historiographical opposition between old movements such as trade unions with a local or national focus and new social movements with a transnational outlook is thus called into question. As union members undertook to prioritize solidarity with the Global South within the ranks of their own organizations during the 1970s, the division between old and new social movements all but lost its significance.

The combination of high expectations for global political reforms and few tangible results in the course of international negotiations nurtured the frustrations of representatives of the South as well as those of their activist supporters in the North. Many felt that the organizations concerned with international solidarity, which were mostly concerned with specific development projects, failed to grasp the immediacy of the issue and the need for far-reaching structural reforms. Within the labor movement, this critique was voiced by members of the *Werkgroep voor een Maatschappij-Kritische Vakbeweging*, which was established in 1970 and united members of the three trade union federations, although only the leadership of the NKV signaled any real interest.²⁷ The critics had close ties to other activist groups, such as the radical ecumenical campaigning organization Sjaloom, which encouraged union members to regard their organizations as vehicles for changing society at large:

²⁶ The material on the history of the Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging which is presented as part of this chapter has previously been presented in Dutch: Peter van Dam, “‘Een stukje ellende in uw eigen wereldje’: Solidariteit met de Derde Wereld in de Nederlandse vakbeweging,” in *Onbehagen in de polder: Nederland in conflict sinds 1795*, ed. Bram Melink and Jouke Turpijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 231–252.

²⁷ Special issue “Maatschappij-kritische vakbeweging,” *Kosmoschrift* (1971) 2; Huetting, de Jong Edz and Neij, *Naar groter eenheid*, 357–359.

Are there people within the trade union movement who realize that they have raised their members too nationalist and too focused on their own interests in the short run? Are there groups of people in the world of trade unions, who see a direct relation between large- and small-scale capitalism, between the global manipulations of large companies and the still unfair distribution of wealth and power in their own country?²⁸

The politicization of transnational solidarity also affected the trade unions, but evoked mixed reactions. Union officials stressed the importance of moderate attempts at improving development cooperation, whilst critical members championed the view that unions should strive for structural reforms at home and throughout the world. Whilst union members thus debated competing interpretations of transnational solidarity, the three large federations of Dutch trade unions slowly gravitated towards closer cooperation among themselves. This coalescence was fostered by the successful cooperation between unions with different religious and ideological backgrounds as well as by growing doubts about the purpose of independently organized Catholic and Protestant organizations.

Joint programs of action by the three large federations were a first tangible result of their closer cooperation. In these programs, the unions presented their priorities to the national government. The first joint *Program van actie* in 1967 noted as a fourth priority that “from the viewpoint of solidarity (...) the West shall have to concern itself with the need in developing countries, which will demand sacrifices from all.” Next to increasing the state budget for development aid, the program also called for initiatives from private enterprises, whilst the unions promised to step up their own efforts to mobilize support. The program clearly mirrored the influence of the UNCTAD-negotiations, calling for international trade agreements to stabilize commodity prices and for the facilitation of the import of products from developing countries to the West.²⁹

The second UNCTAD-conference in New Delhi 1968 drew considerable public attention in the Netherlands. Its failure to reform the conditions of global trade in favor of the countries in the Global South led activists in the Netherlands to initiate the so-called “Cane Sugar Campaign”, which drew attention to the ways in which the policies of the European Economic Community withheld from developing countries a chance to sell their produce in Europe for a fair price.³⁰ In 1970, the Food and Agriculture Organization hosted a World Food Con-

²⁸ Piet Reckman, *Kosmocomplot 70* (Voorburg: Interkerkelijk Vredes Beraad, 1970), §9.

²⁹ *Program van actie. Overlegorgaan N.V.V. – N.K.V. – C.N.V.* (1967).

³⁰ Peter van Dam, “In Search of the Citizen-Consumer: Fair Trade Activism in the Netherlands Since the 1960s,” *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 132/3 (2017): 143–150.

gress in The Hague, which saw predominantly youthful activists demand immediate action to some effect, forcing the Dutch officials hosting the conference to come up with concrete initiatives.³¹ The second joint program issued by the trade unions for the years 1971–1975 reflected the influence of these national and international debates. The very first chapter was dedicated to development aid. In line with the recommendations which had been made for the United Nations' Second Development Decade, the unions demanded that by the end of the 1970s, two percent of the national budget should be reserved for development aid. The program stated that development aid should be real aid, which could not oblige the recipients to spend their funds in donor countries. Attempts at the international coordination of the prices of commodities and raw materials should be supported, whilst the tariffs for raw materials and tropical products from the South should be lifted. Moreover, development aid should focus on social as well as economic issues.³²

Amidst the many interpretations of transnational solidarity, solidarity with workers across the globe remained the point of departure for trade unions' activities in the realm of development. This approach could count on remarkable support among union membership. For example, since 1960 many local activities supported trade unions in Latin America in the course of the Catholic unions' yearly campaign "Wij en Zij" ('Us and them').³³ The CNV initiated a similar campaign since 1967 under the header "Kom Over" ('Come Through'). Previously, it had campaigned for donations to support their activities in the former Dutch colony of New-Guinea as well as for development projects and the funding of the international Christian trade movement.³⁴ In a joint educational publication concerning "rich and poor countries" from 1970, the trade unions stated that the Dutch worker "feels solidary toward the millions who live elsewhere under circumstances which are comparable to or even worse than those experienced by workers in our own country in the nineteenth century." This sense of global solidarity between workers should be translated into financial aid and sending young workers to provide assistance on the ground. Above all, the workers in developing countries should be supported to build up their own, vigorous trade unions.³⁵ Conspicuously absent in these activities were the highly politicized issues surrounding the Vietnam War and solidarity with socialist Cuba. The unions ap-

31 "Jongeren drukken stempel op wereldvoedselcongres," *Amigoe die Curacao*, 1 July 1970, 2.

32 IISG, Overlegorgaan, 53: Brochures, folder "Uitgegeven brochures": *Actieprogram 1971–1975*.

33 Jan Peet, *Katholieke arbeidersbeweging II: De KAB en het NKV in de maatschappelijke ontwikkeling van Nederland na 1945* (Baarn: Arbor, 1993), 300.

34 Pruijm and Van der Woude, "Van monddood naar mondigheid," 90–91.

35 IISG, Bro 309/14: Lesbrief Overlegorgaan 1970.

parently avoided contentious Cold War politics, which had the potential to polarize members at the national level as well as relations within the international trade union federations.³⁶

The Dutch trade union federations decided to pursue more intensive forms of cooperation in 1971. They regarded development aid as an issue in which they could pioneer such cooperation. As a result, the Trade Union Foundation on Development Cooperation (SOSV) was founded as a joint enterprise.³⁷ In planning for the foundation, the trade unions had prioritized concrete development projects. Specifically, these projects should be concentrated in the Dutch overseas territories of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles, because union leadership expected their members to have a strong feeling of solidarity towards workers in these countries.³⁸ Exploratory talks with government officials reaffirmed this approach. It transpired that if the unions would come up with a joint initiative to build up trade unions in these countries, they could make use of government funds for “social reconstruction”. This promise of funding was an important impulse for the realization of the SOSV.³⁹ As late as the 1960s, then, calls for development aid combined attempts to secure overseas influence in an age of decolonization, drew on the expertise of colonial administration, and attempted to mobilize a colonial sense of connection among the Dutch population.⁴⁰

In the years following its establishment, the initiatives devised by the SOSV shifted from projects related to (former) Dutch colonies towards activities which favored a more radical, postcolonial agenda. At first, the foundation deployed advisers in Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles and offered scholarships for labor officials from these countries. In an attempt to expand the geographical range of the SOSV, its director Piet Jeuken appealed to relations in the interna-

36 Patrick Pasture, “A Century of International Trade Unionism,” *International Review of Social History* 47/2 (2002): 282–285; Jan Jacob van Dijk and Paul Werkman, “Om de plaats van het CNV in de internationale arbeidersbeweging,” in *Grenzeloos christelijk-sociaal. Internationale activiteiten van de christelijke vakbeweging*, ed. G.J. Schutte (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009), 36, 43.

37 My analysis of the cooperation between the Dutch unions draws on: Van Dam, *Religion and Zivilgesellschaft*, 268–285.

38 IISG, NVV, commissiearchief 1964–1972, 727: Ontwikkelingshulp 1967–1969: “Notitie inzake mogelijke opzet en financiering van een projekt door de Commissie Ontwikkelingshulp van het NVV,” 18 April 1969.

39 *Ibid.*, 728: Ontwikkelingshulp 1970: “Nota betreffende institutionalisering van de hulpverlening van de Nederlandse Vakbeweging aan ontwikkelingslanden (met name Suriname, de Nederlandse Antillen en Indonesië).”

40 Frey, “Control, Legitimacy, and the Securing of Interests”; Esther Helena Arens, “Mission Interrupted?” Die Diskussion über die Dekolonisierung in den Niederlanden,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (2008): 133–154.

tional labor movement to promote the possibility of using funds from the Netherlands for development projects. Jeuken and his staff envisaged a role as intermediary for such initiatives, mediating between the requests from developing countries and the different sources for funding in the Netherlands.⁴¹

The positioning of the SOSV as a project agency for union-related development initiatives reflected the rapid expansion of organizations in the field of development. Jeuken and his staff were careful not to enter into competition with other agencies, which had established themselves as key partners for the Dutch government in this area. As the most important of those, NOVIB had claimed a position as a development organization which was structurally co-financed with government funds alongside a Catholic and a Protestant agency, both of which had evolved from missionary organizations. In 1974, the trade unions would also be acknowledged as permanent participants in this co-financing scheme.⁴²

The trade unions' opportunities for receiving government funds for development-related projects mirror the increasing involvement of the Dutch state in the field of development. As the government funds for development policy rapidly increased during the 1960s, a large share of these funds was channeled through civic organizations which had established themselves within the field of international development. These included NOVIB, but also religious agencies which had a background in missionary activities.⁴³ This was a viable strategy because it allowed for the desired expansion of activities which government agencies were not themselves capable of implementing. Moreover, organizations such as NOVIB during the 1960s successfully presented themselves as experts in this field based on their involvement since at least the 1950s.⁴⁴

Next to the capability and legitimacy of civic organizations, a third motive for funding transpired during the early 1970s, as the Dutch government initiated

41 IISG, Overlegorgaan, 56: SOSV: Kwartaalverslag van de Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging voor de periode 1 oktober 1972–31 december 1972; *Ibid.*: Brochure "How to Use Dutch Official Development Aid for Trade Union Oprojects in Developing Countries?"

42 Marc Dierikx, "Inleiding," in *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Bronnenuitgave deel 4: 1973–1977*, ed. Marc Dierikx (The Hague, 2005), xxiii.

43 Sjoerd Keulen, *Monumenten van beleid. De wisselwerking tussen Nederlands rijksoverheidsbeleid, sociale wetenschappen en politieke cultuur, 1945–2002* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), 71–122.

44 See Matthew Hilton, *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). The considerations on the relations between civic organizations and the government in the field of transnational relations build on: Peter van Dam, "Attracted and Repelled: Transnational Relations Between Civil Society and the State in the History of the Fair Trade Movement since the 1960s," in *The International Relations of the Netherlands, 1815–2000: A Small Nation on the Global Scene*, ed. Ruud van Dijk et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 183–200.

the Dutch Development Strategy Commission (NCO). With this new body, the Dutch government responded to a recommendation by the United Nations, calling on its members among the “developed countries” to increase the involvement of their population with the issues of development. The NCO would coordinate and subsidize initiatives to promote awareness about development among the Dutch public. The government officials, consigned to install it, regarded the organization as a suitable instrument to moderate the increasingly politicized public opinion around the issue of development. By granting radical activists a limited number of positions within the commission, they intended to encapsulate radical groups within its structure. Through funding moderate initiatives, they hoped to promote the desired depoliticization. Therefore, except for the federation of world shops which represented recent attempts to promote fair trade with the South, long-established organizations were the desired collaborators for the commission.⁴⁵

As traditionally dependable partners, the trade unions presented themselves as suitable participants in the NCO-initiative. Moreover, a report commissioned by the NCO demonstrated that the knowledge about development issues was lowest among workers, whilst these also indicated little willingness to learn more about the subject. Internal discussions within the unions had also shown that many members were skeptical about the priority their organizations were granting to development.⁴⁶ As the effects of the economic recession in the wake of the oil crisis in 1973 made themselves felt in the Netherlands, these sentiments became more widespread.⁴⁷ This combination of an emphasis on raising awareness, the doubts about its importance among workers, and the availability of funding prompted the SOSV to engage with activities in the field of education. In 1973, the agency received NCO-funding to set up a program which would raise awareness about development issues among union members.⁴⁸ In the eyes of the SOSV-staff, their project did not aim to change the views of these members as much as it would increase their awareness for the global context of their own

⁴⁵ Keulen, *Monumenten van Beleid*, 106 – 117.

⁴⁶ IISG, NVV, commissiearchief 1964 – 1972, 729: Ontwikkelingshulp 1971 – 1972: “Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging. Voorlichtings- en mentaliteitsbeïnvloedingsproject met betrekking tot de problematiek van de ontwikkelingssamenwerking.”

⁴⁷ IISG, Bro 248/13: *De plaats van de arbeid. Tweede discussienota* (1973); IISG, 1990/4730: *De plaats van de Arbeid. Verslag van de uitkomsten van een discussieproject onder leden van NVV, NKV en CNV* (1975).

⁴⁸ Leon J. van Damme and Mari G.M. Smits, *Voor de ontwikkeling van de Derde Wereld. Politici en ambtenaren over de Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking 1949 – 1989* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2009), 216 – 217.

condition: “If the Dutch trade union movement wants to be able to (...) contribute to a solution of this issue, it will have to be able to count upon the awareness of its members of their own situation,” they noted in a brochure explaining the objectives of their project.⁴⁹

The educational project would evolve into the most important activity of the SOSV during the first half of the 1970s. Three new staff members were recruited to fulfil the paradoxical task of transforming the outlook of the union members in order for them to be able to address issues of global development “from below, in their own specific ways.” The project was divided into three phases. During the first, staff members and “key figures” would be targeted through courses and stimulated to set up local working groups. During the second phase, these groups would have to employ activities which would spread the awareness about development in broader circles. Finally, these working groups would achieve a state of independence, allowing them to formulate their own plans to raise awareness on an even larger scale.⁵⁰ The new staff members would support this process by hosting courses and supporting local groups with educational material. They energetically took to their task: by the end of 1973, 229 union members and 108 officials had participated in their courses, whilst they also regularly published a periodical to support the local groups.⁵¹ The SOSV also collaborated with broadcasting agencies to inform the public about transnational solidarity and point out concrete options for participation.⁵²

The new focus on raising awareness and the employment of the three staff members introduced a more radical interpretation of solidarity in the work of the SOSV. This became apparent as the foundation published the booklet *Ons soort mensen* (‘Our kind of people’) by the well-known activist Piet Reckman of the aforementioned ecumenical campaigning group Sjaloom. Reckman presented an interpretation of transnational solidarity which revolved around a shared interest among workers across the globe. The publication took the exploitation of the Third World as a point of departure, stating that this was not a story about others. For, Reckman noted, “everyone knows about the shockingly unequal distribution of income, power, goods, and opportunities for advancement. While our world is becoming one and all borders are disappearing as a result of technology, trade, economy, and information, it becomes increasingly clear how

⁴⁹ IISG, Overlegorgaan, doos 56: SOSV: Folder *Bewustwordingsproject Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging* (November 1973).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ IISG, Overlegorgaan, doos 56: SOSV: “Bewustwordingsproject. Verslag over de periode 1 september 1973 tot 1 april 1974.”

⁵² *Ibid.*: “Kort verslag ekstra D.B.-SOSV 21 mei 1974.”

hopelessly divided that world is.” Reckman singled out multinational companies as those who were controlling developing countries and Western economies. This, however, also provided workers from different countries to join hands in fighting the power of these companies.⁵³

In accordance with this publication, the SOSV undertook attempts to bring issues of development closer to home. In 1974, it published an extensive study on the mining of bauxite in Surinam and the subsequent production of aluminium by the Shell-owned company Billiton. The author of the study, the economist Maarten van Klaveren, concurred with Reckman on the crucial importance of the power of multinational companies for understanding the stagnating development in the South. However, he took a more refined position on the way forward. Instead of a “crooked pseudo-Marxist reasoning”, Van Klaveren suggested working towards better monitoring of multinational companies, building up an international trade union movement which could confront their power, and bolstering the capacities of national governments in the South to deal with them.⁵⁴

Following up on this lead, local working groups attempted to connect the daily experiences of Dutch workers with those of workers in the South, by identifying ties between their own workplace and Southern companies. For example, a group of employees of the Dutch electronics company Philips in Stadskanaal managed to raise interest for the fate of Philips-employees in Colombia.⁵⁵ Publications about the multinational companies AKZO and Unilever also attempted to show their Dutch employees how their lives were connected to those of workers throughout the world, and how their employers were trying to pit workers in different countries against each other.⁵⁶

This strategy of singling out instances where the lives of people in the North and the South converged had been pioneered by like-minded activists in other contexts. After the unexpected success of the cane sugar campaign since 1968, many local campaign groups had set up so-called *wereldwinkels* (‘world shops’), which served as campaigning centers and as an outlet for literature

53 Piet Reckman, *Ons soort mensen. Over de derde wereld en de onze* (Utrecht: Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging, 1973).

54 SOSV, *Bauxiet, Billiton en Suriname. Over de derde wereld en de onze. Voorstudie voor ‘De buit is binnen’* (Utrecht, 1974).

55 IISG, Overlegorgaan, doos 53: Brochures: SOSV, *Verslag Bewustwordingsproject 1 december 1974 – 1 april 1975* (Utrecht, mei 1975), “Bijlage agenda 4 juni 1975.” See also IISG, Bro 2141/5: N.N., *Het zijn kollega’s en daar staan we voor!* (n.p., 1975).

56 IISG, Bro 1371/8: AKZO: 3600 arbeidsplaatsen weg (Woerden, 1976); IISG, Bro 450/19: *Unilever wordt de soep heter gegeten dan opgediend...???* (Woerden, n.d.).

on and selected products from the South.⁵⁷ Hardly limiting themselves to selling, these groups played a pivotal role as local relays for a boycott campaign targeting coffee from Angola in 1972 and 1973. The boycott was initiated by the Angola Committee, which had forged a broad coalition of moderate and radical supporters through years of campaigning. For example, in trying to enlist the trade unions for their cause, the committee deliberately foregrounded a moderate view of the campaign. Through such strategic maneuvering and a clever media campaign, the activists eventually succeeded in banishing Angolan coffee from all Dutch supermarkets.⁵⁸ Similar boycott strategies were also applied to products from other countries with dubious political leadership, such as apples from Pinochet's Chile and oranges from South Africa.⁵⁹

Attempts to bring issues of development home saw the spread of a more radical political perspective alongside more moderate views on solidarity, however. These views did not align with a distinction between old and new social movements. Among trade unionists, they by and large caused a division between moderate representatives of the CNV and their more radical counterparts from the other federations. "The question of development has evolved from an opposition between countries (poor countries versus rich countries) to an opposition between classes (proletariat against capital)," the CNV-periodical *Evangelie & Maatschappij* observed concisely.⁶⁰ This politicization strained the relationship between the trade union federations which were jointly supporting the SOSV. The Christian-democrat CNV in particular had always objected to adopting the perspective of class struggle, even though it gradually relinquished its reserved relationship towards the radical positions of Latin-American members of the Latin American Confederation of Workers (CLAT) as a result of personal encounters during visits from CNV-staff members to Latin America in the 1970s.⁶¹

Rejecting the perspective of a global class struggle as a dominant framework, the trade union leaders refused to employ the key to the hearts of Dutch union members the SOSV had thought to have discovered. Engaging

57 These observations build on: Peter van Dam, "Moralizing Postcolonial Consumer Society: Fair Trade in the Netherlands, 1964–1997," *International Review of Social History* 61/2 (2016): 223–250.

58 Jos van Beurden and Chris Huinder, *De vinger op de zere plek: Solidariteit met Zuidelijk Afrika 1961–1996* (Amsterdam: Babylon-De Geus, 1996).

59 Roeland Muskens, *Aan de goede kant: Een geschiedenis van de Nederlandse anti-apartheidsbeweging 1960–1990* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2014), 106–125.

60 C.H. Koetsier, "Bewustmaking voor ontwikkelingsamenwerking, met of zonder klassenstrijd," *Evangelie en Maatschappij* 27/6–7 (1974): 123.

61 Pruijm and Van der Woude, "Van monddood naar mondigheid," 84–85.



Fig. 25: Protest against coffee from Angola which was sold by the supermarket Albert Heijn in Tilburg, 3 October 1973. Bert Verhoeff / Anefo / Nationaal Archief.

with Cold War politics, the SOSV-staff was often more radical than the leadership of all Dutch trade union federations. For instance, the union boards called on the foundation to stop publicizing the activities of the Second Bertrand Russell Tribunal, which had confronted injustices in Brazil, Chile, and Latin America since 1973, because they didn't approve of the radical approach of the tribunal.⁶² A request to cooperate with groups protesting against the Vietnam War was also turned down by the federations, who pointed out that the trade unions had adopted a policy of not engaging in matters concerning the recognition of governments or states.⁶³ In this instance, the Cold War allegiance to the United States, which had also translated into strong relations between Western European and US trade unions, ostensibly overruled radical sympathies.

The federations could not establish joint positions in every case, however. The issue of human rights violations in Chile in particular caused disagreements among their representatives. Human rights, then, did overrule divisions caused

⁶² IISG, Overlegorgaan, doos 56: SOSV: "Bewustwordingsproject. Verslag over de periode 1 september 1973 tot 1 april 1974."

⁶³ *Ibid.*: Th. Offermans (adjunct-secretaris overlegorgaan) aan de Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging, 18 maart 1975.



Fig. 26: Representatives of the three Dutch trade union federations discuss possible actions after the escalation of the Vietnam War, 3 January 1973. Left to right: Jan Mertens (NKV), Jan Lanser (CNV), Adri de Boon (NVV). Rob C. Croes / Anefo / Nationaal Archief.

by the diverging international allegiances of the Dutch unions and the competing views of the role of Christian democracy.⁶⁴ For example, the NVV signaled a willingness to support the Chile Committee, which aimed at establishing a broad coalition, and to participate in a demonstration against the Pinochet-regime in 1973. The Catholic NKV stated that it did not reject these initiatives, but doubted whether trade unions should participate in such activities. CNV-representatives, however, were strictly against any involvement with campaigns directed at Chile. During the meeting where the issue was brought up, they were so displeased with the SOSV's open support for the Chilean opposition, that they took to barely concealed threats: "The CNV is willing to take a clear responsibility for the SOSV, but this has to be made possible."⁶⁵ This reluctance to engage in international

⁶⁴ Mariana Perry, "'With a Little Help From my Friends': The Dutch Solidarity Movement and the Chilean Struggle for Democracy," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 101 (2016): 83–86.

⁶⁵ IISG, Overlegorgaan, doos 54: Verslagen Bestuurscommissie Overlegorgaan: "Samenvatting van de 72e vergadering van de bestuurscommissie van het Overlegorgaan van 5 december 1973, gehouden bij het CNV."

politics did not result from a general rejection of radical politics among Christian union membership, as the popularity of radical Christian figureheads such as the Brazilian archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara and the Argentinian labor leader Emilio Maspéro demonstrated.⁶⁶

The friction around the course of the SOSV was reinforced by the increasingly strained relationship among the trade union federations. As negotiations about closer cooperation between the federations dredged on, it became clear that NVV and NKV wanted a much closer form of cooperation than the CNV was willing to accept. As they decided to bring about a new joint trade union organization without the CNV, the outlook for the SOSV became grim. In fact, the split between the federations offered the participants a way out of the conflict over the direction of the SOSV. While they agreed on the importance of transnational solidarity in principle, its interpretations diverged considerably. Moreover, the radical views which were formulated in the course of the educational work of the SOSV lacked support among the leadership of each of the federations. Therefore, as the cooperation between the federations came to an end as NKV and NVV merged into the Federation of the Dutch Trade Union Movement (FNV), the activities of the SOSV were integrated within the structure of the FNV and the CNV. Some members of the SOSV-staff continued their work as a “flying brigade” within the FNV, facilitating development projects abroad and educating union membership about related issues. In 1982, these activities were bundled in the foundation *Wij en Zij* (FNV Mondiaal since 1997). Within the CNV, the activities of the “CNV-actie Kom Over” were expanded as its new main vehicle for transnational solidarity.

Too little? The measure of transnational solidarity

That's what they call it, growing awareness of union members, of members of unions who want to do something about poverty and misery, which turn the world into a valley of tears. It should start at the bottom, according to the people in the middle, those on top, scholars and copycats of those scholars. It has to start at the grassroots level, according to the union. Of course this is an attempt to shift responsibility, for how can the grassroots level do that, if its immaturity is maintained?⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Jan Filius, *Helder Camara in Nederland* (Utrecht: A.W. Bruna & Zoon, 1971).

⁶⁷ IISG, Bro 677/13 fol.: *Op weg naar een multinationale vakbeweging* (1975) 1 [ed. SOSV].

The three staff members of the SOSV-educational project did not conceal their frustration in this retrospect about their work. The leadership of the unions had not adequately supported their work. Many union members had also disappointed them: "Most of them are members to support the union to hire people who can make sure they will have an even better income. There is not yet any solidarity to speak of."⁶⁸ This disappointment with union officials and members points towards the diverging views of transnational solidarity. Many trade unionists had accepted a responsibility to come to the aid of workers in other countries, supporting them in building up their own union or assisting in concrete instances of need. The notion that the trade union movement was more than a national movement appears to have been widely accepted and in fact provided the conditions for the installation of the SOSV and its educational project. However, the youthful SOSV staff had a more radical vision of transnational solidarity in a postcolonial world. They regarded the issues which confronted workers across the world as essentially the same, either because all were joined in a common class struggle, or because all were faced by the global power of multinational companies.

The disappointment voiced at the time by radical activists over a lack of solidarity should not obstruct the view of the widespread acceptance of a global framework as a relevant marker next to the local and the national in the postwar era. Rather than blaming the lack of appeal of radical positions on the alleged reluctance of trade union officials or the ignorance of the rank and file, it can be explained by regarding more the popular alternative visions of transnational solidarity. As the initiatives for international solidarity by trade unions demonstrate, the relative weight of a global frame of reference increased from the 1950s until the 1970s. However, its importance in relation to the local and national and the specific interpretation of the relations to people in other parts of the world were contested. From this perspective, transnational solidarity does not appear as an exceptional phenomenon which only concerned a handful of activists, but as a fundamental part of postwar social history. Such a perspective challenges historians of local and national history to take transnational perspectives seriously. Reversely, it requires historians of transnational activism to weight their findings in relation to local and national perspectives.

This calls for a reassessment of the relevance of globalization in the history of social movements. The historiography on post-war social movements has been doubtful in its evaluation of the impact of globalization. Whilst its influence is generally acknowledged, globalization has apparently not displaced the essen-

68 *Ibid.*, 2.

tial role local and national context play in the functioning of social movements. Even where transnational issues are at stake, national politics and national protest repertoires often continue to dominate the politics of contention.⁶⁹ In fact, many sociologists suspected an inverse relationship between the ability of social movements to organize transnationally and the process of economic and technological globalization: as economic capital and social networks became less bound to a specific location, social movements would have trouble reacting to them. However, the political process of globalization also created tangible institutions such as the World Trade Organization, which could serve as a common target for a geographically and politically dissimilar group of activists.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the embracing of a one world-perspective could also lead people to turn away from large-scale politics and focus on their immediate environment.⁷¹

An approach which accounts for the rise of the global in relation to the persistent influence of local and national perspectives connects the history of social movements to a broader social history of globalization. Debating the societal impact of globalization, David Held and Anthony MacGrew have discerned a skeptical and a globalist position. Skeptics do not judge globalization to be a new phenomenon which deserves special attention in post-war history, whereas globalists regard it as a process that has fundamentally transformed the history of the world.⁷² Applied specifically to the rise of a global frame of reference, the globalist interpretation has been elaborated by Robbie Robertson, who has argued that post-war globalization is different from earlier “waves” because it was accompanied by a conscious perception of the importance of a global perspective in the post-war period.⁷³ A more skeptical position has been voiced by Roland Robertson, who points out that awareness of a global framework has a long history.⁷⁴

69 Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 196–199.

70 Donatella della Porta et al., *Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 12–15.

71 David Kuchenbuch, “‘Eine Welt’: Globales Interdependenzbewusstsein und die Moralisierung des Alltags in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38/1 (2012): 174–176.

72 David Held and Anthony G. MacGrew, eds., *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 2.

73 Robbie Robertson, *The Three Waves of Globalization: A History of a Developing Global Consciousness* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

74 Roland Robertson and David Inglis, “The Global ‘Animus’: In the Tracks of World Consciousness,” *Globalizations* 1/1 (2004): 38–49; Roland Robertson, “Global Connectivity and Global Consciousness,” *The American Behavioral Scientist* 55/10 (2011): 1336–1346.

Moreover, he has developed the notion of “glocalization” to stress the importance of the local in lieu of the global.⁷⁵

The attempts at promoting transnational solidarity among trade union membership illustrate the need to regard social movements as “multi-level players”, which may react to events close-by or far away, build on local and national protest repertoires whilst also adapting new strategies from activists across the globe. They are therefore able to capitalize on political opportunities on a local, national, and transnational level.⁷⁶ International solidarity enabled and hampered cooperation between a host of different groups around issues of transnational solidarity. Because established organizations such as the trade unions had long integrated transnational solidarity into their activities, the concern for the development of the South could be connected to this tradition. This provided a platform for both moderate and more radical initiatives, which often coexisted within the framework of a single organization, such as the SOSV, which combined projects aimed at traditional intra-union solidarity with a more radical educational program. At first the connection to the trade unions enabled the latter project by providing it with an institutional framework and the trust needed to obtain funding. As the project got underway, however, the ties to the trade union movement eventually diluted the attempts to foster a radical interpretation of transnational solidarity among trade union members.

The history of post-war initiatives in the field of transnational solidarity in the Netherlands points towards the remarkable rise and broad societal acceptance of a global perspective during this era. Thinking about its obligations towards people across the globe became common among the Dutch population during the 1950s. By the 1970s, it was as widespread as to foster the hopes of radical activists of mobilizing a considerable constituency. As the analysis of their attempts has shown, their failure should not be equated with a lack of acceptance of a global perspective. Instead, it leads towards a more nuanced approach to transnational solidarity. As Robertson’s notion of glocalization has indicated, next to the rise of a global perspective, people could retain or even reassert the importance of local and national perspectives. The need for solidarity with the Global South did not become accepted in a vacuum, but was balanced with notions of local and national solidarity. Even though activists’ at-

⁷⁵ Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson, “Glocalization, Globalization and Migration: The Case of Scottish Football Supporters in North America,” *International Sociology: Journal of the International Sociological Association* 21/2 (2006): 171–198.

⁷⁶ Dieter Rucht, “The Transnationalization of Social Movements: Trends, Causes, Problems,” in *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*, ed. Donatella Della Porta, Dieter Rucht and Hanspeter Kriesi (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1999), 206–222.

tempts to elevate global solidarity into a dominant position by and large failed, many trade union members remained convinced of the salience of transnational solidarity.

Conclusion: rethinking transnational activism

In conclusion, the attempts to promote transnational solidarity within the Dutch trade unions provide two important insights for the history of postwar civil society. First, they stress the need for an integration of the compartmentalized histories of civic activism and a reassessment of the ways in which a global framework has impacted postwar society.

The history of the rise of transnational solidarity within trade unions demonstrates the viability of an integration of the historiography on Third World activism, development aid, and internationalism into a history of transnational civil society by relating international solidarity to other spatial frames of reference. Such an integration allows us to account for the longer history of civic initiatives to foster solidarity, the ways in which solidarity between the Global North and South was related to attempts to promote East-West relations, and initiatives focused on local or national solidarity.

The recent *hausse* in literature on internationalism and activism across national borders⁷⁷, transnational issues, networks, and the circulation of knowledge across borders have drawn renewed attention. This has resulted in calls to expand the analysis of international solidarity beyond the late 1960s. It also produced an expansion of the range of actors involved to include radical church groups and the old left.⁷⁸ Until recently, Third World activism was predominantly

⁷⁷ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); della Porta et al., *Globalization from Below*; Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012).

⁷⁸ Kim Christiaens, "Voorbij de 1968-historiografie?," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 128/3 (2015): 377–406; *Id.*, "Europe at the Crossroads of Three Worlds: Alternative Histories and Connections of European Solidarity with the Third World, 1950s–80s," *European Review of History / Revue européenne d'histoire* 24/6 (2017): 932–954; Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); *Id.*, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Van Beurden and Huinder, *De vinger op de zere plek*; Erica Meijers, *Blanke broeders, zwarte vreemden. De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, de Gereformeerde Kerken in*

studied as part of the history of “1968”, whereas development aid was studied as a compartment of the history of international relations.⁷⁹ The history of internationalism had focused mostly on Marxist internationalism.⁸⁰ Influenced by the transnational turn, historians have rediscovered the societal breadth and the temporal width of these phenomena, which had been a staple of older studies of internationalism.⁸¹

A focus on transnational solidarity furthers the expansion of the time-frame and the range of actors. In particular, it considers not just groups of radical activists. Instead, it calls attention to the many more moderate notions of international solidarity which circulated widely since the 1950s. Because international solidarity has not been their primary focus, the likes of churches and trade unions have often been neglected as crucial carriers of transnational allegiances.

Second, then, the analysis of the Dutch unions’ transnational solidarity informs our understanding of the social history of globalization. This history demonstrates how a global perspective indeed gained considerable influence within trade unions during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. However, rather than replacing the local and national, a global orientation became intertwined with these perspectives. Not only was the balance between local, national, and transnational perspectives constantly shifting, interpretations also competed. Although many people in the Netherlands agreed that solidarity with people far away was necessary, they did not agree about the extent of this solidarity or towards whom it

Nederland en de apartheid in Zuid-Afrika 1948–1972 (Hilversum: Verloren, 2008); Pas, *Aan de wieg van het nieuwe Nederland*.

79 Marc Hooghe, “Een bewegend doelwit. De sociologische en historische studie van (nieuwe) sociale bewegingen in Vlaanderen,” *Belgisch tijdschrift voor nieuwste geschiedenis* 34/3 (2004): 331–357; Bart Latré, *Strijd & inkeer. De kerk- en maatschappijkritische beweging in Vlaanderen, 1958–1990* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2011); Jan Nekkers, Peter Malcontent and Peer Baneke, *De geschiedenis van vijftig jaar Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking 1949–1999* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999); Rimko van der Maar, *Welterusten mijnheer de president. Nederland en de Vietnamoorlog 1965–1973* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007); Peter Malcontent, “Nederland, België en de Derde Wereld,” in *Nederland-België. De Belgisch-Nederlandse betrekkingen vanaf 1940*, ed. Duco Hellema and Rik Coolsaet (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011), 201–236; Luuk Wijmans, “De solidariteitsbeweging. Onverklaard maakt onbekend,” in *Tussen verbeelding en macht. 25 jaar nieuwe sociale bewegingen in Nederland*, ed. Jan Willem Duyvendak et al. (Amsterdam: SUA, 1992), 121–140; a notable exception is Kuitenbrouwer, *De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld*.

80 Geert van Goethem, *The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), 1913–1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

81 Lyons, *Internationalism in Europe, 1815–1914*; Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane, “Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction,” *International Organization* 25/3 (1971): 329–349. Examples of recent studies include: Christiaens, “States Going Transnational”; Gildea, Mark and Pas, “European Radicals and the ‘Third World.’”

should be directed. For example, in instances where calls for international solidarity collided with Cold War politics, as in the case of solidarity with Vietnam and Cuba, it often proved impossible to maintain a coalition between moderate and radical groups. Not only have local and national perspectives impacted the global, the reverse is just as relevant. Seeing how global perspectives could facilitate and hamper cooperation between different groups of activists thus demonstrates the importance of a comprehensive transnational approach to civil society in the post-war period.

Abbreviations

CNV:	Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (National Federation of Christian Trade Unions)
FNV:	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (Federation of the Dutch Trade Union Movement)
ICFTU:	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFCTU:	International Federation of Christian Trade Unions
IISG:	Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam)
KAB:	Katholieke Arbeidersbeweging (Catholic Workers' Movement)
NCO:	Nationale Commissie Ontwikkelingsstrategie (Dutch Development Strategy Commission)
NKV:	Nederlands Katholiek Vakverbond (Dutch Catholic Trade Union Federation)
NOVIB:	Nationale Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (National Organization for International Assistance)
NVV:	Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (Dutch Association of Trade Unions)
SOSV:	Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Vakbeweging (Trade Union Foundation on Development Cooperation)
UNCTAD:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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