*International Review of Social History* 71:2 (2026), p. 177
doi:10.1017/S0020859026101618

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

EDITORIAL

# Farewell to Aad Blok

In June 2026, Aad Blok reached retirement age and stepped down as Executive Editor of the *International Review of Social History* (IRSH), a position he had held since 2008 (with a brief interruption). Before that, he served as Editorial Assistant (1994–1998, together with Mona Hilfman), and Associate Editor (1998–2008, assisted by Angèle Janse). Aad joined the Institute in December 1986, fresh from a degree in social and economic history at Utrecht University. The then director of the International Institute of Social History asked him to set up a separate publishing department, a role that enabled him to gain an in-depth understanding of the workings of the publishing world, book editing and production, and (open-access) journals. That knowledge proved essential over his subsequent thirty-year career with the *Review*.

But his expertise went far beyond the technical, logistical, and organizational aspects of publishing an internationally renowned historical journal. An avid reader with a deep interest in the new social history initiated by scholars like Charles Tilly, and possessing an excellent memory, Aad became the Executive Editor the Editorial Committee (EC) could rely on without reservation. Preparing editorial meetings was only a small part of his role. Most of his time went into digesting the comments of external reviewers and EC members and writing detailed decision letters to authors who submitted papers to the journal. His analytical and diplomatic qualities, backed by real command of the field, meant the committee could trust his judgement and his handling of authors completely. The same was true for Aad's selection of external reviewers, often four per submission, which sharpened his view of the global labour history field that the journal had adopted by the turn of the century. Aad also tracked developments across other journals in (global) social and economic history, using what he learned to signal trends, blind spots, and opportunities for the IRSH, which helped give the *Review* a unique position in the wider world of global labour history.

In short, without Aad we would have been lost, both organizationally and substantively. The Institute and IRSH therefore owe him a tremendous amount.

*The Editorial Committee*

**Cite this article:** "Farewell to Aad Blok", *International Review of Social History* 71 (2026), p. 177, 2. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859026101618

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859026101618 Published online by Cambridge University Press