

VITA DOCUMENTATA

FATHER ARIËNS:

*Apostle of
the Humane Society*

Volume 1

VITA

Alphons Ariëns,

1860-1928

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PREFACE

Ariëns was a priest in the period that bracketed the turn of the last century. This was a time of change for Dutch society. It marked the transition from a traditional to a modern society on economic, social, cultural and political levels. For Catholics, too, this was a period of change and exuberance, as L.J. Rogier, authoritative author of the history of Dutch Catholicism, described this time of transition.¹ In other publications, the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century is often described as a process of emancipation for Dutch Catholics.

In this phase of emancipation and transformation, a special role as pioneer and apostle is ascribed to Alphons Ariëns: pioneer of the labour movement and apostle of change.² In this double role, he made history: first of all for the Catholic segment of the population, but also for Dutch society as a whole. Ariëns did this in such an exemplary way that he has entered Dutch history as ‘the Catholics’ hero’. It is, indeed, a characteristic of an emancipation movement that its descendants cherish the historical role of its pioneers. The memory of their heroic deeds is kept alive in publications and monuments, in the names of streets, squares, buildings and associations. We see the same happening to Ariëns. In cases like his, the Catholic Church has still another way to commemorate a person: it can declare the person blessed or saint and can thus raise him or her to the honour of the altar.

Soon after his death, a group of Ariëns’ friends quickly set the wheels in motion to initiate the procedure for beatification. An Ariëns committee was set up to get the process started. A whole series of publications appeared about this priest whom many venerated as the ‘hero of Christian love’. Gerard Brom, one of Ariëns’ most fervent admirers and himself a leader in the Catholic movement, wrote a monumental two part biography of his hero.³ While not everyone could be equally appreciative of this biography, not only because Brom considered his hero already a saint but mainly because he did so at the expense of Ariëns’ opponents, this biography did lead to the preparations for the beatification process. On 7 February 1956, Prof. Dr. L.J. Rogier, as chairman of the Ariëns committee, submitted the official request for a beatification

¹ L.J. Rogier and N. de Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren. Katholiek Nederland, 1853-1953*. ‘s-Gravenhage 1953. This commemorative volume was published in 1953 to mark the centennial of the episcopacy in The Netherlands.

² Cf. L.J. Rogier, *Alfons Ariëns. Apostel en pionier*. ‘s-Hertogenbosch 1953 (G.G.G.-brochure n° 683); idem, ‘Alfons Ariëns. Apostel van de kentering’, in: *Verslag Herdenking honderdste geboortedag pastoor dr. Alfons Ariëns* (Utrecht 1960), p. 9-27.

³ Gerard Brom, *Alfons Ariëns*. Amsterdam 1941, two volumes.

procedure to the archbishop of Utrecht. The church court for this procedure was installed two years later, on 3 August 1958, thirty years after the death of Alphons Ariëns. Many documents were collected for this procedure and many witnesses were interviewed; this resulted in a voluminous *Positio super causae introductione* that was submitted to the Roman Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

There have been fundamental changes to the procedure since it was started. The purpose here is to compile a dossier about the life of the *Servus Dei (Vita Documentata)*, consisting of a brief biography (*Vita*) supported by documents, both those written *about* and those written *by* the person concerned (*Documenta*). At the request of Msgr. Dr. M.P.M. Muskens, who at the time was postulator of the *Causa Ariëns*, the present author accepted the task of compiling the desired dossier. On several occasions, consultations on the nature and size of the dossier were held with Father Dr. Peter Gumpel, S.J., who served as relator in the *Causa Ariëns*.

It goes without saying that for the compilation of the dossier the present author consulted the numerous publications about Alphons Ariëns. Most of this literature had become familiar, since it had been used to prepare the publication of *Bronnen van de katholieke arbeidersbeweging in Nederland: toespraken, brieven en artikelen van Alphons Ariëns, 1887-1901* [*Sources of the Catholic Labour Movement in The Netherlands: Speeches, Letters and Articles by Alphons Ariëns, 1887-1901*] edited by the present author. This publication of source materials was founded on a thorough study of the Ariëns Collection preserved at the Catholic Documentation Centre in Nijmegen, the archive containing Ariëns' manuscripts and published works. In compiling the *Vita Documentata*, the present author turned once again to the Ariëns archive as well as consulting the publications that have appeared in the meantime.

When assembling the dossier, the present author sought inspiration in the portrait of Ariëns in existing literature as apostle of, and pioneer in, the emancipation of Dutch Catholics, while at the same time trying to provide a new foundation for this portrait by situating Ariëns and his work in the historical perspective of the construction of modern society. Does he have any further purely historical importance besides the completion of social and Catholic emancipation? Can his example inspire future generations? Could it perhaps be his emancipation message as 'apostle of the humane society'? These questions served as guides in composing this dossier.

The *Vita Documentata* consists of three volumes.

The first volume contains the *Vita* and includes a description of the life, work and meaning of Alphons Ariëns (1860-1928).

This biographical description has been kept intentionally brief, since over the years many scientific and popular biographies have been published about Ariëns. It is divided according to the three main periods of Ariëns' life: his youth and student years, his years as curate in Enschede, and his period as pastor in Steenderen and Maarsse. Most attention is devoted to his years in Enschede, because this was the crucial periods of his life, literally and figuratively the *pièce de résistance* for his work. During these years, he laid the foundation for his life's work; in his later life, he built on and expanded these foundations. The biography concludes with an attempt to explain the meaning of Ariëns for church and society. Related to this, is an analysis of Ariëns' spiritual legacy. The *Vita* is documented with a limited selection of photocopies from publications about Ariëns.

The two other volumes contain documents written by Ariëns.

Under the title *Pioneer of the Catholic Labour Movement, 1889-1901*, volume 2 contains *Documenta* from his years in Enschede. They have been selected from *Bronnen van de katholieke arbeidersbeweging*, which was cited above.

The third volume, entitled *Prophet of Emancipation, 1888-1928*, consists of a selection from Ariëns' numerous published works on the core problems relating to the main areas of his activity. Besides the Catholic social movement in general and the labour movement in particular, these encompass the struggle against alcohol abuse, the encouragement of the women's movement and the development of Catholic religious life.

The following books have been added as appendix to these three volumes:

1. *Inventaris en bibliografie van de Collectie Ariëns* [*Inventory and bibliography of the Ariëns Collection*].
2. *Ultraiecten. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Alfonsi M. Ariëns, sacerdotis saecularis Tertii Ordinis Franciscalis Sodalitatis (1860-1928), Positio super causae introductione*.
3. *Bronnen van de katholieke arbeidersbeweging in Nederland: toespraken, brieven en artikelen van Alphons Ariëns, 1887-1901* [*Sources of the Catholic Labour Movement in The Netherlands: Speeches, Letters and Articles by Alphons Ariëns, 1887-1901*].

Jan Roes,
Nijmegen, 28 July 1998

1. ALPHONS ARIËNS' YOUTH AND STUDENT YEARS, 1860-1886

Family life

Alphonse Marie Auguste Joseph Ariëns was born on 16 April 1860 in Utrecht. Phons was the fifth child of Adriaan Willem Karel Ariëns and Antonia Christina Elisabeth Povel. In all there were eight children, an equal number of boys and girls. His father, who was born in Venlo, had studied law in Utrecht and later established his law firm there. His mother came from an Amsterdam merchant family. Although they were immigrants in Utrecht, both parents were active Catholics in this outpost of Catholic emancipation. This is important, given the church relations at the time, because since the restoration of episcopal rule and the subsequent Protestant reaction in the April Movement of 1853, Utrecht was a city where Catholics had to run the gauntlet. As lawyer, Ariëns' father was expressly involved in defending Catholic interests in Utrecht. He was also a founder of the Saint Vincent league and was its chairman in its early years.

Not much is known about the kind of boy little Phons was. We do know that he grew up in a good Catholic family. His father was known as a just but severe man, who taught his children discipline and austerity from their earliest days. Mrs Ariëns, by contrast, was more the soft and caring mother who educated her children in a spirit of affection and Catholic piety. She was, however, rather sickly and, partly for this reason, the children were sent to boarding school at an early age, although this practice was far from exceptional in higher Catholic circles at the time. Lack of adequate educational opportunities in the immediate area compelled them to look further away for further education.

Phons Ariëns grew up in the 1860s, a decade marked by far-reaching developments in "local church" in The Netherlands and in the centre of the world church in Rome. These years not only saw the start of the school controversy, which resulted in part from the encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus Errorum*, but were also the time of the Zouaves, who went to Rome in large numbers to defend the pope. Thus for Dutch Catholics, too, the 1860s were a period in which ultramontanism was the dominant theme. The First Vatican Council strengthened this administrative and emotional link with Rome doctrinally. Young Alphons Ariëns thus breathed the atmosphere of a growing Roman Catholic self-awareness from his earliest years at home.

Rolduc Boarding School

After his first communion, which he received at age ten, as was then the custom, Phons Ariëns left grammar school in his home city, Utrecht, in 1870 for the Rolduc

Boarding School in the Province of Limburg. As of that time, he was brought up and educated mainly outside his home. Thus Alphons Ariëns did not have an extensive family life, due in part to the death of both his parents' at a relatively young age: his mother in 1880 and his father three years later.

In Rolduc, young Ariëns proved to be an extraordinarily talented pupil, not only in studies, but also in sports, theatre, and social skills. His childish restlessness and nimbleness soon lead his fellow-pupils to call him 'the flea'. In the then current system of 'annual prizes', he earned the top prize for most subjects throughout high school. Besides providing knowledge and upbringing, Rolduc was also known as a seedbed for Catholic leaders. Alumni of this famous boarding school were linked in an "Old Boys' Network", many of whose members played important roles in Catholic emancipation during the second half of the nineteenth century. In his later activities, Ariëns was able to profit from this regularly.

After graduation, young Ariëns had to face the decision of his future occupation. He had long vacillated between the priesthood and a juridical career. While the obvious choice would have been to take over his father's law firm, and while his father would gladly have seen him do this, Phons felt, in the end, more strongly called to the priesthood. To reach this goal, he stayed two additional years in Rolduc for his training in philosophy.

Rijsenburg Seminary

From 1878 to 1882, Ariëns studied theology at the archdiocesan major seminary Rijsenburg. The level of seminary education in those days can hardly be called academic. There was, however, one important exception: Dr. Herman Schaepman, who taught church history, but more importantly, was the main inspiration of the archdiocese's future clergy, giving the students a militant awareness of an emancipating task. '*Credo pugno*' was his motto and he inculcated this in those he taught. Schaepman certainly considered Ariëns one of his most promising students who would put his teachings into practice.

The seminary put great emphasis on the development of a diocesan spirituality and on the discipline of the priesthood, what we might today call a 'corporate identity'. It is there that Ariëns first came to know the specific characteristics of archdiocese of Utrecht's clergy. His intellectual and other talents earned him the respect of his fellow-students, but at the same time, as typical representative of the urban well-to-do class, he was somewhat of an outsider in an environment where the majority came from an agrarian or craftsman background.

On 15 August 1882, Alphons Ariëns was ordained priest in the Rijsenburg Seminary chapel. Because he was only 22 years old and thus had not reached the age

prescribed by canon law, he had to apply for a dispensation. Illness prevented Msgr. Andreas Ignatius Schaepman, archbishop of Utrecht, from administering the ordination; this task was performed, in his stead, by the missionary bishop Msgr. H.J.A.P. van Ewijk, OP, apostolic vicar of Curaçao. Phons' main regret was that his mother, to whom he said he owed his vocation to the priesthood, was unable to see him ordained; she had died two years earlier.

Study in Rome and Stay in Italy

The extraordinarily talented and, moreover, very youthful new priest was offered the opportunity, soon after ordination, to continue his theology and philosophy studies in Rome, be it at his own expense. Because he came from a reasonably well-to-do family, he was able to meet the cost. In October 1882, he left for the Eternal city with two other students. Less than six months later, he received word in Rome that his father had died suddenly.

It seems impossible to discover exactly what Alphons Ariëns studied in Rome. It was initially intended that he would study canon law, as was the wish of seminary president Van de Burght, who taught this subject. Once in Rome, Ariëns registered at the Dominicans' Saint Thomas Aquinas College, later known as the Minerva University. Presumably he did take courses in canon law, but after some time he changed to dogmatic theology. In any case, on 14 June 1885, he received a doctorate degree in theology from this university. In the spirit of the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, promulgated by Leo XIII in 1879 and in which the teaching of Thomas Aquinas was recommended as the philosophical foundation for Catholic life and philosophy, Ariëns probably concentrated mainly on (neo-) Thomism. Without his later writings showing him to be an emphatic neo-Thomist, it seems that this philosophical education proved useful in guiding Dutch Catholics on the way to modern society in a period of church history when Thomism was the dominant framework for Catholicism's social and political relevance.

After obtaining his doctorate, Ariëns remained another year in Rome. He used some of this time for further study in philosophy and even planned to obtain a doctorate in this discipline, but more than this, he took time to become acquainted with the land and people of Italy. "Rome defrosted me," he would say on several occasions later.¹ This was his way of saying that he became another person in these years, one who had learned to look further than local Dutch landmarks. In any case, these years made him an 'Italophile', as he called it when he wrote for the newspaper *De Tijd* in 1888, under the pseudonym 'Pellegrino', about the pilgrimage a group of Dutch Catholics made to Rome that year.

¹ Interview with Alphons Ariëns, in: *Het Centrum*, 25 June 1910.

On one of his numerous trips through Italy, he also visited Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, who even then was revered as a saint. During the same trip, Ariëns also met his colleague, Don Rua. Ariëns became familiar with their style of social apostolate in Turin, particularly among young people. He also reports this extensively in the pilgrimage account mentioned above. These experiences were one source of inspiration during his later social activities. On Sicily, he went down into the sulphur mines to witness at first hand the inhumanly heavy labour. According to Ariëns own witness, these experiences were of decisive importance for his later life, in particular its social aspect.

2. FATHER ARIËNS AT THE FRONT OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, 1886-1901

After returning from Rome, Alphons Ariëns was appointed curate in the parish of Saint James the Elder in Enschede, on 30 September 1886. The young priest with the doctorate claimed to be pleased with this appointment in the centre of Twenthe's cotton industry. Given the church appointment policy of the time, any thought that he could have influenced this appointment can be excluded. Why the archbishop of Utrecht appointed this highly educated priest, trained in Rome, to a low-level function in a remote corner of the diocese is inexplicable; lack of documentary evidence consigns it permanently among the untraceable decisions made by Utrecht officials. Even though, for a bishop, Msgr. P.M. Snickers had a greater than average interest in social problems, it is hardly likely that socio-political motives played any role in appointing Father Ariëns curate in Enschede.

If not Ariëns himself, his family, friends and colleagues were surprised by this unexpected appointment. In his immediate surroundings, some people were disappointed, others even indignant. Some thought this gifted priest was destined for a more suitable church career as professor at the major seminary or in the diocesan administration. It was presumed that an end would soon be put to such a waste of talent. But Dr. Ariëns spent nearly fifteen years as curate in Enschede. Nevertheless, in this period he grew to become a figure of national importance, especially in the social field. As founder of the (Catholic) labour movement, he became known during these years far beyond Enschede and Twenthe, and far beyond Catholic circles. During his years as curate in the shadow of the Catholic social movement, Ariëns also convinced Dutch Catholics that alcoholism had to be combated in an organised fashion.¹

A few times during this Enschede period, there was some question of giving Ariëns another function. During his first years as curate, he was approached about becoming editor-in-chief of the newspaper *De Tijd*. But for the sake of the rising labour movement, he did not take this position. Also in the interest of the labour movement, there was some question of freeing him from all other duties completely, but the archbishop did not consider the total separation of social from pastoral duties desirable.² From Enschede, Ariëns acquired such prestige among Catholics in The

¹ Cf. Gerard Brom, *De Nieuwe Kruistocht. Drankweergeschiedenis van Rooms Nederland, 1895-1907*. Helmond 1909.

² Cf. Brom, I, p. 202-203.

Netherlands, that Schaepman – despite strong opposition – wanted him as his successor in the Lower House of Parliament.¹

It is possible to distinguish several phases and aspects in the social activities Alphons Ariëns carried out during the fifteen years that he worked as curate of Saint James parish in Enschede. He used the first three years, from 1886 to 1889, mainly to find his orientation in his new function and to gain familiarity with his parishioners' lives and social circumstances. The next four years, up to the foundation of the Diocesan Union of Roman Catholic Workers' Associations in the diocese of Utrecht in the fall of 1893, he laid the foundations for labour organisations in Enschede and in the rest of Twenthe. The following period, between 1893 and 1898, was his most fruitful as social and Catholic leader. The success of his work as social pioneer, made Ariëns famous beyond the borders of Twenthe. Partly due to this fame, his activities were scrutinised more closely and he became subject of greater criticism during this period. In his last years at Enschede (1898-1901), he gradually withdrew to become an advisor behind the lines of the social movement.

The Front Lines in Twenthe

For the last century and a half, the highly tradition-oriented society of Twenthe has been under heavy pressure as the result of radical economic and social changes. It is striking that the transformation that this area has undergone in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has remained as good as completely beyond the ken of professional historians.² While it is true that more or less thorough studies have been made of certain aspects and details and that the results of these studies have been published in *Textiel-historische bijdragen*,³ there are no systematic studies as of the present. However fragmentary the design may be, the outline of Twenthe's history over the past two centuries as depicted in these detail studies reveals the classic image of a developing area.

¹ Cf. Brom, II, p.33.

² Some amateur historians have produced praiseworthy publications on the history of Twenthe and Enschede. I mention here specifically: L.A. Stroink, *Stad en Land van Twente*. Hengelo 1962; A. Benthem Gz., *Geschiedenis van Enschedé en zijne naaste omgeving*. Enschede 1921, second impression.

Due to the lack of adequate provisions in archives and – to a lesser degree – in libraries, it is not always easy for a researcher to obtain access to the necessary historical source material about the history of Twenthe.

³ The following articles are particularly valuable: H.D. Grobben, 'Sociale conflicten en sociale organisatie in de Twentse textielindustrie (1800/60-1912)' n°. 12. (1970). p. 36-78 and n°. 13, (1971) p. 38-75; F. Brouwer and M. van Eijndhoven, 'Fabrieksarbeidsters in de Twentse textiel, 1890-1914', n°. 22, (1981), p. 83-116; E.J. Fischer. 'De ontwikkeling van de Twentse katoenindustrie en de toename van de arbeidsproductiviteit tussen 1800 en 1930', n°. 22, (1981). p. 3-39.

The historical hiatus is partly compensated by several sociometric and sociological studies published on various aspects of Twenthe society in general and Enschede in particular just prior to and following the Second World War¹. Besides stubborn economic and social crises, the interest of the social sciences in this region is also due to specific circumstances in Twenthe that make this area interesting to sociologists. The authors reach the unanimous conclusion that Twenthe is a region with a totally unique character, which distinguishes it in several ways from other areas in The Netherlands. This ‘uniqueness’ is expressed in various ways and areas. The dualistic characteristics of this society have drawn the most attention from diverse researchers.

For it has been observed that there is a dialectical relationship between adherence to traditions and the need for modernisation. In addition, it has been noted that during the nineteenth century a social fatalism replaced the ancient nature fatalism among inhabitants of Twenthe. Ariëns took up his post as curate in Enschede at a moment when the tensions between these apparently contradictory tendencies were growing toward their climax. Throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, all of Twenthe and Enschede in particular, were involved in a radical process of transformation, especially in the socio-economic area. Besides Ariëns’ personal qualities, these circumstances are what made him grow in his role as (Catholic) social emancipator. To situate the documents included in this book in their historical context, it is necessary to recognise Ariëns’ position within the Twenthe context at the end of the nineteenth century. Even though his activities are definitely not limited to this area, the origin of his work as social pioneer is, in form and content, specific to Twenthe. His experiences in this melting pot of tradition and modernisation were closely akin to the demands of the Catholic social movement. Twenthe was thus able to serve as a laboratory for The Catholic Netherlands, with Alphons Ariëns at its head.

Economic Development

However far removed Twenthe may have been geographically and culturally around the middle of the nineteenth century, it had developed into an outpost of the Dutch economy. Between 1800 and 1900, the industrial revolution changed the face of this

¹ In chronological order: A. Blonk. *Fabrieken en mensen. Een sociografie van Enschede*. [Enschede 1929]; F. van Heek. *Stijging en daling op de maatschappelijke ladder. Een onderzoek naar de verticale sociale mobiliteit*. Leiden 1945; F. Smits. *Kerk en stad. Een godsdienst-sociologisch onderzoek met inbegrip van een reigiografie van de industriestad Enschede*. 's-Gravenhage 1952; M.W. Heslinga. *Twentse textielarbeiders. Een sociografische schets*. Utrecht 1954; F.B.M.G. van Ditzhuyzen, *Sociale wetgeving in verband met het karakter van een Twentse bevolkingsgroep*. Lochem 1955; Th.J. IJzerman, *Beroepsaanzien en arbeidsvoldoening met betrekking tot de arbeidsvoorziening in de Twents-Achterhoekse textielindustrie*. Leiden 1959.

area. Weaving had long been a traditional cottage industry in Twenthe. In the eighteenth century, many farming families had become dependent on this side activity to supplement the meagre income derived from farming. The organisation of this cottage industry lay mainly in the hands of merchants, the so-called *fabriqueurs* or *Verleger* who took in and passed on orders for weaving. Long used to a system of serfdom, farmers in Twenthe slipped relatively easily into this ‘modern’ system of dependence, even when it meant that the whole family was doomed to a life of slave labour at the loom. This mixed industry characterised Twenthe’s economy in the early nineteenth century: a predominantly agrarian population with a multi-branch cottage industry. In the course of the century, the shift in manufacturing from this cottage industry to a modern textile industry was so great that by the end of the century, Twenthe was one of the most industrialised areas in The Netherlands.

This economic revolution took place for the most part in the 1860s. Despite the depression in the following decades (1870-1890) the cotton industry in Twenthe managed to continue at a reasonable level. But the capitalist breakthrough came only later in the prosperous period that extended from 1890 to 1910. Recently E.J. Fischer published a study containing statistics on the “development of the cotton industry in Twenthe and the increase of labour productivity between 1800 and 1930”, which clarifies the industrial revolution that took place in Twenthe. These figures provide clear insight into the magnitude of the transformation undergone by the textile industry in Twenthe over the period of a hundred years. The correlation between the number of spindles and looms to the number of labourers (spinners and weavers) and the figures on manual force vs. steam power are the raw data¹.

From the 1860s onward, Enschede developed into the symbol of economic expansion in Twenthe. The dominant position this factory city has held since 1860 becomes evident when the number of spindles and looms in Enschede is compared with the number in other factory areas.

Social Conditions

The expansive growth of the textile industry demanded not only a large labour reserve, but above all a new kind of labourer. Various elements resulted in a thorough

¹ The size of a factory in the cotton industry is usually expressed in the number of spindles and looms that are set up in the spinning resp. weaving mills. The technical procedure in the textile industry had improved greatly in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Instructive information on this subject is on display in the Jannink Textile Museum in Enschede. Further useful information on the history of the textile industry and the labour conditions in that branch of manufacturing can be found in the catalogue *Hun leven, hun werk. Getuigenis uit de textielwereld, 1900-1950*, which was published in 1981 for an exhibition on this subject in Gent (Belgium).

redesign of traditional social relationships. Employers and employees who had represented *recognisably* common interests in the “putting-out system” grew, in anonymous factories, into the opposing classes of entrepreneurs and wage labourers. The social circumstances of labourers deteriorated at work and at home to a level unknown in The Netherlands. The labour question, as phenomenon attendant on capitalism, showed clearly in Twente the price that had to be paid for the transition to a modern economic era.

Greater productivity was the purpose of mechanisation and the expansion that it required. Evidence for the continuously increasing demands of productivity is found in the number of spindles that one labourer had to operate. On a manual spinning wheel, a spinner kept about twenty spindles running. In a steam powered spinning mill in use in 1860, he could operate 60 spindles and by 1900 this number had increased to 160. At this time, an experienced weaver generally operated two looms; if he had one or more assistants, he operated four or even six looms¹. This intensification of labour resulted in a considerable increase in productivity. The increase in production per spindle was even exceptionally high. In the weaving mills, production per loom also increased greatly, especially in the last decades of the nineteenth century. What these figures do not show, but which can also be put under the heading of increased labour productivity, is an improvement in the quality of the thread and cloth produced.

Thanks to the inquiry into labour conditions held in 1890, we are reasonably well informed about the labour conditions that prevailed at this time². The worker in the “putting-out system” was used to being paid for piecework – calculated according to size, weight or amount. In the factory, however, this piecework system took on a totally different shape. It became the industrial whip held over the workers to force increased production. This whip was all the more effective because it was held by foremen recruited from among the workers, who, while they did have a fixed minimum pay, could earn very high bonuses depending on the size and quality of the production³. Spinners and weavers, in their turn, generally hired one or more assistants to

¹ Cf. Fischer, 'Twentse katoenindustrie', p. 20-23.

² *Verslag van de tweede afdeeling der Staatscommissie van Arbeidsenquête*. An extensive discussion of all elements would take us too far beyond the limits of this introduction, which can offer only a global outline of the then current labour conditions. For those who would like more information, this report contains valuable data in addition to the survey. Unfortunately, access to these primary sources for a social history is limited.

³ In the *Verslag Arbeidsenquête 1890* (p. 6) it is plainly stated that piecework combined with the bonus system for the bosses “was designed to whip the workers into action so that the bosses could deliver large quantities”.

perform certain tasks. They were generally paid directly and were thus also dependent on the income derived from piecework. In addition to the worker's proficiency, whether even these skimpy wages could be earned was also dependent on the quality and regular supply of raw materials and the availability and maintenance of machinery.

To earn these wages, workers in 1890 had to work an average of six eleven-hour days a week: men as well as women and children over age twelve¹. In most factories, rest periods added up to one or one and a half hours a day. The working conditions differed according to the type of work, but in many cases they posed a risk to health over the shorter or longer term, either because of the serious and less serious accidents that occurred regularly or because of the unhealthy atmosphere of dust, noise and humidity or because certain types of work led to physical deformity².

There were few if any legal regulations in this area and manufacturers were little inclined to introduce improvements of their own free will. Any factory regulations that did exist were intended almost exclusively to maintain order and regularity and concerned matters such as starting times, keeping machines clean, prohibiting fist fights and the like, so that the production would be guaranteed. The foremen, who could impose severe fines when necessary, were generally responsible for seeing to it that these rules were obeyed. The terror arising from the arbitrary application of rules was one of the workers' most frequent complaints. When felled by illness or accident, workers generally had to find their own replacements if they didn't want to lose their income. There were no or few provisions for cases of long-term or permanent illness, invalidity or old age – assuming the latter was reached.

¹ In 1890 there was a slight reduction in working hours, not in the least because some employers began to realise that the quality of the work suffered under a too lengthy workday. Compared with the situation during and shortly after manual weaving, the working hours were even considerable lessened, according to the labour survey. In some factories, children were hired only after their thirteenth or fourteenth birthdays. In those factories that required schooling, children attended lessons during working hours. In Enschede, this schooling for children age twelve to seventeen was divided over five classes: the first class, ten hours a week, the second, eight hours, the third and fourth classes, six hours and the fifth class four hours. Cf. *Verslag Arbeidsenquête 1890*, p. 12 and 30.

² The labour survey cites harrowing examples of this, such as deformed spinal columns in girls who operated throstle machines in spinning mills, the serious breathing problems that resulted from the hot steam in weaving mills that was necessary to process the material, the deafness caused in weavers as a result of the intense noise, the physical results of cleaning steam boilers that were too hot, and from the literally breath-taking dust in the combing room, also known as the devil's room. On the frequent problem of slipping weaving spools, the report notes: "It often causes minor injuries on cheeks and face, but relatively few serious accidents. But if a spool hits an eye, it is often lost." Cf. *Verslag Arbeidsenquête 1890*, p. 12, 52-58.

Textile labour at home involved the whole family; husband, wife and children each had their role. When the work shifted from cottage industry to factories, many women and children moved with it. Mechanisation even increased the opportunities to exploit these labourers¹. In 1874, the Van Houten child labour law prohibited employing children under age 12 in factories. Women, however, made up a very large percentage of the labourers in Twenthe's textile industry. Although there were local differences, in Twenthe as a whole they represented a relatively constant 36%. This percentage of women labourers in the textile industry was a good deal higher than the 1889 national average of 24.5% and the 1899 average of 29.1%. While the number of married women was relatively small, their numbers in Twenthe again far exceeded those in the rest of the country².

The strikingly low percentage of married women employed in the textile industry in Hengelo was the result of an agreement among the local manufacturers not to hire married women. Civil and church authorities supported this agreement. Here, and elsewhere too, employing married women was considered harmful to their families, since "easy come, easy go" was the general rule in such families. Nevertheless, authorities did not consider it desirable to make hiring married women illegal. Keeping it in check was better left to private initiative. This permitted exceptions under special circumstances, since "it could generally be safely assumed that it was not done from a desire for luxury". If the husband was ill or deceased and there was no other breadwinner, the married woman or widow could still provide for her family. And this also provided employers with a permanent labour reserve³.

Industrialisation not only directly revolutionised labour conditions in Twenthe, but all aspects of life there. One of the most important conditions for growth in the labour intensive textile industry was the availability of enough workers. This required the population to be concentrated near factory locations. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the population of Twenthe had been rather evenly distributed over various, predominantly agrarian, communities. Within the period of a half-century, the area witnessed enormous geographic shifts. Almelo, Hengelo and especially Enschede (certainly when Lonneker is included with it) developed into industrial centres.

¹ One manufacturer thought that the number of women and children employed increased "as of the time that the need for strength was replaced by the need for care and intelligence". Cf. *Verslag Arbeidsenquête 1890*, p. 12.

² Brouwer and Van Eijndhoven, 'Fabriekarbeidsters', p. 88-95.

³ Cf. *Verslag Arbeidsenquête 1890*, p. 20-21; Brouwer and Van Eijndhoven, 'Fabriekarbeidsters', p. 95-96, 108, 109. The piecework system theoretically permitted women to earn the same pay as men. But since they normally performed specific tasks (for example, operating shuttles) they generally earned less.

The swift growth of these factory cities was mainly due to migration from agrarian areas. People came first of all from Twenthe, since the decline in the cottage industry sent the home weavers and their families in search of a new means of subsistence, but they also poured in from farther away, especially from the moors in the northwestern part of the province Overijssel and from Friesland. The general economic downturn and the agricultural crisis in particular led large segments of the agrarian population to seek their living elsewhere; for those who considered the trip to America too far or too expensive, there was a future in Twenthe. Because the textile industry, as was characteristic for a development economy, needed a large supply of low-skilled labour, many workers could find a job in Twenthe, even when they had little or no schooling¹.

Distinctive of the ‘mass migration’ in Twenthe from the countryside to the city was the migration of whole families². The traditionally prominent place that the family held in Twenthe’s social structure served as a natural protection against social disruption. Resistance to an imposed life-style is evident from the workers’ strong preference for building their own house on their own ground. Because of this, even Enschede, the largest of Twenthe’s factory cities, retained its rural appearance until very recently³. In 1890, when the summer working hours were set, some factories took into account the workers’ desire to till their fields. Also in 1890, factory workers in Enschede wanted time free to go to the seed and plant markets to buy what was needed for their fields⁴. This had to do not only with the agrarian origin of most of Twenthe’s workers, but also with their frenetic efforts to preserve the last remnants of their independence and thus their self-respect.

All industrial centres in Twenthe grew swiftly in the second half of the nineteenth century, but Enschede led the pack. Workers were attracted to Enschede, more than to any other centre, because here they found more and better paid work than in the rest of Twenthe⁵. Since the 1860s, this average city developed into the industrial heart of Twenthe. By the end of the nineteenth century it had become a real factory town, where nearly the whole population lived directly or indirectly from the textile industry. The urbanisation process held the constant threat of social displacement for the drifting population of labourers. This was particularly true of Enschede, because of

¹ The low status ascribed to textile work, even in our time, should be seen against this background. Cf. IJzerman.

² Cf. Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 116.

³ Cf. Smits, *Kerk en stad*, p. 188-189. Up to the 1950s, Enschede was described as “flat as a pancake”.

⁴ Cf. Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 81, 189; see also *Verslag Arbeidsenquête 1890*, p. 22-28.

⁵ Over nearly the whole line, pay in Enschede was considerably higher than in other factories in Twenthe, especially for women.

the jolting nature of the transformation. Here social and cultural shifts were most strongly felt.

A shortage of sufficient housing, both in quantity and quality, meant that uprooted workers and their families had difficulty finding shelter. Life in overcrowded hovels strengthened the sense of alienation¹. The workers' physical and mental health, already damaged by the working conditions, was thus also put at risk outside the workplace. Alcohol abuse, which of all places in Twenthe was most prevalent in Enschede at the end of the nineteenth century, was both the cause and the result of misery. The 'Krim' and 'Sebastopol' working-class neighbourhoods, constructed after the 1862 conflagration, as 'emergency housing' for newcomers, were seriously run-down before the end of the century².

"The transformation of a Twenthe hand weaver to a modern factory worker required a gradual transition over several decades with ever increasing intensity." This process of social transformation, which the sociologist described a half-century ago with sober detachment³, was described a half-century earlier by a participant in this difficult struggle in the satire reproduced here. A no less moving profile of modern factory workers was sketched by a weaver born in 1869, who had lived through the Twenthe transformation⁴.

Even before the era of large-scale mechanisation had started, a pastor in Twenthe had foreseen how the introduction of "factories" and the accompanying "factory spirit" would lead to the labourer being sacrificed to the producer's monopoly, under the motto: "work, eat and die, - and be quick about it, all for the profit of your master"⁵. From the cottage industry, the Twenthe worker was accustomed to the hard labour conditions imposed by the "putting-out system" that was certainly able to exploit the available labour as effectively as industrial capitalism could, but at least he kept a semblance of independence, because in addition to this his agricultural business contributed – however humbly – to his upkeep.

But in the factory, the worker was completely dependent on paid labour for his sustenance, was often subject to the arbitrariness of foremen and was continually obliged to produce more, while economic recession kept his pay under pressure. He wasn't allowed to be sick, because it meant no pay, as did unemployment for any

¹ Cf. IJzerman, p. 59.

² "The Krim and Sebastopol and the housing facilities in Beschuitengang belong to the worst in Enschede. In the Krim neighbourhood, half the houses stand empty and the windows are nailed shut. Many of these should be declared uninhabitable." Cf. *Verlag Arbeidsenquête 1890*, p. 22.

³ Cf. Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 139.

⁴ Cf. A.H.J. Engels. *Fabrieksmensen*. Leiden 1907.

⁵ Cf. E.A. Geerdink, *De armoede, het christendom en de staat*. From the writings of E. Geerdink (Amsterdam 1873), p. 74-75.

other reason. In short, he felt like a “Twenthe factory slave” with no rights and no name, whose only value was the labour he provided in the service of capital. As one of these wage slaves, he used primal religious concepts – just look at the title - not only to lament his situation, but to demand his ancient rights and freedoms, and to defend his injured human dignity.

Although when seen sociologically, there was an early development of a factory workers’ class, a self-aware and united working class developed relatively late and only very gradually in Twenthe. An utterance such as that of the wage slave cited above, was exceptional in that time (1887). The term “slave” is a keyword often used to refer to labour relations in Twenthe¹. As a result of industrial modernisation, the ancient feudal paternal relationships between master and servant were transformed into business-like, impersonal power relationships between employers and employees. It is possible that, given this background, the Twenthe worker – with the Twenthe inhabitant’s resigned, slow-reacting nature – was more sensitive to these shifts, which in any case led to a far wider social chasm².

Despite their condition of “slavery” the Twenthe workers as group began to move only slowly and with hesitation. On one side they had a strong sense of solidarity, which became acutely visible during conflicts with factory owners, on the other they tried to preserve as much as possible of their relative independence. To this portrait belongs their struggle for their own house with a bit of land in which they placed their agrarian hopes, despite being in an urban industrial situation. The fact that “respectable” workers left (backward) neighbourhoods like Krim and Sebastopol³, shows that Twenthe workers, despite all their misery, refused to adapt to the lot of a modern industrial proletariat. Not adapting any further than circumstances strictly required – whether this involved (having to) work in the factory or joining (having to join) a union – was the means the inhabitant of Twenthe used to resolve the conflict between tradition and modernisation in personal life, or put differently: an agrarian soul could live a long time in the body of a factory worker⁴.

The employers who “ruled like kings in their companies”⁵ shared this characteristic. (Candidate) entrepreneurs in Twenthe originally felt little attraction to the introduction of steam power. Apart from their distrust of “newfangled inventions”,

¹ In the 1850s pastor Geerdink warned, “if men are made slaves and tigers are raised, then nothing else can be expected than slave rebellions and lurking tigers”. Cf. Geerdink, *De armoede*, p. 74. *Recht voor Allen*, regularly published "Reports from the Twenthe slave colony".

² Cf. IJzerman, p. 60-63.

³ Cf. IJzerman, p. 60.

⁴ Cf. Smits, *Kerk en stad*, p. 303.

⁵ Cf. De Jonge, *Industrialisatie*, p. 109.

they were not eager to make the needed capital investments. A descendent of one of the most respected families noted in the report of a sociological study that the economic meaning of family ties was seldom so clearly demonstrated as here in Twenthe¹. The manufacturers guarded their financial independence with care by keeping the factory ownership as much as possible in the family. Foreign capital was avoided whenever possible and family capital was used to acquire large tracts of land in Twente in addition to the investments in family-owned factories. The nouveau riche behaviour of the ‘cotton barons’ was also evident in the intermarriage policy between the families Blijdenstein, Van Heek, Jannik, Ter Kuile and Scholten, all big names in Twenthe textile history. At the end of the nineteenth century, members of the Enschede town council consisted almost exclusively of manufacturers or their family members².

At times in the early period of mechanisation, Twenthe workers revolted against these social circumstances and relationships, but they were only partly successful in shaping a common resistance and the necessary organisations to defend and promote their interests, and even this partial success was mainly due to outside impulses. Four phases³, more or less coinciding with the four decades, can be distinguished in the history of the Twenthe labour movement from 1860 to 1900. In the 1860s, primarily in Enschede, there were a few spontaneous eruptions as the result of wage payments. In the 1870s the same cause (paying wages in Prussian coin in Almelo) led labour unrest to spread over other cities in Twenthe, partly due to the penetration of radical ideas. This resulted in the first “wildcat” strikes and other expressions of “rebellion” among labourers⁴. Revolutionary ideas continued to spread in the 1880s. A few major strikes taught workers the power of unity; the first labour organisations were founded. The 1880s were the transition years to the front period of the labour movement in the 1890s, when employers and employees came to adopt increasingly irreconcilable positions – partly due to several labour conflicts that had been stubbornly fought – and both sides took recourse in more or less militant organisations.

The change in mentality in the working population took place during the 1880s. In 1884, at the low point of the economic downturn, the social climate had become ripe for organisation. In that year, the first Twenthe branch of the Protestant Christian labour union *Patrimonium* was founded in Enschede. And in that same year, Gerrit Bennink, the then champion of Dutch socialism, brought Domela Nieuwenhuis to Twenthe for the first time. Many Catholic workers listened with fascination to his

¹ Cf. F. van Heek, *Stijging en daling*, p. 20.

² Cf. Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 169.

³ Cf. IJzerman. p. 66-71.

⁴ Cf. Engels, 'Overijssel', p. 443.

words, including Hendrik Engels, a later 'disciple' of Ariëns and leader of the Catholic labour movement. For a few years these workers followed the socialist flag, but soon abandoned it, because Catholic workers didn't feel at home in the anticlerical atmosphere¹. As Catholics, one of their main grievances against the industrial labour conditions was that they were forced to work on Sundays and religious holidays. This had already led to a violent conflict with employers in Almelo in 1870, but in 1890 this particular church issue was still a matter of discord for Catholic workers².

Starting in the 1890s, Twenthe workers, who wanted to join forces, found themselves at a crossroads; they could go in a Protestant-Christian, socialist or Catholic direction. Whatever direction they chose, the trade union movement in this period was largely 'reform'-oriented. The economic conditions for social reforms were better in this period. After a long economic downturn, a forceful revival took place in the mid-1890s, especially in the industrial sector. It marked the start of a period of relative prosperity from which workers began to profit, or perhaps more importantly, expressly wanted to profit. Past apathy was increasingly replaced by a conscious struggle for a better position³. On their side, the Twenthe employers counterattacked, using weapons such as lockout in the battle against strikes. For this purpose they founded the Manufacturers Association in 1890, which became the foundation for the employers' federations in The Netherlands.

Denominational Relationships

In denominational terms, Twenthe has undergone rather comprehensive changes since the middle of the nineteenth century. According to census data, the proportion of Catholics fell from nearly 53% in 1850 to a narrow 40% by the turn of the century. The relative decline – in absolute figures the number of Catholics rose in the same period from a good 40,000 to nearly 60,000 – was mainly the result of non-Catholic immigration. Moreover, economic developments were concentrated mainly in places where Catholics were already in a minority⁴.

For Twenthe as a whole, the denominations were equally populous around the middle of the nineteenth century, but there were great differences between individual places. Of the larger cities, only Hengelo is representative of the situation in Twenthe; Enschede en Lonneker reflected more the broader Dutch situation, while the Catholics were but a small minority in Almelo. Except for Oldenzaal, where Catholics were in a

¹ Cf. Engels, *Fabrieksmenschen*, p.32; Brom, I, p. 317; Veltman, p. 19-20.

² Cf. Veltman, p. 20; *Verslag Arbeidsenquête* 1890, p. 493; See also *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 3.

³ Cf. Th. van Tijn, 'Het sociale leven in Nederland', in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 13 (1978), p. 306-313.

⁴ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 3 n. 8.

clear majority, they were concentrated in the smaller, predominantly agrarian communities, such as Borne, Denekamp, Haaksbergen, Ootmarsum en Tubbergen. Besides quantity, at least two other factors in denominational relations are striking: a deeply rooted religious tolerance and the social position of Catholics. Despite the great denominational differences between one place and another, church relations throughout Twenthe had been marked by respect for one another's religious convictions since the time of the Reformation. This respect consisted not merely in external formalities, but was deeply rooted¹. This element is particularly important for a proper understanding of relations between Catholic and Protestant labour organisations in Twenthe. In this climate of tolerance, an interdenominational labour organisation could develop so favourably that the resulting movement could only be turned around with the greatest episcopal effort. Such intervention from outside was extremely difficult for people in Twenthe to accept; Catholics were no exception to this. From a church point of view, Twenthe Catholics had for centuries been oriented toward neighbouring Münster. They had not participated at all in the – admittedly minimal – Catholic life in The Netherlands².

But in the nineteenth century, Twenthe fell emphatically within the horizon of Dutch society, including church society. For Catholics, the years of economic transition coincided nearly completely with those of transition in their Church. The restoration of the episcopal hierarchy in 1853 brought Catholic Twenthe within the jurisdiction of the archdiocese of Utrecht. This started 'the Catholic affair'. Herman Schaepman, the son of the (non-local) mayor of Tubbergen and the great leader of Dutch Catholics, was born in the Twenthe region in 1844, as a near outsider. Even though Schaepman had represented the electoral district Almelo in the Lower House for many years, it would be incorrect to think that his political leadership relied on his Twenthe background. What is true is that Schaepman as priest of the archdiocese of Utrecht and professor at this diocese's major seminary shaped a generation of young priests who stimulated Dutch and thus Twenthe Catholics into action at the end of the nineteenth century. Among them, Alphons Ariëns is the best-known example.

Even in the agrarian-handcraft period, Catholic participation in Twenthe's administration and economy did not reflect Catholics' numerical strength. Nor were Catholics part of the 'new manufacturing elite' that arose in the eighteenth century and consolidated into modern manufacturers in the nineteenth³. What effects did the

¹ Cf. J. van Hessen, 'De katholieke bevolking in Twente van 1853 tot 1953. Sociografisch en sociologisch gezien', in: *Honderd Jaar Katholiek Twente, 1853-1953* (s.n. 1953), p. 69-71.

² Cf. Van Hessen, 'Katholieke bevolking in Twente', p. 72-75.

³ Cf. Th. van Tijn, 'Het sociale leven in Nederland', in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 13 (1978), p. 87; Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 153-154.

economic and social changes in the second half of the nineteenth century have on the place of Catholics in social and religious relations in Twenthe? This question can only be answered tentatively, because there has been little study on the subject.

Relying on references in the few studies that do exist¹, it can be presupposed that Catholics underwent the modernisation of Twenthe society in contradictory ways. Seen socially, their already relatively backward position seemed to have deteriorated rather than improved. The economic development also disrupted the existing numerical balance in the population in favour of Almelo, Hengelo and especially Enschede. Seen quantitatively, these geographic shifts worked to the disadvantage of Catholics: the proportion of Protestants in these factory cities grew considerably, while the predominantly Catholic communities, which had continued to be mainly agrarian, grew little if at all². These numerical changes also had other effects on the position of Twenthe's Catholics. As socio-cultural and political life began to concentrate in the industrial centres, the influence of the Catholic part of Twenthe's population diminished. These negative developments were compensated by an inner strengthening of Catholicism, which is even more striking because it involved the working class, which was considered vulnerable from the Church's point of view.

Thanks to several sociological studies, we are best informed about the situation in Enschede. Although the number of Catholics in this city grew from 1,292 in 1850 to 4,431 in 1890 and 8,505 in 1909, their relative proportion in this period decreased by more than 9%. On a social level, Catholics in this city held a secondary or lower place. The majority were factory workers; most of the inhabitants of the "infamous neighbourhood" Krim were Catholic³. They weren't represented at all in the administrative and economic upper layer. But that is not all. There were few opportunities for Catholics to climb the social ladder. Manufacturers expressly excluded them from the best path for advancement to leadership positions in factory and office – presumably for anti-papist reasons⁴.

¹ Cf. Van Hessen, 'Katholieke bevolking in Twente', p. 63-70; see also Smits, *Kerk en stad*, p. 199-201.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 3 n. 8.

³ Cf. Brom, I, p. 497; A.H.J. Engels, 'Uit het leven van doctor Ariëns. Persoonlijke herinneringen', in: *MemoReeks*, cahier 7, p. 14-15. According to Engels, Enschede's sole parish at the time Ariëns arrived consisted "for 99% of factory workers and small entrepreneurs". See also Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 130-132.

⁴ Cf. F. van Heek, *Stijging en daling*, p. 346-347, 359. It is true that this information relies on a study carried out in 1941, but it involves social mobility in Enschede over a longer period. Where Van Heek speaks of the "presumption of a strong preference, not related to economic motives, on the part of the employers", Smits says in so many words that "the non-Catholic workers visibly discriminated against Catholic workers: Enschede was, at the end of the nineteenth century far from free

Despite – or should we perhaps say thanks to? - this social discrimination, Catholics in Enschede did not retreat. The strong increase in the percentage of people without church affiliation that occurred around the turn of the century took place at only slight detriment to the Catholics. This striking fact, pointed out especially by non-Catholic authors¹, is explained mainly by the success of an intensive pastoral care and a close-knit organisation among the Catholic population. Not least of all, however, these activities were able to produce the desired results because of the favourable social-religious breeding ground, which made work in Twenthe fruitful. Looking back on the history of the Catholic labour movement in Twenthe and more particularly in Enschede, one of the early leaders noted that “the gradual transformation of the popular character in a purely and consciously Catholic direction” was of the greatest importance for the Catholic (working) population².

Especially in the 1880s the circumstances had become favourable for a cross-fertilisation between two movements, both of which strove for the emancipation of a discriminated segment of the population: workers and Catholics. These two movements met in the Catholic workers in Twenthe. The spontaneous struggle, referred to above, to preserve religious holidays showed that it was possible to appeal to religious interests. An early burgeoning missionary interest among members of the Catholic labour movement was another expression of conscious church affiliation³. This is presumably the key that explains why Ariëns, as outsider, was so quickly able to gain the trust of the sceptical ‘Tukker’ known for being suspicious of everyone and everything that was foreign or ‘not from here’⁴. People in Twente – with their typical bent toward tradition, in particular where religion was concerned – felt attracted when he spoke of the struggle that was needed to defend church and social rights and duties⁵. After ten years of pastoral work, Ariëns had apparently taken to heart the people of Twenthe’s religious and social needs to such an extent that he said of himself: “I’m an adopted son of Twenthe”⁶.

of ‘papist hatred’, although no one could say for sure whether this lay more with the foremen or the ‘owners’.” Cf. Smits. *Kerk en stad*, p. 264.

¹ Cf. Blonk, *Fabrieken en mensen*, p. 130-132; Smits, *Kerk en stad*, p. 200-201.

² Cf. Engels. ‘Overijssel’, p. 451.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Cf. Van Ditzhuyzen, *Sociale wetgeving*, p. 19-20.

⁵ In addition, there seemed to be a special religious awareness among weavers, which in the Middle Ages occasionally even led to the formation of sects in various European countries. It is striking that the denominational labour movement in several countries arose early in areas with a textile industry. Further study is needed to show whether there is any question of historical continuity here. Cf. W. Stark, *The Sociology of Religion: A Study of Christendom. II. Sectarian Religion* (London 1967), p. 6-17.

⁶ Cf. Speech in Borne, 29 Dec. 1905, in: *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1005.

In Twenthe Ariëns had an easy task in that he could organise Catholics for a socio-political struggle without coming in conflict with Catholic interests. The social priest was not hindered in his activity by a possible collision with *Catholic* manufacturers, such as paralysed the Catholic social movement elsewhere¹. Because there were no Catholics among the Twenthe manufacturers, he could support the workers in a more relaxed way than would have been possible in the more southern or western provinces. Conversely, he too changed under the influence of his identification with ‘his’ workers, so that he occasionally spoke of his metamorphosis in Twenthe².

*Distribution by percentage of church affiliation in Enschede, 1849-1909**

	1849	1879	1889	1899	1909
<i>Dutch Reformed</i>	59.0	56.5	60.5	60.5	51.9
<i>Roman Catholic</i>	34.0	32.6	29.1	26.3	24.9
<i>Reformed</i>	—	—	2.2	5.2	6.7
<i>Chr. Reformed</i>	—	0.9	1.7	0.7	1.2
<i>Evangelical Lutheran</i>	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4
<i>Baptist</i>	2.2	2.1	1.1	1.3	1.2
<i>Remonstrant</i>	—	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
<i>Jewish</i>	4.0	7.0	3.4	3.1	2.4
<i>other</i>	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	2.0
<i>none</i>	—	0.4	1.2	1.7	9.2

* Taken from: Smits, *Kerk en stad*, p. 197.

When we review the elements of the Twenthe situation at the end of the nineteenth century to see how they are interconnected, it is striking that each of the areas treated is marked by a continuous tension between modernisation and tradition. This resulted in a transformation with a very typical character. In the late nineteenth century this back corner of The Netherlands developed rapidly into an economic outpost. In a short span, the long-present cottage textile craft was transformed into a modern industry. Yet it also preserved traditional traits in its capital provision and business management. An interesting side effect of industrialisation was the geographic and social opening of the area, to which the railway contributed. Seen socially, Twenthe developed at the end of the nineteenth century into the front line of the labour movement. With the qualification, however, that while the Dutch multi-pronged labour movement may not have originated here, it made Twenthe the home to which the denominational varieties of the ‘modern’ labour movement found its way.

The Catholic Church answered the challenge of the social question, which at least for Twenthe workers – and surely the Catholics among them – had a religious-ethical

¹ The lot of the Flemish priest Adolf Daens is one tragic example of this.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 101.

dimension, with a pastoral attitude that was steeped in social commitment. In Twenthe, this pastoral-social theme intertwined with impulses for Catholic emancipation. The result was that this region produced in an early stage a process, which was aimed at mobilising and organising Dutch Catholics. The three themes of this movement – emancipation, protection and social control – can be clearly distinguished in the Catholic labour movement as it arose in Twenthe. As pacesetter, Alphons Ariëns came on the scene at the head of the labour movement just when the parties were getting ready for the struggle. What he managed to salvage from the struggle during the last fifteen years of the waning century is of irreplaceable importance for further developments in Twenthe and elsewhere¹.

Exploration, 1886-1889

After a stay of four years in Italy, Ariëns returned to the Netherlands in the ‘hot summer’ of 1886. In July of that year the well-ordered fatherland had been shaken by the ‘Eel riot’. his outburst of popular ire in Amsterdam brought to the surface the social tensions that rent Dutch society. The emerging labour movement in general and the socialists in particular raised the ‘social question’ more emphatically. In the mid-1880s the climate for social agitation was more favourable than ever. Domela Nieuwenhuis took grateful advantage of this to preach the socialist revolution. The antisocialist reaction, which soon followed, was released in 1887 in an ‘Orange fury’. Meanwhile Domela had been imprisoned in 1886 for ‘insulting the majesty’ of “King Gorilla” Willem III². The ‘social question’, as higher classes called the workers’ problem, focussed on the gross abuses perpetrated on the working population. For The Netherlands this was a relatively new problem, because capitalism was late in developing here. In other countries, however, the social problems that followed in the wake of economic advancement had already become evident³.

On 13 October 1886 – fourteen days after Ariëns had been appointed curate and two days before he arrived in his parish in Enschede – the Lower House appointed a parliamentary investigatory commission to inquire into the working of the Van Houten Child Labour Law of 1874 and to examine the “situation in factories and workplaces”. This investigation into labour conditions was a milestone in the process of raising public awareness of the workers’ problem. The energetic commission began

¹ Cf. Smits, *Kerk en stad*, p. 201. J. Roes, ‘De eeuwende. Overgangsdecennia van het Nederlandse katholicisme’, in: *Spiegel Historiae*, 13(1978), p. 771-776.

² Cf. Th. van Tijn, ‘De sociale bewegingen van 1876 tot 1887’, in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 13 (1978), p. 98-99; P. de Rooy, *Een revolutie die voorbij ging. Domela Nieuwenhuis en het Palingoproer*. Bussum 1971.

³ Cf. A.C.J. de Vrankrijker, *Een groeiende gedachte. De ontwikkeling der meningen over de sociale kwestie in de 19de eeuw in Nederland*. Assen 1959.

its interrogations in the first months of 1887. The dissolution of the Lower House in June 1887 prevented the commission from completing its work; nevertheless, the publication of its findings in the summer of that year shocked the country¹. The report, which had swiftly sold out, ensured that from that time onward it would no longer be possible to deny that the workers' problem had reached The Netherlands. The planned investigation in Twente was one of the activities that the investigatory commission could not complete. However, soon after his arrival in Enschede Father Ariëns began his own study of his parishioners' social circumstances². He used his pastoral visits to their homes to become acquainted with their living and working conditions, with the hours they worked and the wages they received, with the work performed by women and children. It is not known whether the 1887 investigation into labour conditions inspired Ariëns to carry out this 'private inquiry', but it is not at all improbable. In any case, it allowed him to add substantial knowledge the interest he already had in the social question. In less than a year he had apparently acquired a sufficient insight into the social problems for him to consider it necessary to act even at that time (June 1887); he, therefore, united the workers in an organisation³.

Yet it would take another two years before Ariëns stepped into the labour movement. There were many obstacles in his path, but the main problem was that he felt insecure in his knowledge. Apart from what he had seen personally, he knew little about social problems. He used these two years to steep himself in the theoretical knowledge that he lacked. As of 1 January 1887, he could use the *Sociaal Weekblad*, a weekly periodical set up by a group of leftist liberals. Little if any Catholic social literature was available in The Netherlands⁴.

Ariëns has to turn to other countries for Catholic ideas about social reform. In the second half of the 1880s, the labour question became an international topic of discussion among Catholics. In Germany, Belgium and France in particular, but also in Switzerland, Austria, Italy and even England, the social movement, on both church and political levels, was one of the topics most discussed by Catholic leaders during this period. These were the years when preparatory work was done for the social

¹ *Enquête betreffende werking en uitbreiding der wet van 19 september 1874* (Staatsblad no. 130) *en naar den toestand van fabrieken en werkplaatsen*. [Inquiry concerning the effectiveness and extension of the law of 19 September 1874 and into the condition of factory workers and work places.] Sneek 1887. The three-volume report was reprinted in 1981 under the title *Een kwaad leven* [An Wretched Life] with an introduction by Jacques Giele, ed. (Nijmegen 1981).

² Cf. Brom, I, p. 101-102.

³ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 1.

⁴ Cf. 'Ariëns writings' below.

encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891)¹. A group of distinguished Catholics united around G. cardinal Mermillod had great influence on the development of the encyclical. Besides this more or less closed *Union de Fribourg*, a group of socially minded Catholics from several European countries gathered for meetings in 1886, 1887 and 1890 at the instigation of bishop Doutreloux of Liège. These congresses in Liège, at which Schaeppman was the Dutch representative, lead to a breakthrough in Catholic social consciousness. Ariëns followed these international developments with lively interest. For both theory and practice, he let himself be led mainly by influences from other countries².

The Advance, 1889-1893

Still hesitant despite his now greater knowledge and experience, Ariëns had to be convinced by several fellow-priests in Twenthe to move into social action. Exactly a year before he arrived in Twenthe, on 17 October 1885, the first number of the local weekly newspaper *Weekblad voor Oldenzaal en Omstreken* was published. In publishing this newspaper, the Oldenzaal printer Bruggeman gave impetus to the development of Catholic life in Twenthe. G.H.F. Groothuis, the curate in Rossum, took on the task of editing the paper with Sloet's help. Since 1882, Sloet – a native of Twenthe – had been serving as rector for nuns in Oldenzaal. This far from taxing function left him with time and opportunity for academic studies and to serve as confidant for his colleagues. He also supported and stimulated Ariëns. In 1888 and 1889, several articles on workers' associations appeared in *Weekblad voor Oldenzaal en Omstreken*. It has not been possible to determine with certainty whether these should be attributed to the editor Groothuis or to Ariëns. Regardless, the article 'Katholieke Werklieden-Vereenigingen' ['Catholic Workers' Associations'] that appeared in the issue dated 5 October 1889, inspired a group of workers to join Father Ariëns in founding a Roman Catholic Workers' Association. After a preparatory period of six weeks, Sunday 24 November 1889 witnessed the official founding in the Roman Catholic Boys School located on the Market Square in Enschede.

After just three months, the young association and especially its 'spiritual leader' had to undergo an unexpected and heated ordeal. The strike that broke out on 27 February 1890 at Ter Kuile and Morsman Company drew Ariëns into a whirlpool of events. The role he played in ending this strike of nearly eleven weeks brought him fame and vilification in regions far beyond Enschede. As a result of this labour conflict, Ariëns came to be known in socialist tradition as the "betrayers" of the labour

¹ Cf. R.L. Camp, *The Papal Ideology of Social Reform. A Study in Historical Development, 1878-1967*. Leiden 1969; H. Sorgenfrei, *Die geistesgeschichtlichen Hintergründe der Sozialenzyklika 'Rerum Novarum'*. Heidelberg 1970.

² Cf. 'Ariëns writings' below.

movement¹. This stubborn dagger-thrust legend was spread immediately after the strike by the likes of Domela Nieuwenhuis who, in the Lower House, attributed the failure of the strike to “the crafty machinations of the clergy”. In socialist writings, this image of priest/strike-breaker long served as a favourite anticlerical scapegoat². For Ariëns, this strike was also a traumatic experience that he would remember for the rest of his life.

For various reasons, this strike was a turning point in social development, not only in Enschede or Twenthe, but for all of The Netherlands. In the years before 1890, a somewhat successful attempt was made in Enschede to unite all workers in one trade union. After one or more precursors³, the Weavers and Spinners Union *Vooruit* was founded in 1889. Its membership included “Christians, Catholics and ‘socialists’”⁴. Although the union was supposed to be neutral, members of the Social Democratic Union in Enschede dominated *Vooruit*. This meant that from the beginning this trade union was considered socialist. The strike at Ter Kuile and Morsman, brought the differences of opinion to light prematurely. For *Vooruit* the result of the strike was a tangible loss, which was reflected in its membership numbers⁵. On its side, the still emerging Catholic workers’ association – despite the financial aftermath of the strike⁶ – was encouraged by these developments. The strike had served as a catalyst. As of that time, the denominational and ideological divisions that have marked the Dutch

¹ Cf. G. Harmsen and B. Reinalda, *Voor de bevrijding van de arbeid. Beknopte geschiedenis van de Nederlandse vakbeweging* (Nijmegen 1975), p. 65-66. In recent historiography, Ariëns’ image is no longer so univocally defined as the strikebreaker of 1890. Cf. G. Harmsen, J. Perry, F. van Gelder, *Mens-en-werk. Industriële vakbonden op weg naar eenheid* (Baarn 1980), p. 61

² The Twenthe newspaper *Recht door Zee* was a main contributor to the negative image of Ariëns, which is understandable since disappointment over the result of the strike was most strongly felt in Twenthe. The old sore was reopened fiercely as a result of the failed strike at Hedeman in 1898. Ariëns, too, showed that the dramatic events of 1890 remained fresh in his memory. Cf. also Brom, I, p. 167-178.

³ From the meagre data, we can deduce that probably two workers organisations existed in the period shortly before *Vooruit* was founded in 1889. One, in which J. Brinkhuis was involved, was called *De Voorzorg*, and the other, which Engels mentions, was the *Broederband*. Cf. Grobben, in: *Textiel-Historische Bijdragen*, n° 12 (1970), p. 45; Engels, *Fabrieksmenschen*, p. 31. It may be assumed that *Broederband* is the same organisation that Engels later called *Broederbond* and IJzerman *Broederhand*. Cf. Engels, 'Overijssel', p. 443; IJzerman, p. 68.

⁴ Cf. W. van der Sluis, 'De moderne vakbeweging in de katoenindustrie', in: *Overijssel* (Deventer 1931), p. 431-432.

⁵ Cf. Grobben, in: *Textiel-Historische Bijdragen*, n° 12(1970), p.45-59.

⁶ Ariëns (and ‘his’ association) undertook to support the workers whom the manufacturers ‘locked out’ as a result of the strike until they could find new jobs.

labour movement for almost a century have run straight through the working population¹.

The Enschede curate's introduction on the social stage, considerably hastened by these developments, coincided with a rapid acceleration within the social movement inside and beyond The Netherlands, inside and outside the church. The role that the English cardinal Manning had played in ending a strike by London dock workers in 1889 encouraged Ariëns as can be seen from what he says later. He derived similar encouragement from the stimulating words which Leo XIII spoke that same year to a crowd of French workers on pilgrimage to Rome. Simultaneous with the strike in Enschede, an international conference was held in March 1890 in Berlin² on the workers' problem while 'labour day' was celebrated for the first time on 1 May of that year³. A few months later, the German bishops wrote a pastoral letter on the social question; in Liège, a third international congress of prominent Catholics was held on this subject in September. When, on 15 May 1891, the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was published, Catholic social action was sanctioned and stimulated by the highest authority.

In The Netherlands, a social revolution took place at the same moment. As a consequence of the 1887 investigation of labour conditions, the (Catholic) minister of Justice G.L.M.H. Ruys de Beerenbroeck submitted a proposed Labour Law to the Lower House in 1889. It was accepted nearly unanimously and took effect the following year. However unpretentious it may have been in relation to the magnitude of the problem, this law caused a revolution in the attitude of leaders and long-suffering toward the social question⁴. Moreover, in January 1890, the 'State Commission for the Investigation of Labour Conditions' was appointed to continue the work left unfinished by the 1887 commission. At the end of 1891, a Christian Social Congress was held in Amsterdam; it demonstrated a new social position on the Protestant side.

¹ The positions from which Ariëns had to operate in the 1890s were taken after the 1890 strike. They are not treated in any further detail in this introduction. The documents in this book speak for themselves. They have been especially selected to display the complex ensemble of force and counterforce.

² Pope Leo XIII openly endorsed this conference. In these years, social developments in Germany drew much attention from foreign countries, especially its social legislation (including the 1889 law on old-age and disability insurance). Both Catholics and Protestants began to form social organisations (*Volkverein für das katholische Deutschland* and the first *Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress*, both in 1890). The 1892 theatre production *Die Weber* [the weaver] by Gerhart Hauptmann, historicizing the pitiful social circumstances in the textile industry, caused international furore.

³ An international socialist congress held in Paris in 1889 decided that starting 1 May 1890, International Labour Day would be celebrated on the first day of May.

⁴ Cf. Th. van Tijn, 'De sociale bewegingen van 1876 tot 1887', in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 13 (1978), p. 99.

These eventful years between 1889 and 1891 marked Ariëns breakthrough into his social activity. Not only could he deduce from these developments that he had taken the correct path, but the archbishop also confirmed his actions. Snickers gave Ariëns the best evidence, in the clerical context of the time, of “open credit”¹ by giving him a hefty financial gift to be used for the benefit of the workers’ association. In the autumn of 1890, he also gave his episcopal approval to the association. When he appointed Ariëns ‘spiritual advisor’, he created – consciously or not – a new function². Ariëns was more or less the first one to serve in a ‘ministry’ that was to become as controversial as it was unique in (church) history. This function has become historically important for the complex position of a priest in the socio-political arena of The Netherlands. With this appointment of a spiritual advisor, the bishop of Utrecht demonstrated striking insight in the ‘leadership needs’ of the emerging Catholic social movement: on one side it avoided direct clerical patronage in the style of the German *Arbeiterspräses*, while on the other it gave the hierarchy an effective means to control Catholic organisations. Ariëns was the prototype of this modern priest, who had to be both shepherd and sheep (preferably one with multiple talents). In The Netherlands the Catholic spiritual advisor has largely been moulded to the (flexible) Enschede model.

Ariëns could, indeed, use support from the bishop for his pioneering social task among his parishioners, for the old pastor Meurkens found the newfangled ideas of his restless curate disquieting. After the strike’s ‘success’, the distance between the dean and his youngest curate grew greater with the day, when the latter indefatigably

¹ Cf. M.J. Schröder, 'De verhouding tussen Ariëns en Schaepman', in: *MemoReeks*, n° 7, p. 70-73.

² In a later interview on the early history of the Catholic labour movement in Twente, Ariëns answered the question “*Did you become director or advisor to the workers’ association?*” by saying: “I became its spiritual advisor, thanks to Msgr. Snickers. I asked the workers (the most prominent, probably Winkels and Geerdink) whether they would prefer a clergyman or a worker as president. Their answer: a clergyman. I discussed this with Msgr. Snickers. ‘What do they have in [the province of] Holland?’ he asked. ‘A spiritual advisor’. ‘Then we have to do the same here.’ I told him what the workers had said. That may be the case at present, but in the long term, the members do not want to be led by a clergyman. Schaepman and I both had the president of the Craftsmen’s Association in mind. When I told Schaepman what monsignor had said, he agreed immediately.” Cf. Answers to questions by G.J.A. Budde, in: *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1867. By ‘Holland’, archbishop Snickers, who had previously been bishop of Haarlem, meant the Dutch Roman Catholic Confederation. When he granted approval to the Confederation, Bottermanne, Snickers successor as bishop of Haarlem, “assigned a spiritual advisor to the administration”. Cf. *De Tijd*, 19 June 1888. It is not clear whether this refers to an incidental appointment (namely of L.C.L. Eygenraam) as advisor.

continued his involvement with the labour movement. Ariëns' appointment as advisor – if not director or president – to the association gave him an 'official' mission to continue. Once he had received the appointment, he began, in 1890, to organise the workers systematically: besides the association, there was need for a union that would include all Catholic workers, then for a building to house it, and after that its own newspaper and a core of directors who would lead the movement.

From the strike at Ter Kuile and Morsman, Ariëns learned that what the workers needed first and foremost was a strong trade union. The crisis in the neutral *Vooruit* that resulted from the strike's conclusion left a vacuum that could be put to good use. In a series of speeches, Ariëns impressed upon the members of the workers' association the need to establish their own Catholic trade union. The spiritual and cultural goals of the association had too little binding force to keep the workers organised. For this it was necessary to protect their socio-economic interests. With his union, Ariëns also wanted above all to “draw to the Roman lines those Catholics who, while perhaps not overly observant, had anti-socialist leanings”¹.

On 14 January 1891, he launched his plan to establish the Twenthe Roman Catholic Factory Workers Union. The union quickly proved to be a success, so much so that its rapid growth came at the expense of the workers' association. Ariëns carefully attempted to adjust this development by trying to convince the workers that they needed “a double lever”. Although he was prepared for undesirable side effects, it would be incorrect, and inconsistent with the policy he defended and carried out, to say that the massive rush to the union occurred “to his sorrow”.²

Dean Meurkens' sudden death, on 16 March 1891, removed the greatest obstacle to Ariëns' thirst for action. From then on he could work unhindered to expand the associations to include other factory cities in Twenthe, and to further their development. Since at that time an organisation that wanted to be taken seriously had to have its own building, he turned his full attention to this in the spring and summer of 1891³. Schaepman came in person to inaugurate the new building on the second anniversary of the Roman Catholic Workers' Association. At Sloet's instigation, Bruggeman offered on this occasion to print a newspaper for the Catholic labour movement, if Ariëns would undertake editorial responsibility.

¹ Cf. Answers to questions by G.J.A. Budde, in: *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1867.

² Cf. Harmsen, Perry, Van Gelder, *Mens-en-werk*, p. 62. According to his own words, Ariëns' “trade union idea (...) had stimulated the movement in Enschede from the very first moment”. Cf. Answers to questions by G.J.A. Budde, in: *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1867.

³ On 29 April 1891, the contract was signed for the Tivoli building on Oldenzaalse street in Enschede.

Such a newspaper could do much to help expand the movement, but more ground-work needed doing to ensure its acceptance; the worst of the workers' shyness and the worst of the leading Catholics' suspicion had first to be conquered. For Ariëns, the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* arrived like a 'light from heaven'¹, offering encouragement and legitimacy from the highest church authority. Using the spoken and written word, Ariëns spread the social message in these years, not only in Twenthe, but among all Catholics in The Netherlands; his speeches and letters sparkled with the fire of his passion. In Enschede, meanwhile, he continued to mould the pattern of the movement. A network of organisations and institutions – support fund, savings bank, library, brass band, theatre group, and youth group – must do the utmost possible to defend the workers' interests. In particular, their religious-moral life had to be protected against the dangers that threatened workers especially in the factory and pub. Of essential importance for the movement was the creation of a workers' elite. To this end, *Kern* [Core] was founded in 1892. It was a leaders' club consisting of the directors of the various organisations or specially selected members and a few others.

Amid all of this, Ariëns prepared for the publication of the newspaper for Catholic workers. He did not look forward to the extra work this new venture would require, but this objection was soon put aside when the socialist newspaper *Recht door Zee*, which had served since 1891 as the 'organ devoted to the interests of the oppressed and outcast', was distributed among Twenthe workers. January 1893 saw the publication of the first number of *De Katholieke Werkman* [The Catholic Workman]. Thanks in particular to Ariëns' editorial efforts, this 'Monthly for the Roman Catholic Workers' Associations in Overijssel' soon developed into a quality newspaper, which drew attention outside Catholic circles, from Troelstra for example. When the 'Diocesan Union of Roman Catholic Workers' Associations in the Archdiocese of Utrecht' was founded on 1 October 1893, it was decided not only to make this publication its official organ, but to make it a weekly magazine, starting with its second year.

With the founding of the Utrecht Diocesan Union, the Catholic labour movement, which was still searching at that time for a good organisational form, was shown a way that became determinative for its further development. That no one less than Schaepman was appointed spiritual advisor to the Utrecht union, was neither accidental nor purely a token of esteem for the young movement. Schaepman, who had helped draw up the statutes for the Diocesan Union, consciously appropriated from the archbishop the position of advisor; this was a far from inconsiderable jolt to

¹ *Lumen in coelo* (light in the heaven) was the motto from Malachi used to predict the pontificate of Leo XIII. Even during his life, this saying was frequently applied to Leo XIII to describe his 'enlightened' policy.

Ariëns, who “with his blanket endorsement had thus far been the union’s de facto advisor”¹. This function gave Schaepman the opportunity to resist the ‘competition’ from the diocese of Haarlem. The tobacconist W.C.J. Passtoors had founded the ‘Dutch Roman Catholic Federation’ in Amsterdam in 1888. The initially local organisation of workers and small shopkeepers was soon imitated in other cities, first only in the diocese of Haarlem, but later in other places. But Schaepman did not look kindly on the Federation’s national aspirations, on the contrary, the Utrecht union wanted to ensure that Haarlem’s expansion was kept to a minimum where possible².

Schaepman claimed that the principle difference between the two organisations was that the Federation consisted of workers and small shopkeepers, while Utrecht’s unions were purely workers’ associations. In principle, Ariëns agreed with this view, but was more flexible in practice. If circumstances meant that there was a Federation in some small city, he thought it better than nothing at all, if for no other reason than that it prevented lost energy. The union advisor became increasingly annoyed with what he thought of as the Enschede curate’s half-hearted “buddy-buddy” attitude. On the rebound, Schaepman defended, even more emphatically, the idea of keeping the workers’ association undiluted, although he did not always use equally pure (church) political arguments. It has been too easily assumed on the basis of these ‘tactical’ differences of opinion that he had a more progressive view of the labour movement than did Ariëns. Regarding the vital question – discussed below – of the union’s role, Schaepman, when compared with Ariëns, adopted a standpoint that little justifies calling him a champion of the Catholic labour movement in The Netherlands³. Nor do Schaepman’s occasional hardly flattering remarks about Catholic workers and their sense of organisation⁴ qualify him for this honorary title.

From the earliest days, the antagonism between Utrecht and Haarlem, between the Federations and Workers’ Associations had encumbered the Catholic labour movement with a heavy church burden, if not a shadow of clerical doom. Schaepman

¹ Cf. Schröder. 'Ariëns en Schaepman'. p. 71-72; Answers to questions by G.J.A. Budde, in: *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1867.

² W.G. Ubink. 'De kerkelijke overheid en het ontstaan van de katholieke arbeidersorganisaties in Nederland (1868-1903)', in: *Jaarboek van het Katholiek Documentatie Centrum 1973*, p. 50-65. Background on the clerical rivalry between Utrecht and Haarlem, its (church) political origin and Schaepman’s major role in it can be found in Schaepman biographies.

³ More than others, Veltman and Van de Pas, with the firm support of J.G. van Schaik, have put Schaepman on a pedestal in their publications. Both authors favoured a class-related organisation of the Catholic labour movement, in particular in its Utrecht branch. Van Schaik was Schaepman’s second successor as spiritual advisor on the Utrecht Diocesan Union.

⁴ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, esp. Documents 113 n. 5, and 131 n. 8.

wanted Ariëns' unconditional support in his struggle against the "Haarlem-leaning" Federation, because "the honour of our archdiocese and the labour question" was at risk¹. This question wasted a lot of energy and ultimately led to acute personal disputes between Schaepman and Ariëns. One, and not the least, result of this conflict was a premature end to Ariëns' career as social leader.

Consolidation and Crisis, 1894-1898

After the pioneer years, which laid the foundation for a Catholic labour movement, Ariëns entered a period of consolidation and expansion in 1894. But this phase would also include a serious crisis. The years 1894 to 1898 set the course for Ariëns, for the movement and for the relation between the two. These developments are not isolated, but are part of a general process of fermentation that took place in Dutch society as a whole during the 1890s. The workers were the leaven in this process, for through their efforts much of what had seemed immovable and even untouchable started to shift during these years. In contrast to the 1880s, when social engagement was the work of only an exclusive forward guard, the workers' problem in the 1890s attracted the attention of a broader public. The extensive information from the second investigation of labour conditions, published in 1894, did much to contribute to this.

Beside the economic boom that marked these years, the political climate also worked to the advantage of social progress. Political winds brought a climate in which social legislation could thrive. After the Labour law of 1890, mentioned above, there was a Safety Law in 1897 and a Law on Chambers of Labour in 1897. Public housing and retirement pay also received political attention. The government's changing perspective was also reflected in tax reforms and the introduction of mandatory military service and compulsory education. Clearest evidence for the political shift was to be found in the area of voting rights. When the constitution was revised in 1887, it offered expanded opportunities, which the radical-liberals and parliamentary socialists, but also Reformed Christians and Catholics were eager to turn to their advantage. Workers' neighbourhoods came to be seen as goldmines of political opportunity. The elections held in 1894 and 1897, the first under the new voting legislation, were the liveliest ever.

¹ Van Seggelen, p. 69-73. The true motives, background and circumstances of this conflict have never been discovered. The 'Rijsenburg puzzle' will be very difficult to solve, because Schaepman's personal papers were destroyed in accordance with his wishes as expressed in his testament. This is all the more regrettable, because—aside from personal conflicts (Schaepman couldn't stand Passtoors)—this question involves core moments from the history of Catholicism in The Netherlands, in a church political as well as a socio-political sense.

Ever restless, Ariëns felt completely within his element in these dazzling years between 1894 and 1898. It is the most fruitful period of his life, not only because of his successes, but also because of what he undertook as organiser, director, editor and propagandist. He expanded his work terrain considerably: geographically he looked beyond Twenthe and his interests extended beyond the labour movement. He began to travel throughout The Netherlands to spread his ideas and work and to attract support and co-operation (including financially) for a series of new ventures. That performing all these activities alongside his normal pastoral duties sapped his strength became apparent from several physical breakdowns. However, these slowed his thirst for action only briefly. "Forward, forward, always forward," he repeatedly called to the workers and others and regularly wrote to his friends to encourage himself and everyone else to keep going.

His first concern was to expand and especially strengthen the labour movement in Twenthe. Here he met a problem that would draw heavily on the future of the Catholic labour movement in The Netherlands: the relation between trade unions and class organisations. Over the previous years, the trade unions had grown more swiftly than the workers' associations (these were the class organisations). Besides the fact that the workers felt more attracted by the unions' concern for their material interests than by the spiritual and cultural goals of the workers' associations, the attitudes of various pastors also encouraged this imbalance. Because the unions did not need spiritual advisors, they did not impose any extra work. Nor did unions need their own building, like an organisation did. In this way, pastors could preserve their 'pastoral neutrality' while keeping a possible source of conflict outside their parish.

Initially, the relation between union and class organisations was not a matter of principle derived from any church teaching, but was a free question. But this free option ceased with the foundation of the Utrecht Diocesan Union of Workers' Associations. Union advisor Schaepman demanded that the Catholic trade unions be linked to the workers' associations: a trade union member had to be a member of a workers' association. This mandatory linking created an artificial opposition between two organisational forms that Ariëns thought should be complementary, but on a voluntary basis. In organisation and substance, the 'associations' were much closer to the church than the 'unions' were, so that the workers correctly feared that their social-economic interests would take second place to church interests. Apart from the sharp criticism that the Catholic workers organisations had to suffer from outside, because they were thought to be Catholic umbrella organisations, the link was internally detrimental because of the organisational paralysis and ideological sclerosis caused by Schaepman's intervention. It provided a limitless source of dispute for insiders and outsiders.

How were quantity and quality to be kept in balance organisationally? Ariëns sought the best possible solution under the given circumstances to this ever-returning question of size vs. core. As we have already seen, he wanted the workers' organisations to gather "first-class Catholics" for further formation, while he sought to reach the numerous "half-hearted Catholics" via the unions. As of 1894, when he became editor of *De Katholieke Werkman*, he had the opportunity to present his ideas in the Diocesan Union's weekly paper. What he had hitherto explained in numerous speeches, he could now proclaim weekly to a larger public. Striking for the import Ariëns attached to the new opportunity, is the series of four articles on the principles behind the four-fold social goal of the Catholic labour movement – organisation, development, influence and economic advancement – with which he opened the weekly in the first months of 1894. Later in the year, he added another series of articles on the four moral foundations – diligence, frugality, moderation and morality – that underpinned the movement¹. Only rarely did he produce a series of articles on the program: in 1896 on 'the new direction' for co-operatives and in 1898 on the 'economic disparity and its resolution according to the encyclical'². For the rest he wrote mainly about current developments, responding to national and international events of the previous week. One permanent feature in the paper in these years was the section 'News From the Other Side' in which he engaged in a polemic with the socialist 'competition'. Articles refuting the competition, especially the rival *Recht door Zee*, were present in many other parts of *De Katholieke Werkman*. As of April 1896, Ariëns was given a second, monthly, newspaper to edit, *De Kruisbanier*, in which he called Dutch Catholics to the struggle against alcoholism. In later years, this 'new crusade' followed an independent course, but it started in the labour movement. At an early stage Ariëns noted that alcohol abuse had spread dangerously in Twente³. But he did not relate its consequences to the labour movement; in the first year, he even tried to gain members for the Roman Catholic Workers' Association by offering a free round of drinks at meetings⁴. Aside from whether this was a matter of cause or effect, he gradually came

¹ *De Katholieke Werkman*, 26 Jan., 2 Feb., 17 Feb., 9 March, 22 June, 13 July, 24 Aug., 28 Sept. 1894 and 11 Jan. 1895. How essential Ariëns considered the articles is evident from his suggestion to reprint them in book form (Cf. *De Katholieke Werkman*, 3 June 1898), and the frequency with which he repeated these core ideas at the end of an article (for an example, see *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 73) or as a motto in a conspicuous place (See picture on p. 333 of same work).

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Documents 112 and 158.

³ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 1.

⁴ Cf. H. Verveld, 'Vriend der arbeiders', in: *Twentsche Courant*, 5 Aug. 1938. The Protestant teetotaler Verveld warned Ariëns even then against offering the extra 'enticements' to drink, when workers already had enough of these.

to realise that it would not be possible to solve the social question without also tackling the problem of alcoholism. Because of customs in Catholic circles, he had to overcome much resistance. The ‘schaepman’ – the few daily drinks that Schaeppman had said “every workman was due”, when the Law on Drink took effect in 1881 – had become legendary for Roman Catholic laxity on this point. Ariëns, however, began to work against this current of alcohol abuse. He preached moderation more frequently and more emphatically, in addresses, articles and personal contacts; this virtue was an indispensable condition for laying the moral foundations of the labour movement.

Surprisingly, Ariëns concerned cry bore fruit: on the occasion of the copper anniversary of his ordination in February 1895, three workers offered the strictly personal ‘sacrifice’ of abstaining from alcohol completely in the future. Ariëns used the occasion to push through his “dream of a broad Catholic Temperance Society for The Netherlands”¹. The first three were soon joined by a group of brothers-in-arms that organised a Crusade under the leadership of the curate from Enschede. It founded an independent temperance movement alongside the workers’ organisations, because alcoholism was a problem that involved not only workers, but all Catholics in The Netherlands. In this area, they were far behind their non-Catholic compatriots who had been organising for more than half a century. With the Crusade and its clarion, *De Kruisbanier*, with a League of Mary for the women’s temperance movement and a Saint Anna League for young crusaders against alcohol, Ariëns could exercise his drive to organise in this area (too)².

At the end of 1894, he was given the unexpected chance to realise another social dream. In October, a labour conflict broke out at D. Jordaen and Sons in Haaksbergen, during which 41, mostly older and weaker – workers lost their jobs. Although much later he recognised this as an error³, Ariëns, against the will of its leaders, prevented the Roman Catholic Cotton Workers Union from striking. To help get new jobs for the victims of the conflict, he put in practice the ideal of a ‘co-operative’ that the bishop of Mainz, von Ketteler, had launched as the (Catholic) solution to the social question in his book *die Arbeiterfrage und das Christenthum* (1864). By 14 December 1894, Ariëns had gathered the material and financial means to start a new company *De Eendracht* [Harmony] in the former Roman Catholic rectory in Haaksbergen. To

¹ Letter from Ariëns to Gisbert Brom (27 Feb. 1895), in: *Archief Gisbert Brom*, n° 5.

² The young Gerard Brom, Ariëns precocious ally in ‘the new crusade’ against drink, wrote in 1909 a history of Catholic opposition to drink entitled “Drankweergeschiedenis van Rooms Nederland, 1895-1907”. More than an historical epic, it was a flaming ‘j’accuse’ against Roman Catholic negligence and a fervent plea for Ariëns, whose name had become linked to a temperance fund. Cf. Gerard Brom, *De Nieuwe Kruistocht. Drankweergeschiedenis van Rooms Nederland, 1895-1907*. Helmond 1909. Cf. also Brom, I, p. 427-481.

³ Answers to questions by G.J.A. Budde, in: *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1867.

call it a 'textile factory' would be far too grandiose for this co-operative manual weaving mill that, economically, could not compete in any sense with a modern factory. In no other effort did Ariëns invest as much energy as in this experiment to demonstrate how a Christian society could work as alternative to both capitalism and socialism.

The Haaksbergen co-operative was one of the many experiments in the late 1800s and early 1900s where workers, in The Netherlands and abroad, ran their own companies, but nearly all of them failed. *De Eendracht* was no exception to this rule. Ariëns faced the same problems as the socialist 'productive associations': 1. a chronic shortage of capital, which prevented the needed mechanisation and rationalisation, which put the company in an unfavourable position with regard to the capitalist competition; and 2. equally chronic difficulties in selling and distributing the products¹. To solve these problems, Ariëns spent years travelling the length and breadth of the Catholic population in The Netherlands in the alternating role of beggar and cloth peddler until he had to admit defeat in 1901, when – a half-year after his departure from Enschede – the Haaksbergen factory was forced to close. For many years he would steal the hearts of the Twenthe workers with this indefatigable toil for the Haaksbergen co-operative. Admiration and surprise were the mixed harvest of the equally selfless and reckless love he spent on this problem child; his superiors, his colleagues, his (wealthier) friends and family members were not impressed with Ariëns as entrepreneur. There were repercussions on the Catholic labour movement, not so much because it confirmed prejudices against the social movement, but because he was so preoccupied with this prestige project that he gave the other labour organisations less attention.

In addition to founding *De Eendracht*, the 1894 strike at the Jordaan company also had another effect on the labour movement in Twenthe. What Ariëns had feared and what was also his reason for advising the Catholic factory workers' union against further strikes had become a reality: the majority of the redundant workers were Catholic. This experience made him realise that Catholics alone were too weak. While it is true that the Twenthe Roman Catholic Factory Workers Union had been reorganised earlier in the year to increase its effectiveness, the labour dispute in Haaksbergen taught that co-operation with Protestant-Christian organisations was necessary to allow the workers to stand up forcefully to the employers. Partly at Ariëns' instigation, Catholic and Protestant labour organisations in Twenthe were redeployed. A first form of interdenominational co-operation arose when the Enschede Labour Council

¹ F. Becker and J. Frieswijk, *Bedrijven in eigen beheer Kolonies en produktieve associaties in Nederland tussen 1901 en 1958* (Nijmegen 1976), p. 302-307. See also Brom, I, p. 356-378.

for the Cotton Industry was founded, in part with Ariëns' help. In this 'Chamber of Labour', which consisted of one branch for employers and one for employees, the representatives of the Protestant-Christian and Catholic workers were in one joint section¹. In 1895 discussions were started between representatives of branches of the Twenthe Roman Catholic Cotton Workers Union, the Reconciliation Union, *Patrimonium* and 'Support One Another'. These resulted, on 15 September, in a decision to establish a federated joint venture to be called *Unitas*. A year later, the first interdenominational union in the Netherlands was formally established. In the neighbouring German textile industry, which Ariëns preferred to use as model, similar developments in the establishment of interdenominational unions took place at the same time.

Despite the rather loose co-operative organisation and internal differences of opinion about centralisation and a war chest, *Unitas* thrived. But its first major ordeal lay just around the corner. In the summer of 1897, a pay dispute broke out in Almelo. Most of the complaints could be eliminated and peace restored thanks to the concerted efforts of the local labour organisations – both denominational and socialist. But a new conflict broke out at Hedeman Company in September. The workers' strike led employer to take recourse in a 'lock-out' as so frequently in Twenthe. This development entangled *Unitas* – and indirectly Ariëns – in a fierce labour conflict that would drag on until early March 1898.

This strike is of far-reaching import for the history of the labour movement in Twenthe and far beyond, not so much for the effort it cost as for its results. The after-effects of the strike can be detected in at least three areas: 1. in the relationship between the denominational and the socialist unions, 2. in the budding interdenominational developments, and especially 3. in the Catholic labour movement.

To start with the last: as a result of the strike at Hedeman, Ariëns was shifted to the sidelines of Catholic social activity. One consequence of this was the heavy burden placed on the labour organisations' future, not only because the road was opened for an exclusively Catholic trajectory, but because class organisations of the time were given precedence over the labour union. This marked the start of a difficult period for *Unitas*. If this union had ever had serious interdenominational viability, it seems to have disappeared in 1898, although the 'Roman exodus' from *Unitas* was only officially sealed by an archiepiscopal order in 1912.

The strike at Hedeman is also interesting for the early history of the Dutch labour movement because it is one of the few, if not the only, cases when denominational and socialist unions acted jointly in a labour conflict. Despite their different views, all

¹ The socialists were not represented in the Labour Council. Cf. Grobber, in: *Textiel-Historische Bijdragen*, n° 12 (1970), p. 54-55; IJzerman, p. 75; 'Notulen van de Arbeidsraad voor de Katoenindustrie te Enschede 1895-1897', in: *Archief Unitas*.

parties involved made a serious effort to work together to defend workers' interests. Although Ariëns was not directly involved with the strike, he had played a major role in this attempt at co-operation, as *Unitas*' (unofficial) advisor and as editor of *De Katholieke Werkman*. He was aware of the interests at risk and of the effects that would result from failure. He foresaw that this strike would exert "influence on the whole working population of Twenthe" for many years in the future, just as had been the case with the strike at Ter Kuile and Morsman¹. After the strike was ended, it was obvious to him that long-term relations had been fundamentally spoiled².

As was noted, the Hedeman strike marked a turning point in Ariëns' place in the Catholic labour movement. His position as informal leader in *Unitas* was considerably weakened. His obscure and even conflicting interference had caused tension among the ranks of the denominational labour movement, not only among the members but also among (part of) the leadership. More serious, however, was the harm done to his church 'backing'. A few months later he gave up his position as editor of *De Katholieke Werkman*, willingly or not, after he had vented his views, under the umbrella of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in some four articles on economic disparities in which he used terms that would have fit a socialist comfortably. At Schaepman's instigation, he was called to Utrecht to answer for this lapse. There, in 1895, Van de Wetering had succeeded Snickers, whose secretary he had been, as archbishop. This archbishop had less patience with the Enschede curate's social meddling. He warned Ariëns to practice restraint and forbid him to take part in strikes³.

However, the events in Almelo and their repercussions were more an expression than a cause of the crisis. His involvement in social conflicts outside of Twenthe, such as a bitter strike in Maastricht in 1896. The example of the *Unitas* union found imitation in other places. Moreover, Ariëns consciously sought to expand the Christian (interdenominational) union internationally, which led him to make contacts in Belgium and Germany. He did the same for his campaign against alcohol abuse.

This expansion was accompanied by internal shifts, which changed the character of the Catholic labour movement in these years: it developed in the direction of an autonomous social organisation, which as a result adopted a more independent stance toward church authority. The 1893 ordinance that the trade union was subordinate to

¹ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Documents 152 and 157.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 157. The frustrations and embitterment were all the greater because it had been hoped that this labour conflict would revolutionize social development. More than once during the strike was heard, "If Almelo is lost, all is lost." Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 150.

³ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Documents 149 (note 6) and 159.

the class organisation 'risked' becoming a dead letter in practice, especially after *Unitas* was founded. The trade union's swift expansion proceeded undeniably at the expense of the Roman Catholic labour movement. Ariëns' view on this question of principle was expressed more clearly in his actions than in his words. Insofar as he recognised the structural evolution on time, he made no serious attempts to turn the tide; on the contrary, he promoted them when he helped found *Unitas*. It goes without saying that Schaepman, as advisor to the Roman Catholic workers organisations (the class organisations) was little pleased with this implicit undermining of his function. When, in the context of the universal suffrage movement, Ariëns brought politics into the labour movement, or at least made no effort to keep it out, Schaepman had had enough. In the eventful election of 1897 Catholic workers in Enschede showed that they had their own political ideas, to the great dissatisfaction of Schaepman, who blamed the advisor in Enschede for this¹.

After that, the continually deteriorating relation between Ariëns and Schaepman slid swiftly to its nadir. The Hedeman question was the last straw. Besides the fact that Ariëns' was exceeding his Enschede authority when he acted in Almelo, he was also operating in Schaepman's electoral district. The union advisor took no small degree of malicious pleasure in seeing his 'rival' entangled in the events in Almelo. Knowing that the archbishop was far from pleased with Ariëns' 'adventures', Schaepman took the first opportunity to have church authority do what his own authority as union advisor failed to do, put that annoying Enschede curate in his place².

Behind the Lines, 1898-1901

With the apparent intention of withdrawing from the front lines of the labour movement, Ariëns said and wrote little on social questions for quite some time after the Almelo affair, and certainly not in public. More than a year later, however, he had to face the aftermath that, while restricted in tone and magnitude still revealed the crisis in the Catholic labour movement. In the summer of 1899, Jan Brinkhuis brought the dissident Flemish priest Adolf Daens to Twente to promote the Catholic-Democratic Party. Urged on by what he thought of as *Unitas*' too weak appearance in the Hedeman strike, Brinkhuis had left this union and the Roman Catholic Labour Movement in March 1898. The weaver Brinkhuis, who had been Ariëns' ally from the first moment, wanted to found a workers' organisation that, while it would be Catholic, would be independent of the church and would take a conscious political position.

The arrival of Daens in Twente provided the needed (clerical) commotion. In founding a Christian Democratic Party that intensely challenged the dominating con-

¹ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Documents 131 and 147.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 159.

servative Catholic party in Belgium, Daens had come in conflict with his bishop. The latter suspended him from his priestly faculties, which made many Catholics see him as more or less 'lapsed'. When it became known that Daens would speak in Enschede and Hengelo, it convulsed Twenthe Catholics, and especially the clergy. An official warning that the archbishop had read from the pulpit only fanned the unrest.

For Ariëns, it was more than ironical that Father Daens, his tragic companion in misfortune who, as it were, personified the 'schism' between church and social interest, came to challenge him on his own home ground in Twenthe, and that at the invitation of Ariëns' own 'disciple'. It is understandable that the Enschede advisor felt challenged by the Daensian commotion. Nevertheless, he remained calm amid the general agitation. Relying in part on information he had gathered, he tried to reduce the question to normal proportions for the union advisor, the archbishop and the general public¹.

This Christian Democratic 'entrance' into the Dutch Catholic labour movement is intriguing in its conformity with developments in some neighbouring countries. Around the turn of the century, there was an international crisis in the Catholic social movement. This crisis focussed on two core questions of the Catholic labour movement: its becoming political and its opposition to church's patronising attitude. In Germany, the Christian union organisations fought this conflict in a mounting *Gewerkschaftsstreit*, in Belgium the battle was led by the Christian Democrat movement centred on the brothers Adolf and Pieter Daens².

Compared with these two movements, the 'Catholic Democratic Party' as Brinkhuis grandiosely called it, was not very impressive. But this party was a clear exponent of an undercurrent that strove for socio-political awareness and emancipation from patronising church involvement. Ariëns' reactions to the Daensian incident show that he was well aware that the spirit he had awoken risked escaping from the bottle. Daens and Ariëns were more closely related than the latter wanted to admit. But beside the similarities, the two priests also differed in ways that can be attributed to their different priorities. Ariëns had decided and frankly stated that nothing was as

¹ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Documents 169-171; A. Ariëns, 'De Daens-beweging in België', in: *Het Centrum*, 24 and 25 July 1899.

² R. Brack, *Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, 1900-1914*. Köln 1976. Various studies have been published on elements of the Daensian movement. F.J. Verdoodt is currently preparing a monograph on the subject. Among the sources being consulted is the Vatican Archive where voluminous dossiers on the Daens question are preserved. Louis Paul Book has written a gripping biographical novel entitled *Pieter Daens. Of hoe in de negentiende eeuw de arbeiders van Aalst vochten tegen armoede en onrecht* [*Pieter Daens. Or how the workers in Aalst fought against poverty and injustice in the nineteenth century*] (First impression, Amsterdam 1971).

dear to him after God and his church than the labour movement. In contrast to Daens, this implied a practice of submission to church authority.

For Ariëns, this was no easy choice. Although in his last years in Enschede he was less involved with the workers' organisations than he had been, he found it very difficult to step back from *Unitas*, his most controversial brainchild. He believed he had sufficient reasons to maintain this attitude, even against the will of the union advisor and the archbishop, because he wanted to do all he could to steal Brinkhuis' thunder. But for those in authority, this was an attempt to use Beelzebub to drive out the devil. And they weren't completely wrong, for *Unitas* was itself a symptom of the Christian Democratic fermentation that marked those years. It was no accident that in these years Ariëns sought support in other countries for the idea of an interdenominational and international trade union movement, even when he did his utmost to keep it out of the sight of those 'upstairs'.

Neither his superiors nor some of his friends looked upon his mainly behind the scenes efforts for the interdenominational union with gratitude. Yet he couldn't help working on setting up the newspaper *Bondsblad Unitas* (1899) and, when necessary, announcing the establishment of new branches such as those in Goor and Aalten, or going on foreign trips with leaders when needed¹. If this attitude, in the long term, helped the (interdenominational) union movement is moot, because this provocation of church authority made *Unitas* the stake in a question of principle: in what direction should the Catholic workers movement go, and who had the last word, the workers' organisations or church authorities?

According to Ariëns, the purpose of *Unitas* was to protect Twenthe from socialist inundation. As to the relation with the socialists, he did much to guarantee the outcome of his prediction that these would be seriously affected by the Hedeman strike. In these years, he moved away from the socialists more vigorously than he did in the period when he spoke of them with a degree of respect as those "on the other side". Just before the turn of the century, he expressed his satisfaction in frank terms about the sharper divisions between the parties, in other words that people came to feel "aversion and disgust toward the socials"². For him, a new game was started in Almelo. He missed no opportunity to let people know this.

One such opportunity was his unrelenting propaganda for the Haaksbergen cooperative. When he travelled around the country begging funds to keep this projects

¹ Cf. Engels, 'Overijssel', p. 449-450.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 182. It is amazing that Ariëns, who was generally careful in choosing his words, more than once spoke of the 'socials' when he meant the 'socialists' although in doing so he used the term common at the end of the last century and rarely if ever applied it to himself at this point.

alive, he regularly referred to *De Eendracht's* function as bulwark against the social danger. Meanwhile, this 'company' absorbed so much time, so much energy, so much money and so much attention that other factors, not in the least himself, suffered. However heroic, this desperate struggle to keep 'Haaksbergen' going was kept alive at the expense of his first born, the Catholic labour movement. To a strongly increasing degree, Ariëns had to turn to financiers, which put serious pressure on his material and mental independence in the struggle between labour and capital.

This mixture of ideals and interests was augmented in other avenues. In these years, he expanded over the whole country the struggle he began in Enschede against alcohol abuse. He gained many allies and friends for, and because of, this campaign, especially in Brabant and Limburg, and particularly among prominent members of church and society, including the manufacturers Vlekke and Van Besouw, the priests Mutsaers, Nolens and Prinsen, the lawyers Aalberse, Ruijs de Beerenbrouck and Van Wijnbergen.

Besides the battle against drink, Ariëns repeatedly mobilised this elite for new goals, one time for management or social functions, another for cultural, political or church activities. That this Catholic 'elite' had met regularly and informally in the years after 1899 in the *Klarenbeek Club*, was also partly his doing. In these years Ariëns developed almost automatically into a hub in the Catholic old-boys' network.

Symbolic of this early socio-political compartmentalisation was the Catholic community building, for which Ariëns laid the foundations in his last years in Enschede. In this building, which was given the suitable name *Concordia*, he centralised "the Catholic program" that he had unfolded in 1894¹. To finance this construction, he was largely dependent on contribution from Dutch Catholics, which meant that he literally and figuratively became more indebted to them than was already the case because of 'Haaksbergen'.

As Ariëns became more entangled in his web of Catholic contacts, he grew away from the labour movement. His identification with the interests of (Catholic) workers² was replaced by an orientation to the 'Catholic affair'. Jan Brinkhuis, with whom Ariëns had worked since the birth of the labour movement, did not fail to perceive that the pioneer from the early years was not the same in 1901 – that he had succumbed to the "power of capitalism"³. It could seem that the restless seeker Brinkhuis, who had thanked Ariëns in 1898 when he left the Roman Catholic Workers' Association for teaching him "to stand on his own in society"⁴, wanted to

¹ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 69.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 101.

³ 'De Macht van 't Kapitalisme', in: *De Katholiek-Democraat*, Nov. 1901.

⁴ *De Katholieke Werkman*, 18 March 1898.

send his teacher on his way with the tip of his boot when he left Enschede, but it cannot be denied that there was a striking difference between the curate of 1886 and that of 1901. More than the power of capital, his church position was responsible for the 'new' Ariëns, who felt compelled to withdraw behind the front of the labour movement in the years after 1898. In addition to the reasons cited above for this withdrawal, there was still another: in 1899, he began to think that his days as curate in Enschede could come to an end at any minute and that he therefore had to be prepared to leave Enschede.

Social emancipation and Catholic emancipation, it was for these two complementary movements that Ariëns spent fifteen years in the Enschede front lines. While the sympathetic observer, either contemporary or historian, may see a chasm between these two goals, the founder of the Catholic labour movement did not. Ariëns repeatedly claimed that in his social pioneer work he thought of himself as continuing Schaepman's Catholic emancipation program, with the difference that Schaepman tried to realise this mainly from above while the workers' man did so from below¹. Given the tense relation he had with his teacher in the later years, this may seem incredible at first sight, but perhaps the cause of the personal tensions should be sought in the change of the Catholic guard. For each of the two priests, the basic question was the objective salvation of the faithful. What this meant was not for them to decide but was reserved, according to Roman Catholic teaching for the church magisterium, to the pope and bishops. Ariëns had no doubt that in the end what was and was not 'salvific' was decided in Rome and, for The Netherlands, in Utrecht.

The norm for his priestly activity lay there, as did the limits of 'his' labour movement and, by extension, of the *Catholic* labour movement as such. When he was at the point of withdrawing behind the IJssel line, Ariëns gave two speeches on the encyclical *Graves de communi re*², in which Leo XIII clamped down on the Christian Democratic movement. In these he accepted without reservation the limits set by the church. At that moment, he could see the approaching end of the period in which he had striven in Enschede for 'the spiritual and temporal well-being' of the faithful who (by coincidence) were for the most part workers. This pastoral and social struggle produced the writings published here that serve as source materials for the history of the Catholic labour movement³.

¹ Cf. the numerous references to Schaepman in the index of names; A.M.A.J. Ariëns, Dr. H.J.A.M. Schaepman. Een studie, Haarlem 1889; [F. Netscher] 'Pastoor Dr. A.M.A.J. Ariëns' in *Hollandsche Revue*, 16 (1911), p. 720-723.

² Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Documents 220 and 222.

³ Cf. J. Roes, 'Voor het tijdelijk en geestelijk welzijn. Ariëns' bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de katholieke arbeidersbeweging in Nederland', in: *Alfons Ariëns*

(Speeches delivered on 27 August 1978 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his death). p. 36-38.

3. PASTOR ARIËNS, THE CATHOLICS' SHEPHERD IN THE NETHERLANDS, 1901-1928

'The Grand Pastor of Rural Steenderen', 1901-1908

Ariëns had hoped that at the end of his period as curate, he could continue to work as pastor for the labour movement that he had called to life in Twenthe¹. However, in 1901, Archbishop Van de Wetering appointed him pastor in Steenderen, a purely agrarian village. Contemporaries, both friend and foe, Catholic and non-Catholic saw this transfer as “the banishment of the red curate”. Some referred to it more euphemistically as being “removed upstairs”, with the main emphasis on “removed”. Steenderen lay beyond the IJssel River and was difficult to reach with the transport available at the time. The objective observer's belief in any ‘good intentions’ the archbishop may have had in making this appointment – namely, giving the nearly exhausted Ariëns a chance to rest in the country and so regain his strength – are thus taxed to the utmost.

In any case, this appointment was considered as incomprehensible and surprising as his previous appointment as curate in Enschede had been. Given the situation in the archdiocese of Utrecht at the time, removing someone with the rare qualities and accomplishments of this priest to a place so far from the problems of the modernising world elicits wonder and can be considered an inexplicable waste of talent even in an historical perspective. It became clear that Ariëns was destined for no more than an average church career. About this he had no regrets, at least he never expressed any in so many words; on the contrary, he said repeatedly that he felt most at home as a ‘normal parish priest’.

In Steenderen, Father Ariëns unmistakably began a new phase in his life. He not only had to move from the city to the country, but the companionable person he had become, due in part from living in larger or small groups since he was ten years old, had to adjust to the relatively lonely life of a village pastor. In Enschede, he had not been officially freed of other duties to work in social areas, but in practice he had enjoyed a good deal of freedom. For the city person Ariëns essentially was and would remain for his whole life, working in rural Steenderen required an enormous adjustment. That he could accept this unexpected transfer with conviction and that he could perform his new task as pastor with the necessary energy witnessed to his clerical sense of duty and above all to his mental flexibility.

¹ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 221.

The famous Utrecht gynaecologist Ausems, one of Ariëns numerous friends, is known to have called him ‘the grand pastor of rural Steenderen’. Now, Steenderen was indeed a very small parish, but its new shepherd still needed to learn his trade. Such a small, protected flock as was to be found in this village posed no organisational problems, but as pastor he had literally no one to turn to but himself. From then on, he had to ‘run’ the parish alone as the only one responsible for its pastoral care. He could no longer rely so easily on his colleagues, although if he did need help, he could call on the Franciscan fathers in neighbouring Vorden.

Despite the, for him, so unusual circumstances, he seems to have adapted relatively quickly to the new situation, and even to have felt at home in Steenderen, at least if we may believe what he writes in his letters. That he performed his pastoral tasks even more meticulously, if possible, than he did in his years in Enschede is apparent from the papers he left behind. These contain the full texts of his sermons for all the Sundays of each year. But particularly convincing are the statements that members of this parish made in later years about their pastor. These show him to be an extremely dedicated pastoral worker¹. From then on, the direct care of souls had the highest priority in his life as priest: celebrating the liturgy, administering the sacraments, catechesis, caring for the sick and the poor.

Besides, Ariëns was not buried so deeply in faraway Steenderen that no one could find him. It was partly due to these special circumstances that existing contacts were not only maintained, but even strengthened, in some cases growing into life-long friendships, such as with Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, the later prime minister and the Dominican, Father Alphons Rijken. His contacts in the *Klarenbeek* Club kept him from becoming too lonely. Leaders in church and society visited the ‘social priest’ even way back there beyond the IJssel.

For his part, Ariëns did not reduce the extra-pastoral activities, for which he had become known earlier. During these years, he increased his efforts in the struggle against alcohol abuse, which he had earlier called “the scourge of the century”, certainly when, in 1902, court statistics were published showing that a higher percentage of the Catholics in The Netherlands were involved in criminality, largely due to their greater abuse of alcohol. The flow of his publications on this problem increased, as we shall see in the section on his crusade against alcohol abuse. We will also examine the role he continued to play from beyond the IJssel as advisor to, and inspiration for, the Catholic labour movement, especially when it underwent a serious crisis in the struggle for an interdenominational trade union movement.

¹ Cf. the statements concerned in: *Positio super causae introductione Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Alfonsi M. Ariëns*.

However, we should note here that when Ariëns came to Steenderen, he brought along a whole train of financial worries from his time in Enschede. Msgr. Henricus van de Wetering, who was continuously concerned about how the archdiocese could keep its head above water financially, thought that a financial scatterbrain like Ariëns – and this bishop-bookkeeper was not the only one to consider him such – could probably not do too much damage in the steady environment of a rural parish. It may be assumed that Ariëns' appointment as pastor in a rural location is at least partly attributable to this archiepiscopal concern. Ariëns, who was anything but a bookkeeper and who found it easier to spend money than to collect – or even hope to collect – it, had worked himself into a hopeless financial tangle. To put it bluntly: he filled one hole by digging another, until there was just nowhere left to dig. Arch-beggar that he was, he did not hesitate to go out repeatedly to beg together the funds that were needed.

The Haaksbergen venture in particular kept him under its shadow for years. He not only had to sell the chalice he received from his family at his ordination because of it, but in the quite unusual role of cloth salesman in a cassock he knocked on the doors of shops and homes to sell the textile products made in Haaksbergen –without much success. Not in the least because of these chronic financial worries, he ultimately became a physical wreck. While in the shelter of his Steenderen parish, he did finally managed to pay back his long-standing debt, these years also revealed the damage to his health that resulted from the torrid years in Enschede.

Pastor of Maarssen and Surroundings, 1908-1926

In 1908, he was appointed pastor in Maarssen, after the archbishop had been asked whether it wasn't time to transfer him from Steenderen. This location on the Vecht, River close to the episcopal seat enjoyed a certain prestige among the Utrecht clergy. This, however, was more apparent than real, for this parish was far from flourishing in either a church or financial sense. But, in one aspect, Maarssen was an import step forward when compared to Steenderen: here the pastor had at least one and usually two curates at his side. This gave dynamic Ariëns room to stretch out his wings to the far outreaches of Maarssen, which in this case included the whole Dutch church province and sometimes even beyond it. He remained pastor here until his retirement in 1926 and during these eighteen years, he grew to become the definitive 'shepherd of Catholics in The Netherlands'.

While at the beginning of the twentieth century the village of Maarssen had a predominantly rural character, at least to the outside world, it was far enough under the influence of nearby Utrecht to experience some of the problems of modern society. In his new parish, which numbered about a thousand communicants, the pas-

tor had very different cares than in simple Steenderen. The phenomenon of no, or only marginal, church affiliation required a new approach. We see that in Maarssen pastor Ariëns concentrated on a new form of pastoral work, in contrast to his approach in his former parish where he had introduced few changes. He expressly promoted 'Roman Catholic club activity', which was the spearhead of church development in modern Catholicism. He consciously imitating Don Bosco, he set up organisations for young people.

But an accent in Maarssen that was uniquely his own, was the broad structure that he created with the *Charitas* association to provide adequate care and help facilities for the poor and needy in his parish. A large role was reserved for women in *Charitas*. The report for this association covering the years 1917-1924, which is included in volume 3 of this dossier, gives a good picture of its purpose and broad goal. Of its type, this *Charitas* organisation was unique among parishes in the Dutch church province. During the First World War, pastor Ariëns became involved in organising placement for Belgian refugees in his parish, just as earlier in Steenderen he was able to convince his parishioners to take in children who had become wards of the court.

While alcohol abuse was not a very serious problem in the first parish where he served as pastor, in Maarssen he was again confronted by it at close quarters. Alcoholism had again become a problem he could not ignore. Young people, above all, had to be protected from thralldom alcohol; first in his own parish, then elsewhere. In these years he devoted all his energy to this crusade, which had become his second life work after his early pioneering activity for the Catholic labour movement.

Crusade Against Alcohol Abuse

Even while still active in the Catholic labour movement in Twenthe, Ariëns had become convinced that alcohol abuse had to be combated forcefully. In his analysis of the complex social problem, alcoholism was both cause and symptom of a whole series of social evils. He was able to bring the leaders of the labour movement to share this conviction, for they soon followed him in his crusade against alcohol. This can be considered a small miracle, certainly in Twenthe, where the clergy's battle against alcohol had borne little fruit since it was started in the middle of the nineteenth century. Stronger still, the labour leaders were the ones to take the initiative in creating an organised struggle against alcohol abuse. As has been briefly described above, they had commemorated the copper anniversary of Ariëns' ordination by giving him the 'instrument of the Crusade'. Pastor Ariëns' persevering care brought this adoptive child to adulthood; it became one of the supporting pillars in his struggle to liberate his fellow Catholics from hopeless ensnarement in the social misery they tried to 'drown'.

From this Twenthe initiative grew a fully-fledged organisation whose purpose was to help Dutch Catholics resist alcohol. In his last days in Enschede, Ariëns gave more of his time and energy to his ‘Crusade’, to the Leagues of Mary that fought alcoholism among women, to the Saint Anna societies against alcohol abuse among young people, and to the *De Kruisbanier*, the periodical founded to give voice to the struggle against alcoholism. The more that direct social action was removed from his influence, the more he pursued this indirect path to social reform. It was particularly due to his effort that a congress held in October 1898 in Utrecht, where *toute Hollande catholique* was present, decided to establish a national federation for Catholic temperance societies. An organisation, suitably called *Sobriëtas* was founded in 1899, under the chairmanship of Ariëns’ friend and co-worker Ruijs de Beerenbrouck.

Certainly after his transfer to Steenderen, Ariëns had had time to submerge himself in *Sobriëtas* and all it involved. Current events enticed him from his pastoral tent almost immediately. As we have noted briefly, the court statistics for the year 1900, published in the summer of 1902, caused commotion. According to these statistics, Dutch Catholics were more involved in criminality than were the other denominational population groups.

And when the publicity suggested that this had something to do with their being Catholics, Ariëns felt challenged to take on the defence. He took up his pen to plead the innocence of his co-religionists in the Catholic newspaper *De Tijd*, disputing any causal link between religious conviction and a tendency toward criminality¹. The cause of a greater degree of criminality among Catholics had to be sought in alcohol abuse that, in its turn, was caused by their situation of social deprivation. Recent research in Roman sources show that Ariëns’ publications on this topic swiftly drew attention from highest levels in the Curia².

His two articles on criminality, which were followed by a whole series of ‘commentaries’ and other publications, stimulated Ariëns to deepen his knowledge of alcohol abuse and its social consequences. This resulted in one of his larger publications, which appeared in 1905 under the title *Criminaliteit en Drankmisbruik. Een woord aan de Nederlandsche Katholieken* [Criminality and Alcohol Abuse: A Word to Dutch Catholics]. For the leaders of *Sobriëtas* this was the sign to intensify the struggle against alcoholism. In 1907, a new periodical called *Sobriëtas* was founded; Ariëns was its inspiration and editor. Wielding his pen as weapon, he unleashed in this paper a veritable crusade against alcoholism.

¹ ‘Criminaliteit bij Katholieken’, in: *De Tijd*, 26 and 27 Sept. 1902

² Cf. the chapter ‘Criminaliteit en armoede onder Nederlandse katholieken. Een opmerkelijk rapport van de pauselijk zaakgelastigde Giovannini uit 1902’, in: J.P. De Valk, *Roomser dan de Paus? Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands katholicisme, 1815-1950*. Nijmegen 1998.

Although it was not always easy to keep all comrades in one line, it is thanks to him that Dutch Catholics came to realise that they alone could put an end to this addiction. Young people, in particular, were his goal. He wanted to convince them of their responsibility for the future of the church and of society. Character formation and willpower training became two fixed features in the addresses and writings in which he aimed at fostering temperance and preferably total abstinence. Almost literally to his last breath, Ariëns worked for the elimination of the havoc that alcohol wrecked in people's lives.

Spiritual Advisor to the Catholic Social Movement

We have already seen that at the end of his period in Enschede, Ariëns had been forced to withdraw further behind the lines of the labour movement. Partly on Schaepman's advice, the archbishop had more or less removed him from his functions in the labour movement. The appointment as pastor in Steenderen was clearly a continuation of this policy. Social action, in contrast to the struggle against alcohol, was forbidden terrain, at least for the time being.

Only in 1903 did he regain room to manoeuvre in the social field. Schaepman's death earlier that year certainly removed one barrier, especially since shortly before he died Schaepman said he would like Ariëns to be his successor in the Lower House of Parliament. Although Ariëns had no ambition to serve in the Parliament in The Hague, this was a sign of appreciation for his social achievements. That Ariëns' role as social leader had earned him national respect can be seen in his appointment to the government commission set up after the great railway strike of 1903 to inquire into the working conditions of railway personnel. The bishop had given him permission to accept a seat on this commission¹. Furthermore, by this time Ariëns had as good as paid back all the debts he had incurred while in Enschede and for Haaksbergen.

Another Twenthe burden, which still lay on his shoulders and which was less easy to remove was what was known as the '*Unitas* question'. He carried this interdenominational 'debt of honour' from Steenderen to Maarssen before it was finally paid by force in 1912. What was the problem? From the chapter on his years in the Enschede front line we know that Ariëns had good reasons to choose for an interdenominational federation of Catholic and Protestant textile workers' unions: if together they could raise one social fist, they could face employers and socialist unions from a position of greater strength. *Unitas*, as this union was called, grew to become one of the most powerful organisations in The Netherlands. Its federal design, however, came under increasing pressure to the dissatisfaction of Schaepman and the bishop.

¹ In recognition of his services on this commission, he was decorated, in 1906, as Knight of the Dutch Lion, the same high honour that had been given to Schaepman.

Unitas became the stake of a long struggle about the best structure for Catholic social organisations. The Catholic labour movement had been the guideline for this, but since the trade union and class organisations were born primarily from the need of the times, little attention had been given to their organisational principles, in particular with regard to their relation to the church. The purely practical background of a new function such as ‘spiritual advisor’ was an expression of this provisional structure. But gradually, as other social groups, such as farmers and merchants, copied the Catholic labour movement’s example, there was a need for church guidance and co-ordination. At the start of the twentieth century, three choices had to be made: purely Catholic or mixed denominational organisations, national or diocesan structures, and finally separate union and class organisations or a combined union and class organisation. It lasted until partway through the First World War before these problems were solved, in other words, until the bishops reached a decision.

But in the intervening years, *Unitas* was pressed between the millstones of church and work. When, in addition, the difficult situation was made worse by what had occurred in the German *Gewerkschaftsstreit*, which in its turn was dragged into the struggle between modernism and integralism, the *Unitas* question petrified into a matter of prestige which came down to a dispute between autonomy versus authority. To resolve this question, Ariëns was forced to become a totally different kind of ‘spiritual advisor’ than what he had been in Enschede. The image of the ‘spiritual advisor’ as ‘figurehead’ for the bishop has its roots in this phase of the Catholic movement. This function became a new institution, which determined the shape of the Catholic socio-political group’s structure in the twentieth century. Although Ariëns was convinced of the usefulness, correctness and good right of an interdenominational union, ‘Utrecht’ gave him the task of withdrawing refractory Catholic workers from this association. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that this pioneer of the Catholic labour movement had to sacrifice much to obey this order.

Unavoidably, this sacrifice led to an alienation from ‘his’ labour movement. As spiritual leader, Ariëns continued to offer advice to individual members of the movement’s leadership who asked for it, and continued to give addresses and write articles on the main themes of social policy, especially when this concerned the connection between the union movement and the struggle against alcohol abuse, but during his years in Maarssen the labour aspect of the social movement was transformed into a broader struggle to reform society.

Leader of the Catholic Women’s Movement

Liberating people from addiction to alcohol held a high place on his agenda of reform measures, as was already mentioned. But his struggle against alcoholism led to other

demands and opportunities for social renewal. The mobilization of women in this struggle was one remarkable example. Ariëns had understood early that there was little chance of breaking the lethal chain of poverty and drunkenness without help from women. For him it was obvious that, “If the women want drinking habits to change, then they would change”¹. That is why a separate association for women was set up from the very start of the organised movement against alcohol abuse.

In his crusade against alcoholism, Ariëns called repeatedly and urgently on the efforts of women. His speeches and writings reflect this approach throughout. His call elicited wide response, so wide that the first call for an independent organisation for Catholic women came from this women’s movement against alcohol; it was the first hesitant step toward women’s emancipation in a Catholic context. Acting on the conviction that women are not identical but are equal to men, he drew Catholic women into the social movement.

As was the case for all Dutch Catholic social and cultural association, Ariëns was also present at the birth of the Catholic women’s movement; or to put it more strongly, the founders called upon him in 1912 to serve as its ‘godfather’. He chose, however, to remain in the background, not only because, in this case as with the labour movement, he wanted to leave the women free to organise their own association as they saw fit, but also because a wave of integralist insinuations swept over Catholics in The Netherlands in general and over Ariëns as social leader in particular. Just the idea of a Catholic women’s association would increase the storm, certainly if a priest were involved. Ariëns was well aware of this in these tumultuous years.

Although already hesitant in his contacts with women and extra cautious under these circumstances, he still came under a cloud as a result of the preparatory gathering held on 26 March 1912 in Nijmegen. When asked whether the episcopacy should be involved in the foundation procedure, he advised that church approval should certainly be sought, but that the request should be delayed until the plans had taken a more definite shape. This advice soon leaked out and malicious tongues explained it as advice to exclude the bishops. In the autumn of 1912, the Roman Catholic Woman’s Alliance was founded with episcopal approval, but Ariëns wisely remained in the shadows, although there is good evidence for also attributing this emancipation movement to him. However, this did not impede him from appealing ever more insistently in the following years for people to take responsibility for the ‘Catholic affair’.

Motor of the Catholic Movement

By the start of the First World War, the ‘Catholic movement’, which had begun some twenty-five years earlier from very humble and local beginnings and which had devel-

¹ Brom, II, p. 285.

oped rapidly thanks primarily to Ariëns pioneering social activities during his years as curate, had gained a definite foothold. This is especially true of the social organisations, about which the bishops had issued a communiqué in 1916. This communiqué has since served as a legislative framework for the further structuring and expansion of the Catholic socio-political group¹. In a certain sense, this rounded off Ariëns' work as pioneer of the labour movement. The more the movement was able to steer its own course, the more he turned to cultivating other parts of the church's vineyard.

After and in addition to the labour, temperance and women's movements, pastor Ariëns turned to the broader unfolding of 'Catholic life' as a means to strengthen Catholic identity. In these years of dynamic expansion, which led to "a flourishing Catholic life" as confident proof of successful Catholic emancipation, Ariëns grew to become the motor of the Catholic movement in The Netherlands. Communication is an indispensable instrument for helping a large mass of people along the road to progress in modern society. Ariëns recognised early the importance of newspapers and periodicals as means of communication between the various levels of an organisation. Throughout his life as priest he was a driven prophet, not only in his speech but also with his pen. He filled thousands upon thousands of pages – from short and long letters to articles and brochures – to spread his message of emancipation and renewal.

As editor, he was responsible for publishing three periodicals, in particular for supplying the needed copy. From Steenderen and especially Maarssen, he turned energetically to the apostolate of the pen once he was freed from the daily cares for the labour organisations. He was a journalistic publicist who wrote about current problems; he produced no learned tractates, but stimulating and apologetic articles, clear and systematic, as could be expected from a trained Thomist. To disseminate information effectively to broad layers of the Catholic population, Ariëns undertook ventures that were typical of his creative and indefatigable talent for organisation. During a stay in England, he had learned of the successful work done by the Catholic Truth Society, which inspired him to found the Geert Groote Society². By publishing easily readable and inexpensive brochures, the GGG, as the society came to be known, intended to keep the Catholic population informed of current questions in the areas of faith and society. By preference, these were distributed directly by mail but were also available in a pamphlet rack that pastor Ariëns installed in his church in Maarssen.

The Catholic movement was given a new impulse during the First World War by the missionary dynamism that infused Dutch Catholics. Ariëns can be considered one

¹ Cf. J.M.G. Thurlings, *De wankele zuil. Nederlandse katholieken tussen assimilatie en pluralisme* (Deventer 1978, second impression), p. 42-43.

² Cf. G. Dierick, 'De oprichting van het Geert Groote Genootschap', in: *Jaarboek van het Katholiek Documentatie Centrum 1971*, p. 47-110.

of the earliest clarions of the 'grand mission hour'¹. As soon as new missionary ventures arose, he supported them vigorously in word and deed. He helped awaken the missionary spirit with his calls to action in the press. He stimulated the work of the papal missionary societies, starting in his own parish, and then in other parts of the archdiocese. He was particularly active in promoting a missionary spirituality among his fellow priests². The establishment of an Apostolic Union of Secular Priests was intended to strengthen missionary spirit among parochial clergy. As so often in Ariëns' life, one thing led to another: from this missionary venture he felt called to expand the *Unio Apostolica* among his fellow priests, to encourage their apostolic identity.

Ariëns' relation to non-Catholics in general and Protestants in particular was ambivalent. In the spirit of openness and mutual respect he participated in constructive co-operation, as is evinced in his attitude toward the interdenominational union *Unitas*, but he also forcefully defended doctrine and Catholic interests against attacks from dissenters. In the same period in which he was anxious about the continued existence of *Unitas*, he was also involved in establishing the Peter Canisius Apologetic Society (1904). Yet he did not participate in the Committee for the Conversion of The Netherlands, which was founded in 1919. This was a rather unrealistic effort begun by a group of fanatic Catholics. However, at the same time he protested against placing Catholic children from Vienna in Protestant families. As leader of the 'Catholic movement' he kept a close watch on denominational interests.

The conscious and systematic mobilisation of lay people is a striking element in the method Ariëns used in all his organisational activities. From the early days of the labour movement he emphasised the need for a trained nucleus. He chose the same approach for the temperance and women's movements. In his view, priests should limit themselves to starting a movement and to finding suitable leaders to whom its further development and expansion should be entrusted. Ariëns' repeated success in mobilising a large group of lay people, including many intellectual and social leaders, for the Catholic affair is one of his major accomplishments. It pointed the way to the formation of lay apostles such as Pius XI urged in the context of Catholic Action.

Although he was unfamiliar with the theory of social movements, Ariëns understood that the saying *pecunia nervus rerum* – no money, no movement – applied to the Catholic movement. Like every other 'social movement', the Catholic movement had to gather the needed 'resources': financial and other. Ariëns spent much energy

¹ Cf. J. Roes, *Het groote missie-uur. Op zoek naar de missiemotivatie van de Nederlandse katholieken, 1915-1940*. Bilthoven 1974.

² Cf. Th. Wolters, 'Assistent der Unio Apostolica', in: H. van Ooyen, *Ariëns Priester* (Heerlen-Enschede s.d.), p. 77-84.

on this ‘resource management’. He gained a reputation as ‘arch-beggar’ among Catholics in The Netherlands; he begged for money for the ‘Catholic affair’ throughout his life: for a building to house the Catholic labour movement in Enschede, for the weaving mill *De Eendracht* in Haaksbergen, for the temperance movement or the missions, or for the planned Catholic University. Not even a close guess can be made of the amounts involved, especially since he had no talent for finances. Money only interested him as something that could be spent, as something to be used for good and useful purposes. This meant that professionally and privately he was chronically short of funds. That makes it all the more striking that despite this he kept the trust of so many benefactors (family, friends and acquaintances) who continued to support him.

Prophet in His Own Country

It is said that prophets are not honoured in their own country. This is not really applicable to Ariëns, for even during his life he was honoured for his service. Besides numerous publications, other witnesses to this are the institutions that bear his name, the Ariëns Fund (1907) and the Dr. Ariëns Society (1920). Both civil and religious authorities conferred honours; in 1906 he was made Knight of the Dutch Lion and in 1919 he was made secret papal chamberlain and received the associated title of monsignor. The celebration of the fortieth anniversary of his ordination, in 1922, was the occasion for a national expression of homage from Dutch Catholics. The elite descended nearly unanimously on the rectory in Maarssen. At his funeral, six years later, they were present again. After his death, admiration for this special priest only increased. The Ariëns committee was set up on 1936 to preserve his memory.

However, Ariëns stimulated not only appreciation and admiration, but a good deal of scepticism and surprise, and from some quarters, even opposition and suspicion. His work is thus not undisputed. Co-religionists who could admire his contagious urge for renewal had their doubts about the realism of the many ideals he pursued. In the pioneer phase of the Catholic labour movement, he had to put up with the distrust and disinclination of part of the clergy: the old guard among fellow priests, who were known in the diocese of Utrecht for their matter-of-fact attitude, had many doubts about his actions; but among younger priests he had many followers. Friction with his teacher Dr. Herman Schaepman, the Catholics’ political leader, grew to the point that their contact was broken off completely. Partly influenced by this difficult relationship, his archbishop looked upon this remarkable priest with a mixture of respect and suspicion¹.

¹ Characteristic for the level-headedness of the Utrecht clergy is Cardinal De Jong’s comment in response to a compliment about this exceptionally gifted priest: “as archbishop I am happy to have this priest, but I am also glad I have only one such.”

The most difficult phase of Ariëns' life is doubtless the period of turbid struggle between modernists and integralists. While he definitely cannot be suspected of modernism, if only because he refrained, almost on principle, from taking theological and philosophical stands and moreover because he was a far too orthodox and law-abiding priest to act against the teaching of the church, Dutch integralists still regarded him as a black sheep. They found Ariëns an easy target because with 'his' labour, temperance and women's movements he operated in an area that – in terms of orthopraxis – was the primary object of modernist suspicions.

Retirement in Amersfoort, 1926-1928

Ariëns was a 'workaholic', addicted to work. Besides smoking, it was probably the only addiction he thought he could permit himself. From his first days as curate in Enschede, he overexerted himself chronically. His nervous and restless nature allowed him too little time to regain his physical and mental strength. He neglected to get enough sleep and forgot to eat and drink regularly. He ignored warnings from those around him. After ten years of hard labour as priest-pioneer with more than two full-time jobs, he was confronted in Enschede for the first time with the limits of his stamina. While it is true that he recovered rapidly, the complaints resulting from overwork and excess tension returned with greater regularity over the following years. This was certainly true once he had developed heart trouble.

His workload wore out his lean body prematurely. In the Maarssen period, it became increasingly difficult for him to deny this. Although as pastor Ariëns could benefit in these years from the help of devoted and competent curates, which not only left time for his many activities outside Maarssen but also allowed him to delay his retirement, he finally had to accept the status of retired pastor.

In 1926, his twenty-fifth year as pastor, he requested and was permitted to retire. As retired priest, he moved to the convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Amersfoort, right next to the Redemptorist retreat house. There, too, he couldn't stop working. He paid and received visits. He kept writing articles, especially about temperance. But his strength continued to wane. On 7 August 1928, at age 68, he died in the convent to which he had withdrawn.

The presupposition that Msgr. Van de Wetering had similar ideas about Ariëns is not farfetched.

4. FATHER ARIËNS: HIS MEANING FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Person

“Ariëns priest”, many publications use these two words, chiselled on Father Ariëns’ gravestone in Maarssen, to summarise his life. For example, to explain his multi-faceted activities, authors point to the pastoral motives that moved this pastor to work for his fellows, especially the needy. Although these publications should generally be read against the background of emancipation Catholicism and the prominent role attributed to this priest in that process, it cannot be denied that it is difficult to understand certain traits of Ariëns’ personality and work when it is not viewed from the perspective of his Christian inspiration. Many writings with a more or less hagiographic tint portray Ariëns, as curate and pastor, as an idealised priest rather than as a typical representative of the clergy of the archdiocese of Utrecht

In nearly every way, he is distinguished from the majority of his colleagues. He was born in a city in an academic environment, while most of the archdiocesan clergy came from the rural families of farmers or craftsmen. Although Ariëns could adapt reasonably well to a rural environment such as that of Steenderen and to the village Maarssen, he still remained essentially an urban figure with an intellectual foundation. His preference for ‘kindred intellects’ is clearly visible from his circle of friends, which included Gisbert Brom, Schröder, Sloet. Ariëns was an early representative, certainly among Dutch priests, of the modern, dynamic cultural pattern and thus felt easily at home in an urban industrial society. He could give clear expression to the corresponding urge for change during his years in Enschede. This made him a ‘born leader’ of the social and cultural emancipation of Dutch Catholics at the end of the eighteenth century.

The brief biography of Ariëns provided here will have made it clear to the reader that this priest does not owe his permanent place in Dutch (church) history to a high-flying church or secular career. Publications on Ariëns seek an explanation in the attraction that undeniably radiated from his character, from his life and work as an extraordinary priest, which made him the guide to a whole generation of colleagues. This guiding function also finds expression in the documents appended to this biography. To understand these documents properly, it would be useful to be aware of several salient features. A mere superficial acquaintance was enough for people to note two character traits, which generally cancel one another out in other people, but which

seem to have nourished Ariëns' life and work: a nervous, almost compulsive drive to work and a nearly scrupulous exactitude.

A vacillator by nature, he sought advice from everyone. In addition to constantly seeking advice, as we see in his numerous letters, the present author sees an even more striking expression of this exactitude in the way he prepared his texts. This is especially evident in the manuscripts of the hundreds of addresses and sermons that he wrote. Whether sermon or lecture or a 'word of advice' for the workers, he wrote down on paper every word he would speak, at least in short notes, but mostly in a complete text. All texts contain deletions, corrections or additions. Apparently he reread his texts several times, weighing each word and wondering whether it was sufficiently good, honest and clear. His letters also show that he reread what he wrote and sometimes gave it to someone else to read before mailing it; sometimes he was afraid he might offend someone, other times he was worried that he had not used all available arguments, so that he often added a word or sentence, softened a sharp word or added a postscript with some further thought.

Ethically, Ariëns was a child of the Victorian period. Prudish to the point of being scrupulous, he assiduously avoided all that could bring him into temptation. Particularly in his contact with women he was exaggeratedly 'fastidious'¹. This concern for ethics was also an important theme in his socio-pastoral work in the labour movement and, of course, in the battle against alcoholism. In at least one regard Ariëns was anything but meticulous, was even reckless, and that was in the way he managed money. Besides an inadequate insight in pecuniary matters his financial mismanagement was also often due to an excess of trust. As a "born optimist" – a way Ariëns liked to describe himself – he assumed the best of people. In general this characteristic helped him to gain the trust of others, although on several occasions he was given the brush off.

Despite a timid shyness, he had ease in his contacts with all types of people. It was not so much his external refinement as an inner interest in the other person and his problems that made him appealing to others, despite his restless fervour². This helped open doors for 'the doctor', giving him access after only a short time to the people of Twenthe, despite their reputation for being closed and distrustful. In his own opinion, the experiences he derived from his stay in Italy taught him to work with people; they "defrosted" him, as he put it. Be this as it may, he was able, in his turn, to defrost his environment, and not in the least the Twenthe worker: the Catholic in the first place,

¹ Cf. J. Brinkhuis. 'Wie was doctor Ariëns?', in: *MemoReeks*, n^o. 7, p. 13.

² Cf. M. Bruna, *Mgr. Dr. A. Ariëns* (Amsterdam 1948), p. 27-28.

but also the Protestant. In a period when it was by no means customary for a priest, he sought and found an audience among Protestant Christian groups¹.

Ariëns was an open person with great social skills. As priest he did not recoil from contacts with dissenters, Protestant, socialist or liberal. He was also good with the press and in politics. Conflicts, however, gave him difficulty; by nature he was a man of harmony and reconciliation. Contrary to a politician, for whom conflicts are a power base, he detested conflicts and avoided them wherever possible. In this sense, Ariëns was decidedly not suitable for (church) politics. Could not an *incompatibilité d'humeur* in character between Ariëns and Schaepman be the deepest cause of their clashes? His compromises between various positions and interests could easily give the impression that he lacked sincerity. On the other hand, he usually had a clear-cut opinion about matters he was involved in and could even be rather stubborn when he thought it a matter of principle. In questions freedom of conscience, he could even collide seriously with loyalty to church authority.

His relation to church authority is a separate chapter in Ariëns' life. Ultimately he always obeyed submissively, for above all he was an exemplary priest, schooled in the clerical discipline characteristic of ultramontane Catholicism, but that he occasionally had to force himself is evident. It is probably more correct to speak of his relation with the archbishop to whom he owed obedience for the largest part of his priestly life: Msgr. Henricus van de Wetering. Their relation was based exclusively on respect for authority and obedience. A greater difference of character than what there was between these two people is scarcely imaginable. Although he was indisputably intellectually and morally superior to his bishop, Ariëns was as afraid as a small boy for the linear authority of this undisputable superior. His loyalty and docility to church authority was stressed and admired by many witnesses in the *Causa Ariëns* as proof of his heroism.

In one Catholic tradition, unquestioning docility was indeed considered an expression of 'heroism in the faith'. But is it not also relevant to recognise the harmful side of unthinking obedience, and to see it as one of the 'damaging' aspects for complete development of Ariëns' talents? Did Ariëns the *priest* not have to exert force on Ariëns the *person* to bring to full expression the deepest motives for his activities as Christian, namely caring about and for the preservation of human dignity? Did not Ariëns' personal life fall short of the ideals that he strove for in and preached to others? If an attitude of subservience is considered evidence of sanctity, would this evidence not contradict the higher good of human dignity, which was the main concern of 'the servant of God'. Would a possible canonisation then not overlook both the essence and the ultimate goal of canonisation, namely, keeping alive the 'memory'

¹ H. Verveld, 'Vriend der arbeiders', in: *Twentsche Courant*, 5 Aug. 1938.

of an exemplary follower of Jesus and his 'good news', in short, offering a convincing example for imitation, to all people of good will, Christians and non-Christians, on the way to a new future, here and in the afterlife.

Pioneer and Prophet

With the impatience of one driven, Ariëns could grate on the nerves of his more sedate colleagues. He was constantly in motion, even literally, making new plans before the current project was even partially complete. He did not have the oratorical talents of his teacher Schaepman, but he could draw his hearers in his wake, physically if necessary. He was able to find the right tone, especially with workers, so that the natural leaders among them felt involved¹. In this way he tried to get and keep the inert mass of workers moving. Rather than being on a podium, he preferred to work behind the scenes as indefatigable driving force. The effects of these burdens can be seen clearly when comparing photos of Ariëns taken in 1886 and 1901.

Certainly during the period in Enschede, when he was at the height of his strength, Ariëns displayed an inconceivable dynamism. To get the labour movement started, to publish *De Katholieke Werkman*, to establish the production co-operative in Haaksbergen and especially to keep it running, to organise the struggle against alcoholism, to travel the country giving addresses and lectures, to help resolve social conflicts, to beg funds for his ideals and machinations, and to do all this in addition to his normal duties as curate, he had literally to work day and night as organiser, stimulator, publicist, orator and debater.

As the son of a lawyer, Ariëns had a strongly developed sense of law (few things could get him as wound up as breaches of justice), which earned him much credit among the people in Twente. To hear from a priest that justice did not come above but before love of neighbour: that was what the 'serfs' of industrial society wanted to hear. The Ariëns' diplomatic and political skills show that in addition to the relationships of law, he was also sensitive to those of power.

All the abuses that together made up 'the workers' problem' at the end of the eighteenth century in The Netherlands continually found a place in his addresses as sins that cried out for revenge. From his own observations, as well as information from his worker friends and from investigations of labour conditions he could sum up the many shortcomings of this society in revolution: (too) low pay for excessively long hours, working conditions that were a permanent risk for the workers' physical and mental health and safety, woman and child labour, no income during unemploy-

¹ Cf. A.H.J. Engels. *Fabrieksmenschen*. (Leiden 1907), p. 33-36; id., 'De geschiedenis der Rooms-Katholieke arbeidersbeweging in Overijssel', in: *Overijssel* (Deventer 1931), p. 446.

ment resulting from sickness or redundancy, no old-age provisions or for widows and orphans, the housing problem, alcoholism.

The purpose of the labour movement lay in the liberation of workers from their condition of servile dependence. When he took emancipation as his starting point, Ariëns differed little from the views of his main opponents, the socialists, but he did differ in the paths that should be followed to reach this goal: reform or revolution in the social order. According to Ariëns, workers should take matters into their own hands, by becoming organised and developing power, so that they could exert the necessary influence on their lot and so that they could have their just share of prosperity, but they should do so on the basis of diligence, frugality, moderation and morality.

In addition to independence, he stressed the need for social and political reform in his speeches and articles on solving the worker's problem: democratic means must be used to bring legislators to protect workers from the overweening power of capital. Social legislation could gradually improve the workers' legal position. Partly for this reason, Ariëns thought that gaining public opinion was vitally important for the success of the labour movement and he was a proponent of extending the right to vote. There were other areas where he also thought democratisation should be applied, such as: the workers' contribution to decision-making in work councils or chambers of labour where relations between employers and employees were negotiated, and the administration of labour organisations, certainly when there was a question of using a strike as the ultimate weapon in a labour conflict.

Ariëns saw uniting Catholic workers in their own organisations as an indispensable precondition for attaining these goals. The speeches that relate to the establishment and development of the Catholic workers' associations and unions belong to the unique and thus most appealing documentation in the Ariëns archive. Thanks to the exact nature of the spiritual advisor, who had the habit of writing out all his speeches, we can follow closely the systematic way he worked from the start: founding and managing an association, setting the statutes, developing diverse activities, caring for finances and finding a suitable building, electing a board of directors, opposition tactics, etc.

We see the born organiser at work in the documents relating to social action. Here we witness the difficult process of mobilising a population group that was not used to organising; a fundamental lack of solidarity was the most difficult hindrance that had to be overcome. He therefore continually practiced the art of training a whole legion of 'co-workers' and 'comrades', by continually encouraging them, praising them for their successes and admiring their ideals. Contemporaneous letters reveal again the effort that it cost him to move Catholic workers into action. This is no less applicable

for the later years than for the first years, for once the novelty had worn off, early zeal tended to flag.

It is partly against this background that we should view his later pleas for (inter) denominational labour unions, because the workers were more easily attracted to the direct defence of their interests. It is also in this light that we should appraise his ideological rejection of his socialist rivals and his defence of the Christian triptych of faith, family and property against the revolutionary ideals of class warfare. The difference between Christian and socialist union mentality is strikingly apparent in various documents: *Unitas*' reconciliation-oriented spirit contrasted sharply with the socialist groups' irreconcilable pugnacity. The Coalition of Catholics and Reformed Protestants in politics was proof of the good right, and especially the usefulness, of interdenominational co-operation; it was said that Schaepman and Kuyper gave a good interdenominational example.

For Ariëns, the emancipation of Catholic workers was part of the much wider movement for Catholic emancipation. Ariëns witnessed to Schaepman's having set him on his way in a biography of his teacher written in the early years of his period in Enschede. Rome was the other orientation point for his pioneering work, as we see from *Naar Leo's gouden priesterfeest, [On Leo's Golden Jubilee]* published at nearly the same time¹. In speeches, letters and articles he expanded upon this double struggle for emancipation, first in Twente and then in the whole of The Netherlands. The Catholic labour movement served as the foundation for a system of Catholic social and cultural organisations, which in their turn supported political party formation among Dutch Catholics.

In diverse articles, Ariëns outlined clearly the various expansions and goals, and especially the central role he ascribed to the Catholic press, party and school. Letters written in his last years in Enschede show how this dynamo mobilised people and organisations in service of Catholic life. He radiated the characterising motive of an emancipation movement: the awareness that things must and can be changed. As priest and doctor in theology, Ariëns had an obvious (moral) authority among Catholics, which made him acceptable as pioneer. He presented and taught his 'co-workers' and 'disciples' a grand ideal: that they should always work for 'the Catholic affair' without regard for their own (personal and social) interests.

For the Worth and Dignity of the Human Person

"There are few holy pastors". Ariëns is to have made this comment when referring to the holy Curé of Ars. The Franciscan Han Lohman used this apocryphal citation as title for a book he published to conclude his life's work in service of the *Causa*

¹ Both documents are included in the volume *Documents: Prophet of Emancipation*.

Ariëns. The question is whether Ariëns ever will be raised to the honour of the altar on the basis of his work as pastor. Neither in Steenderen nor in Maarssen was he a parish pastor *pur sang*. One single parish was too little for his capacity to work, but more important was that conventional parish work did too little to respond to the higher ideals and purposes of his life as priest. It is not that he was not a *bonus pastor*, or put more strongly even a model pastor, who has become an inspirational example for many Dutch priests, but his major spiritual merits lie outside the direct field of a pastor's life. Through his work as pioneer of the Catholic labour movement and as prophet of emancipation, Ariëns gradually grew to become the pastor of 'Catholics in The Netherlands'. This is all the more reason to admire Ariëns' extraordinary devotion to duty. In addition to his enormous series of extra-pastoral activities, which would have been more than a full-time job for anyone else, he still proved to be an exemplary pastor.

However, it would not be honest – either toward Ariëns or toward posterity – to compare him to the Curé of Ars, for the latter is not only a totally different person, he lived in a different historical context, and thus was a totally different pastor. In his characteristically matter-of-fact and concise manner, Jan Cardinal **de Jong**, archbishop of Utrecht and professional church historian, expressed his appreciation for Ariëns' work with the following words: "Whoever seeks to write the history of Catholicism in The Netherlands at the turn of the last century, will find it impossible to ignore the figure of Father Ariëns. If for no other reason than that he is met at every turn. Ariëns had, in one way or another, a hand in all that took place in every area of Catholic life in those days"¹. To this church historical evaluation, written when the Catholic socio-political group was at its apex, we can now add, a half-century later, – in a period when socio-political groups have lost influence in The Netherlands – that Ariëns belongs not only among the Catholic but also among the national personalities whose legacy has marked the twentieth century. Thanks in part to his efforts, Catholics have not only appeared on the national agenda, but have also made their specific contribution to societal reform.

But ultimately, what Ariëns sought was not social transformation, but human conversion. "Neither social improvements nor, even less, organisation were his ultimate goal, but the person, whom he must regain and keep for Christ", continued Cardinal **De Jong**, who called Ariëns "a shining example" for every priest. Ariëns grounded his pioneering social work on the primal Christian conviction that man has been created in God's image and likeness.

¹ J. **de Jong**, 'Voorwoord' to the second edition of: Gerard Brom, *Alfons Ariëns*. Utrecht-Antwerp, 1950.

In a period of radical social changes that posed a threat to the worth and dignity of the human person, he devoted his life to liberating people from a condition of slavery and addiction. In the terminology of our times, there are good grounds for calling Ariëns an activist in the defence of essential human rights. As priest, he felt especially called to defend the spiritual and material interests of people who were victims of changing circumstances and who thereby risked losing their dignity. In his eyes, this service to humanity was a normal service to God. In this light, activities that at first seem less priestly are given a religious dimension, and even a prophetic meaning.

According to Catholic social teaching, the church was the safest guarantee for a humane society. As *societas perfecta*, the church's example is thought to be ideal proof of this. Ariëns proclaimed this teaching throughout his life, but more importantly, he also tried to put the redeeming message into practice. For him, defending human rights was the same as defending evangelical values, and vice versa. As Ariëns once remarked, people only learn 'the humanities' in the essential meaning of the term, while "*inter homines*"¹. That is why he, unlike most parish pastors who came before him, went as pastor to the people and didn't wait until they came to him. Experience taught him first hand the need to humanise the inhumane conditions and relations in modern society. For Ariëns, christianisation and social reform were two sides of the same coin: the advancement of human happiness, here and in the hereafter. As such, this apostle of human dignity can also be considered a 'Christian humanist' on the threshold of the twentieth century.

¹ Cf. Brom, I, p. 62.

5. ARIËNS' SPIRITUAL LEGACY

Ariëns' writings

Most of the original documents included in this 'Ariëns dossier' are preserved in the Catholic Documentation Centre in Nijmegen: the unprinted documents in various archive collections and the printed documents in the library. Obviously, the Ariëns archive has served as an important locus. After Ariëns' death in 1928, his papers were deposited in the library of the University of Nijmegen. Dr. W. van Koeverden, who had taken charge of these papers some years earlier, worked with several of Ariëns' friends to expand this collection to a somewhat hybrid, but nonetheless valuable 'Ariëns archive'¹.

Ariëns' admirers have not only collected extended documentation *about* Ariëns, they have also tried to "bring home" and situate as many of Ariëns' unprinted and printed documents as they could. Ariëns, who was not a pack rat by nature and was certainly not an administrator, had not only disposed of many documents, he did not record the dates of the documents he did keep. What he did preserve with reasonable care were the manuscripts of the nearly 400 speeches and approximately 1180 sermons he had delivered, even though he did not always provide them with a date, place and occasion. The only incoming letters kept with any regularity were those from his period in Maarssen; in the preceding years and especially for the Enschede period this was not the case, barring a few exceptions (specifically letters from Schaepman).

The "Ariëns papers" show their greatest hiatus in the area of his published material. Except for the brochures, he saved no copies of his published texts, nor did he maintain a list of his publications. It was known that he had written a very large number of articles in his 'own' periodicals *De Katholieke Werkman*,² *De Kruisbanier* and later *Sobriëtas*, but also in other periodicals and in newspapers. But how many, where and when? Ultimately, the bibliography proved to contain 1600 entries. Compiling this was an enormous task, carried out mainly under the guidance of Gerard Brom. With Van Koeverden, he also traced and added to the archive as many as he could of Ariëns' outgoing letters, either in original, photocopy or transcript form. Even corres-

¹ Cf. J. Roes, 'Inleiding' ['Introduction'] in: *Inventaris en bibliografie van de collectie Alfons Ariëns* (Archives of the Catholic Documentation Centre. Vol. 3, Nijmegen 1978), p. 14.

² The Catholic Documentation Centre possesses a nearly complete copy of *De Katholieke Werkman*. It is one of the very few copies, if not the only copy, that has been preserved. Unfortunately it is in very poor condition, so that it is no longer suitable for lending. One copy is available for consultation on micro cards.

pondence between third parties was collected when it related to events in which Ariëns was (also) involved. Several people have spent a number of years ordering and describing the collected documentation.¹

To evaluate Ariëns' legacy, especially as champion of the Catholic labour movement, it is important to know, among other things, what source materials he *himself* used, namely what spiritual baggage he made his own. On this we have already noted that the Enschede curate had had no special training or schooling to prepare him for his social work. In various ways he tried to remedy his lack of theoretical foundation in social problems while he was already actively involved. As priest, his primary orientation was toward sources from his own Roman Catholic Church, but he did not limit himself to these. He let himself be led to a considerable degree by information from 'elsewhere', to be understood as meaning both foreign and non-Catholic. He never became a proponent of any particular system. As a genuine eclectic, he made a selection from here and there – and further: he took whatever he thought best for his work. Without adopting a particular system, he was an avowed opponent of capitalism and socialism, the two systems that he fought systematically in word and especially deed.

At the start of Ariëns' work in Enschede, there was still no question of a Catholic social view that, as 'social doctrine' could claim universal applicability, and certainly not in The Netherlands. A book was collated in 1873 from the literary estate of the pastor of Delden, E.A. Geerdink, which made a fair attempt at treating the relation between poverty, Christianity and the state,² but which was completely unsuitable for providing solutions for the social question in the modern sense. Publications by the Jesuit A. van Gestel on pauperism and liberalism also contributed little to a better insight in social development³. His younger confrater P. Bruin was equally unsuccessful in finding a solution for the social question other than the exercise of Christian

¹ Cf. *Inventaris en bibliografie van de collectie Alfons Ariëns [Inventory and bibliography of the Ariëns Collection]*. *Jaarboek van het Katholiek Documentatie Centrum*, Vol. 3. Nijmegen 1978. The volume consists of part of the 'Inventory of the Alfons Ariëns archive, 1860-1928, with deposited and collected documents covering the years 1877-1962', edited by W.A.A. Mes and Maria Teresia Smit, OSU (p. 18-145, with 1880 inventory items) and part of the 'Bibliography of the publications of Alfons Ariëns', edited by A.G.J. Maes in conjunction with J. Lohman; OFM (p. 146-236, with 1625 inventory items). The inventory and bibliography are provided with indices of personal names, subjects, institutions and places (p. 237-289).

² Cf. E.A. Geerdink, *De armoede, het christendom en de staat [Poverty, Christianity and the State]*. From the writings of E. Geerdink (Amsterdam 1873), p. 74-75.

³ Cf. W. van den Heijning, *Adrianus van Gestel s.j. (1830-1900) en zijn standpunt in de sociale kwestie*. Doctoral dissertation, Theology Faculty, Tilburg 1980.

charity¹. Dutch Catholics, including their political leader Dr Herman Schaepman, had little more to offer at that time than this “sovereign remedy”.

In various other countries there were diverse schools and currents, among which there is not only little coherence, but also sometimes even contradiction on fundamental points. Around this time an ‘official’ social doctrine began to take shape primarily in Geneva and Liège². From their side, French Catholics provided various models of social action, while their German co-religionists were occupied with the more theoretical aspects of the social question, specifically under the influence of Von Ketteler’s writings. When presenting the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, pope Leo XIII called this latter ‘our great predecessor’.

This encyclical laid the basis for Catholic social teaching; it was the *magna charta* for the social order according to Catholic insights³. For Ariëns, *Rerum Novarum* had been the most authoritative source since this encyclical’s publication in 1891. Not only because the pope spoke about the subject at a time when it was greatly needed, but also because Ariëns had held Leo XIII in especially high esteem ever since his years of study in the Eternal City. Ariëns was thus so open to the policy of this pope for reconciling church and world that he could justifiably be considered an “officer of the guard” for this Leonine social strategy⁴. Leo XIII’s numerous documents – from encyclicals to occasional speeches served as guideline for Ariëns’ thinking and activity.

Second to the pope, the bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler was his most important mentor in ‘doctrinal’ matters⁵. In general, Ariëns borrowed his

¹ Cf. P.B. Bruin SJ, 'De sociale roeping der christelijke liefdadigheid', in: *Studiën*, 29 (1887), p. 171-210.

² On this see above: '1886-1901: Ariëns at the front of the labour movement', under: 1886-1889.

³ Over the years, many publications have appeared on the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (cf. above '1886-1901: Ariëns at the Front of the Labour Movement, note, 7). P. Hafner treats the recent literature in his article: 'Katholische Soziallehre und Ideologie. Zeitbedingte Elemente in der Eigentumslehre der Enzyklika Leos XIII. "Rerum Novarum"', in: *Civitas*, 35(1980), p. 412-447.

⁴ Cf. B. McSweeney. *Roman Catholicism. The Search for Relevance* (Oxford 1980), p. 74-80.

⁵ Since the end of the nineteenth century, a voluminous corpus has been published on German Catholic social teaching and movement, and more specifically on Von Ketteler. Remarkably many scientific and popular works on *katholische Soziallehre* have been (re)published in Germany over the last ten to fifteen years. See, among others, W. Gottschalch, F. Karrenberg and F.J. Stegmann, *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland*. Munich, Vienna 1969 (esp. p. 325-560: F.J. Stegmann. 'Geschichte der sozialen Ideen im deutschen Katholizismus'); O. von Nell-Breuning, *Wie sozial ist die Kirche? Leistung und Versagen der katholischen Soziallehre*.

Catholic social ideas to a large extent from Germany, in particular neighbouring Rhineland where München-Gladbach had developed since 1890 into the centre of the German Catholic social movement. At the instigation of the socially conscious manufacturer Franz Brandts, the priest dr. Franz Hitze began to organise and publish about social activities in this textile city. Several times Ariëns had personally¹ met Hitze, who was advisor to the union of Catholic *employers* in Germany, but he knew him mainly from his publications. These greatly helped the Enschede curate to find his way in the still uncultivated social area. The *Staatslexikon*, the first instalment of which appeared in 1887 (containing among other things, a very extensive article by Hitze on the *Arbeitersfrage*), was a social ‘bible’ for Ariëns. He lived and worked, for a large part, on the basis of the same natural law oriented, neo-scholastic and Catholic emancipation spirit displayed in this reference work².

In the search for a suitable (Catholic) organisational form, German Catholicism – apart from the Craftsmen’s Association - offered few models. There were Catholic labour organisations in Belgium and France, but in the first phase Ariëns either did not know of them or thought them unsuitable. In any case, we find no evidence that he had them in mind. Rather, he seemed all the more oriented toward developments in his direct surroundings. Various references justify the presupposition that, especially in the early phase of the labour movement, in the years 1890-92, Ariëns found inspiration in the Reformed social views and organisations³.

Moreover, the example offered by a few Twenthe branches of *Patrimonium* provided a very practical model of Christian social principles and organisations close at hand. The Christian Social Congress (1891) and the Christian Employers’ Association

Düsseldorf 1972; A. Rauscher and L. Roos, *Die soziale Verantwortung der Kirche. Wege und Erfahrungen von Ketteler bis heute*. Cologne 1977.

¹ For the occasional assertions by Van de Pas and Schröder (and via them of J.G. van Schaik?), that Ariëns “maintained busily active contact with the great man from München-Gladbach”, that “he went there often, and conferred and corresponded with him”, no adequate evidence can be found either in the correspondence or in other documents. Cf. W. van de Pas. *Alfons Ariëns* (Utrecht 1958), p. 79; M.J. Schröder. 'De verhouding tussen Ariëns en Schaepman', in: *MemoReeks*, n° 7, p. 74. However, letters and other documents reproduced in this book do show that Ariëns kept copies of Hitze’s writings and recommended them to others.

² The *Staatslexikon* was published at the initiative of the Görres-Gesellschaft, the organisation of German Catholic intellectuals. Georg von Hertling served as editor. See: C. Bauer. 'Das Staatslexikon der Görres-Gesellschaft. Spiegel der Entwicklung des deutschen Katholizismus', in: C. Bauer, *Deutscher Katholizismus. Entwicklungslinien und Profile* (Frankfurt 1964). p. 54-66.

³ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, esp. Documents 7, 8, 28 and 37; see also B. Kruithof, 'Trouw aan het beginsel. De christelijk-sociale beweging in Nederland van ca. 1875 tot 1909', in: *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis*, 7(1981), p. 347-373.

also provided the Catholic vacuum of those days with at least some theoretical and organisational footing. A few striking parallels can also be considered indications for Reformed influence on Ariëns, especially as regards organisation. Abraham Kuyper's antithetical thinking found its Catholic parallel in Ariëns. Equally striking is that they both emphasised Christian society as an alternative to the existing order.

In addition to Kuyper, Ariëns was probably no less inspired by A.S. Talma, who during his appearances in *Patrimonium*, where he defended the modern idea of unions, and in the Antirevolutionary Party, where he represented the social contingent, showed striking agreement with Ariëns' own ideals. Moreover, Talma was very active in the campaign against alcohol. The simultaneous emancipation of a denomination (Doleantie) and the 'fourth estate' (*Patrimonium*) is probably what appealed to Ariëns the most. For Ariëns and the Reformed leaders, emancipation and the preservation of faith were the interrelated goals of the social organisations. Here, presumably, also lies one of the main explanations for the later successful efforts to co-operate in the interdenominational union *Unitas*. Ariëns also looked sympathetically on the Reformed political organisation, the Antirevolutionary Party, with its emphasis on democratic procedures and programmatic unity. That is why he was pleased to see political as well as social co-operation in the Coalition.

Typical of Ariëns' eclectic methodology is that he sought ideas for practical social policy in other quarters, if necessary outside Catholic or even Christian circles. In this, he had a striking preference for empirical information. Besides the data he collected himself (for example about working hours, pay, women and children workers, accidents, housing, alcoholism), he also derived his knowledge of the worker's problem from the two labour condition surveys held in these years.

Also conspicuous is that he derived his information about the capital side of the social question from contacts with and publication by 'socially-minded' employers. After and beside Leo XIII, Von Ketteler and *Patrimonium*, the manufacturer from Delft, J.C. van Marken was probably the one who exerted the greatest influence on Ariëns' 'seeing, judging and acting'. Although Ariëns felt strongly drawn to the Catholic examples, represented in other countries by Franz Brandts and Léon Harmel and in The Netherlands by Vlekke and Van Besouw, the manufacturer from Delft long remained his model. He lacked these examples in the immediate Twente area, with the exception, perhaps, of Stork, a manufacturer from Hengelo.

Ariëns was generally very receptive to practical and preferably also personal models. That is why he found the English trade unions and their leaders so appealing¹. He also considered the activities of the English 'workers' cardinal' Manning, and particularly his intervention in the London dockworkers strike of 1890, an example to be

¹ Cf. *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 129.

followed. What he constantly told the workers – that actions speak louder than words – was also highly applicable to him. He was also impressed by the German social legislation of those years. Like Talma, he derived from this the insight that government intervention was indispensable for a healthy development toward more social security for workers.

Besides personal and written contacts, Ariëns drew the information that he needed for his day by day activity mainly from daily and weekly newspapers. Insofar as relevant for the subject of this book, we have been able to discover that he certainly read the following periodicals: the national Catholic newspapers *Het Centrum* and *De Tijd*, the Twenthe newspapers *Recht door Zee* (socialist) and *Weekblad voor Oldenzaal and Omstreken* (Catholic), and in the social field *Arbeiterwohl* and *Sociaal Weekblad*. The last two, in particular, kept him informed of the most recent developments and ideas on social matters, for example those relating to German social legislation and the English trade union movement. In later years the paper *Unitas* joined the list, insofar as he did not write its articles himself.

It is very likely that he also read the following periodicals (in alphabetical order): *De Baanbreker*, the *Fabrieksode* (Delft), *De Katholiek*, *De Katholiek-Democraat*, *Kölner Correspondenz*, *Provinciale Overijselsche en Zwolsche Courant*, *Recht voor Allen*, the *Telegraaf*, the *Volksbanier* and the *Volksvriend* (anti-alcohol). It is also possible that he was informed by third parties about the content of other socialist newspapers than those listed above, such as: *De Roode Duivel*, *De Textielarbeider*, *De Volkstribuun*, *De Volksvriend* (Zwolle) and *Voorwaarts*. With a view to the activities of the German interdenominational trade unions, it is possible that in later years he had access to *Der Christliche Textilarbeiter*, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* and the *Westdeutsche Arbeiterszeitung*. In any case, he was aware of these newspapers, as he was of several Belgian newspapers, but it is not known whether and how regularly he saw them. For this rather abundant arsenal of periodical information he could presumably rely in later years on the editor-in-chief of *Het Centrum*, Gisbert Brom, in whom he had a direct journalistic source.

From all this it should be clear that Ariëns did not neglect to acquire the mental equipment needed for his Catholic social pioneer work among the Catholics of Twenthe and The Netherlands. But it will also have become clear that the equipment was rather specifically compiled: except for ‘dogmatic’ and ‘exemplary’ elements, these comprised mainly ‘time-bound’ elements, taken from daily or weekly periodicals. To know whether his mental baggage was still greater, it would be necessary to know what else was on his bookshelves besides the *Staatslexikon*, or documents by

Leo XIII and the writings of Von Ketteler, or works by Hitze or Quack¹. If it had been much more than this, then it is as good as certain that it was physically impossible for him to read more than he did. Great thinkers in sociology did not influence him; he was himself not a great thinker but a doer. His bent toward action gave him an automatic interest in current reports on the events that surrounded him, much more than in their underlying structures, with all the advantages, but also the limitations that this implies.

Through their concentration on current events, the writings that Ariëns produced generally excel in realism, concreteness, and especially immediate concern. On the other hand, they also reveal a number of shortcomings due unmistakably to a horizon that is limited to the interests of the day. One expression of this is a narrow-minded view of socialism, and all that resembled it in any way. Ariëns is continually enervated by socialism, sometimes aggressively, but generally defensively, whereby he used almost exclusively apologetic arguments, starting from very schematic views².

Even if one were to accept that neither ‘the other side’ nor ‘this side’ used every available means to whet their opposition and conflicts, it is striking that Ariëns approached socialism with a near blind prejudice. Besides stemming from his being a child of his time and especially of his Catholic and clerical milieu, this partisan bias also had to do with his method of reacting to events. Because the Dutch socialists of those days, as they wrote in various newspapers and other militant writings, did no more than proclaim what was often a homespun philosophy of society, Ariëns’ reaction could hardly develop into fruitful articles on the subject. There is also no evidence that he made any attempt in these years to improve his, at best second or third hand, familiarity with Lasalle, Bebel and a few early French socialist thinkers – let alone Marx or Engels – by reading their writings³.

Seen as a whole, we must conclude that Ariëns’ writings were supported by only a brief and superficial basis in social theory. It is reasonable to wonder whether this priest was sufficiently equipped with financial-economic and especially sociological knowledge to undertake the responsible task he assumed. But here again, he does not fare too badly in comparison with contemporary social pioneers. Nevertheless, it is

¹ Ariëns’ calls in *De Katholieke Werkman* to return borrowed books and brochures, give only a summary indication (Cf. *De Katholieke Werkman*, 21 Dec. 1894, 9 Oct. 1896, 30 Sept. 1898). In the archive are two lists with titles of books and brochures, but they contain primarily publications on spiritual subjects. Cf. *Archief Ariëns*, n° 1573 and 635.

² A striking example of this is *Bronnen katholieke arbeidersbeweging Nederland*, Document 80.

³ After Ariëns had left Enschede, he tried to remedy this shortcoming. In 1903 and 1904 he wrote comprehensive texts about Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx as preparation for one or more speeches. Cf. *Ariëns Archive*, n° 1061 and 1074.

important when reading the documents included here to keep these limitations in mind. Ariëns operated on the basis of a circumscribed social concept: a difficult middle course between personal and social responsibility, tensely seeking a third way between capitalism and socialism.

Besides collisions with these poles, effective operation was continuously hindered by numerous equivocalities, because Ariëns often mingled the goals of the labour movement: the social and the pastoral aspect, the Catholic emancipation and the social emancipation, the general Christian and the Catholic organisation. To remain constant in a jumble of contradictory interests and options, he sought orientation from the compass of the Christian view of the person and of life, with a view to reaching temporal and spiritual well-being. A unique vision of humanity, which could be called a religiously coloured anthropology in which the relation between person and work is set in the context of both a worldly view of social justice and a transcendent perspective, is probably the most characteristic as well as the most difficult to determine element in Ariëns' writings on the Catholic labour movement¹.

Stringent choices had to be made in selecting items for a publication of Ariëns' writings about the Catholic labour movement. A further choice has to be made from this first selection for the documents in volume 2 of this Ariëns dossier. That is why it is important to explain the choices made. The first limitation involved the choice of writings from the Enschede period. But even for this fifteen-year period it was not possible to include all the eligible texts. A careful study of the complete Ariëns collection, both printed and unprinted documents, produced the conclusion that an integral publication of the writings on the Catholic labour movement was not only impossible, but was unnecessary or undesirable because of the unavoidable overlap and duplication. On the basis of these considerations, it was decided to publish a selection of the available documents, despite the considerable drawbacks that adhere to this decision. Approximately three quarters of the available texts have been included. A third of the speeches and a good ten per cent of the publications have been included.

It is impossible to give exact numbers because one can argue, regarding both the speeches and the publications and even more for the letters, about which documents (in whole or in part) relate to the subject of this book. As for the speeches, the sermons have been left out of consideration on principle, because the nature and content of these make them ineligible. Insofar as it could be discovered with the help of extant texts, Ariëns gave at least 160 speeches in this Enschede period. Here again the exact number cannot be determined, because it is not evident in all cases whether we have

¹ Cf. M.D. Chenu, *La 'doctrine sociale' de l'église comme idéologie* (Paris 1979), p. 42-43, 53; Harmsen, Perry, Van Gelder, *Mens-en-werk*, p. 17-18.

the text of actually delivered speeches or of notes or adaptations. About 140 texts relate to the labour movement. Of the 874 numbers in the bibliography of the *curate* Ariëns (the Enschede period), between 650 and 700 titles relate more or less to the labour movement, depending on whether or not certain subjects such as the struggle against alcoholism are considered part of this.

Be this as it may, many more documents have been left out than have been included in the book *Bronnen van de katholieke arbeidersbeweging* [*Sources of the Catholic Labour Movement*]. From it a second selection was made for the ‘Ariëns’ Dossier’ in the volume entitled ‘Pioneer of the Catholic Labour Movement’. As was the case with the published book, here again most of the documents, after laborious weighing, were left aside. The basic principle for the selection was to compile a dossier that would reflect Ariëns’ thinking and activity as founder of the Catholic labour movement in The Netherlands. This meant selecting texts that documented the *representative* lines of development in his ideas and in the organisations.

Ariëns’ legacy

About which Dutch Catholic of the nineteenth or twentieth century has so much been written as about Alphons Ariëns? Even during his life, attention was drawn to his work and person in various publications, especially in daily and weekly newspapers, and on special occasions such as anniversaries¹. After his death there was a flood of publications that has yet to cease even in our day. Beside many articles in the press, which usually appeared on an anniversary of his death on 7 August,² a whole series of books and brochures have been published about Ariëns³. Three waves of publications can be distinguished: a first boom during the decade after Ariëns’ death, a second in the 1950s, partly due to the beatification procedure, and a third at the end of the 1970s, partly occasioned by the fiftieth anniversary of his death.

All these publications express a great respect for Ariëns’ person. Many were intended to support his possible canonisation by the Roman Catholic Church, and some even have a direct connection to the procedure required by canon law. One of the conditions for being ‘raised to the honour of the altar’ is veneration by the community of believers. In view of this hagiographic background, it is obvious that most of these publications are not intended to be critical, at least not with regard to Ariëns.

Nearly all publications are characterised by a glorification of the *priest* Ariëns and strongly emphasise his heroic exercise of numerous Christian virtues, especially unselfish love of neighbour. The titles often say enough in this regard. The virtues are

¹ Cf. AA, n° 1862. Various packets of press cuttings about Ariëns are preserved in the Ariëns archive.

² Cf. AA, n° 1863-1865.

³ See the list in the overview of consulted literature.

usually related in particular to Ariëns' social activities, which places them in a special light. As 'apostle of change' he is called the outstanding saint of modern times.

Gerard Brom was the great driving force behind veneration for Ariëns. He was the youngest brother of the priest Gisbert Brom, one of Ariëns' friends during his Enschede period. Even in his very early (1909) work *De Nieuwe Kruistocht* [*The New Crusade*], on the genesis of the Catholic temperance movement, Gerard Brom displayed an intense admiration for Ariëns' work. Ten years later he emphasised the conviction again in an article he wrote for *De Beiaard*, a leading periodical of which he was the editor. From the time of Ariëns' death until his own thirty years later, Gerard Brom, who had become professor at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, worked in various capacities to preserve the memory of his 'spirituality' and, preferably, to have him canonised. It is particularly due to him that an impressive amount of documentation by and about Ariëns has been collected and preserved. As chairman of the Ariëns committee, he was promoter in the procedure for Ariëns' beatification.

The name Gerard Brom has become permanently associated with that of Ariëns through his two-volume biography of the respected leader. Forty years later, and despite its excessive length, this biography still reads like a compelling epic, and it can still be numbered among the masterpieces of Dutch historiography, well sown as the latter may be with biographies. Despite the criticism from Catholic circles of Brom's prejudicial biases, which certainly burden the book,¹ it has, as standard work, determined the view of Ariëns to this day. The scientific value of the work lies in the numerous sources Gerard Brom used. Not only did he know Ariëns well personally, he was more familiar with the latter's many published and unpublished writings than anyone else. Moreover, via his brother Gisbert, Gerard Brom had background information that was particularly enlightening for Ariëns' Enschede years. In addition, he

¹ The two hefty volumes of the book (resp. 631 and 741 pages) were published in 1941, just before the wartime paper shortage. The book's fame preceded it; even without advertising or reviews it was quickly sold out. (Cf. Gerard Brom's preface to the second printing of the book in 1950.) Reviewers who sought to evaluate the book did have to face the paper problems and especially the suppression of periodicals. For this reason, the Dominican father B.H. Molkenboer, Gerard Brom's colleague at the university in Nijmegen, distributed a stencilled open letter about the Ariëns book, in which, in addition to his appreciation, he did not conceal his considerable criticism of Brom's hero worship. But Gerard Brom was not very impressed with this or other criticisms of which he came to learn, as is evident from his correspondence with Jan Nieuwenhuis about his book on Ariëns (Cf. *Archief Jan Nieuwenhuis*, n° 44, in the Catholic Documentation Centre.) Gerard Brom certainly did not moderate his pronounced views in the "New edition" of the book, which appeared in 1950 as an adaptation for "a broader circle of readers" under the same title. This 'popular' edition, which omitted the scientific apparatus, still fills a good 700 pages.

had systematically collected information from many of Ariëns' friends and acquaintances¹.

For anyone wanting to study the origins of the Catholic labour movement in The Netherlands, Gerard Brom's book is of irreplaceable importance. In addition to Ariëns' youth and student years, the first volume is devoted to his role as social pioneer in Enschede. Brom can recount so much about this eventful period in Ariëns' life because of a thorough knowledge of the sources, amplified by valuable first and second hand information, that it is impossible for a researcher studying the (Catholic) social history of The Netherlands to work without it. This first volume is also the one that earned Brom the most criticism from Catholic circles. This criticism was directed especially at his extolling Ariëns while blackening Schaepman's good name. In his effort to make his hero appear still greater, Brom cut down the Roman Catholic priest-statesman Schaepman before the workers' curate Ariëns.

J. Witlox – the biographer of the opposing party, Schaepman, – succinctly typified this classic story of Goliath and David as “a monument on a battlefield”². As appears from his confession of the Augustinian motto *Victor quia victima* at the front of the first volume, Brom planned from the very start to portray Ariëns as the victorious victim in the battle scene of Catholic emancipation, and a holy winner as well. Just these a priori and antithetic features mark this biography as a product of its time, which interpreted the pugnacious ideals of a Catholic generation that had begun to disappear with the author. In his testimony for the *Causa Ariëns*, Rogier has correctly pointed out that this magnificent work is marred in places by black and white representations, resulting primarily from the author's artistic ‘overkill’³. In fact, he repeated the criticism that Father B. Molkenboer, OP, made to his colleague Brom in his ‘open letter’ directly after the book's publication.

Be this as it may, Gerard Brom is nevertheless the pre-eminent Ariëns specialist. No subsequent authors who have written about Ariëns can match Brom in either the literary or the scientific value of their work. To a greater or lesser extent, all subsequent publications are built on Brom's work. The two volumes are sufficiently voluminous and detailed for this. This does not mean that there have been no publications since Brom that add to or correct certain points sketched in Brom's portrait of Ariëns. The romanticised ‘Life Story of Dr. Alfons Ariëns’ written by Jan Nieuwenhuis in consultation with Gerard Brom, is not numbered among these, since it is too close to Brom's work. Professor L.J. Rogier gave a lecture in 1953, to mark the 25th anniversary

¹ Cf. 'Herinneringen aan Alfons Ariëns', in: *MemoReeks*, n° 7, Nijmegen 1978.

² Information from J.C.P.A. van Laarhoven.

³ *Positio super causae introductione Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Alfonsi M. Ariëns*, p. 569.

sary of Alfons Ariëns' death, in which he presented this 'apostle and pioneer' to Dutch Catholics in a Brommian spirit¹. Of all authors, Willem van de Pas is the most critical toward Brom's view of Ariëns, in particular what concerns the relation with Schaepman. Despite the expectations raised by its swollen subtitle, in comparison with other publications, Van de Pas' book offers a strikingly matter-of-fact evaluation of Ariëns. In a concise, rather businesslike style Van de Pas focuses on Ariëns' social meaning. Besides the relation with Schaepman, he also goes rather extensively into the *Unitas* question, in which he, as 'official historian' of the Catholic Labour Movement at that time still justifies the established organisation as the only correct historical development².

At the end of the 1970s, Father Han Lohman, OFM, produced two publications. As vice-postulator of the beatification process, he made it his goal to spread the atmosphere of Ariëns' sanctity in word and image. He particularly distinguishes himself from other authors after Brom, in his knowledge of the Ariëns source material; from the many years he spent with Ariëns' writings, he has acquired considerable factual knowledge, which he can and does use to supplement Brom's view in places, but for the rest, he adds nothing essential.

A review of the remaining literature on Ariëns reveals two related shortcomings. Nearly all publications have a hagiographic and thus minimally critical character. In them, Ariëns appears more as the authors want to see him than as he can be known from his writings. Thus over the years an Ariëns myth has grown that is urgently in need of examination. It is questionable whether a strongly biased spiritualization of his meaning does justice to Ariëns' work as social pioneer, and it is even more questionable whether the historiography of the Catholic labour movement is (was) well served with the "beatification" of its founder. The continuation of the myth is closely related with the neglect to study Ariëns as he appears in his own writings.

A totally different kind of publication was the text *Een priester onder de arbeiders* [A priest among the workers], which appeared in 1980 on the occasion of an exhibition on Ariëns' Enschede years. This study by B. Hesselink produced no new

¹ Cf. L.J. Rogier, *Alfons Ariëns. Apostle en pioneer*. 's-Hertogenbosch 1954. As the then chairman of the Ariëns committee, Rogier submitted the official request in 1956 to the archbishop of Utrecht to open the proceedings for Ariëns' beatification. In 1958 the relevant church tribunal was installed.

² In his opinions on the relation between Ariëns and Schaepman, and on Ariëns' role in the *Unitas* question, Van de Pas unmistakably supports the view of J.G. van Schaik, who for forty years had been the spiritual advisor of the diocesan and national Catholic labour organisation. Van Schaik thoroughly disagreed with Brom on these points and even had plans to write his memoirs to rehabilitate Schaepman, but never did so. Cf. J. Veldman, 'Een nieuwe bijdrage tot de sociale geschiedenis', in: *Lering en Leiding*, 25(1975), p. 29.

data or insights, but the author does situate Ariëns in a different kind of context, which basically amounted to a social-history-oriented interest in Ariëns' work in Enschede. Thanks in part to a revival of interest for the history of the Dutch labour movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Ariëns' work and meaning was viewed from another historical perspective.

Since the study by Gerard Brom, no systematic and scientific research had been done on the abundant supply of Ariëns own writings. Since it's publication, Brom's voluminous standard work has served as exhaustive source on Ariëns. Admittedly, the temptation of this masterful biography was and is still great, but for scientific research oriented toward new insights, such an indirect access to Ariëns' work is unacceptable. That access to the documents was extremely difficult was a more convincing excuse. Besides the many unpublished writings, Ariëns also left behind many published works, but there was no efficient means of consulting them. The Catholic Documentation Centre undertook the task of using professional means to open the Ariëns collection for academic study: an inventory of the archive documents and a bibliography of the publications. These tools not only permitted a survey of the total scope of the collection, it also allowed the authenticity of the various documents to be determined. The publication *Inventaris en bibliografie van de Collectie Alfons Ariëns* [*Inventory and Bibliography of the Alfons Ariëns Collection*] reported on the findings of this research¹.

In 1982, Jan Roes published *Bronnen van de katholieke arbeidersbeweging in Nederland: toespraken, brieven en artikelen van Alfons Ariëns, 1887-1901* [*Sources of the Catholic Labour Movement in The Netherlands: Speeches, Letters and Articles by Alfons Ariëns, 1887-1901*]. This publication was prepared at the request of the Ariëns committee. It decided to use money that had been collected over the years to set up a material commemoration in honour of Ariëns to establish a spiritual monument to him that would keep alive the memory of his social pioneer work and provide him with a legitimate place in Dutch history.

Since then, a more important source of information about Ariëns has become available in the voluminous book with documents prepared for the beatification process. Especially relevant are the reports of witnesses. These add valuable information about the broad spectrum of activities of this priest of the archdiocese of Utrecht and

¹ *Inventaris en bibliografie van de Collectie Alfons Ariëns* [*Inventory and Bibliography of the Alfons Ariëns Collection*]. Vol. 3 of: Archives of the Catholic Documentation Centre. A series of inventories, published under the editorship of A.F. Manning and J.H. Roes. Nijmegen 1978. This book has been added to Ariëns dossier as enclosure.

show how he is admired as a saint¹. Whether it is as the *pastor animarum* or the pioneer of the Catholic labour movement or the prophet of emancipation, numerous witnesses confirm his meaning as ‘apostle of human dignity’.

Presumably, it is hard to imagine a more convenient indicator for whether a person speaks figuratively to the imagination than the literal portrayal of this person in films, plays, radio dramas etc. Not so long after his death, Ariëns’ life was portrayed in two plays. The person of this priest, especially in his heroic role as ‘pioneer of the Catholic labour movement’, later remained the subject of dramas. At the request of the Catholic Radio Network (KRO), KRO-Radio programmed a radio drama about Ariëns in 1978. At present, a very well known Dutch (non-Catholic) publicist is working on a ‘docudrama’ in three parts on Ariëns’ life for KRO-TV.

¹ *Ultraiecten. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Alfonsi M. Ariëns, sacerdotis saecularis Tertii Ordinis Franciscalis Sodalitatis (1860-1928), Positio super causae introductione.* Roma, Typogragrafia Guerra, 1983. Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, P.N. 1061.

APPENDICES: A SELECTION OF PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ARIËNS

J.H.G. Jansen (archbishop of Utrecht), *Ariëns. Een levensbeeld en eerherstel*. [*Ariëns: A Portrait of his Life and a Rehabilitation*] Address at the unveiling of the statue of Dr. Ariëns in Enschede, 16 June 1934.

Gerard Brom, *Alfons Ariëns*. Two volumes. Amsterdam 1941

J. de Jong (cardinal archbishop of Utrecht), 'Voorwoord' ['Preface'] to the second edition of: Gerard Brom, *Alfons Ariëns*. Utrecht-Antwerpen, 1950.

L.J. Rogier, *Alfons Ariëns. Apostel en pionier*. [*Alfons Ariëns: Apostle and Pioneer*]. 's-Hertogenbosch 1953 (G.G.G.-brochure n° 683)

M.H.C. Vendrik, *Ariëns en de wereld van de jongeren in 1956*. [*Ariëns and the World of Young People in 1956*.] Address held on 'Ariëns day' 5 August 1956. Ariëns Committee Publication, Amsterdam 1956.

B.J. Alfrink (cardinal archbishop of Utrecht), 'Preek' ['Sermon'], in: *Verslag Herdenking honderdste geboortedag pastoor dr. Alfons Ariëns* [*Report on the Commemoration of the Hundredth Birthday of pastor Dr Alfons Ariëns*] (Utrecht 1960), p. 5-8.

L.J. Rogier, 'Alfons Ariëns. Apostel van de kentering' ['Alfons Ariëns. Apostle of Change'], in: *Verslag Herdenking honderdste geboortedag pastoor dr. Alfons Ariëns* [*Report on the Commemoration of the Hundredth Birthday of pastor Dr Alfons Ariëns*] (Utrecht 1960), p. 9-27.

H. Lohman ofm, 'Er zijn weinig heilige pastoors'. *Alfons Ariëns, een aristocraat met een democratisch hart*. [*There are few holy pastors'. Alfons Ariëns, an Aristocrat with a Democratic Heart.*] Hilversum 1978

A.F. Manning, 'De wereld rond Ariëns', ['The World around Ariëns'] in: *Alfons Ariëns*. Speeches delivered on 27 August 1978 at the fiftieth commemoration of his death, collected and published by the Diocese of Utrecht and the Ariëns Committee, p. 30-35.

J. Roes, 'Schipper naast God. Alfons Ariëns en de koers van de Nederlandse katholieken' ['Master Under God. Alfons Ariëns and the Course of Dutch Catholics'], article written for: *In de vaart der volkeren. Nederlanders rond 1900*. [*The Course of Peoples. Dutchmen around 1900.*] Amsterdam 1998

From Scripts for ‘Ariëns productions’

Wim Snitker, *Het Spel van den Kelk. Toneelspel gewijd aan den Godsman Alfons Ariëns. [Gambling with the Chalice. Play dedicated to Alfons Ariëns, man of God]*. De Gemeenschap, Bilthoven 1939

Adriaan Venema, *Alphons Ariëns. Een radiospel. [Alphons Ariëns. A Radio Drama]*. KRO Hilversum 1978.