

tie. Maar oplossingen zijn dit niet, want -zo haalt Houben Marx aan: “ De uiteindelijke reden voor elke echte crisis blijft altijd de armoede en de inperking van de consumptie van de massa’s”.

Houben ziet de GFC als een geografisch uitgestrekte en historisch gevormde systeemcrisis van overproductie. Het is evident dat dit een geheel andere interpretatie is dan het neoklassieke perspectief dat wil dat landen “hervormd”, arbeidsmarkten “flexibeler”, lonen “gematigd” en landen “competitiever” moeten worden. Houben’s analyse is zo overtuigend dat het neoklassieke narratief dat niet meer is.

Houben stelt dat ook het Keynesiaanse recept om private spaaroverschotten via overheidsuitgaven te recyclen tot effectieve vraag analytisch tekort schiet. Neo-Keynesianen duiden de GFC eerst en vooral met het concept onderconsumptie. Houben stelt dat onderconsumptie iets anders is dan overproductie. De private consumptie is de laatste decennia niet substantieel gedaald -want steeds overeind gehouden door (hypotheek)schuld. Wel zijn de investeringen gedaald, is de ongelijkheid toegenomen en zijn de lonen reëel gedaald. Tezamen met het schuldkaartenhuis leidde dat tot overproductie -aldus Houben.

Houben’s poging tot weerlegging van Keynes is onuitgewerkt en kort. Overigens is zijn begrip van de GFC evenwel zeer overtuigend. De schijnbaar ongegegroeperde fenomenen inkomensongelijkheid, schuldenberg, huizenbubbels en bankenlobby zijn geïntegreerde onderdelen van een ontstaansgeschiedenis van de GFC. Sommige historici zullen dat allicht als teleologische geschiedschrijving beoordelen, maar de afgelopen decennia kunnen in elk geval niet als “one damn fact after another” afgedaan worden. Zelfs wie Houben’s economische uitgangspunten niet onderschrijft, zal aan deze historiografische inzet niet langer twijfelen.

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Torsten Feys, *The Battle for the Migrants: The Introduction of Steamshipping on the North Atlantic and its impact on the European exodus*. (St John’s: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2013) 409 p. ISBN 978-19-27869-00-0.

Feys examines the impact that the development of steam-shipping had on migration patterns from Europe to the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Feys asserts that shipping companies played a prominent but as yet undervalued role in facilitating the chain migration of millions of Europeans through their vast array of migrant agents in Europe and the United

States. This is, he acknowledges, difficult to prove with certainty (p. 85). He is on steadier ground when he affirms that steamship companies managed to successfully diminish the efforts of American restrictionists to stem the arrival of unwanted southern and eastern Europeans and sidestep policies when they were eventually introduced. In addition, he persuasively demonstrates that these companies minimised government intervention and took advantage of 'the authority vacuum caused by globalization many decades before other industries' (p. 318) by creating international shipping cartels to ensure maximise profit and minimise competition from any newcomers.

Feys aims to combine the perspectives of maritime and migration historians in his work. Although analysing transatlantic migration is not new, he attempts to bring a more transnational, comparative, multi-disciplinary and multi-thematic approach to the topic. He focuses, in particular, on the evolution of the Holland-America Line because of the accessibility and wealth of the company's archives and the fact that the line was a prominent member of the New York Continental Conference that regulated the North Atlantic passenger trade. He also refers to various archives scattered around Europe and the United States and quotes extensively from the Dillingham Commission's reports on immigration in the early twentieth century.

Feys first charts how steamships competed with and gradually replaced sailing ships as the most popular form of transport for migrants by the end of the American Civil War in 1865. As well as ensuring safer and shorter journeys, steamships also meant that the journey was not irreversible anymore as return became more affordable (p. 50). He then discusses the roles played by various actors in stimulating and facilitating transatlantic migration, especially shipping agents, who 'spread information on where, when and how to move' (p. 117), often becoming unofficial bankers for migrants along the way. Agents favoured an unstable market because it could lead to higher commissions but by introducing inter-line agreements through conferences, shipping companies were able to maintain higher and more stable prices, thereby increasing their profits. Despite the attention of the American financier J.P. Morgan – who sought a share of the growing migrant trade – and suspicion from American anti-trust campaigns in the early twentieth century, European shipping cartels retained control over North Atlantic migrant traffic until the end of the Progressive Era.

The last part of Feys's book is dedicated to what many readers will feel is its most interesting and innovative contribution when he considers the influence of the shipping industry in offsetting increasing efforts in the United States to restrict immigration. Although scholars such as Aristide Zolberg and Maldwyn Jones have acknowledged shipping companies' role in influencing migrant transport laws, no scholar, Feys argues, has yet 'paid much attention to their role in opposing immi-

gration restrictions' (p. 211). Despite seventeen bills attempting to introduce a literacy test for immigrants successfully passing through the US Senate or House from the 1890s onwards, it took until 1917 before it eventually became law. In the meantime, '17 million migrants, most from eastern and southern Europe, landed in the US' (p. 239). This was, Feys argues, to a great extent due to the efforts of the shipping lobby, which 'managed to delay far-reaching, racially inspired restrictive measures for more than two decades' (p. 321) by hiring influential lobbyists, positioning men inside congressional commissions on immigration, contributing to party funds, distributing gifts, mobilising opposition among old and new immigrant communities and influencing public opinion through the press.

The fascinating story that Feys clearly presents about shipping companies' efforts to halt, moderate and circumvent American immigration restrictions will quite rightly attract migration historians to this book. Maritime historians will find details about the formation and growing power of shipping conferences of interest, particularly how the continental lines came to dominate their British counterparts. Some problems remain. The structure of the book is odd: the two background information chapters are confusingly labelled parts 1 and 2 and are then followed by chapters 1-5. Some of the graphs (e.g. on p. 150) are difficult to read because the shipping lines are differentiated by shades rather than symbols, despite the book being in black and white. The inclusion of an index and an explanatory list of acronyms would also have helped the reader. Lastly, some of the theoretical views referred to could have been introduced earlier and might have played a more prominent role because of their relevance to Feys's arguments, most notably Gary Freeman's hypothesis (p. 250) that specific actors who benefit from immigration are more likely to influence related policies than the broad range of actors who might oppose it. Overall though, the book is a very welcome addition to the literature.

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Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman (eds), *Dutch Atlantic connections, 1680-1800. Linking empires, bridging borders*. (Leiden/Boston, BRILL, 2014) 452 p. ISBN13: 978-90-04271-32-6.

Dutch Atlantic history is a growing field, both within the Netherlands and, on a much more modest scale, internationally. The last fifteen years have seen substantial revisions on the economic significance of the Atlantic world for the Dutch Republic. Some have even suggested that in the late eighteenth century, Atlantic