

the *Volkstribuun* was so full of praise for radical Catholic social theorists like Manning and Von Ketteler that it distributed the text of *Rerum Novarum* free!²¹ The free-thinking section of liberal opinion was generally impressed, as well: Hendrick Quack was delighted with the Pope's fondness for his own hobby horse, the guilds, and their modern equivalents,²² Sam van Houten (despite some criticism as well) was pleased to see Leo XIII's 'antirevolutionary Socialist' approach,²³ and *De Amsterdammer* also approved, while remarking that Leo had reserved, perhaps not surprisingly, a rather large role for his Roman Catholic Church in the resolving of the great social question.²⁴ It was only certain liberal papers, those which represented the entrepreneurial, secular interest, which appeared totally disinterested: *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, a rather lightweight Amsterdam liberal daily, ignored *Rerum Novarum* entirely, and the more serious *Algemeen Handelsblad*, which had pretensions of serving the business community and of providing a firstclass foreign news coverage, merely mentioned the encyclical in passing, and then only to be sarcastic about it.²⁵ From the point of view of employers, these liberal papers did have an interest in 'the social question', but were not impressed by the posturings of either the Calvinists or the Catholics: the Socialists they saw as a threat, and took more seriously.²⁶ Even the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* showed only a passing interest, and its reports of 21 and 27 May saw the encyclical largely as a domestic Italian matter.²⁷ But with the exception of these entrepreneur-oriented liberal papers, there was general interest and respect for the Pope's new pronouncement.

There was of course criticism, for in many ways *Rerum Novarum* was an explicitly anti-liberal and anti-Socialist document, and some of that criticism took the form of satire and ridicule. True to the elite liberal tradition of refusal to take seriously the efforts of emergent confessional groups, the *Algemeen Handelsblad*

21. Issue of 4 July 1891; see Perry, *Roomsche kinine*, 85.

22. H.P.G. Quack, *Herinneringen uit de levensjaren 1834-1914*, Nijmegen 1977, 384-385.

23. S. van Houten, 'Paus Leo XIII over het arbeiders-vraagstuk', *Vragen des Tijds* (1892), Part I, 1-37; see 9, and 1-9 *passim*.

24. *De Amsterdammer*, 3 June 1891.

25. On 4 June 1891 *Rerum Novarum* was referred to in connection with the colonies (see below), but on 7 June there was a major article on 'Maatschappelijke Toestanden' (The Social Situation), in which *Rerum Novarum* was not even mentioned.

26. See the major articles on the strikes in Belgium and the Workers Congress in Brussels in these papers, e.g. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31 July 1891.

27. After the announcement of the encyclical's publication, the *NRC* did not return to the subject during the rest of the summer.