FICTION

Compelling epic about a priest's struggle against social injustice

Pieter Daens

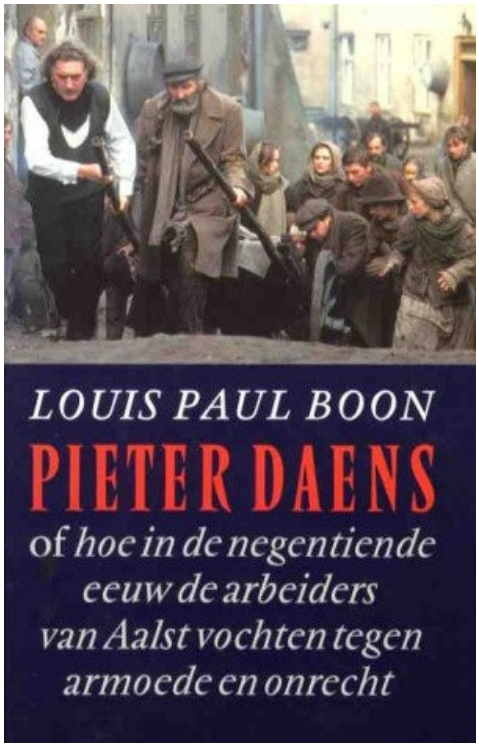
LOUIS PAUL BOON

At the end of the nineteenth century, working people in the small industrial town of Aalst live in terrible conditions. There are child labour and dangerous working conditions, and people are housed in slums. Adolf Daens is a priest who starts a new political party combining Christian and socialist ideals, to defend the interests of the working class. His brother Pieter is a journalist who denounces the abuses in the paper. Adolf was elected to parliament but was eventually forced to give up his seat. He continued to represent the struggle against injustice for the people of Aalst, but died in 1907 – penniless and exhausted. His brother Pieter continued his work.

> **Great because of its simplicity and its instantly gripping truthfulness**
>
> GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN

For years, Louis Paul Boon collected information about the rise of socialism in Aalst and about the radical Christian workers' movement around Adolf Daens. His research resulted in this monumental book, which is a true Flemish classic. It is a spectacular expression of Boon's compassion for the committed individual who, despite all adversity, wants to keep on believing in socialist ideals. The novel was turned into a successful film by Stijn Coninx, which was nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign film.

> **The Flemish working class could not find a better historian than Boon**
>
> VRIJ NEDERLAND



AUTHOR

Louis Paul Boon (1912-1979) is the author of a large and rich oeuvre spanning several genres: from the compelling historical epics to his sharp, witty work as a newspaper columnist and his tongue-in-cheek, scabrous novels. Boon certainly competes with Hugo Claus for the title of most important writer of Flemish literature in the twentieth century.

ORIGINAL TITLE Pieter Daens of hoe in de negentiende eeuw de arbeiders van Aalst vochten tegen armoede en onrecht (1972, De Arbeiderspers, 612 pp.)

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