



## International Conference of Labour and Social History

Internationale Tagung der HistorikerInnen der Arbeiter- und anderer sozialer Bewegungen  
Conférence internationale d'histoire ouvrière et sociale



# PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME (30.6.2017)

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**

## “Worlds of Labour Turned Upside Down – Revolutions and Labour Relations in Global Historical Perspective”

**21 – 23 September 2017**

**AK-Bildungshaus Jägermayrhof, Römerstraße 98, A-4020 Linz, Austria**

**Conference Languages: English – German**

53<sup>rd</sup> ITH Conference, organized by the International Conference of Labour and Social History (ITH), kindly supported by the Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

### Preparatory Group

**Tamás Krausz** (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), **Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir** (University of Iceland, Reykjavík), **Marcel van der Linden** (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam), **David Mayer** (ITH, Vienna), **Stefan Müller** (Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bonn), **Goran Musić** (Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz), **Lukas Neissl** (ITH, Vienna), **Felix Wemheuer** (University of Cologne)

### Objectives

After a long quarantine, “revolution” is back as a topic of historiographical debate. The upcoming anniversary of 1917 – arguably one of, if not the most momentous event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – has further fuelled this renewed interest. The reasons for the trend might be sought, on the one hand, in broader contemporary social experiences of crisis – including economic crises, recent upheavals in the Arab world, or movements and governments in Latin America aiming at transformation or even explicitly revolution. On the other hand, internal shifts within the domains of historical studies have made revolutions an attractive object of study again: Under the influence of dynamic debates around “global history” and “transnational perspectives” revolutions have emerged as an obvious object of study for those interested in the circulation of ideas, persons, commodities, practices, etc., as well as the connection between locations.

Taking this fresh attention given to revolutions as a starting point, the ITH Conference 2017 proposes to realign the focus and to discuss the specific interrelation between revolutions and labour relations. This interrelation is, of course, most conspicuous in all those movements and political projects, especially after 1917, in which a shift in ownership and labour relations was explicitly seen as a prime mover of revolutions. Revolutionary processes, however, have always been greatly shaped by the crises and conflicts emerging from the worlds of labour and by the aspirations and agency of labourers.

Approaching change within the “worlds of labour”, the conference aims at bringing the renewed interest in revolutions together with the vibrant debates in the field of Global Labour History. The latter has evolved over the last two decades focusing on the analysis of labour relations – emphasizing their diversity and the interrelated co-existence of various forms in the development of modern capitalism. How were revolutions grounded and shaped by this diversity of labour relations? How did different groups of labourers act in and influence revolutionary processes? And, how did these revolutionary transformations determine shifts in the composition of the labour force as well as the shape of labour relations?

Starting from these basic questions about the interrelations of revolutions and labour, a series of themes, topics and lines of enquiry will be discussed at this conference. This includes before-&-after-analysis (the systematic analysis of labour relations before, during, and after revolutions); the conspicuous interrelation of labour, revolution, and war (as epitomized in the experience of WWI and after); different forms of microanalysis allowing unique glimpses at the "big" processes of revolutions by focusing on rather small units either of production (factories, workshops, plantations, households) or community (villages, neighbourhoods) and including the forms of self-organisation of workers, peasants, and other groups in councils, soviets, or committees; tele-connections between actors in different localities and "revolution as labour", i.e. the work of those living for and from revolutionary activity.

This conference seeks to give ample space to comparative approaches (both synchronic and diachronic) or to pay special attention to connections between places and actors apart. All world regions are covered and many papers go beyond the well-known array of "classical" revolutions. The organizers also have encouraged a long global-historical perspective and the conference is open to papers on different periods. This includes the more remote processes and events in early modern period or the transformations around 1989 and beyond. The conference will also explicitly use the notion of larger transnational "cycles of revolution" presupposing the existence of interconnected clusters of revolutions affecting different regions at the same time.

This conference will be organized in a spirit that expressly acknowledges the fundamentally contested nature of all revolutions (both among actors of the time and subsequent historians). It adheres to a rather broad notion of "revolution" – including failed or attempted revolutions, revolutionary situations, as well as those imposed from above or through war. It, nevertheless, insists that the debate is on condensed (and relatively short) processes of crises, conflict, and change. The conference's focus, thus, remains on cases, where there was both an element of (political) transition and one of (social) transformation.

## Thursday, 21 September 2017

**Registration** of participants at the venue

- 12.00 – 14.00 Meeting of the ITH Board and the International Scientific Committee
- 14.00 – 14.30 Break
- 14.30 – 16.30 General Assembly of the ITH
- 17.00 – 17.40 **Conference Opening**
- 17.40 – 18.15 **Opening of the exhibition "1927 – Violent Solution in Austria"**
- 18.15 – 20.00 **Keynote Lecture:**  
**Immanuel Ness** (City University of New York): ***Working Class Spontaneity, Organisation and the Revolutionary Path: Past, Present, Future***
- 20.00 – 21.00 **Welcome Reception**

## Friday, 22 September 2017

**Registration** of participants at the venue

- 8.30 – 10.00 **Panel I: Labour Encountering the October Revolution, 1917-1920s**  
Chair and comment: tba
- Dimitriy Churakov (Moscow State Pedagogical University): *Half-Worker, Half-Peasant: The Events in Izhevsk 1917-1918 from the Point of View of the Peculiarities of Modernization in Russia*
  - Tiina Lintunen (University of Turku): *The Networks of the Rebellious Red Women in Finland in 1918*
  - Marine Dhermy-Mairal (Grenoble Institute of Political Studies): *The ILO Enquiry on Bolshevism in the Twenties: Between Fear, Curiosity and Learning*

- 10.00 – 10.30 Coffee Break
- 10.30 – 12.00 **Panel II: Communist and Post-Fordist Politics of Labour in the Short 20<sup>th</sup> Century**  
Chair and comment: Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir (University of Iceland, Reykjavík)
- Bernhard Bayerlein (Institute for Social Movements, Ruhr-University Bochum): *Instructors, Professional Revolutionaries and Comintern Officials: Transnational Leading Groups and Revolution as 'Work'?*
  - Jesper Jørgensen (The Workers' Museum, Copenhagen): *Revolution, Radical Anti-Fascism and Transnational Solidarity: The Danish Seamen and Harbour Workers' Revolutionary Union Opposition (1933-1934)*
  - Leo Kühberger (Graz): *1917 and 1968: Comparing Revolutions at the „Hidden Abodes of Production“*
- 12.00 – 13.00 Lunch
- 13.00 – 14.15 **Special Event:**  
**The Prague Spring, Scientific-Technical Revolution and Socialism**  
A conversation (with audience participation) with **Mikulás Teich** (Cambridge), chaired by **Susan Zimmermann** (Central European University, Budapest)
- 14.15 – 14.45 Coffee Break
- 14.45 – 16.15 **Panel III: Eastern Europe: Labour Regimes and the Logics of Change, 1940s-1990**  
Chair and comment: Goran Musić (Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz)
- Katja Praznik (State University of New York at Buffalo): *Artistic Labour During Self-Managed Socialism: From Avant-Garde to the Alternative*
  - Adrian Grama (Central European University, Budapest): *Rethinking the Post-War Conjuncture: Labour and the Politics of Productivity in Eastern Europe (1945-1960)*
  - Renate Hürtgen (Berlin): *“Nobody will take away my experience!” Forms of Workers' Self-Organisation during the Revolutionary Change 1989/90 in the GDR*
- 17.30 – 18.45 Dinner
- 19.30 – 21.30 **Public Event** at the Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria (Volksgartenstraße 40, A-4020 Linz)

## Saturday, 23 September 2017

- 9.00 – 10.15 **Panel IV: Revolutionizing Labour Relations and World Order, 1790-1848**  
Chair and comment: tba
- Pepijn Brandon (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam/International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam) & Niklas Frykman (University of Pittsburgh): *Revolutionizing the Republic of Wood: Maritime Labour in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*
  - Gabriel Di Meglio (University of Buenos Aires/National Scientific and Technical Research Council/CONICET): *Plebeians, Politics and Labour Relations in Revolutionary Argentina (1810-1825)*
  - Wolfgang Häusler (University of Vienna): *Dr. Ernst von Violand. Labour as the basis of democracy and the social history of the Revolution 1848 in Austria*

10.15 – 10.30 Coffee Break

10.30 – 12.30 **Panel V: Reordering Labour in Revolutionary Asia**

Chair and comment: tba

- Matthew Galway (University of British Columbia, Vancouver/University of California, Berkeley): *Spectres of Dependency: Labour Relations, Unequal Development and the Origins of Cambodian Communism (1955-1965)*
- Sepideh Nekomanesh (Stockholm University): *Changed Concepts about "Workers" and "Women's Role as Economic Agents" in the Aftermath of the Iranian Revolution 1979*
- David Palmer (University of Melbourne): *From Imperial Fascism to the Edge of Labour Revolution: Workers and Japan's Military-Industrial Complex (1931-1952)*
- Felix Wemheuer (University of Cologne): *The Impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution on Labour Relations*

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.30 **Panel VI: Labour, Transnational Interaction and Decolonization, 1940s-1960s**

Chair and comment: tba

- Raquel Varela (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) & João Carlos Louçã (Universidade Nova de Lisboa): *Forced Labour and the Portuguese Revolution: A Global Labour History Perspective*
- Kerstin Stubenvoll (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): *Colonial Work, Trade Union Influence and Anti-Colonial Self-Assertion in the Cameroon War of Decolonization*
- Christian Chevandier (University of Le Havre): *Working in the Railways before, during and after the Algerian Revolution (1950-1970)*
- Perna Agarwal (King's College London): *The Confidence of Labouring: The Potency of the Wartime Experiences of Indian Labour at the Port of Calcutta*

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.00 **Concluding Debate**

Chair: tba