

Labour Beyond State, Nation, Race: Global Labour History as a New Paradigm

A one-day workshop organised by the Global Labour University in collaboration with *Sozial.Geschichte Online* University of Kassel, 26 November 2011

The history of the labour movement is often taken for granted, as if factual learning alone secured knowledge. However, each new generation of labour militants must find its own interpretation of labour history and generate new notions of what is worth struggling for. This is often done based on existing research. However, research on labour movements and unions often continues to be informed by historical notions derived from 19th and early 20th century social science, such as the nation state, the male breadwinner model, a homogenised national and racial populace, continuous social progress, the politics of labour, economic freedom, the welfare state. In the last two decades, however, research into the transgressing aspects of labour has shown a multifaceted configuration of labour and an internationalist outlook accompanying the making of the (worldwide) working class. Contrary to notions of a stable Fordist-type development of 'national' working classes, it was found that early attempts to organise global labour go back as far as the advent of modernity. From the onset, more often than not, transnational modes of labour organisation that attempted to overcome the limits imposed by employers played an important role. In this workshop, we will consider new directions in the writing of labour history. Central issues to be touched upon are: How are these new directions characterised? What are their presuppositions and limits? How can labour be conceptualised anew? What are the contours of labour internationalism in the 21st century? This one-day work-

Conference

shop will look at some of the issues raised by an international perspective on labour history. A keynote speech will give a broad introduction to internationalist perspectives on labour.

Schedule

10:00 a.m.	Introduction and organisational issues
10:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Keynote Speech I – Lucien van der Walt (Wits University, South Africa): <i>Syndicalism and Anarchism and Global Labour History</i> (working title)
11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	Discussion
11:20 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Break
11:30 a.m. to 13:00 p.m.	Roundtable I: <i>Global Labour in the Making: Alternative Perspectives on Facets of Labour History</i> – Manuela Bojadzijev (University of Berlin): <i>Racism, Migrants' Struggles and Labour Organising</i> (tbc) – Peter Birke (University of Hamburg / <i>Sozial.Geschichte Online</i>) and Max Henninger (<i>Sozial.Geschichte Online</i>): <i>Workers and Urban Social Movements Today</i> – Lars Stubbe (University of Kassel): <i>What is Global About Global Labour? Snippets on Global Labour Movements and Unions from a Marxist Perspective</i>
13:00 p.m. to 14:30 p.m.	Lunch break
14:30 p.m. to 15:30 p.m.	Roundtable II: <i>Histories Making History</i> – Juana Torres Cierpe (University of Santiago / University of Kassel): <i>A Century of Trade Union History in the El Teniente Copper Mine, Chile</i> – Lisa Carstensen (University of Berlin): <i>Gendering and Marginalisation in Commodity Chain Production: The Cases of the Poblana (Mexico) and Paulista (Brazil) Home Textile Industries</i>

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15:30 p.m. to 15:45 p.m.	Coffee break
15:45 p.m. to 16:30 p.m.	– Elisabeth Tuijthof (tbc): Transnationalism and Care Work as New Research Paradigms (tbc)
16:30 p.m. to 16:45 p.m.	Discussion
16:45 p.m. to 17:30 p.m.	– NN (tba)
17:30 p.m. to 17:45 p.m.	Discussion
17:45 p.m. to 18:00 p.m.	Final discussion

The workshop is organised in collaboration with *Sozial.Geschichte Online*. Papers are to be published in a special issue on Global Labour History in 2012.

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