

Labouring Lives and Political Protest Across and Beyond the Nordic Countries

Call for Papers:

**Nordic Labour History Conference, The Workers
Museum, Copenhagen, November 26-29, 2020**

**Nordic Labour Film Festival, Cinemateket,
Copenhagen, November 25-29, 2020**



NURSES PROTESTING, CA. 1969. RÅDHUSPLADSEN,
COPENHAGEN. PHOTO: ULF NILSEN/ABA

www.nordicl labour history.org
nlhc.cph@gmail.com

Deadlines for submissions and notifications

- Session proposals: October 1, 2019
- Individual papers: November 15, 2019
- Film proposals: August 15, 2020
- Notification of whether your session proposal have been accepted: December 1, 2019
- Notification of whether your individual paper proposal have been accepted: February 1, 2020
- Notification of whether your film proposal has been accepted: September 15, 2020

- Submission of full papers: September 15, 2020
- Submission of final cut films: November 1, 2020



Our history

Nordic labour history conferences have been organized by the labour history institutes of the Nordic countries since 1974. The last conference took place in Reykjavík, Iceland, in 2016 and the participation and variety of sessions and papers illustrated the renewed interest in labour history in the Nordic countries. The conference led to the founding of Nordic Labour History Network and a more systematic cross-nordic cooperation, showing that the field is vivid and growing.

The next Nordic Labour History Conference – taking place at the Workers' Museum (Arbejdermuseet) in Copenhagen, November 26-29, 2020 – will continue the efforts from Reykjavík of expanding the field with new approaches to what can be interrogated as labour history: What counts as labour, where does labour take place and under what conditions, who constitute the working class and indeed 'the worker', what can be recognized as labour organizing and workers' associations.

The title of the conference – Labouring Lives and Political Protest Across and Beyond the Nordic Countries – is meant to encourage this expansion of approaches by pointing to the specificities of labour as such, of labour organizing, of workers' associations and parties, of collective bargaining practices and traditions, of the lived lives of workers, of convergences of and segregations between workplace and home, labour and free time, of various forms of political protest, activism and dissidence, as well as the spatial and temporal geographies of labour within, but not limited to a Nordic context. Labour and workers travel beyond sectoral and national borders and thus labour history inquiries must travel too.

The Nordic Labour History Conference 2020 (NLHC2020) encourages contributions from both established and emerging fields of study within labour history. Throughout the NLHC2020 the following tracks will be recurring (further description of each track is provided in the last part of the CfP):

- Feminist Labour History
- Precarious Work Historicized
- Free/Unfree Labour
- History of Fascism and Anti-Fascism
- Communist lives
- Histories of Migrant and Itinerant Labour
- History of Collective Bargaining
- De-industrialization
- Vagrant and Entreprenuerial Labour
- Political Activism Post 1945

Papers and session proposals within the recurring tracks will be reviewed by the conference organizing team in collaboration with the researcher(team) responsible for each track (contact info below). Papers and session proposals outside the tracks are also welcomed and will be reviewed by the organizing team.

Researchers proposing sessions – within or outside the tracks – are encouraged to collaborate and exchange well in advance to ensure coherent sessions. Each session should include contributions from at least three Nordic countries. Individual papers accepted for the conference will be paired in sessions with attention to both topic and cross-nordic exchange.

Along with the tracks, we are also organizing three special sessions for which papers can be proposed: One on de-industrialization processes; one on maritime-, dock-, and shipyard labour; and one on collective and individual life histories as entries to labor history (see further descriptions of the special sessions in the last part of the CfP).

Among the confirmed keynote speakers at the NLHC2020 is Professor Donatella della Porta, who will be giving a talk on political protest, social movements, and the politics of collective memory. Donatella della Porta is Dean of the Department of Political and Social Sciences as well as Director of Centre of Social Movements Studies (Cosmos) and Director of the PhD Program in Political Science and Sociology at Scuola Normale Superiore in Florence.

Also as keynote, History Professor at University of Manchester, Kevin Morgan – founding editor of *Twentieth Century Communism: a journal of international twentieth century history* and secretary of the Working Class Movement Library – will be talking about labor biographies and transnational communist studies.

Furthermore, Hull Professor at University of California, Santa Barbara, and President of the International Federation for Research in Women's History (2015-2020), Eileen Boris, will give a public talk about the history of the International Labour Organization, reviewing the research that came out of the 1919-2019 centennial as well as discuss centennials as a battleground of historical memory.

The main language of the conference is English, but proposals of sessions and papers in the Nordic languages are also welcomed.



HOUSE BUILDERS AND GUESTS CONGREGATING IN
THE METALWORKERS' HOUSE, FINLAND, 1964. PHOTO: TYARK

Nordic Labour Film Festival

The NLHC will be paralleled by Nordic Labour Film Festival (NLFF). NLFF is part of a global movement of labour film festivals and is organized by the collective RåFILM in collaboration with trade unions. If you wish to propose a film for the NLFF (your own or others), please contact the NLHC2020 organizing team (nlhc.cph@gmail.com) and coordinator Talat Bhat (talat@rafilm.se) with the subject “NLFF”.

Book and journal receptions and -market

The conference program will include receptions for new publications within the field of labour history as well as host a book and journal market. If you – as individual, journal or publishing house – wish to launch or sell books or journals during the conference, please contact the organizing team with the subject “Books and journals”. If your proposal is a launch, the deadline for proposals is August 30, 2020.

Session and paper proposals, submission details

Session proposals must include a title and a short description of the session (max 800 characters excl. references), the titles of each paper, the names and short bios (max 300 characters) of the presenters and the proposed commentator, including institutional affiliation if applicable, contact details of the session coordinator and the presenters, as well as the name of the track under which it is submitted. If it is not submitted under any track, please add up to five keywords.

Individual paper proposals must include a title, an abstract (max 800 characters excl. references), a short bio (max 300 characters) of the presenter incl. institutional affiliation if applicable, contact details of the presenter, as well as the name of the track under which it is submitted. If it is not submitted under any track, please add up to five keywords.

Scholars and researchers from universities, museums, archives, trade unions and other institutions and organizations, as well as independent scholars and researchers are encouraged to submit proposals. Students on post-graduate level (BA/Bachelor or above) are also encouraged to submit proposals.

Film proposals must include a short description (max 800 characters) of the film, the title of the film, the name of the director and script writer (as well as other contributors if relevant), the year, and a list of previous screenings if applicable. If the film would premiere at the NLFF2020, please note this specifically.

Track descriptions and coordinators



GROUP OF COMMUNISTS IN 1930s ICELAND. PHOTO: FROM THE SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER ÞJÓÐVILJINN

**NB: All proposals should be send to the
coordinator as well as the organizing
committee: nlhc.cph@gmail.com**

Feminist Labour History in the Nordic countries and beyond

Coordinators:

Silke Neunsinger, ARAB Stockholm: silke.neunsinger@arbark.se

Marjaliisa Hentila, Tyark, Helsinki

Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir, University of Iceland

Since the turn of the millennium we have experienced a new upswing in feminist labour history. During the last NHLN conference in Reykjavik in 2016 this was illustrated by a large number of panels on the subject. We want to invite you to continue the discussions started in Reykjavik, to challenge earlier perspectives and assumptions and to develop our knowledge about feminist labour history through discussion about empirical findings, theoretical, conceptual and methodological approaches and the expansion of the field in space and time.

We welcome contributions addressing amongst others the discussions on:

- the intersection of class, race, gender, global inequality, etc. in all thematic areas of labour history
- the global gendered division of labour
- sexual harassment at work
- the historical engendering of various types and forms of labour
- the historical evolvement of the relationship between paid and unpaid or subsistence-oriented work
- commodification and decommodification of domestic and care work
- how gender has impacted labour law and practice and vice versa, i.e. how labour law has shaped gender relations
- trade unions and gender locally, nationally, transnationally and internationally
- queer history and the labour movement
- the meaning of gender in times of economic or political crises, during revolutions and strikes
- labour women leaders - the known and unknown socialist feminists
- sisterhood and socialist feminists - with women or men to struggle for womens' rights
- feminism in labour culture (literature, music, art)
- gender, work and fascism/antifascism



ISTASYON PINOY BROADCASTING IN COPENHAGEN, 1990S, ABOUT EG. STRUGGLES AGAINST PRECARIZATION OF FILIPINA CHAMBERMAIDS. PHOTO: FROM MARC. R. DICAY'S ARCHIVE (SEE ALSO WWW.FILIPPINERNESDANMARKSHISTORIE.DK)

Precarious Work Historicized

Coordinators:

Nina Trige Andersen, SFAH: nina.trige.andersen@gmail.com

Margit Bech Vilstrup, Arbejdermuseet

Annette Thörnquist, Stockholm Universitet

"Precarious work" is a topical issue in contemporary political and academic debate. Even though precarious work is closely related to changes in the organization of production and work in recent decades, it is an old phenomenon as well. In this track we aim to historicize and interrogate the concept of precarious work and to invite papers that investigate precarization processes – and workers' responses to these processes – at work places (urban and rural) as well as in relation to for instance self-employment, home-based work and industrial outwork, BPO industry, platform work etc. The focus is on the Nordic countries, but also beyond, as the world of labor is obviously connected. We encourage proposals of sessions and papers that engage with theoretical understandings of precarization and precarious work, as well as with specific empirical studies of such processes and forms of labor and labor organizing. We also welcome studies on the role of social partners, governments, institutions and associations, including their responses and strategies relating to precarious work and precarization processes.

Free/Unfree Labour

Coordinators:

Fia Sundevall, Stockholm University:

fia.sundevall@ekohist.su.se

Christian de Vito, University of Leicester

Johan Heinsen, Aalborg University



WORKERS IN SUGAR PLANTATION, ST.CROIX, UNDER DANISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION. PHOTO: PETER ELFELT/THE DANISH ROYAL LIBRARY

As labour historians are increasingly looking beyond wage labour, the question of the interaction between, and fluidity of, "free" and "unfree" labour is becoming still more prevalent. This track explores the elements of coercion in a host of different labour relations (slavery, convict labour, tributary labour, wage labour, etc.) in the Nordic countries and beyond. Topics may include: coerced labour in colonial, military or rural contexts; the welfare state and coercion; gender and unfree labour; and the lived experiences of coercion, including processes of solidarity and conflict among or between workers in different categories of labour. We welcome proposals on all historical periods.

History of fascism/anti-fascism

Coordinators:

Charlie Krautwald, University of Agder: charlie.krautwald@uia.no

Andrés Brink Pinto, Lund University

Hélène Löw, Uppsala University



CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ANTIFASCISTS AND FASCISTS AT DNSAP MEETING 1940. PHOTO: ABA

Ever since the emergence of fascism on the political scene in Europe after World War I, the Left has coped with fascists seeking to challenge the socialist labour movement. This is also true for the Nordic countries where local fascist movements as well as the political development in other countries have been the cause of anti-fascist mobilisation from the 1920's and beyond. This has taken on many forms from opinion building, legal action, and social reform to solidarity work, mass mobilisation, and militant activism. With the reoccurrence of right-wing ultra-nationalism the past years, the history of fascism and anti-fascism is becoming still more actual and has gained renewed interest among scholars of political mobilisation. The track explores the many facets of this research field with topics such as fascist movements from Mussolini to right-wing populism; fascism as workers' movements; anti-fascist strategies from legalism to militancy; solidarity work, internationalism and transnational connections; fascist and anti-fascist culture and propaganda; gender and masculinity in fascist and anti-fascist activism.

Communist Lives

Coordinators:

Rósa Magnúsdóttir, Aarhus University:
slarm@cas.au.dk

Ole Martin Rønning,
Arbeiderbevegelsens arkiv og bibliotek,
Oslo

Pia Koivunen, University of Turku



Since the days of the Cold War, communist studies have moved beyond the original concepts of totalitarianism and organizational structures. Our session aims to explore further the contemporary trend of biographical research, while integrating a perspective that puts rank-and-file communists into focus. Exploring communist lives challenges common dichotomies in the historiography by showing the fluidity of concepts such as belief/dissent, work/leisure, trust/distrust, conflict/peace, center/periphery, public/private, official/unofficial, integration/secterianism, and can enhance our conception of for instance gender roles, education, space and time, mobility, loyalty, generations, emotions, experiences, and ideology. This track puts the spotlight on communist individuals, couples, and groups. Using communist lives as a lens, topics may cover anything from everyday strategies to political struggles in the ideological context of communism. We also invite papers with a focus on the methodological innovations and challenges (for instance archival structures as such, letters, diaries, memoirs/autobiographies, oral history, prosopography and digital humanities) that arise when dealing with communist lives.

POSTER FROM KOMMUNISTISK UNGDOM
(YOUTH ORGANISATION OF NKP) 1973. PHOTO: ARBARK

Histories of Migrant and Itinerant Labour



FILIPINA CHAMBERMAIDS, 1972, HOTEL RICHMOND, COPENHAGEN. PHOTOS: GITTE KABÉLL (SEE ALSO WWW.FILIPPINERNESDANMARKSHISTORIE.DK)

Coordinators:

Heidi Vad Jønsson, Syddansk Universitet: hej@sdu.dk

Nina Trige Andersen, SFAH

Mats Wickström, Åbo Akademi

Mathias Kaihovirta, Åbo Akademi

Migration studies are often dominated by contemporary perspectives, whereas labor studies tend to overlook migration and migrant experiences. When migration is treated in Nordic labor history it is often framed as a challenge and migrants become the external other. In this track we focus on the histories of migrant and other forms of itinerant labor in the Nordic countries and beyond – cross-border as well as within national territories – including histories of migrant labor (self)organizing, labor migration routes, trade union responses to migrant labor, recruitment practices of migrant labor to and between the Nordic countries, workers' parties policies and strategies in relation to migration, individual and collective labor migrant experiences and -accounts. We invite proposals that draw on all kinds of source materials, including oral history, institutional and private archives, photos, policy documents, parliamentary and public debates; work-place and company specific histories etc., and all forms of labor: urban and rural; formal and informal; labor within manufacturing, service, domestic and other sectors; workplace labor, home-based labor and labor on the move. We encourage specific empirical studies as well as studies that address how histories of migrant and itinerant labor – theoretically and methodologically – can be accounted for.

History of Collective Bargaining

Coordinators:

Astrid Elkjær Sørensen, SFAH: astridlk@hotmail.com

Lars Berggren, Lund Universitet

Barbro Budin, IUF

In the early 20th century, agreements between national employers' associations and trade union federations were concluded in the different Nordic countries. Following conflicts in the labour market, the September Agreement was signed in Denmark 1899, the December Compromise was agreed upon in Sweden 1906 and the Manufacturing industry agreement (Verkstedsoverenskomsten) signed in Norway in 1907. However, strikes and lockouts were still frequent during the following decades. In the 1930s and 1940s, labour market agreements regulating industrial relations were signed in most Nordic countries. Negotiation rather than legislation has been known as a characteristic of the Nordic Model.

One interesting research question is, however, to what extent labour market conflicts have in practice been resolved through negotiations or legislation. Since particularly the 1990s deregulation, digitalisation and outsourcing has led to new forms of employment and labour market relations. In what ways have these changes affected industrial relations and collective bargaining?

This track explores patterns of collective bargaining and mediation among white- and blue-collar workers within different trades in the period 1900–2010. Papers on how trade unions have handled issues concerning gender equality, precarious work, free/unfree labour, migrant and itinerant labour are also very welcome.

Vagrant and Entrepreneurial Labour

Coordinators:

Ann-Catrin Östman, Åbo Akademi: ann-catrin.ostman@abo.fi

Johanna Wassholm, Åbo Akademi

Eirinn Larsen, Oslo University

Focusing on itinerant labor and small-scale entrepreneurship, this track invites papers that analyze untypical and mobile livelihoods. Today, itinerant trade as well as various forms of vagrant labor are integral parts of social, cultural and economic life in many regions of the world.



VAGRANT TRADERS, 1910-1920, FINLAND. PHOTO: SVENSKA LITTERATURSÄLLSKAPET/EDITH SÖDERGRANS ARKIV

Throughout history, marginalized groups and minorities have received income from itinerant labor and small-scale selling. This track investigates significant and heterogeneous, yet relatively underexplored groups. We invite studies of for instance how various groups could - alternatively were forced to - engage in petty trade and small-scale entrepreneurship to gain their livelihoods. Moreover, we encourage questions of for example how various forms of itinerant labour were interpreted and regulated, and how these groups experienced interaction and inclusions as wells violence, threats, racism and discrimination, as well as how individuals and groups engaged in small-scale entrepreneurship and petty trade organized their work lives. By engaging with such studies within the framework of labour history, the track also seeks to expand our ideas about who constitute the working class and what counts as labor, historically and contemporary.

Political Activism Post 1945

Coordinators:

Jesper Jørgensen, Arbejdermuseet: jjo@arbejdermuseet.dk

Rikke Halberg, Arbejdermuseet

Lasse Lindekilde, Aarhus Universitet

Thomas Olesen, Aarhus Universitet

Political engagement has changed. Significant fewer people are today members of political parties than 50-60 years ago. However, the decline in party membership can't necessarily be seen as an expression of declining political commitment, but rather as a diversification of forms of political participation, expressions and practices and an attraction to different kinds of political activism, ranging from "liking" political Facebook pages, voluntary grassroots work and peaceful demonstrations to the practice of political violence. The track is part of an ongoing project on Danish left wing activism in a historical and comparative perspective by the Workers' Museum and Aarhus University, and invites panels, sessions and individual papers exploring actors' motivation for engaging in political contestation across and beyond the Nordic countries, including topics such as alternative political strategies and communication forms, conceptions and practices of democracy, social dynamics in social movements (international solidarity, anti-war, environmental etc.), and personal narratives/memories as sources to the study of political activism.



THE COMMITTEE FOR ACTION OF MAY 7, 1969,
PROTESTING JOHN WAYNE'S PROPAGANDA FILM
FOR THE US WAR IN VIETNAM. PHOTO: ABA

Special session descriptions and coordinators



ELSINORE SHIPYARDS, DENMARK. PHOTO: MUSEUMS OF ELSINORE

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coordinator as well as the organizing
committee: nlhc.cph@gmail.com**

Deindustrialization processes in the Nordic Countries

Coordinator:

Christian Wicke, Utrecht University: c.wicke@uu.nl

In this special session, scholars of diverse disciplines and case studies are invited to begin a discussion and test ideas about the history of deindustrialization in the Nordic countries.

Deindustrialization is becoming a vibrant theme in public labour history and memory studies. As a highly place-dependent and uneven phenomenon, the understanding of its underlying historical processes requires multilevel analyses, involving local, national and global perspectives of different time periods. While the history of industrialization has enjoyed popularity in the faculties, often being historicized as integral to the transition to modern culture in the western world, the causes and effects of deindustrialization deserve further inquiry.

The worlds of labour—and thus political as well as historical cultures, labour relations, industrial landscapes, urban structures and many other spheres of life—have changed greatly under conditions of deindustrialization. This special session considers the causes and effects as well as the management and remembering of deindustrialization processes in the Nordic countries from various disciplinary vantage points. In line with the overall conference theme, a particular focus will be on political protests of various kinds that emerged in response to deindustrialization processes.

Paper proposals should be guided by one or more of the following questions: 1) What were causes and effects (political, socioeconomic, cultural and environmental) of the major deindustrialization processes in the Nordic countries; 2) How have these processes been managed politically at the national and local levels; 3) What forms of political protest and organized action have deindustrialization processes given rise to; 4) How did it affect the world of labour and labouring lives; and 5) How political is public memory of deindustrialization—i.e. what kind of industrial heritage exists, what kind of historiography, and what kind of efforts by public authorities and civil society have been taken to preserve and construct memories of deindustrialization?



Maritime-, Dock-, and Shipyard Labour

Coordinators:

Iben Vyff, Elsinore Shipyard Museum: ivy03@helsingor.dk

Niels Hein, Elsinore Shipyard Museum

Lars Beggren, Lunds Universitet

With significant changes in the maritime industry, maritime-, dock- and shipyard labor has changed as well. Up until the end of the 20th century, docks and shipyards was a visible and prominent feature of many maritime towns and cities in Europe, not least the Nordic countries. Since then, many of these maritime workplaces has vanished from the urban waterfront along with its laborers. In some places, this was due to tougher competition in the industry, resulting in closures of many maritime industries and workplaces. In other places, however, docks, shipyards and other maritime industries simply moved to new locations, were access to the coast, and the possibility of expansion was better, as well as to places where labor costs were lower. The maritime industries in Europe have also changed due to significant technological developments, with many industries focusing on technological or logistic specialization. But what did these changes mean for the workforce, and how did workers respond to these changes? This session explores how changes within the maritime industry impacted the lives and culture of the hard labor maritime workforce, as well as the maritime urban areas. We invite papers with a focus on changes around maritime labor identity and culture in general, with particular focus on the Nordic countries, but also on connections beyond borders and continents.

Faces in the Crowd: Collective and Individual Life Histories as Entries to Labour History

Coordinator:

Sofie Lene Bak, University of Copenhagen, The Saxo Institute: ztv207@hum.ku.dk

New political agendas like #MeToo, gender identity, climate change, financial crises, migrant organizing etc. alters not only the political debate but also the historical focus. As consequence “Invisible Histories” from the “bottom” is again getting attention and there is a growing interest in oral history and alternative forms of archives, and the methodological reflections in general expands and challenges historiography. Furthermore, though biographical methods have long been employed within labor history studies, these methods have in recent years gained new traction and are being explored in new ways and in new fields. Simultaneously, the concept of what counts as archival material is being expanded and added with new digital layers as well as archival collection and construction is spread to wider audiences, for instance via SoMe. This session invites researchers and cultural workers to discuss these developments and present results from collective and individual life histories projects.



Hosts, co-organizers and sponsors



www.arbejdermuseet.dk



Society for labour history, Denmark: www.sfah.dk



Workers Archive: www.tyark.fi



People's Archive: www.kansanarkisto.fi



www.arbetarhistoria.org



Swedish Labour Movement's
Archives and Library

www.arbark.se



Finnish Society for Labour History
www.thpts.fi



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The Icelandic Association of Historians
www.sagnfraedingafelag.net

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