

CfP: Military Labour History at the ELHN-WORCK Conference 2021

Final call for individual papers for the Working Group *Military Labour History* (ELHN-WORCK Conference, Vienna, 30 August–3 September 2021), deadline 5 January 2021.

This is a final call for abstracts (individual papers) for the [Military Labour History](#) sessions at [ELHN-WORCK 2021](#), Vienna, 30 August–3 September 2021, to be submitted by **5 January 2021**.

One might not immediately think of the military when discussing issues related to workers and labour. Yet whether free or unfree, paid or unpaid, those assisting military-related tasks and objectives are involved in work; and militaries are dependent upon a range of labour, from soldiers to domestic workers, in order to function. Thus, the Military Labour History Network is dedicated to exploring, defining, documenting, analysing and theorising military labour across time and geography and within various contexts.

At the ELHN 2021 Conference in Vienna, the Military Labour History Working Group will have the following panels, and submitted abstracts must align with one of these:

Panel 1. Military labour history: what, why, who and how?

When the ELHN military labour working group was founded in 2015, it responded to a call to explore military work as labour. Inspired by the works of Jan Lucassen and Jan-Eric Zürcher, the working group sought to bring together scholars exploring various forms and aspects of military labour, including but not limited to conscription and military service, military employment and remuneration, various degrees and forms of coercion in military labour, military working environment, gender divisions of military labour, and war industry workers.

Nonetheless, a returning question within the working group is how to define military labour and military workers. Is, for example, a wage-earning high-ranked officer a military worker? And what of those serving the needs of the military who are not combatants? What of the Chinese trench digger in the Great War or the Papuan stretcher bearer in the Asia Pacific War; the nurse tending to battlefield wounds or the civilian in the munitions factory? Another key question, then, relates to what should be recognised as military labour, especially for non-combatant and civilian workers who aid the achievement of military ends. The above also raise questions about freedom and coercion in military labour, from voluntarism to conscription to slavery.

For this session, we therefore wish to dig deeper into the concepts, theories, and/or methodologies in military labour history. In short, this session will explore what is military labour, why we need to define it, who might be included, and how we can research it.

Panel 2. Resisting military labour

This session explores warfare and military labour from the perspective of resistance, which may be active or passive, open or hidden, and consist of collectively organised efforts or actions of individual soldiers. In addition to various ways of opposition, such as desertion, conscientious objection, rebellion, strikes, mutiny and sabotage, the session can refer to the different ways and means states have used to deal with resistance within their armed forces.

Panel 3. Recruitment of military labour

This session deals with the various ways in which recruitment of military labour have been organised, practiced, communicated and experienced in various time periods and geographical regions. We particularly encourage presenters to discuss various degrees and/or forms of coercion in the recruitment of military labour, and/or coercive relations between various forms of recruitment.

Panel 4. Gendering military labour

The word “military” almost automatically conjures up images of men in uniform, but this session seeks to nuance and problematise that image in relation to military labour. Examples of topics the session might address include: military labour and masculinities; gendered divisions of labour in the military; women in the military; gender and non-combatant/civilian labour for the military; intersectionality and military labour; military families and camp followers; and gendered ideologies and military work.

If you would like to submit an abstract for one of the above panels, please send the following to the Working Group Coordinators:

1. The name of the Panel
2. A paper title and an abstract of **up to 500** words
3. If you are not already a member of the Working Group, **a bio of up to 200 words**.

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As there are uncertainties due to Covid-19, also indicate whether you would be willing to give your presentation via an online session.

If you would like to join the Military Labour History Working Group mailing list and Facebook group, please state this in your contact email. You can also visit our webpage <https://socialhistoryportal.org/elhn/wg-military>, which includes our newsletters.