

# European Labour History Network Working Group "Feminist Labour History"

Newsletter N. 1 - June 2016

Dear members of the ELHN Working Group "Feminist Labour History", dear interested Colleagues and friends,

As you might know already, the EHLN working group on "Feminist Labour History", created in October 2013, aims to build and develop existing, more or less formal and informal contacts and networks of scholars with an interest in gendered labour history in Europe and around the world. We aim to bring together and support research related to a broad range of themes and concepts in feminist labour history including but not limited to the following:

- the intersection of class, race, gender, global inequality, etc. in all thematic areas of labour history
- the global gendered division of labour
- the historical engendering of various types and forms of labour
- the historical evolution of the relationship between paid and unpaid or subsistence-oriented work
- commodification and decommodification of domestic and care work
- the role gender has played in shaping labour law and practice of regulating labour and the impact of labour law and labour practices on gender and gender relations
- trade unions and gender locally, nationally and internationally
- the politics of "women's work" and "men's work"
- the exchange of knowledge about primary sources, archives, and literature related to the history of gender and labour.

The first conference of the European Labour History Network, held in Turin on December 14-16, 2015, was a very successful event. More than 200 scholars from all over Europe took part in the Conference, which hosted 37 parallel sessions and 2 plenary ones. Thanks to the bottom-up structure of the European Labour History Network and the open call for papers we launched as "Feminist Labour History" working group, women's and gender labour history had a tremendous visibility within the Conference.

Around one third of the overall sessions addressed explicitly gender-related topics. The session *Gender, Labour and Modern History. What's new on Europe* (coordinators: Cristina Borderias and Manuela Martini) was composed of two panels and a round table: 1) *historiographical and theoretical proposals*; 2) *empirical proposal* and 3) *translating gendered labour related concepts in different historiographies*.

The session *Wage Equality, Pay Equity and Equal Pay* (coordinators: Cristina Borderias and Silke Neunsinger) was composed of two panels, addressing themes such as wage equality in relation to the international framework provided by the ILO and the EU as well as the evolution of gender pay gap and equal pay in national context (e.g. Spain and South Africa).

Also the session *Women and Trade Unions in Europe* (coordinators: Silke Neunsinger and Susan Zimmermann) was composed of two panels. The first, *Trade Union Women's Activism: gender, class and political system*, analyses context such as Franco's Spain, 1970s Italy and France and, last but not least, Hungary (1965-80). The second panel, *A Biographical Approach to Women and Trade Unions in Italian History. The case of Emilia-Romagna Region*, analysed women and trade unions across a century of Italian history, focusing on the Emilia-Romagna Region.

The session *Women Work in Rural Areas: a long-term perspective (XII-XXI Centuries)* (coordinator: Giulio Ongaro), instead, was composed of one panel, whose papers explore in the long run rural women livelihood, gender and rural industry, female mobility, gender relations in agricultural work and peasants household in context such as Spain, Italy, France, Austria and Turkey.

Finally, the session on *Women and Gender Relations in the Labour Force: the case of mining, 1500-2000s* (coordinators: Rossana Barragán and Leda Papastefanaki) was composed of one panel, whose papers explore women's formal and informal work in the Bolivian, Spanish and Greek mines during 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The sessions were usually well attended and the debate was lively. Further opportunities of international cooperation and networking have emerged.

The increasing interest in women's labour history has been confirmed also by the European Social Science History Conference, held in Valencia on March 30-April 2, 2016. The "Women and Gender Network" and the "Labour Network" hosted more than 9 sessions investigating explicitly the intersection between women's/gender history and labour history. Among the topic addressed at the conference we can list: *Gender, deindustrialization and precarious labour; Women's labour history between the local and the global; Migration and care/domestic work; Women's work and the Atlantic economy; Women's workers, class and identity; Women's economic space and work; Revisiting women's work by thinking at transgression, interspaces and hybrids; Women and gender labour relationships in the mines (1500-2000); Women's work in rural north-west Europe in the early modern era.* Furthermore, many other sessions addressed women's work in relation to family and social structure, welfare systems, census data, state socialism, informal labour, etc. Thanks to the wide range of topics, women's labour was investigated in regard to Western and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Atlantic space, and to a lesser extent also to Africa and Asia.

Many scholars attending the Turin Conference also organized sessions at the ESSHC in Valencia, addressing relevant topics for women's labour history. In Valencia, the coordinators of the ELHN Feminist Labour History Working Group met, and developed two initiatives:

1. We invited Eloisa Betti to join the coordinating group – welcome to Eloisa!
2. We decided to launch this bi-annual Newsletter. The Newsletter is conceived as a tool for sharing information regarding calls for papers, job advertisements, ongoing projects and activities as well as opportunity of cooperation in the field of women's labour history. We plan to issue the newsletter twice per year, in June and December. We invite you all to send us information you wish to see included in the next issue of the newsletter by November 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest. Please do send these news to Eloisa Betti.

The next EHLN Conference will be held in autumn 2017 in Paris and we strongly hope that this will be an opportunity for meeting you all again. Please feel invited from now on until November 15<sup>th</sup> to circulate your ideas for the 2017 ELHN Conference via using the reply-all function amongst all of us included in our Network so far. We will, based on this input, come up with a Feminist Labour History Network Call for Papers for the ELHN Paris 2017 Conference in the December edition of this Newsletter.

Please also circulate any other ideas or plans you entertain for activities within or to be supported by the Feminist Labour History Network via this email-list.

Feel free to forward and share our Newsletter with colleagues, who might be interested in following the activities of the ELHN Feminist Labour History Working Group. Colleagues interested in receiving the Newsletter should write to Eloisa Betti.

Please do also invite others to become part of the ELHN Feminist Labour History Working Group. In order to do so, interested individuals should write to Eloisa Betti who will include the name into our list of members of the Working Group.

***Let us conclude with a recap of the opportunities/deadlines:***

***Any time to 15 November 2016:*** Ideas, suggestions, etc. regarding the CfP of the Feminist Labour History Working Group for the 2d ELHN Conference in Paris in autumn 2017, circulation via this address list

***15 November 2016:*** Deadline for sending news to be included into the next edition of the Newsletter to be circulated in December 2016, email to Eloisa Betti

***Any time:*** Joining the group receiving this Newsletter and/or the Working Group, email to Eloisa Betti

***Any time:*** Ideas or plans for activities of the Feminist Labour History Network, circulation via this address list

In addition, please feel all free to share information etc. via this address list.

Best wishes,

Eloisa Betti, Silke Neunsinger, Leda Papastefanaki, Susan Zimmermann