

***MARITIME LABOUR HISTORY
WORKING GROUP
(EUROPEAN LABOR HISTORY
NETWORK)***

Newsletter No 1, 18 March 2016

CALL FOR COLLABORATORS: *SEA IN WORLD HISTORY*

(16 January 2016)

Our colleague Peter Cole sends us a call that might be of interest. He informs us that Stephen Stein, Editor of the *Sea in World History*, is looking for people to write on some topics for this work. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please let me know, and of course, please feel free to pass the list on to anyone you think might be interested. The topic are:

New Zealand since 1945 (750) - Europe since 1945 (2000) - Titanic (400) - Liberian Registry (500) - Aristotle Onassis (400)

If you are interested please contact with Stephen Stein, PhD, sstein@memphis.edu

DOCK WORKERS AND THE ASBESTOS IN THE VENETIAN WATERFRONT

(7 January 2016)

Marco Caligari is working on the translation of an article in regard "The dock workers and the asbestos in the Venetian waterfront". He asks for suggestion about researches, papers or books on two main subjects:

- The Asbestos and the dock workers.
- Harmful goods and the health of the workers in the waterfronts.

If you have any ideas please contact Marco Caligari, caligarimarco@gmail.com

CALL FOR PAPERS: *INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS AND SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF REPRESSION IN HARBORS AND AT SEA. THIRD JULES DURAND DAYS. UNIVERSITY OF LE HAVRE, FRANCE, 24-25 NOVEMBER 2016*

(7 March 2016)

The Maritime Labor History Network founded in Turin on December 15, 2015, during the European Labor History Network conference, noted that studies of port and sea workers had accumulated over the last twenty years. At the same time, a new interest has emerged in France for the figure of Jules Durand, a coal porter and leader of the 1910 Le Havre strike who became the victim of a judicial frame-up and the object of a wide-ranging solidarity campaign in his own country and around the world, bringing together human rights activists and trade unionists of all tendencies.

The Conference « International networks and solidarity in the face of repression in harbors and at sea » aims to shed light on the forms of this solidarity with Jules Durand in 1910, and to compare the events of 1910 with other incidents of repression in ports and at sea which also triggered international solidarity, in other places, at other times and on other issues.

The violence of the conflict which took place in the Le Havre harbor in 1910 had been foreshadowed in France and among maritime nations by directives which came from international networks of shippers (International Shipping Federation) as well as transport workers (International Transport Workers Federation). Such preparations included the resort to lock-out of strikers, to new labor-saving machines and to non-striking workers imported from elsewhere (English workers in Antwerp, Kabyles in Marseille). When the Havrais strike leader was condemned to the death penalty following false testimony and a frame-up organized by a very large company (apparently a rare, even exceptional, instance of such methods in the history of the Third Republic), demonstrations of support broke out in all cities of France, particularly port cities, and in Europe (Barcelona, Genoa, Antwerp, Brussels, and others), the Americas and Australia. What cultures of solidarity and information transmission networks enabled such a widespread protest?

Had the scope of the movement observed in 1910 and 1911 been prepared by earlier campaigns of information, solidarity or mutual aid organized by various networks during the nineteenth century (free masons, Christian seamen's social work and missions, trade union, socialist, anarchist federations, seamen's clubs, repeated socializing in the same pubs and inns of different ports, oral stories, songs, publications)? Did there exist a distinctive world of the harbor and maritime workers, which could sustain common cultural elements in several countries connected by navigation?

Did other instances of repression and solidarity display the same features as the campaigns in defense of Jules Durand? A few years earlier, in 1905, a mutiny had erupted on board the Russian battle ship Potemkin: it was immortalized some twenty years later by the film-manifesto of Sergueï Eisenstein. In 1908, a young Swedish Anarchist docker from Malmoe, Anton Nilsson, was condemned to death after a strike and a bombing. He later became a sort of hero of the Scandinavian revolutionary workers. In 1909, a dockers' strike took place in Antwerp, during which strike breakers were imported from outside the city, as they were to be in Le Havre in 1910.

Later, after the Great War, French sailors refused to act against the Soviet revolution; they were prosecuted. But they were also defended by a memorable campaign in favor of « the French Black Sea mutineers ». Between 1921 and 1926, the Chinese revolution was born in the strikes of seamen and dockers and the solidarity boycotts organized in

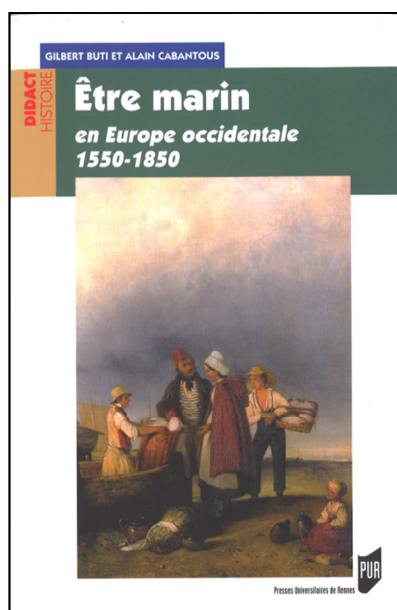
Hong Kong, Canton and Shanghai, which were harshly suppressed and became the setting for André Malraux's novel, *La Condition humaine*. In 1934, the Communist leader of the Hamburg dockers, Edgar André was condemned to death by the Nazi regime, and was defended by a major international campaign organized by the Communist movement. In another sphere, the leader of the German KPD imprisoned in Buchenwald, Ernst Thaelmann, a former Hamburg docker, was known throughout the world by a photo of him wearing a cap typical of Hamburg dockers and seamen. In Amsterdam, dockers organized a strike against the round-up of Jews; their leader, Henk Sneevliet, was arrested and executed by the Nazis on April 13, 1942. A statue recalls this heroic gesture.

More recently, in 1995, the dockers of Liverpool who were attempting to defend their jobs, had to sustain first repression from their employers (a massive sacking of several hundred dockers), then from the relatively good-natured municipal police, then from the more violent specially trained police unit (OSD Operational Support Division), often called "robocops", while the government unleashed a one-sided campaign of denunciation in the media. This strike gave rise to a vast movement of support both in the United Kingdom and around the world, particularly in ports.

These struggles, their repression, the solidarity they aroused, gave birth to songs, stories, novels, plays, films, which often had an international audience, in any case an impact well beyond the port where the conflict took place. A good example is the film by Ken Loach, *A Flickering Flame* (52 minutes), known in France as *Les dockers de Liverpool*, which had an important role in popularizing the strike in Europe. Others include *Adalen 31* by Bo Wideberg, 1969, about Sweden, or Paul Carpita's *Le rendez-vous des quais*, 1950-53, about Marseilles. Cultural representations of social conflict at sea and in harbors, such as Ken Loach's film, have contributed to their broad impact and deserve to be analyzed.

We call for papers (or other forms of presentations) on these issues: the proposal should be from ten lines to a page, and should be accompanied by a brief presentation of the author and her or his publications. It should be received before June 1, 2016. Answers to the proposals will be sent out by July 1, 2016.

Contact: john.barzman@univ-lehavre.fr



BOOK. ÊTRE MARIN EN EUROPE OCCIDENTALE 1550-1850.

(7 March 2016)

We would like to inform you about a new book by Gilbert Buti and Alain Cabantous. *Être Marin en Europe occidentale 1550-1850*.

This work is an essay published in French by the Presses Universitaires de Rennes. It is aimed to a wide range of readers, not only scholars, but precisely this is

probably its great goal. It is a good thing to talk about seamen from a rigorous point of view, supported by documents and sources. And it is also necessary to discuss about the social identities and role of seamen in the society as a social group but also as workers.

Gilbert Buti is a professor emeritus of Modern History at the Université d'Aix-Marseille, and member of the laboratory TELÉMME (MMSH). Alain Cabantous is also professor emeritus of Modern History at the Université de Paris 1.

MEETING OF THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN LABOUR HISTORY NETWORK.

We inform you that a meeting of the coordination committee of the ELHN is scheduled in Valencia (Spain) for Thursday 31 March 2016. The meeting will be chaired by Susan Zimmermann. The city of Valencia hosts those days the Eleventh European Social Science History conference (30 March - 2 April 2016), organized by the International Institute for Social History.

**PLEASE SEND US INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKS,
RESEARCHES, EXHIBITIONS, CONFERENCES OR ANY
SUBJECT THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST FOR THE GROUP.**

**NEW INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED IN THE NEXT
NEWSLETTER**

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