

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

## Newsletter No 9, 4 December 2017.

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### CONFERENCES

**2<sup>nd</sup> European Labour History Network Conference, Paris, 2-4 November 2017.**

Let us do some comments about the sessions of Maritime Labour Working Group of ELHN (Paris 2-4 November 2017)

First of all, the participation was quite successful: 15 attendants at the first session, 17 at the second session, 22 at third session (most of them participated in the general meeting of the group) and 12 at the last session. In general, we were a disciplined crew, and almost all the people respected the time that they had for their presentations. In despite of this, we didn't have much time for the discussions although the researchers had a great predisposition to the participation. This is something to think about for future conferences.



Beyond the contents of the different papers, we can point out that the gender dimension appeared in a transversal way, and not only as and specific point of view, in different papers along the four sessions.

Another very common issue was the role of the state in the recruitment of the maritime workers. Also, we could see a narrow relation between national and global perspectives, and this was also analysed by different

academic interests, as of the labour organizations or legal conditions. Finally, it was commented that there was a significant absence of the political perspective in most of the papers.

During the general meeting it was proposed that, in the next ELHN conference, it should be important to celebrate a round table in which we can discuss on epistemology, methodological issues, lines of research, problems, and so on. It would be interesting to share a state of art of the different national or regional situations about maritime labour history, and to present it in the next meeting of the group. Another issue was the difficulties of the definitions (e.g. names of occupations or of the kind of ships). A proposal for the construction of a thesaurus, or a kind of dictionary of maritime terms was launched; a starting point may be HISCO with the codification of different occupations.

Another question was how we can get the attention by the no maritime historians to our work. Moreover, we need to put in relation our individual research interests with the fundamental questions of the general labour history. What could be the contribution of Maritime History to the general History? On the other hand, in order to improve the participation of new researchers, we encourage senior researchers to disseminate the information about the group between doctorate students and similar, so we can incorporate them to the group. It should be easy due to the informal characteristics of the group and the free-of-charge of the participation.



To end, the working group agreed with that Jordi Ibarz and Enric García should go ahead as co-coordinators.

The coordination meeting of the ELHN network proposed to consider the organisation of a 3rd ELHN conference in Amsterdam in two years. We will keep you informed about the final decision. And, of course we will

propose maritime sessions for this meeting. We ask the members of the group to send us proposals or considerations about the future so we can elaborate, when time comes, a proposal of call of papers for the next meeting.

### **Port Cities and Migration in the Modern Era**

On 23-24 November 2017 a meeting was held at Gothenburg: *Port Cities and Migration in the Modern Era Conferences*. The meeting was organized by Christina Reimann and The Centre for European Research (CERGU) at the University of Gothenburg. Eighteen papers were presented in the meeting. These papers were distributed in six panels.

Panel 1: 'The Migrant' in Port Cities' Society

Panel 2: Port Cities' Urban Infrastructure

Panel 3: Migration and Identity Formation in Port Cities

Panel 4: Microcosms of (Post-) Colonial Mobility

Panel 5: Migrants' Trajectories

Panel 6: Port Cities and Emigration



Two Keynotes Lectures were also presented by Brad Beaven (University of Portsmouth) and Leos Müller (University of Stockholm) at the session Port Cities' Urban Cultures and their Share in Globalization Processes.

The participants of the meeting considered the problems of globalization and migration from micro and macro points of view. In the different sessions, the participants were able to put together two concepts, migration

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and port cities. These two topics are not generally analysed at the same time. With this approach, it was possible to connect the global processes to the port transformations, which are necessarily of a local dimension. At the same time, this perspective of analysis permitted to make a critical approach to the phenomenon of globalization.

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## **PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES**

We offer you information about publications that can be of your interest. In this newsletter all of them are from members of our working group. Please keep us informed about your recent publications on the topic on labour and maritime industries.

### **Shipbuilding workers around the world**

We inform you about the publication of the collective work

*Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Workers around the World. Case Studies 1950-2010.*



This book, edited by Raquel Varela, Hugh Murphy and Marcel van der Linden, presents us 24 case studies on shipbuilding in recent times, from the Social History point of view.

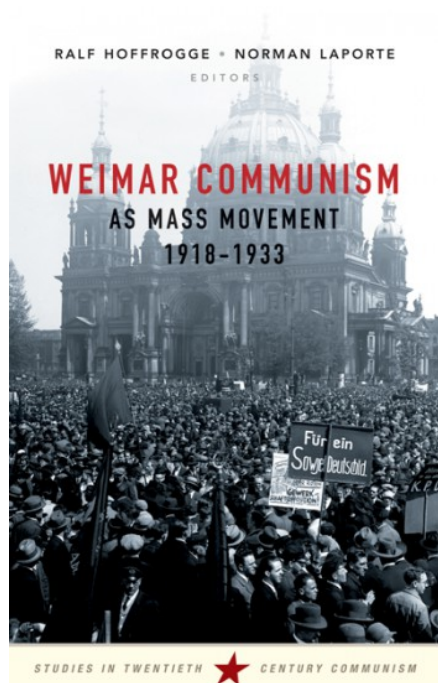
After Second World War, the role of the United Kingdom as the first world's shipyard changed. The balance move to the Far East, first to Japan in the 50's, to South Korea in the 90's and nowadays the core of the shipbuilding industry is in China.

This book illustrates the change process in this industry from a labour history approach. You can find more information at <https://socialhistory.org/en/publications/shipbuilding-and-ship-repair-workers-around-world>



## Weimar Communism as Mass Movement 1918-1933

Our colleague Constance Micalet Margain sends us information about syndicalism and maritime history in this publication.



A quarter of a century after the opening of the archives in Berlin and Moscow, the role of the German Communist Party (KPD) is the subject of a new wave of studies. This book makes this new field of scholarship available in English for the first time.

This book represents essential reading for academic, undergraduate and general readers interested in twentieth German history and politics and the interwar communist movement. It is especially relevant now, 100 years after the 1917 October Revolution. From the maritime point of view, it reminds us the role of the maritime workers in the development in the movement.

You can find more information about this publication at <https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/book/weimar-communism>

## The Poor Man's Goldmine?

We also strongly recommend a recently published article by Jari Ojala, Piritia Frigren and Anu Ojala. This work, titled *The Poor Man's Goldmine? Career paths in Swedish and Finnish merchant shipping, c. 1840-1950* has been published on line at the Scandinavian Journal of History, 3 October 2017. You can download it at the following link: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03468755.2017.1381392>

Through the analysis of almost 60.000 men recruited to serve on Swedish and Finnish merchant vessels, they show interesting aspects as length of careers, career paths of lower-level Abs and Captains, for instance, and so on. The exploitation of databases points new perspectives on the interpretation of the seamen's lives and jobs.

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## DIVERSORUM

Recently a doctoral thesis has been defended in Barcelona under the title Service-sector *Guilds and the Challenge of Liberalization: The organization of maritime-cargo handling in Barcelona, c. 1760-1840*. The work was written and defended in English by Brendan J. von Briesen. The thesis has been directed by Jordi Ibarz Gelabert. The Jury was composed by: President, John Barzman (Université Le Havre Normandie); Secretary, Llorenç Ferrer (Universitat de Barcelona) and José A. Nieto Sanchez (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid).

Brendan J. von Briesen was born in the United States and now lives in Barcelona. Is active member of the research group Treball, Institucions I Gènere (Work, Institutions and Gender) of the University of Barcelona.

In the framework of this research group there is a section devoted to maritime industries that is fostering at present two more PhD students who are doing research on maritime subjects: the Barcelona maritime community in the transition from sail to steam, on one side, and the maritime labour associationism before 1936.

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***PLEASE SEND US INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKS, RESEARCH IN PROGRESS, EXHIBITIONS, CONFERENCES OR ANY SUBJECT THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST FOR THE GROUP. NEW INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER***

***IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL TO US AND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS WILL BE DELETED FROM THE LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.***

Enric Garcia, [garciade@telefonica.net](mailto:garciade@telefonica.net)  
Jordi Ibarz: [jordi.ibarz@ub.edu](mailto:jordi.ibarz@ub.edu)