

Newsletter from the Military Labour working group of the European Labour History Network

October 7, 2019

This newsletter gives a report from the 3rd European Labour History Network's (ELHN) conference in Amsterdam and the meeting the working group had during the conference. We hope to see you all at the next conference, in Vienna 2021, if not sooner!

/Christine, Fia and Olli (the working group coordinators)

Sessions at the 3rd ELHN conference in Amsterdam 2019

The Military Labour working group had two sessions at the ELHN conference:

- (1) Free/unfree military labour (co-organised with the free/unfree labour working group) and
- (2) Military labour.

The following papers were presented (listed in the order of presentation):

- “Rewarding a Paid Sword: a 1904 Letter of Honour by the Tibetan Council of Ministers”, by Jeannine Bischoff (Germany)
- “Labour under Military Occupation: Free or Unfree?”, by Christine de Matos (Australia)
- “Women’s Right and Men’s Obligation: Gender Equality and Military Conscription in Contemporary Swedish History”, by Fia Sundevall (Sweden).
- “The Psychology of Killing and the Experiences of American Soldiers in the Vietnam War, by Olli Siitonen (Finland)
- “The integration of women in the Dutch armed forces and the politics of ‘combat’”, by Kim Bootsma (the Netherlands)



All five presenters, pictured from left to right: Olli Siitonen, Fia Sundevall, Jeannine Bischoff, Christine de Matos, and Kim Bootsma.

New coordinators of the working group

Due to other commitments, Giulio Ongaro have asked to leave his coordinating position of the group. We would like to express our gratitude to Giulio for his work during the last four years and his important part in founding of the working group back in 2015. Thank you Giulio!

Replacing Giulio are two scholars: Christine de Matos (The University of Notre Dame Australia) and Olli Siitonen (University of Helsinki, Finland), who will hence coordinate the working group together with Fia Sundevall (Stockholm University & the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive & Library) until the next ELHN conference.

Jeannine Bischoff (Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, Germany) will be the military labour working group's contact person to the free/unfree labour working group (for which she is one of the coordinators), with which we wish to continue our collaboration.

The next ELHN conference (2021)

The next ELHN conference will be held in Vienna, Austria, in the fall of 2021. Dates etc to be announced. For that conference the military labour working group decided to have *both* an open call for papers + calls for at least three specific topics which we felt needed more focus ahead. The topics we decided on were:

- **Military labour history: why, what and how?**
For this theme we are looking for papers dealing more broadly with concepts, theories, and/or methodologies in military labour history research
- **Resisting military labour**
E.g. papers on deserters, conscientious objector, saboteurs, organized resistance within the Armed Forces.
- **Gendering military labour**
E.g. gender division(s) of military labour across time, feminist organizations response to military labour.

Yet another suggestion was:

- **Recruitment for military labour**
E.g. conscription, recruitment marketing campaigns, devshirme and other early modern military slavery systems.

Because there were so many cancellations of presenters to this year's conference (not only to our working group's sessions but many others as well) we discussed various solutions, e.g. making a list of substitutes, sending out reminders and asking for confirmations every third month until the conference, and more. We will have reason to discuss this further as the next conference approach.

Publications

We discussed publishing something together, and/or edit a thematic issue of an international journal. We decided to talk more about this in the working group meeting at the next ELHN conference in 2021.

The ELHN general assembly of working group coordinators

During the conference, two meetings were held with the ELHN's general assembly of working group coordinators. The meetings primarily dealt with the following matters:

- A proposal of general guidelines for the general assembly of working group coordinators' in order to formalise some of its currently unspoken rules and regulations.
- The appointment of a steering committee of the assembly
- The status of the free/unfree labour group within the ELHN (considering they have received a large network grant from the EU)
- The candidates to host the next ELHN conference

Mailing list and Facebook group

We would like to remind everyone receiving this newsletter that the working group has a mailing list and a Facebook group for communication within the group. Please feel free to use these channels of communication for e.g. distributing calls for papers for workshops and conferences within the field of military labour history.

To be added to the mailing list, please e-mail Olli Siitonen olli.siitonen@helsinki.fi

To be join the Facebook group, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/militarylabour/>

Coordinator's email

Please feel free to contact the coordinators if you have any questions.

Christine de Matos, christine.de.matos@nd.edu.au

Olli Siitonen olli.siitonen@helsinki.fi

Fia Sundevall fia.sundevall@ekohist.su.se