



## Newsletter No. 2, June 2020

Welcome to the second issue of the MLHWG newsletter! In here you will find updates on the last General Assembly meeting and next ELHN conference, a call for suggestions for our WG sessions at 2021 conference, and an introduction to the WG coordinators.

### Call for sessions for ELHN 2021 in Vienna

The next European Labour History Meeting (ELHN) will take place in Vienna, Austria, August 30 – September 3, 2021 (for more info on the preparations, please see the “ELHN General Assembly Meeting”-section of the new letter, below). We look forward to meet many of you there!

There will be a proper call for papers in late 2020 to our Working group (WG)’s sessions (more info on this in November). Before then however there is a call for sessions.

As was stated in the first issue of our newsletter, we would like to align our WG’s sessions at the ELHN 2021 with a possible special journal issue. As a reminder, here are some proposed themes:

- 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 - for example papers on deserters, conscientious objector, saboteurs, organised resistance within the armed forces;
- Gendering military labour - for example gender division(s) of military; and/or
- Recruitment for military labour - for example conscription, recruitment marketing campaigns, devshirme and other early modern military slavery systems.

If you read the section “Getting to know your coordinators” below, you will note that the Military Labour WG coordinators are all late-modern historians. We would therefore particularly welcome further suggestions for themes, sessions and papers on earlier historical periods.

### How to give feedback on the proposed themes above and/or propose a session:

1. If you have feedback or an idea for a theme or session you wish the group would arrange: Send this to [christine.dematos@nd.edu.au](mailto:christine.dematos@nd.edu.au), or add your thoughts to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/militarylabour/>. We need your feedback and/or ideas before September 20<sup>th</sup>.
2. If you already have an idea of a session and what papers/presenters you wish to have in it:

Write a max. 500-word abstract incl. title of the session. Collect paper abstract of approx. 3-4 people you wish to include in the session. Send the session abstract together with the paper abstracts to [fia.sundevall@ekohist.su.se](mailto:fia.sundevall@ekohist.su.se) . **Deadline: September 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Please feel free to use our WG's mailing list [elhn-military-labour@googlegroups.com](mailto:elhn-military-labour@googlegroups.com) or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/militarylabour/> in order to look for other people interested in the theme you wish to arrange a session on.

### **ELHN General Assembly Meeting**

On Friday 8 May, the ELHN General Assembly (made up of Working Group Coordinators and representatives of labour networks) held a Zoom meeting. This was after the cancellation of the Leiden meeting in March (due to the postponement of ESSHC to 2021).

One of the key discussions was the next ELHN conference, scheduled to be held at the University of Vienna from 30 August to 3 September in 2021. The ongoing COVID situation of course makes this difficult to confirm, but preparations are continuing on the assumption that it will indeed be going ahead. This ELHN will be organised by and held in conjunction with the WORCK conference, and more information about that can be found here <https://socialhistoryportal.org/elhn/conference-2021> and here <https://www.worck.eu/conference-2-2021-vienna/>. (You can also find out more about WORCK in Fia's Facebook post of 28 November 2019, having grown out of the Free/Unfree Labour Working Group.)

Discussion centred around the preliminary program, giving adequate time to both ELHN presentations and working group meetings, ideas for keynote speakers and keeping costs for the attendees as low as possible. Timelines for the conference are as follows:

- 1 October 2020: deadline for ELHN session proposals
- 1 November 2020: time schedule for ELHN working group sessions and call for individual ELHN paper proposals published online
- 15 January 2021: deadline for individual ELHN paper proposals
- 1 April 2021: WORCK-ELHN conference program published online; start of conference registration
- 15 June 2021: registration deadline.

The other key discussion at the meeting related to the ELHN structure, the most important change being the former Steering Committee (the group that facilitates ELHN decisions and coordinates ELHN organisation) is now renamed as the Network Committee. Using and keeping the ELHN and Working Group websites up-to-date and active was a further item of discussion. You can find ours here: <https://socialhistoryportal.org/elhn/wg-military>. After a meeting that went half an hour over time, other items were postponed to the next meeting of the General Assembly, possibly at the Nordic Labour History Conference in November 2020.

## Getting to know your coordinators

The coordinators would love to know more about you, the WG members, but in the meantime, here is a little more about us.



**Fia Sundevall:** I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Economic History and International Relations at Stockholm University, Sweden, and an affiliated researcher with the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive and Library.

My research within the field of military labour particularly deals with coercive and gendered labour relations in Sweden and Scandinavia since the late 1800s. I am currently working in a number of multi-disciplinary research projects where I explore, for example, conscript soldiers' attempts to organise themselves in a soldiers' union, the conscription of women and homosexual men in Scandinavian militaries (including the history of the current system, which is commonly and contradictory referred to as "voluntary conscription"), conservative women's fundraising for the armament and training of conscript men, and more.

My main publications within this field are in Swedish, however amongst the recent English language ones are: "Conscripting Women: Gender, Soldiering, and Military service in Sweden 1965–2018" (with Alma Persson), in *Women's History Review* 28, no. 7 (2019); "Military Education for Non-Military Purposes: Economic and Social Governing Projects Targeting Conscripts in Early 20th century Sweden", *History of Education Review* 46, no. 1 (2017); "Money, Gender and Military Training: Women as Economic Agents in Military Affairs (Sweden 1924–1942)", *Militärhistorisk tidskrift* [Swedish Journal of Military History] no. 1 (2017); "Free and Unfree Labour – An Introduction to this Special Issue" (with Christian G. de Vito), *Arbetshistoria* [Swedish Journal of Labour History] no. 3–4 (2017).



**Olli Siitonen:** I am a PhD candidate in history at the University of Helsinki. My dissertation examines wartime killing experiences by using theories of social psychology to analyse narratives of Americans who fought in the Vietnam War. Warfare creates an exceptional context for violence where killing becomes an integral part of the job description of soldiers. My goal is to create a theoretical model that will further our understanding of wartime violence.

I am currently working on two articles. The first describes how the characteristics of the Vietnam War created the context for American wartime killing experiences. The second is a collaboration where we will utilise programming language R to transform digital oral history collections of the Vietnam War into a format suitable for machine learning.

In 2021, I will travel to the United States to conduct a Fulbright research exchange at the University of Maryland College Park and the Vietnam Center and Archives at Texas Tech University.



**Christine de Matos:** I work at The University of Notre Dame Australia in Sydney and have been working on various aspects of the military occupation, in particular the Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-1952/72), for the last 28 years. One of the areas that really interests me is the relationship between labour and the everyday enactment of power under conditions of military occupation – that is, how the occupiers use labour to enact or perform their power over the occupied. This is perhaps a more unusual interpretation of the term “military labour” – not direct work for the military as, say, a soldier, but rather labour that more indirectly enables military power. To give an example, members of the occupying military forces in Japan and Germany after WWII had the occupied working in subservient domestic roles in the homes (which had often been requisitioned by those occupiers). This domestic labour enabled them to assert their military power over the defeated nation even in the private domestic space of the home. I am hoping to explore these ideas further in book on labour and military occupation, which is related to the presentation I gave at the 2019 ELHN conference in Amsterdam. I am also embarking on a new collaborative international project with colleagues comparing the home in occupied Germany and Japan.

In terms of recent publications, I have one on domestic labour in occupied Germany currently under review. An older publication can be found here: “Labor under Military Occupation: Allied POWs and the Allied Occupation of Japan”, in de Matos and Caprio (eds) *Japan as the Occupier and the Occupied*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015: 65–87. The role of domestic workers in occupied Japan is explored in the chapter “Living the Colonial Lifestyle: Australian women and domestic labour in occupied Japan 1945-1952”, in Hans Hägerdal (ed), *Responding to the West: Essays on colonial dominance and Asian agency, 18th to 20th centuries*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2009: 137–49. But of *indirect* interest to some members (work, war, migration and internment) might be this new one, “Three Domestic Workers, Two Internment Camps and a War: A Journey from Singapore to British India”, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 93 Part 1, no. 318 (2020): 23–42. It looks at three women who migrated from China to Singapore to work as domestic workers for the Japanese consulate, only to be wrongly arrested and incarcerated in British India, along with Japanese and other civilians, for the course of the Asia Pacific War.

### **What else is happening?**

So many conferences and meetings have been postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19. But while we are preparing for the 2021 ELHN meeting, you might like to check out some other opportunities:

**Conference:** Worlds of Related Coercions in work (WORCK) conference 1: Reconceptualising Wage Labour, 17–19 September 2020, Budapest, Hungary. This conference is still planning to be held on location, however parts will be held on line. For more info, see:

<https://www.worck.eu/conference-1-2020-budapest/>

**Conference:** The Nordic Labour History Conference, 25–29 November, Arbejdermuseet [the Workers museum], Copenhagen, Denmark. The conference program includes two sessions on military labour. <http://www.nordiclaborhistory.org/preliminary-full-program-of-nlhc2020/>

**CFP:** Hidden Economies of Slavery, 10-11 December 2020, German Historical Institute London, UK. Closing date: **30 June 2020**. More information: [https://www.ghil.ac.uk/call\\_for\\_papers.html](https://www.ghil.ac.uk/call_for_papers.html).

**CFP:** XIII Nordic Women's and Gender History Conference, "Gender, Power and Disempowerment", 19-21 August 2021, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark. Closing date: **1 February 2021**. More information: <https://events.au.dk/nwghc21/call-for-papers.html>.

**Meeting:** Worlds of Related Coercions in work (WORCK) meeting, 22–24 February 2021, Lisbon, Portugal. More info to be posted soon here: <https://www.worck.eu/activities/meetings/>

### **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 example 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](mailto:olli.siitonen@helsinki.fi).

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

### **Coordinators' emails**

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

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