



Newsletter No. 3, October 2021

Welcome to the third issue of the MLHWG newsletter! In here you will find updates on the WORCK/ELHN conference and General Assembly meeting, information about our new workshops, and an introduction to the WG coordinators and support coordinators.

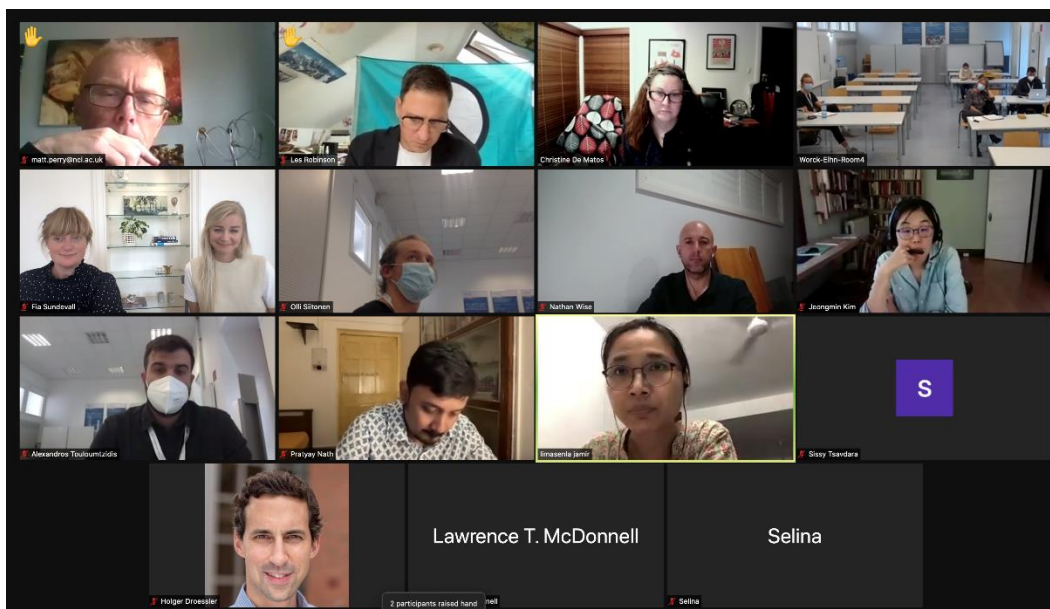
WORCK/ELHN Conference

The combined WORCK/ELHN conference was held in hybrid format in Vienna and online from 30 August to 3 September 2021. The hybrid format presented some technical challenges, and mainly for those who travelled to Vienna to participate in person! It seems our Zoom world has normalised that kind of conference participation for many of us.

We had four fabulous panels and 15 presenters at this meeting, one of the strongest representations of the MLHWG we have had. The panels included one on Resisting Military Labour, two on Recruiting Military Labour, and one on Military Labour: what, why, who, how? Topics varied in space from Greece, Korea, North and South America, South and Southeast Asia and Germany to Sweden. Topics included World War I, military bases and occupation, the Paraguayan War, Vietnam War, Mughal India, US Civil War and World War II. You can read the abstracts here to find out more: <https://www.worck.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/WORCK-ELHN-Abstracts.pdf>.

Here are some photos from our hybrid sessions with our fabulous presenters and audience:





General Assembly Meeting

On 1 September, the ELHN General Assembly (made up of Working Group Coordinators and representatives of labour networks) held its meeting at the Conference.

Two important things came out of this meeting. The first is the ELHN committee: there is a new elected chair, Leda Papastefanaki from the University of Ioannina, and the vice-chair remains Matthias van Rossum. The rest of the committee comprises Jacqueline Rutte and Donald Weber. The new nomination committee is Tibor Valuch, Görkem Akgöz and Christian Wicke. The next General Assembly will be on 25 January 2022.

The second is that the next ELHN conference looks to be in Uppsala, Sweden. However, this will not be until June 2024 (three years instead of the usual two). The delay will get us back in synch (alternating years) with the European Social Science History Conference, to be held in 2023 after being postponed from 2020 to 2021. So watch this space for more information.

MLHWG meeting

In Vienna, we had strong attendance at our WG meeting and some exciting initiatives emerged. There is a good appetite for having meetings in between the ELHN conferences, especially important considering we will now have to wait three years for the next one! The team are planning quarterly workshops – more on this development below. We also have a new and exciting line-up of coordinators to take us forward, with representation from Europe, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific. The three coordinators are Christine de Matos, Olli Siitonen and Jeongmin Kim, and the three supporting coordinators are Pratyay Nath, Lawrence T. McDonald and Alexandros Toulountzidis. You can meet your new coordination team below.

New MLHWG workshop program

The ELHN Military Labour Working Group will be running a regular meeting in the form of a workshop. The workshop meets will be quarterly on Zoom and will further discuss the new ideas about and core issues on military labour history that were addressed at the 2021 ELHN/WORCK conference in Vienna. The 2021-2022 themes include, but are not limited to, concepts of military labour, military labour in premodern and early modern history, capitalism and militarism, and the intersection of gender, race and military recruitment, among others. If you are interested in joining the workshop or presenting your work-in-progress, please contact the workshop organisers, Jeongmin Kim (jeongmin.kim@umanitoba.ca) and Lawrence T. McDonnell (lmcd@iastate.edu).

Proposed schedule:

2021 November 19 (Friday) CET 3-5pm (CST 8-10am; IST 7.30-9.30pm; EET 4-6pm; EST 9-11am; GMT 2-4pm; AEDT 1-3am) - *note, may be subject to change*

- Theme: Concepts of Military Labour History
- Presenter: Pratyay Nath
- Material: Nath's conference paper (will be sent to participants)

2022 (time TBA)

1. February 25 (Friday)
2. August 26 (Friday)
3. November 18 (Friday)

Potential topics for future workshops:

- Visual sources/analyses of military labour
- Premodern/early modern history of military labour
- Capitalism (including pre-capitalist forms of) and military labour
- Gender and military labour (intimate, sexual and gendered labour)
- Any other suggestions? Bring them along or let us know!

Meeting format:

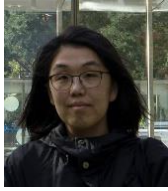
We will have 1-2 presenters to initiate the discussion (10-15 minute) and devote the rest of the time to general discussion. We will need a volunteer or two for the future workshops. Lawrence and Jeongmin will serve as facilitators.

Meeting venue: Zoom (The link will be provided when you rsvp - **please rsvp to Lawrence and Jeongmin via email before 8 November 2021.**)

Contact Lawrence and Jeongmin (details above) for further information or to share ideas.

Getting to know your new coordination team members

Christine and Olli have been introduced in previous newsletters, but meet your new team below.



Jeongmin Kim is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Manitoba in Canada. A gender historian of modern Korea and East Asia, her work focuses on feminist political economy, social and labour history, and US war and occupation in the Asia Pacific. Jeongmin is excited to join the team. She is co-organizing, with Lawrence McDonnell, the Military Labour Working Group's quarterly workshop this

year.



Alexandros Touloumtzidis grew up in Larissa, in the region of Thessaly, in Greece. He studied history and archaeology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. He completed his postgraduate studies in European History in the same Department, focussing on World War I and the social structure of British society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is a PhD candidate at the University of Patras, implementing the doctoral thesis "Under British Command: Greek Labourers, Farmers and Soldiers in the Macedonian Front 1915-1918" under the supervision of Associate Professor Elli Lemonidou. His main research interests concern labour history and specifically the military labour provided to the British by Greek-speaking populations in the region of Macedonia during the First World War. At the same time, he explores the transnational relations that were developed in the occasion of military labour, as well as the war ethics of the working classes and the workers who constituted the divisions that were under the British army's command.

Alexandros is also the senior researcher and historical curator of the cultural initiative "The Heritage of Taste", which studies the anthropology of food and documents cultural practices related to nutrition and health through oral history. He is a founding member of the association "History of Social Movements in Thessaly". He works as a Project Manager in European, co-financed and educational programmes at the University of Thessaly. Alexandros is a supporting coordinator.



Lawrence T. McDonnell is an Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Iowa State University. His research explores the American transition to capitalism in 19th century as an aspect of global labour history. His first book, *Performing Disunion: The Coming of the Civil War in Charleston, South Carolina* (Cambridge, 2018), explores the labour and gender roots of secession in the South's most conservative city. Lawrence's current major project is a reframing of the Civil War as the central moment of capitalist class formation in America. *Bloody Work: The Civil War and the Making of the American Working Class, 1846-1877*, is based on more than two decades of study in archival sources, newspapers, memoirs, and regimental histories. Lawrence is a supporting coordinator.



Pratyay Nath is Assistant Professor of History at Ashoka University, Sonipat, India. He is a historian of early modern South Asia, with a focus on warfare, empire, environment, state, and kingship. His first book *Climate of Conquest: War, Environment, and Empire in Mughal North India* was published by Oxford University Press in 2019. His articles have been published, or are forthcoming, in *War in History*, *The Journal of Military History*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *The Medieval History Journal*, and *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. His forthcoming edited and co-edited volumes include *The Early Modern in South Asian History: Querying Modernity, Periodization, and History* (Cambridge University Press) and *War and Society in South Asia, 1000-1800: A Reader* (Orient Blackswan). He is currently editing a special issue on “environment and empire in the early modern world” for the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* and co-editing a volume on the history of the horse in South Asia for Routledge. He writes in English and Bengali. Pratyay is a supporting coordinator.



Farewell to Fia!

We have a great new team, but that means we also need to say farewell to one of the old team – longstanding coordinator Fia Sundevall. Fia was a coordinator of the Working Group from the Turin conference in 2015, along with Giulio Ongaro (who stepped down in 2019). She has been the guiding light of the Working Group and we will miss her terribly. But it is not truly goodbye – Fia will remain an active member of the Group. Thank you, Fia, for your instrumental role in bringing us together and building such a strong network of researchers in military labour history.

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. 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. We might even move into the Twitter and Instagram worlds soon – so watch out for that!

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

To join the Facebook group, make a request here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/militarylabour/>.

Coordinators' emails

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

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