

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

XVI Nordic Labour History Conference 2025

WEDNESDAY 7 MAY

Keynote 1: Katrina Navickas (University of Hertfordshire)

Popular Resistance to the Enclosure of Urban Public Space in the Long 19th Century: Protest and the Commons in England

This paper draws from the opening chapters of my next monograph, *Contested Commons: a History of Protest and Public Space in England*. It argues that urbanisation and industrialisation in England created new public spaces that facilitated political sociability and new sites for popular protest. An urban commons was created by democratic and labour movements in the early nineteenth century. In reaction to the new working-class movements, the political and social elites sought to control and police such spaces. This paper draws on work by Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago, Brett Christophers and David Harvey on rethinking the meaning of ‘enclosure’ and ‘commons’. The enclosure of the agricultural commons in this period was paralleled by a process of urban enclosure, whereby any collective activity in public spaces such as streets and parks was increasingly policed or prohibited by property owners. The state reaction against labour movements was an ongoing process of enclosure, dispossessing the working classes by elite accumulation of property and public space. The new political movements, especially the Chartists in the 1840s and the socialist parties and unemployed in the 1880s, resisted these processes by mass occupation and communal uses of such sites.

Session 1a: Social Democracy, the Nordic Welfare State and Future Challenges

Panel participants:

Matti Hannikainen, University of Helsinki

Elina Hakoniemi, Demos Helsinki

Kjell Östberg, Södertörn University

Pete Pesonen, Finnish Labour Archives (chair)

Session 1b (BIO): Biographical Narratives and Social Histories: Exploring Lives and Networks

Nina Trige Andersen, Selskabet for Arbejderhistorie (chair)

Malin Arvidsson, Lund University

Nelly Thüring: Theosophist, Feminist, Socialist

“All I have strived for during this school day – that an earthly life amounts to – has been to do my utmost to promote the realization of human brotherhood on our little Earth.”

This is how Nelly Thüring (1875–1972), at the age of 94, summarized her philosophy of life in an interview with *Morgonbris*, a journal published by the Swedish Social Democratic Women’s Federation. During the 1920s, she had helped organizing local chapters of the recently founded Women’s Federation as a touring speaker. In 1922, she became one of the first female members of the Swedish Parliament (Riksdagen). By tracing Thüring’s path to Parliament, a recently published biography *Nelly Thüring: teosof, feminist, socialist* (2024), contributes new knowledge about how Social Democratic women campaigned for female suffrage and better living conditions.

Nelly Thüring was also active in the Theosophical movement, an esoteric movement whose members were guided by a utopian vision: to realize the Universal Brotherhood. When she ran for municipal council in Gothenburg in the 1910s, she described the movements for socialism, peace, feminism, temperance and vegetarianism as branches of the same tree. The early 20th century esoteric movements are probably best known for having inspired cultural figures such as Hilma af Klint. However, this presentation, based on the above-mentioned book, shows that Thüring – among many others – applied her theosophical worldview to social and political issues.

Tapio Bergholm, University of Eastern Finland, University of Helsinki

Serendipity and Networks, Making Biography of First Social Democratic President of Finland

I have published already *Kiihkeä* (passionate) Koivisto in 2020 and *Kova* (hard) Koivisto in 2023. In this paper I look back and forward into my biography project of late President Mauno Koivisto.

I will discuss theoretical, ethical and practical possibilities and problems. Until now I have been against predestination and very early development approaches, which see character, talents, intelligence and other important personal qualities fixed. My intention was to look at and probably therefore my research results are about changes, conjunctures, even chaotic events and sometimes strategical serendipity.

Other idea in beginning of biography project and connected to the earlier questions was to find out, how Koivistos connections and networks developed and changed over time.

In this paper I will discuss, how these questions developed during the research project. Also. I will evaluate, did available source materials enable to properly look at and answer to these lines of enquiry.

Fanny-Johanna Reinikka, University of Helsinki

Two case studies depicting the working lives of a porter and a male servant living in Helsinki between 1880-1930

Scholars have noted that during the late 19th and the early 20th century Helsinki attracted people seeking new work opportunities especially in various service positions. However, sources describing the individual people working in these professions are scarce. Biographies usually depict people who have themselves produced surviving personal source material and about whom other contemporaries have written. This paper shifts the more traditional approach, by asking to which extent it is possible to write biographies about people who have not produced any surviving personal source material themselves? It also poses the question of what the benefit of such biographies are when studying themes typically associated with social history and gendered working life. To explore this topic, I will present case studies focusing on two men who led very different lives from a socio-economical standpoint but who both worked in different service positions. The men introduced in these case studies are a porter who worked in a bank and a male servant employed mainly in private households. They both lived and worked in Helsinki during the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century. I showcase how a micro historical approach can offer new insights into how work opportunities and working conditions affected a man's life. The two men explored in the case studies did not produce any surviving or known personal source material such as letters or diary entries. However, glimpses of their life stories can be retraced through official documents that depict mostly the different aspects of their working lives. Previous research has shown that a man's life was usually tied to their ability to work and to provide. So, I pose the question if studying men in service positions with a biographic mindset, could offer new insights to understanding different career paths of men.

Session 1c (FEM): Women, Work and Social Change

Katri Karkinen, Lammasoja Research Service

The historical division of labour in agricultural education

Creation of dairy schools in Finland in order to guarantee quality butter was a phase in the historical process to educate peasantry. In the 1870s it was decided to promote dairy industry, parallel to cultivation but more emphasis in animal husbandry. Why to study dairy schooling? First, for a group of rural women, the churning had been a job providing earnings. Second, the gender specific school is a sign about attitudes that woman and man are different and, a job one can pursue depend on sex.

Instead of educating women and men in the same classrooms, fields and cowsheds, the training included separate subjects according to gender. Even though a general primary education and schools started to follow the idea of equality according to Uno Cygneus and his kindred spirit, in the professional training the division prevailed. It was not challenged that time, and not the coming century ahead.

The process of education development may be connected to the formation of economic and agricultural institutions. Agriculture administration had a task of developing economy and inspecting the results of education. “Maanviljelyshallitus” was created in 1892 to conduct the development.

When the first agriculture education institutions had started like Mustiala in 1840, it has had examples from similar institutions in Sweden and Denmark. One may ask, what was the purpose of specialities according to gender? How it was possible that this division lasted in Finland in agricultural education more than one hundred years?

Valgerður Pálmadóttir, University of Iceland

Discourses about Housework in Public Debate in 20th-Century Iceland

On 24 October 1975, women in Iceland took a day off to demonstrate their labour's importance to society. The Women's Day Off, or 'The Icelandic Women's Strike', gained worldwide attention and made the front page of the world's leading newspapers. News of the action often described how women had paralysed the entire society for a whole day with the work stoppage, whether it was work done inside or outside the home, unpaid or paid. The enormous turnout became a testament to the power of women's solidarity across classes and attracted interest from feminists and women's movements worldwide. However, the responses were mixed and varied. For example,

while women's movements in the Nordic countries expressed moderate interest in the method of a one-day women's strike, the initiative was acclaimed by members of a Marxist-feminist movement, Wages for Housework. These activists, mainly based in Italy and the US, believed that a general women's strike, as performed in Iceland, powerfully exemplified their ideas about how modern societies are primarily based on unpaid work by women – and thus hailed the radical potential of the action. But how do the ideas of this radical international movement match the discourses about housework's value or lack thereof and its relationship to gender (in)equality in Iceland? In this paper, I apply a long *durée* perspective and analyse discourses among feminists and others who partook in public debates in Iceland about housework in the 20th century. I explore if and how discussions of housework were connected to women's freedom, whether the gendered division of labour was questioned, and whether the socialisation of typical women's work was associated with general (political) ideas about welfare and equality.

Session 2a (CDW): Dynamics of Labour Control

Hanna Kuusi, University of Helsinki (chair)

Pontus Blüme, Stockholm University

Digital Labour Platforms and the Concept of Control

For the past five years, research on digital platforms – and on labour platforms, the so-called gig-economy, in particular – has increased rapidly, and the way these platforms organise a labour force has predominantly been seen in one of two ways: As Digital Taylorism, focusing on new divisions of labour and surveillance regimes made possible by algorithmic management, or, as a form of Panoptism, where a more passive governance through customer rating systems “assures the automatic functioning of power”. Both perspectives, however, revolve around the concept of discipline.

In this paper I challenge these perspectives, both empirically and theoretically. What is usually considered as labour platforms are in fact a heterodox collective of corporations on a spectrum from traditional service providers to algorithmically governed proprietary labour markets. Studying the mechanisms of power over labour within such companies in Sweden, I find that both Taylorist and Panoptic mechanisms of power are less pervasive the closer to an actual platform structure a company positions its operations. This, I argue, is because platforms did not exploit labour in a traditional Marxist sense, but extracted rent from labour that operated autonomously

from capitalist command. There were no economic incentives to increase the productivity of this labour power, no need to discipline workers, as long as demand found its supply. I find also a tendency of platformification over time, as a particular set of companies that were once launched as service providers tend to gradually transform themselves towards the platform business model.

What platforms do, I argue, is to control a flow of labour through their proprietary markets, and this paper attempts to illustrate how this concept in its Deleuzian sense can explain what should be considered as a post-Fordist production process proper.

Lukas Rosenberg, University of Göttingen

Scientific Management and the Control of Labour-Time. The Great Indian Peninsula Railway Workshops at Parel in the 1920s

In this paper I analyse the reorganisation of production and the associated increasing control of labour-time in the railway workshops of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) at Parel (Mumbai, India) in the 1920s. Under the auspices of ‘scientific management’ and based on time studies as well as the detailed surveillance of labour-time, production processes were remodelled. It will be argued that the reorganisation scheme was introduced to counter worker’s mobilisation as much as to increase productivity. The investigation of the scheme will be embedded in the history of industrial struggles in the workshops and the surrounding city of Mumbai as well as contemporary ‘scientific management’ discourses. The paper is based on considerable archival research in South Asia and the United Kingdom, that I conducted for my ongoing PhD project. It will be written in English.

For the last decades, most enquiries into the labour and industrial history of South Asia have treated ‘scientific management’ and rationalisation attempts as discussions, which rarely had material effects at the site of production during the colonial period. My case study offers deviating evidence and underlines variations in production regimes in different industries and at varying points of time. The railway workshops of South Asia in general are barely investigated, even though they were the largest industrial undertakings in many cities on the subcontinent. Their significance for the development of labour forces and the organised labour movement have hardly been addressed.

Beyond the field of South Asian labour history, the investigation adds to ongoing discussions about the history of disciplining workers at the site of production, production shifts and the uneven development inherent in capitalism.

Rehna Sotto, University of Jyväskylä

Control and discipline in shift work online group

Many aspects of technology-mediated communication have been studied at work but there is little knowledge on the construction of control and discipline in shift work in the digital space. Particularly, the focus is on the interaction among team leaders and their team members in their work online group. This study aimed to explore ways in which technological use constitutes control and discipline among shift workers. I specifically explore the possibilities of the use of naturally occurring data in the analysis and in applying the concepts of applied conversation analysis in interaction.

The research was conducted through shadowing in the two WhatsApp online group conversations in one restaurant unit of Finnish restaurant groups for one year (March 2024-March 2025). The first WhatsApp group is reserved for team leaders' conversation and the other WhatsApp group is intended for the whole team. Preliminary findings suggest that syntax, lexical choice, and the use of images determine how leaders relay control of behavior and discipline among team members which elicits the question of leading in the online space.

This presentation discusses further the tentative notion of the role of text, images, and their interactions with humans in the online world, and how the interactions of these two create control and discipline in shift work.

Session 2b (BOR): Labour Movements and Social Dynamics Across Borders

Ainur Elmgren, University of Oulu (chair)

Michał Gęsiarz, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Norwegian Solidarity with „Solidarity” — at the Crossroads of Trade Unionism and New Social Movements?

I aim to analyze various aspects of the reaction that the Polish “Solidarity” (“Solidarność”) movement aroused among the Norwegian civil society. My research spans over the period of 1980-83 and is organized around two turning points in the Polish development - worker unrest in August 1980 and imposition of the martial law in December 1981. Although “Solidarity”, established in September 1980, was founded as a trade union, its scope and activities soon crossed the boundaries between trade

union, social movement and political entity. The global campaign of solidarity with “Solidarity” transcended traditional union and labour perspectives to similar extent. Therefore, paper’s topic encompasses Norwegian workers’ initiatives in the broader political context. I discuss the activities of such actors as the social democratic “giants”: the trade union center LO and Norwegian People’s Aid, radical Socialist and Maoist movements, as well as the biggest independent, union-based solidarity organization for Poland — Solidarity Norway-Poland (SNP). So far, Norwegian researchers have drawn little attention to the grassroots reaction to “Solidarity” in their country. In Poland, several books and chapters were written, yet mainly taking shape of journalism and short contributions. Nevertheless, I not only aim to “fill the gap” in solidarity research, but also to reflect on different aspects of engagement. I ask about motivations and range of popular participation in certain activities. I navigate between forms of engagement such as politics of aid, solidarity, human rights etc. My main sources are the documents of Norwegian trade unions, aid and solidarity organizations as well as Norwegian press. I thus use a mix of an institutional approach and discourse analysis. I believe that my research may contribute to a better understanding of transnational solidarities and be useful in the context of contemporary movements. The multi-faceted nature of solidarity with “Solidarity” may also enable deepened understanding of workers’ solidarity and its extensions and pitfalls.

Marta Laskowska, University of Helsinki

Who’s behind the border of the border states? The Social Democratic Party of Finland, the Polish Socialist Party and the images of Russia 1919-1921 from a comparative perspective

The proposed paper is a part of my doctoral dissertation in which I compare the Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP) and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) with regard to selected questions. I interpret Poland and Finland as border states, i.e. the states situated to the west of Russia and both directly and indirectly influenced by Russian foreign politics and its internal transformation.

In the proposed paper, I analyse and compare the images of Russia presented in the main press organs issued by both parties, namely in dailies *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* (*Finnish Social Democrat*) and *Robotnik* (*Workmen*).

In the research period, there were in fact two Russias: the White and the Red. White Russia, although more liberal than the tsarist regime, was associated by the Polish socialists and the Finnish social democrats with imperialism and hostility towards the new independent national states in Eastern Europe.

Neither Red Russia appeared willing for harmonious coexistence with the border states. The concept of a state led by the working-class movement was of course appreciated by both parties. However, political terror and the idea of the dictatorship of the minority, which the Russian Bolsheviks advocated, were widely condemned.

I argue that the images of Russia in the press sources of the PPS and the SDP had much in common. The dissimilarities stemmed mainly from the different experiences of Poland and Finland during the tsarist era and fact that Poland faced an actual invasion by Bolshevik troops, while Finland experienced only minor military clashes between Bolsheviks and Finnish volunteers in the borderlands.

Daniel Stridh, Stockholm University

Ambivalent Solidarity? Exploring the Nexus between Migration and Racism in the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union 1972-2002

After seventy years of immigration, the Swedish labor union movement is today actively engaged in fighting all forms of discrimination, yet it continues to maintain distinctions among people based on their migration backgrounds. This study examines the potential paradox in this stance by exploring the complex relationship between national identity, migration, and racism within a union context. Through an analysis of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union's views on migration and racism from 1972 to 2002, the study offers new insights into the racializing and nation-building aspects of union work. This is particularly relevant for a union that has played a central role in the development of Sweden's welfare society. The findings indicate that the ambivalence of union solidarity towards workers with foreign backgrounds has coexisted with an underlying notion of Sweden as a fundamentally modern, equal, and gender equal nation where racism is perceived as a marginal phenomenon.

Constantin Torve, Queen's University Belfast

Re-writing the 'Ethnic Fabric': Ethnic stereotyping of Irish and Nordic workers in the late 19th and early 20th century American Press

The dominant scholarly paradigm of the last 30 years is one that views immigrant labour and its acculturation in America primarily through the lens of whiteness. The two most important, and still widely cited, proponents of this view are Roediger (2002) and Ignatiev (1995). While the reductive and often class-blind character of the whiteness paradigm has been criticised, notably by Arnesen (2001), McMahon (2015), and Kelly (2018), and a few notable examples of class-oriented scholarship exist (Nordahl 1994, Goings 2014, O Luain 2020), a conspicuous gap remains on the underlying question of

how immigrant workers' agency in this regard was impacted, and likely constrained, by discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Research on American nativism in the post-Civil War period is sparse, and many examples are decades old (Kinzer 1964). There is very little research that examines how prevalent exclusion discourses towards most immigrant groups were, and there is absolutely none but my own that specifically analyses this in a context of labour and the working class.

I have addressed this gap in the existing scholarship in two ways. First, I have developed a case study of the early evolution of anti-Irish sentiment in the antebellum era, using the Pottsville, PA-based *Miners' Journal*. I have then conducted a quantitative study on the prevalence of a specific anti-Irish trope in the American press. This will be contrasted with the according representation of Nordic workers. The established perspective would suggest that ethnic characterisations of Nordic immigrants were far more favourable than those of the Irish, but I expect to find significant deviations from this for some specific working-class elements of these groups. I will draw on the digitised newspaper record to compare ethnic characterisations of the two groups, focussing on the period of ca. 1880-1920.

Session 2c: Capital and Political Access (Mid-1800s and Onwards)

Katrina Navickas, University of Hertfordshire (chair)

This session brings together labour history and political history, examining the relationship between class and political participation in the Nordic countries and beyond. It will focus on how formal restrictions on political engagement impacted the political access of economically vulnerable and working-class groups. Moreover, how labour movements and socialist organizations navigated and resisted barriers against democratic participation by the poor.

Three presentations will explore these themes:

Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir, University of Iceland & Fia Cottrell-Sundevall, Stockholm University

Suffrage, Capital, and Welfare: Conditional Citizenship in Historical Perspective

This presentation shares findings from the newly published book *Suffrage, Capital, and Welfare* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), which investigates voting barriers across five Nordic countries as well as Aotearoa New Zealand, Brazil, Canada, Austria, and India. The book demonstrates how economic restrictions on suffrage systematically excluded

working-class men and women, along with other marginalised groups, from the electorate, thereby reinforcing social hierarchies rooted in class, gender, race, and age.

Fia Cottrell-Sundevall, Stockholm University & Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir, University of Iceland

Capital and Political Candidacy

Building on insights from the presentation on the book *Suffrage, Capital, and Welfare*, which deals with voting barriers, this talk shifts focus to economic restrictions on political *candidacy* in Iceland and Sweden. It discusses forthcoming research on how financial criteria barred individuals from standing for office. Framing these barriers within labour history, we will examine the impact of class-based restrictions on the representation of the working class, as well as how socialist organizations challenged these restrictions.

Josefin Hägglund, Malmö University

Election Meetings and Political Participation in 1880s Sweden

The final presentation shifts focus from formal voting rights to practical engagement, examining election meetings in 1880s Sweden, where parliamentary candidates were nominated and debated. It will show how these gatherings became arenas for contesting political inclusion, focusing on whether and how individuals without voting rights participated in these discussions. The presentation will discuss how practical interventions – workers showing up at meetings or arranging meetings of their own – spurred debates on the nature of national parliamentary representation, and on working-class political identities and tactics.

Film screening: The Potato Revolution. Telling the Story of the Women who Inspired the Swedish Hunger Uprisings of 1917

Film (55 min) + Q&A with the director Anna Hammerin, Professor Katrina Navickas and Karen Brookfield.

Set against the backdrop of the First World War in 1917, 'The Potato Revolution' delves into the untold story of the hunger uprisings in neutral Sweden. As Europe is consumed

by war, Sweden grapples with a devastating food shortage that ignites a series of protests, predominantly led by women. The women's struggle for survival and their fight for justice spark a significant political transformation, ultimately leading to Sweden's democratic breakthrough.

Despite the pivotal role women played in these events, their voices have been largely omitted from the historical record, resulting in their contributions being forgotten. In 2019, Anna Hammerin, in collaboration with filmmaker, Adam Jones-Lloyd, embarked on a mission to uncover this history, which in part links to Anna's own family story. They recorded oral histories from descendants, and together with researchers Karen Brookfield and Kenneth Hallberg, they collected primary sources, including rare film footage, to shed light on the resilience and courage of these women, who helped to shape Sweden's future.

'The Potato Revolution' weaves together archive material with poignant interviews, creating a compelling and emotional narrative that resurrects a vital chapter of history. This film aims to give recognition to those whose efforts have long been overshadowed, ensuring that their legacy is not lost to time.

THURSDAY 8 MAY

Keynote 2: Pirjo Markkola (Tampere University)

Nordic Gender Equality Revisited

In 1976, Nordic gender equality agencies conceptualized gender equality as “equality between men and women in family and work.” Since the 1970s, strong equality policies were developed in certain areas whereas obvious gaps and weaknesses remained in other areas. This lecture addresses the outcomes of Nordic gender equality policies from an intersectional perspective.

Session 3a: Nordic Labour Geographies Between (and Beyond) East and West

Matias Kaihovirta (chair)

Eirik Wig Sundvall & Byron Rom-Jensen, University of Oslo

The Lumber Business': The Nordic dimension of AFL-FTUC's strategies and operations, 1944-1957

When Irving Brown traveled to Europe in late 1945 to initiate the AFL's international crusade against Soviet Communism, he did so on behalf of a poorly funded labor federation with few international friends. By the end of the year, Brown concluded that 'our best friends in Europe' were to be found in the Scandinavian labor movement. Indeed, even as Cold War tensions rose and Brown's network and finances improved drastically, Scandinavian labor leaders proved to be key partners, mediators, and middlemen for the Americans, including as a bridge to Finland. This article seeks to resituate the Nordic countries as a critical dimension in US labor's Cold War operations.

David Witver, Penn State University

Searching for Jimmy Hoffa in Finland

In 1975, the most notorious union leader in the United States disappeared, the presumed victim of organized crime. His disappearance transformed him into a mythic figure whose story is invoked to highlight the problem of corruption in American unions. The prevalence of corruption in American labor history is depicted as an example of American exceptionalism, a phenomenon with no parallels in other similar western, industrialized nations. But in fact, no comparative studies have yet been made to examine, or explain, this apparent case of exceptionalism. This paper hopes to fill that gap by comparing Hoffa's story to a contemporary Finnish labor leader who occupied a similar position involving power and controversy, Niilo Wälläri. The paper will use that comparison to consider just how exceptional the U.S. situation was and to chart out some of the reasons for why the situations differed.

Inger Jonsson (Uppsala University, ARAB) & Silke Neunsinger (ARAB)

Decentring the Swedish model: Industrial Relations and Indigenous Labour in the Far North between the 1930s and 1980s

In this paper, we want to highlight what can be gained from crossing the border between different research fields. The focus is on the Arctic and how today's green transformation as well as earlier industrialisation have affected the livelihoods of people living in the area. This is a vital subject for indigenous studies, but the transformation processes of industrialisation in general have always been central to

labour history. While indigenous studies have become important in labour history in Canada, Australia, and the US, it has only recently been recognised in the Nordic countries. It is highly likely that by letting labour history meet Indigenous studies we will get new perspectives on the history of industrialisation in the Arctic.

To cross the border between different research fields is seldom easy and differences in theoretical and methodological approaches must be considered. But there is much to be gained by trying. The participants in this panel will discuss how such a meeting can take place between Indigenous studies and labour history. What new questions will be raised? How can different approaches be adjusted to gain new knowledge? Are there any examples to learn from?

Session 3b (CRI): Labour Strategies and Industrial Relations

Jarmo Peltola, University of Helsinki (chair)

Matti Hannikainen, University of Helsinki (commentator)

Jenny Jansson (Uppsala University)

Blockades instead of strikes? How Swedish unions have used blockades in labor conflicts 1980-2020

In most Western European countries, including Sweden, the number of strikes has declined since the 1980s, giving the appearance of peaceful industrial relations. However, there are other forms of industrial action beyond work stoppages, one of which is the blockade. Blockades are the act of interrupting work processes without starting a full work stoppage. For instance, workers can refuse to work overtime, they can prevent new hires, and they can perform physical blockades of work places ('circulation struggle'). Blockades can be used either as the primary conflict method or as a complement to strikes.

In this paper, we investigate the use of blockades by Swedish trade unions from 1980 to 2020. We examine which unions employ blockades, which types of blockades are most common (blocking overtime work or physically blocking workplaces), and whether trends have shifted over time. We have compiled data on all blockades that took place in Sweden during this period using the archives of the Swedish Arbitration Office/Mediation Office.

Our analysis demonstrates that blockades are a far more common industrial action strategy than strikes in Sweden. In the 1980s, strikes and blockades were considered separate strategies: unions would either strike or block work. From the 1990s onward, the norm has been to combine strikes with blockades. While physical blockades of workplaces were common in the 1980s, blockades targeting working hours have become the most common form of blockade over time. This shift could be explained by the globalization of the economy, the creation of global value chains, and the adoption of just-in-time manufacturing, making blockades of overtime work an increasingly effective conflict strategy. Lastly, we anticipated that unions organizing employees in the public sector would use blockades more frequently than private sector unions due to the more restricted right to strike in the public sector. However, we find no differences between the sectors. We do however find a difference between unions with high union density and those with low union density: unions with low union density are more inclined to use blockades than those with higher union density.

Ilkka Kärriälä, University of Helsinki

Why is the Nordic Model of Industrial Relations Breaking Down in Finland? An Historical Perspective

Petteri Orpo's conservative-populist government came to power in Finland after the election of 2023 and introduced a substantial labour market reform program, including restrictions to the right to strike, extension of decentralized bargaining, weakened employment protection and significant cuts to unemployment insurance. Other Nordic countries following the traditions of democratic corporatism and tripartite bargaining have not witnessed as far-reaching state-led reform programs.

The paper offers an historical interpretation on Finland's drastic turn away from the 'Nordic model' of industrial relations. An important factor is the fact that Finland was the last Nordic country to adopt collective bargaining on national level during World War II. The process was more state-led than in other Nordic countries, and especially the employers were less invested in the model. However, for decades centralized tripartite bargaining was in the interest of all parties. It was only during the economic depression of the early 1990s when the employers began to call for radical reforms. Despite attempts to move wage bargaining at least to industry level, centralized tripartism lived on until 2016. After decentralization to industry-level, employers have become more ambitious and frustrated because of Finland's poor economic performance since the 2008 financial crisis and because of the feeling that tripartite bargaining has produced too modest results - despite cuts in hourly wages in 2016, abolishing possibilities for early retirement and many other employer-friendly reforms.

A suitable government coalition now allows employers to pursue their interests through the 'political' avenue instead of bargaining.

The paper argues that behind immediate conjunctural reasons for the employers' and state's steps away from the 'Nordic model' looms Finland's weaker tradition of bargaining and weaker trust between labour market parties, which has been manifested also in weaker co-determination and participation rights of wage-earners as well as more frequent industrial conflicts than in other Nordic countries.

Hannah Karina Yoken, University of Jyväskylä

Finnish Labour Unions and Anti-Nuclear Mobilisation during the Euromissile Crisis

During the first half of the 1980s, the threat of nuclear annihilation captured the attention of people around the world and elicited strong emotions leading to mass mobilisation. In Europe, the Euromissile Crisis threatened the continent's security and future. This was likewise a period in Finland when anti-nuclear protest reached its peak: between 1981 and 1984 as many as 220 000 Finns took part in local peace marches annually, organised during the United Nations Disarmament Week.

This paper examines a seemingly forgotten aspect of 1980s anti-nuclear protest, namely the role of labour unions. I ask how and why some Finnish labour unions appealed to their members, urging them to mobilise on behalf of disarmament and peace. The paper's primary focus is on instructional literature produced by Finnish labour unions, which provided members with background information and instructed them how to take direct anti-nuclear action. An example is the 1982 pamphlet *Aseidenriisunta – rauhanpolitiikka: Suomen toimet – meidän työmme* ("Disarmament – Peace Policy: Finland's Actions – Our Work"), written by the Central Organisation of the Finnish Trade Unions SAK. The Finnish case will be placed into comparative dialogue with international examples, based on secondary literature.

This presentation is part of my broader Academy of Finland postdoctoral project *A Farewell to Arms': Anti-Nuclear Protest, Emotion and Gender in Finland, 1979-1987*. I approach protest opposing nuclear weapons and energy in 1980s Finland as a broad socio-political phenomenon rather than a clearly definable social movement, emphasising the plurality of voices and activities brought together by the threat of nuclear annihilation. The focus is therefore on the ways in which emotions were central to everyday acts of anti-nuclear resistance. This presentation builds towards an English-language monograph, which highlights the different aspects of Finnish 1980s anti-nuclear protest. I envision a chapter on labour unions and protest in the workplace as forming a core chapter in this upcoming book.

Session 3c (CDW): Labour and Protest: Economic, Political, and Social Dimensions

Anna Hammerin, University of Hertfordshire (chair)

Ulla Aatsinki, Tampere University

Forest Workers – Economic Necessity, Political Threat in Lapland in the First Decades of the 20th century

In my paper I examine how workers became a threat to the forest industry and how they began to be controlled in the early 20th century in Lapland. The forest industry expanded to northern Finland at the end of 19th century. Extensive stocks of raw material, forests, were waiting for thousands of workers, forest workers. They arrived from eastern and central Finland. In addition to their work force these landless young men also brought new values and attitudes and strengthened local civic society. Migrant workers had a significant role in labour movement, trade unions and social democratic party, in the beginning of the 20th century. Together forest industry and internal migration affected economic, social, cultural and political structures in Lapland. The county became the scene of conflict between labour and capital – production relations were defined by cyclically sensitive markets, which fueled workers' political organization, which in turn increased the employer's suspicions of them. The civil war escalated the setting; in addition to economic disadvantage, workers at logging sites were seen as national threat. I study, what control methods employers and authorities used, and what results they achieved with them. It is also important to ask how the employees responded to the control, what kind of thoughts and actions it caused in them. As source material I use official documents, documents of associations, newspapers, and memoirs.

Christos Stefanopoulos, University of Crete

The Hunger Strike as an Alternative Form of Workers' Protest in Post-Civil War Greece, 1950-1967

"Many fainting spells" appeared after the fourth day of the railway hunger strike inside one of the company's factories. Railway workers "with high morale" requested the payment of accrued, better terms of health care, even the removal of the manager for his behavior towards employees. After mass fainting from the first 544 workers who participated, the company and the state accepted most of their demands.

Indeed, the hunger strike as a form of workers' protest, had strong social references and feelings of support in the politically authoritarian environment of post-civil war Greece. Besides, at the beginning of the period under investigation, it was a means of pressure and struggle of the workers suffering from tuberculosis and demanding better living conditions in the sanatoriums, food, benefits for them and their families. The period begins with the end of the civil war (1946-1949) and extends to the imposition of the military dictatorship (1967-1974). Since the authoritarian, anticommunist political framework many times did not favor mass labour action, the hunger strike turned into a form of protest. After all, most of the workers who participate, do not belong to any of the legal or illegal versions of the Left and are members of the recognized by the state labour unions, secondary and tertiary labour organizations.

The purpose of the paper, then, is to analyze hunger strikes as a form of workers' protest in the authoritarian political context of the period 1950-1967. Additionally, the paper seeks to trace workers' resistance to forms of labour discipline and their demands for better living conditions. To investigate the above research questions, the archives of labour unions, the press, archives related to social and labour movements and left-wing political formations, will be used.

Minna Harjula, Tampere University

Work and Minimum Income Aid in Finland, 1850-2020: Interconnections and Contradictions

Despite the grand narrative from poverty to modern welfare state, the need for poor relief (1852, 1879, 1923) and later means-tested minimum income aid (1957, 1984) has remained in Finland – and even increased since the 1990s.

This paper analyses the interconnection between work and last resort income aid in Finland. By analysing the various meanings of work in the last resort income aid the paper reflects on the inclusive and exclusive mechanisms that have created hierarchical citizenship among the aid recipients.

The long-term analysis indicates how the legacy of poor relief has persisted in the last resort income support in the welfare state margins. Significantly, the relationship between the poor relief recipient and local administration was parallel to a servant-master relationship in the nineteenth century agrarian society. Since then, the aid recipients have been categorized according to their ability and willingness to work, and work has been used as a tool to test, train and show the moral quality of a citizen. Paying back the received aid via work was a principle that was only gradually abandoned by the 1970s.

Especially, the status of the able-bodied working-age needy has been controversial. In order to foster individual agency in the labour market, the liberal poor law 1879-1922 did not accept unemployment as a valid cause of aid. Moreover, the paper indicates the increasingly marginalized status of the unemployed since the mid-1990s. Lacking activity in job seeking has resulted in last resort benefit sanctions. Although the new constitution (1995/1999) defined unemployment as a social risk which should be covered via social insurance – instead of last resort need-tested minimum income aid – the unemployed still had the highest risk of facing a long-term need of minimum income support in the 2020s.

Session 4a (BIO): Labour Biographies: Documenting and Connecting Individual and Collective Personal Trajectories within Labour Organising

Nina Trige Andersen, Copenhagen & Jonas Söderqvist, Swedish Labour Movements Archives and Library

The purpose of this panel is to refine and cultivate ideas for a project tentatively titled "Labour Biographies." Individual and collective biographical narratives have been increasingly recognized in the field of labour history. However, there is a lack of comprehensive resources documenting the diverse individuals, both women and men, who have contributed to labour organizing efforts.

The goal of Labour Biographies is to develop and maintain an editorially curated, user-generated database of biographical entries about individuals involved in labour organizing (including, but not limited to, labour organisations) in the Nordic countries and possibly beyond. This includes not only individuals already recognized as "significant" historical figures, but essentially anyone involved in labour-organising activities for whom we can find information in archival materials. This database should serve as a valuable research tool within labour history and for sharing knowledge about labour history with a wider audience.

The concept of Labour Biographies comprises two main components: The Toolbox and The Digital Encyclopaedia. The Toolbox is an app that registered and approved users can access. It serves both as a work tool for researchers and a content feed. Through this app, researchers can create new entries and add to existing ones as they obtain information about relevant individuals, such as while working with archival material. As the database expands, researchers will be able to access biographical entries relevant

to their studies and identify potential connections between people, places, events, and organisations.

An editorial committee is responsible for validating information, ensuring correct content addition with necessary references in all sections, and performing text editing before new entries and additions are made visible to other users.

Once an entry has enough data to create a prose text, it will be accessible on The Digital Encyclopaedia. This is a public website containing edited biographical entries, along with features that connect knowledge clusters and historical narratives based on the biographical entries.

All entries will be originally created in the language used by the person being biographed and the sources about this person. They will then be translated into English to facilitate cross-Nordic research and reach a broader audience within and beyond the Nordic countries. Therefore, it will be necessary to have editorial committees in each of the Nordic countries involved in Labour Biographies and a cross-Nordic editorial committee.

Nina Trige Andersen (Selskabet for Arbejderhistorie, København) and Jonas Söderqvist (Swedish Labour Movements Archives and Library) will present the project ideas. The panel will include Ole Martin Rønning (Arbejderbevegelsens arkiv och bibliotek, Oslo), Alpo Väkevä (Työväenliikkeen kirjasto, Helsinki), Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir (Háskóli Íslands, Reykjavík) and a representative TBA from Arbejdermuseet og Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv, Copenhagen. The panellists and the audience are invited to discuss key questions, some of a practical nature and some more fundamental, including but not limited to:

- How do we determine who should be included in Labour Biographies and who should not? One of our goals for this project is to facilitate, expand, and democratize labour history research. However, various relevance criteria must be considered.
- What categories and types of writing would be appropriate for biographical entries?
- What ethical questions and concerns might arise when creating and providing information in biographical entries?
- How do we incorporate and engage with existing biographical encyclopaedic material related to labour history?
- How do we involve both individual researchers and research and archive institutions?
- What are the connections and differences between Labour Biographies and other types of biographical encyclopaedias?

- What kind of big data and statistical analysis could be used in a Labour Biographies project?
- What features would be relevant to develop to share knowledge clusters and narratives in the publicly available version of Labour Biographies?
- How could this project be financed and hosted in the short and long term?
- Who would be relevant collaborators for Labour Biographies? Archives, libraries, research institutions, labour organisations, labour parties, and labour history associations?

Session 4b (CDW): State Surveillance and Labour Conflicts

Marko Tikka, University of Tampere (chair)

Tiina Lintunen & Piia Vuorinen, University of Turku

State Controlled Communists and Forgotten Åland Islands

After the Civil War, security police was established in Finland in 1919, to control activities considered dangerous to the state and to prevent espionage by other states. Until the end of the Second World War, surveillance was mostly directed to control unreliable leftists and foreigners. The control of communists and suspected communists meant that many of those under surveillance belonged to the working class. The bitter memory of the Civil War, the geographical proximity of the communist-dominated Soviet Union and fears of the underground activities of the Finnish Communist Party formed the background and, from the point of view of those in power, the justification of the state control. The political nature of control and the forms of police actions that transcended the boundaries of the law are an undeniable part of the history of the Finnish security police. Despite fairly extensive research on the Finnish security police, some areas still remain unexplored. In our current project, we have studied the activities of the security police on Finland's western border in Åland Islands. Although border regions are often seen as important areas of control in nation states, the security police did not monitor Åland for more than a decade – although communist activity was not entirely absent there. In our presentation, we discuss the surveillance of the left in Finland in general and control over the Åland Islands in particular between 1919– 1945. We also consider the reasons for the low level of monitoring in Åland. Our main source of data consists of the extensive archives of the security police.

Hanne Koivisto, University of Turku

Finnish Left-Intellectuals as the Target for State Police in the 1930s

In the 1930s, Finnish labour movement faced significant challenges, The Communist Party was banned, and radical socialists faced pressure as well.

The society of the time was authoritarian and supporting bourgeois values. Not only persuasion but also coercive measures were used to manage conflicts. The State Police tightened its control of citizens, starting to monitor even the left intellectuals. It is fair to say that these shared the workers' fate. In a sense, the intellectuals can be seen as a kind of proxy for radical workers, since active communists had already been imprisoned.

In practice, the State Police intensely monitored public events where intellectuals appeared. Detectives took notes on their speeches, read their publications, and shadowed them. The aim was to collect evidence of illegal communist activities to bring charges of incitement to illegal acts. Extensive files were compiled on those monitored, mixing detailed information with rumours, gossip, and even distortions.

The analysis shows that the State Police's perception of those monitored was largely based on alleged communist activities endangering national security. Aggravating findings were expressive capacity, influence within the labour movement, and communist contacts. The most dangerous activists were those with the best speaking skills and greatest public support. Interestingly, purely cultural figures did not seem equally relevant, especially if the person used expressions that were difficult to the audience. However, even poems were confiscated.

Intellectuals noticed being monitored but this did not worry them at first. The situation changed when the Winter War began. Now charges were pressed of treason and high treason, retrospectively justified by the intellectuals' actions from the distant past. Arrests, interrogations, and trials began and led to several years in prison.

Carl-Erik Strandberg, Åbo Akademi University

Språk och strejkrörelse i Finland, Vasa 1928

Den 3.8.1928 utbröt en strejk på Vasa museibyggnad bland byggnadsarbetarna till följd av att arbetsgivaren vägrat godkänna kollektivavtalet som företagets byggmästare undertecknat april 1928. Vid första anblick var strejken typisk; en lokalt organiserad, offensiv arbetsnedläggning eftersom arbetarna försökte tvinga arbetsgivaren till eftergifter. Det unika med strejken var att den förklarades som språkligt

diskriminerande, eftersom man hävdade att de svenskspråkiga arbetarna hade blivit underbetalda jämfört med sina fackanslutna, finskspråkiga motsvarigheter. Vidare uppfattades det besynnerligt eftersom förmannen och arbetsgivaren var även svenskspråkiga.

Under strejken fick byggnadsarbetarförbundet emotta kritik av Vasa industriråd no.4 för att förbundet dels misslyckats med att understöda strejkarna med både kunskap och kapital, dels att man höll på att misslyckas med att "väcka" den svenskspråkiga arbetarklassen i Vasa. Strejken belyser således inte enbart en konflikt mellan en svenskspråkig arbetsgivare och dess arbetstagare utan blottar även hur man upplevde att den centraliserade fackföreningsrörelsen missförstod eller förbisåg det lokala, språkliga behovet.

Målet således med denna presentation är tvåfaldig. För det första önskar detta paper visa på språktillhörighet som faktor i socialistisk radikaliserings och facklig organisering. För det andra att blotta konflikten som upplevdes mellan den centraliserade fackföreningsrörelsen och det lokala, språkliga behovet. Fallstudien visar på hur det lokala förhållandet avslöjade brister i det centraliserade och organisatoriska.

Källmaterialet består av korrespondensen mellan industrirådet och Finlands Byggnadsarbetarförbund samt Vaasan ammatillinen keskusneuvosto, centrallrådet. Källmaterialet kompletteras även med artiklar ur den lokala arbetarpressens två huvudsakliga tidningar, Nya Folkbladet och Työn Ääni samt material ur ryska socialpolitiska arkivet gällande Finlands kommunistiska parti, FKP.

Session 4c: Nordic Labour Movements: Religion, Nonalignment, and Organizational Strategies

Ilkka Kärriälä, University of Helsinki (chair)

Nils Ivar Agøy, University of South-Eastern Norway

The Norwegian Labour Movement and the Problem of Religion in Post-War Norway

The experiences of the Second World War, when Norway was occupied by Germany, appreciably shifted the perception in the Norwegian labour movement of the Lutheran Church of Norway and other Christian denominations, especially as the Church of Norway had played a leading role in civilian resistance to Nazism. The war had created

a climate of national fellowship in which many previous dividing lines, both cultural and political, now seemed to be less relevant. When a majority Labour government took office in late 1945, it faced clear expectations that the Church of Norway be given more independence than before, and also that the Labour Party itself ought to modify its traditionally critical stance regarding the Christian religion. The paper will trace the development of this topic by studying three interrelated threads: 1) The efforts of Christian party members to induce the Labour Party to change its programme; 2) the government-initiated process to revise the official church organization against the background of the wartime experiences; and 3) the sustained work on the part of the Labour Party to formulate a “cultural programme” to provide people with “something to live for”, beyond everyday, material needs. The paper will also sketch how the Communist Party of Norway, which had fronted a consistently anti-religious policy since its formation in 1923, tried actively to appeal to Christian voters in the immediate postwar period.

The aim of the paper is both to throw light on little-known aspects of postwar history, and to delineate unofficial power structures within the labour movement. Sources are a variety of archive materials (from parties and organizations well as from official or semi-official institutions), private papers and print material.

Jouko Raitaniemi, European University Institute

Nordic Nonaligned Social Democracy and the North-South-East-West Division of the International Labour Movement

Post-war decolonisation globalised the socialist labour movement as diverse movements in the Global South adopted some form of socialism to overcome underdevelopment and (neo)colonial dependence. However, despite the ideal of international solidarity, divisions persisted between the labour movement in the industrialised North and socialists in the ‘Third World.’ Moreover, the ‘international labour movement’ was already divided along Cold War lines into competing communist and anti-communist (social democratic and democratic socialist) organisations.

This paper examines how Finnish and Swedish social democrats navigated these North-South and East-West divisions within the international labour movement from 1968 to 1975, a period characterised by détente in Europe and intense conflict in the Global South. It evaluates their interactions with diverse actors, including fraternal parties within the Socialist International (SI), anti-colonial liberation movements, socialist regimes, and democratic activists under authoritarian rule. Using correspondence and reports from party international secretaries and publications such

as the SI journal *Socialist Affairs* as primary sources, the study highlights the global and transnational factors in the Nordic social democratic international activism of the era.

The paper argues that North-South issues temporarily superseded Cold War concerns as the rapid population growth in the Global South and developing countries' assertion of political power within international organisations gained attention. Like others at the time, Finnish and Swedish social democrats sought to promote their common interests with the Third World, based both on progressive political goals and a shared nonaligned small-state status within the highly unequal international order. Unlike some Western governments and SI parties, they generally opposed framing anti-colonial struggles through the Cold War lens. The paper also challenges the view that the Nordic labour movement aimed to export a 'Third Way' Nordic model to the Third World as an alternative to communism, as transferring models across vastly different societies was generally considered unworkable.

Isak Törnqvist, Umeå University

The Labour Commune: Early Swedish Social Democracy's Organizational Path and Political Opportunities

Formally beginning in the year 1900, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) organized its members within so-called 'Arbetarekommuner' (labour/workers' communes). These were local umbrella organizations consisting of different local social democratic associations and collectively affiliated union branches. Later, as the party grew, women's associations, youth clubs, and cooperative groups, also took a place within the organization. This paper investigates the organizational structure of the Swedish Social Democratic Party during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emphasizing the role of the labour communes and their apparent distinctiveness compared to other European labour parties of the period.

By employing social movement theory, I aim to explain how and why SAP chose an organizational path that heavily relied on the local collective affiliation of union members. This approach not only seems to have set SAP apart from many of its European counterparts but also might have created specific political opportunities that shaped its development and impacted its success. The research is based on my ongoing PhD project, in which I describe a party initially lacking an organizational strategy because of the limited possibility for political participation among the working class, and later stubbornly defending the adopted line because of its quantitative advantages.

Kjell Östberg, Södertörn University

Where did socialism go?

Where did socialism go? is the concluding report from a research project active at Södertörn University for 25 years. The aim of the project has been to examine how and in which areas the Swedish labor movement came to orient itself politically and ideologically in the fields of power that revolution and counter-revolution, socialism and capitalism, democracy and fascism developed around the Baltic Sea region during what Hobsbawm called “The age of extremes”. The results have been reported in several anthologies and a large number of monographs and articles.

In this book seven essays, focused on historical turning points, the four authors, Håkan Blomqvist, Lars Ekdahl, Werner Schmidt and Kjell Östberg, examine the complex relationship of Swedish social democracy to socialism, not only as distant utopias but as political alternatives for action. What proposals and perspectives were actualized and pitted against each other?

An introducing article analyses the discussions within the party around industrial democracy and socialisation during the early 1920s. Another deals with the socialist renaissance of the 1970s which was stimulated by the pressure from the extra-parliamentary movements of the time. A third reflects on how socialism as a concept and project came to split up and become different types of at least rhetorical over-ideology for the most diverse political and social interests. A hegemonic theoretical study of the Swedish 1930s and the Second World War is discussing how relations to Nazi Germany were not only determined by the political institutions dominated by Social Democracy but above all by the extra-parliamentary forces in the traditional – economic, military, diplomatic – elites that held societal hegemony. Furthermore, the significance of the trade union movement for the ups and downs of socialist perspectives is discussed. In concluding contributions, the results of the research project are synthesised.

Session 5a: War and Labour

Fia Cottrell-Sundevall, Stockholm University (chair)

Mikko Rapo, Tampere University

Suffering and (In)Justice: The Moral Economy of the Rural Poor in Post-War Finnish Resettlement, 1945–1948

Defeated by the Soviet Union and forced to cede around 10 percent of its pre-war territory, Finnish society was confronted by several problems after WWII. War reparations, demobilization, and resettling the displaced Karelian population strained Finnish society to its limits. The Land Acquisition Act, enacted in May 1945, granted displaced Karelian people and war veterans the opportunity to acquire farmland or residential plots with the help of the state. Previous research on the resettlement process has mainly focused on Karelian refugees and war veterans, as they comprised the primary groups resettled. However, for tenant farmers, farm laborers, and various rural poor, the resettlement seemed to offer a path toward land ownership and independence as farmers.

My paper analyzes correspondence between the rural poor and resettlement authorities from 1945 to 1948, focusing on how the rural poor understood the resettlement and how they justified their claims for land. It explores the rhetorical strategies and cultural narratives they employed to present themselves as morally entitled, often invoking the state's duty to protect its most vulnerable citizens. The dominant rhetoric of the resettlement revolved around morality and compensation for wartime suffering. For the rural poor, many of whom had been too old to participate directly in the fighting, asserting a claim to land through these conventional tropes proved challenging. By recounting experiences of injustice, hardship, and life-long poverty, the rural poor reframed the rhetoric of suffering to suit their own needs. Through an analysis of these experiences, my paper examines the rural poor's version of the moral economy of post-war resettlement.

Olli Siitonen, University of Helsinki

Moral Injury in History: Analyzing Perpetrator Accounts of Wartime Violence

According to American military training manuals the profession of frontline soldiers is divided into two key aspects: obeying orders and killing or capturing the enemy. This paper is part of my PhD research on wartime killing experiences of Americans who fought in the Vietnam war. The goal of my research is to find out how soldiers explain personal violence and try to live with their experiences after the war.

This paper utilizes theories of social psychology in the analysis of personal narratives in letters, diaries, memoirs, and interviews of Americans who fought in Vietnam. These sources originate from the Vietnam archives at Texas Tech University and Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

War has a devastating impact on the welfare of human beings. It thrusts soldiers into morally injurious situations, where they are forced to act in ways that transgress their deeply held moral beliefs. This paper focuses on perpetrators of violence by looking at the explanations military veterans use to contextualize their actions and transform these experiences of violence into a more comprehensible form.

Growing number of evidence indicates that experiences of personal violence and killing during war are closely related to symptoms of post-traumatic stress, depression, and self-punishing behavior among military veterans. Meanwhile, researchers have called for further investigation of historical and psychosocial context for killing in war which would provide predictors for Moral injury among veteran population.

Researchers from the San Francisco VA hospital have developed the Impact of Killing treatment program for veterans who are suffering from moral injury related to their personal experiences of violence. The purpose of this paper is to provide historical context for their research as understanding the context and situational factors of warfare can help clinicians working with military veterans who are suffering from prolonged symptoms of moral injury.

Antti Hannunen, Museum Centre Vapriikki

The Tampere 1918 Civil War Museum – an XR project

The Museum Center Vapriikki's popular Tampere 1918 exhibition closed in early September 2023. Since 2008, the exhibition had received acclaim from both visitors and professionals in the fields of history and museology. However, Vapriikki did not wish to abandon the important topic of the Finnish Civil War. The new Tampere 1918 Civil War Museum website provides information about the events of the Civil War in Tampere through 3D-modeled virtual experiences, interactivity, articles, images, and videos. This presentation will give a behind-the-scenes look at the conversion of a traditional museum experience to virtual and XR form. It also presents new virtual ways of presenting the results of studies to the public, that should also be of interest to academic scholars.

Session 5b (FEM): (Trans)National Labour: Gendered Work and (Dis)Connections with Changing Environment

Inger Jonsson, Uppsala University, ARAB (chair)

The presentations in this panel discuss forms of seasonal, transient, and gendered labour in early 20th-century Finland and the U.S. We examine women's strategies in times of unemployment, socialist organisation in migrant-settler life, and women's labour in both rural and urban settings. Additionally, the speakers discuss how women addressed gendered labour and demonstrate the complex (dis)connections women workers formed with changing environment. Through local, regional, and (trans)national perspectives, this panel explores women's roles as 'workers' within translocal working-class culture. The session addresses the conference themes of women's experiences, working lives, and forms of labour organisation from Finnish and North American perspectives.

Simo Laakkonen, University of Turku

A Touch of Frost: Gender, Class, Technology, and the Urban Environment in an Industrialising Helsinki

In the first presentation, Simo Laakkonen will explore the history of laundry work. Women have been responsible for this hard work, which has been one of the most important factors contributing to human well-being worldwide. Yet, it seems that the laundress and her work were too commonplace, too rough, and too undramatic to attract much attention from the greater public in the past or historians today. He investigates women and their work during a particular season—winter. What were the relations between winter, laundry work technology, female identity, and the environment in an industrialising Nordic city? Laakkonen claims that in addition to battling urban the environment, washerwomen had frosty relations with the leading city fathers and cold, if not icy relations with the leading female figures of the better-off classes of the city.

Petri Talvitie, University of Turku

Industrialisation and Women's Labour Force Participation in Rural Finland

Next, Petri Talvitie examines the employment of female agricultural day labourers in North Savo at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when more than fifty percent of the households in the region were rural working-class families. The paper considers the

impact of industrialisation and the emergence of dairy farming on women's labour force participation and the gender division of labour in the poor periphery of Europe. It seeks to answer two key questions: firstly, to what extent did women have access to paid work in rural areas and under what conditions, and secondly, how was women's market work interwoven into household survival strategies? The paper is based on data collected from court records and oral history interviews.

Lotta Leiwo, University of Helsinki

Transnational Networks and Colonial Ideas: Finnish Migrant-Settler Women in the U.S. Socialist Movement

In the third presentation, Lotta Leiwo examines Finnish women within the context of the Finnish Socialist Federation in the U.S. Many Finnish migrant-settler women were transient and built important networks through their participation in local socialist activities and transnational socialist newspaper publishing. Leiwo analyses the agency of Finnish women in the socialist movement locally, regionally, and (trans)nationally, and how they addressed the topics of Indigenous Peoples, imperialism, and labour in socialist newspaper *Toveritar*. Finns were part of broader transnational and social structures, within which the colonial epistemology of 'free land' in North America had been adopted as part of the working-class worldview. By studying women's agency and writings, it is also possible to explore how they transmitted colonial ideas to younger generations.

Session 5c (CDW): Short-term Labour and Precarious Work in Northern Europe during the Pre-Industrial Era

Marja Jalava, Tampere University (chair)

This session bases on academic research project "The long history of short-term jobs", founded by Koneen Säätiö 2020–2024. The starting point for the project was very often forgotten fact, that long employment relationships, which could last decades, did not became common until the large-scale industrialization took place and public institutions and services were established. In this research project we have studied people and occupational groups who, instead of the landowning or fixed-term employment relationships, lived on short-term, parallel and/or seasonal works in early modern (1620–1870) Swedish realm and in particularly in Finland, on both urban and rural context. In this session we discuss on meaning of the work from the new and

topical perspective. Our focus is on the early modern society in which most of the people earned their living by parallel occupations regardless of their social status, gender, or location (urban and rural). We are researching how did different working duties, tasks, positions, places, and sites change during the life cycle and career path – and how different occupations could (or had to) be combined to ensure the sufficient living.

Tiina Miettinen, Tampere University

Conflicts between Men Servants and Masters in Ekenäs Town in 1623–1696

Ekenäs (Finnish: Tammissaari) is a small town on the southern coast of Finland. In my paper, I attempt to find out what kind of conflicts arose in Ekenäs during the seventeenth century between masters and their men servants, and I also seek to determine how their relationship appeared and developed in official sources in the seventeenth century. The backgrounds of the domestic servants varied a lot in early seventeenth-century Ekenäs. The court cases in seventeenth-century Ekenäs involving men servants consist of two main groups. The first group comprise cases in which men servants argued over their salary or were accused of having broken a promise to enter service. The second group, growing more common from the mid-seventeenth century, were cases of improper sexual relationships. Servants were simultaneously insiders and outsiders in the burgher households. In a legal way, their role as outsiders became clearer during the seventeenth century. Hired men servants were at the same time both obedient servants and opportunists, gamblers in a changing society. Servants tried to balance their own livelihood and advancement in social networks, and this needed both diplomacy and calculation.

Sofia Gustafsson, University of Helsinki

Enlisted Soldiers' Atypical Employment in Helsinki in the 1750s

Military professionalisation took place all over Europe in the eighteenth-century, but soldiers and their families were often poor. In Sweden, enlisted soldiers had to engage in all sorts of temporary jobs or self-employment to make ends meet, since their wages were too low to sustain their families. However, military employment did offer so-called legal protection, and thus it allowed them to combine all kinds of jobs and work. Enlisted soldiers came from mixed backgrounds, and many of them had educational training, mainly from abroad. Soldiers were free to exercise crafts outside the guilds, and this was a great opportunity for former journeymen. For those who lacked professional training, inn-keeping, baking, or butchering could be lucrative options for eager entrepreneurs. Soldiers could also enter the service of local manufacturers,

providing brickworks or glassworks with much needed expertise. They could also work as unskilled day labourers on farms or do other odd jobs for local inhabitants. Soldiers' families could be highly mobile, and, if no legal jobs could be obtained, they could engage in illegal activities. However, not all enlisted soldiers were poor and marginalised; the situation depended largely on their professional skills or talent for business.

Ella Viitaniemi, Tampere University

A Man without Bread: Precarious Clergy and Struggling Career-Paths

In historical research, the short-term and precarious jobs of the lower ranked clergy are often overlooked in favour of those holding the highest and permanent positions. Practically every young pastor began with a fixed-term and temporary assignment in order to gain experience for future posts. The church needed pastors who were ready to serve in short-term assistant pastoral and substitute positions, as the congregations' weekly services had to run without interruption. As the number of pastors with a university education increased, the competition for permanent posts intensified. This case study focuses on Pastor Anders Johan Mennander (1727–1797), who worked in various short-term positions as well as an assistant pastor throughout his career in western Finland. He did not attain a permanent post until the age of 70, although he applied for numerous vacant positions during his career. The paper examines how short-term jobs in the church were organised and the means which the lower ranked clergy used to try to obtain permanent office. Mennander's case reveals a broader picture of the desperation and poverty of the lower clergy amid fierce competition for office.

Session 5d (DLH): Data for Labour History: Current Potential and Limitations

Silke Neunsinger, ARAB (chair)

Jonas Söderqvist, Swedish Labour Movements Archives and Library

Risto Turunen, Tampere University

Tanja Juuri, Tampere University

The session "Data for Labour History: Current Potential and Limitations" explores the impact of digital advancements on the field of labour history. With the mass digitisation of archival sources such as historical newspapers, parliamentary debates, and trade

union documents, a new realm of research opportunities has emerged. These machine-readable datasets not only increase accessibility to previously overlooked topics but can also highlight the activities of marginalised groups, thus broadening our historical understanding.

This session will discuss how these recently digitised sources, coupled with novel computational methods, encourage a shift from microhistories to a broader macroperspective. Methodologies ranging from simple word searches to statistical time-series analysis, network analysis, or semantic analysis based on language models open new possibilities for historians to uncover hidden relationships and patterns within historical texts. Metadata from diverse archival sources, alongside textual content, allows researchers to move beyond individual incidents to analyse broader societal shifts and construct more inclusive histories of working people, accounting for historical variations in factors like gender, education, and occupation.

The panel will also address the increased transparency in labour history research enabled by digitisation. Sharing not only research papers and monographs but also the underlying data and code can increase reproducibility and collaboration across the academic community. Furthermore, there are new opportunities to explore interactive online platforms as a means of disseminating research.

However, this digital shift is not without its challenges. The session will reflect on the long-standing critiques of quantitative social history and contemporary digital humanities, such as prioritising countable data at the expense of individual experiences. It will explore what might be lost when original sources are transformed into digital formats. By weighing both the potentials and pitfalls of “digital turn”, this session will provide a snapshot of the current data landscape in labour history and a critical discussion about the future of the field in the digital age.

Risto Turunen (University of Jyväskylä) will present the People & Parliament interface containing parliamentary debates multiple Northwest European countries, including Finland (1907–2022), Sweden (1809–2022), Norway (1814–2016), and Denmark (1848–2017). The interface was developed through a collaborative effort involving advanced text-mining techniques from the early 2020s and research in political history, with a focus on comparative conceptual history. During his talk, Turunen will illustrate how this tool can be applied to the study of the transnational intellectual history of labour movements across Europe.

Jonas Söderqvist (Swedish Labour Movements Archives and Library) will present Labour’s Memory, a digitisation project publishing annual and financial reports from the blue collar trade movement, from the local level to the international, spanning the time

period 1880-2020. The project involves collections from four archive institutions and make use of digital humanities methods for enriching and enhancing the data.

Tanja Juuri (Tampere University) will give a presentation on digitalised obituaries and expressions of grief within the context of the early 20th century Finnish Canadian labour movement. The focus is on two working-class newspapers, *Työkansa* (1907-1915) and *Vapaus* (1917-1974), which are part of the digital collection of the National Library of Finland. The presentation will explore how the use of digital materials has impacted her dissertation research.

Keynote 3: Christian De Vito, University of Vienna

Labour Coercion and Punitive Configurations

During the last decades, a strong thematic, spatial and temporal expansion has prompted the rethinking of key concepts in labour history. New ideas of “work”, “labour relations” and “the working class” have been proposed and the traditional distinction between “free” and “unfree” labour has given way to the analysis of the making of labour coercion. This keynote lecture seeks to contribute to these transformations by looking at the punitive practices that have produced and reproduced multiple dimensions of labour coercion in several historical contexts. In particular, it addresses the making of convict labour, the role of punishment in the im/mobilization of labour, and the way punitive processes have intersected with the paternalist mode of domination. In the process, the keynote offers the concept “punitive configurations” as a dynamic analytical tool to address the relationship between punishment and society.

Session 6a (BOR): Labour History beyond Animal-Human Divides

Ainur Elmgren, University of Oulu (chair)

The scope of ‘labour history’ has broadened considerably during the twenty-first century. In particular, global history approaches to the study of labour have revealed how the experience of free waged labour has been a minority one, largely specific to time (the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and space (the liberal capitalist economies of Western Europe and North America). Even in these contexts, however, the question of what work is and who performs it has long been under debate.

The rising sub-field of animal history owes a debt to labour history, not least in its ambitions and aspirations to write an emancipatory 'history from below'. At the same time, human-animal studies (HAS) have criticized a human-animal dualism inherent in the prevailing concept of labour and proposed to reshape it by the inclusion of the labour of non-human animals. In this session, we consider what animal history can add to our study of labour history, not least in responding to the exhortation of the conference organisers to 'reconsider the notions of the working class and the worker.'

Marja Jalava, Tampere University

Pigs as Metabolic Labourers: The Case of Pig Fattening Performance Testing in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

This paper discusses the various ways in which human-animal studies have positioned animals – especially such 'food animals' as pigs – within capitalism and working class. Among the various conceptualizations, the following are highlighted in particular: 1) Animals as similar to wage labourers; 2) Animals as slaves; 3) Animals as the ultimate subaltern; and 4) Animals as super-exploited living commodities.

Making use of Maan Barua's (2018) and Dinesh Wadiwel's (2018) concept of 'metabolic labour' and using pig fattening performance testing in the Nordic countries as an empirical case, this paper suggests that swine in modern animal agriculture can be seen both as a raw material to be worked on by human labourers and as labouring subjects whose object of production is their own body and to whom 'labour time' equals life, as they are bred to grow faster in order to die quicker. Therefore, as Barua has argued, pigs' metabolic labour not only highlights the violence in commodifying life, but also signifies the economic force of nonhuman potentials co-opted by capital.

Mary Hilson, Aarhus University

Labouring Pigs: Animal and Human Workers in Denmark c.1860–1930

Animals have worked alongside humans in many different historical contexts: horses and oxen have provided power for transport and ploughing; dogs have worked with humans in tracking, hunting and providing security; dogs, horses and carrier pigeons have fought in wars; while many smaller animals have worked as companions to humans. This paper is concerned with animals whose labour primarily consisted of converting energy to food for humans, specifically pigs. Pigs have lived in what is now Denmark probably as long as humans, and in the early modern period they were engaged in other forms of labour too, as the recyclers of waste and the managers of

forests. As is well known, however, the nineteenth century saw a massive increase in their numbers – from c.230,000 in 1837 to over 2.5 million in 1914, as Danish pork and bacon became established as an export commodity. Not surprisingly, this shift triggered profound changes for pig lives and bodies.

This paper has two aims. *Theoretically*, it offers some reflections on the nature of animal work from the perspective of pig history, asking to what extent it is helpful to consider pigs as workers. *Empirically*, it is concerned with a particular workplace, namely the slaughterhouse. The slaughterhouse has been widely studied as a new institution of modernity, where human workers engaged with new Fordist technologies on the infamous ‘disassembly lines’ (in a Nordic context for example Grelle and Knudsen, *Gris på kniven* (1995); Hansson, *Slakt i takt* (2004)). My interest however is in the slaughterhouse as a site where human and animals workers interacted, and where adaptations had to be made to accommodate the needs of both groups.

Petteri Norring, University of Helsinki

Division of Labour in Multispecies Society. Modernization of Finnish Pig Farming in the Early Twentieth Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, those in Finland interested in economic productivity and the prospects of national economy were frustrated with the present state of domestic swine husbandry. The number of pigs was too low and the Finns were consuming too much imported pork fat. The money was flowing out of the country while, at the same time, the Danes were reportedly cashing in with their rationally and efficiently organized swine husbandry.

This paper discusses the emergence of advanced pig farming in Finland, and agricultural division of labour from the point of view of human-animal relations. The Finnish experts who were eagerly modernizing the domestic pig farming were also promoting new kind of multispecies division of labour within the pig farming. Through this both the farmers and the pigs were gradually constituted as a collective ‘work force’ within the agricultural sector. Furthermore, this paper suggests that the general notion of farmed animals as labourers does not sufficiently illustrate those intraspecific work categories within which the pigs became elemental parts of system-level dynamics of early twentieth century market society and industrial capitalism. Through the analysis of these intraspecific categories the paper studies the human-animal relations from the perspective of work (Lainé & Porcher, 2023) and considers anew the boundaries between nature and society, and between production and reproduction in the context of labour history.

Session 6b (FEM): From Reproductive Health to Labor Rights: Women's Struggles and Institutional Responses

Nina Trige Andersen, Selskabet for Arbejderhistorie (commentator)

Daniel Stridh, Stockholm University (chair)

Samantha Smith, Michigan State University

“We do, indeed, have a union”: Showgirls and the Struggle for Unionization with the AGVA in Las Vegas, 1970-1980

For many years, dancers and showgirls had union contracts with the American Guild of Variety of Artists (AGVA) when they worked in floor/revue shows throughout the United States, and particularly in Las Vegas. Show programs, even printed this at the bottom of page, indicating that the show and the artists were unionized through a branch of the AFL-CIO.

Then in 1980, a full cast of dancers and performers with the “Casino de Paris” at the Dunes Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip, fought for over one year, for unionized representation. There was no longer a local office of the AGVA in Las Vegas, so the cast had to communicate with upper-level union officials. The dancers continually reached out to other performers in Las Vegas, through underground publications to no avail. So, what happened? And, what does the organization of showgirls and dancers at the Dunes Hotel and Casino tell us about labor issues in the 1970s and 1980s, not just in Las Vegas, but throughout America, and perhaps the world?

This paper seeks to answer these questions, and tell the history of showgirls’ struggle for unionization at the turn of the decade. This is not a union history, although changes in the AGVA itself, and localized issues of representation do come into play. This is history of women artists, showgirls, and the local demise of their contractual representation in casino hotels on the Las Vegas Strip. By recentering the showgirl in the broader history of labor and the 1970s/1980s, a nuanced story about the fight for representation in the late-twentieth-century comes to light.

This paper relies on a complex web of archival manuscripts ---hotel records, union records, and records made by the showgirls themselves ---to tell this story.

Thea Holmlund, Stockholm University

Navigating precarity and social reproduction: The approach of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) to part-time and temporary work 1993-2007

In recent decades, most European countries have experienced a significant rise in precarious forms of employment, and Sweden is no exception. Since the 1990s, Sweden has, among other things, seen an increase in various forms of temporary work and involuntary part-time employment. How have unions responded to these developments? Historically, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) has exerted considerable influence over labour market regulations and has organised unions in industries where workers are particularly affected by precarious employment. Thus, studying LO's actions in relation to the precarisation of work may provide valuable insights to the broader processes of precarisation over recent decades.

Previous research has noted that LO's union agenda has largely been shaped around the interests of white men with stable, full-time employment. Women and immigrants, who have been disproportionately affected by insecure forms of work, have often been marginalised. Therefore, there is a need to deepen our understanding of how LO's interests and strategies have been formulated in relation to the increasing precariousness of work and in relation to which groups of workers that LO has claimed to represent.

Furthermore, the rise in precarious employment blurs boundaries between work and private life, and union approaches to precarisation reveal underlying assumptions about how society is reproduced. Thus, my dissertation adopts a social reproduction approach. The source material consists of union-produced documents, analysed through text analysis.

Riikka Suominen, Tampere University

Sexual and Reproductive Health Care, Institutional Change, and Related Experiences in Finland (1910s-1950s)

This paper discusses grassroots-level experiences within the changing institutional structures of sexual and reproductive health in Finland. At the beginning of the 20th century, birth control guidance was promoted, especially in working-class women's newspapers, while population policy experts and physicians maintained a more restrictive stance on the issue well into the 20th century.

Using the concept of experience, this paper deepens the understanding of non-reproductive heterosexuality: what aspirations, hopes, and possibilities citizens had for

regulating birth before reliable contraceptive technology, how these demands materialized into the first institutions that provided contraceptive counseling, and how couples—and, in most cases, women—encountered these new services. My focus is on working-class and rural lower-class women, who often had to seek guidance from the public sector. By examining these encounters, it is possible to uncover the active, embodied reproductive choices that ‘ordinary’ women and men made in their everyday lives and to analyze how sexual and reproductive health evolved from a private issue to a matter of public healthcare in Finland.

I focus more specifically on two institutions organized by the working-class women’s movement in Helsinki: Advisory office in sexual matters (*Sukupuoliasiaan neuvontatoimisto*), which operated for a short period in the 1930s, and the Helsinki Mother and Child Home (*Helsingin Ensikoti*, est. 1942) for single women expecting a child. As source material, I utilize the digital newspaper archives of the National Library of Finland, the archival materials related to these institutions from the Labour Archives of Finland, as well as private letters, oral history testimonies, and publications by medical and population policy experts.

Session 6c (CDW): Social Regulation of the Working Class

Pirjo Markkola, Tampere University (chair)

Hanna Kuusi, University of Helsinki

Workplace Physical Exercise in Finland, 1960–1970s – Leisure, Break or Duty?

Health, stress relaxation, occupational safety or profit maximizing by physical exercise at work? In the 1960s the Finnish state authorities reacted to health ills of industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation, including alarming rates of cardiovascular diseases, with new policies of health promoting sports for masses. Three central organizations focusing on sports for health were founded within the politically divided sport scene in order to receive state support. A novel emerging sub-field was physical exercise at work sites. Competitive sport teams within trade unions and companies have indeed a long history, but the new exercise ideas were based on universality and diversity instead of skill. The aim of my paper is to explore the evolving ideas and practices of workplace physical exercise, its reasoning, promotion and implementation from the perspectives of the organisations, industries and contemporary researchers. Special focus will be given on responsibilities within labour relations and resources (individual activity/passivity, employer

responsibility/advantage, controlled leisure/breaks), on diverse work environments and on gender issues. Source material consists of archives of the organisations of sport for health in the 1960s and 1970s (*Kansanurheilun Keskusliitto* 1960-73, *Kuntourheiluliitto* 1961-, *Kuntoliikunnan Keskusliitto* 1964-73 and *Työväen Kuntoliitto* 1974-), their educational material, newspaper and expert media and contemporary research, including for example METELI project, which studied working conditions and physical activity in metal industry in the early 1970s.

Mikael Wallin, Tampere University

Deconstructing Working-Class Culture: Normative Attachments Imposed on Working Class Cultural Activities

This study examines contemporary working-class culture in Finland as both an objective cultural practice and an ideological construct using a novel machine learning technique called word embedding, a computational method useful in measuring the biased meanings implicit in a text. My main research question is what kind of class dichotomies and implicit cultural biases are associated with working class lifestyles in Finnish public discourse? I will answer this question through a mixed methods research design. In the first phase I use the Participation in Leisure Activities 2017 survey by Statistics Finland to identify objectively representative cultural items distinctly popular among working class individuals spanning media, leisure, and gastronomy. In the second phase I train word embedding models with data from various Finnish social media platforms to compare how culturally meaningful dimensions are positioned relative to the lifestyles prevalent among the working class. The study contributes to research of class by examining in a systematic way the ways in which working class culture in its objective statistical sense and subjective media representation differ from each other. The initial findings suggest that lifestyles prevalent among the working class are not perceived in the contemporary media as working class but rather affluent, middle class and masculine. This can be partially explained by the loss of class-based identity among the working class and an increased reliance on consumer identity arguably connected to increased precarity of work contracts, persisting alienating nature of work accompanied, perhaps paradoxically, by historically increased affluence in living standards.

Jakub Muchowski, Jagiellonian University in Kraków & Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Bodies and Selves of Women Workers in Mining Industry in Late XX Century. The case of Coal Preparation Plant in Walbrzych, Poland

In the presentation I describe how women workers in the coal preparation plant in Walbrzych, Poland, experienced the relationship between their working bodies, their class and gender identities, highlighting their physical and social challenges and their demand for recognition. Walbrzych is a city of about 100,000 people in southern Poland that was an important mining center until the end of the 20th century.

Women workers in the coal preparation plant were seen as doing "feminine" work that was considered less valuable than the work done by men in the mines. Despite the physically demanding and important nature of their work, the women workers felt that their work was undervalued and demeaned, as it changed their bodies in ways that violated their sense of femininity and social status. The women workers took pride in their work, emphasizing their strength, resilience, and ability to efficiently combine work and family responsibilities, but they also expressed concerns about how their work affected their identities as women and workers. Work in several ways legitimizes and supports their understanding of themselves as women and workers, and at the same time, this same work, while changing their bodies, challenges their confidence and their social position.

My findings are the result of historical and anthropological research on the relationship between body, work, and identity, with an intersectional approach that links class and gender identities. The research process involved interviews with women who worked in mines in last three decades of XX century in Poland. The discussion section summarizes how the women workers' identities were intersectional, involving both class and gender, and that their physically demanding work both legitimized and undermined these identities through its effects on their bodies.

Session 6d (LIT): Working-Class Fiction

Alpo Väkevä, Finnish Library of the Labour Movement (chair)

Jussi Lahtinen, Tampere University

Narrating the Social Class – Working-Class Literature of the Long 1970s as a Form of Social Class Discourse

The 1970s marked the last heyday of traditional working-class literature in Finland and throughout the West. During the decade, this literary trend was partly connected with the counter-culture radicalism of the 1960s, but foremost it was continuum of the long-

lasting traditions of the Finnish social realism. Typically, working-class novel of the 1970s includes strong social criticism, vulgar language, unconventional topics, and left-wing attitudes. Authors of that time can be compared to the realist and naturalist authors of the 19th century: they were broad-minded individuals, who pointed out the faults of the society from the perspective of the “weak and insecure common people”.

In my paper, I pose the question: How have working-class authors positioned the working-class individual in their novels and short stories within the context of a changing social reality? How is working-classness in its various forms narrated in fiction that was produced “within” the class? I identify a dual role for working-class literature: it is narrative art, but at the same time, the literary trend serves as a forum for social discussion. I read fiction first and foremost as a public discourse attached to social class.

Authors of that period highlight the problematic relationship between rapid modernization and the working-class. The conflict between cultural liberalism and conservatism, the expanding mental gap between the actual working-class and the elite of the labor parties, the fear of the economical internationalization, distinction between the affluent working-class and heterogeneous “underclass” and the inequality between sexes are all visible in the 1970s narratives. Indeed, authors were dissidents of the Grand Modernization, pointing out the faults of the capitalistic society and the problems inside the labor movement. These discussions were also spread and analyzed through various other media. My central claim is that in the 1970s, prevalent social narratives were expressed through the voices of the working-class. These voices became quieter as the following decades passed.

Asta Sutinen, University of Helsinki

Romantic Hopes and Expectations – Huviposti and the Promise of a Better Future in Romantic Fiction of Labour Magazines

In my presentation, I will examine how *huviposti*, a number in the events organized by civic associations, was presented in short stories, causeries and other fictional texts in the magazines and newspapers published in the early 20th century Finland. My primary sources are labour associations’ prints published between the years 1890 and 1930 and made digitally available by the Finnish National Library. *Huviposti*, which roughly translates to amusement mail, was an oral-literary cultural phenomenon that was widely adopted in labour associations’ events for fundraising purposes. In *huviposti* numbers, written letters or notes were distributed among named recipients as a part of a public performance taking place on a stage. Although the anonymity of letter writers enabled written insults and disturbance among the audience on the spot and in

newspaper discussions, in the paper I will focus on the romantic expectations and associations of *huviposti* in fictive writings.

Reading literature is affective and provokes emotions and reactions. In some short stories published in labour associations' magazines with ideological purposes *huviposti* was presented as a romantic connector that awakens tender emotions between the main characters. *Huviposti* was also presented as a tool to surpass class boundaries in a love story that was about to end in a happy marriage. In order to achieve the ideological goal, the author combined personal feeling with collective and communal targets and moral justice. The departure point for my analysis is that the authors of the short stories had a perception of the potential readers. Although I cannot read the real experiences of the readers, I will examine the textual ways of creating affectivity by the author and analyse what kind of emotional feedback the author might have expected. The paper therefore contributes to ongoing discussions on affectivity in working class oral-literary cultural phenomena.

Jordi Valentini, Independent Researcher

Collective Autobiography and Working-Class Literature in Mediaterranean Europe

The proposed paper analyzes collective autobiography as an expression of working-class literature. The first part of this essay expands on the definition of working-class literature, considering its different interpretations (2017, 2020). For this essay, the candidate will focus on literature that is mainly produced by the workers themselves. A definition of collective autobiography, and how it can be a specific “sub-genre” of working-class literature, will also be proposed. The second part of this study analyzes three different autobiographical works, from three different countries of Southern Europe: Italy (GKN, 2022), Spain (2016) and France (Rossignol, 2008). Through these texts, the analysis will consider the specificity of a “Mediterranean” working-class condition (1989). This specific perspective could bring a unique perspective around the concept of “literariness” (Nilsson, 2022), especially if compared to similar case studies in Northern Europe. The closing part will insist on the “literariness” of working-class literature. In their effort to support current political struggles, these literary texts cannot solely rely on their use (Felski, 2008). On the contrary, they must be confronted with critical depth, so as not to diminish their disruptive potential.

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Session 7a (CDW): Embodied Labour and Workplace Discipline: Corporeality and Control in 20th-Century European Industrial Settings

Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, Jagiellonian University in Kraków (commentator)

Tiina Lintunen, University of Turku (chair)

This panel explores the relationship between corporeality, labour, and discipline across various industrial settings in socialist and post-war Europe. It investigates how workers' bodies have been controlled, shaped, and resisted within specific labour environments, highlighting the broader socio-political and economic frameworks that have influenced these dynamics. All three papers are presented as part of an international collaboration within the "Homo [Lab]orans" research group, based at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

Kirsti Salmi-Niklander, University of Helsinki

Discipline and (Dis)obedience in Workplace Security: Accidents and the Scars of Work in Finnish Metal Industry

Salmi-Niklander opens the discussion by examining tensions between workplace discipline and disobedience in the Finnish metal industry. She focuses on the carelessness towards safety regulations that became part of the foundrymen's working ethos, often due to the economic penalties associated with following safety measures. Drawing on oral histories and memoirs, the paper explores the physical "scars of work" caused by accidents, as well as the mental scars stemming from traumatic experiences. Salmi-Niklander positions these scars as part of an intangible industrial heritage, reflecting deeper industrial and economic tensions.

Grace Simpson, Complutense University of Madrid & Jagiellonian University in Kraków

The Mineworker's Body as Subjected and Subjective: Symbolic Violence in the Asturian Coal Basins of Late Francoist Spain

Simpson narrows the focus further to specific instances of symbolic violence in the Asturian coal basins under Franco's regime. Using primary sources from the 1960s and 1970s, she analyses how the Francoist regime and mine managements sought to control mineworkers' bodies with occupational health and safety regulations, and through structural changes like automation and mechanisation. The paper reveals how workers resisted this control through acts of rebellion, such as lateness, absenteeism, and disregard for workplace rules, which often led to disciplinary actions. By focusing on these micro-histories of resistance, Simpson's paper contributes to broader discussions on workplace control and worker agency in late 20th-century Europe.

Marcin Stasiak, Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Invalid's Three Bodies: Corporeality, Labour and Disability in Invalids' Cooperatives in Socialist Poland

Stasiak's paper provides a conceptual and multifaceted closing to the panel by exploring the intersection of disability, labour, and corporeality in post-war Poland. Focusing on invalids' cooperatives, Stasiak argues that the body of the invalid existed in three overlapping domains: the political body (a tool for the socialist welfare state's agenda of efficiency and care), the institutional body (subject to Taylorist management principles and the 'medical-productivist complex'), and the individual body (personal bodily experiences of disability in the workplace). By investigating how disabled workers navigated the misfit between institutional expectations and their own bodily realities, Stasiak's paper ties together the panel's broader themes of bodily control, workplace discipline, and resistance.

Session 7b (CRI): Economic Crises and Labour Responses

Leena Enbom, University of Helsinki (chair)

Jarmo Peltola, University of Helsinki (commentator)

Ken Bjerregaard, Linköping University

The Private Sector Employees in the Crisis of the 1930s

When the labour market in Sweden was hit by the worldwide crisis in 1931, new phenomena arose. The widespread unemployment affected not only the workers but also the white-collar workers in the private sector. Now bank and industrial officials risked not only receiving pay cuts but also being ousted into unemployment. This new phenomenon found concrete expression in the German novel, *Kleiner Mann – was nun?* about the shunned clerk Johannes Pinneberg.

In 1931, Swedish organizations for white-collar workers in the private sector had merged into *the Central Organization of Employees*, (De Anställdas Centralorganisation, Daco). Resistance was activated during the crisis, in various areas such as unemployment, negotiations and political influence. These organizations of employees saw themselves as part of the middle class and had a different agenda and view of employers than the blue-collar workers' unions. This means that the study of the practice of the private sector white-collar workers in the crisis cannot have the same starting point as the corresponding study of the practice of the blue-collar workers. A crucial difference from the workers was that the subjective identity of the private employees was questioned during the crisis. Middle-class identity was put under severe pressure as unemployment rose and employers lowered wages. The need for a more radical policy among private white-collar workers arose, especially towards employers.

The task in the study of this part of the workforce is to develop a different method and question to capture the dynamic movement that arose. The most important concept is *identity* and how it shifted from a middle-class identity to a wage earner identity during the crisis. How this could happen so quickly in Sweden during the crisis of the 1930s is a central research question. The source material is very large as this part of the trade union movement has its own central archive.

Maika Absetz, University of Helsinki

Unemployment in the Thought and Rhetoric of the Central Trade Organisation of Finland, 1968–1986

In my PhD-project, I study the change of thought and rhetoric of the Finnish labour movement. The Central Organisation for Trade Unions in Finland (Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö, SAK) serves as a proxy for labour movement in Finland as being the largest employee organisation in Finland. The employees of the economic policy section are the focus of my study and the material they produced my main source material. I engage with the claim of universality of neoliberalisation by examining its influence in non-traditional intellectual and geographical context – the challenge of neoliberalism to Finnish labour movement.

In the conference, I will present a subsection of the Chapter 5 of my monography, the section focusing on the SAK economic experts' view on the unemployment benefits. In this paper, I will examine how these economic experts commented on unemployment security from the late 1960s until the mid-1980s, with particular emphasis on the significant 1984 unemployment benefit reform. I will engage with the neoliberal theories related to job search, natural rate of unemployment, negative income tax and workfare approach to unemployment security, analysing their presence and forms in the speeches, memos and statements of the economic experts.

With a qualitative reading of the material, I demonstrate how the SAK's economic experts exhibit a hybrid of traditional social democratic values and neoliberal economic theories. On the one hand, their commitment to expanding the coverage and level of unemployment benefits suggest a resistance to neoliberal influences. On the other hand, their acceptance of job search -theory, critique of the benefit system as impeding labour market flexibility and endorsement of work-fare style punitive demands to enhance mobility indicate a partial adoption of neoliberal economic framework. These results show that Finland was not isolated from the global neoliberalisation process.

Carlotta Maria Vaglieri, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca

Oral History of Deindustrialization in Milan

The focus of this proposal is the deindustrialization and the change of manufacturing in Milan, analyzed through the memories of those who have experienced firsthand phenomena such as layoffs, payroll subsidies and technological changes.

The aim of this proposal is to show how deindustrialization was experienced by workers in different ways in relation to the events they went through: as a personal attack; as human labor replaced by technology and machines; as a transformation of the landscape, occupied, before, by a huge number of factories lived every day by workers, then, by skeletons of abandoned factories. The second aim is to examine the subjective responses to deindustrialization in terms of strikes or shifts to other sectors. Furthermore, the third aim is to analyze the perceptions workers have about the transformations of working-class political participation, especially their impressions of contemporary workers' struggles.

The research field is Milan and its hinterland, chosen since, at the Italian level, they have been an area that has gone through deep work changes, evolving from the first industrial development in the late 19th century; then, the spread of the industrial and Fordist organization of work during the Economic Boom; up to the crisis of the secondary sector and the shift to service sector starting from the Seventies. This

process, in Milan such as in the other industrial cities (Turin and Genoa), has involved a sort of invisibility of the working class, from both economic and social points of view.

Regarding the source, a corpus of oral histories, that I previously collected for my master thesis, will be presented and analyzed. This includes in-depth interviews recorded with workers, occupied in some factories located in the eastern part of Milan and its hinterland.

Session 7c (LIT): Newspapers and the Working-Class Culture

Jussi Lahtinen, Tampere University (chair)

Konsta Kajander, University of Jyväskylä

Rethinking Working-Class. Cognitive-Cultural Aspects of the Finnish Working-Class Press 1885-1910

In my presentation, I will demonstrate how cognitive theory of culture can provide vital perspectives for the analysis of the working-class press. I argue that narrative cultural products, such as editorials, articles and correspondent letters, are based on cognitive structures of the human mind. Since the texts of the past are products of the 'dead minds', the cognitive processes of the individuals cannot be observed directly. However, researchers of the working class can track thoughts and emotions, experiences, hopes and fears of the individuals as well as cultural values and norms of the society via mental and cultural representations, 'memory traces', preserved in the source materials from the past.

Using cognitive-cultural toolkit as a methodological framework, I define working-class as a social category, which is produced in the interplay of cognitive reasoning and discourses. Categorizations such as prototypes, stereotypes and ideals of the working class are based on cultural models, cognitive schemas, which are intersubjectively shared as members of a community. However, features of the working-class category are not fixed. They can be negotiated, disputed and transformed based on observations and experiences of the individuals in different historical environments. Thus, analysis of the press from cognitive-cultural framework can bring interesting insights on the birth and the making of the Finnish working-class.

Using examples from my ongoing post-doctoral research, I will demonstrate how the features attached to the category of working class included attributes, values and norms from agrarian cultural models of Finnish peasantry inherited from the estate

society, which were reshaped to match the ideals of the socialist working-class movement. The letters from the correspondents show that the people identified with the working class were not merely passive receivers of ideals from above, but actively reshaped the cultural models of the Finnish working class for its future to come.

Heikki Kokko, Tampere University

Nationwide Circulation of Knowledge: Emergence of Civil Society Revisited in Finland

This paper explores the pivotal role of readers' letters published in the nationwide press in mid-1800s Finland in fostering a culture of knowledge circulation, which significantly contributed to the emergence of civil society. During this period, Finland experienced a remarkable transformation as local communities began to engage in extensive correspondence, with their letters being published in newspapers across the nation. This burgeoning epistolary culture not only facilitated the dissemination of knowledge but also played a crucial role in shaping public opinion, fostering social citizenship, and strengthening a sense of national identity.

The study delves into the content and themes of these readers' letters, examining how they addressed issues of social, economic, and political importance. By analyzing a diverse range of correspondences published in the press, the paper highlights the ways in which these letters served as a medium for ordinary citizens to participate in public discourse, thereby democratizing knowledge and empowering individuals to contribute to societal development.

Furthermore, the paper investigates the networks of communication that emerged through these published letters, revealing how they connected disparate regions and communities, creating a cohesive national dialogue. This network of correspondence is argued to be a foundational element in the development of a Finnish civil society, as it enabled the exchange of ideas and fostered a collective consciousness among the populace.

This paper revisits the emergence of civil society in Finland, emphasizing the significance of readers' letters in the nationwide press as a vehicle for knowledge circulation and social cohesion. The findings underscore the importance of grassroots communication in the historical development of civil societies and offer new insights into the role of translocal epistolary practices in shaping new identities—such as the working class—that emerged during the modernization process.

“Art for the working class!” – Discourse and Ideology in Finnish Language Worker’s Party Newspapers’ Art Related Articles 1905–1918

This paper focuses on art related writing in Finnish language worker’s party newspapers from 1905–1918. The paper explores the discursive regularities governing the discussion on visual arts to understand the function(s) of writing about art in the party affiliated newspapers. The main research question is “Were the articles on art ideologically motivated or strictly concerned with art for art’s sake?”

The paper is based on the author’s MA thesis in art history (Vuori 2024), which analyzed 17 Finnish-speaking worker’s party newspapers. A total of 273 articles (187 related to specifically art exhibitions) were found and analyzed using discourse analytical methodology. The theoretical framework mobilized relies on Michel Foucault’s definition of discourse as a set of conceptual regularities that materialize in language and produce subjectivities (*Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1969). The Foucauldian framework is combined with Marxist theories of ideology to expose when and where the discourse showed signs of an ideological component.

The main result suggests that, although publishing articles on art was not primarily ideologically motivated and embodied a genuine interest in art as art, such texts still had potential to be ideologically moving. This happened mainly through the discursive creation of an ideological working-class subject longing for art. The paper shows that Finnish worker’s party newspapers of the early 20th century contain significant discussions on visual arts and should be acknowledged in studies pertaining to art criticism and the Finnish art world of this period.

In this paper, the above-mentioned research material is summarized, and the most prominent examples are discussed in the light of the theoretical discourse-ideology framework to give a nuanced image of visual arts related writing in early 20th century working-class press in Finland.

Session 8a: Film screening: The Sad Truth

- Film (75 min) + discussion with the director Helle Stenum

The Sad Truth is a film about young Syrian women in Danish deportation camps who are faced with two choices: return to their country of origin or spend an indefinite time in the camp. Their stories echo stories of the Danish deportation of Jews in the 1930s and of German war refugees in 1945-1947.

We meet Syrian women Sahar, Nadia, Enas and Mariam, who have lost their asylum claim, as well as activists: retired teacher Gerda, law student Rahima, writer Anne Lise and priest Per. We also listen to politicians who defend the deportation law.

The film invites us to reflect on similarities and differences in the situation of refugees and in political rhetoric over time, and also on narrative: who tells these stories and how? How is the Danish deportation policy of the past remembered and told? Who are remembered and who are forgotten?

Session 8b (CRI): Navigating Crises and Strikes: Historical Perspectives on Working-Class Resilience and Leadership

Pauli Kettunen, University of Helsinki (chair & commentator)

Jarmo Peltola & Leena Enbom, University of Helsinki

Resilience and Vulnerability: Exploring Working-Class Mobility During and After the 1930s Crisis

The crisis of the 1930s impacted different population groups in varying ways: for some, it led to an increase in purchasing power, while for others, it resulted in income loss, a decline in social status, and weakened health.

This paper explores why different population groups experienced the crisis in varied ways. While many previous studies have emphasized individual survival through qualitative life course analysis, this study examines the entire urban population to identify factors that fostered resilience and those that increased the likelihood of being pushed to the margins. We are particularly interested in the impact of Civil War background and other divisive features within the working class of our study area. What were the typical life course patterns in the post-crisis years? Among the working-class population, who emerged as survivors, high achievers, or those who dropped out?

Our data consists of a comprehensive database of the entire adult population of Tampere, an industrial inland town in Finland. This dataset enables us to track individuals across multiple observation points, providing new, individual-level insights into the factors driving upward or downward social mobility.

Activist Leadership and the Danish Brewery Strike 1985

Labour history has a long tradition of writing about and portraying its leaders. It has provided us with valuable information about the development of the labour movement; however, a substantial part of this literature is from a methodological point of view very traditional. Therefore, under the headline of *Activist Leadership*, the paper shed new light on a long-established genre by introducing new concepts and theoretical perspectives to the field.

The paper draws especially on a social movement approach to the study of political leadership that focuses on individuals' embedding in social relations and utilization of changes in the political, social, cultural and economic environments, which are constantly changing. At the same time influential activists must be able to move other people to action, to mobilize them or to coerce them, to lead them by example, to convince them by ideas, to arouse them by emotions. The political leader, or political entrepreneur as it is also called, must be able to coordinate activities and construct a dedicated community that follows a common goal.

To highlight the approach, the Copenhagen brewery workers' 8-week strike in 1985 is chosen as a historical case. Based on interviews as well as written sources, the case study takes a closer look at the life histories of two of the most leading figures of the strike, Barbara Kryger and Finn Sørensen. Their careers provide important insights into the different types of resources that activist leaders contributed to the conflict and into both formal and informal activist leadership including questions of organization, leadership nomination and 'bridge leading'.

Thanasis Betas, General State Archives, Magnesia Prefecture – Greece

Marital Status, Living Conditions and Survival Strategies of Male and Female Workers in the Greek Tobacco Industry, 1950–1970

In this paper I follow the workers in the Greek tobacco industry beyond the factory. I seek to outline their marital status, living conditions and survival strategies during the post-war period. Where did these people live? What neighborhoods and what houses? What were their living conditions at home and in the neighborhood and what were the survival strategies of their families? To examine these issues, I have selected directly relevant material from cigarette factory archives: staff records, personnel register cards, payrolls, labour union records, as well as photographs, oral testimonies and newspapers.

The low wage of labour in post-war Greece combined with the absence of housing policy seems to have often forced members of working families to share the same housing in order to survive. These informal "survival strategies" were also adopted because of the financial difficulties faced by older family members. The low pensions of elderly parents or grandparents, those who took them, combined with the health problems they may have faced and the general absence of social policy for old age "forced" cohabitation in many cases. Income flowing into the common home, i.e. the household, from various sources, could ensure its survival. This coexistence, however, was not caused solely by economic causes.

On the contrary, other factors registered in the field of cultural values and standards were involved. Such could be considered the obligation of male family members to financially support elderly parents and women to look after them in their daily lives, which concerned nutrition, cleanliness, etc. The young men also had another moral debt: the financial support of the single sister, but also of the underage brothers, if the father of the family had died or was unable to work. In this way, it could be said, that the adverse situations caused by the absence of social policy and the welfare state in the working classes in general might have been "compensated" to some extent by the family ties and values that dominated Greek society at the time.

Session 8c (FEM): The Private and the Public

Hannah Yoken, University of Jyväskylä (commentator)

Valgerður Pálmadóttir, University of Iceland (chair)

Silja Pitkänen, University of Jyväskylä

An Ideal Woman of the Early Soviet Union

The paper analyses how women were depicted and represented in educational posters of the early Soviet Union in 1920s and 1930s. In contrast to the customary western representations of the "new" and "modern" women of the early 20th century, women portrayed in the early Soviet educational posters were often represented as mothers. Thus, also depictions of ideal families of the early Soviet Union will be analysed as part of the presentation. Families in the posters often included also grandparents. As symbols of the old regime grandparents were usually represented having unwelcome manners, for example pre-chewing the food for small children and exposing them to danger of e.g. various infections. In the young Soviet Union, everything was to be clean

and fresh, and, in the educational posters, mothers were responsible of their families learning the ideals of the new era. How were women depicted in the context of early state socialism? Were they working or taking care of their families, or both? How should the children, the literal new people, be raised? By considering these questions the paper examines how the new Soviet state propagated itself as a vanguard of full employment, gender equality and, in the end, new Soviet woman.

The source material of the presentation consists of approximately 400 posters of the early Soviet Union from the collections of the Stanford University's Hoover Institute. The presentation is part of the project Educational Posters and Ideal Citizenship, 2022–2026, funded by the Kone Foundation. In the research, the various methods of the research school 'visual history' will be applied and developed.

Arja Turunen, University of Jyväskylä & Anna Niiranen, University of Jyväskylä

A Space for A New Woman: Labour Feminism in the Finnish Women's Magazine Uusi Nainen in the 1960s and 1970s

Women's magazines have long been an institution within capitalist consumer society, often characterized by lavish fashion pages and beauty tips. However, this genre represents only one type of women's magazines. Bulletins and organs of various women's associations also serve as women's magazines: they are aimed at women, edited mostly by women, and discuss topics concerning women. In our presentation, we analyse how the Finnish women's magazine Uusi Nainen (transl. 'A New Woman', 1945–2008), published by the Finnish Women's Democratic League representing the radical left, defined its role in the 1960s and 1970s, and participated in the public debate on women's societal position.

In the 1960s and 1970s, women's lives changed as Finland transformed from an agrarian and industrial society to a modern, urban, and post-industrial one. During this period, women's participation in paid work became the norm. These decades also witnessed the emergence of the Nordic sex role debate in the 1960s and the feminist movement in the 1970s, both of which criticized contemporary gender roles and hierarchies, politicizing questions of private life. Feminists and sex role activists demanded equal rights for women and better opportunities in the working life, the liberalization of abortion laws, and the establishment of affordable daycare for small children. While these were new initiatives within politically unaligned (bourgeois) feminist activism, they had been part of the labour feminist agenda since the early 20th century.

Based on our analysis of the content of the magazine and archival sources, we explore how Uusi Nainen addressed its readers, represented and discussed women's issues and social position, and viewed the aims and activism of sex role and feminist movements. Our paper is a part of the research project A Space for Women? that studies how Finnish women's magazines discussed feminism and women's role in the 1960s and 1970s.

Pete Pesonen, Finnish Labour Archives

Oral history of Finnish factory “homers” from a gender perspective

This paper examines the workplace practices of Finnish industrial workers by focusing on the history of factory "homers" from a gender perspective. A "homer" is an object made by a worker for his or her own use, using the equipment and materials of the employer's factory. Historically, homers have embodied workers' professionalism and the need to control the use of time and space, which is governed by industrial discipline. Homers reflect the collective moral code of the factory culture, where workers' independence and sense of community were intertwined.

This paper complements my dissertation research on Finnish industrial homers. The primary source for this study is a collection of oral history interviews and self-written memoirs that I conducted for my dissertation. This collection includes interviews with 99 individuals, only six of whom are female. Based on the oral histories, homer practices were predominantly male. Surprisingly, with a few exceptions, even the female 'skilled workers' were unfamiliar with the homer phenomenon or reacted in unusual ways. What might have caused the gender bias in the oral histories of the homer-phenomenon? Is this phenomenon gendered, and if so, what are the underlying reasons?