



## **55<sup>th</sup> ITH Conference**

### **Working on the Land: Actors, Societies and Environments**

**Linz/Upper Austria, 5-7 September 2019**

Conference languages: German / English

#### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

The ITH Conference 2019 aims at strengthening the links between labour history and rural history. It intends to address the topic "working on the land" from two different angles: firstly, agricultural work as co-production of society and nature and, secondly, rural labour relations as elements of larger political and economic systems. Contributions to this conference will explore how these two perspectives complement each other, identify research desiderata and blind spots in the respective other, creatively develop bridges and contribute to the theoretical, methodological and empirical enrichment of the history of agrarian work and labour.

The first angle highlights how agricultural work – growing cereals, tree- or garden-crops, raising cattle, working in woods and forestry or processing raw materials produced on the land – differs from other forms of work. It draws our attention to the differences of agriculture from other branches of the economy due to its natural embedment: the natural constraints on the choice of crops in specific regions, the biological growth processes of plants and animals, the seasonality of the labour process, the uncertainties of weather and the resulting output-related risks and the effects these features may have (had) on the material and immaterial traits of culture, such as settlement patterns, household composition, techniques and technology, perceptions of the environment, the possibilities to intensify the production process, the choice of contracts, social stratification and property rights. In order to grasp the co-production of society and nature, researchers might undertake in-depth case studies with a regional or local focus.

The second angle from which the topic is being addressed emphasizes the variety of rural labour relations, looking rather at commonalities with other forms of labour relations, and, last but not least, at the wide range of combinations – by individuals and households – between agricultural and non-agricultural work. This includes family farming, service in husbandry, the various forms of free and unfree labour, forced labour and wage labour (e.g. permanent, seasonal, migratory), but also agricultural activities of rural artisans and industrial workers, the gendered and age/life course-related division of labour and many other topics. The connections of these various labour relations with overarching (socio-)political and (socio-)economic formations (for instance, such as territorial states and global capitalism(s) since the sixteenth century) are of particular interest. The respective focus is on more general aspects such as class and power relations, social movements and (non-)organizations of rural workers, mobility and migration, commodity chains, governance structures, the access to landed property and other key resources and market

developments as explanations for the social constitution of rural societies. This perspective calls for the broadening of research to multiple scales, ranging from local to global.

The conference aims at bringing together contributions from different disciplines (e.g. history, geography, sociology, economics, anthropology) and multiple temporal and spatial contexts, which address the complexity of rural labour relations and the agency of rural workers from the angles outlined above. Interest in long- and short-term historical processes and in social change should form the common ground for interdisciplinary discussion. Besides detailed case studies, contributions focused on international comparisons and/or transnational connections are particularly welcome. Papers might highlight the practical rooms of manoeuvre of rural actors, varying between adaptation and resistance, or explore how the history of agrarian labour and work in a given space was influenced by natural opportunities and constraints, technological developments and globalizing market forces. These are but two examples for how contributions to this conference might productively build and expand on the interconnection of rural history and labour history through a focus on the study of work.

## **SUBMISSION**

Proposed papers should include:

- abstract (max. 300 words)
- biographical note (continuous text, max. 200 words)
- full address und e-mail address

The abstract of the suggested paper should contain a separate paragraph explaining how and (if applicable) to which element(s) or question(s) of the Call for Papers the submitted paper refers.

The short CV should give information on the applicant's contributions to the field of labour history, broadly defined, and specify (if applicable) relevant publications. For the purpose of information, applicants are invited to attach a copy of one of these publications to their application.

Proposals to be sent to **Lukas Neissl**: [lukas.neissl@ith.or.at](mailto:lukas.neissl@ith.or.at)

## **TIME SCHEDULE**

Submission of proposals: by **6 January 2019**

Notification of acceptance: **17 February 2019**

Full papers or presentation versions: by **4 August 2019**

## **PREPARATORY GROUP**

**Lisa Bolyos**, Vienna

**Josef Ehmer**, University of Vienna

**Winfried R. Garscha**, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW)

**Dirk Hoerder**, Vienna

**Erich Landsteiner**, University of Vienna

**Ernst Langthaler**, Johannes Kepler University Linz

**Lukas Neissl**, ITH, Vienna

**Silke Neunsinger**, Labour Movement Archives and Library, Stockholm

**Brigitte Pellar**, Vienna

**Susan Zimmermann**, ITH, Vienna

*The ITH Conference 2019 is organised in cooperation with the Institute of Rural History, St. Pölten.*

## **THE ITH AND ITS MEMBERS**

The ITH is one of the worldwide most important forums of the history of labour and social movements. The ITH favours research pursuing inclusive and global perspectives and open-ended comparative thinking. Following its tradition of cooperating with organisations of the labour movement, the ITH likewise puts emphasis on the conveyance of research outside the academic research community itself. Currently ca. 100 member institutions and a growing number of individual members from five continents are associated with the ITH.

Information on ITH publications in the past 50 years:

[http://www.ith.or.at/publ\\_e/publ\\_online\\_e.htm](http://www.ith.or.at/publ_e/publ_online_e.htm)

Subscription to the ITH e-newsletter published twice a year:

[http://www.ith.or.at/rundb\\_e/r\\_index\\_e.htm](http://www.ith.or.at/rundb_e/r_index_e.htm)

Online ITH membership application form:

<http://www.ith.or.at/joinith/index.html>