

Working-Class Politics in 20th century Europe

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Since the birth of Labour history, Working-Class Politics and workers' political commitment have been a classical subject, especially within the Labour movement. But we need to re-assess and re-develop this issue. We ought to take into account new topics and fields of research, such as the gender studies, the social movement studies, the protest studies, etc., and to entangle them with working-class politics. We also need to change the starting point: instead of focusing on organizations (trade unions, political parties, etc.), the role of their leaders, their strategies or their internal debates, we suggest turning attention toward] workers themselves.

More precisely, the WG intends to analyse:

- workers practices and workers mobilizations: strikes, food riots, plants' occupations, etc. and their pattern, the contentious repertoire and its transformations. Moreover these struggles have to be linked with the labour process and the working practices or, conversely, with the unemployment and leisure.
- the salient goals of these movements (wage increases, prices of the food, hours etc.), and their political dimensions: the quest of equality, workers' power or workers' control for example. Therein the "moral economy of the crowd" (E.P. Thompson) is probably a key category for analysis.
- the processes of politicisation and radicalisation: for example, the transformation by which ordinary places and spaces or workers' places were becoming political, and sometimes radical, spaces such as Camere del lavoro, maisons du people, or the factories themselves. On the other side, moderate workers seek to privilege bargaining or to cooperate with management. These processes of appeasement, or the vigorous denials of any political involvement by some workers have to be seriously studied. In particular the motivations and attitudes of moderate workers, who are very often the majority, are still unknown.
- the important role of some categories of workers: as Eric Hobsbawm and Joan Scott underlined "the political shoemakers", some craft traditions or specific workers played a significant role in various workers' episodes: the "radical miner" (Dick Geary), the skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled workers, young workers, immigrant workers, etc. Equally, the role of the so-called working-class strongholds, from Torino to Glasgow, has to be scrutinized in each period and movement. Consequently, the inner tensions and oppositions within the working-class, are also a salient issue.
- The specific role of ideological or religious traditions (socialist, communist, syndicalist, fascist, protestant, catholic, etc.) amongst some working-class communities, and/or their circulations is worthwhile when connected with workers' practices. But it can be interesting to underline their transformations, adjustments or declines. And how can we draw a social portrait of the conservative workers?

For the following ELHN Conference in Amsterdam, we intend to organize three sessions dedicated to three main periods or problem:

- Working-Class contentious politics during and at the end of World War 1: strikes and plant occupations, food riots, workers' councils, etc.
- Workers' Consent to Extreme-right Regimes and Movements: an old and a new problem.
- 1968 and workers' struggles: mobilizations, successes and failures.

The deadline is September 24th and abstracts (200-400 words) in English or in French must be sent to stefano.musso@unito.it ; matt.perry@newcastle.ac.uk ; xavier.vigna@gmail.com
The acceptance will be communicated by March 2019.