**European Labour History Network – ELHN**

**Working Group on “Wage Labour. Terms of remuneration”**

The founding meeting of the ELHN took place at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) on 12 October 2013. The forty scholars who gathered in Amsterdam, belonging to research institutions, archives and journals based in various European countries, felt the need to increase the cooperation among labour history scholars, share knowledge and (digital) material, create a platform for future collective research, and organize conferences and seminars. The Network will primarily include Europe-based scholars (professors, post-doc and PhD researchers, post-graduate students) but will also seek to connect with scholars based outside Europe.

It was agreed to circulate information through Labnet (<http://www.iisg.nl/labnet/>), the Social History Portal (<http://www.socialhistoryportal.org/>) and a virtual environment electronic discussion platform (forthcoming); a meeting of the journals group in Vienna will be held during the ESSHC; a first broad conference will be organized, probably in 2015, in conjunction with another event in the field.

A provisional coordination committee was appointed, whose members are: Marcel van der Linden, Stefano Musso, Silke Neunsinger, Leda Papastefanaki, Tibor Valuch, Xavier Vigna, Donald Weber and Susan Zimmermann.

In order to structure the network and overcome fragmentation, the key-role of working groups was underlined. Some working groups were proposed and are now taking shape. Among others: Long term perspectives on remuneration; Pre-industrial labour; Feminist Labour History; Factory/worksite history; Industrial heritage and structural change; workers politics and social movements; Imperial labour history.

**The ELHN Working Group on**

**“Wage Labour. Terms of remuneration”**

As globalization accelerates, the ongoing issue of competitiveness has sparked off new debate over the "cost" of labour and the levels and criteria underlying its remuneration. This age-old question has given rise to a wealth of literature using a quantitative approach, often coupled with a price-oriented one, and focused on trends in living standards. The question of terms of remuneration has only been noted lately by historians, despite occasional references and a rudimentary typology opposing direct remuneration, in the form of time or incentive wages, to socialized non-wage labour costs, cash payments to payments in kind, and the like. This was initially addressed in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, and established itself as a major issue in the following decades. (H. Phelps Brown and S. Hopkins, 1981 ; P. Scholliers and V. Zamagni, 1995 ; P. Scholliers and L. Schwarz, 2003). However, research focused more on Central and North-Western Europe, and the modern era, than on Southern and Eastern Europe, and the contemporary one. In addition to the huge gaps that have emerged, the findings of this research open the way for developing knowledge and exchange on the basis of a cross-historical approach.

The history of labor remuneration systems embraces approaches situated at the crossroads of economics, law, politics, anthropology, society and culture at large. It further encompasses different concrete combinations of these systems, as well as more general ones, relating to wage-earner status and labour conditions. Any study of the development of payment methods involves defining them as well as investigating the role of agents. Additionally, it means researching their individual or collective patterns and frameworks, whether direct or indirect, or, more generally, what is actually being paid, to the extent that work implies remuneration. Yet this is belied by the persistence of mass, forced labour and of unpaid domestic activities. Notwithstanding the theoretical controversies and others concerning the worth of work, work value and labor power, these questions raise a number of important social issues posed by the hierarchical division of labour and the traditional justifications for it, unevenly emancipated from the extra-professional factors of domination (such as age, gender, ethnic origin, social background).

Although this subject lends itself to cross-period research, it would seem preferable to focus initially on the long-term process of industrialization traditionally associated with the emergence of a “salary society”. This by no means excludes making a foray into earlier periods. It would also be appropriate to extend our research to colonized territories, which are characterized by a variety of extremely contrasting and ambivalent statuses. Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, a number of European societies were lastingly marked in this regard, whether in rural areas or in certain large industrial firms.

The European group devoted to the “history of wage labour" intends to promote research in this area. We aim to better inform the research community about our research teams, our work in progress, our journals and the national programs we are participating in. Above all, we wish to organize direct exchanges and joint projects. Thus, in the initial stages, we would envisage organizing seminars addressing the issues of historiography, sources, the terminology relating to wage labour across cultures, and like issues.

We would be extremely grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire to assist us in the setting-up of an initial database.

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Michel Pigenet (michel.pigenet@univ-paris1.fr)

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**Questionnaire**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name and Surname |  |
| Affiliation |  |
| Academic position (if any) |  |
| Personal webpage |  |

Research interests (in general)

Research interests related to the topic

How would you like to be involved in the Working Group on **Wage labour. Terms of remuneration**? Please, tick all relevant responses:

* Receive information
* Take part in seminars, conferences, and other events.
* Organize seminars, conferences, and other events.
* Organize and design collective projects
* Other:

Would you like to suggest any topic for future workshop or conferences?

Please, add any further comments and suggestions here.

*Do you consent the circulation of these information within the working group members?*

*Do you consent the publication of these information, e.g. on the future website of the ELHN?*

**Please, return this questionnaire to:**

Leda Papastefanaki (papastefanaki@ath.forthnet.gr)

Michel Pigenet (Michel.Pigenet@univ-paris1.fr)

 **Le prix du travail. Les modes de rémunération.**

A la faveur de la mondialisation accélérée en cours, la question récurrente de la compétitivité a relancé les débats sur le « coût » du travail, les niveaux et les normes de sa rémunération. Ancienne, la question a suscité une abondante littérature privilégiant une approche quantitative, souvent couplée à celle des prix dans une perspective centrée sur l’évolution des niveaux de vie. La question des modalités a plus tardivement retenu l’attention des historiens en dépit d’évocations dispersées et d’une typologie rudimentaire opposant rémunérations directes, au temps ou.au résultat, et « salaires indirects » socialisés, versements monétaires et rétributions en nature, etc. Abordée au tournant des années 1960-1970, elle s’affirme au cours des décennies suivantes (H. Phelps Brown et S. Hopkins, 1981 ; P. Scholliers et V. Zamagni, 1995 ; P. Scholliers et L. Schwarz, 2003). Les investigations menées ont davantage concerné, cependant, l’Europe centrale ou du Nord-Ouest et l’époque moderne, que la période contemporaine et le Sud ou l’Est du continent. Les avancées réalisées tout autant que les lacunes béantes constatées invitent à l’élargissement des connaissances et aux échange dans une démarche d’histoire croisée.

Au carrefour de l’économique, du social et du droit, du politique, du culturel et de l’anthropologique, l’histoire des systèmes de rémunérations du travail recouvre à la fois celle de la multitude de leurs combinaisons concrètes et celles, plus générales, de la condition salariale et du travail. Etudier l’évolution des modes de rémunération revient aussi à s’interroger sur les acteurs et procédures de leur définition, leurs formes et cadres individuels ou collectifs, directs ou indirects, et, plus largement sur ce que l’on rémunère exactement, pour autant que tout travail suppose une rémunération. Ce qu’infirme la persistance du travail contraint de masse et de la gratuité des activités domestiques. Par-delà les controverses théoriques et classiques sur la valeur du travail, la valeur-travail et la force de travail, le questionnement renvoie à celles, lourdes d’enjeux sociaux, soulevées par la division hiérarchisée du travail et ses justifications inégalement émancipées des facteurs extraprofessionnels de domination (âge, genre, origine…).

Si la thématique se prête aux recherches transpériodes, il paraît préférable de privilégier, au moins dans un premier temps et sans exclure des incursions vers des périodes antérieures, le temps long du processus d’industrialisation précisément associé à l’émergence d’une société « salariale ». Il semble également pertinent d’étendre les investigations aux territoires colonisés, espaces propices aux statuts les plus contrastés ou ambivalents dont nombre de sociétés européennes gardent elles-mêmes des formes durables en plein cœur du XXe siècle, tant en milieu rural que dans certaines grandes entreprises industrielles.

Le groupe européen « histoire des rémunérations du travail » se propose de promouvoir les recherches en la matière. D’abord par la circulation d’informations sur les collègues, enquêtes, publications et programmes nationaux qui en traitent. Ensuite et surtout par l’organisation d’échanges directs et de projets communs. Ainsi pourrait-on envisager des journées d’études consacrées, en préalable, à l’historiographie et aux sources de la question ou aux vocabulaires comparés des rémunérations du travail, etc. Dans l’immédiat, les réponses au questionnaire joint et vos commentaires et suggestions constitueront une base élémentaire de données.