Conference Program

Title: Workers and the “Golden Age of Social Democracy”, 1945-1975

Venue: Institut für soziale Bewegungen, Clemensstr. 17-19, 44789, Bochum

Language: English

Wednesday, 26 April 2023

10:30 am Welcome & Introduction
11:00 – 1:00 Panel 1: The Aftermath of the Second World War (Commentator: Eileen Boris)
11:00 – 11:15 Jan de Graaf (Ruhr-Universität Bochum): “Opportunities for Workers in Postwar Eastern and Western Europe: Participation versus Mobility”
11:15 – 11:30 Alexandre Fortes (Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro): “Brazilian Workers in the Postwar Era: Continuity and Change in the Struggle for Democracy and Social Rights”
11:30 – 11:45 Howard Brick (University of Michigan): “Has Capitalism Changed?”
11:45 – 12:00 commentator’s remarks
12:00 – 1:00 discussion
1 pm – 2 pm lunch break

2 pm – 4 pm Panel 2: The Rebuilding of Democracy after 1945 (Commentator: Paulo Fontes)
2:00 – 2:15 Felix Spremberg (Universität Tübingen): "Democratization in Postwar Japan and the Rise and Fall of Social Democracy”
2:15 – 2:30 Martin Conway (University of Oxford): “Workers and the Reconstruction of Democracy in Western Europe”
2:30 – 2:45 commentator’s remarks
2:45 – 4:00 discussion
4:00 – 4:30 coffee break

4:30 – 6:30 Panel 3: Democracy at the Workplace (Commentator: Leon Fink)
4:30 – 4:45 Nelson Lichtenstein (University of California, Santa Barbara): “Why No Corporatism in the United States? American versus German Models of Industrial Relations in the Early Postwar Era”
4:45 – 5:00 Hannah Forsyth (Australian Catholic University): “Shop Floor Democracy and the Australian Arbitration System”
5:00 – 5:15 Stefan Müller (Universität Duisburg-Essen): “The Humanisation of Labor and Safety at Work in Post-War West Germany”
5:15 – 5:30 commentator’s remarks
5:30 – 6:30 discussion
Thursday, 27 April 2023

9 – 11 am  Panel 4: Social Democratic State Formations (Commentator: Larissa Correa)
9:00 – 9:15  Kjell Östberg (Södertörn University): “Swedish Social Democracy, The Nordic Model and State Formation”
9:15 – 9:30  William A. Booth (University College London): “Workers, the State, and Left-Wing Movements in Mid-Century Latin America”
9:30 – 9:45  Mathieu Fulla (SciencesPo Paris): “Extending State Prerogatives while Being Reluctant to Transform its Machinery: Social Democratic Parties and State Formation in Post-war Western Europe”
9:45 – 10:00  commentator’s remarks
10:00 – 11:00  discussion

11 – 11:30  break

11:30 – 1:30  Panel 5: The Feminization of the Working Class? (Commentator: Gabriel Winant)
11:30 – 11:45  Eloisa Betti (Università degli Studi di Padua): “Deconstructing Fordism from the Perspective of Women’s Work in Postwar Italy”
11:45 – 12:00  Dorothy Sue Cobble (Rutgers University): “Reimagining the Labor Movement: The Midcentury Origins of a New Social Democracy”
12:30 – 12:45  commentator’s remarks
12:45 – 1:30  discussion

1:30 – 2:30  lunch break

2:30 – 4:30  Panel 6: Workers and Decolonization (Commentator: Silke Neunsinger)
2:30 – 2:45  Babacar Fall (Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar): “Labor Relations in Pre-and Post-Independence in French-speaking West Africa”
2:45 – 3:00  Ravi Ahuja (Universität Göttingen): “Labour as a Political Category: Twentieth-Century Trajectories”
3:00 – 3:15  Alex Lichtenstein (Indiana University): “Industrial Relations and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Postwar South Africa”
3:15 – 3:30  commentator’s remarks
3:30 – 4:30  discussion

4:30 – 5 pm  break

5:00 – 6:30  Panel 7: Worker Education and the Cultural Milieu (Commentator: Vanessa May)
5:00 – 5:15  Marsha Siefert (Central European University): “Workers of the World Unite - On Screen: The World Federation of Trade Unions, Das Lied der Ströme (1954), and the International Left”
5:30 – 5:45  commentator’s remarks
5:45 – 6:30  discussion
8 pm Conference Dinner

after dinner speaker: Leon Fink (editor of LABOR: Studies in Working-Class History), “Postwar Social Democracy: Cradle of Neoliberalism?”

**Friday, 28 April 2023**

9 – 11:30 am Panel 8: Corporatism and the Interventionist State (Commentator: Stefan Berger)

9:00 – 9:15 Andrew Elrod (Research Department, United Teachers Los Angeles): “The Idea of a US National Wage Policy from the Truman to the Carter Administrations”


9:30 – 9:45 Mike Beggs (University of Sydney): “Labour in the Technocratic Frame: Macroeconomic Policy and Wages in 1950s Australia”

9:45 - 10:00 commentator’s remarks

10:00 – 11:00 discussion

11:00 – 11:30 coffee break

11:30 – 13:30 Panel 9: Divisions within the Postwar Labor Movement (Commentator: Will Jones)

11:30 – 11:45 Gerd-Rainer Horn (SciencesPo, Paris): “Workers and Catholicism in Postwar Western Europe and Latin America”

11:45 – 12:00 Susan Zimmermann (Central European University): “Spurring Women to Action? Communist-led Women’s Trade Unionism Between the Hungarian Shopfloor and Top-level Internationalism, 1947 to 1959”


12:15 – 12:30 commentator’s remarks

12:30 – 01:30 discussion

2:00 – 3:30 lunch & closing discussion