



WORCK Newsletter N° 3

Aalborg/Vienna, 16 April 2020

Dear members of the COST Action WORCK,
dear colleagues interested in the study of labour and coercion,

as the political events come thick and fast these days, we have decided to set up a **WORCK Blog on “Covid-19 and the Workers of the World”**:

<https://www.worck.eu/blog/>

Taking up Marcel van der Linden’s concept of the “workers of the world”, we would like to invite you to engage in a political debate with us on the consequences of covid-19 for the world of work. While academic analyses of labour historians and political initiatives of NGOs, trade unions and social movements rarely meet, we see the global crisis as an important opportunity to bring these two ends together and to think of joint reflections and actions on the ongoing situation.

The **blog’s editorial** (*see attachment*) is an invitation to share this idea with relevant contacts of your networks in- and outside academia and to contribute to the debate by sending blog posts to worck@worck.eu.

As you can see, the discussion has already begun. You may find **reviews** of relevant press articles, **first-hand reports** about experiences of coercion made by workers since the beginning of the corona crisis, **academic essays** as well as **political initiatives** (*see attachment*).

Furthermore, we are happy to inform you that the programme (*see attachment*) for our **first WORCK Conference in Budapest** is now online:

<https://www.worck.eu/conference-1-2020-budapest/>. In nine sessions, 37 conference speakers from all parts of the world address the conference topic **“Reconceptualising Wage Labour”** from different perspectives. Two public outreach events will complement the programme.

Please note, however, that **we are not able to say by now if the conference can actually take place**, as we need to wait and see how the global pandemic evolves over the next weeks. Depending on the emergency measures and travel regulations issued by the national governments, we will confirm (or revoke) the conference plan by early June at the latest.

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Finally, we would like to inform you that some of the activities we had planned for the near future and that had to be cancelled due to corona crisis are being transformed into **virtual meetings**.

Working Group 1 (“Grammars of Coercion”) has had an online training on the annotation tool CATMA on 1 April and will have virtual follow-up discussions on specific source documents over the next months.

The digital infrastructure team is preparing hands-on webinars on the use of

- Nopaque, a digital platform developed by the University of Bielefeld, which we are allowed to use for our collaborative WORCK projects (contact person: Silke Schwandt),
- Transkribus, a computer tool for the transcription of handwritten manuscripts (contact person: Tobias Hodel).

For the activities of the other working groups, please get in contact with the respective working group leaders or join our slack workspace and follow the internal discussions. (If you would like to be added to slack, send an e-mail to juliane.schiel@univie.ac.at).

Warm regards,

Johan Heinsen and Juliane Schiel

Attachments:

- Editorial “Covid-19 and the Workers of the World. Invitation to a Debate” of the new WORCK Blog
- Programme of the WORCK Conference “Reconceptualising Wage Labour” (16–19 September 2020, Budapest)
- Initiative by a group of Italian researchers “Towards a Caring Democracy”