

**Call for Papers**  
**Arbeiter:innenkulturen: Alltag jenseits der Arbeit**  
**Cultures of the Working Class: Everyday life besides work**

During the 1970s and 1980s, cultural practises of members of the working class as historical subjects became a topic of interest for West-German historiography. Research focussed mainly on two areas within the study of proletarian ways of life on the micro level of social life: “Arbeiterkultur” (“Workers’ culture”) in organised formats such as workers’ sports clubs or youth groups on the one hand and a history of how (working class) people experienced and perceived everyday life as well as (their) behaviour in and outside the factory that was not based on class consciousness but rather “Eigen-Sinn”. Similar questions were asked by GDR historians. The research focused primarily on phenomena from the time of the German Empire and the Weimar Republic, but also on ruptures and transformations as a result of National Socialist rule and after 1945. New methods and concepts were developed which remain present in historiography to this day, like “Alltagsgeschichte”, “Eigen-Sinn” and “Oral History”. The latter also highlights some historians’ political intention of creating a democratic “History from below” (“Geschichte von unten”) by giving voice to hitherto unheard contemporary witnesses. The same can be said about the formation of History Workshops (“Geschichtswerkstätten”) which enabled self-taught historians (often with roots in the New social movements) to contribute to the historical exploration of everyday cultures, especially on a local level. Thus, the first peak of a history of the “Workers’ culture” has itself become the topic of Contemporary history or History of knowledge (“Wissensgeschichte”). Today, workers’ everyday culture, although not omnipresent, has its fixed place in historiography. This is also represented by “Arbeit – Bewegung – Geschichte”, where aspects of workers’ everyday culture are occasionally discussed but far less frequently than other topics. That at least some interest in the exploration of a cultural history of the proletariat still exists is best showcased by conferences like “Labour – Everyday Life – Exploitation: Social History of Working Women” (“Arbeit – Alltag – Ausbeutung: Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Arbeiterinnen”), which took place in Heidelberg just last year, while at the same time, a general loss of memory of research approaches and -findings from the 1980s has to be recognised.

With this intentionally wide kept Call for Papers, which covers as many research approaches, topics and perspectives without regional or periodical limitations, it is our aim to make the historiography of working peoples’ everyday culture more visible (again) and to provide an overview of the current research (situation). Connections to earlier studies are encouraged but also especially their extensions in different fields of study. These could include perspectives concerning new studies on workers’ culture and interconnections with aspects of transnational, local, regional or post- and de-colonial historical studies. An intersectional approach, for example the entanglement of Class with other categories of social oppression, can provide valuable findings and help broadening the understanding of this field of study. Furthermore, questions concerning fractures, ambivalences and (points of) reference/s could be formulated. For example: (Where) were similarities and contradictions in workers’ everyday culture and the notions thereof as propagated by parties, organisations or in countries with socialist rule? Were there references to Workers’ culture in the New Left? Which fractures and transformations/continuities can be found in workers’ cultures, for example after fascist rule, “since the Boom” or 1989/90.

Another approach could be the historization of the subjects who studies workers' cultures, which would in turn enable a critical analysis and reception of their findings and conceptions and to (re-)discover early works either in a review format or articles.

Potential topics:

- The private is political: the negotiation of forms of relationship since the industrialisation
- Solidarity and class consciousness in everyday life.
- Workers' culture and consumption: diet, indulgence, addiction, clothing
- Negotiations and notions of childhood and adolescence
- Access to education: ways of learning and mediating knowledge
- Tenement/ "Rental barracks", cooperatives and flat shares: living together enforced and voluntary
- Workers' self-management, cooperatives for production and consumption
- Between emancipation and patriarchy: masculinity, femininity and other images of sex and gender in the proletarian everyday life
- From "Naturfreundejugend" ("Friends of Nature") to Skinheads: the relationship between workers' culture/s and sub-cultures
- Proletarian aesthetics: role, form and function in the productions and reception of workers' literature, art and music
- "Oh, so comrades, come ...?" (Inter-)nationalism and (anti-)colonialism in workers' everyday life
- Grieving, remembering, and hoping: cultures of remembrance and visions of the future
- Competition versus winning mentality? Role, form and function of workers' sports
- Feasts and celebrations: (ritualised) escapes from everyday life?
- Places of social encounter and political resistance: street, pub, shop, allotment
- Everyday forms of in- and exclusion: discrimination amongst workers

Meaningful research proposals of up to 2500 signs (including spaces) can be submitted until the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 and should provide an overview of the topic, intended method and source base. We will ask for articles based on the proposals. The deadline for the fully written articles is the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2025. All contributions have to pass our internal multi-step review procedure and it is only after the submission of the final version that we will offer a definitive promise of publication. We only publish original works (exemptions are sometimes made for articles initially published in a language other than German). Submissions for "Arbeit – Bewegung – Geschichte" are not reimbursed. Manuscripts may be sent per e-mail in a docx-file. Finalised articles in German may not exceed 50 000 signs including spaces and notes. Articles in English may not exceed 40 000 signs, for publication they will be translated into German.

Contact: [cfp@arbeit-bewegung-geschichte.de](mailto:cfp@arbeit-bewegung-geschichte.de)

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Publication expected in September 2025

