

Conference

Self-Management in Action: Worker Cooperatives and Employee-Owned Enterprises in Western Europe after 1945

Centre for Contemporary History, Potsdam, Germany 24th to 25th September 2015

Venue:

Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF Potsdam) Seminar Room (Ground Floor) Am Neuen Markt 9d 14467 Potsdam Germany

Convener:

Dr. Anne Sudrow, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam

Supported by:

Stiftung Bildung und Wissenschaft

Conference language:

English

Registration:

The number of participants is limited, so we request all those interested in taking part to register beforehand (before 18 September) via e-mail to:

Dr. Anne Sudrow (ZZF Potsdam): sudrow@zzf-pdm.de

About the Conference:

The United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives. As a consequence, in European business history, too, cooperatives attracted considerable attention. In the wake of an increasing interest in the history of consumption and in the mediating actors between consumers and producers in the market economies, studies on consumer co-operatives and their impact on consumer choice and consumption patterns followed. Producer cooperatives

and democratically managed enterprises, however, suffered from the 'death of the production paradigm' in economic and social history. They have been thoroughly neglected by historical research in the recent past. It is this particular type of businesses in the secondary, industrial sector and their history that the conference will focus on: factories and workshops 'under workers' control' or 'producer cooperatives', as they were mostly called until the 1970s. During the 1970s this model of employee-control and employee-ownership came to be known throughout Europe under the term of 'self-management' ('Selbstverwaltung', 'autogestion', etc.) Research into this largely disregarded and empirically diverse field can connect aspects of the business history of mostly small and medium sized industrial firms with a culturally informed history of production. Such research can investigate the history of the new social movements and their social visions with regard to their particular economic forms of political practice.

Conference Programme

Thursday, 24th September 2015

13.30-14.00 Welcome and Introduction

14.00-15.30 **Panel 1: Southern Europe since 1945**

(Chair: Christopher Neumaier)

Tito Menzani, University of Bologna:

«We have no Master, except the Generation of the Future». Worker Cooperatives in Italy (1945-2015): a Critical Analysis

Fernando Molina, University of the Basque Country, Bilbao:

Regarding Arizmendiarrieta: The Social History of Mondragon through the Looking-Glass of the «Founding Father»

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-17.30 Panel 2: Eastern European Precedents

(Chair: Matthias Judt)

Maciej Tymiński, University of Warsaw:

Rise and Fall of Self-Government Enterprises in Poland (1956-1958). The Case of the Cable Factory in Ożarów Mazowiecki

Josip Mihaljević, Croatian Institute of History:

Yugoslav Self-Management in Practice (1965-1974). A Case Study of the Gredelj Rolling Stock Factory

17.30-17.45 Coffee break

17.45-19.15 Panel 3: French Experiences

(Chair: Anne Sudrow)

Frank Georgi, Université Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne:

Boimondau. The Rise and Fall of a «Community of Work» in post-war France as seen by Sociologist Albert Meister

Jens Beckmann, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam:

Work differently, decide differently? When Unionists become Entrepreneurs. LIP in Besancon, France, after 1976

20.00- Conference dinner

Friday, 25th September 2015

9.00-11.00 Panel 4: Worker Cooperatives in Britain

(Chair: Max Hertzberg)

Jonathan Moss, University of Southampton:

Women in Control: Revisiting Fakenham Enterprises 1972-1977

Anne Sudrow, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam:

State Influence on the Shop Floor. The Meriden Motorcycle Cooperative in Coventry and British Labour and Conservative Governments (1974-1984)

Chris Cornforth, Open University, Milton Keynes:

A History of the Cooperatives Research Unit at the Open University, Milton Keynes

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-13.00 Panel 5: Central European Case Studies

(Chair: Jens Beckmann)

Christiane Mende, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam:

Fragility and Resilience of Workers' Self-Management in the Süßmuth Glass Works, West Germany (1969-89)

Susanne Kokel, University of Marburg:

Strategies for Acceptance? Management Practices within the Moravian Church

13.00-14.00 Lunch break

14.00-15.30 Panel 6: Researching Current Developments

(Chair: Rüdiger Graf)

Hanna Moilanen, University of Eastern Finland:

Worker Cooperatives in Finland – Means of Managing a Precarious Working Life

Juan Pablo Hudson, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Argentine:

Companies Recovered by Workers in Argentina: a Balance of 15 years of Self-Management from two Case Studies in Rosario City

15.30-16.30 Final discussion