

ZARAH Circular No. 3

29 November 2021

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

welcome to the Circular No. 3, by which we share some new pieces of information on our activities.

Before we all left for our summer break, our database, which we consider a milestone in our project work and a relevant open access research tool for all, went online; in autumn, soon after our return to Vienna, a series of inspiring events took place. We briefly report on all these below. Finally, just a few days ago, we published the Introduction to our third Blog Series on [Transnational Links and the History of Women's Labour Activism](#); more contributions from our team will follow at regular intervals until spring!

Please do not hesitate to turn to us with any idea, query or information you might wish to share. And just as a note: People interested in receiving our circular are kindly asked to write to [zarah.info@ceu.edu](mailto:zarah.info@ceu.edu).

Best wishes,

Susan Zimmermann (Principal Investigator) and Lukas Neissl (Program Manager)  
on behalf of the entire ZARAH Team

### **Our International Conference “Women’s Labour Activism in Eastern Europe and Beyond, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries”: An exciting moment for the attending gender and labour historians**

*A truly motivating meeting, significant for bringing together scholars from many countries and circles who study women’s labour activism in Eastern Europe and beyond in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries* – this is how we would describe the ZARAH international conference in a nutshell. The conference, to which the ZARAH Team had invited scholars via an open [call for papers](#), took place from 14-16 October at CEU in Vienna. It was held in preparation of the publication of an edited volume and was thus more of an authors’ workshop than a classical conference. During the conference we discussed more than two dozen [papers](#).

In a somewhat unusual but extremely discussion-friendly format, contributors introduced briefly their pre-circulated paper, and this was followed in each case by the comments from one of the lead discussants: Krassimira Daskalova, Marcel van der Linden or Susan Zimmermann; subsequently, the floor was open for group discussion. We received enthusiastic remarks by participants, many of whom felt that this was one of the most productive and motivating meetings in which they had ever participated – and we much appreciate the willingness of the contributors to participate in this collaboration.

Rooted in a rich variety of perspectives and using different methodologies, the contributions dealt with activists’ life stories, their roles as strike organizers and participants, their activism in men-dominated organizations, the public representation of their work and activism, etc. We are very much looking forward to the next steps in finalizing the ZARAH edited volume!



**The Second ZARAH International Workshop took place, in connection with Brigitte Studer's public lecture, in Vienna**

On 11-13 October 2021 the Second ZARAH International Workshop brought together the ZARAH Team and three external experts on women, labour and social history: Birgitta Bader-Zaar (University of Vienna), Dorothy Sue Cobble (Rutgers University) and Brigitte Studer (University of Bern). The ZARAH team members presented elements of their research and discussed new approaches and findings on the history of women's labour activism in Eastern Europe, other countries and regions and internationally with the international experts. The [workshop program](#) is available on the ZARAH [website](#).

The workshop opened with a public lecture by Brigitte Studer, Professor Emerita of Swiss and Contemporary History at the University of Bern, on “[Travelling for the Global Revolution: A New Perspective on the Communist International](#)”. Leaving behind traditional approaches which have depicted the Comintern apparatus in anonymous organizational terms, Brigitte Studer focused on the individual live paths and the formal and informal networks of the communist activists and their political practices. The lecture gave insight into the social world of the Comintern which was based in a complex division of labour and constituted by the experiences, hopes and disappointments of women and men for whom the revolution was both work and a way of life.



### ZARAH's open research database is online

On 1 July 2021, ZARAH DB, our database on women's labour activism in and beyond Eastern Europe, and internationally, went online. ZARAH DB can be freely accessed [here](#).



The database brings together archival and published sources, giving as many of them as possible in open access mode. These multilingual materials include key sources related to the history of women’s labour activism in Eastern Europe and internationally, and reflect the research done by the ZARAH Team. Each document comes with an English language abstract, and the information contained in these sources also feeds into the standardized and individual keywords as well as the place and name records contained in the database. The database can be searched from all of these and additional angles.

The screenshot displays the ZARAH DB search interface. On the left, under 'FILTER BY', there are several filter categories: 'Date', 'People (191)', 'Organizations (171)', 'Places (87)', 'Events (47)', 'Archive (10)', 'Language (7)', 'Author (36)', 'Item Type (9)', 'Historical context (10)', 'Labour conditions (15)', 'Living conditions (43)', 'Labour relations (10)', 'Activist repertoire (11)', 'Scale of repertoire actions (4)', 'Agendas (20)', 'Format of participation (12)', and 'Communication and knowledge production (4)'. On the right, under 'PEOPLE', there is a search bar and a list of names with their respective counts: Akselrod, Liubov Isaakovna [+], Alday, Lucina [+], Alvarado, Luis [+], Ammar, Abbas [+], Anderson Nevarez, Hilda [+], Araiza, Carmen [+], Barbet, M. [+], Becerra, Magdalena de [+], Belay, NN [+], Belkhodja, Janine [+], Berecz, Kata [+], and Biró, Éva [+]. Below the filters, there is a pagination bar showing page 1 of 89, with '10 / page' selected. At the bottom, a document preview is shown for '133rd Session. Fourteenth Item on the Agenda. Report of the Meeting of Experts on Women's Employment (Geneva, 5-10 November 1956)', dated 5-10 November 1956, from the International Labour Office, Governing Body, document.

On the ZARAH DB website, you can perform simple and advanced searches and view metadata and document reproductions in the [Database](#) section. The [About](#), [For Researchers](#), and [Data](#) sections, as well as the [Terms of Use](#), provide further information about the aims of ZARAH DB, our approach to digital reproductions of sources and details about our rich metadata.

ZARAH DB is fully functional now, and new documents are being added continuously until 2025. After that, the database will remain online for another five years and the research data it contains will be transferred to a scholarly data repository.

ZARAH DB is a repository of largely untapped information on labour activists and labour activism broadly defined from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The database is meant to be of service to the scholarly community and anyone interested. We hope you find ZARAH DB an easy-to-use entry point into an exciting topic!

We are happy to receive your feedback and any questions you may have about ZARAH DB at [zarahdb@ceu.edu](mailto:zarahdb@ceu.edu).