



LAUREATE
RESEARCH
PROGRAM IN
INTERNATIONAL
HISTORY
&
RACE AND
ETHNICITY IN
THE GLOBAL
SOUTH

THINKING LABOUR RIGHTS THROUGH THE 'COOLIE QUESTION'

17-18th September, 2015

Symposium to be held as part of the Laureate Research Program in International History, University of Sydney, Australia

This symposium sets out to re-think histories of labour rights within the context of economic internationalism. It suggests that there is now a need to broaden and re-think the field of labour rights history and that one way to do this is by focusing on the global response to the problems of contract and indentured labour and what became known as 'the coolie question' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 'coolie question' has been conceptualised in two main ways – as an offshoot of histories of slavery and anti-slavery and in the context of the history of migration to colonies of the former British and Spanish empires. This symposium seeks to bring different scholarly approaches to 'the coolie question' into conversation to reflect more broadly on the implications of 'the coolie question' for transnational and global histories of labour rights as human rights. At the same time we wish to internationalise the history of labour rights and suggest new ways of conceptualising labour rights in the globalising present.

The workshop will feature three keynote speakers:
Associate Professor Moon Ho-Jung (University of Washington)
Professor Mae Ngai (Columbia University)
Professor Leon Fink (University of Illinois)

We welcome papers on the following themes:

- Free and unfree labour
- Labour and empire
- Economic internationalism and free trade liberalism
- The 'coolie question' as a methodological category
- Slavery and imperial migration schemes
- Comparative labour history
- Asian migration and labour rights
- Gender and labour rights

To subscribe to our mailing list e-mail Martin King at history.international@sydney.edu.au

<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/inventing-the-international/>

Abstracts should be sent to Sophie Loy-Wilson (sophie.loy-wilson@sydney.edu.au) by April 30th 2015.

This workshop will be convened by Dr Sophie Loy-Wilson (University of Sydney) and Prof Marilyn Lake (Convener of the 'Australia in the World', a series of public lectures and seminars at The University of Melbourne).



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