

Historical Materialism London 2022

10-13 November 2022 @ Central London

Workers' Inquiry Stream

Deadline for abstracts: 1 August 2022

<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/>

Notes from Below is hosting a stream on Workers' Inquiry at the Historical Materialism conference in London this year. As in previous years, we are inviting contributions that build on workers' inquiries and try to understand class composition.

We understand "Workers' Inquiry" as a Marxist method that combines research with organising. This involves trying to understand the labour process at work, forms of exploitation, technology, management strategies, class relations, capitalism, from the perspective of workers. It can also explore workers' struggles and ways of organising. As a method, it may involve traditional forms of research, like interviews, surveys, ethnography, autoethnography (presenting own experience) or more collaborative methods of co-research with or led by workers.

Notes from Below argue for class composition as a framework for understanding workers' inquiries, by examining the changing ways in which workers are organised at work (technical composition), in society (social composition) and as a force for class struggle (political composition). For the stream, we are particularly interested in trying to understand new moments of class composition, where workers find ways to respond to the changing technical and social composition. Class struggle at work is shaped by the conditions at work and in society. In previous years we have had workers talking about their experiences in sectors like manufacturing, food delivery platforms, videogames, tech, supermarkets, as well as accounts of struggles in different countries.

For the stream, we want to encourage contributions that present experiences, involve workers' inquiries, or develop ideas that can further our understanding of class composition. The stream is open to contributions from participants with any or no experience of presenting at academic conferences. As with previous years, we hope to have a stream that brings together organisers, workers, and Marxist researchers. We will, of course, be organising a social event as part of the stream too.

We are particularly interested in contributions in the following areas:

- Inquiries into specific kinds of work

- Examples of organising the “unorganisable”
- Struggles within/against unions
- The impact of the pandemic and home working on organising
- Fire and rehire and other new managerial strategies

We are not inviting submissions to the stream that are about work or theory in general. Abstracts must involve workers' inquiry in some way or be connected to workers' struggles. Other approaches or topics may be suitable for the general call or streams at the conference.

If you want to take part, you can submit an abstract (a short explanation of what you will talk about) to the Historical Materialism call for papers <https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/> and indicate that it is a submission to the "Workers' Inquiry" Stream.

Deadline for abstracts: 25 July 2022

If you are interested in taking part but have any questions about the process you can contact the Notes from Below editors at the email address below. As with previous years, we are keen to support participation, including developing initial ideas, helping draft abstracts for papers, the preparation of presentations, or anything else that can support new speakers at the conference. While many papers at the conference take the form of a panel of speakers each talking for 15 minutes or so, we have used different formats like roundtables, shorter talks, Q&A, and so on in the past and are open to alternative suggestions.

For further information, any questions, or support with taking part, please email editors@notesfrombelow.org

Please feel free to share this call with others you think might be interested in participating.

*****This year, the conference will be taking place in a particularly onerous financial context, due to an unprecedented 20,000 pound room rental rate. Thus, for this not to sink the journal and imperil any possibility of another conference in London in the future, we are calling on all comrades to be generous and to suggest any possible grant possibilities.*****