

# CALL FOR ABSTRACTS



## PUNISH AND REHABILITATE THROUGH WORK: INSTITUTIONS, DISCOURSES, AND AGENCY IN CENTRAL, EASTERN, AND WESTERN EUROPE AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Workhouse, house of correction, reformatory, forced labour colony, disciplinary labour camp, etc. – these are only a few designations of the disciplinary institutions that proliferated across Eastern, Central, and Western Europe during the late 19th and in the first half of the 20th century. These disciplinary institutions served a dual purpose of confinement as well as correction. Behind their walls or within their compounds, citizens who deviated from the prevailing middle-class norms of “proper work” and “decent behaviour” were confined as well as corrected by making use of their labour. The declared aim of such institutions, whose tradition dates back to the early modern period, was therefore not only to punish individuals whose mobility, livelihood and other types of conduct were criminalised, but also to turn “alcoholics”, “beggars”, “delinquents”, “pimps”, “prostitutes”, and “vagrants”, to name only a few groups who were targeted, into “orderly citizens”.

The majority of existing research has focused on the 18th and 19th centuries and the role of the continental as well as the English workhouse in Western Europe in relation to nascent capitalism. Therefore, shifting the focus on the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century opens up new possibilities for inquiring into the continuities and discontinuities of the practices and functions of previously established or newly created disciplinary institutions that were intended to provide additional punishment while simultaneously correcting the allegedly deviant subjects through labour. In particular, the regions of Central and Eastern Europe underwent significant political, social and economic development during this period. This development included the transition from semi-peripheral regions of empires to nation-states and many turbulent transformations of political regimes, encompassing liberal and popular democracies, authoritarian regimes as well as Nazi and state-socialist dictatorships. The political transformations often went hand in hand with significant economic fluctuations, such as the Great Depression or the two world conflicts. In addition, various social and penal reforms were introduced during this period, which had serious repercussions on the idea of who and how should be punished and/or rehabilitated through work.

In this workshop, we aim to bring together scholars from various fields, mainly experts in the history of social policies, history of convict or forced labour, histories of diverse marginalised or criminalised groups, history of criminology and penal law, and history of prisons and prison reform. Our intention is to explore the locally diverse disciplinary institutions such as continental workhouses, reformatories for young offenders, forced labour camps, etc. from various perspectives. These institutions could be located at the nexus of confinement, labour, and rehabilitation. They were embedded in a wider net of penal, social and economic measures and at the same time debated in expert circles as well as on the pages of the popular press. We also want to overcome the fact that the historiography of these various institutions remains very much focused on Western Europe, captive to national narratives, mostly overlooking institutions designed for women and often fragmented among a variety of research perspectives that overlap with each other only sporadically. Finally, in order to see possible innovations in this research field, we want to discuss the existing concepts (including disciplination, forced labour, and convict labour) that serve to interpret the meaning of these institutions and the methods and sources which could be used in order to reconstruct the everyday life of men and women assigned to these institutions as well as to re-examine the institutions’ role in confining specific groups of inhabitants, namely the Roma and Sinti.

## Issues we would like contributors to address in the workshop are:

### 1. INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS

What functions did these disciplinary institutions perform in the broader context of social processes of exclusion and inclusion?

How did the constitutive tension between the rehabilitation and confinement of inmates affect the position of these institutions within gradually diverging systems of punishment and social welfare?

Which actors (e.g. different bodies of the state, municipalities, churches, private companies etc.) were involved in different aspects of these institutions and in which ways?

### 2. IDEAS AND PRACTICES

How to interpret the relationship between the diverse contemporary discourses of rehabilitation and punishment, and the changing practice of the disciplinary institutions such as continental workhouses, forced labour camps and reformatories?

What role did the disciplinary institutions play in the discourses and imaginations of social outcasts, especially those who were labelled as “Gypsies”?

Did these popular as well as expert ideas and discourses shape the practice?

### 3. INMATES AND STAFF

Who actually were the people confined in these institutions, in terms of their age, gender, class, professions, ethnicity, nationality, etc.?

Why were they confined and in what ways were they deemed to need reforming?

Who was recruited as staff in the disciplinary institutions and how?

### 4. LABOUR AND ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY

What kinds of labour were used to correct male and female convicts and what concepts (e.g. forced labour or convict labour) could be used in order to capture the complexities of penal and economic goals?

How were the inmates' conditions negotiated in relation to the labour market, wages, etc. in the outside world?

### 5. EVERYDAY LIFE AND METHODOLOGY

What were the living conditions and everyday life of the inmates and how did the everyday life of male and female convicts differ?

How were the social hierarchies and order negotiated by the inmates and the staff?

What types of sources and methods can be used in order to reconstruct everyday life and to capture the agency of the inmates and how?

### 6. (DIS-)CONTINUITIES

How did these disciplinary institutions change over time?

What role did the agency of inmates play in particular?

How were they influenced by political development of the state or local administrations?

We especially welcome scholars who deal with these topics in the context of Central and Eastern Europe and/or apply innovative qualitative and/or quantitative methods and approaches.

Our plan is to publish an edited volume.

**Workshop language: English.**

### Organizers:

**Pavel Baloun** (Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences / Faculty of Humanities, Charles University)

**Lucie Dušková** (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, GWZO)

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**Jiří Smlsal** (Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences)

### Deadlines:

- Abstract Submission (max. 300 words with short bio): **April 4, 2024**
- Communicating Acceptance: **April 22, 2024**. Selected participants will be invited to submit a paper of 3,000–5,000 words as a basis for the book chapter.
- Paper Submission: **September 30, 2024**
- Submit Abstracts to [prworkshop2024@hiu.cas.cz](mailto:prworkshop2024@hiu.cas.cz)

**Venue:** Prague.

### Keynote Speaker:

**Sigrid Wadauer** (University of Vienna)