



# **50<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LABOUR HISTORY INSTITUTIONS (IALHI)**

Fundación Pablo Iglesias, Alcalá de Henares, Spain

September 11-14, 2019

## **Archives and libraries as actors in commemorative culture**

*Call for papers*

Almost every IALHI institution holds materials relating to crucial events of the labour movement's history, and thus serves a commemorative function, if not explicitly, then by implication. Altogether, IALHI-institutions have probably organized or participated in thousands of commemorative events or projects, including exhibitions, commemorative books or memorial days. Therefore, exploring our roles in commemorative culture and exchanging views and best practices may be of interest to many of us.

The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War seems an ideal occasion to engage in a discussion about archives and libraries as actors in commemorative culture, and the magnificent venue of the *Archivos del movimiento obrero* (Labour movement archives), in Alcalá de Henares, offers an inspiring environment for this.

In Friday's program, we will evaluate the issue from three different angles. In the morning's session, the local organizers will look through the lens of the Spanish Civil War to make us aware of the complexities of commemorating one of the major social history events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the afternoon's program we will take a broader perspective and call IALHI members to submit papers on one of the three topics listed below. We invite you to either reflect on the topic, to showcase relevant projects, or to do both. We have drawn up the schedule below, but depending on the number of submitted proposals per subject, this could still change.



## **1. The sensitive side of commemoration**

As most of us know, the commemoration of events in social history or the acts of historical figures can be a challenge. Issues can be sensitive or controversial. How do we deal with this? Can IALHI institutions fulfil a historical-critical role in the commemoration of sometimes traumatic events of the past? To what extent and in which ways are we part of the politics of history and on what terms do we participate in the political education of today's society? What role do labour archives play in the context of the "right to the truth" and reparation for the victims of social conflicts?

## **2. Commemoration and dissemination**

Unlike big museums, smaller archives and libraries are not well-oiled PR-machines. How can we make the most of our commemorative efforts in terms of dissemination and outreach? Is this a good strategy to engage with our target groups and draw new audiences to our collections? Does it appeal to younger people, and how do we encourage their interest? Can we apply new techniques and media to promote this?

## **3. Visual commemorative politics**

Commemorative culture heavily depends on visual representation. Some images have become icons of the commemoration of key events and developments in the past. The visual turn in historiography has produced many studies on the use of pictures and photos for commemoration. How do we use representational objects for commemoration? Should we try to disentangle the emotional and political significance of some objects? If so, how? And how do we handle archival objects that have been manipulated, for instance photos that have been cropped or in which certain parts have been erased?

The proposals (500 words), along with a brief professional profile (150 words), must be submitted by **July 15, 2019** to [ialhi2019@fpabloiglesias.es](mailto:ialhi2019@fpabloiglesias.es). Conference participation is without a fee, however travel and accommodation costs are at your expense.

As usual, on Thursday 12 September there will be opportunity for IALHI members to give short presentations (5-10 min.) on their current projects and activities. If you are a IALHI member, you can submit your presentation with your name and working title.