The modernization of industrial labour and the increasing power of workers were important chapters of the 20th century. The studied period is one of the major systemic changes – from capitalism to communist central planning and after 1989, back to a capitalist market economy. The process of industrialization, post-industrialization and globalization influenced the changes in the conditions of workers and factories. Taking the example of the Factory of Metallurgy Ózd (Hungary), the talk will examine the structural changes of the working class and the living conditions of workers from the dynamic start at the beginning of the 20th century until the collapse of the ironworks at end of the 20th century. The talk will provide an overview of the concepts – who was/is a worker? – followed by a summary of the two parts of the research: the workers’ life after WWII and the various forms of remembrance and representation, using an interdisciplinary research methodology including traditional historical analysis, statistical investigation and genealogy of workers’ families, life stories, lifestyle analysis, and oral history.

Tibor Valuch is a social historian, professor at the Institute of History of Eszterházy Károly University of Applied Sciences. His main research fields include the social and cultural history of Hungary after the Second World War period, history of everyday life in contemporary Hungary and Central-Europe, contemporary European social history, social history of consumption in modern Europe from a comparative point of view and labour history. He is author of several monographs and papers. His latest book is Contemporary Hungarian Society, Budapest Osiris Publisher Ltd, 2015 and he is also the author (with György Gyarmati) of Hungary under Soviet Domination 1944-1989, Budapest-New York, ARP Publishers 2009.