

**draft**

# **International Labour Studies 2000+**

## **The International Labour Movement Between Geneva, Brussels, Seattle/Porto Alegre and Utopia**

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## **Introduction: The Road to Utopia**

Over the past few years the International Transportworkers Federation (ITF) has been running an international summer school, addressed to its Global Solidarity programme. In the announcement for the school to take place in Canada, August 2003, a session was planned on

**'New Strategic Alliances between Trade Unions and the Social Movement:  
Panel Discussion with Representatives of the "Social Movement"**

(See Resources)

This odd formulation is nonetheless encouraging because of the explicit or implicit recognition that

- trade unions do not lead this movement (as they could certainly claim at the previous turn of century);
- the 'social movement' exists separate from the trade union organisation;
- strategic alliances are necessary between these two parties.

The next step, surely, would be to remove the inverted commas from the social movement, and for the unions to move from a strategic *alliance* to a close *articulation* with such - for the unions to see themselves as an intimate if autonomous part of the new social movement.

The matter is, however, by no means agreed by all. Indeed, on the admittedly thin evidence above, the ITF is one century ahead of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. This is still inhabiting the century of national-industrial-westocentred capitalism. The current ICFTU handbook on the union response to globalisation (ICFTU 2002) defines globalisation in economic (capitalist) terms, defines solidarity in solely institutional (union to union) ones, and seeks restoration of an (unexamined and idealised) West European capitalist past:

A nation-centred system with national social and economic policies helped to create a degree of social justice and economic equity [...] The international trade union movement is seeking ways to incorporate into the globalisation process the protections which were achieved in many countries at the national level and to enable workers and their unions to participate effectively in the global economy and in building a democratic framework for it. (17-18)

In so far as the 'social movement' appears in the ICFTU handbook, it is without the words between the inverted commas, in the guise of NGOs (non-governmental organisations), and strictly marginal.

What one would expect, from the new international labour studies, is that they would go deeper than either of these political positions. What I would hope for is that they would also go further, exploiting the relative (if now relativised) freedom granted the academy, to provide some kind of leadership, guidance or at least a challenge to the labour movement itself. So this article is concerned both with the varied international labour responses to globalisation, and with the new wave of international

labour studies that are, in their different ways, trying to relate to such. (For interesting reviews of labour studies, national or international, relevant to this exercise, see Labour Studies Journal 2002, Munck 2000).

Now, in the title to this somewhat eclectic paper:

*Geneva* stands for the ILO, for international liberal-democratic industrial relations and social partnership (actually, surely, a capitalist partnership?);

*Brussels* for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and for a traditional institutionalised union internationalism (TIUI) of social-democratic hue, as well as for social partnership;

*Seattle* for the – prematurely celebrated? – marriage of national Teamsters and global Turtles, and *Porto Alegre* for the self-named Global Justice and Solidarity Movement (GJ&SM).

And *Utopia*? Utopia means both ‘good place’ and ‘nowhere’- a good place that does not yet exist. This is the place/space for consideration of Emancipatory Labour Studies (ELS, a concept that, I think, has lacked not only an acronym but even a name).

In reviewing such varied material, I propose to work my way from Geneva to Porto Alegre. And to end up in - or at least with - Utopia. The procedure is arbitrary, but it may be therefore considered consistent with the eclecticism of the collection. The Conclusion will reflect on the eccentric ('off-centred', I hope, rather than 'peculiar') notion of emancipatory international labour studies.

## Geneva

*Jose (2002)* is published by the research institute of the ILO and, despite a full-colour cover of demonstrating Korean workers (of the old corporatist union centre in Korea, but in which the colour red predominates), it nonetheless reproduces the founding parameters of the ILO: social partnership, social welfare, collective bargaining and the nation-state. It also reproduces the post-1945 developmentalism of the ILO, with Jose's own Introduction ‘drawing lessons’, paternalistically, for what are quaintly, given ever-growing social and international inequalities, still called ‘developing countries’.

The book contains extensive case studies on 10 very different countries, ranging from Japan and Sweden at the beginning to Niger and South Africa at the end. As a database on such countries in the present conjuncture it may have some value. But, bearing in mind that the work is concerned with ‘trade union responses to globalisation’, it becomes clear that the understanding of such responses, by either the ILO or the editor, is *national*. Any union response *above, below or beyond* this decreasingly effective (because decreasingly central) level or arena, finds only marginal reference.

Given the manner in which neo-liberal globalisation has been undermining both the institutional and ideological bases of 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial relations, this

book comes over less as a vision of the future than a monument to the past. The ILO itself, like the United Nations, has been marginalised by neo-liberal globalisation in general and the International Financial Institutions in particular (see Harrod and O'Brien below). One must, therefore, assume that the institution that sponsored the book is hoping that neo-liberalism will blow over, leaving the national or regional departments of labour, employers' associations and unions - and the inter-state ILO - to resume the national/regional, bipartite/tripartite, industrial relations of the past (as revealed by the ILO magazine, *World of Work* 2003). Only the contribution on South Africa threatens to break out of the iron cage of 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial-relations-think. It raises the question of whether South African unions are not moving toward a 'global social movement unionism' (373ff). The notion is not, however, explained (but see, again Harrod and O'Brien below).

*Jenkins, Pearson and Seyfang (2002)* lies in the territory between Geneva and Brussels, which is also the region of attempts to recreate social partnership for the era of globalisation. It does, by this token, however, enter the new terrain of labour's NGO support groups, or transnational advocacy networks (TANs, for which see Keck and Sikkink 1998). These could be considered to hover around Brussels, Geneva...and even Washington. This is an informative collection, on a new area of concern, that of a new language - that of voluntary 'codes of conduct', of 'corporate responsibility', of 'ethical trade', of 'framework agreements', of 'monitoring' in relation to such, and of union and NGO action here. This 'de-statification' of labour relations represents a sea-change in global capitalist labour-control strategy. I have no doubt that labour and citizen movements must enter this area and energetically dispute it. My doubts are about *how* to do this whilst simultaneously building international labour consciousness, autonomy and power.

As the editors make clear, the new terrain has been created in response to the incapacity or unwillingness of the state, under globalisation, to play the role assigned to it in the past. Given the increasing difficulty in using the state, law and the ILO itself, to impose, umpire or even suggest solutions to labour conflicts worldwide, and given the rise of multiple expressions of citizen discontent with uncontrolled corporations and trade, there has appeared this new front - that of an 'unmediated' struggle between corporations on the one hand and labour/citizens on the other.

This virgin territory was largely opened up whilst the international unions were still fixated on the nation-state, the ILO for the solution to labour's global woes. It was not, therefore - and unlike even the ILO at its foundation – created as a result of a previous wave of labour protest, union demands and social revolution. And this means that the language here spoken is largely that of 'stakeholder interest'. These weasel words (or *new* weasel words) are meant to frame and justify the creation of some new kind of voluntary global social partnership between capital and its agents, labour and its TANs. This global neo-pluralist understanding has been acceptable to the NGOs at a moment marked by serious marginalisation of the unions and of extensive openings for NGOs. It has been blessed by the United Nations, with a Global Compact between the corporations, unions and the NGOs (99) – criticised even by liberal internationalists as opening the UN door to transnational corporations. The Global Unions themselves have predictably grasped at this new straw, just as they have those of voluntary 'Codes of Conduct', and 'Framework Agreements' between International Trade Secretariats (ITSs, recently re-baptised as Global Union

Federations – GUFs) and union-friendly corporations. The major qualification expressed by the ICFTU seems to be precisely at the point at which unions are being put on one line with NGOs! A dependent, defensive, institutional self-interest marks its response:

Trade unions appreciated the stakeholder concept to a point. This point was where the idea of ‘business and stakeholders’ began to replace the notion of social partners and social dialogue...Trade unions are the human side of industry as well as an important part of civil society. Kofi Annan understood this dual nature of trade unions when, at a high level meeting on the Global Compact in July 2000, he said ‘Labour unions can mobilise the workforce – for after all, companies are not composed of their executives’. (99)

The editors of this collection are more cautious, even sceptical about, this new terrain. They nonetheless conclude hopefully, but in a language that suggests their acceptance of the hegemonic discourse (of the past as well as the present):

In the absence of universally agreed commitments by states and corporations to meeting the needs and demands of labour – that they are able to work for a fair reward, with dignity, in a context where their ongoing entitlements as citizens are supported by the state and by private corporations – codes may well represent an important framework both for achieving workplace justice and for extending the global responsibilities of all major stakeholders beyond the moment of production of goods and services to the production and reproduction of labour power in the global economy. (7)

Whilst many of the NGO campaign voices within the book – and they are the majority here – have a broader and more activist orientation to this new area, one seeks in vain for a theoretical approach, an ethical position, a re-framing of the matter in relation to union strategy, social movement theory, or some emancipatory vision. (A relevant approach and position are argued by De Angelis 2003). And whilst the two first chapters provide a certain orientation to the terrain, I don’t think they even begin to suggest how workers might, to paraphrase Marx, bring their hides to this market without receiving a hiding. There is, for example, no serious theoretical/strategic reflection here on the relationship between these new mediators and the people they are thus ‘representing’. Or between advocacy/mediation on the one hand and any autonomous collective public self-expression by those being so represented.

So what we are left with is a series of informative and thought-provoking chapters, some themselves armed with more of a mobilising orientation – as with Women Working Worldwide (Ch. 8). My general reaction, after reading this book, however, is to signal, as did Roman mapmakers of uncharted terrains in Africa:

*Hic Sunt Leones*

(here are lions – or, if in Scotland, *vulpes*). I also felt, as a newly-arriving explorer, the necessity to first have a Rough Guide to the jungle, such as that provided by a

handbook with, regrettably, a similar social-partnership orientation (Wicks 2003). Perhaps another Roman warning needs posting here: *Caveat Emptor* (Buyer Beware).

In the meantime, however, those involved in, or observing, this new terrain might take recourse to the earlier mentioned paper of De Angelis (2003). His argument would imply, that such exercises are part of a neo-liberal discourse of ‘governance’:

that it does not represent a paradigm shift away from neoliberalism. Rather it is a discursive practice, a strategy that emerges as capital's second line of defence vis-à-vis struggles against enclosures and crises of reproduction. It is a space in which the needs of reproduction are acknowledged by capital, but commons are deterred or forestalled through the hijacking and entrapment of the values, the words and dreams of the commoners. In governance, the environmentalist value of sustainability is turned into the financial value of sustainable profit, social justice is turned into corporate compliance with pitiful minimum wage regulations, democracy and participation is turned into partnership among stakeholders who must accept competitive market norms as *de facto* unchangeable mode of human interaction.

Unlike a number of the books mentioned below, finally, there is in this one no awareness of a GJ&SM that has itself been reframing such issues within a more holistic, more global campaign against corporate capitalism (a word missing from the index).

### **Brussels**

Harrod and O'Brien (2002) has a title referring to ‘global unions’, ‘organised workers’ and ‘international political economy’ - all language familiar to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The ICFTU has recently tried to co-ordinate like-minded international unions under the rubric of Global Unions (Resources). This does not mean that the book is addressed to such, nor that it was produced as a service to the existing internationals. On the contrary, much of what it has to say points precisely to the crisis of these and the difficulty of developing some kind of ‘progressive internationalism’ (25).

What the book shares with the ICFTU/Global Unions is an assumption of the centrality of the traditional *union* form to *labour* internationals and internationalism, and a search for solutions without social transformation. The introduction thus states that it is

important to take a look at the current experience and policies of unions without a pre-determined yardstick by which to measure...whether their actions further the working class, enhance the possibility of systemic transformation or directly support a society-wide norm of social justice. (8)

There is here, therefore, both the hypothetical implication that – to paraphrase a contemporary social movement slogan - ‘another international labour studies is

possible', and a decision to avoid such. The other road not taken is that which would require direct, rather than indirect, consideration of non-unionised/non-unionisable labour (a massive and growing majority of workers under globalisation), whose 'resistance to neoliberal globalisation is a significant feature of labour unrest' (10). I will return to this with Edelman below.

In so far, however, as both the labour internationals and the collection are confronting - and seeking humane and democratic alternatives for labour - to neo-liberalism and what has been called the 'cancer stage of capitalism', both the internationals and the collection require to be taken seriously. The book *should* be since it is a serious collection, with a wide-ranging and theoretically-informed introduction that raises challenging political, theoretical and academic issues. And, it must be said that, unlike most such international labour collections, this one is of a uniformly high quality.

At the cost of ignoring many contributions, and of homogenising others, I will concentrate on arguments concerning the problematic present and possible future of union internationalism. These are the chapters by Mine Eder on the *contradictions and prospects* of union internationalism, Ian Robinson on successive *international economic strategies* of the US/Canadian unions, Rorden Wilkinson on the *International Labour Organisation*, Robert O'Brien on *global labour standards*, Dan Gallin on *labour as a global social force*, Rob Lambert on a *global social movement unionism*.

The *contradictions*, or obstacles, it must be said, appear profound indeed, given that union responses have been largely corporatist, national and defensive. Whilst it is recognised that neo-liberal globalisation is also a powerful provocation to labour internationalism, the 'most promising prospects' (183) – those of solidarity networks beyond the unions – are here reduced to tokens.

The successive *international economic strategies* of the North American union centres have been subordinated in the past – even when resisting them - to liberal ideologies of trade. Recent Canadian or US union embrace of an 'international social dimension' (122), comes over as in large part an enlightened protectionism. Although their international strategies may be changing, the claim that the current policies of the US and Canadian unions are 'morally defensible and intellectually coherent' (129) appears over-stated for strategies that are, basically, determined nationally, if not nationally.

The *ILO*, and the *global labour standards* that it has been championing, are revealed as being, respectively, seriously undermined and unlikely of achievement. Once again the alternatives proposed hardly meet the challenges raised.

The *global social force* labour supposedly represents appears to be a potential lying in the interstices of a deplorable present and a desirable future. This future is, however, a projection of the powerful European social-democratic tradition from the national-industrial stage of capitalist development. Such a future, it is argued, requires the re-invention of this tradition, and a consequently profound transformation of the inter/national unions themselves. A key necessity is the articulation of the unions with the wider contemporary social movement, seen as having common values and

overlapping aims. The leadership of this effort is reserved (as it is by Marxists) for the organised working class:

The trade union movement alone can play this role...It remains...the only universal and democratically organised movement at world level, with an unequalled capacity for resistance. (250)

This is a mantra chanted by labour-oriented r/evolutionary socialists (see Harman below) and, like any mantra worthy of the name, requires no evidence or argument. Indeed, it is an alternative to such. Here, as elsewhere in the book, there are deep-rooted assumptions that surely require questioning, even surpassing, if the emancipatory potential is to be released.

A *Global Social Movement Unionism* (GSMU) is presented as the best of four possible answers to the trade unions' globalisation crisis, the others being 'Strategic', 'Authoritarian', and 'Political' Unionism. GSMU is here evoked, rather than conceptualised, as a form surpassing subordination to capital, the state and to political parties - one that creates longterm alliances with social movements, and that extends its interests and field of activities to 'civil society' (188, Table 1; 197). The critique, here, of the various failed or failing union models carries more conviction than the promotion of this fourth one. The case meant to represent 'social movement unionism' is the KMU of the Philippines. But this was, in fact, the union front of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines, and it has followed the splits and decline of the latter (West 1997, Abinales 1999). There is an argument to be made for a GSMU but this surely requires reference to more than one or two problematic cases, to make more than passing reference to the GJ&SM, and to be based on a more-systematic conceptualisation (attempted in Waterman 2003).

Occasional reference, in this collection, to what I would call 'the internationalism of labour's others', to singular extra-union labour solidarity networks or actions, or to particular countries/moments (here South Korea, South Africa, Brazil), do not carry sufficient weight to transform a series of eminently relevant and sobering accounts into even the outlines of an alternative.

Finally, I want to return to the academic or theoretical parameters of the work. The introductory argument is that the parameters for the study of international labour are set by (international) political economy. IPE certainly allows for a widening of the past academic parameters of international labour studies. But a new understanding of growing international social protest under globalisation surely cannot occur within the framework of disciplines created for academic purposes (under determined political-economic circumstances?) rather than for socially-emancipatory ones. (It would be interesting to systematically compare here a feminist work on women's internationalism, Naples and Desai 2002). To the Harrod arguments concerning the academic role of international labour studies in relationship to various old or even new disciplines, there needs – for a new kind of labour studies – to be added the relationship of the socially-committed international labour researcher to his/her discipline and to the social movements under consideration (see, again, Edelman below).

*Munck (2002)* is an excellent little work, just over 200 pages, and demonstrates, yet again, the author to be a master of the stimulating synthesis. In a back-cover puff on the book itself I say it will be a basic reference work for this decade, relevant to organisers and educators, students and academics, and that it is going to be at the centre of debate on international labour and labour internationalism. Now, whilst a web search reveals that the book has been acquired by academic libraries in many parts of the world, I have so far been unable to find one such review, never mind a debate. So it looks as if I may have to start this.

The eight chapters present 1) a Polanyian approach to the problem of globalisation and labour, 2) the Golden Era of Western capitalism, 3) the globalisation era and debate, 4) Northern workers, 5) Southern workers, 6) the old internationalism, 7) the new internationalism, and 8) results and prospects.

'*Polanyi?*', I hear you cry, '*Who he?*'. Munck tells us that Karl Polanyi, a brilliant critical social theorist of Central European origin, published in 1944 an innovative but neglected work on the history of capitalism. Crucially, it dealt with the 'double movement' within capitalism historically. This is between market domination of society and a social movement (of labour) to regulate this, thus re-embedding the market in society. Munck not only considers that what we see under neo-liberal globalisation echoes Polanyi's first movement but that what we both need, and can see some evidence of, is the reappearance of the second movement. This is embodied or exemplified, according to Munck, in the international trade union struggle for a 'social clause' in trade agreements (1-5). We are here only on page five and I already have series of further questions, objections or challenges.

Polanyi, to start with, is hardly 'neglected'. A Google search on <Karl Polanyi 2003> yields 3,000 entries. <Ronnie Munck 2003> and <Peter Waterman 2003>, with about 360 each for the same year, are, perhaps, a teeny-weeny bit neglected, but surely not Karl P! Polanyi (again unlike Ronnie and myself) has an institute dedicated to his name, with regular international conferences. His growing popularity is due to the theoretical/moral/political underlay he provided for the 'golden era' of Western capitalism (see Munck's excellent Chapter 2). Or, rather, since we are talking about a revival of interest, the multifaceted justification Polanyi thus provides for an analogous second movement today. This bring us to the 'social clause'.

'*Social Clause?*', I hear you cry, '*What's that?*'. This is, or was, the politically-contradictory and morally-ambiguous Western union strategy of trying to obtain and impose international labour standards through the World Trade Organisation (i.e. the new inter-state organisation responsible for undermining and destroying worker jobs and labour rights). This was itself the culmination of a campaign begun 15-20 years earlier by the ICFTU and the campaign is quite revealing of its attempts to obtain things *for*, rather than *with*, workers, strikes, demonstrations and all that historical 'second movement' stuff. There is a long, complex and shabby story here, and it is thoroughly discussed elsewhere (Working USA 2001). The ICFTU spent considerable, but unpublished, amounts of money and uncountable staff hours trying - in the new millennium's most unfortunate union metaphor - 'To Get a Seat in the WTO Restaurant' (Waghorne 2000). And then in trying to export this MacDonaldised product to those in the South, whom the North, in traditional colonial missionary style, presumed to be ignorant of their own best

interests. More money was then spent on the evaluation of this problematic export strategy. Today this pathetic piece of Westocentric paternalism is being quietly interred by the ICFTU. There has been no announcement of death, no funeral. But the prolonged burial process may be suggested by citations of the ‘social clause’ on the ICFTU website:

1998	23
1999	5
2000 (Congress year)	13
2001	1
2002	0
2003 (till July)	1

So much for the ‘what’. Before dealing with why it gets key attention in Munck, I want to deal with ‘how much?’. The answer is, a lot. There is a sub-section in ‘Workers South’, a further discussion in ‘New Internationalism’, and up to 10 mentions elsewhere. As for *why* this chronicle of a foretold - or at least predictable - death plays such a key role in Munck’s book, this has to be because of his ideological investment in a Polanyian ‘second movement’ – today implying a globalised neo-Keynesianism. In this Munck sees the ICFTU - no doubt reformed, possibly radicalised by the new social movements, and computerised - as playing a leading role (192-4):

At an international level, the ICFTU has, significantly, recently engaged in a Millennial [Millennium - PW] Review of its organisation, capacities and strategy. Even its most fervent critics recognise that the ICFTU is changing from the Cold War, pro-imperialist, narrowly bureaucratic organisation it once was...The Millennial Review was designed to meet precisely these challenges. (192)

‘What Millennium Review?’, I hear you murmur. As well you might, since this idea, which certainly excited me when first mentioned in 2000, is subject to the same (Uneven) Law of Diminishing Citations as the social clause:

2000 (Congress)	12
2001	17
2002	1
2003 (till July)	1

I am afraid that here again Munck’s conviction - that the institutionalised labour movement which brought us the second movement the first time, will also be the first movement the second time - has outweighed the required scepticism of the intellect. Although the one 2003 reference on the ICFTU site *does* claim that the matter will be raised at the 2004 Congress of the ICFTU, it is unlikely, on present evidence, to do more than add a few more members to the orchestra of the Titanic, to add one or two classes to the below-decks passengers.

Readers may now be also asking questions about this *reviewer*. If things are so bad, why does he insist this is going to be a basic reference work as well as the centre of debate? Well, this is because, in addition to his excellent political-economic

chapters (say Chs. 2-6) Munck's book well expresses the present ambiguity of the institutionalised trade union internationals and internationalisms (ITUIs). Like him (and his front cover photo) they show increasing awareness of the GJ&SM. Like him they want a globalised neo-Keynesianism. Like him they think the ITUIs can *lead* this movement and/or that this can be done by *alliance* with the new movement, but without transforming themselves in the light of the model of self-articulation (networking and communication) the latter offers. I think, I hope, that, unlike Ronnie Munck, they are actually further down the road to Seattle-Porto Alegre, than he. (Search the Canadian Labour Congress website, particularly for the pages on Argentina and the Labour Development Forum. Compare with Trades Union Congress 2003, which suggests increased pluralism, if not radicalism). This depends, however, more on the continuing power of attraction exercised by the GJ&SM, rather than any specific union initiative one is aware of. And the new movement is, surely, more likely to coerce capitalism into civilising itself than a subaltern opposition focussed on bargaining fora and bargainable issues.

### **Seattle and Porto Alegre**

*Edelman (2002)*, it seems to me, belongs somewhere within the Seattle-Porto Alegre archipelago. This is because he deals with non-unionised/non-unionisable rural labour, with an international small-farmer network called *Via Campesina* (Peasant Way?), and with the kind of new internationalisms that have themselves both contributed to and been supported by the global justice and solidarity movement (GJ&SM) in general or even the World Social Forum (WSF) in particular. The rural population of the world has now dropped to under 50 percent, and the *classical* peasant and/or rural-based guerilla movements of the past have declined since the days of Mao, Ho and Che. But half the world's population are *still* rural producers or dependent on such, they have become increasingly educated, involved both in other economic activities, and in inter/national labour migration cycles. And neo-liberalism/globalisation has not only been confronting them worldwide with identical, analogous or related ills, but also provoking them to new, innovative - and increasingly international - protest.

Whilst Edelman concentrates on Central America, where there have been particular direct stimuli to rural activism, he addresses himself also to the profoundly different circumstances of Karnataka, India, of José Bové's France, and even to the apparently well-organised small farmers of the Netherlands. He also reveals a common set of aggravating and facilitating circumstances, the latter including the explosive growth of international NGOs (INGOs), of TANs, of UN and other regional or international conferences – many making space for or even primarily addressed to ‘civil society actors’ or ‘global civil society’. Such aggravations/opportunities, of course, also apply to the non-rural world, which is part of the explanation for the explosive growth of the GJ&SM around the turn of the millennium. The other part has to do with the erosion or implosion of ‘emancipatory’ – and even ‘protective’ - states, parties, ideologies, identities and strategies in the face of neo-liberal globalisation.

*Via Campesina* (founded 1993) had a number of initial advantages in its ambition to create an international small farmer network. One was its Central American origin at a time of great social ferment. The other was what it had learned from the shortcomings of an early experiment in regional cooperation, ASOCODE,

which had the intention of surpassing *ongización* (NGOisation) but, flooded by funding from irresponsible Northern funding agencies, then created a top-heavy and top-down body which later went into crisis. *Via Campesina* now operates from a desk in Tegucigalpa, has a part-time coordinator, a limited website (though recently much improved. See Resources), affiliates varying from the Maoist-led KMP in the Philippines to the biggest social movement in Latin America, the innovative MST (Landless Rural Labour Movement, see Stedile 2003, Resources). *Via Campesina* lobbies within the UN and the international financial institutions (compare Jenkins, Pearson and Seyfang above), but is also a regular presence, punching above its weight, within the World Social Forum and at protest events of the GJ&SM. Whatever the current success and future potential of this body, it signals the re-emergence of rural labour as a factor in international labour and social movement politics. It cannot be found in either Jose, in Harrod and O'Brien or Munck. Nor, more significantly, on the websites of the ICFTU, Global Unions, or the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers, the former organisation of Dan Gallin. (I tell a lie: it gets one mention, as an also-ran, where the ICFTU mentions its own participation in a 2001 roundtable involving elements from the GJ&SM).

More important than Edelman's gloss on *Via Campesina* - or my gloss on his gloss - are the questions he raises about his own discipline, anthropology/ethnography, in respect to his subject, peasant or small-farmer movements. These questions, which include those about the relationship of *anthropologists* to their subjects, are equally apropos to anyone studying international labour or other social movements. One problem is that of 'multi-sitedness' – or breadth at the expense of depth. As well as that of over-identification with movements which might claim to have a privileged role in social emancipation, even if only locally. Here he argues for a distancing, not in any conventional academic sense, but in that of focussing on the wider field within which the movement operates, and over which it makes claims. Edelman does not relate the rise of small-farmer movements to the crisis of trade-union movements (there have been major tensions at local and national level in Brazil). But those interested in advancing emancipatory international labour studies are going to have to do this. Indeed, others are to some extent already doing so (Dietrich and Nayak 2001).

*Panitch and Leys (2000)* has its origins in Canada, with which both editors and a number of contributors are connected. And the book should be maybe understood as situated within that part of the emancipation archipelago closest to the United States. In so far as the previous issue of the *Socialist Register* (Panitch and Leys 1999) was actually *on* utopias, it should also be understood as being as being also fairly close to this continent also. The collection reveals the continuing potency of a New Left Marxism, prepared to confront the realities of a globalised, networked, finance and services capitalism. It is against these and other transformations that the international working classes are examined.

Between the editorial Preface and the final Reflections, this ambitious, substantial (392 pages) and original collection has two essays on the new e-workers (one UK: one US, one on low e-workers; one on high ones), one on the 'peasantry' (editorial quotes), one on the North/South division amongst workers, two on India (one on unorganized workers, one on women amongst such), country overviews of South Africa, West Europe, Russia, Iran, Brazil, East Asia, essays on such themes

(overlapping with country studies) as labour and democracy, Islam, working-class self-activity, feminism in the labour movement, maids and madams, a labour-community alliance, and on internationalism with the Zapatistas. This is, unfortunately, the only one on internationalism, though several chapters mention, at least in passing, the institutionalised traditional union internationals (ITUIs).

Panitch and Leys makes a very nice contrast with Harrod and O'Brien, and with Munck. Where it varies from both would be in its explicit Marxist sympathies, its commitment to, on the one hand, the 'other' working classes', and on the other to the GJ&SM. It should be remembered that Vancouver, in the west of Canada, is close to Seattle, that Quebec, in the east, was a site of one major anti-globalisation protest. And that Canada itself has seen a major campaign against US-sponsored 'free trade' agreements, a campaign that developed from a national-protectionist to at least a 'progressive internationalist' one, reaching first Mexico then the rest of Latin America. The question is whether all these resources are sufficient to enable the editors to draw together even the evidence and ideas they have themselves collected on this complex class, divided into at least two worlds (North and South), and displaying the structural, historical and cultural differences of 'Women in India's Informal Sector', 'Chinese Workers in New York', 'West European Trade Unionism', and 'The Working Class and the Islamic State in Iran'. This heavy task falls to the Leo Panitch in his final 'Reflections on a Strategy for Labour'.

Panitch's title is borrowed from a work of Andre Gorz from the 1960s, when the New Left was new. Gorz's later work (1999), the time of the Even Newer Left, is surely more relevant to the collection. The 1999 work concentrates on the necessity for a radical new understanding of work under capitalism, and for any new labour movement to understand and address all its forms (well represented in Panitch and Leys). In so far as Gorz here was proposing a strategy, it was for 'the liberation of time from work'. Panitch's own

key, long-term condition for an alternative to globalisation is democratic investment control within each state. (381)

As measured against 'the liberation of time from work', this comes over as not only failing the 'slogan test' (would it look good on a banner?) but as again looking back toward a nationally-defined solution to labour's global problems. True, Panitch lays stress on the 'democratic' here. True, he adds: '*refounding, reorganising and democratizing the labour movement itself*' (383); a non-party but 'structured movement' (385-6), capable of surpassing the existing anti-corporate coalition; and, finally, '*a new internationalism*' (387). I would consider that – despite its gestures toward learning from Brazil and South Africa, and of open discussion about each other's weaknesses and failings – Panitch's argument (for what Laxer 2001 elsewhere calls 'left nationalism/internationalism'), remains hostage to the nationalist internationalisms of the past. The problem here is not so much that Panitch reproduces, as he himself admits (387), the Northern bias of Gorz. It is that he prioritises and thus fetishises the state-national, as the necessary place, space and identity for the emancipation of labour and society, at a time in which this scale or identity is being relativised by the local, the regional, the global and the cyberspatial.

The resistance of this Marxism to what is being increasingly recognised, even by the ITUIs, as a new ‘global solidarity’, and which is both powered by and modelled on cyberspace, is revealed in the disappointing exchange, in this issue of the *Socialist Register*, on ‘Virtual Chiapas’. The exchange falls outside the focus on the working class, since it is a follow-up to an article in the ‘Utopias’ issue of the annual. It is disappointing because of its failure to place the Chiapas case within any general understanding of the relationship between human emancipation, international solidarity and cyberspace. As I said of this issue when raised in the previous *Socialist Register*:

International solidarity with Chiapas has been heavily marked by the *old* Northern left myth of the revolutionary savage and an *old* left syndrome of self-subordination to such. That this syndrome can be reproduced or even reinforced by the web may be disappointing but should not be surprising to those who know: that media means manipulation (or, if you prefer a kinder word, mediation); how the web works for dominant forces; and how deep the present crisis of the left is internationally. This case is, moreover, one of computer-mediated solidarity on the North-South axis and in a North-to-South direction. Other contributors to SR 2000 argue for the potential of the web for social movements and socialism. Seattle would have been unimaginable without it. So what we need to think about is

- the increasing centrality of this increasingly-integrated multi-medium for a post capitalist utopia,
- addressed to the globalisation the Zapatistas have exposed,
- which their electronic friends have narrowcast to the world,
- relevant to North and South, East and West.

What we need to work out is the relationship between an increasingly real (life-invading, life-enhancing) virtuality and the tangible places where people die, survive – and would like to be able to more fully live. (Waterman 2000)

Back to Panitch and Leys. Here a one-line soundbite appears appropriate: Working Classes; Global Realities; Socialist Headaches.

## Utopia

In relation to international labour studies, utopia is connected, at least in my mind, with the greatest of anti-utopian utopians, Karl Marx. And therefore with Marxism, as a counter-hegemonic orientation to international labour studies – and, of course, internationalism (previously known as ‘cosmopolitanism’). This has one foot firmly placed in industrial capitalism and the other just as firmly in a socialist future. Put more broadly and dramatically, Marxism is

an unusual, perhaps unique, combination of...science, critique, vision and recipe for revolution...with each of these qualities contributing to and feeding off the others. (Ollman 2003:82).

This is a strong claim. It gives Marxism the aura of established truth, infinite both in space and time, of representing both the extent and limits of social science and social transformation – which, indeed, are here identical. My inclination, however, would be to rather see this claim as itself a utopian vision. If, moreover, we consider Ollman's Marxism-as-Vision to exist within a *history* of emancipatory thought and struggle, this might allow us to consider, 1) whether or not Marxism(s) are today promoting the emancipation of labour, and if not, 2) whether international labour studies need also emancipating from Marxism.

*Chris Harman* (2002), a leading figure within the Socialist (Trotskyist) Workers' Party in the UK, has produced a major analysis of the world's working class, intended to argue the 'classical' and 'simple' Marxist vision that

The growth of capitalism was necessarily accompanied by the growth of the class it exploited, the working class, and this would be at the centre of the revolt against the system. (Harman 2002:3)

I am not going to here go into an analysis of Harman's own analysis, leaving this to people better with statistics than I am. I would, however, suggest that his figures, or use of figures, exists in a certain tension with those of other researchers sympathetic to unionism (Harriss-White and Gooptu 2000, Dasgupta 2003, Portes and Hofman 2003) and who, simultaneously, are *not* those with whom Harman is here primarily concerned. The targets here are various deviant Marxists, Post-Marxists and left Post-Structuralists who have been questioning such a classical and simple Marxism as he offers. Harman sets out on a long march through the statistics to demonstrate that announcements of the death of the proletariat have been much exaggerated, and that the world's working class is bigger, absolutely and relatively, than ever. He says that it is therefore an error to see

movements of disparate social groups as 'social subjects', capable of bringing about a transformation of society. They are not. Because their base is not centred in collective organization rooted in production, they cannot challenge the control over that production which is central to ruling class power. (40).

He ends by urging the necessity for the new global solidarity movement to 'find ways to connect with the great mass of ordinary workers', who would then, presumably, lead the disparate anti-capitalist movement in a clearly socialist direction.

Harman's account deals primarily with workers in their existence as a 'proletariat' (or as related to such), rather than as a 'working class'. This means in their existence for *capital* rather than their existence for *themselves* (even more for *the emancipation of humankind*). The assumption that one can read off working-class consciousness, desire and capacity from structural position is, indeed, a 'classical simple' reading of Marxism, but represents a political-economic-determinist rather than a movement-focused, historical and dialectical reading. As one recent critic of socialist – and feminist – determinism puts it of the Chinese women workers in her study, they

are not mere passive receptacles for patriarchal and capitalist ideologies. They engage in a contested process of actively defining their identities and constituting their interests as political and cultural subjects. They are shaped but not determined by the bourgeois and patriarchal 'others'. (Lee 1998:162)

Indeed, Lee even argues that her workers are agents in creating the workplace structures and processes within which they exist, survive and struggle! (With at least the implication that such agency can develop itself in a post-capitalist direction?).

Chris Harman mentions working-class (actually trade-union) behaviour only in passing. And then to reveal, at least to readers, its contradictory nature (South Korea, 1990s, positive? Bombay textiles, 1980s, negative?). His assertion of working-class primacy remains a theoretical assertion (past), an inevitability (future), and a strategic necessity for the 'global justice and solidarity movement' (GJ&SM) right now. Given the problematic past and present of his proletariat/working class, given that future necessity or inevitability needs, for conviction, to be based on present evidence and/or argued immanence, rather than theoretical reassessment, we are left only with the strategic prescription.

Chris Harman has nothing to say about the working class (or working classes) as privileged subjects of *internationalism* (or, in my hopefully more contemporary phrase, 'global solidarity'). However, as anyone who looks can see, it is the new GJ&SM that is the vanguard of contemporary internationalism. Which may be why Harman avoids addressing the matter. In reality, of course, it is such new, 'non-proletarian', 'diverse', 'identity' movements that have been bringing internationalism back into the union movement!

Curiously - and despite the presumed vanguard role of the working class - Harman's address is not to this class to win the leadership of the GJ&SM, but to the diverse and cross-class movement to win the working class! Here the SWP's investment in the new movement wins out over traditional theory and future aspiration.

I am not, of course, trying to assert some correct, essential and eternal Marx against Harman's 'classical and simple' one. We are now living in a post-classical, post-simple, phase of capitalism and proletarianisation. And this requires a complex understanding of such inter-relations as those: between different kinds of work/er and labour-for-capital; between labour and other struggles; between class and democratic movements; between interest and identity; and between localism, nationalism, regionalism and internationalism. At least if we are concerned with recognising, confronting and surpassing the multiple forms of alienation with which a capitalism marked by globalisation, informatisation, consumerism, services and finance increasingly confronts us.

In such a situation, it seems to me, a theory which homogenises the working class, according 'it' an essence that over-rides 150 years of industrial revolutions and capitalist transformations, is likely to be of less heuristic value than one which assumes repeated de-structuring, differentiation, division and distance, amongst

working classes. And which then addresses itself to the question of how such can be surpassed.

*Hobsbawm* (2002) is, of course, the joker even in this utopian pack. His book is not about this century but the past one. It is not social science but political autobiography. It is not about labour but the world. It is, however, *also* about the end of a Communist, Marxist, socialist and even a labour utopia, and therefore bears upon the possibility of even *thinking*, in this new century, about a new articulation between labour, internationalism and emancipation. Born in Year One of the Russian Revolution, 1917, Eric Hobsbawm is one of the greatest social historians of his time. *Of his time*. This also means that whilst he lived through, surveys and even impacted on the era and the world of national-industrial capitalism, its discontents and counter-movements, he fails, I think, to surpass it.

Hobsbawm sees his century as a disappointing, even tragic, one ('May you live in interesting times!' is a Chinese curse). Hobsbawm's history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is called *The Age of Extremes* (Hobsbawm 1994). His best-known intervention into British left politics was entitled 'The Forward March of Labour Halted' (Ch.6). A great labour historian, Hobsbawm appears trapped in the world he evokes. Hobsbawm *lived*, as a Communist, the world of industrial capitalism, the rise of the working class, of trade unionism, of socialist political parties, of nation-states and revolutionary state-building. As also of a labour and socialist internationalism that, as he himself recognises (Hobsbawm 1988), became in the 20<sup>th</sup> century less a matter of autonomous 'agitators', increasingly a matter of state/party 'agents'. His itinerary, as a path-breaking social historian, as a Communist activist, and as a cosmopolitan and multi-lingual traveller, is never less than interesting. There are shafts of light and moments of admitted confusion, as well as of self-criticism.

But the book leaves one puzzled at his inability to recognise the extent to which the labour movement, as Marxism's privileged agent of social emancipation and internationalism, was, as the century drew to a close, being first challenged and then overtaken by a widening range of social classes, categories and movements, with one origin in an earlier worldwide revolt, of the 1960s, with which he felt limited kinship (Ch. 15).

Here we have to contrast Hobsbawm with his contemporary countryman, another great labour and social historian, and social theorist, the one-time Communist, Edward Thompson. Thompson, who abandoned Communism a generation before...well...before Communism abandoned Eric Hobsbawm, threw himself with his very considerable energy and talent into the British and international peace, democratic rights and solidarity movements (particularly with East European dissidents in the 1980s), thus prefiguring an internationalism of a 'post-nation-state' era. Although his final chapter was written after September 11, 2001, Hobsbawm seems not to have noticed the 'global justice and solidarity movement' that both before and after this admittedly-sobering event, was beginning to shape a new articulation between labour, unions, youth, women, indigenous peoples, between the 'primitive rebels' (250) of one his most imaginative books and the sophisticated ones of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Conclusion: the forward march of international labour studies recommenced**

It is the customary privilege of the reviewer to dump on others, from a great height, this height preserving his own position from similar treatment. Or even from revelation. Frequent mention of the World Social Forum and the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement, as well as evident sympathy for the contribution of Edelman, reveals that I also inhabit the archipelago that runs from Seattle to Porto Alegre - with planned extension to Mumbai in 2004. Given the partisanship that evidently underlies and motivates this review, I feel required to at least draw some more explicit conclusions or suggestions. At the beginning of my Utopian section, moreover, I did raise the question of emancipating labour internationalism and international labour studies from Marxism. Or at least from those Marxisms coming from Planet Marx (an extra-terrestrial place, visas for which are issued only on recognition of the unique truth-aura that surrounds it). I even revealed, I hope, a certain sympathy for the notion of combining 'science, critique, vision and recipe for revolution'. And I used, in the introduction, the notion of 'emancipatory labour studies' (ELS). A little cautious, now, of claiming more than an 'unusual' value for this notion, let me try to combine some earlier thoughts (Waterman 2001) with some more directly related to this review. The earlier thoughts went something like this:

The secular trinity of 19<sup>th</sup>-century socialism was Labour-Internationalism-Emancipation. As early-industrial capitalism developed into a national-industrial-colonial capitalism, the internationalism of labour became literally *international*, and simultaneously lost its emancipatory aspiration and capacity (or vice versa). The dramatic – and labour-devastating – development of a globalised-networked-informatised capitalism is raising the necessity and possibility of a new kind of labour internationalism, capable not only of defence against neo-liberal globalisation but also of an emancipatory challenge to capitalism as such. This implies self-liberation from the traditional (understanding of the) working-class, the trade-union form and socialist ideology. Such an emancipation can be assisted by a recognition of the work and workers produced by a globalised-networked-informatised capitalism. Positively it requires a close articulation of labour with the global justice movement (a.k.a. 'anti-globalisation', 'anti-corporate' and 'anti-capitalist'), and serious address to processes, discontents, social actors, movements and alternatives previously considered marginal or irrelevant. An emancipatory labour internationalism will also need to re-discover utopia.

So much (or little) for an emancipatory labour internationalism. An emancipatory labour studies (ELS) requires reflection on a certain elements related to this scenario. I will limit myself to one reflection about process, another about space, a third about method.

*Process.* Although a number of the above-mentioned books and authors allow for and/or show evidence of involvement in a dialogue with union leaders or labour activists, I do not think we can say that contemporary international labour studies reveals or furthers a systematic dialogue involving the relevant parties. By this I mean that it does not systematically reveal, express or feed into such. In so far as 'emancipation' applies as much to process as to outcome, then an ELI would require at least elements of serious dialogue between academics, union leaders, union members, NGOs and such other significant worker and citizen identities as have been mentioned above. There are obstacles to this on both – on all – sides of such a

‘multilogue’, including the territorial claims of union officers, working-class anti-intellectualism, popular suspicion or scepticism of visiting firemen, or women. But in so far as this piece is more likely to be read by other academics, it will do no harm to emphasise not so much academic elitism (easy target) but the manner in which this elitism coincides or combines with Marxist theory and vanguardist practice (Graeber 2003).

*Space.* David Graeber’s paper is a thoughtful appreciation of the anarchist intellectual and political tradition and its presence within the GJ&SM. It was presented at an academic seminar but published on a website of the Indy Media Centre – itself a major, de-centred but international/ist, multi-media site of the new global movement. Which is where I found it and where one might expect it to be most discussed. Now, it is clear that any website, and English-language text, even in easy-access academic language, and at reasonable length, is going to be inaccessible (as we are ritually reminded, on the web, by left cyberphobes and cybernoughts) to indigenous women bidi-makers in rural Andhra Pradesh. But 1) this has been successively true of the press, of the camera, of radio, of cinema and video, and 2) cyberspace operates on revolutionary communicational principles that a) surpass the one-to-one, or one-to-many, technologies of previous media and b) surpass the local parameters of traditional many-to-many networking/communication: ‘chat’ is now itself part of the cybergalaxy. Whilst most (inter)national labour websites have limited, if any, space for serious discussion, other parts of cyberspace have demonstrated its capacity to break through at least the academic/activist divide.

Also significant are those spaces that are simultaneously places. I am here thinking primarily of the World Social Forum, no longer a single event but a type of such, marked by the primacy here of ‘proposition’. This means by its focus on alternatives to neo-liberal corporate-dominated globalisation, its openness to civil social actors, and its dialogical intentions (Sen et. al. Forthcoming). Although, up to now, the Forum form has been dominated by the Panel (ten-to-many?), the possibility for a multiplicity of such has made Social Forums a place increasingly attractive to labour TANs, to the TIUIs, and to those pro-labour individuals or *groupuscules* that fall outside these institutions. Place of speech and space of dialogue matter. Whilst there is nothing in the Forum form to *prevent*, for example, academic labour specialists from competitively boring the pants off each other, as in conventional academic conferences, the desire for impact and influence encourages them to express themselves in formats accessible and attractive to activists. It is, in any case, with and from the Forum that new ideas are developing concerning popular knowledge-production and the common self-education of activists, leaders and, presumably, academics (Sousa Santos 2003a, b). Whilst labour, and socialist intellectuals, have certainly had a hand in the repeated Calls of Social Movements emanating from such Forums, this has so far been largely a place at which the various international(ist) labour parties (in the non-party sense) speak *to* each other rather than *with* each other. But one could imagine a time in which those academics interested in an ELS would consider their presence at a global or regional Social Forum as more worthwhile – for both input and output – than even an academic or union event to which the other party is invited.

*Method.* Here I am thinking of the fixation on institutions in international labour studies (a fixation I share). Or, rather, of the necessity for ‘indiscipline’, of

cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary or extra-disciplinary work here. I have been confronted, on a number of occasions, even around the new movement, with remarks to the effect that Naomi Klein (2001) is ‘just a journalist’ (like William Greider 1997? Like Andrew Ross 1999?). Let us disregard the hypothetical motive of *envy* here. Let us impute to such opinions nothing graver than bourgeois, elitist, academic arrogance. I think that any work concerning labour internationalism, including testimonies, novels, videos, and music, should be evaluated according to, 1) the technical or artistic criteria relevant to the mode, and 2) their contribution to human emancipation. Stating this is not a vulgar anti-academic populism. Because I have equal admiration for emancipatory academic work that I have to struggle with (and may not even have had the *succes d'estime* of – to grasp an example out of the air – Hardt and Negri 2001).

Bringing this wandering chicken back to its roost, I want refer again to ethnography. This discipline has its own problems, as further spelled out by Edelman (2001). But I have been, in this essay, primarily concerned with the absence of people (in Spanish, more evocatively, *lo popular*) in the studies reviewed. And, in so far as ethnography is supposed to concern itself with these, I am particularly sympathetic to such work, at least when put together in a cocktail with globalisation. And then stirred rather than shaken. Or, maybe it is simply a couple of ethnographers, concerned with the newest experiences of globalisation and popular response to such, who have impressed me.

Here I would draw attention to the work of Michael Burawoy and his students (Burawoy et. al. 2000). Reflecting on a common research project Burawoy calls for ‘grounding globalisation’ (337-50). This is not, however, a work that even touches on international unionism or labour internationalism. What it nonetheless reveals is the way in which working people, some of them waged or formerly so, experience globalisation, survive it and sometimes challenge it. And how, in so doing, isolated rural women, in one interesting case, were able to locally re-cycle, for their own ends, the work of North American academic feminists and local NGOs. Burawoy notes, but cautiously, in his last paragraphs, the Seattle explosion, which must have occurred as he was reading his proofs. But just before this he says (employing a concept for our present era that I won’t mind never seeing again) the following:

Instead of reaching for a global theory of the Global Postmodern, we should try to map out its distinctive and emergent political terrain. If Global Imperialism governed through coercion, the forcible domination of centre over periphery, metropolis over colony, empire over satellite, the Global Postmodern is a world governed by hegemony in which consent prevails over coercion. It is dominated by a constellation of ideologies – market freedom and liberal democracy, sovereignty and human rights – that recognises and works through difference. To be sure, hegemony is always ‘protected by the armour of coercion’, but the latter is deployed only episodically (if dramatically) and in the name of universal principles. Global Imperialism called forth wars of moment, violent anticolonial struggles, inter-national wars, but in the Global Postmodern wars of movement are doomed to defeat. Just as national hegemony cannot be overthrown by revolution, so Western global hegemonies cannot be

overthrown through violence. Instead we turn to wars of position in which different groups with multiple identities have to be woven together around universalistic principles such as human rights or environmental justice. It is a war of position because it builds up a mosaic from multiple locations. Its trenches lie in the burgeoning transnational society of ethnic diasporas, deterritorialised nations, nongovernment organisations, professional associations, the global civil society that becomes denser by the day. It is not so much a matter of creating movements outside the hegemonic order but rather on its terrain, radicalising the meaning of democracy, appropriating the market, democratising sovereignty and expanding human rights. (349)

This was written before ‘nine-eleven’, and the return to Rudyard Kipling’s ‘savage wars of peace’ by the most primitive part of the US elite (and its foreign pro-consuls). But it is an important reminder to the international left that this neo-imperialist *policy* operates within an *epoch* of globalisation and that, therefore, other such policies – a global neo-Keynesianism for example – cannot be discounted. A left that reverts to the rhetoric and strategies of traditional anti-imperialism will fail to effectively recognise and surpass the hegemonic appeals of such a neo-Keynesianism, just as it did the first time round.

However, the major significance of Burawoy’s conclusion lies for me not so much in what it says as where it comes from and what it implies for labour internationalism. It comes out of studies of working people, of many kinds, in radically different locales, all profoundly re-shaped by neo-liberal globalisation. Its implication for labour internationalism is: this is the new terrain, discourse and orientation. Burawoy is evidently aware of labouring people but does not hint at labour internationalism or even labour struggles, except in so far as he here mentions ‘appropriating the market’. This is an area in which a new labour internationalism, like the classical one, could and should be pro-active - and far beyond wages, jobs and conditions. But it is, just as obviously, a terrain on which increasing numbers of social movements are active – just as labour is, could be, or should be, on the ‘non-economic’ ones. An emancipatory labour internationalism, in other words, must today be constructed on a terrain which does not necessarily privilege labour as activity, identity or movement, but which simultaneously provides labour internationalism with an opportunity for re-commencing its forward march. And an emancipatory labour studies would both follow and stimulate such.

Oh, and what about ‘science, critique, vision and recipe for revolution’? Well, I hope I have at least touched above on everything except ‘revolution’. I have elsewhere suggested that the contemporary task of revolutionaries is to make the revolution unnecessary and, by this token, the counter-revolution impossible. This would seem to be both consistent with Burawoy and contradictory to Marx. Given, however, the miserable results of Marxist-inspired revolutions, particularly for the proletariat, the debilitating fear, for believers, of invasion, of counter-revolution, or of ‘the revolution betrayed’ (such betrayal increasingly appearing as *internal* to the notion of revolution), this may be no bad thing. Locked in a dance of death that gripped the international labour movement for 100 years or more, we can leave Insurrectionism and Reformism to bury each other. Now is surely the time to say, like

the therapist to whom Portnoy (Roth 1970) has been revealing his sorely-divided soul for several hundred pages, ‘Now we may perhaps to begin?’.

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