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Draft for Discussion

An Emancipatory Global Labour Studies is Necessary!

Recreating the Global Labour Movement in the Hour of Furnaces

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A strange delusion possesses the working classes of the nations where capitalist civilisation holds its sway. This delusion drags in its train the individual and social woes which for two centuries have tortured sad humanity. This delusion is the love of work, the furious passion for work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the vital force of the individual and his progeny. Instead of opposing this mental aberration, the priests, the economists and the moralists have cast a sacred halo over work. Blind and finite men, they have wished to be wiser than their God; weak and contemptible men, they have presumed to rehabilitate what their God had cursed. I, who do not profess to be a Christian, an economist or a moralist, I appeal from their judgement to that of their God; from the preachings of their religious, economics or free thought ethics, to the frightful consequences of work in capitalist society.
(Paul Lafargue 1883)

[The changing nature of work and production opens up] a number of major questions not just for the development of frameworks for future empirical research, but for our very conception of society: What models of individual autonomy and choice can we use to understand human agency in an increasingly commodified economy? How should we conceptualise the increasingly fluid boundaries between 'work' and 'leisure', 'production' and 'consumption', 'service delivery' and 'service use'? When citizens are pitted against one another in their capacities as workers and as consumers, what forms of social organisation are possible to enable them to express their collective interests and gain some purchase on their decision-making process? When both employment and consumption relationships are increasingly transacted over geographical distances, often across national borders, what forms of representation, negotiation, and regulation are possible?
(Ursula Huws 2003:186)

In the longer term…the development of the world working class will have to become the analytical background against which trade-union internationalism is analysed.
(Marcel v.d. Linden 2008: 261, fn 6)

Now is the hour of furnaces and nothing but light should be seen.
(José Martí, 1853-95)

Introduction

There is a welcome new wave of what is beginning to call itself 'The New Global Labour Studies'. This considers work, workers and unions in the light of globalisation and then at local, national, regional and global level. The new wave could be considered, at least in part, to accompany the new 'Global Justice and Solidarity Movement' and the wave of writing inspired by such. But is the New Global Labour Studies (NGLS) also *informed and motivated* by the new popular and radical-democratic social movements, by its new principles of articulation, or by the new theorising? The NGLS would not be new if it did not reflect on the crisis confronting work and working people globally, as also on that of the inter/national trade union movement. It therefore also has implicit or explicit implications for inter/national unionism. But does it also fan the labour sparks thrown out by the planet-consuming furnace of capitalist globalisation and paleo-liberalism?

This paper 1) critiques the NGLS for its social-liberal parameters, concentrating on the supra-national or global level, spaces, sites or aspects. It argues 2) the necessity for an 'Emancipatory Global Labour Studies' (EGLS) and suggests some possible theoretical sources of such. It presents 3) some cases for research on labour(-related) social movements with hypothetically emancipatory potential. It considers 4) information technology and cyberspace as a crucial new agora of labour struggle and a crucial resource for movement-oriented international labour studies.

1. The New Global Labour Studies[1]

I associate the NGLS initially with a particular book and journal and intend to take these as representative of a growing body of writing and dialogue. The book is *Grounding*

[1] The background to this paper is the involvement of many of the parties addressed with the 'New International Labour Studies' (NILS) of the 1980s. These include Ronnie Munck, Eddie Webster, Rob Lambert and myself . Over the decades we have both collaborated and disagreed, but always, I hope, respectfully and with continuing appreciation for each other's work. For accounts of the passage from NILS to NGLS see Munck (2009 and/or 2010). For the gradual re-emergence of Left international labour studies in the UK, see Waterman (2009). In commenting on an earlier draft of this paper, Laurence Cox, a founder of the new online social movements journal, Interface, says, in part:

> In terms specifically of [Global Labour Studies], I get the sense of a field highly structured by forces outside itself – some work representing a thoroughly institutionalised perspective, with only limited ability to think beyond actually-existing circumstances; some fascinating work (usually historical or ethnographic) around specific kinds of struggle but which don't really offer much by way of practical orientation for most working stituations; and some passionate but usually wildly generalising writing from specific political positions. (Email received 070911).

I can only hope that this revised version, which benefits from participation in the South African GLU Conference and conversations with my hosts in Johannesburg (Eddie Webster and Luli Calinicos) and Durban (Pat Horne and Patrick Bond), will go some way toward meeting the needs of this more than 'half-informed outsider'. But I also think that, given the one-way, top-down, centre-periphery, North to South flow of funding and institution-building, there would be a good case for a political-economic (power and money) analysis of the NGLS, a research task I leave to others.

Globalisation: Labour in the Age of Insecurity. And the journal is the new *Global Labour Journal*. There is an overlap between the authors of the first and the editors of the second. Indeed, there is also a certain overlap between these and a particular union network, the Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights (Sigtur). And (at least initially?) with the Research Committee 44 (Labour Movements) of the International Sociological Association. And, finally, with the Northern-based but largely Southern-targeted Global Labour University.[2] There are other links - personal, professional, institutional and ideological - between the NGLS on the one hand and the traditional inter/national trade union organisations and the inter-state International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the other. The book and journal seem therefore relevant and worthy objects of critique. The NGLS has, finally, a much wider spread, or force of attraction, within the broader field of cross-national and global labour studies, being, thus, more like a complex or network, the characteristics of which this part will attempt to specify.

The book[3]

Firstly, then, Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2010). This book (henceforth *Grounding*) is a highly original and ambitious work, which should provoke discussion and encourage further work amongst labour-oriented academics and research-minded activists in coming years (see full review Waterman 2011a). *Grounding* focuses on the tribulations and struggles of factory workers in the 'white goods' (refrigerators, washing machines, etc) industry in one locale each of Australia, South Korea and South Africa. The book could be considered as the major contribution (at least in English) from the 'Global South' to the widening Left efforts to reconceptualise and reinvent the labour movement worldwide in the age of globalisation.[4]

Grounding depends on a critical reconsideration of the theory of 20th century Left sociologist and social historian, Karl Polanyi, with his currently much-cited and promoted work (e.g. Munck 2002, 2009, 2010) on 'the great transformation' brought

[2] The Global Labour University, based in Kassel and Berlin, Germany, now has branches in India, Brazil and South Africa. Despite being firmly rooted within the homeland of traditional inter-state and international trade union institutions, as well as social-liberal discourses of labour relations, it is also a source of, or has hosted, work that goes beyond the canon of 'social partnership'. See here the GLU conference held in Johannesburg, October, 2011, and the abstracts of papers contributed to this. Consider, in particular, the work of conference participants, Melisa Serrano and Edlira Xhafa (2011), published in a joint ILO/GLU publication. More on these later.

[3] This and the following sub-section draw on Waterman (2011a and b).

[4] An earlier Southern exception comes to mind, the English/Spanish 'Labour Again' list http://www.iisg.nl/labouragain/index.php. After a promising start, however, it seems to have fallen into disuse. It is nonetheless worth a visit…or a revival. The absence of Latin American labour studies from the resources deployed by *Grounding* is dramatically revealed by the contribution to the *Global Labour Journal* of Enrique de la Garza (2011). In a special issue on 'making public sociology' edited by Michael Burawoy, de la Garza reveals the theoretical/political riches of this tradition, as well as giving us a moving autobiographical account of his life as a movement-oriented labour specialist. I also discover, for the first time, that whilst we were busy with the New International Labour Studies in Europe and the Anglophone world, he was busy with a rather more-substantial 'New Labour Studies' in Mexico and Latin America.

about by the first industrial revolution, of the 'double movement' in which the capitalist economy came to dominate society and how this provoked a movement to 're-embed' the economy in society. *Grounding*, however, marshals other theorists to supplement or correct Polanyi. They include, notably, Sidney Tarrow (2005) on transnational social movements, and Michael Burawoy (2000, 2004) on, respectively, movements against globalisation and the relationship of socially-committed academics to the people and movements they study (indeed, the title of their book does homage to Burawoy). The authors also make use of radical social geographers such as David Harvey, with arguments concerning capital's spatial operations and the necessity for multi-spatial and multi-level counter-strategies.

Whilst they do not synthesise their theoretical sources, far less draw from them a set of initial propositions, the authors do deploy them throughout the work with elegance and effect. Curiously, *Grounding* does not conceptualise, in its theoretical introduction, two related notions from the old New International Lab our Studies that nonetheless repeatedly reappear throughout the book, 'social movement unionism' and 'the new labour internationalism' (although the latter, as we will see, is at least defined in Chapter 9). Yet these two concepts actually seem to underlie or at least inspire their work. More limiting, however, is their failure to deal with computerisation/informatisation as a fundamental characteristic of capitalist globalisation and a crucial terrain of labour and other social movement struggle against this. Informatisation depends on and creates *another space* – cyberspace – which emancipatory social movements ignore at their peril.[5] The implications of this void in the theoretical peregrinations of GG, become evident in the chapter on a new labour internationalism.

The internationalism chapter of *Grounding* (Chapter 9) depends on a schematic opposition between an old and a new labour (actually *union*) internationalism (Table 9.1), in which the characteristics are:

Old Labour Internationalism	New Labour Internationalism
Career bureaucrats	Political generation of commited activists
Hierarchy and large bureaucracy	The network form
Centralisation	Decentralisation
Restricted debate	Open dialogue
Dipomatic orientation	Mobilisation and campaign orientation
Focus on workplace and trade unions only	Coalition with new social movements and NGOs
Predominantly established, Northern, male, white workers	Predominantly struggling Southern Afro, Asian and Latino workers

Whilst such Manichean oppositional schemes are a common rhetorical or polemical device (of a kind I may myself have employed), and whilst this one does powerfully challenge the old union internationalism, the characterisation of the new is itself open to challenge. Where, for example, is the alternative to, opposite, or surpassing of, the 'male-

[5] The key text on informatisation and networking is Castells (1996-8), which deals both with the present revolution in capitalism and new forms of cyberspace resistance to such. Increasing Left writings, however, concern themselves with cyberspace and social movements in general or even with labour movements in particular. Apart from Eric Lee (1996), consider Escobar (2004), Dyer-Witheford (1999), Martinez (2006), Robinson (2006, 2011) and Waterman (2010).

dominated'? Not on the table, nor, actually, in the book's index, any more than are 'women' or 'feminism'.[6] Nor, indeed, are there on this table any 'new' theories/ideologies/discourses. Such schematic presentations of internationalism need, I would argue, to be supplemented by wider and deeper features/aspects such as, for example, the following (Waterman 1998:57-63, 235-8).[7] These include

- distinctions between different active *bearers* of internationalism (the union organisation? the broader labour movement? the new global social movements more generally? labour-movement or labour-oriented activists/researchers?),
- the *axes, directionality, reach and depth* of international solidarity actions or campaigns,
- the distinct *possible yet problematic types of solidarity* within either the old or the new (Identity? Substitution? Complementarity? Reciprocity? Affinity? Restitution?),
- the *meaning* to those workers involved at either end of the transaction (or any point of the network) of the solidarity they are involved in.

I am equally unconvinced by this chapter that a new union internationalism is or will be *primarily* carried by the Southern workers (Waterman 1998:Ch.5). Indeed, it could be seen as a prerequisite of any new union or labour internationalism that it develop out of a global dialectic and dialogue

- between all world areas - including the here forgotten (ex-)Communist one and that humungous new CommuCapitalist Workshop of the World, China (subsumed with difficulty into any homogenous North or South)!

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[6] Hale and Wills (2005) deals not only with another globalised industry, garment production, but with an overwhelmingly female workforce, and one in which global resistance is promoted by feminists and takes the networking form.

[7] Marcel van der Linden is the key figure in the 'Amsterdam School' of 'Global Labour History'. A major historian of union, labour and social-movement internationalism, he reminds us that the union internationals today only represent between five and ten percent of the world's wage-earners (van der Linden 2008:280). Van der Linden also warns us, concerning his own recent work on labour internationalism, that

> Since the historiography of trade-union internationalism is far more advanced than the historiography of the world working class, I focus on the development of labour organisations here. In the longer term, however, that approach should be reversed, i.e. the development of the world working class will have to become the analytical background against which trade-union internationalism is analysed. (v. d. Linden 2008:261, footnote 6).

Van der Linden also reminds us – should we need such reminding - that Marx's working class bearer of human social emancipation was only a tiny proportion of the then-existing working classes and therefore proposes another theoretical basis for including these others (van der Linden 2006:Ch. 2). Actually we *do* need such reminding because whilst we did or do know this, we assumed global industrialisation and the consequent generalisation of the industrial proletariat.

- With the full range of radical-democratic worker movements
- with the complete range of radically-democratic social movements
- between labour organisations/movements and socially-committed academics.

The 'new internationalist' cases that this chapter of *Groundings* offers are all from the Geographic South, though Australia is, obviously (if embarrassingly) part of the Socio-Economic North, and South Korea is in the Geographic North (Seoul is almost as far North as Lisbon)! Even the most 'socially southern' of the three, South Africa, is a somewhat atypical member of the Global South - although what would be a 'typically' Southern state/society is today questionable. So any Manichean, or even a simple binary opposition, between North and South is here either fatally undermined or rendered seriously problematic.

The major case offered for the new union internationalism is the Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights (Sigtur). It is no coincidence that this network links major unions in the three case countries in this book. Nor that one of the *Grounding* authors, Rob Lambert, is a founder and keystone of this network. Nor that he and Eddie Webster have been its major academic promoters. So one has to decide whether authorial over-identification does not seriously exaggerate its importance.

Sigtur has no presence within the World Social Forum (unlike the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and the South African Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), it has attended only one WSF). And after almost two decades of existence it has a weak and non-dialogical web presence.[8] Yet a dialogical web presence is today surely another requirement for any new labour internationalism. Nor are we offered, in the presentation of Sigtur, here or elsewhere, any serious discussion of the 'North/South' relationship *between* the three countries that the authors consider 'the fundamental challenge to a new labour internationalism' (209). Yet Australia, home base of Sigtur, is a Northern wolf in Southern sheep's clothing. Sigtur has, finally, been so far trapped in an unrecognised or unadmitted contradiction - or at least a foundational tension - between trying to build a new *networked* labour movement internationalism on the basis of leadership relations between trade union *organisations* that themselves reproduce the state-national base of their Old Labour Internationalism.[9]

[8] www.sigtur.com/. Although I was given to understand, early 2010, that this was to gain a dialogue feature, it has not, at time of writing, come into existence. Moreover, the presence of Sigtur on the new UnionBook blogsite is more or less limited to propaganda. A rare academic contribution to the Sigtur site (reproduced on that of UnionBook), by Robert O'Brien, is actually an endorsement of the network with a few cautionary comments. We are, thus, confronted with a small circle of academics (who reappear as co-authors of *Grounding* and editors of *the Global Labour* Journal) and a limited network of traditional Left trade union leaders involved in a largely self-referential relationship. The Sigtur website is not, at least yet, the space in which an emancipatory global labour internationalism can be developed. Perhaps it will come to contribute to such in the future but this would require it to enter into direct, open, horizontal dialogue with other such cyberspaces, something I will return to.

[9] Sigtur membership consists primarily of national union centers of some unspecified 'Left ', 'progressive' or 'democratic' nature. In the case of the Philippines, this is the Kilusang Mayo Uno, long associated with the (Maoist) Communist Party of the Philippines (http://jpe.library.arizona. edu/volume_6/westvol6.htm). In the case of India, it is the two major Communist trade union federations, one of which is associated with the Communist-led Government of West Bengal, itself responsible for land clearance and peasant

Grounding is, therefore, a work still imprisoned within earlier stages of capitalism and the incrementalist discourses of the West-Eurocentred Left; its proposed strategies reproduce the 20th century social-democratic tradition. I say '20th century' because there was an emancipatory 19th century one, and there is also developing a 21st century social-democratic tradition – one that is opening itself to the dramatically-transformed nature of global capitalism and to the newest global social movements contesting this (consider, for example, Bieler, Lindberg and Pillay 2008, Bieler and Lindberg 2011, New Unionism, UnionBook and the tiny, personal but pluralistic and multi-lingual, Global Labour Institute website of Dan Gallin). Striking, also, is that despite the Southern drumbeating,[10] our co-authors are entirely dependent on Northern theories and theorists!

The most *Grounding* can hope for is that, in its three somewhat untypical Southern cases, industrial unions and Left political parties will bring about radical reforms within (presumably repentant) national-capitalist polities. In 2011 evidence of such such movements and such repentance is lacking. Even those Left Latin American states in which so much labour and social movement hope has been placed over the last 5-10 years are now being critically questioned and challenged (e.g. Heinz Dietrich 2011). The utopia which the authors are promoting (in Chapter 10) must be seen as one of the past: Sweden of the 1970s? On a world scale? And this despite the surely reasonable argument that it is *union identification with this Swedish utopia* that continues to disarm, firstly, the unions of the North in the face of the new capitalism but also, secondly, many *if not most* of the unions of the South, for which this shrinking (if not yet melting) Northotopia has become the only imaginable one. Consider here the almost literally universal union endorsement of the Decent Work project[11] of the Eurocentred International Labour Organisation (critiqued Waterman 2005).[12]

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massacres in the interest of major Indian corporations (http://www.wsws. org/articles/2007/apr2007/beng-a21.shtml). At a Sigtur conference in South Africa, 1999, I witnessed a *walkout* by the two Communist Indian unions in protest against a Hong Kong-based labour NGO's exhibition on factory fires in China (we have to presume that protest against factory fires in Thailand would have been acceptable to the Indian delegation). Members of Sigtur also appear to act as national gatekeepers, obstructing, if not blocking, Sigtur from relating to other unions or labour movements in what they seem to consider as 'their' nation-states. Indeed, I heard one Indian Communist leader at this conference proclaim, in traditional bourgeois-national-statist mode, the principle of non-interference in Indian labour matters!

[10] Munck's (2010) 'South' is at least a metaphorical as well as a socio-geographic one, referring to the 'subaltern' whoever and wherever s/he may be.

[11] For Southern union endorsement of the Decent Work campaign, see the website of CUT-Brazil, Sigtur's sole Latin American affiliate, http://www.cut.org.br/cut-em-acao/40/trabalho-decente-na-estrategia-da-cut.

[12] The effect of international trade union involvement in (in reality uncritical acceptance for almost one century of its 25% representation within) the ILO, has been, inevitably, one of a reduction of its independence of thought and autonomy of action. Whilst there is little if any writing on this, compare the much-later experience of women's NGOs with presence within and recognition by other UN instances (Joachim 2011):

> [R]ecent work…suggests that multilateral institutions affect not only the behaviour of NGOs but also the very understanding they have of themselves, as well as the interests they pursue. […]

The exchange

The publication of *Grounding* led to an exchange in the new *Global Labour Journal*. This did not, unfortunately, suggest a way beyond the shortcomings of the NGLS. It was also, unfortunately, in attack/defence mode (Global Issues 2010). It was started (despite the evident sympathy for his work of *Grounding Globalisation*) by Michael Burawoy (2010a), in a piece entitled 'From Polanyi to Pollyanna'.[13] Whilst certainly of value in its critique of Polanyi and the New Polanyism, his almost unqualified attack on *Grounding* did not suggest any labour movement alternative,[14] dismissing not only the authors of *Grounding* but Global Labour Studies in general as being over-optimistic and as hopelessly and falsely so. Burawoy seems to see the necessity today for not so much a class-based as a species(?)-based movement but concludes even *here* that:

> Some sort of global counter-movement may be necessary for human survival, but there is no historical necessity for it to appear…A counter-movement to prevent ecological disaster can only be imposed by authoritarian rule…There may be small counter-movements…but palliative care might forestall *any* collective commitment to contain capitalism's rapacious tendencies. (Burawoy 2010a:311)

Given the evidence for growing global protest against war, imperialism, climate change, deforestation, genetically-engineered crops and animals, patriarchy and sexual discrimination, advertising, Frankenstein foods, extractivism, I would suggest that his is a fatalistic pessimism and one that – as several of his respondents suggest (Global Issues 2010) is one that cannot but discourage struggle.

I have to ask myself whether the combination in this exchange of an admittedly unrealistic optimism and a quite unqualified pessimism may not be due to 1) the heavy dependence on, or reference of both parties to, two socially-committed critical theorists of industrial capitalist society, social discontent and emancipatory movements, Karl Marx and Karl Polanyi, and 2) the further heavy reference to, if not dependence on, the distinction or opposition between the exploitation theory of the first and the commodification theory of the second.

It is my feeling that whatever major theoretical, methodological, analytical or strategic insights or inspirations the Two Karls might provide for global labour studies

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> Furthermore, the heightened engagement of women's NGOs in the United Nations, in general, pitted so-called insiders and outsiders against each other. Although the former considered institutional politics a necessary strategy to advance women's status, the latter feared that this would result in co-optation and problems of accountability.

[13] A Pollyanna is 'someone whose optimism is excessive to the point of naïveté or refusing to accept the facts of an unfortunate situation' http://en.wikipedia.org /wiki/Pollyanna#cite_note-0.

[14] Burawoy did come back with a rejoinder (2010b) in rather more friendly mode, but without demonstrating any optimism of the will to counter his pessimism of the intellect. His problem may be with the distinction or opposition he sees between academic work and political engagement. Burawoy seems to consider (his?) academic work to be committed to truth or science and (others'?) political engagement to involve an idealisation of realities and possibilities. Whilst cognizant of the tension between these two types of practice, I have not found – and am not finding - academic labour studies to be so scientific nor political work to necessarily require idealisation.

today, they do not – either singly or combined – provide a sufficient theoretical basis for an emancipatory movement under our radically different capitalist conditions. Actually, of course, Karls 1 and 2 were not adequate in the 19th and 20th centuries either. Neither the class-based strategies drawn from Marx nor the Society+State-based ones following (at least implicitly) from Polanyi, was crowned with more than temporary, partial – and tragically reversible - success. I am here referring, of course, to the collapse of the Communist and Third World Socialist projects that drew on Marxism and to the more-gradual destruction/disintegration of the capitalist welfare-states inspired (again implicitly) by Polanyi.

The hosting of this exchange by the *Global Labour Journal* does it credit. But both the exchange and various other contributions to or review articles in GLJ raise in my mind the idea that 'Another Global Labour Studies is Necessary'. Thus in one recent issue we find two contributions suggesting more of social-reformist conviction than critical sociological endeavour, those of Gay Seidman and of Hennebert and Bourque.

In the course of a book review *Gay Seidman* (2011) argues of 'Social Movement Unionism' (SMU) that it is not a

> strategic prescription, [proponents] forgetting that the phrase was originally merely descriptive, meant to capture the heady sense of excitement and possibility that came when labour activists realised that even in authoritarian settings, workers could use their shopfloor strength to support broad working class goals.

This has to be considered an authorial fancy rather than a reflection on the literature or a finding from research. In original formulation (Waterman 1993), the argument 1) dealt with workers under both liberal-democratic and authoritarian capitalist regimes and 2) had a clear 'strategic prescription' - or at least a provocation to surpass traditional models and theories, Right, Centre or Left. On a search, June 2011, the phrase rated 72,800 Googles (to use the new currency), many of which are to such societies as those of the European Union, others to North America, one or two even to Madison, Wisconsin, (where Gay lives and where, early 2011, a dramatic and innovatory labour-student-community protest occurred). Amongst the thousands of contributions are also scholarly items critical of the concept but advancing the effort to help international labour escape from its capitalist predicament, its national(ist) parameters and its Social-Liberal (occasionally Communist or Populist) entrapments.[15] The best-known piece on SMU is

[15] I realise I haved been using the term 'social liberalism' without defining it. I have been provoked by Magaly Rodríguez García (2010) who in her work on the International Confederation of Trade Unions, prefers the sub-category, 'labour liberalism' (208-10). If that applies particularly to the role of the ICFTU in the Cold War period, I have a preference for 'social liberalism' thus understood:

> It differs from classical liberalism in that it believes the legitimate role of the state includes addressing economic and social issues such as unemployment, health care, and education while simultaneously expanding civil rights. Under social liberalism, the good of the community is viewed as harmonious with the freedom of the individual…Social liberal policies have been widely adopted in much of the capitalist world, particularly following World War II. […] It affirms the following principles: human rights, free and fair elections and multiparty democracy, social justice, tolerance, social market economy,

the mentioned one of Kim Moody (1997), which has 'international' in its title, and which can hardly be dismissed as being either confined to authoritarian settings or merely descriptive. 'Social Movement Unionism' was also the subject of a panel (one of the eight papers being that of Gay herself) at the 2010 session of the Labour Movements Committee at the Conference of the International Sociology Association, Gothenburg. http://people.umass.edu/ clawson/abstracts.html# session8.[16]

In a report, secondly, on the 2010 Congress of the ITUC, *Hennebert and Bourque* (2011) fail to mention the manner in which the ITUC repressed a Palestine solidarity resolution proposed by the South African Cosatu union centre and (re)elected to major ITUC committees the leader of the increasingly-criticised Israeli Zionist trade union centre, Histadrut. This led to a public Cosatu critique of the ITUC - to my knowledge the first such by any affiliate (http://www.cosatu.org.za/docs/shopsteward/2010/sept.pdf). Whilst this example of Eurocentric bureaucratic union authoritarianism might have occurred out of the sight of Hennebert and Bourque, how can they have possibly missed the priority given in Congress plenary sessions to representatives of the international financial institutions responsible for the destructuring of the international working class and the present crisis of international unionism? An evaluation of the same ITUC Congress by veteran social-democratic international union leader, Dan Gallin (2011), is not so much critical as dismissive of both the ITUC and of contemporary social-democracy more generally.[17]

In suggesting that 'another global labour studies is necessary', I am playing with and expanding on the early slogan of the World Social Forum, 'Another World is Possible!', a slogan that at least opened up the imagination to the possibility of a world beyond not only paleo-liberalism but also capitalism. Let me here suggest as a name for

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free trade, environmental sustainability and a strong sense of international solidarity. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_liberalism#cite_note-9.

This seems to me to embrace contemporary Social Democracy as well as Labour Liberalism. Although I might like to add Modernism and Eurocentrism to the mix - as well as opposition to Neo-Liberalism.

[16] Interestingly, a recent paper (Flores 2010) on a new Brazilian union uses the concept of SMU to distinguish it from the CUT-Brazil confederation that Gaye (Seidman 1994), had discussed in SMU terms. Be it noted, finally here, that a recent critique of the SMU concept accuses it of coming from and relating to Western liberal democracies rather than in Southern authoritarian settings (Rahman and Langford 2010)!

[17] 'The ITUC had its second congress in Vancouver in June and elected a new general secretary (Sharan Burrow) and a new president (Michael Sommer from the DGB). Predictably, not much else has changed. The ITUC remains a jester in the court of the intergovernmental organizations and acts, in the best of cases, like an international human rights NGO with an emphasis on labour issues. Unlike all its predecessors, even the two latest and weakest, it has no principles, no programme, no vision and, consequently, no traction. The role of the largest international labour organisation the world has ever seen remains marginal. […] 'The ideological collapse of social-democracy, which has internalised neo-liberal policies hostile to workers, to unions, to its own historical heritage and reason for existence, has certainly been a factor contributing to the demoralisation of the trade union movement, especially in countries where there is a historically close link between the unions and the social-democratic parties (Central and Northern Europe, UK), or in the countries of the former Soviet block where the meaning of socialism has been lost through decades of Stalinism'.

my alternative, 'Emancipatory Global Labour Studies'. This would provide the acronym EGLS (pron: 'eagles'). But before we go searching for eagles, let me to try to establish that the NGLS, with its limited parameters, goes wider than one book and one exchange in one journal.[18]

A major contributor to the NGLS has been *Ronaldo Munck* (2002, 2009, 2010), who combines theoretical insights on class (Karl Marx), commoditisation (Karl Polanyi), space (David Harvey and others), uneven and combined development (Leon Trotsky), post-colonialism (Walter Mignolo), Gramsci (or at least contemporary theorists of 'subalternity') and others to conclude that

> Subaltern studies…can equally be applied to postmodern subjects such as the proletariat [precariat? PW] and the new working poor. A critical theory of subalternity would contribute to our understanding of contestation in the era of neo-liberalism by workers and the new international social movements /…/ The long-term contest between East and West is now leading to the latter losing out…The North-South contest is seeing increased contestation by the latter…Th/e/ new South is not (just) a geographical region but, rather, more of a cultural metaphor for all the subaltern classes, regions, neighbourhoods and households. This transformation project represents…a recovery of the struggles, aspirations and counter-hegemonic projects of actually-existing global civil societies. (Munck 2010:221)

Whilst there is in Ronnie's argument a rich mix of theoretical elements and thought-provoking ideas, and whilst he gestures toward new working classes, new socio-geographic spaces, new social movements, even 'counter-hegemonic' (213) ones, and even a 'grounded and truly global socialist transitional programme' (214), he seems to see such as expressed, at least in part, in an existing labour (trade union?) movement that 'has recovered its voice and…articulated grounded and practical proposals to deal with the global disorder'. We are presented with no evidence of such. There is here, indeed, no consideration of the core or 'default' labour movement form and ideology – the national-industrial, collective-bargaining-oriented, oligarchical union – as an obstacle to a Marxist or even a *Polanyian* transformation. The theoretical/strategic contributions of, for example, feminism and environmentalism are marginalised or invisibile, as is informatisation and cyberspace. There remains, finally, a profound tension between the class and post-capitalist orientations of Ronnie's Marxists and the non-class and reformed-capitalist orientations of his Polanyi.[19]

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[18] The NGLS seems to be expanding even I struggle to complete this piece. This may, of course, be simply a function of my wider casting of a net which is clearly of my own construction. In this manner I became aware, late-July, 2011, of a relevant piece by the Left Social Democrat, national and international union officer and adviser, Asbjorn Wahl (2011) in a new (to me) website, the *Global Labour Column*, http://column.global-labour-university.org/, itself a project of the Germany-based but now international Global Labour University, http://www.global-labour-university.org/.

[19] I leave aside here the question of Ronnie's use of 'post-modern', even if, as I have suggested parenthetically, this applies to the precariat and the new working poor. These both seem to me to be long-existing modern subjects (if 'modern' is being restricted to the epoch of national, industrial, enlightenment powered capitalism). What would here be 'post-modern' would be the vocabulary or theory that has rediscovered or reinvented them.

A welcome addition to the NGLS has been that of the radical social geographers (Castree et. al. 2004, McGrath-Champ, Herod and Rainnie 2010). They have introduced 'space' and 'scale' as crucial determinants of and contested terrains for workers and unions. In both cases, however, the concentration is overwhelmingly on 'labour' as understood in terms traditional to 19th-20th century capitalism, even if Castree et. al (2004:225) do recognise that most of the world's work is done outside the 'formal economy'.[20]

Perhaps the most sophisticated contribution to the NGLS is that of *Peter Evans* (2010), in, again, the *Global Labour Journal*. Evans reviews a wide range of literature and considers an equally wide range of old and new forms of international labour response. He also addresses the problem of the traditional formal inter/national union structures and such new 'rhizomes', or network relations of international social movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Sensitive to the possibilities of the new communications technologies, he also stresses their potential for a necessary cultural transformation in the labour movement:

> Global communication technologies are more than just tools – they also reshape cultural possibilities. Contemporary global diffusion of everything from ideological presuppositions to everyday practices doesn't erase divisions, but twenty-first century workers may share as much culture at the global level as nineteenth century workers did at the national level. The global media may be a frightening Leviathan, but the memes they create are shared by workers around the world. In the workplace, the global spread of corporate structures and practices creates shared cultural milieus that permeate workers' lives almost regardless of geographic distance and political boundaries. If the socio-cultural nemesis thesis argues that cultural divisions undercut the possibility of transnational solidarity, the 'labour's turn' thesis argues that revolutionary changes in communication combine with the emergence of a globally-shared culture and everyday practices to create new potential for building solidarity across even the widest geographic divides. (Evans 2010:357)

Like most contributors to the NGLS, unfortunately, he gives both the hegemonic, institutionalised ITUC family and the marginal networked Sigtur qualities or potentials broadcast by their champions rather than emerging from committed but critical research. Thus he states of the Eurocentred and Eurocentric ITUC etc, that

> The 2006 merger of the World Confederation of Labour and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to form the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) replaces a structure fractured by Cold War politics with the possibility of a unified strategic actor. The move to rename the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs), calling them Global Union Federations (GUFs) instead, reflected recognition that it is not so much trade itself as the global production networks that underlie it that must be restructured if workers interests are to be protected. The accompanying organisational consolidation reflected appreciation that global corporations operate across a range of sectors, and labour organisations must encompass a similar range. (Evans 2010:361-2)

[20] A visual and visceral reminder of this in the case of India is provided by an illustrated book on such workers in the case of India (Breman and Das 2000). This not only shows the immense variety of such work and workers but also reveals the variety of spaces (work places, homes, streets) in which they survive. It also prompts for me the question of why the two books on labour and space do not themselves deal with the nature of the factory, office, street or household space in which their subjects actually work.

Whilst later qualifying this somewhat…umm?... Polyannic vision, he fails to see that this institutional – indeed corporate - merger reproducing the corporate capitalist model was neither preceded nor followed by any change in worldview, ideology or strategy. Discussion before and after the event was confined to leading officers, mostly out of the public eye, and it in no way involved any identifiable rank or file. It was a defensive move by a set of institutions under severe external attack (due to the global neo-liberal offensive) and internal weakening (the reduction of union resources). He likewise sees the move of the AFL-CIO from its CIA-days (Scipes 2010) to a largely state- or inter-state-funded and West-Eurocentric Development Cooperationism as a sign of *hope* for labour internationalism! Indeed, all his positive examples of union internationalism are on the North-South axis and in a North→South direction. Taking this problematic part for the whole obstructs, surely, a holistic view of, and a universal ethic for, international labour solidarity.

Rohini Hensman, a veteran of socialist-feminism and Left unionism in Mumbai, India, is surely the most 'Southern' contributor to the NGLS, as well as a contributor to *Global Labour Studies* (Hensman 2010).[21] Her contribution to the journal, however, seems to me trapped within both the parameters of capitalism and the ideology of social-liberalism. It is also surely *passé*, as well as somewhat iffy. She argues that

> Globalisation could help to strengthen workers' rights in India if unions worldwide could agree on a social clause in WTO agreements which would guarantee the basic human rights embodied in the ILO Core Conventions to all workers, including those currently in informal employment relationships, and launch campaigns for employment creation programs. Additionally, they would need to put pressure on governments to slash military expenditure and redirect public spending to the social sector, infrastructure, and civilian research and development. These steps would also help to end the economic downturn. (Hensman 2010:111)

Rohini even argues that

> Opposition to globalisation retards the transition from imperialism to a world order marked by more egalitarian and peaceful relationships between peoples; furthermore, it distracts attention from the task of shaping the new global order, leaving the field open for advocates of traditional authoritarian labour relations and modern neo-liberal policies to impose their own agendas on it. (123).

In so far as she does not demand or even speculate about an alternative to such, this accepts the parameters of capitalism. In so far as it proposes, implicitly, a neo-Keynesian alternative to neo-liberalism, it falls within the discourse of social-liberalism. In so far as it proposes to continue the ICFTU campaign, for what I have called 'A Social Clause from Santa Claus' (Waterman 2001), it is *passé*. This ICFTU campaign failed and has been buried, without announcement or flowers, by the new ITUC in favour of the equally

[21] She has also published a book (Hensman 2011) which deserves a full length review, particularly since its title suggests its more-than-Indian implications and because it has a couple of chapters on the international and internationalism.

social-liberal 'Decent Work' campaign.[22] The dependence of Rohini Hensman's arguments on a reformed and social-liberal WTO, and on an International Labour Organisation (ILO) which only has powers of moral suasion, means the similar dependence of the Indian and international labour movement on one inter-state organ of neo-liberalism and one of social-liberalism, the one based in Washington, the other in Geneva. Although, further, she does mention that only seven percent of the Indian wage force is in 'formal employment' (119), her argument is based on the hope that the other 93 percent are going to be able to enter into the sphere of national labour law, collective bargaining and international labour standards, within which the traditional international labour movement exists but is also trapped.[23] Whilst, finally, she, reasonably, condemns a bourgeois-nationalist anti-globalisation ideology that predominates amongst the Indian unions - based on two or even ten percent - she gives no cognizance to an international *anti-globalisation* movement that is morphing into a *global justice and solidarity movement* with ever-more pronounced anti- or post-capitalist orientations.

Steve Hughes and Nigel Haworth's introductory work on the International Labour Organisation (2011) is overly concerned with the personalities and roles of successive Directors General. This suggests it belongs to 'The Great Man School of ILO History'. They also say surprisingly little about the role of unions within the ILO. Whilst both authors are involved in an official ILO history project, this does not necessarily mean that their work is - in the pejorative Latin-American sense phrase - an *historia oficial*. They may occasionally remind us that the ILO is an institution of capitalism (43), and take note of its critics (Chapter 8). But the book dismisses the criticism that the ILO has no power to in any way back up its decisions (95). This is to fail to compare it to the international financial institutions that have seriously undermined and disoriented the ILO. More significant, however, is the absence of any critical-sociological or political-economic authorial standpoint. There is a consequent silence over the fact that, within this 'tripartite institution', one part (labour) has only 25 percent representation whilst the two others (capital and state) have 75 percent (in the Governing Body it is a still-pathetic 30:70). The book does not consider the significant circulation of staff between the ITUC and ILO posts or departments. Nor does the book consider who is 'represented' by 'labour' (actually by state-approved trade unions), the indirect and distant manner of even such meagre representation, nor what percentage (10? 15?) of the world's wage or labour forces the unions here 'represent'.[24]

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[22] The Social Clause has been at least singed – by an author who thinks it still has life - as failing so far to have challenged the political and ideological hegemons (Pahle 2010). It has been scorched by a collective based in South Africa (Tribe of Moles, 2011), of which more below.

[23] Actually, they would have to not only enter the seven percent of the wage force in the organised sector. In order to impact on this set of institutions and regulations, they would have to become part of the even smaller percentage of the unionised. To assume the primacy of this unionized…what, two percent?...of India's labour force would seem to me to condemn the labour movement to marginality.

[24] Former ILO officer, Guy Standing (2008), in a text the authors give some space to (Hughes and Haworth 2008:97-8), actually makes a much more fundamental critique of the ILO than they allow for. Underneath a wide-ranging critique of its past and present is his concept of 'labourism' - that at its origin the ILO assumed labour to mean fulltime, male employment in unionised/unionisable occupations, with such unions oriented toward collective bargaining with employers under the protection of a benevolent state. And that, despite its dramatically changing programmes and slogans, the ILO is - given neo-liberal globalisation and

Labour and Globalisation is a network, autonomous of the formal union structures, that has existed for some years within the World and European Social Forums (WSF, ESF). The WSF is not an academic agora, but it is the kind of space within which labour(-oriented) intellectuals and activists might be expected to exchange ideas and experiences oriented toward 'another possible world'. Despite the presence in its various forum meetings of various critically-minded union and other labour movement activists, from North and South, the network has remained at best a pressure-group within the limits of actually-existing trade union structures and discourses. Indeed, the ambiguities or limits of this autonomous labour exercise remain those of the traditional inter/national unions at the same events. L&G and the ESF seem to be associated with or have given rise to a June 2011 conference entitled 'Austerity, Debt, Social Destruction in Europe: Stop!', at the European Parliament, hosted by the Leftist GUE/NFL group of Euro-parliamentarians. The target seems to have been neither capitalism nor globalisation nor even neo-liberalism, though a 'financialised capitalism' gets one mention. And although the purpose of the event was to search for alternatives to the dire situation portrayed, this seemed to be a restoration of a Neo-Keynesian Social Europe. The conference did, true, identify itself with the wave of European protests occurring or projected in 2011. But it was apparently unwilling or unable to endorse a Greek proposal for a "common front of trade unions, movements, political forces" (the precise nature of which I have been unable to track down).

Having hopefully established that this is a major tendency in contemporary international labour studies, let us try to establish some elements necessary for developing an emancipatory tendency.

2. Sighting eagles

'Emancipatory' is, of course, an old word, often referring to the inclusion of the oppressed, exploited, excluded, discriminated, into an existing polity or society, often only referring only to political rights.[25] In the Marxist tradition, however, it came to mean emancipation from capitalism, as in the name of the first Russian Marxist party, the Social-Democratic Emancipation of Labour Group.[26] In so far as this referred to the

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its nefarious effects on this model - unfit for purpose. He shows how the unions are incorporated into the ILO and how they frequently collaborate with the employer representatives in defence of common corporate interests. Standing is no Anarcho-Marxist Samson, attempting to pull the temple of global capitalism down on his own head (anyway ensured by his resignation from its priesthood). But, unlike Hughes and Haworth, he is prepared to think outside the canon, to identify fundamental new labour phenomena, and to suggest both theories and policies relating to such. He thus makes, to my mind, a considerable contribution to an emancipatory global labour studies. And I regret to say (given their generous mention of my own critique of the ILO) that his 30-page article provides a rather more profound and provocative account of the ILO than their 122-page apologetic.

[25] In the Dutch case in the 1980s, I recall, there was a government department of 'Emancipation Affairs', which was self-understood to apply only to women. Later there was a dilution and reduction of state-institutionalised emancipation, with the new keywords being, of course, 'gender mainstreaming' and with responsibility being thinly spread over multiple departments. By that time, presumably, no one in the Netherlands was presumed in need of emancipation.

[26] http://www.marxists.org/ archive/plekhanov/1883/xx/sdelg1.htm.

working class, it tended to reduce emancipation primarily, and almost solely, to overcoming exploitation in the capitalist wage-form. I prefer to understand emancipation as the counterpole to alienation in all its forms. This is how it seems to be understood by Erik Olin Wright (2006):

> Emancipatory social science, in its broadest terms, seeks to generate knowledge relevant to the collective project of challenging human oppression and creating the conditions in which people can live flourishing lives. To call it a social science, rather than social criticism or philosophy, is to recognise the importance for this task of systematic scientific knowledge about how the world works. To call it emancipatory is to identify its central moral purpose—the elimination of oppression, and the creation of conditions for human flourishing. And to call it social implies a belief that emancipation depends upon the transformation of the social world, not just the inner self. To fulfil its mission, any emancipatory social science faces three basic tasks: first, to elabourate a systematic diagnosis and critique of the world as it exists; second, to envision viable alternatives; and third, to understand the obstacles, possibilities and dilemmas of transformation. In different historical moments one or another of these may be more pressing than others, but all are necessary for a comprehensive emancipatory theory.[27]

And here are the crucial spheres of emancipatory effort suggested by the multi-volume compilation of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007-10), *Reinventing Social Emancipation: Toward New Manifestos*.[28] This project implicitly suggests the necessary articulation of Participatory Democracy, Alternative Production Systems, Multiculturalism, Justice and Citizenship, Biodiversity, Rival Knowledges, Intellectual Property rights and even…*a New Labour Internationalism* (Waterman 2006a:446)! Anyone could (and should) add to this listing. I might have added Liberating Cyberspace. And whilst I think the last area should have been *New Internationalism(s)*, and whilst we might still be waiting for a volume of, or on, the New Manifestos, I think we can take a general orientation from the two cited authors. We could, thus, begin to understand global social emancipation as the project of developing a post-capitalist, post-liberal (and post-state-socialist) understanding of democracy, production, rights and knowledges, a liberated cyberspace, and a new global solidarity - within which a new global labour solidarity would play a part.[29]

Marcus Taylor has a thought-provoking piece on both the New International Labour Studies of the 1980s and more recent developments that, perhaps, leans in the

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[27] An alternative and later source for the Olin Wright argument is http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/ERU_files/ERU-CHAPTER-2-final.pdf.

[28] Rob Lambert and Eddie Webster (2006) make their own contribution to the Boa Santos volume on labour internationalism.

[29] Only on finally redrafting this paper did I become aware of Ernesto Laclau's (1996) essay 'Beyond Emancipation'. It clearly deserves more serious consideration than I can here providet. It appears to suggest that this concept is dependent on the conditions of unfreedom it negates and has no constructive (creative?) content or capacity. Unless and until, however, either he or someone else offers one or more constructive alternatives, I think I can work with emancipation's negation of the various - and increasingly dangerous - unfreedom(s) with which we are confronted.

direction of EGLS without quite getting there. He points out the limitations of any political-economic determinism:

> the promise of international labour studies lies in its ability to develop a more critical perspective akin to Marx's critique of commodity fetishism and to feminist critiques of the gendered foundations of capitalist societies. Such an approach would insist that the classed, racialised and gendered struggles through which labouring bodies are accumulated, reproduced, put to work and restructured are not simply sociological appendages to the hard rigour of political economy. Rather they constitute the social substance from which the abstract forces of capitalist society are given both form and content. If labour is the 'form-giving fire' through which capital in its various forms is produced, then the results of struggles over the construction, reproduction and utilisation of labour simultaneously configure the local and global, concrete and abstract dimensions of global capitalism. As such, they shape not only the localised relationships of power and resistance through which labour is reproduced and utilised; they concurrently feed into the determination of prices, profits and competitiveness, and therefore shape investment, technological change and industrial structure, i.e. the very parameters of capitalist development. (Taylor 2008: 449-50)

What more specific meaning could social emancipation have today for working people? The classical labour movement had, in fact, two major work-related emancipatory slogans. One was 'A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work'. This notion was, initially, surely, a Christian one, later incorporated, along with other convenient bits of churchlore, into social liberalism. In so far as this is or was an emancipatory slogan, it was clearly in the sense of gaining rights *within* an existing capitalist society and liberal polity. This is where lie the political (or spiritual?) roots of Decent Work. The other historical slogan was 'The Abolition of Wage-Slavery', the fundamental aim of the anarcho-syndicalist (and internationalist) Industrial Workers of the World (aka IWW, or Wobblies):[30]

Conditions they are bad,
And some of you are sad;
You cannot see your enemy,
The class that lives in luxury,
You workingmen are poor,
Will be for evermore,
As long as you permit the few
To guide your destiny.

CHORUS

Shall we still be slaves and work for wages?
It is outrageous --has been for ages;
This earth by right belongs to toilers,
And not to spoilers of liberty.

In more contemporary form, this reappears in Andre Gorz (1999), who calls for 'The Liberation of Time from Work'. In so far as Gorz considers that in the West we have

[30] This is from 'Working Men Unite!', by E. S. Nelson, in the Wobblies' *Little Red Songbook*. http://www.angelfire.com/nj3/RonMBaseman/songbk.htm.

reached the end of the 'work-based society', this slogan might be understood as Eurocentric, but should be taken as one expression of a global struggle against enforced capitalist work and worklessness. It takes expression in the South, particularly in Latin America, in attempts to both conceptualise and realise a 'solidarity economy' - a topic at successive World Social Forums.[31] In so far as this understanding could be linked to the ancient/contemporary demand for the liberation of the commons (socialisation of an increasingly privatised/commodified world, for which see Waterman 2003 and The Commoner), an inter-relationship with the GJ&SM (with its ecological, citizenship, women's, housing and rural movements) would be developed. The Gorz slogan should at least be credited with de-naturalising 'work', whilst so many Left labour activists and specialists simply take work for granted. In any case there are other authors carrying on the struggle against wage slavery (e.g. Carlsson 2008, Holloway 2010, Porcaro 2009, Sinclair 2001. Carlín 2010). Let us note here that most, if not all, of the contributors to the NGLS do not question, far less challenge, 'work' as the alienation of human labour by capital/state. They are, rather, concerned with improving the conditions under which this takes place. So let me here specify on some of these more-recent challenges to 'work', taking just two or three of the above-named authors.

Drawing from classical Marxist political economy, *John Holloway* distinguishes between 'labour' and 'doing':

> There are two different sorts of activity here: one that is externally imposed and experienced as either directly unpleasant or part of a system that we reject, and another that pushes towards self-determination. We really need two different words for these two types of activity. We shall follow the suggestion of Engels in a footnote in Capital (Marx 1965 [1867]:47) by referring to the former type of activity as labour, the latter simply as doing. Autonomies, then, can be seen as revolts of doing against labour. (Holloway 2010: 909).

Mimmo Porcaro, reflecting on the contemporary fragmentation of what was once (thought of) as a homogeneous industrial working class, draws from the independent Marxist labour historian, E. P. Thompson, to stress the *non-industrial* milieux within which the English working class made itself.

> If the results of an investigation…confirm that today, as in the past, buds of collective consciousness are born primarily off the job, they would confirm that (especially today) the main venue for the formation of a potential class consciousness is not production, but life itself, in all its many forms. Does this imply a weakening of the socialist discourse? Allow me to observe that a collective movement of workers (and others) oriented toward social transformation can be built only if and when 'consciousness' takes shape as the effect of 'whole life', because strong ideas capable of truly affecting politics, 'public' ideas accessible to everybody, regardless of their class and family, ideas organised as causes…can be born only as the result of the whole ensemble of life experience. […]
>
> This [necessary] new investigation closely resembles the one that should become a new politics: the interconnection of a thousand heterogeneous experiences from which an

[31] Though also, typically, a concept much argued about, and into which various governments have various slippery fingers, http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/noticias_01.php?cd_news=1507&cd_language=2, http:// www.globenet3.org/Articles/Article_Argentina_Solidarity.shtml. Interestingly, a solidarity economy network came out of the 2010 US Social Forum, http://www.solidarityeconomy.net/about-solidarityeconomynet/.

> unprecedented collective entity may emerge. This entity will not emerge from abstractions: not from Work, not from Life, not from Politics. Work, Life and Politics are in some way 'neutral': they are battlefields that can have different outcomes, including, respectively, labourism, retreat to the quotidian, or opportunism. Rather, the new entity will be engendered by concrete, hence unpredictable, choices made by millions of men and women who will want to take sides on each of these battlefields, to arrive at a solution that does not reproduce today's hierarchies: a non-repetitive solution, not devised beforehand, the one that best fits a consciousness of the historical situation capable of renaming the present and the future. (Porcaro 2009)

He even goes so far as to suggest that it may be in the common experience and discontents of commodified consumption and a commodified family life that an emancipatory consciousness and action could be constructed.[32]

One recent major work on the contemporary nature of work and workers is, however, firmly anchored to the conditions of at least one Southern country and region. This is the book of *Franco Barchiesi* (2011), also – admittedly - an Italian and from the autonomist tradition, but who bases himself on ethnographic research amongst South African workers and who less asserts the identity/difference with other African workers than provides argument and evidence *for* such. He is concerned with the relationship between how workers perceive their work and how this relates to their behaviour as citizens. His conclusions are those of neither an Incremental nor an Insurrectionary Polyanna. Whilst, like our previous autonomist writers, shifting the focus of our attention from formalised wage employment in large-scale enterprise to the broader community of residence and work, his Chapter 6 deals with

> how workers articulate politically their desires to transcend a grim precarious workplace life. Some try to grapple with change through an updated activist imagination appealing, beyond the walls of the shop floor, to community mobilisation and demands for [de]commodified social services. More widespread is, however, the continuous reliance on the ANC [African National Congress] for policies of job creation and protection. Seemingly in contradiction with the low esteem workers have for their own jobs, such claims reveal, in what I term an emerging politics of labour melancholia, aspirations for an idealised social order where work guarantees authority relations based on gender, age, and nationality. Such developments raise the disquieting possibility that, by maintaining work at the core of its imagination of citizenship emancipative [sic] discourse can easily and inadvertently feed chauvinist and authoritarian fantasies. (Barchiesi 2011: 25)

This work shows that a new theoretical approach toward labour does not necessarily imply optimism about its role but rather *a shift of the terrain of focus and the terms of debate*.

The South Africa-based *Tribe of Moles* picks up where Barchiesi leaves off. The 'provocation' they issued for a conference says much of what I have been thinking but rather better. They say, for example:

> Should we start placing liberation from, and not through capitalist work at the core of new languages and grammars of politics, which uncompromisingly break with the legacy

[32] I here recall the manner in which I observed a Euromarch for jobs in Amsterdam, 1997, whilst in a neighbouring street other, happier, citizens were involved in the commodified ritual of privatised consumption, known as 'shop until you drop'. I experienced this, wryly, as a binary, not to say Manichean opposition. Porcaro suggests a way beyond this.

> of the twentieth century Left (s)? […] The most powerful struggles we have been witnessing over the past decade have placed on the agenda matters of decommodification of water, housing, land, education, and basic services independently from the market. From Greece to Egypt, precarious workers have not merely seen their subjectivity thwarted and mutilated by the lack of a stable job but, by being central to vast movements against austerity policies, they have indeed placed their own precariousness at the core of a radical politics of claims and political possibilities.

This does not mean dismissing traditional labour struggles:

> Workplace struggles are, for sure, still important in affirming the autonomy of life and the common from the dictates of the market, for example through demands for wages and benefits that are impossible to meet in terms of productivity, therefore subverting wage labour from within. But struggles for production especially imply for us the production of social relations and political possibilities that emanate from the power of the common as it manifests itself across the social and the everyday. They hint, in other words, at the production of subjectivity and the refusal of the modalities of subjection along which capital and government want to align conducts and values. We are referring here not only to subjectivities premised on waged employment and the consumption of commodities but also to their correlates in the institutional sphere: liberal democracy and the idea of the individual rooted in property and market relations as the only legitimate carrier of socio-political agency.

Ilda Lindell has been working extensively on the informal sector in Southern Africa (2009, 2011a, b, Forthcoming). This work includes pieces on transnational organising (Lindell 2011a, b), using the social-geographic concepts of space and scale (for which see also Munck 2010). She challenges the prioritisation of either the global or the local in studies of informal labour. On the basis of two Mozambique case studies she also concludes, interestingly, that neither 'bottom-up' nor 'top-down' (Oxfam promoted!) strategies are the 'right' one, with the implication that various strategies can positively affect self-empowerment and have political impact locally/nationally/internationally.

Melisa Serrano, Edlira Xhafa (2011a, b) (and their fellow graduates in a GLU research project presented to the GLU's Johannesburg conference) talk more of 'alternatives', or of surpassing the 'capitalist canon', in their research on what I would call emancipatory labour initiatives.[33] They also, I think, incorporate into their argument that notion of plurality, dialectic and dialogue I have suggested as part of my idea of EGLS. They produce a critique of the 'alternative' literature, suggest a research methodology, carry out case studies, and argue for their own work that it

> Aims to contribute to the discourse on alternatives to capitalism by establishing a 'dialogue' between theoretical debates…and existing social experiments…In doing so, we aim to bring these theoretical debates into the perspective of those engaged in these

[33] The conference was of such general relevance that it it may be invidious to identify other conference presentations that surpass the capitalist cannon. My ear or eye caught the contributions, in particular, of Jackie Cock, Ercüment Çelik, Prishani Naidoo, Franco Barchiesi, Devan Pillay, Sue Ledwith and Collaborators, Jennifer Jihye Chun, Ruy Braga. Abstracts can be found in the Conference Reader and Conference Papers. Both these and a CD made available at the conference are, however, incomplete. Full proceedings and reports on the conference will no doubt become available. I do, below, identify this well-organised and fruitful event as a suitable case for analysis by those interested in tracking eagles.

> practices and struggles in such a way as to develop their consciousness and capacities to become subjects of transformation…Finally, by identifying common elements in various struggles and experiments…we attempt to connect these struggles and…contribute to the construction of a coherent and inspiring alternative of capitalism. (Serano and Edlira 2011a: 20).

Most of the projects researched have to do with local alternatives in the economic sphere, such as worker-run factories in Argentina and India; informal workers' cooperatives and micro-lending projects in Mozambique, India, Brazil and the Philippines; state-supported or initiated democratic and participatory schemes in Brazil and Quebec; and partnerships for community and economic development in Australia. They give, further, examples of both union and – as indicated – state support. And whilst they warn against romaniticising the more successful projects, they also argue for the consciousness-raising accompanying what they clearly consider to surpass, in potential, a capitalist logic. The therefore conclude that

> The identification of common strands or elements in people's stgruggles that have emanacipatory or transformative potential, and their connection with [a variety of emancipatory] theoretical discourses, contribute to a process of connecting the struggles of people across the globe in the common pursuit of a coherent and inspiring alternative to capitalism. (Serano and Edlira 2011a: 32).

Chris Carlsson, from the USA, belongs to an American tradition of Left libertarianism and utopianism (compare Sinclair 2001), is familiar with both Marx and Marxisms, and is highly concerned with both work and class. However, he not only abandons the traditional terrains and means of labour movement action but suggests, rather, that emancipation from wage-slavery requires marginalising or exiting (or being expelled) from it and the creation of new communities of production, distribution and exchange on the periphery of or beyond the parameters of capital and state.[34] For him capitalism began with the enclosure of the pre-existing commons. And the emancipatory project is one of re-establishing the commons under contemporary conditions. This is not for him, however, a future prospect, far less one requiring an apocalyptic revolution. He finds his 'Nowtopia' (Carlsson 2008) in the contemporary USA and provides us with multiple varied contemporary examples of such. These include the activities of 'Pirate Programmers, Outlaw Bicyclists, and Vacant-Lot Gardeners', to quote the book's subtitle. These might seem primarily US or even Californian activities, dependent on survival possibilities existent only there. And, indeed, there is little if any reference to Asia, Africa and Latin America. Yet the self- or collective-oriented activities he portrays in considerable detail surely have their parallels in the majority precariat of the Global South. And there are anyway lessons to be learned internationally from how working people are responding to the contradictions of the homeland of globalised, computerised, networked and paleo-liberal capitalism. Given the valuable reviews existing of the work

[34] For Carlsson's critical, if not dismissive, view of the 'alternative' labour event at the Belem WSF, 2009, see Appendix 3 in Waterman (2009a), http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cssgj/documents/working-papers/wp008.pdf.

as a whole,[35] I will concentrate on what is, in Carlsson's book, simultaneously the most Californian and the most international area of both alienated and self-created labour 'The Virtual Spine of the Commons' (Chapter 8). Unlike our previous three 'emancipatory' authors, he makes significant room in his work for the struggle in and around the Internet. He argues that

> Though a majority of people do not work in computer- or Internet-related business, the growing precariousness of fixed employment in most fields parallels the relationships emerging in on-line and related work. (187)

Carlsson recognises the contradictions within the work of the free software and other emancipatory cyberspace activities – particularly, of course, the capacity of information capitalism to turn such creative and cooperative production into profitable business. Nor does he idealise even the most adventurous cyberspaces, such as Wikipedia or the movement-oriented Indymedia. But he does argue that

> Capital has reorganised production systems across the planet with just-in-time supply lines, disemploying entrenched, unionised workers in favour of transient immigrant and temporary workforces wherever possible. The newly emerging communities on-line, facilitated by many of the net-based organising efforts, represent another facet of an emerging recomposition of the working class. New sites and forms of resistance to capital accumulation are taking shape, and already beginning to make themselves felt in the anti-globalisation and anti-war movements, technologically savvy immigration campaigns across the northern hemisphere, and with remarkable resilience in the unquenchable efforts of faceless digital rebels who refuse to succumb to the practices or priorities of business. (207)

3. Siting eagles

Many of my references and URLs[36] refer to this other workplace/work type/communication-space/contested-terrain that neither *Groundings*, Michael Burawoy nor his respondents show much, if any, awareness of. It is called cyberspace. Indeed, they do not mention, either, that growing part of the world's working classes who produce the equipment, write the computer programmes, work in the call centres, or whose working lives are increasingly dependent on the internet/worldwide web, Facebook and other P2P (peer-to-peer services), plus, in the case of academics and activists, online journals and publishing, databases, Wikipedia or Google's translation device. We are now entering the brave new capitalist world of labour indicated in the initial quote from Ursula Huws.

In the USA, the vanguard of capitalist (post-)industrial development, computer use at work or computer dependence at work is rising dramatically. Consider this from even before the turn of the century:

[35] By Robert Ovetz, http://www.commoner.org.uk/?p=89 and Ben Dangl, http://www.zcommunications.org/nowtopia-by-ben-dangl.

[36] The highlighted or clickable words, names or phrases above.

> Survey data indicate that the share of workers using computers with video screens and keyboard input on the job rose from roughly 25 percent to 50 percent between 1984 and 1997…Popular applications include word processors, database and spreadsheet programs, and, more recently, e-mail clients and Internet browsers.[37]

I am not sure whether or not this percentage includes or excludes MacDonald's hamburger-flippers, filling your greasy order on a counter computer. It is, however, more than two decades since Barbara Garson (1988) wrote of *How Computers are Transforming the Office of the Future into the Factory of the Past*.

I will here only suggest that, under an increasingly globalised and informatised capitalism, 'real virtuality' (Castells 1996-8) is a new terrain of life, work and struggle that relativises any privilege assumed for the shopfloor, the enterprise, the state-defined nation, the inter/national union office or conference.[38] (I say *relativises*, not denies, denigrates or dismisses). Secondly, information and communication technology (ICT) provides an infinite space/means of communication with emancipatory potential that revolutionary thinkers and activists previously – erroneously if understandably - accorded in turn to the free press, to film, radio or video. Why ICT provides this where the previous means or modes did not is in part because of the built-in principle of feedback - that Bertold Brecht (1983) mistakenly projected onto radio - that it embodies the network, is therefore in principle subversive of institutionalisation and hierarchy, that the technology is ever cheaper, and because, as I have suggested, cyberspace is infinite and unbounded. This implies that whatever and whenever capital, state and other hegemons try to commercialise or control – and they are continually and aggressively doing so - is a provocation to sabotage, circumvention and creativity by technically-qualified but frustrated information workers and networked 'hacktivists'.[39] Marx, as so often was before his time (and a little too earth-bound in metaphor?) when he said in the *Communist Manifesto* that 'What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers'.[40] We have been dramatically reminded of the subversive capacities

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[37] http://www.sri.com/policy/csted/reports/sandt/it/Handel_IT_Employment_InfoBrief.pdf.

[38] Castells (2007) carries his argument on communications in a paper that argues

> that the media have become the social space where power is decided. It also puts forward the notion that the development of interactive, horizontal networks of communication has induced the rise of a new form of communication, mass self-communication, over the Internet and wireless communication networks. Under these conditions, insurgent politics and social movements are able to intervene more decisively in the new communication space. However, corporate media and mainstream politics have also invested in this new communication space. As a result of these processes, mass media and horizontal communication networks are converging. The net outcome of this evolution is a historical shift of the public sphere from the institutional realm to the new communication space.

The argument is developed in a major work I have not had access to (Castells 2009).

[39] 'Hacktivism' is also a disputed terrain. At least if construed as 'Clicktivism'. See White (2011) for a critique of those who see this as an alternative to street-fighting days.

[40] http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm. Note that he was here assuming that this would be primarily the industrial proletariat produced by early capitalist

of cyberspace in general, and of social networking services and the new P2P (peer-to-peer) technologies in particular. I am thinking here of the Wikileaks furore and the Arab uprisings. Whilst much of the media coverage and commentary about these is grossly hyped (Lovink 2012), the use of the web by trade unions, the broader labour and social movements and *by global labour specialists themselves* has expanded exponentially over the last decade.

So what I am here primarily concerned with is cyberspace as a disputable terrain, and, particularly, whether or not it is at least *a* privileged terrain for an emancipatory global labour movement and the study thereof. This is the arena sketched by Peter Evans earlier. But I would like to consider whether it is not additionally capable of breaking down the academic/activist divide. Following, commenting on and, hopefully, contributing to thinking and action around 'International Labour Communication by Computer' for some two decades (Waterman 1992, 2010), I have to admit that both the activity and reflection has seemed to be making slow and difficult progress. Recently, however, there seems to have been something of a breakthrough, at least on the reflection side of the equation. I am thinking of Bauwens (2011), Burston, Dyer-Witheford and Hearn (2010), Hogan, Nolan and Trumpbour (2010), Mosco and McKercher (2008), Mosco, McKercher and Huws (2010), Cyberunions. These efforts often go far wider than my concerns in this paper, dealing with the very language we use in talking about 'work', 'network theory', 'knowledge workers', and other quite crucial theoretical and social questions. Whilst I might mention some of these broader issues, I will try to concentrate on whether or not this *is* a privileged terrain, whether it *is* breaking down the academic/activist divide, and, of course, the international/global aspect. Oh, and, of course, whether and it what sense this literature might be said to be emancipatory.

In a special journal issue on 'Digital Labour: Workers, Authors, Citizens' Burston, Dyer-Witheford and Hearn (2010) ask about the new technologies:

> What are the implications of these changes in the very definitions of what constitutes 'work' and in the parameters of the workplace? What are the implications for our senses of selfhood, our political agency as citizens, and our creative freedom as artists and innovators? Finally, how might we see these changes wrought by digital technology as potentially politically productive or liberatory? (215)

Whilst Ursula Huws (2010) strikes here a somewhat somber note, Dyer-Witheford (2010) himself goes back to the Young Marx's notion of 'species-being' to both explore the fate of humanity under the present capitalist dispensation. Reflecting on the uprisings in the Arab world, he says:

> Regardless of their outcome, whether catastrophic, compromised or victorious in unimaginably experimental ways, these uprisings have already returned to the political horizon possibilities of radical self-organisation that have in so many places been banished for a generation. They are revolutions detonated by the meeting of extraordinary high technological development and extreme inequality, a contradiction that defines the condition of the global worker, and whose resolution will determine the trajectory of human species-becoming. (500)

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industrialisation. The grave-diggers produced by a globalised, informatised, patriarchal, militarist and ecologically-destructive capitalism are legion.

It is Vinnie Mosco and Catherine McKercher (2008) who actually ask 'Will Knowledge Workers of the World Unite?'. If previously cited authors may be aware that 'labour's others' also exist 'above' or 'beyond' the traditionally employed/unionisable, Mosco and McKercher focus on what is a dramatically growing sector of such. Acutely aware of the novelty of their knowledge workers, they are equally aware of the manner in which computerisation implies 'convergence' across what were previously distinct kinds of work and industries and then, of course, what were distinct national capitalist economies. Sympathetic to the idea of social movement unionism (158-65), they trace its expression amongst knowledge workers in North America, in India and at international level. They argue that

> Some, especially among communication, media and information unions, result in the creation of non-traditional labour organisations to represent the needs of workers who, for any number of reasons, are unwilling or unable to represent the needs of workers who, for any number of reasons, are unwilling or unable to join traditional unions. (161).

The authors' North American, Indian and international examples do include non-traditional union models but they seem to think that, in these very different countries or very different levels, traditional unions are willing, if not always able, to evolve in the direction of what one might call a globally networked solidarity unionism. My feeling is that whilst unions are capable of responding, adjusting and following, the sources and dynamic for any such transformation are to be found outside the traditional working class and their traditional organisations.

Brecher, Smith and Costello (2009) not only discuss one or two cases of union/labour campaigning with/in the Web but also raise a series of challenging questions about such (italicised in the original):

> 1. *What does it mean when individuals begin organising outside and without the help of traditional organisations?...*
> 2. *It's easy and cheap for organisations to bring people together into a swarm or smart mob, but what do you do with them then?...*
> 3. *Will offline social movement organisations be willing to cede control as ordinary people increasingly leverage social networking tools to channel their own activities? …*
> 4. *How do labour and social movement organisations address the dangers associated with online action? …*
> 5. *How do we track the demographics of who's online and who's not and what tools they are using? …*
> 6. *How do we present complex ideas online? …*
> 7. *How does offline and online social movement building fit together? …*
> 8. *How can social movements wield real power online? …*

It is interesting that the authors do not distinguish between unions and social movements, clearly seeing them as confronted by the same problems and possibilities.

Now, do we have any evidence that action and reflection, labouring people and labour specialists, labour leaders and members/followers, West/Rest, Fe/Male, Hetero/GLTB are also meeting, dialoging, strategising, collaborating in Cyberia, on the Web? Are these traditional distinctions/oppositions, produced or reproduced (even from pre-capitalist practice) being overcome in this new space? Are new liberated territories and new labour/social movement practices being here created?

If I consider what is possibly the most open and horizontal of international union or labour movement sites, UnionBook (UB), I can, September 2011, only draw on one year of personal experience. UB describes itself as 'the Social Network for Trade Unionists'. In its present form it had been functioning also for about one year. July 2007 it had some 4,000 adherents. This compares with its 'mother' site, LabourStart, an international multilingual news and solidarity service which after 10-15 years of operation claims some 50,000.[41] But whilst LabourStart has 200 correspondents and occasional conferences,[42] it is a broadcaster, in the sense of collecting information and appeals and then posting them from a single centre to surfers or to those subscribed to its email service. UB, clearly, is meant to be a labour movement alternative to FaceBook, etc. It is open in the sense of dispensing with any coordinator, founder Eric Lee himself keeping a lower profile on UB than many of its contributors.[43]

Apart from providing members with individual blogsites, UB has 200+ groups. 'Featured Groups', include the following: 'Solidarity With the People of Egypt' (204 members), Labour Union Staff (119), Labour-lore and Working Class Culture (105), Transnational Corporations (149), Trade Union Educators (235). All the groups are in English although a certain proportion of UB members come from outside the North and even the Anglophone South. The number of members does not necessarily correlate with the amount of activity. Nor, evidently, with the questions posed in the previous paragraph. For the full list of groups see http://www.unionbook.org/groups. These include a couple I have myself unsuccessfully floated. I have thus been reduced, or reduced myself, to a personal blog, to which I copy-and-paste labour and social movement news, views and analyses, as well as my own writings. I am not sure whether I can find out how many visitors come here, what their identities might be, but there is in any case, minimal feedback. But for me the most interesting group on NU is Social Network Unionism, set up by the Netherlands-based Turkish activist, Orsan Senalp. Social Network Unionism lists 70 members, autumn 2011. But whilst it carries items by the group's creator, and many from those oriented toward global social emancipation and cyberspace, I wonder to what extent these come from those union or social movement activists toward whom Orsan Senalp is clearly oriented.

We seem to be here confronted with two interlocking problems: 1) the inheritance of a generally low level of interest in ideas within the international union movement. Such interest probably went into decline after WW2, with disinterest or even aversion increasing with the failure of 'labour's utopias' (Communism, Marxism, Social Democracy, Populism/Radical Nationalism); 2) a continuing lack of interest or capacity by labour-oriented internationalist intellectuals in communicating new emancipatory

[41] For more on UnionBook see Waterman 2010 and Robinson 2006.

[42] Its 2007 conference is to take place November 2007 in Istanbul, under the the dramatic title 'From Social Networks to Social Revolutions', http://www.labourstart.org/2011/. The site is complete with a red flag. Even as rhetoric, this is a major innovation for LabourStart, previously reproducing the social-liberal rhetoric of the ITUC, Global Unions, the ILO, etc. Clearly inspired by the Arab uprisings, which also used the R word, the question remains of whether the transformation suggested by LabourStart is intended to also occur in Belgium and Switzerland, where these bodies are largely seated.

[43] Indeed, it does occur to me that these two sites should – given their specificity/generality actually be named UnionStart and LabourBook!

ideas to even those union and labour activists who have computer access, interest and internet skills (such as the 4,000+ on UB). This judgment is again impressionistic and speculative. A research/action project addressed to UB and other relevant sites would be necessary to investigate the matter further, this requiring appropriate methods and the active encouragement and support of its coordinator.

Such attention could and should be extended to such other sites as the longer-established NewUnionism (NU). Its subtitle is 'Organising for Workplace Democracy' and it is possibly the most ideas-oriented (and aesthetically innovative) international labour site. NU does publish relevant membership/affiliation data:

> The New Unionism Network was launched at the beginning of 2007. Here's our membership directory. In terms of demographics, 48% of members work for unions. The next biggest group is 'rank and file' workers (at 31%), followed by academics (11%). The gender balance is 34%/66% female/male, which is a worry, although female membership has been rising more proportionately in recent months. There are about 500 members from 47 countries, and 1500 subscribers to our Work In Progress newsletter. We're well pleased with the balance between white-collar and blue-collar members. The nationality with the highest membership is the USA (24%), followed by UK and Australia (21%), and then Canada (11%)… [W]e're needing to build our website audience in South America and Africa in particular. In terms of finances, we are seeking donations to cover operating costs. We're currently holding our own through thanks to the odd member donation, but no more than that. We have no other source of income, nor any political links.

Clearly membership is overwhelmingly from the Anglophone North, the site being exclusively in English. NU does have a few members producing longer posts but most items seem to be either written or posted by website owner, Peter Hall-Jones. Although the site is formally devoted to Organising, Workplace Democracy, Internationalism and Creativity, items written or posted by Hall-Jones would seem in practice to reach beyond these:

> As well as networking for unionists, we also provide a bridge for those who can't join a union (or *feel* they can't, for whatever reason). We want to bring the 'precariat' -- workers without security such as those in the informal economy, part-timers, temps, freelancers, the unemployed, trainees etc -- into the general orbit of unionism. After this, they can then make a more informed choice about deeper participation and/or solidarity…New Unionism is about:
>
> ... working people democratising their workplaces
> ... activists globalising unionism 'from below'
> ... organisers turning practice into theory
> ... labour meeting labour academia

NU also has its own groups on UB (225 members) and FaceBook. And the FaceBook site itself links with various other union or labour sites where more discussion might be taking place.

Inspiration for overcoming the old divides can be found beyond union and labour sites and, indeed, in traditional spaces and places. For an example of what is possible online, consider the work of Annie Leonard**,** which, with freely-accessible videos, caricatures and wit, communicates radical messages about mass consumption and

pollution.[44] Or the films of Michael Moore, one of which ends with an updated version of 'The International' by Left activist song-writer, Billy Bragg, http://michaelmoore.com/books-films/capitalism-love-story**.** Or, to move beyond the Anglophone world, *Anti-Capitalism*, by Argentinean autonomist academic, Ezequiel Adamovsky (2011).[45] This is done in the style of the well-known works by Rius, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rius**.** *Anti-Capitalism* is - for worse rather than better - illustrated by an Argentinean worker art group rather than some brilliant individual artist. But this is surely the small price paid for the principle of surpassing the intellectual/worker or professional/amateur divide!

Open-access and CopyLeft journals in cyberspace are one way in which the high price and exclusivity of academic production is being broken down. The *Global Labour Journal*, otherwise quite traditional in being restricted to academic contributions and by peer-review, is a model in so far as its total content is available for free download. Another labour-friendly open acess online journal, *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements***,** preserves the academic tradition of peer review whilst being open to contributions from non-academic activists.[46] Canada seems to be the site of a whole number of open-access online labour journals. One is *Labour, Capital and Society*, which comes out the earlier era of the 'new international labour studies', marked by its focus on labour in the third world. Although its online emanation is recent, it has digitalised issues back to 1996, and it has hosted special issues on international labour studies and labour internationalism.

So much for reflecting, or reflecting on, cyberspace and the emancipation of labour. But what will shortly become evident is that cyberspace is an increasingly important place *for finding out* what emancipatory labour sparks are escaping the furnace of a furious and world-destructive capitalist globalisation

4. Labour and related movements with emancipatory potential

I want, firstly, to both argue *for* an emancipatory tendency in international labour struggles/studies and to *avoid* setting up EGLS and NGLS as either a Manichean

[44] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Leonard**,** and

- Story of Bottled Water
- Story of Cap and Trade
- Story of Stuff
- Story of Cosmetics
- Story of Electronics
- The Story of Citizens United v. FEC

[45] This was first published in Spanish in Buenos Aires around 2005. I made strenuous efforts at that time to interest an English-language publisher but without success. I had similar lack of success in finding an online outlet for this brilliant little book. Next came editions in German and Japanese. Finally, it was published in the USA by that excellent radical publishing company, Seven Stories. It should really now be done online by Annie Leonard!

[46] See the Call for Papers for the special issue 'For the Global Emancipation of Labour', planned for 2012.

opposition (virtue/vice) or even a simple binary one. This is not only because global labour studies is an inevitably disputed or disputable terrain but also because each of 'the categories I have identified is itself disputed or disputable. And, crucially for me, the emancipatory' can be found on the terrain, in the struggles, within the institutions, in the publications of what I have called the 'social-liberal' NGLS. For me this is a sign of our new capitalist times. The Cold War is over, both Liberalism and Marxism (or Reform and Revolution) have lost their cast-iron certainties, have fragmented or been increasingly challenged. So, I would rather see my NGLS and EGLS as overlapping terrains, but having different horizons, whilst each is – as I have suggested – itself a site of dispute. I claim, obviously, to stand on the terrain of the emancipatory, from where I hope to challenge those who stand within the social-liberal, and invite them to consider this more adventurous terrain. But within this latter terrain I expect to be challenged by those who consider themselves to be more emancipatory or to have a deeper, wider, more subversive/utopian vision of labour studies and labour struggles.

Why, secondly, does the subtitle above say 'and labour-related'? This is to allow for movements of those who may not be considered 'workers', or 'real workers', or 'normal workers', by either the unions, the unionised or labour researchers. *Or*, slightly less negatively, those whose activities or movements may be recognised or even adjusted to by the inter/national union organisations but in a patronising Eurocentric or patriarchal manner. These others form together, or relate to, the overwhelming majority of working people worldwide. I call them 'labour's others' (Waterman 2008). As suggested, they may be recognised as workers, but not have their *specific* identity recognised nor the *autonomy and democratic equality* of their movements granted. I am thinking of peasants and small farmers, carers (customarily called 'mothers' or 'housewives'), the precarious, prostitutes (even if increasingly recognised as 'sex-workers'), street-traders, urban petty-producers, and even the urban poor more generally – who either produce, trade or die.[47] I am also thinking of students who are not only future workers, or the precarious, or the unemployed but whose academic conditions are increasingly industrialised and whose struggles either take on labour/social-movement characteristics or overlap with those of the unionised. And I am obviously interested in their increasing internationalism and the forms these internationalisms take. The cases here listed are inevitably random, but suggest the growing number and variety of such movements and activities. Only research can reveal whether they do or do not contribute to the emancipatory movement. Or, more cautiously - whether emancipatory elements can be found in them, emancipatory lessons drawn from them.

- Greater Toronto Workers Assembly.
- Excluded Worker Congress, USA
- El Buen Vivir/Living Well/Sumak Kawsay

[47] For a brilliant and moving portrayal of life, work and survival in the truly brutal conditions suffered by slumdwellers in the megacity of Lagos, Nigeria, see 'Welcome to Lagos', a three-part BBC documentary, http://documentarystorm.com/around-the-world/welcome-to-lagos/. It does not deal with more than individual or small-community struggles. But it demands reflection on how the work, energy, creativity and optimism of such millions could become a force for self- and social emancipation.

- 7th Global Labour University Conference[48]
- Beyond Growth Congress 2011
- Basic Income Network
- Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS)
- Beyond Precarious Labour: Rethinking Socialist Strategies
- Workers and Students in the Madison, Wisconsin, uprising
- Workers and the Egyptian Revolution
- Labour and Climate Justice[49]
- Labour and the Commons (or anti-privatisation)
- Labour at the US Social Forum in Detroit, 2010
- Students in and against the Edu-Factory
- Precariat
- Peasants/Small Farmers/Landless
- Domestic Workers
- Sexworkers[50]
- Street Workers/Traders[51]
- Urban Inhabitants
- America Latina en Movimiento/Sindical
- Migrants[52]
- European Peoples' Assemblies

[48] I was invited by the GLU to take part in this event, which I have mentioned earlier. Due to some misunderstanding it is second paper of mine that is abstracted here – which I consider a bonus. An earlier version of my conference paper can be found at Waterman (2007).

[49] On this much-discussed and disputed issue, see Ross (2011)

[50] I am aware of having not dealt with sexworkers in either my NGLS or EGLS sections. Perhaps no such study exists in international(ist) terms. There is a hypothetically relevant work here, that of Gregor Gall (2006). But, despite the subtitle 'An International Study', it appears to have no chapter or chapter section on the international level or internationalism. From a critique by Juanita Elias (2007) it appears that it belongs to a traditional political-economic school that has little or no time for gender, or for feminist theorising on sexwork.

[51] StreetNet is a fascinating case in so far as, whilst clearly articulating a major category of 'labour's others', and insisting on their autonomy, it confines affiliation to 'membership organisations' and mimics in many ways the structure and practices of the traditional inter/national union organisations. See here Pat Horne (2005) and Ercüment Çelik (2010, 2011).

[52] I have have been unable to identify any autonomous global network of or for migrant workers. There are some dependent on or oriented toward the UN, the ILO and the ITUC, e.g. http://www.december18.net/. There are a couple of Filipino-based international migrant networks, one at least of which appears to be possibly linked with the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines, http://www.ilps-web.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2150&Itemid=38. And yet another that is a church outreach body, http://www.simn-cs.net/. There must be at least one autonomous global network, if not more. Further search for, or the construction of, such a network is necessary. In the meantime, consider the World Charter of Migrants, http://cmmigrants.org/. And a national solidarity network in the USA, http://www.immigrantsolidarity.org/.

- Social Network Unionism
- Global Labour Institute
- Global Labour Institute UK[53]
- Cyberunions
- [Fill in as necessary or desirable]

The point, of course, is not to set such up such categories, networks, lists, alliances, sites as being or representing the 'real' proletariat. The problem is that of recognising proletarianisation as more a process than a condition. Nor is the idea to set up the 'poorest of the poor' in Manichean opposition to some 'labour aristocracy' as the privileged bearers of revolution and internationalism. If only because this would be to repeat the Marxist error concerning the urban industrial proletariat and to use language appropriate to 19th-20th century capitalism and state-nationalism.[54] Under the conditions of a contemporary globalised and informatised capitalism, the key words for social transformation should, anyway, be 'emancipation' (explained above) and 'global solidarity' (implying a solidarity which relativises the state-defined nation and its relations with other such). Further, of course, there are multiple tensions and contradictions both within such categories/organisations/networks and between them and other such. Of equal importance, finally, some of the categories/activities mentioned above are linked to/carried out by or with the traditional working class and its traditional organisations. These latter are, therefore, neither to be demonised or dismissed. They are, rather, to be subject to critical study using relevant contemporary theories or concepts.

Conclusion: A Long March through the Literature

I fear this paper has somehow echoed Mao's Long March, which not only travelled for two years and thousands of kilometres before it reached Yan'an (Yenan) but advanced and retreated and even looped the loop before arriving at its destination. As with Mao in Yan'an, however, this paper has only reached a resting place. And unlike the case with Yan'an, where Mao violently repressed dissent,[55] I am hoping that those who either agree or disagree with my argument, or consider it inadequate, might feel stimulated, emboldened or provoked sufficiently to respond to it.

'Emancipation' is an aspiration, not a 'line' or a 'position'. There is not only a plurality of sparks but also of furnaces throwing these out. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2004) talks of the necessity to identify

[53] This points to 'Education Materials', not available on the GLI headquarter site.

[54] We can see one veteran socialist Africanist, John Saul (2011) struggling to surpass such oppositions in a piece on 'non-transformative global capitalism', the 'proletariat and precariat' in Africa in general, South Africa in particular. He here resurrects the ghost of his African 'labour aristocracy' thesis that I, mistakenly, thought to have hung, drawn and quartered in my PhD over 25 years ago (Waterman 1983)! Even if his resurrection is qualified and temporary, it does signify the extent to which his effort to come to terms with work, working people and social discontents under a *radically*-transformative global capitalism in Africa are limited by traditional Marxist categories and socialist hopes.

[55] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yan%27an.

> two processes that I designate as *sociology of absences and sociology of emergences*. I speak of sociologies because my aim is to critically identify the conditions that destroy non-hegemonic and potentially counter-hegemonic social experience. Through these sociologies, social experience that resists destruction is unconcealed, and the space-time capable of identifying and rendering credible new counter-hegemonic social experiences is opened up.

And, in the words of international union veteran, Dan Gallin (cited Hall-Jones 2011):

> Many of us come from a tradition which encourages one to think that one can provide the spark all by oneself, if one has the correct policy (which is the brownish residue left at the bottom of the pan after many splits have boiled the water away) and if one works hard enough… I have finally come to the conclusion that this is nonsense. The spark we want cannot come from any one of us, it can only come from a combination/interaction of many of us. In other words, forget the vanguard party, the network is the vanguard.

And, finally, those who have managed to plough through this substantial paper may feel mollified by the knowledge that I have now given myself the additional task of reducing this paper to 10 Commandments, 21 Conditions, 11 Theses or Umpteen Propositions and to make them accessible to labour and social movement activists who do not have the time to read long academic papers.

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