

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



LABOUR MOVEMENTS Research Committee (RC) 44

October 1999

Secretary's notes

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Mission

To encourage international research on Labour Movements, with a focus on their role both in industrial relations and in the political arena. Membership is open to any person engaged in research into Labour Movements or in Labour Movement Activities

In this edition of the Newsletter we have reproduced profiles of board members. We also have a short profile on the Centre for Research on Work and Society (CRWS) in Toronto. We would encourage all members of RC44 to send in similar profiles indicating their research interests and activities. We would also like to invite other research centres on labour to send us descriptions of their institutions. We are hoping that by the time we get to Brisbane in 2002 we will have a comprehensive picture of labour movement studies globally and a more active and informed network of scholars. Please pass on a copy of this Newsletter to colleagues in the field. Our subscribers are starting to grow but we keep on hearing from colleagues who are surprised to hear about the Newsletter and want to join.

We are also publishing in this edition three of our members' choices of the most influential books for sociologists of labour. We invite all members to submit their lists and we will publish as many as possible in every edition over the next two years. We intend to present a summary and analysis of these lists to the World congress. We are interested in finding out whether there is any agreement among us as to which books are clearly more influential or whether our field of study is sharply fragmented. This latter possibility is not necessarily a weakness and points to the need for greater interaction and debate between us.

One possibility is for RC44 to develop its own journal to encourage cross fertilisation of research findings and publications between countries. I am not aware of any sociology journal on comparative labour studies although I can think of a number of excellent interdisciplinary journals such as Labour, Capital and Society published by the Centre of Developing Area Studies at McGill University in Montreal. I would be interested to hear from members as to what they would identify as the key journals in our field. So would journal editors please take advantage of this opportunity for a free advertisement.

We will be carrying reviews of books on labour movements studies in the coming editions. If you have recently published a book please arrange for the publishers to send it to us. We will also be approaching members to review books for us. We hope, through a more interventionist strategy, to tap the world wide knowledge on labour movement studies that exists among the readers of the RC44 Newsletter.

Eddie Webster

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Profile of Board Members

This brief profile will inform you about the research interests and teaching activities of all the board members. Contact them directly if you would like further information. We are inviting all members to send us a brief profile so that a directory can be set up.

Richard Hyman

Research Interests: Has a long background of work with trade union activists and officials and currently focuses on European Industrial Relations

Teaching : Industrial Relations at the University of Warwick

Publications: The Workers' Union, Strikes, Industrial Relations: a Marxist Introduction, The Political Economy of Industrial Relations, and (with Anthony Ferner) Changing Industrial Relations in Europe and New Frontiers in European Industrial Relations. He is founding editor of the European Journal of Industrial Relations , and he is completing a book provisionally entitled *The Geometry of Trade Unionism*.

Claire Williams

Research Interests: Industrial Sociology, Sociology of Work, Gender and Masculinity, Emotional Labour, Occupational Health and Safety and Methodology.

Teaching: Department of Sociology, Flinders University of South Australia - Work, Occupations and Organisations.

Publications:

Williams, C. 1999, 'Extended Review: Danger bodies at work', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 1, March.

Williams, C. (forthcoming) "Demanding publics and emotional labour: The case of flight attendants.

Williams, C. 1997, 'Women and occupational health and safety: from narratives of danger to invisibility', *Labour History* No. 73. November. pp. 30-52.

Eddie Webster

Research Interests: the evolving industrial relations system in South Africa, the new labour market institutions that have emerged in South Africa, workplace industrial relations. Recently completed a study on the occupational culture of deep-level gold miners. He worked closely with the South African labour movement during the anti-apartheid struggle and continues to do so as it confronts the challenge of globalisation under a democratic order.

Teaching: Teaches courses on the sociology of work, industrial relations, the sociology of labour and social policy.

Publications: Trade Unions and Democratisation in South Africa, 1985-1997, London , Macmillan, co-authored with Glenn Adler.

Towards a class compromise in South Africa's double transition: Bargained liberalisation and the transition to democracy, *Politics and Society* - co-authored with Glenn Adler, September 1999

Eroding the core: Flexibility and the resegmentation of the South African labour market, *Critical Sociology* - co-authored with Bridget Kenny, October 1999

Defusing the Molotov Cocktail in South African Labour Relations; Burden of the past and challenge of the future, in Kuruvilla, S and Mundell, B (eds), *Colonialism and the Institutionalisation of Industrial Relations in Developing Countries*, JAI press, 1999.

Varkey Jose

Research Interests and Activities: Heads the Labour and Society Programme in the

International Institute for Labour Studies, ILO, Geneva and is in charge of an innovative programme of the ILO on "Organized Labour in the 21st Century" whose aim is to strengthen trade unions in responding to the changing environment in the world of work. This project has 16 case studies with a view to

surveying how far the unions in each country have adapted to the new environment by addressing new concerns, organizing new constituents, forming new alliances; and adjusting union structures and finances. He is also establishing a network linking trade union practitioners with academic scholars to exchange information, and provide a forum for interaction between the ILO, unions and the academic community.

Rob Lambert

Research Interests: Previously, field research analysing the authoritarian labour regulations in Asia and Australia and the potential of the independent forms of unionism to set new agendas.

Currently, The debate over social clauses and international labour standards. Coordinates Sigtur, a new regional initiative bringing together the new independent unions from Southern Africa, Asia and Australia as well as Latin America in an alliance of 'southern unions'.

Teaching: Coordinator of the Asian Business Programs at the University of Western Australia.

Developed a new major in the Commerce and Economics degrees which contextualises Japanese, Korean and overseas Chinese business activity in the region.

Publications: 'Australia's Historic Industrial Relations Transition', *Globalisation and Labour Relations*, Peter Lesink (ed), 1999, London, Edward Elgar; 'Global Dance: Factory Regimes, Asian Labour Standards and Corporate Restructuring', in the book, *Globalisation and Patterns of Labour Resistance*, Jeremy Waddington (ed.), 1999, London, Mansell.

Carla Lipsig-Mumme

Research Interests: Previously, organiser for the United Farmworkers of America, and UNITE. Now, new union organising strategies in international comparison, young workers and unions, the garment industry, Australian labour and labourism, labour and globalisation, future of work and employment.

Current: Union educator and policy advisor with unions in Quebec, English Canada and elsewhere.

Teaching: Sociology of work; labour and globalisation; contemporary trade union issues and strategies. (Graduate mostly, some undergraduate.)

Publications: "The dilemma of organising:", in McBride, S. et. al, *Globalisation and Power*, MacMillan, 2000. *The Language of Organising*. (monograph), CRWS, 1999.

Regina Morel

Research Interests Previously, the class formation and labour movement among Brazilian steel-industry workers; studying "political generations" among steel workers. Currently, the analysis of Brazilian industrial relations, specifically the change from a strictly regulated model to a completely deregulated one in which the structures for negotiations and confronting interests are still undefined.

Teaching Activities: Professor, Department of Sociology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Pamela Roby

Research Interests: Chair of the American Sociological Association's Section on Sex and Gender and Vice-Chair of the National Commission on Working Women. Currently, factors shaping the leadership experiences of trade union stewards, social and economic inequalities, higher education, and women and work.

Teaching Activities: Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies, Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Publications: Creating a Just World: Leadership for the Twenty-First Century,' *Social Problems*, Vol. 45 (1), 1998, pp. 1-20; 'Becoming Shop Stewards: Perspectives on Gender and Race in Ten Trade Unions,' *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 20 (3), Fall 1995, pp. 65-82;

Profile
Centre for Research on Work and

As part of York University CRWS works closely with numerous faculty members in a number of disciplines.

Academic Programmes

CRWS offers an Undergraduate Honours Programme in Labour Studies. As part of this programme, CRWS aids fourth year students, finding placements throughout the labour movement, relevant government ministries, the community sector, and the business world. CRWS also employs and trains graduate students in labour research, from the disciplines of sociology, history, environmental studies, political science, economics, and social and political thought while also supervising field research projects with labour unions and community groups.

Working Groups

CRWS convenes Working Groups on a number of policy-oriented topics.

Trade Unionist In Residence Programme A programme for trade unionists who spend from three months to one year at York researching, writing, speaking and meeting with students.

Research Themes

CRWS' mission as a university-union-community research centre leads it to respond to the needs of its constituents with research projects of varying length and target audiences.

CURRENT

Industrial relations and the labour process, women and economic restructuring, trade union response in international comparison, the delivery of training

Facilities

CRWS offers a number of facilities including a Resource Centre which contains books, articles, journals, collective agreements and newspaper clippings dealing with work related issues, from a number of English and French speaking countries. The materials in the Resource Centre are available to any interested party and photocopying facilities are easily accessible. The Centre also has offices available for graduate students and visiting scholars.

web site: www.yorku.ca/research/crws/



International Industrial Relations Association (IIRA)

12th World Congress

Date: May 29 - June 2000

Venue: Tokyo Japan

Theme: Global Integration and Challenges for Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management in the Twenty First Century

Themes of the Tracks

- Exploring trends in employment relations and new approaches to work in the 21st century
- The impact of globalisation on national and regional systems of Industrial Relations and Employment
- Changing patterns of employee and union participation: Toward new systems of Industrial Relations?
- Search for flexibility, fairness and prosperity: Alternative employment policies in the 21st Century
- Asia in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities in Work and Labour

For Further Information

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The Editors would like to generate some debate for the Newsletter from this article.
You may either respond directly or write an article

The Changing State: Questions for Debate

Peter Fairbrother
School of Social Science, Cardiff University, Wales

Over the last two decades, the form and organisation of liberal democratic states has been challenged in fundamental ways, with major implications for public sector workers, their trade unions and for their citizens. These states faced two related crises, concerned with the economy and politics: problems about balance of payments, inflationary pressures, expanding public sector debt and exchange instability and questions about political organisation, authority and legitimacy. Increasingly, governments began to distance themselves from the formulation and implementation of economic policy through a process of depoliticisation.

One outcome was a restructuring of the form and focus of the state as employer via competition-based policies and practices: former bureaucratised states have been transformed into managerial states. In varied ways there has been a formal disengagement of the state politically from the economy, defining problems as susceptible to technical and 'economic' solutions. The assumption is that the form and organisation of the state is not associated with the structuring of class relations. Rather, the elaboration of the managerial state has been justified via the rhetoric concerning globalisation and the role of the market.

The focus of restructuring has been on a reconfiguration of state managerial hierarchies, impacting on the relations between management and workforces. One feature of this change has been the devolution of managerial control and accountability, redefining management-worker relations in decisive ways. There has also been a redrawing of state boundaries, with the widespread implementation of privatisation policies, in the form of asset sales, transfers of ownership and out-sourcing. Such policies are now advocated by many policy-makers and advisers as an essential element in a restructuring of the state designed to produce competition-induced efficiencies so as to

bring about sustained economic growth.

With the elaboration of these policies, workers and their unions face a break from past certainties and securities. Increasingly, workers face employment insecurity, work intensification and uncertainty about the future. Such developments have stimulated questions about forms of union organisation within the state sector and privatised enterprises and the alternatives facing these unions. While decentralisation, fragmentation and the privatisation of the public sector has raised difficult questions for workers and their unions, it has also provided the stimulus for a re-examination of trade unionism in this sector. The outcome is that in most liberal democratic states the last two decades have seen the emergence of public sector unionism as a political force.

But, the difficulties for these workers and their unions in the state sector are part of a wider malaise. Trade union movements in many liberal democratic states face membership decline, a recomposition of bargaining arrangements and procedures and a distancing from former political partners. Against this backdrop, unions have begun to explore the traditional boundaries of unionism, giving rise to debates about social movement unionism, community unionism and campaigning unionism. However, it remains unclear how and under what circumstances union adaptation, innovation and renewal is possible. The actual extent of union advance or renewal aside, it can be argued that the restructuring of state employment presents opportunities for unions that were not there previously, opening up both mundane issues as well as redefining agenda of concerns. Thus, the paradox of state restructuring is that union members and their leaderships face choices, which are critical for the emergent form and character of the

New Book

Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalization: Alternative Union Models in the New World Order

Edited by Ronaldo Munck and Peter Waterman, Macmillan Press, 1999, London and New York

Internationally the trade union movement is finding itself peripheralized by a series of mutually reinforcing processes - the ongoing world economic crises; the uneven transition from an industrial to an information and service capitalism; the aggressive policies of neo-liberalism; the collapse of communism and radical nationalism; the decline of the social-democratic or labour tradition - and by a globalization that undermines the nation-state to which union hopes have long been pinned. The editors argue that this crisis provides an opportunity for labour to recover or reinvent itself. They see this in terms of a labour response to the waves of energy coming from the new global social movements (women, ecology, human rights/democracy, and so on).

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Ana Maria Catalano
- A New Task for the Unions: The Liberation of Time from Work *André Gorz*
- Multiple Identities and Multiple Strategies: Confronting State, Capital and Patriarchy
Amrita Chhachhi and Renée Pittin

PART III LABOUR WEST AND EAST

- The Future of the US Labour Movement in an Era of Global Economic Integration *George DeMartino*
- The Russian Trade Unions: From Chaos to a New Paradigm *Kirill Buketov*
- The Future of the Japanese Automobile Industry: Coexistence with the World, Consumers and Employees
Confederation of Japan Automobile Workers' Unions
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Glenn Adler and Eddie Webster
- Restructuring of Labour and Trade Union Responses in Brazil *José Ricardo Ramalho*
- Labour, Industry and the State in India and Pakistan *Christopher Candland*

PART V KEY ISSUES

- Ecology and Labour: Towards a New Societal Paradigm *Laurie Adkin*

RC44 Top 10 most influential books - responses

H Braverman Labour and Monopoly Capital	Dorothy Sue Cobble (Ed.) Women And	Richard Turner The Eye of the Needle
G D H Cole World of Labour	ACook et al (eds) Women And Trade Unions In Eleven Industrialized Countries	Marx Capital Vol 1
c goodrich Frontier of Control	ACook et al (eds) Women And Trade Unions In Eleven Industrialized Countries	Isaac Deutchers Trilogy Prophet Unarmed
A Gramsci Political Writings 1910-1920	ABolles We Paid Our Dues: Women Trade	Braverman Labor and Monopoly Capital
G Lukás History and Class Consciousness	ABolles We Paid Our Dues: Women Trade	Beynon Working for Ford;
W Milne-Bailey Trade Unions and the State	ABolles We Paid Our Dues: Women Trade	Hyman Industrial Relations: A Marxist
E P Thompson Making of the English	E Lawrence Gender And Trade Unions	Max Weber The Protestant Ethic and the
A Touraine La conscience ouvrière	B Wertheimer We Were There: The	C Wright Mills The Sociological
H A Turner Trade Union Growth, Structure	B O'farrel et al (Eds.) Rocking The	Bottomore and Nisbet A History of
C Wright Mills New Men of Power	J Hoerr We Can't Eat Prestige: The	Harry Prosh The Genesis of Twentieth

Trade Unions in Nigeria

Jimi Adesina
Department of Sociology
University of Ibadan

Send updates on
trade union
struggles in your
regions

Two dates in 1999 represent major signposts on Nigeria's trade union landscape. On Wednesday January 27 1999, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) held its first democratic delegates conference and elected a new leadership in more than half-a-decade. On Saturday May 29 1999, a new constitution with a set of fundamental and justiciable rights came into force as a new President-elect for Nigeria was inaugurated. The first date represents—no matter how flawed—the return of the NLC to its members, after four-and-half-years of having been hijacked by a military dictatorship. Between August 1994 and October 1998 a “Sole Administrator” appointed by the regime of General Sani Abacha ran the NLC. The same situation prevailed with the oil workers' union.

The second date marked the beginning of Nigeria's long journey to a democratic polity and civil society. Again, in spite of the major flaws in the process of the return to civil rule and the ambiguous nature of Nigeria's new 'democratic' environment, a constitution with guaranteed rights and a civil society that remains restive provides openings for the labour movement that it has not experienced for fifteen years.

Since 1983, the Nigerian labour movement has experienced horrendous attacks in the hands of successive military dictatorships. In 1984, the resident doctors protesting conditions of employment were not only sacked en masse but also were forcibly ejected from their hospital accommodation by national security personnel, and their leaders arrested. Three years later, leaders of striking electricity workers were sentenced to long periods of imprisonment. In 1988, the NLC national headquarters was seized by the regime of Ibrahim Babangida and put under the control of a sole administrator. In 1992, the union of university teachers was banned (a ban repeated in 1996), and in 1993 the teachers were sacked en masse.

The greater nightmare was after August 1994. In the aftermath of the 1994 general strike, several union leaders were arrested and imprisoned: the more famous being the oil workers' leaders. Between 1994 and 1996, several decrees were passed hamstringing the unions on issues of internal union decision making process, who could not contest for offices at the NLC level, and the ban on affiliation with international labour organisations (including the ILO). Numerous union activists were arrested at various times in the period and a significant segment of the national union leadership reached an uneasy accommodation with the dictatorship.

If the two dates, mentioned earlier, marked important turning points in Nigeria's contemporary labour history, there are nonetheless enormous dilemmas facing the movement.

First, “democracy” even among Nigeria's political class remains a flag of convenience. The paradox of

contemporary Nigeria is the prevalence of persons who spent years propping up military dictatorship in Nigeria in important and highly visible positions. Party formation and election became, in the main, a game of resource deployment. In a situation in which public servants in several parts of the country had not been paid for several months and appalling poor pay, the federal legislators recently picked up cheques for between 2.5 million and 3.5 million *naira* (about US\$25,000 and US\$35,000) as their furniture allowance! The allowance would easily pay the salaries of more than 1,166 public servants, were the state governments to pay a minimum wage of 3,000 *naira* a month. The response of the NLC was to organise a robust protest march in front of the National Assembly (for several hours) without any apparent capacity for a follow-up action - beyond a gesture.

The twinning of transition from dictatorship and neo-liberal economic policies (under the enforcement of the IMF and the World Bank) represents a second major challenge for the trade union movement. A National Council on Privatisation, set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo, hopes to complete the privatisation of several key public enterprises by 2001. This is in spite of the more skeptical stance of Candidate Obasanjo during the election campaigns. The impact of the promised 'downsizing' of these enterprises and the anticipated job losses in an environment of high unemployment raises a host of questions and challenges for the trade union movement and democracy in Nigeria. A generalised deployment of neo-liberal economic and social policy framework - after years of failed structural adjustment programme - poses major challenges to the trade union movement as much as the fledgling democratic agenda in Nigeria. This becomes more urgent given that in spite of steps taken by the new administration on the 'log of demands' given it after taking office, the IMF and the World Bank seem dead set against any debt relief for the country. Debt servicing presently accounts for 35% of the federal budget: more than education and health combined.

The absence of an alternative policy framework by the new civilian administration is mirrored in the trade union movement. Developing such alternative policy framework - reminiscent of the mid-1980s - represents a major challenge for the trade union movement. It is on such a platform that the mobilisation of the civil society for the defence of not only the interest of the poor and the disadvantaged hinges but of democracy as well. The experience of the past is that neither the international financial institutions nor the Nigerian power elite make a serious discrimination between democracy and dictatorship. It is for the trade union movement and the rest of the disadvantaged civil society to show that democracy matters.

