

The Networked Internationalism of Labour's Others: A Suitable Case for Treatment¹

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How Do, Can or Should Sexworkers of the World Unite?

The photo shows a demonstration of the UK-based International Union of Sexworkers, London. In March 2002, the IUSW became an affiliate of the General Municipal and Allied Workers Union, one of Britain's oldest. It should be noted that, although networked internationally, this is formally a trade union. And that it is actually a national or even local (London) union of international (i.e. multi-national) sexworkers. Therefore, like other such new kinds of collective worker self-expression, this is less a case for celebration, more one for investigation. (Photo: Fredderico D'Amicci).

¹ Thanks to Dan Gallin of the Global Labour Institute for corrections and suggestions. He remains innocent of any remaining crimes or misdemeanours. The same goes for the International Conference on Labour and Social History, Linz, September 2008, at which a draft of this paper, with annexes, was first presented. (Waterman 2007c).

Abstract

This is a proposal for research into the new and developing internationalisms of the 'peasants, artisans and others, enrolled amongst the sons of toil'. These internationalisms are so commonly articulated in network form (so difficult to understand without network theory?) that it is difficult to discuss the one without the other.

In today's world, the 'damned of the earth' would seem to be those marginalised from, or marginalised within, the traditional working class, either un-unionised or beyond the reasonable reach of unions. We need to consider the internationalisms of such labouring or popular classes/categories/identities as the rural poor, the casualised, urban popular residential communities, migrant workers, poor women, indigenous peoples. Is there any evidence that labouring classes, categories or identities *less* incorporated are demonstrating either *more* or *more-appropriate* internationalisms?

Whatever we here find, we will also need to examine the international relationships of each category with the others, with the unionised working class, with the cross-class, multi-issue, global justice movement. And to consider whether or not the *form* that might be taken by the international relations of these categories (customarily networks) might not be more appropriate to resistance and counter-assertion against a globalised-networked-computerised capitalism.

We would also need to consider the kind of relationships such new international movements establish with such international hegemony as the International Labour Organisation, with other inter-state institutions, and with capital, state, and other dominant instances/ideologies (gendered, racial, religious, party, etc) at all social levels and scales. We would need, finally, to consider what implications such evidence might have for *unionised* labour and for the development of a global justice movement that goes way beyond the poor.

After 1) an introduction on the internationalism of labour's others, this paper will consider 2) what networking has to do with this, 3) existing case studies, 4) theoretical resources, 5) some brief notes on methodological resources and 6) the customary in-conclusions. The paper is completed with bibliographical and internet resource lists.

The Networked Internationalism of Labour's Others: A Suitable Case for Research

*We peasants, artisans, and others
Enrolled among the sons of toil
Let's claim the earth henceforth for brothers,
Drive the indolent from the soil!
On our flesh too long has fed the raven,
We've too long been the vulture's prey.
But now farewell the spirit craven,
The dawn brings in a brighter day!*

*Then comrades come rally!
And the last fight let us face.
The Internationale
Unites the human race!
(Chorus, 2x)*

From an English translation of Eugene Potier's
'L'Internationale'

1. The Internationalism of Labour's Others

Although long-considered the anthem of the international union, labour, socialist and communist movements, Potier's words nowhere refer to any of these. It stands more in the tradition of Flora Tristán's 'Workers' Union' (Tristán 1843), in which the uprising and emancipation of labouring people (in France? anywhere? everywhere?) would lead to universal liberty, equality and solidarity. In Potier's French original there is a first verse reference to 'les damnés de la terre' (thus 'damned', and not, as in the English, 'wretched'). There was, therefore, added licence for Frantz Fanon to apply it to the poor of the Third World (Fanon 1986). But he thereby laid another *particular* claim on a *universal* appeal to internationalism on behalf of all the poor. With the end of state - and decline of party - communisms (and the often-compulsory singing of a song emptied of all emancipatory significance), Potier's words may speak to a new international movement. But, this time on behalf of all labouring people and in the name not of an ideology, nor a state (present or future) but of the principle of human solidarity. As suggested by the lines above, and as spelled out in the French original: the international will *be* the human race.

The major international movement of our day is, of course, one that has many names – none of which refers to either the proletariat in particular or the people in general: 'Anti-Globalisation', 'Anti-Corporate', 'Anti-Capitalist', 'Global Justice and Solidarity'. I use the last of these, not because I am lacking in either anti-neoliberal spirit,

nor anti-capitalist desire, but because it seems to me to better capture the present nature of this amorphous but many-splendoured and many-prickled thing. 'Global Justice and Solidarity' has other characteristics which may recommend itself as a name. One is an explicit reference to the global, another is an implicit reference to economic and socio-cultural rather than solely political rights, a third is the *absence* of class-specificity – surely appropriate to the multi-class composition of the movement.

Yet there is good reason to return to the sons (not to speak of daughters) of toil. Indeed, there are several good reasons.

The first is that *The Internationale* was, for many decades and much of the world, *the* anthem of the international labour movement.

The second is because of the specific reference in the above verse to those enrolled amongst the toilers – the artisans, peasants and others. Given that the inter/national union movement has, with exceptions, forgotten the song and abandoned any *emancipatory* sense of internationalism (Waterman 2004), could it be that the notion of an emancipatory internationalism, if not the song itself, has migrated to other categories of the popular sectors, historically less-incorporated into 20th century capitalism? Could it be that these are the *new* bearers of the old internationalism, or the popular bearers of a *new* internationalism within the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement (GJ&SM)?

The third reason for addressing labour's others is that these are the (growing) majority of the working class, understood as a global phenomenon (Millar 2007). In a 'Shining India', with a labour force of over 370 million, they represent 83-93 percent of the workforce, and only 3.5 percent are in any way unionised (Harris-White 2002:17)!

A fourth is that, whilst the Thirdworldist Internationalisms of the 1960s-70s (Gerassi 1971) have passed into history, there is new theory suggesting a much broader and more complex notion of the working class (Hardt and Negri 2004: Ch. 2.1). This might not privilege the marginalised, in the way that some 'new theories of revolution' (Woddis 1972) did after 1968. But it certainly refers to, broadens and loosens the old narrow conceptualisation, image or assumptions about this class.

There is, finally, a wave of new writing that does at least suggest that such 'marginal' sectors do have their own autonomous international relations and might have more affinity with or demonstrable contact with the GJ&SM than the unionised working class (for example, Conway 2007, Cumbers and Routledge 2005-7, Dietrich and Nayak 2006, Edelman 2003, Hale and Wills 2005).

To what kinds of workers am I here referring? Broadly the same categories as those in an old piece of my own, exploiting the same words of the *Internationale* (Waterman 1981a, b). At that time I was talking about the inter-relationship of working classes only within 'peripheral capitalist societies'. What I actually said was 'workers, peasants, artisans and (m)others' - the latter to the distinct chagrin of one feminist just

recruited to lead a 'Women and Development' Programme at my institute. Let me today suggest the following often overlapping categories: casual/ised workers (Wills 2007), urban residential communities; child workers, rural labour/communities; indigenous peoples; im/migrant workers; petty-producers/traders/service-providers (Streetnet 2007); the un/under-employed, the high- and low-tech 'precariat' (Greenpepper 2006(?), Precarious Reader 2005, Toret and Sguiglia 2007) and, obviously, the women housekeepers, rural labourers, homeworkers, sex workers, factory workers, domestic workers, amongst the above.

2. What's networking got to do with it?

There is no need to *assume* a new privileged bearer of social emancipation and global emancipation - as might be suggested by the concept of the 'precariat'. No more is there a necessity to *assume* a privileged relational form for the expression of such - as might be suggested by some of the literature around networking. In the first case one would be reproducing the notion of such a privileged agent. In the second case one would be reducing 'networking' from a way of understanding human and social relationships to an empirical form (that might reproduce within itself characteristics of the hierarchical, bureaucratic institution, or of charismatic leadership) (Nunes 2005).

It will be sufficient if such research recognises 1) the subversive effect of considering seriously the networking form - the variety of networking forms - taken by new worker movements, 2) the emancipatory effect of considering such relational forms not as temporary (in the absence of), nor transitional (on the way to) 'real' union forms, 3) that the customarily middle-class initiated or staffed labour network - local, national, regional, global - is not necessarily less 'working class' than a traditional union that produces its 'middle-class' internally, out of its own institutional dynamics or as a result of external demands/attractions.

But, in any case, as the next section will surely suggest, the common form taken by the self-articulation of new worker interests, identities or concerns internationally is the network. I find this particularly striking in the fourth case below, insofar as it is authored by someone from the tradition of political economy, who spends many pages dismissing theory relating to the new capitalism, to the new workers, to the new social movements and even networking. Yet his case study, of protest against unemployment, poverty and exclusion across Europe - one with much worker and some union participation - is indubitably...a network!

3. Relevant literature, diverse cases

There is not yet much literature on the 'networked internationalism of labour's others'. Four pieces come to mind, the first on peasants/farmers (Edelman 2003), the second on fishworkers (Dietrich and Nayak 2006), the third on women garment workers (Hale and Wills 2005), the fourth on the Euromarches, starting 1997, against unemployment and poverty (Mathers 2007). I will add a fifth case that really has none of

the above characteristics but is nonetheless relevant to research on the topic. This is a campaign which has just started and which I have begun observing. It does not even have as much as a substantial essay to its name.

1. Via Campesina. The Edelman piece is long, wide, detailed and eminently well-documented. It centres on Via Campesina (Peasant Road? Peasant Way?), certainly the best known of the new ‘other labour’ networks created in response to the wave of neo-liberal capitalist globalisation. Via Campesina was born in Brussels (HQ of the European Union and its disastrous agricultural policies), 1993, following a long history of attempts to create peasant/farmer internationals,² at a time of a global farming crisis, of growing rural movements worldwide. It exists in tension with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (dominated by big farming interests, close to the major inter-state institutions). There had been a wave of local, national and cross-border rural organising in Brazil (Landless Workers’ Movement, MST), Central America, North America, in Europe and in India. Amongst a profusion of such movements, of NGO activity and networks, Via Campesina is marked by its orientation toward the poor, the breadth of its concerns (land reform, environment, indigenous peoples, women, human rights, food security), its alliances (World Social Forum, Palestine). Inspired, no doubt, by Latin American tradition and Brazilian practice, it has also been highly visual, theatrical and media-savvy. It has also operated, it seems to me, more as a distributed network than a centralised organisation:

[H]igh profile participation in international protests and civil society gatherings continues to be a hallmark of Via Campesina activity. Its supporters played prominent roles at the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre, Brazil and at the 2002 ‘Rome + 5’ FAO World Food Summit. [...] Much of the Via Campesina’s organising is carried out by its constituent groups, often with the funds from European NGOs. The Via Campesina itself has a tiny staff: the executive secretary, a part-time bilingual ‘technical secretary’, and a regular secretary in the Operational Secretariat in Honduras; a part-time consultant in Nicaragua who works with the Via Campesina’s Global Agrarian Reform Campaign; and a multi-lingual technical assistant based in Europe, who handles the network’s internal communications and media relations. It relies on Yahoo listserves for distributing position papers and announcements, which circulate in English, Spanish, and occasionally in other languages. (Edelman 2003:206).

In little more than a decade, peasant/small-farmer networking and political action – which certainly go wider than Via Campesina - have had considerable success, stalling world trade talks, obtaining at least temporary bans on GM crops, shifting the nature of dialogue toward major life and ethical issues. Moreover:

² Edelman misses the Communist **Red Peasant International** or Krestintern, 1923-?, and the (presumably anti-Communist) **International Peasant Union**, 1948-?.

Participants in the peasant and farmer networks have also come to have a dynamic sense of themselves as political actors, empowered with new knowledge, conceptions of solidarity and tools of struggle, and surprisingly unlike the unsophisticated rustics that urban elites often imagine them to be. (214).

Problems remaining include: relations of the networks with NGOs (presumably Edelman means Northern funding agencies); representativity claims (of who speaks for whom in the rural community); of accountability to constituences and funders; overwork amongst activists with rural occupations; tensions between national and international activism; 'verticalist' tendencies with exclusionary effects. As well, presumably, as problems with strategy toward state, regional and international agencies, towards hypothetical allies, etc.³

2. Fishworker internationalism. Dietrich and Nayak (2006) is actually about the dramatic development of fishworker movements in India in the era of globalisation, and their involvement in international solidarity efforts. In so far this piece was contributed to a collection on labour internationalism, on which I was invited to make a commentary, I will draw from my comments (Waterman 2006:452-3), in the next three paragraphs, whilst reminding readers that the Dietrich and Nayak piece was originally written in the early 2000s.

The case reveals, in open and dramatic form, most of the problems that have been ignored, or concealed, or marginalised by the modern labor movement: the multiple identities of workers, women workers/working women, complex and conflicting notions of community, the search for work and production in harmony with nature, the increasing centrality of the international sphere, the necessity of simultaneously building up an *international* community of workers+communities and, on this base, and in function of their empowerment, negotiating with inter-state institutions. Particularly interesting is the manner in which, and the form within which, their internationalism is being created. Excluded, by traditional local/national unionism, from membership of the institutionalised union internationals, the fishworkers have found their internationalism with the support of an international/ist NGO, and in the form of a network.

Let us here avoid two possible misunderstandings that could follow. One is that we have discovered *the* way to emancipation, national and international, the other that we have discovered *the* vanguard thereof. These two errors, customarily combined, have been common to the left historically. And they reveal the continuing legacy of 1) ancient ideologies of human emancipation (that the last shall be the first, that there is a chosen people), 2) of the modern Marxist one (the most oppressed modern class as the bearer of international emancipation, the socialist intelligentsia as its guide and teacher). It is not *because* the fishworkers are the most oppressed (or the most marginalised, or that they represent the majority, or that they accumulate within their community the major forms

³ For more detail on Via Campesina, see Borrás 2004, who has not only been involved in the network at international level but also has experience as an activist in the Philippines.

of alienation under capitalism) that they suggest the future of labor emancipation and internationalism. It is rather that systematic reflection upon these matters, made possible by collaboration with critically-minded and socially-committed intellectuals, *can* lead to the surpassing of previously concealed truths or ingrained misunderstandings.

There is, finally, no guarantee that such emancipatory visions, desires or capacities, would survive any of the following assaults: 1) increased repression on the part of the state, inter-state policies and practices; commercial aggression on the part of inter/national capital; 2) a sophisticated and extensive reform policy by the same powers; 3) a similarly sophisticated proposal of marriage by an otherwise un-emancipated trade union movement, national or international (i.e. one still insisting on the male superior position); 4) a substitutionist, instead of an empowering, role by the intellectuals/professionals supporting (or leading!) the movement, whether at local, national or international level.

3. The book on women garment workers (Hale and Wills 2005) is, regrettably, not about **Women Working Worldwide** (WWW) as such. What it is about is an international participatory action research project coordinated by WWW. However, it is still possible to pick up from the Conclusion (234-9) some impressions of WWW thinking and action in relation to the workers they characterise as neither 'informal', nor 'marginal', nor 'atypical' but – more political-economically – as being at the bottom end of a long supply chain. Given common union absence, or incapacity to organise, such workers, and given frequent state unwillingness to act on their behalf, new types of body have emerged to support, organise and advocate on behalf of such workers:

Many have been set up specifically to support women workers and as such have developed creative forms of resistance, using spaces outside the workplace to reach workers through their communities, making explicit connections between home and work...[W]e argue that solidarity is best crafted by taking a lead from the workers producing the goods, by working with organisations...whether or not these are trade unions in the traditional sense. (236)

Hale and Wills argue, thus, that WWW is part of a new kind of political action, involving alliances between workers, unions, activists at different levels, and consumer-oriented bodies in the central markets of key buyers. They claim evidence of the success of international campaigns, not only in terms of winning better conditions but also the establishment of rights, and even of successful solidarity action running in the South-North direction. They nonetheless recognise that such successes are unlikely to occur at the bottom end of the subcontracting chain. Here they consider necessary the lobbying of national and inter-state authorities, including the ILO, demanding full legal rights for all workers. They also favour such 'multi-stakeholder initiatives' (237) as the UK's Ethical Trading Initiative, which can encourage the more responsible or more vulnerable big-brand merchandisers and retailers to confront the conditions of workers at the end of their supply chains. Further, they consider their findings

relevant to...other economic sectors, as well as to...the wider global justice movement...The activities that we have developed as WWW involve international networks between local organisations...along with activist groups based in consuming nations. The composition of these networks varies depending on the issue...They involve trade unions working alongside more community-focused organisations; groups based on class identities...together with those mobilised around gender, religion, ethnicity and geography; those with traditional organisational hierarchies and those with none. (238)

Whilst, as I have said, this is not a book *about* WWW, Hale and Wills add elements to the previous cases. In particular, I think, do they emphasise pluralism in strategies, in organisational (I would say *relational*) form, and in demands. What we do not here have is the kind of critical self-reflection on such matters offered by the two previous cases.

4. The study of the **Euromarches** (Mathers 2007) concerns a West European campaign against unemployment and poverty that has been running (or ran?) for around a decade from 1997. Its particular interest may be precisely that it was addressed to work and workers in general, that it crossed the unionised/non-unionised divide, and that, unlike the other cases, it was a movement within the capitalist core of the North – although unconfined by this. Moreover, this is a case study that goes beyond any traditional unionist or workerist paradigm, addressing itself to the ‘...Struggle for a Social Europe’ (Ch. 3), to ‘A Europe of Citizens’ (Ch. 5) and – in the spirit of the World and European social forums – to ‘A Different Europe’ (Ch. 6). Finally, although the author may hardly himself recognise this, and certainly does not theorise it, the text reveals the extent to which this was movement was *networked*. There are six index categories related to this word and 25 or more separate page references to such. These by far outweigh index references to ‘trade unionism’ (a few), ‘Marx/ism/ists’ (less) or ‘Party’ (none). The international marches followed on national campaigns (themselves organised by networks), and took place in Amsterdam (1997), Cologne (1999) and Nice (2000). Says Mathers (51):

The European marches were an early example of a transnational network...which has contributed to the successful practice of transnational coalition building. However, this was a network with a centre: a European Co-ordinating Committee which provided some strategic direction and fulfilled functional tasks. Nevertheless, the network was loose enough to allow the largely autonomous function of the marches and to enable the participation of the grassroots activists involved in local and national social movement organisations (SMO) that played a significant role in the mobilisations.

Mathers continues, stressing the essential role of organisations within the network, the absence of necessary funding, and the failure to formalise it into a continuing structure that could have ensured continuity. He considers the Euromarches as ‘paradoxical’ (51) insofar as they combined a traditional form of action (The march? With reminders of the

British hunger-marchers of the 1930s?) with modern communication technologies. Borrowing from the vocabulary of American social movement theory, he provides us with a portrait of the kind of movement to be later symbolised for many by 'The Battle of Seattle' and even, possibly, 'institutionalised' in the World and European Social Forums.

Whether or not the national bases of the Euromarches were 'organisations' in any traditional sense is a problem of conceptualisation and also for investigation. Because the word 'network/ed/ing' can function as either something we perceive, as a way of perceiving (even an organisation/institution), or as a bearer of negative, positive or contradictory values. Reading the Mathers account, I *see* networks and networking, this being confirmed by the Euromarches website. At the same time, I recognise the limitations of the Euromarch movement/campaign, as suggested by Mathers. It is also my impression, from his account and from the website, that the Euromarches either simply ran out of steam or, more positively, that they morphed into the more general 'European social movement' represented by the European Social Forums. This impression is influenced by the language or even the foci of Mathers: 'a social Europe', 'a Europe of citizens' and 'a different Europe'. Whilst, actually, these were all demands or policies being developed outside the deadening embrace of either the European Union or the European Trade Union Confederation (that is both financially and morally dependent on the former), these were hardly 'revolutionary' or 'transformatory' demands. They were, according to the Mathers account, demands for recognition of citizen rights and for a Europe that would realise such.:

...from the perspective that social movements are always in the process of being constructed, the European Marches appears [sic] to have played a role in moving the demands of the emergent European social movement away from defensive 'militant particularism'...and in the direction of more universal and utopian goals. (106).

Amongst other radical and novel demands raised within this movement over the years was that for a 'basic income' grant as a right of citizenship, rather than a minimum wage for those in formal employment (122 ff). This was a matter of some controversy within the movement. However, it seems to me that this apparently rather reformist demand (which could clearly be justified on Keynesian grounds) was and is actually subversive of the notion that one has to be in wage work to be recognised as a full citizen. This traditional position is one that has been internalised within the traditional labour and union movement. But it simply leaves out that growing proportion of the working poor either excluded or expelled from a 'normal' job. As Mathers says:

An unconditional income...would...act as a de facto minimum benefit, minimum wage, and minimum pension and would act as a barrier to what was identified as a 'spiral of poverty' (129).

Mathers, in his interpretation of the Euromarches, goes into considerable detail about their impact on those involved:

These struggles were also a process of production. They produced new personal and collective identities amongst the unemployed as well as new representations of them as an international and internationalist social and political force which was potentially capable of posing a challenge to the internationally institutionalised power structure that they identified as the source of their problems. This in turn served to demonstrate the 'Europe of Citizens' and to engender real hope that its demands could be institutionalized in a 'different Europe'.

Mathers reports and reflects, explicitly or implicitly, on international labour networking as demonstrated by the Euromarches. On the one hand he suggests the ability of networking to bring together a wide and growing range of movements and leftwing unions. At the same time he appears to see networking as either prior to or inferior to 'an effectively functioning transnational organisation' (78). Yet it is evident from his account that networking was necessary to circumvent the traditional unions, most of them self-subordinated to the European Union. (Later the European Trade Union Confederation and its French and Dutch affiliates campaigned for a EU Constitution that was, humiliatingly, rejected in two national referenda and collapsed. 190).

Mathers reveals, in many places, the resistance, reluctance or territorialism of the established European unions, national and international. Thus, at one moment British unemployed workers committees were obliged to withdraw from the network when the Trades Union Congress denounced the Euromarch as hostile to the European Union (58). In France the (traditionally-Communist) Confédération Générale du Travail withdrew itself and its unemployed committees because it was negotiating affiliation to the ETUC (59). At other moments and places Mathers shows the ETUC organising its own separate anti-unemployment demonstrations, some substantial, but with official union contingents defined by national banners.

In his final update and conclusion, Mathers provides a sober account of the opposition between top-down organising for a 'European Social Model' by the ETUC and the bottom-up model of the Euromarches and the global justice movement more generally. About the latter, he says:

The project emanating from this strategy is less clear cut, but has focused rather on the promotion of key demands which have arisen from the grass roots opposition within nation states to neoliberal globalisation. Rather than suggesting that organised labour has been superseded as an agent of social change, the existence of two alternative models of organisation and mobilisation suggest that the struggle for a 'social Europe' will involve a struggle within organised labour as its central social agent. (192).

One does not necessarily have to agree with this conclusion to appreciate the value of the Mathers case study. One would like to know what actually became of this movement. At the same time, however, we *are* required to confront the problematic relationship between the organisation and the network as forms of collective self-articulation. This is

particularly so for a movement around work that seems or seemed to be escaping from traditional organisational/institutional/ideological boundaries. And, indeed, from the boundaries of traditional Marxist categories (I will have to return to this matter in Part 4 below).

5. Organising Cleaners Internationally.⁴ This story concerns a union campaign to organize cleaners in the Netherlands, 2007. But it begins around two decades earlier, with Justice for Janitors (J4J), a campaign by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in the USA. ‘Janitors’, in the US, covers doorkeepers, cleaners and related ‘property services staff’. These are, in the US mostly migrants, often illegal. The work is customarily outsourced, but necessarily to small companies: the property services providers are often MNCs. For example, the Danish-based ISS claims 200,000 customers worldwide, and maybe 250,000 workers, from Brunei to Iceland and Uruguay. Not forgetting, of course, the Netherlands. In this country there are 150-200,000 company-employed cleaners. Many of them like their work but certainly not the low pay, the increasing workload, the insecurity, the arbitrary or discriminatory behaviour of immediate supervisors, the denial of sick leave, the uncertainties when ‘their’ company loses its contract to a competitor (which has undercut its offer and needs to recover this from the workers). In Schiphol Airport, there are some 60,000 such workers, but only 2,000 or so work for the airport authority itself, the rest for numerous sub-contractors.

The campaign to organise cleaners is in the hands of FNV Bondgenoten, the major Dutch industrial workers union. However, the idea of organizing this dispersed and largely immigrant force comes from the USA. The methods it is using are American. And an experienced SEIU/J4J organizer has been sent to the Netherlands to animate the exercise, train the Bondgenoten organizers and advise on the mobilization methods. There is some kind of understanding between SEIU in the USA, Bondgenoten in the Netherlands, and their joint international, the Union Network International (UNI). This now refers to itself as the ‘global union for skills and services with 15 million members in 900 unions’. UNI has a Property Services department, which also covers the growing security guards industry. UNI, which is itself one of the newer and more dynamic of the internationals, is now calling itself UNI Global Union, and its Property Services department, UNI Property Services Global Union!

We are here, admittedly, considering the organization and expansion of institutionalized union bodies, national, regional and international or global. So whilst the word ‘global’ is much in evidence, what does it have to do with the ‘networked

⁴ Sources for this ongoing case include the following: Haegens 2007, CAOKrant Schoonmaak 2007, <http://www.beteretoekomst.org/> (in eight languages); <http://www.indymedia.nl/nl/2007/10/47564.shtml>, <http://www.ainfos.ca/ainfos336/ainfos31790.html>, informal discussion with paid organizers and volunteer activists, and participation in meetings in Amsterdam and The Hague, October-November 2007; a discussion between two organizers of cleaners in the UK (Alzaga and Nunes 2007); correspondence with a US organizer familiar with Justice for Janitors (<http://www.seiu.org/property/janitors/>) and the SEIU (<http://www.seiu.org/index.cfm>); Union Network International Property Services <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/unipropertyn.nsf>. Kloosterboer (2007), Moberg (2007), Stern (2006), Gallin (2007), Jeremy Anderson, Paula Hamilton and Jane Wills. (Forthcoming); the Ken Loach movie, ‘Bread and Roses’.

internationalism of labour's others'? Certainly the workers have been marginal to the organized working class. And as immigrants they are customarily marginalized within the places they live in. So much for 'others'. But it seems to me that this internationally-linked organizing campaign actually lies on the ambiguous zone between union institution-building and labour networking. The case suggests the extent to which the previously hidebound and immobile unions have taken on the methods of community organizing of the US, of the new social movements of the 1980s-90s, and even the global justice movement of the present day. And it invites us to consider whether what we are witnessing is union instrumentalisation of social movement networking, or movement penetration and transformation of international unionism as we have known it.

This overlapping or interpenetration became evident to me at the three cleaners' campaign meetings I attended in the Netherlands, October-November, 2007. The first was held in the cellar of a community centre in Amsterdam, hosted by a political club of young left activists and students; the second was held in a multi-cultural community centre in a working-class/immigrant area of The Hague; the third was the first national rally of the cleaners, organized by the union, but supported by one or two left political parties. Even the third one, the clearly union-organised meeting one was more like a celebration of, or community-building exercise amongst, the 3-400 multi-cultured cleaners (and families) present.

Even more is this 'social movement' aspect of the campaign suggested by the exchange between Valery Alzaga and Rodrigo Nunes (2007). It appears that this new labour-organising strategy is about as far from traditional unionism as it is possible to get. These are some of the new elements, from experience in the US, in London, in Berlin and Milan: 1) the involvement of allies from community organizations, autonomist social movements and friendly political parties; 2) the centrality of research to campaigning (identifying the relevant industrial/employment structure and key worker communities); 3) developing worker-approved organizers from amongst the cleaners; 4) establishing effective media contacts; 5) identifying meaningful periods or dates for mobilization and protest; 6) making connections with immigrant rights movements; 7) moving - after initial victories on wages, conditions and recognition - from external to internal campaigning (recruiting to the union).

Much of this kind of activity belongs to the repertoire of 'organising' as distinguished from 'service' unionism. Much of it belongs to familiar forms of community organizing. These organizers both use the word 'network'. The awareness of the two organizers goes further:

JN: ... This is the most important element of J4J, I'd say. A campaign in itself could be described as business unionism, but it is part and parcel of the J4J model that you activate the community, you create new, transversal connections - which is what you could call social unionism. For me that's the most important element: at the end of the day, with J4J as with anything else, there's no guarantee that relations won't become crystallised, that you won't just create a new representative class [layer of

representatives? – PW]. But if a campaign successfully feeds into a lively movement around it – a movement that can also, to some extent, reclaim the union as its own – then you have more chances of there always being enough pressure ‘from below’ to keep things moving.

VA Not just that; the movement can do things that the union can’t. The union is limited in various ways by legal or structural constraints. So if something needs to be done that the union can’t do, it’s important to have the support of those who can. Almost all our members are migrants, often with an irregular status. They can’t do a sit-in and risk being arrested, but others can. If there are housing problems in a place, it’s not our direct job to start a campaign, but we can support those who do. At the same time, it’s important that these relations are very clear and open. I helped organise J4J marches supported by the Black Bloc, and they knew there could be no trouble because of people’s legal status – so you had all these kids in black marching alongside Mexican grandmothers, pacifists, American Indigenous Movement members, university and high school students, migrant rights organisations.

Also, what you say about reclaiming the union... A union victory has the effect of spreading this feeling of possibility to everyone else. This was certainly one of the things that led to such a vibrant migrant movement in the US in the last few years – people saw their friends and family organise and win, and started organising too. J4J has had an important role in the struggle for migrant legalisation in the US. A direct role, by participating in coordinations, co-organising marches, building alliances.

Nunes and Alzaga (both previously involved with the World Social Forums and other transnational solidarity movements) do mention campaigns in different countries but hardly mention the relations between cleaners or movements *internationally*. Yet, in so far as Nunes is a Brazilian and Alzaga a Mexican-American, and have been active with their communities of birth, they actually themselves embody the new internationalisms and represent the new generation of internationalists (Waterman 1999).

But it appears from from all available sources that there is little if any horizontal connection between the cleaners in the UK, US and the Netherlands.⁵ And this despite the cleaners commonly being bi- or tri-lingual, and often sharing such languages as English and Spanish. Cross-border connections seem to so far depend on international union relations. In the case of the Netherlands, these would seem to be between the FNV-Bondgenoten, the SEIU and the UNI. And this triangular institutional model seems to be being energized by SEIU and informed by its discourse. There is, of course, no reason to object if a good idea or experience comes from a US union that is itself responding to pressures above from a globalised neo-liberalism and from outside or below from the

⁵ It seems that at one moment ISS workers from Denmark did come over to support a J4J campaign in the USA (Kloosterboer 2005: 34). There are likely to have been other cases.

civil rights movement, from low-paid worker dissatisfaction, immigrant self-mobilisation and the global justice movement. Particularly if, like Alzaga and Nunes, one is aware of the dangers of demobilization or bureaucratization. One has to further remember that any 'horizontal' solidarity relationship is more likely to be between organizers/communicators than between the workers themselves. In other words, it is more likely to be an equivalent to 'shopsteward internationalism' than 'shopfloor internationalism'. The matter will be settled overtime by the workers and activists involved, by whether they are satisfied to be 'represented to' or 'present in' the international.

One further qualification has to be born in mind. This has to do with the leader/ship that, more than any other, has been behind this new wave and type and new wave of worker organization. This is the SEIU and its President, Andy Stern. SEIU claims to be the fastest-growing union in the US and Stern is identified with globalizing US unionism. Moreover, he has been a leading critic of the old AFL-CIO, marked by its model of 'service-unionism', 'business-unionism', 'state-corporatism' and 'trade union imperialism' – as also its secular decline in numbers and influence. As against these, Stern has championed 'organising unionism', reduction of the myriad existing unions into industrial ones, and 'global partnerships'. These are supposed to involve both globalised unionism and the global justice and solidarity movement (Stern 2006: 111, 113)!⁶ Stern suggests where the Netherlands fits into this picture:

With a mandate from the SEIU's 2004 convention delegates to build a global union, followed by UNI's adoption of global unionism, SEIU assigned staff to Australia, Poland, England, India, France, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, South America and, soon, Africa. (112)

However, this brave new world of unionism is marked by tensions and contradictions, from the lowest level to the highest. There have been, within SEIU unions complaints that in the face of local worker truculence the leadership will negotiate over their heads, or even merge difficult locals (branches) out of existence. From the title of his book onwards, Stern reveals his own sympathy for Americanism and the American (Capitalist) Dream. His notion of international militancy includes negotiations with the state-controlled All China Trade Union Federation (Fong and Maher 2007). And he is apparently even prepared to consider *paying* third world workers to strike on behalf of US ones. Gallin (2007) comments:

This is extraordinary. In the past, when a strike was 'outsourced', it was the other way around: strong unions would put pressure on transnational corporations, including through industrial action, to defend weaker unions that were unable to defend themselves because, for example, they would face extreme repression. Stern is aware of this possibility, since he mentions 'outsourcing strikes to countries where strikes are legal and will not provoke government retaliation' but what he is now proposing, is that

⁶ My quotes from Stern 2006 are dependent on Gallin 2007.

unions in rich countries, specifically the United States, should in effect hire unions in low-wage countries as cannon fodder to fight their battles.

The contradictions in Stern's discourse could lead one to simply dismiss the new SEIU/Bondgenoten/UNI strategy as Business Unionism on a World Scale. And to thus throw doubt on the J4J strategy, nationally and globally. This would, however, be to fail to recognize the concessions that SEIU is also making toward shopfloor and community mobilization and to the global justice movement, as well as the risk taken in employing young educated organizers, themselves infected by new movements and ideas. It would, finally, require us to consider the cleaners organized as a manipulable mass rather than as themselves possessing agency.

To return to the matter of international networking between cleaners. Whilst in this particular case any relationship between such workers, in the Netherlands, the USA and – eventually – China, would seem to be being mediated by national and international union structures, and motivated by the aim of re-creating a 20th Century social partnership (this time at global level), the matter does not necessarily end where it may have begun. Union leaderships propose, but workers, communities and critically-minded activists dispose. Given the existence of the other networks mentioned, given cleaners' simple curiosity or need for direct horizontal contacts, given the widespread common knowledge of English and/or Spanish, given the decreasing cost and increasing ease of communication, I would be surprised if an international network of property service workers did not develop during the next five years. Whether this would be part of the union structure, an independent shopfloor initiative within the union, or an independent network, is yet to be seen. The matter practically begs for a participatory action research (PAR) project.

4. Theoretical/ideological/strategic resources

How are we to conceptualise the of phenomena revealed in these five cases, or in the many other possible ones listed in Waterman (2007c, Appendix 3)? Let me make some suggestions based on past work and recent reading. Here I would like to at least mention writing on 1) 'social movement unionism' or the 'new social unionism'; 2) new forms of - or new wave - labour organising 3) on labour or social movement networking and on 4) the emancipation of labour and global social emancipation.

The literature on *social movement unionism*, is both growing and varied. I will refer to my own particular angle on this, summarised as 'A New Social Unionism, Internationalism, Communication and Culture' (Waterman 2007c: Appendix 4). Based on a recognition of the revolution within capitalism represented by its globalised and networked phase, this approach combines certain traditional Marxist and other socialist insights with those of the European/Latin American New Social Movement theory of the 1970s-80s. It assumes the necessity of surpassing the traditional understandings of work, the labour movement and internationalism. And then of recognising both the variety of work for capital, the consequently varied kinds of worker and labour protest, of workers

as bearers of other significant identities, and of the labour movement as just one expression of a struggle against growing human alienation and for a new social emancipation.

New wave labour organizing. The above conceptualisation has been criticised by Anthony Ince (2007), who considers 'social movement unionism' to be an over-general and homogenising category. In a wide-ranging international review, he prefers to talk of 'new wave labour organising' and to consider, critically, the relevant types and sub-types. These include *New Union Organising* (Sub-types: Organising Unionism, Partnership and Bargaining to Organise), *Network Unionism* (Social and Community Organising Unionism, Radical Organising Unionism), *New Worker Organising* (Worker Centres, Solidarity Networks and 'Cyber-Unionism'). Without going into each of his categories it would appear that the typology makes room for much, if not all, of what we have been earlier considering. Where it might not, it could be fine-tuned or extended. His general orientation or aspirations would anyway seem compatible with those of earlier-mentioned authors. He says:

The New Labour Organising strategies discussed here do not represent the full scope of possibilities for new (or rediscovered) forms of worker mobilisation, and they do display some significant problems that need to be overcome. The next decade will be pivotal for the long-term future of the labour movement, since these new ideas have brought with them new challenges and difficulties that need to be addressed if they are to be successful and sustainable. What is imperative now is to consolidate the moderate gains that have been made, and build upon them positively without losing sight of the ultimate goal. This goal should be ambitious, not simply recruiting workers, nor empowering them, but the facilitation of our collective self-empowerment as a whole, accompanied by the recognition that every struggle is intimately connected to every other. A strong labour movement is built upon such connectivity, democracy and solidarity... (Ince 2007:48-9)

Here three caveats.

One has to do with his attitude toward the international, where he says:

In an era of increasingly globalised labour and capital markets, it is important that strategic co-ordination should reflect this. As such, unions and organisations that believe in New Labour Organising strategies need to assert this on the world stage, lest they remain isolated from the majority. There is a significant amount of already-existing labour internationalism, but this must move beyond statements of solidarity towards a more concrete sense of mutualism and skill sharing. Bodies such as the ILO and ICFTU may hold the key to this. (44)

I would myself consider the ILO-ICFTU nexus (since November 2006, actually that of the ILO with the merged International Trade Union Confederation) to be a major part of the problem, though not necessarily excluded from being one (preferably *two independent and separable*) parts of the solution.

The *second* caveat follows from this and it is a question of whether, in an otherwise admirable pluralism, Ince enables us to move from sensitive analysis to effective strategy. This, for me, requires some kind of policy proposal, with relevance, obviously, for the internationalism of labour's others.

The *third* caveat might therefore be that although Ince recognises the practical significance of networking, he does not seem to consider this as itself an emancipatory field or force.

New forms of labour organizing. Overlapping with the Ince conceptualisation is the literature on *new forms of labour organizing*. Much of such work is carried out within the far-reaching institutional or ideological parameters of the International Labour Organisation and the traditional union internationals (consider *Labour Education* 2002). One could include here the 'one-size-fits-all' campaign for 'Decent Work', promoted by the ILO and uncritically endorsed by the ITUC. This campaign certainly allows for the autonomous organising of 'informal sector' workers, and seems to be approved of by, for example, StreetNet. 'Decent Work' is implicitly based on the European capitalist welfare state developed in the post-World War Two period. It therefore wants us to go back from the bad capitalism of the present day to the good capitalism of the past (though the word 'capitalism' is not prominent in this discourse). It is therefore unable to consider the political-economic, ideological or socio-geographic limitations to that dying utopia. Why, for example, did it disappear? Was the collapse of capitalist social partnership not written into the terms of the original understanding? 'Decent Work' is moreover promoted as the single answer, simultaneously, for the regularly-employed and unionised in the North/West and the casual, sub-contracted, temporary, part-time and unemployed of the Global South. And it is dependent on its promotion or imposition worldwide by such inter-state bodies as the ILO and the EU (Social Alert 2007). Finally one should recognise a body of literature that seems to possibly overlap with the autonomist orientation of Ince on the one hand and the institutional one of traditional Northern unions on the other. Kloosterboer (2005, 2007) is interesting not only for its reporting on a wide range of union and other forms of worker organizing worldwide but for its at least implicit assumption that these are part of a *broad new labour movement* - and for its likewise implicit recognition that the Dutch unions have something to learn from such.

Which brings me to my second theoretical resource, the literature on *labour/social movement networking*. Recognition of the extent to which a computerised and globalised capitalism is networked is now widespread. Well established, also, is the capitalist think-tank literature on 'netwars' (e.g. Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1996). In the above-mentioned case studies, indeed, the relevance or superiority of movement self-articulation in networks is either demonstrated or assumed. (I will return to the case in which it is not).

Less common is argument for *labour* networking, national or international. But it is well represented, I think, in the long quotation below:

...Networks have advantages on two fronts: in confronting modern flexible and decentralised management systems, and in mobilising the energy of new movements. In the past, corporations were able to crush networks. But the changing context has given networks a new life. They are potentially stronger than before, both because of growing understanding of how they work best, and because of technological advances that speed decentralised communication...The type of organisation and leadership needed to build and sustain networks and networks is in many ways the opposite of that needed for traditional mass action and large-scale hierarchies...The network approach...requires that labour think of itself as a coordinator rather than a power, as a player in a complex force field rather than as the leader of the forces of social justice. It is in many ways an attitude of humility, but it may be now that in humility there is strength...in the world of new movements and networks, it is not always clear who is a member and who is not. The key question is not how many members you have, but who you can mobilise...The real problem for labor is to grow in *influence* — in the ability to unite groups outside its own boundaries. With influence, labor could help to bring together different and shifting communities around key campaigns. With influence, it could concentrate its efforts on the weak points of the relations among firms. Influence comes from vision and from the ability to listen without dominating. It comes from understanding how networks work — the logic of swarms and identities and campaigns — and being able to reflect the values of a large range of social justice groups. The pursuit of influence would put energy and resources into meetings with far flung groups, into building alliances, into structuring consistent communications systems across diverse organisations, and into Internet capability. It is a way of acting that is as different from industrial union organisation as industrial unions were different from crafts in the 1930s — and as continuous as both with the core mission of labor. (Heckscher 2006)

I find this a rather rich specification and as relevant to the global as to the national. It has been spelled out — or at least imagined — for migrant sex workers, by Laura Agustín (1999). She tells a tale in which the hero is...a mobile phone! And imagines a future in which sex-worker activists would provide sex workers with not simply tea and sympathy but access to an expanding range of audio-visual resources. The problem, she would seem to imply, is not that labour's others cannot speak, but that they have not so far been heard. Imaginative and critical use of new technology enables this. It also, of course, puts into question the traditional need for the *organisation*, with its hierarchy and its leaders — bureaucratic, charismatic or both.

Against the kind of argument mentioned above, we should, however, recognise the objections of Andy Mathers. Self-identified with an indubitably networked and international labour campaign, Mathers prefers to dismiss networking theory (in the shape of Manuel Castells, 156-60) and to at least imply that the movement he is analysing is partial or temporary - a moment before the return or development of an organised labour movement - with a Marxist or even Trotskyist leadership (174-7). Having castigated some of the world's innovative social theorists (Touraine, Melucci, Gorz, Castells, Habermas, Offe, Beck, Giddens and others - including at one point myself - as the 'new social democratic left' (3), Mathers prefers to explain his network in terms of US social movement theory - much criticised for its liberal-pluralistic assumptions and reformist aspirations. His case, it appears to me, runs ahead of his theoretical and political framework. Which by no means implies that the Euromarches should be considered exemplary or non-problematic. Nor does it mean that Mathers' criticism is to be dismissed. Rather does it require us to find more adequate resources for understanding or strategising the relationship of the new networked social (movements) with the traditionally political (state, law, parties, unions).

Although not specifically addressed to the relationships here under consideration (those of the international labour networks with either the hegemonic order in general or the hegemonic labour organisations in particular), the Argentinean scholar-activist, Ezequiel Adamovsky (2006), certainly focuses on an aspect crucial to such relationships. This is expressed in terms of the tension between the autonomous social movements and the heteronomous political sphere.

From the viewpoint of strategy, the current emancipatory movements can be said to be in two opposite situations (somewhat schematically). The first one is that in which they manage to mobilise a great deal of social energy in favor of a political project, but they do that in a way that make them fall in the traps of 'heteronomous politics'. By 'heteronomous' I refer to the political mechanisms by means of which all that social energy ends up being channeled in a way that benefits the interests of the ruling class or, at least, minimise the radical potential of that popular mobilisation. This is, for example, the fate of Brazil's PT under Lula, and also of some social movements (for example certain sections of the feminist movement) that turned into single-issue lobby organisations with no connection to any broader radical movement.

The second situation is that of those movements and collectives that reject any contact with the state and with heteronomous politics in general (parties, lobbies, elections, etc.) only to find themselves reduced to small identity-groups with little chances to have a real impact in terms of radical change. This is the case, for example, of some of the unemployed movements in Argentina, but also of many anti-capitalist small collectives throughout the world. The cost of their political 'purity' is the inability to connect with larger sections of society.

Adamovsky proposes (and later spells out in some detail) a kind of institutionality that might avoid both horns of the contemporary social movement (and network!) dilemma:

One of our main problems when it comes to get us new institutions lies in two wrong (but deeply rooted) beliefs: 1) that organisational structures and rules conspire *per se* against horizontality and against the openness of our movements, and 2) that any kind of division of labor, specialisation and delegation of functions brings about a new hierarchy. Luckily, social movements in many corners have started to question these beliefs.

Any person who has participated in a non-hierarchical kind of organisation, even a small one, knows that, in the absence of mechanisms that protect plurality and foster participation, ‘horizontality’ soon becomes a fertile soil for the survival of the fittest. Any such person also knows how frustrating and limited it is to have organisations in which each and everyone are always forced to gather in assemblies to make decisions on every single issue of a movement – from general political strategy to fixing a leaking roof. The ‘tyranny of structurelessness’, as Jo Freeman used to say, exhausts our movements, subverts their principles, and makes them absurdly inefficient.

Contrary to the usual belief, autonomous and horizontal organisations are *more* in need of institutions than hierarchical ones; for these can always rely on the will of the leader to resolve conflicts, assign tasks, etc. I would like to argue that we need to develop *institutions of a new type*. By institutions I do not mean a bureaucratic hierarchy, but simply a set of democratic agreements on ways of functioning, that are formally established, and are endowed with the necessary organisational infrastructure to enforce them if needed.

With respect to *Global Social Emancipation* we might first consider this statement by Boaventura de Sousa Santos:

The paradigm of social emancipation developed by western modernity is undergoing a deep and final crisis. Social emancipation must, therefore, be reinvented. It must be understood as a form of counter-hegemonic globalisation relying on local-global linkages and alliances among social groups around the world which go on resisting social exclusion, exploitation and oppression caused by hegemonic neoliberal globalisation. Such struggles result in the development of alternatives to the exclusionary and monolithic logic of global capitalism, that is to say, spaces of democratic participation, non-capitalistic production of goods and services, creation of emancipatory knowledges, post-colonial cultural exchanges, new international solidarities. <http://www.ces.uc.pt/emancipa/en/index.html>.

Appropriately enough, this comes out of a research project earlier referred to, which addresses itself both to 'alternative production' and to international labour solidarity (Sousa Santos 2006c). It also relates to the kind of issues being raised, though certainly not settled, within the World Social Forum process.

None of the three cases I consider above really goes into alternative production, or what, within today's global justice movement, comes under the rubric of the 'solidarity economy' (Waterman 2007c, Appendix 3). This is, however, allowed for, I think, in the reconceptualisation of 'work' by André Gorz (1999). Gorz (who regrettably died whilst this piece was being drafted) produced a challenging critique of the ideology of work that still dominates the international trade-union movement as much as it does the capitalist (or statist) media. This ideology holds that 1) the more each works, the better off all will be; 2) that those who do little or no work are acting against the interests of the community; 3) that those who work hard achieve success and those who don't have only themselves to blame. He points out that today the connection between more and better has been broken and that the problem now is one of producing differently, producing other things, working less. Gorz distinguishes between work for economic ends (the definition of work under capitalism/statism), domestic labour, work for 'oneself' (primarily the additional task of women – for whom 'self' customarily means 'the family'), and autonomous activity (artistic, relational, educational, mutual-aid, etc). He argues, or at least allows for, a movement from the first type to the third, and for the second one to be increasingly articulated with the third rather than subordinated to the first. If the trade unions are not to be reduced to some kind of neo-corporatist mutual-protection agency for the skilled and privileged, they will, Gorz argues, have to struggle for liberation *from* work:

Such a project is able to give cohesion and a unifying perspective to the different elements that make up the social movement since 1) it is a logical extension of the experience and struggles of workers in the past; 2) it reaches beyond that experience and those struggles towards objectives which correspond to the interests of both workers and non-workers, and is thus able to cement bonds of solidarity and common political will between them; 3) it corresponds to the aspirations of the ever-growing proportion of men and women who wish to (re)gain control in and of their own lives.' (Gorz 1999:45)

In researching our particular subject matter, it would be necessary to synthesise such elements, or offer a consistent alternative theoretical framework. But it does seem to me that we already have at least minimal theoretical resources.

4. Some notes on methodology

In researching the networked internationalism of labour's others the kind of questions that need exploration are such as the following:

- What international solidarity activities do such categories have? Along which axes, in which direction, at what distance, with what intensity and duration?
- What historical or contemporary discourses do they employ?
- How do they relate to (which sections of) capital, to inter/state agencies, the international union and/or World Social Forum/Global Justice and Solidarity Movement?
- What relations do they have with the poor/marginal labour they speak of or for, and their commonly middle-class supporters?
- What *form* does their international articulation take (union-type organisations? social-movement-type networks, NGO-type support or service centres?);
- Are they (more? less?) culturally/communicationally active than the unions?
- What are the implications of their common funding by state or inter-state agencies, by corporate foundations or agencies of ‘development cooperation’?
- To what extent does the networked internationalism of labour’s others reproduce the centre-to-periphery model, in other words a ‘substitution’ or ‘vanguard’ notion of solidarity; to what extent does it recognise and embody such other aspects of solidarity as ‘identity’, ‘reciprocity’, ‘complementarity’ and ‘restitution’?
- And, finally, are these plural and varied ‘global solidarities’ to be seen as contributory to, or exemplary for, an international labour movement still largely locked into the *internationalism* of the last century?

I will not go into detail on appropriate research methods. Perhaps, however, I could warn *against* limiting these to those customarily used (also by myself) when researching labour internationalism. These are the public activities, documents, publications and declarations of such bodies. With networks we have, surely, even less reason to assume that such necessarily ‘represent’ members rather than expressing aspirations of activists with loose and extensive bodies of followers. Issues of activist research are considered by Hale and Wills (2006:Ch. 3) and on Mathers (2007:Ch.3). They are also exemplified by work on the Mumbai World Social Forum, 2004, by Giuseppe Caruso (2007:Ch 1).

The extent of computer and email use within such movements makes possible the initial use of the email questionnaire. Given, however, the customarily low response to this instrument, such use represents a challenge and may provide an indication of the development of ‘communications internationalism’ within and between networks. The internet should therefore be seen not simply as a source of information, but as a place/space of the presence by such movements within this new – if still limited – international public arena. Given the presence of labour’s others, alongside the unionised, at the World Social Forum, its local or problem-specific events, one could also carry out surveys here (c.f. Reese, Ellen, Erika Gutierrez and Christopher Chase-Dunn. 2007), though awareness of the highly selective character of the participants/respondents is obviously a requirement.

5. The usual in-conclusions

This has turned out to be less of a conventional paper and – even in this trimmed-down and up-dated version - more of a workbook or a set of resources. Whether it will succeed in its aim of encouraging or provoking others to carry out the necessary research, we will, as so often, have to see. In writing and re-writing the paper I have myself been much provoked by the conference at which it was first present (Waterman 2007c: Appendices 1-2), as well as the work, in particular, of Anthony Ince and Andy Mather. Given the increasingly recognised political and theoretical centrality of the subject matter, and in so far as we are living under a globalised networked capitalism, it would seem reasonable to also propose a web space of some kind focused on this area.

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