

ROUTLEDGE



GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING, LABOUR AND THE CHALLENGES FOR TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

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and Ingemar Lindberg

RETHINKING
Globalizations



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Abbreviations

AFW	Asian Floor Wage campaign
ALaRM	Apparel-industry Labour Rights Movement
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
ASSOTSI	Associação dos Operadores e Trabalhadores do Sector Informal (Association of Workers and Operators of the Informal Sector)
Attac	Association pour la Taxation des Transactions Financiers pour l'Aide aux Citoyens
BOI	Board of Investments (Sri Lanka)
CAW	Canadian Auto Workers
CCC	Clean Clothes Campaign
CEE	Central-Eastern Europe(an)
CEEP	European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest
CGT	Confederation General du Travail (France)
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSR	corporate social responsibility
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDC	Ericsson de Colombia
EDF	European Disability Forum
EEA	European Economic Area
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EFBWW	European Federation of Building and Woodworkers
EMCEF	European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation
EMF	European Metalworkers' Federation
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union (EU)
EP	European Parliament
EPSU	European Federation of Public Service Trade Unions
EU	European Union
ETF	European Transport Workers' Federation
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EWC	European Works Council

FDI	foreign direct investment
FENASICOCH	Federación Nacional de Sindicatos de Conductores de Buses, Camiones, Actividades Afines y Conexas de Chile
FLA	Fair Labour Association
FMC	Fresenius Medical Care
FTZ	free trade zones
FTZGWU	Free Trade Zone and General Workers' Union (Sri Lanka)
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GCC	global commodity chains
GM	General Motors
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences (EU)
HRM	human resource management
IBT	International Brotherhood of Teamsters (US)
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, now in ITUC
ICT	information and communications technologies
IG BAU	German Construction Workers' Union
IG BCE	German Chemical, Mining and Energy Industrial Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Metal Workers' Federation <i>or</i> International Monetary Fund
IR	industrial relations
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
LO	Landsorganisasjonen (Confederation of Trade Unions) (Norway, Sweden)
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur (Common Market of the Southern Cone of Latin America)
Metall	Svenska Metallindustriarbetareförbundet (Swedish Metalworkers' Union, now IF Metall)
MNC	multinational corporation
MFA	Multi-Fibre Agreement
MLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Turkey)
NGO	non-government organization
OPZZ	Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych (All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions)
Petrol-İş	Petroleum, Chemical and Rubber Workers' Union of Turkey

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PPP\$	purchasing power parity in US\$
RSU	Rappresentenza Sindacale Unitaria (Italy)
SEIU	Service Employees International Union (US)
SIF	Svenska Industritjänstemannaförbundet (Swedish Union of Clerical and Technical Employees in Industry, now Unionen)
SIGTUR	Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights
SINAMEQUIPH	Sindicato Nacional de Motoristas de Equipo Pesado de Honduras
<i>Sintraericsson</i>	Sindicato de Trabajadores de Ericsson de Colombia
SL	Second Life
STISSS	Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign (South Africa)
TAN	Transnational Advocacy Network
TNC	transnational corporation
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of the Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) accord
TUC	Trades Union Congress (UK)
Türk-İş	Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions
UFW	United Farm Workers (US)
UK	United Kingdom
UNI	Union Network International
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UPS	United Parcel Service
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZNP	Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego (Polish Teachers' Union)

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Part I

Introduction and conceptual considerations

1 Globalisation and the new challenges for transnational solidarity

An introduction

Andreas Bieler and Ingemar Lindberg

Introduction

Since the early 1970s, globalisation has drastically changed the landscape of international political economy. Its definition is heavily discussed, but generally the increasing transnationalisation of a range of production sectors, the emergence of an integrated global financial market as well as the establishment of neo-liberal economics as a new dominant economic consensus can be identified as its core characteristics. We can, therefore, also speak of neo-liberal globalisation. As such, global restructuring has not fulfilled its promises for world-wide development and better living conditions for all. While overall global gross domestic product (GDP) has increased over the last decades, the general inequality within and between countries has grown. The Gini coefficient, which ranges from 0 (perfect equality) to 100 (complete inequality) indicates that global inequality rose steadily from 43 in 1980 to 67 in 2005 (Bieler *et al.*, 2008b: 10). Moreover, 'for most of the world, economic growth was much slower in the 1980s and 1990s, when the pace of globalisation quickened, than in the 1960s and 1970s' (War on Want, 2009: 4). This is also reflected in higher unemployment levels. 'The number of people unemployed and the number in unstable, insecure jobs has actually increased – from 141 million to 190 million (1993 to 2007) and from 1,338 million to 1,485 million (1997 to 2007) respectively' (War on Want, 2009: 4). Unsurprisingly, we have experienced a growing level of contestation of globalisation since the late 1990s starting with the large-scale protests at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle in 1999 and embodied in the regular meetings of the World Social Forum (WSF), as well as a whole range of regional and national meetings within the social forum process. At the core of these moments of contestation is a variety of trade unions as well as a wide range of different types of social movements.

Whether these movements of resistance against neo-liberal globalisation and in favour of another globalisation are successful will also depend very much on whether it will be possible to move towards transnational solidarity. In a previous volume (Bieler *et al.*, 2008a), we concentrated on the analysis of several national labour movements and their positions on, and strategies to, globalisation. This also included an assessment of trade unions within the regional African and European as

well as international context. This volume builds on these analyses, but also goes beyond them in that it shifts the focus towards concrete instances of successful as well as failed attempts to establish transnational solidarity. As Gajewska (2009: 15) correctly points out, country case studies often reveal especially differences between various national labour movements, which seem to make cooperation across borders impossible. A focus on cases of transnational solidarity, by contrast, allows us to reflect on the necessary conditions of solidarity between different national labour movements in a much more constructive way. In short, the goal of this volume is to draw out possibilities but also obstacles to transnational solidarity in times of global restructuring. Our volume is in line with the objectives of previous volumes in this area (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 2007; Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2009a; Munck, 2004; Taylor, 2008a; for an overview of the wider literature in this area, see Taylor, 2009). Additionally, the purpose of this volume is to bridge the divide between academic work and trade union and social movement activism. Hence, the contributors to this volume include not only labour academics, but also trade unionists and social movement activists. The hope is that this ensures that the discussions are theoretically informed while at the same time related to, and meaningful for, concrete developments and struggles. In the first section of this introduction, we will summarise the challenges of globalisation for trade unions and social movements. Then we will discuss the possible agency of trade unions and social movements, before analysing the wider structural dynamics of the capitalist social relations of production, within which these agents operate. The final part will provide an overview of the structure of the book.

Challenges of globalisation for trade unions and social movements

Several key developments can be related to globalisation from the perspective of labour movements. Importantly, although these developments are often of a transnational nature, the precise way they impact on different groups of people, production sectors and countries differs drastically. Hence, while we outline some general structural tendencies of globalisation here, the concrete experience of these changes differ in line with completely diverse impacts around the world (Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2009b). First, globalisation has led to an increasing transnationalisation of production, with the production of many goods being organised across borders. Outflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) rose from US\$ 88 billion in 1986 to US\$ 1187 billion in 2000 as peak year (Bieler, 2006: 50). A period of recession led to a decline in FDI flows from 2001 to 2003, but four years of consecutive growth led to a new all-time high of FDI outflows of US\$ 1996.5 billion in 2007 (UN, 2008: 253). Overall, there were 78817 transnational corporations (TNCs) with 794,894 foreign affiliates in 2007 (UN, 2008: 212). Robinson additionally highlights 'the phenomenal increase in cross-border mergers and acquisitions; the increasing transnational interlocking of boards of directorates; the increasingly transnational ownership of capital shares; the spread of cross-border strategic alliances of all sorts; and the increasing salience of transnational peak