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PEWS News- Fall 2003

Newsletter of the Section on the Political Economy of the World-System, American Sociological Association [Hard copy of this issue may be obtained from the editor, Paul S. Ciccantelli, paul.ciccantelli@wmich.edu]

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SPECIAL GUEST EDITED SYMPOSIUM: Would including a social clause in trade treaties help or hinder?

Gay Seidman and Robert Ross, Guest Editors

For this edition of the PEWS newsletter, Gay Seidman and Robert Ross asked several academics and activists to write brief responses to a question about strategies that might help improve working conditions around the world. As we hoped, the essays are often at odds with one another, but they are all insightful, provocative and worth reading.

[Rich Appelbaum](#)

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The question: From your perspective, would the inclusion of labor standards in trade treaties improve workers' conditions internationally? Please explain.

In their 1848 Manifesto, Marx and Engels issued an epoch-making call to internationalism: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of All Countries Unite!"

But for a long century, that clarion call sounded more sentimental than empirical: workers did have something lose; most of what they had and what they got was organized nationally - their unions, their social benefits, their political alliances. Since the mid-nineteenth century, most theorists of European working class movements understood that the working classes of advanced industrial countries benefited from colonial domination. Through the late twentieth century, many analysts in the world system tradition continued to argue that workers in the developed world benefit the exploitation of workers in the periphery.

More recently, however, that debate has shifted: many analysts today suggest that global capital mobility creates a 'race to the bottom' as capital moves to lower-wage regions of the world, undermining workers' historic gains in the core. Stagnating wages, growing inequality, the reemergence of sweatshop conditions- -these are seen as consequences of capital's leverage over workers, obtained by real and threatened flight to the South.

In the US, for example, 2.6 million manufacturing jobs have been lost from 2000 through September 2003. Since 2000, real wage gains of production workers has been under one percent; about half the pathetic 1.2% gained by all private non-supervisory employees. Since 1998 almost 17% of the US manufacturing employment base has been lost.

Unfortunately these job relocations have not been compensated by working class gains in the countries receiving the manufacturing investment cascading away from the core. Mexican workers lost ground in the '90s, and then when they began to make gains at the turn of the century, jobs flowed to China, where strict control of working class expression is severely restricted.

So, inquiring theorists want to know: what strategies might labor internationalism pursue to advance the interests of the workers of the world?

The American labor movement has advocated for years that access to the concessions of the major trade agreements (NAFTA, WTO) should be contingent upon national enforcement of core labor rights. Should these be systematically violated trading partner nations would then have recourse to trade sanctions (i.e., tariffs).

Governments of most developing countries oppose such "social clauses" in trade agreements, while labor groups are more divided. Some developing country labor movements support labor rights conditionality in trade agreements, while others oppose it.

The PEWS newsletter asked several academic and labor experts their view of this matter, asking

them to comment briefly on the question: From your perspective, would the inclusion of labor standards in trade treaties improve workers' conditions internationally? Please explain.

Richard P. Appelbaum

A social clause in trade treaties would be a first step toward securing workers' rights in a global economy. Currently the global workforce is lacking in protections of any sort, contributing to what has been aptly called the global race to the bottom. Manufacturers are free to scour the planet for the lowest wages and the most exploitive working conditions they can find. (The same is true regarding environmental protections.) State regulation – labor's hard-won rights, at least in industrial societies – are rapidly being dismantled, in favor of privatized gestures at self-regulation. There is a mountain of research by now that shows when industries monitor themselves, it is a classic case of the fox guarding the chicken coop – plenty of self-congratulatory rhetoric, intended to confuse consumers and lull them into complacency.

Critics of social clauses (which includes nearly the entire economics profession, as well their clients in the governments of developing countries) argue that any restrictions on labor markets in poor countries will rob those countries of their one competitive resource – cheap labor. However well-intended such measures, the critics contend, they are in fact thinly-disguised protectionist efforts to keep jobs in the high-wage core by pricing workers in elsewhere out of the market. Young anti-sweatshop activists in the U.S. are accused of being duped by cynical labor unions. I am not making this up – check out the full-page add that the Academic Consortium on International Trade (self-described as “a group of academic economists and lawyers who are specialized in international trade policy and international economic law”) sent to university presidents in September 2000 (<http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/rsie/acit/Documents/July29SweatshopLetter.pdf>).

Critics are wrong. An adequate social clause would raise the bar for both signatories. If it requires the payment of a living wage in Mexico, it would do the same for the U.S. Formulas have been developed to make wage requirements comparable in countries at very different levels of economic development (see, for example, Richard Rothstein's proposal in a prophetic article he wrote on NAFTA ten years ago; <http://www.prospect.org/print/V4/12/rothstein-r.html>).

And wages are not the whole story, anyhow. Consider the fact that the direct labor cost of a \$25 shirt sewn in Mexico might be 30 cents at best; in China, a dime. Would doubling the wages in either country really price its workers out of the market? Even if the entire cost were passed onto consumers (rather than taken out of the lavish compensation packages that transnational manufacturers and retailers bestow on their top management), would consumers really balk at paying a few cents extra? Perhaps that is why labor union federations in developing countries support social clauses, even when their governments, claiming to speak on behalf of workers, oppose them. (Bob Ross has written eloquently on this topic.)

Moreover, wage minimums are only part of a social clause. More important is the guaranteed right for workers to attempt to form unions, if they so desire, and to engage in collective bargaining if they succeed in doing so. It can hardly be called “protectionist” to require that workers be permitted to represent their own interests, free from fear of being fired – or killed – for speaking out. As union members, workers can then make their own decisions about the wages they deserve, and the danger that their factory will lose their business if they get a raise, overtime pay for extra hours, or medical benefits. Even small increases in workers' compensation could make an enormous difference in their livelihoods, while adding almost nothing at the cash register.

When workers anywhere, at any time in history, have clamored for a slightly larger increase in their slice of the pie, corporations (backed up by their academic ideologues) have claimed that the workers were ill-informed and misguided, and only shooting themselves in the foot – and that their demands – if granted – would pretty much end civilization as we know it. These arguments were made when workers struggled for equality in the United States a century ago, just as they are being made today. Workers, and their advocates, ignored them the first time around. They should ignore them today as well.

Jennifer Bickham Mendez

In my view the most important word in the question as it is articulated is “worker.” Recently a friend brought me a post card from Amsterdam. The card depicts Walter Crane’s painting *International Labor Solidarity*. Around a globe emblazoned with Marx’s renowned call to internationalism five workers dance with joined hands. All wear different cultural forms of “working class” dress. One worker is black, three are clearly white, and one appears to be Southeast Asian. On the ground near their feet are strewn a pick ax, a shovel and a hammer. Behind the men, but not joining their hands, with arms outstretched is a white, female figure of an angel with the word “freedom” in her halo. That racial and cultural differences among the workers are depicted in the painting is noteworthy—that the closed circle of dancing workers is completely male is familiar and not surprising—but remains an important image that ironically persists within certain circles of the international labor movement even in today’s global economy.

Who are authentic workers? Who represents workers’ interests? What qualifies as a labor issue, and who decides this? These are more than philosophical questions. They have real and lived implications for men and women who are struggling to assert their labor rights in a context of the worldwide decline of the Keynesian nation-state.

According to the UN, women’s participation in the workforce is increasing in nearly every country around the world. The ILO estimates that 80% of workers in export-oriented, maquiladora plants are women. And maquiladora workers are not simply passive victims of neoliberal globalization and export-oriented development. Nor, are they the unorganizable sector that discourses about women as “ideal workers,” often articulated by plant managers in the global assembly line, purport them to be. In locations as diverse as Mexico, South Korea, Sri Lanka and the Philippines women maquila workers have organized to fight for better pay and working conditions. Sometimes these mobilizations have taken the form of traditional unions, other initiatives have occurred with the support and assistance of unions and union federations. In other instances, for example, in Mexico and Central America, women workers’ groups have formed as organizational spaces that are separate and distinct from unions. These groups organize women workers in their communities, offer them education regarding their social, reproductive and labor rights, and support them legally as they file complaints related to labor violations. They also launch national and international campaigns to improve working conditions in maquila factories. For these organizations workers are neither women nor workers first—their needs, priorities, indeed, even their RIGHTS as citizens are simultaneously and equally shaped by their social position of gender and class.

The struggle of these organizations and the maquiladora workers whom they support and who make up a significant portion of their leadership underscores the findings of a generation of feminist scholars who have studied the gendered dimensions of the global economy. Gender power structures keep the wheels of the global economy running smoothly, ensuring the kind of flexibility necessary for Post-Fordist production. And the conditions and violations that women workers face (for example, forced birth control and institutionalized sexual harassment) are often gender as well as racially and ethnically specific.

By the same token, unions continue to be male-dominated organizational spaces. For example, though in Central America many of the unions that have formed in the maquilas have a large female representation among the rank-and-file, higher-level federation and union leadership continues to be almost exclusively male. And more importantly, gender issues as articulated by women workers often remain an after-thought or are conspicuously absent from collective bargaining agreements or codes of conduct negotiated by union federations and their supporters in the international labor movement. In particular, private sphere and community issues such as maternity benefits, firings resulting from absence from work to care for sick children, job loss due to pregnancy, safety during transportation to work, reproductive health and rights, and more gender-specific labor issues like sexual harassment are often absent from the demands of unions, but are highlighted by women workers’ organizations.

Critics of social clauses maintain that they will do little to prevent the so-called “race to the bottom.” But an equally important, less visible issue is the decision-making process for determining the content of workers’ clauses in trade treaties. Social clauses based on a gender-neutral (read: male) worker will do little to address the intersection of issues related to both the public and private spheres that impacts women workers’ daily lives. And in a global production system that makes use of geopolitical power, as well as race and gender-based structures of oppression, clauses that do not incorporate the particularities of workers’ multiple positions—in the home, community and workplace—will have a limited impact on the conditions that workers face. Only through an inclusive and democratic process in which the varied experiences and vulnerabilities that are glossed by a universalized category of “worker” are prioritized can social clauses or any other solution to workers’ oppression in the global economy be achieved.

Edna Bonacich

On the one hand, social clauses seem very attractive. They are reminiscent of the New Deal in the U.S., with its setting of a minimum wage, maximum hours, equal pay for equal work, rights to engage in collective bargaining, unemployment insurance, welfare, social security, etc. One purpose of such regulation was to prevent workers from being caught in bargains of desperation, where they would be forced to “sell” themselves for a pittance. There were other purposes as well: to take labor standards out of competition, to prevent disruptive labor disputes, and to develop a consuming middle class. Sadly, while the ideal of this legislation may have been to create equality among all workers, in practice it had important exclusions that limited equality for workers of color, especially women of color.

Now the question arises, can and should such a concept be established at an international level? First it is noteworthy that this kind of welfare state legislation has been seriously eroded within the U.S. and other developed capitalist countries. Clearly, employers and investors do not want to take wages and working conditions out of competition, and prefer dealing with a competitive, fragmented labor market. Many of them want a race to the bottom, regardless of protestations about “high road” development strategies. Their resistance on the national level has to be a pale reflection of their resistance at the international level.

Second, and more important, on a global level poor countries are trying to pursue development. Under the current system, where transnational capital controls the world economy, what do they have to offer besides low wage labor? How else can they get a foot in the door? Given this situation, social clauses called for by workers and unions in developed countries sound awfully like protectionism. They don’t want the jobs to move offshore. Setting higher standards in the poorer countries means they will be less likely to flee.

Don’t get me wrong: I believe that trying to set global labor standards is a good thing. But it can’t be isolated from much larger questions. These include: providing workers who are unemployed with a means of survival, offering education programs so that a nation’s children have a chance for better employment, and most important, developing a world division of labor such that each nation gets its fair share of production and consumption. If we could provide global social security, global unemployment insurance, global 12 year minimum educational opportunities, if we could ensure that the poorer countries would receive capital for investing in their industries even if they did not have starvation wages and living conditions, then a global labor clause would make good sense. But to just set up a minimum wage (for example) without these other forms of support will not, in my opinion, help the people it is intended(?) to help. It will mainly protect first world jobs and labor standards.

One aspect of social clauses deserves special mention, namely, protecting the right of workers to form independent unions. If this kind of political right can be guaranteed on a global level, then workers themselves would have a say in whether or not they want to set standards in their country. Certainly, some workers, unions, and NGOs in developing countries want to see social clauses as a tool in their struggles. Under these circumstances, when the affected workers are themselves calling for the clauses, I completely support them. The challenge consists in forcing nations (including the US) and international institutions seriously to support trade union (and broader political) rights of workers. It boils down to the question of having the power to compel system change. Do top down reforms achieve it? They may open some doors a crack. But they can hardly be seen as a solution unless organized workers have the capacity to force the doors wide open.

On the whole, I feel that piecemeal reform of global production, without a larger vision of how we think the world’s economy ought to be organized, is very limited. I would emphasize the need for a world plan that allocates production and consumption according to principles of equity rather than according to the market. I would also argue for a system in which the working class was a major force in shaping the global political economy. How do we get to such a situation, given that we are a million miles away from it? At this point, such an idea is not even on the table for discussion. I think we, in PEWS and other progressive organizations, ought to be seriously considering the “big picture” alternatives.

[1] Thanks to Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, Carolina Bank-Munoz, and Ted Levine for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this commentary.

Lance Compa

Yes. Workers in the global economy face the same challenge as workers in national economies a century ago: how to halt run-to-the-bottom competition among states, provinces, and regions at differing levels of economic development and natural endowments. The response today must be the same: setting a rules-based floor of standards which governments and firms are not permitted to undercut.

In the United States, this “floor construction” took shape first in 1930s New Deal legislation like the Wagner Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Later came equal pay laws, nondiscrimination laws, occupational safety and health laws and others. The United States was not alone; European countries, South American countries, Canada, Japan and many others moved in the same direction. Mexico set out the most advanced national labor rights and standards in its 1917 Constitution.

None of these national legal frameworks is perfectly administered or enforced in the United States, Mexico or anywhere else. Still, they brake a race to the bottom inside national borders. Now this brake must be applied internationally by the power to suspend trade benefits and preferences for countries and firms that systematically violate workers’ rights.

Those who argue “that’s protectionism” and that only economic growth unimpeded by labor norms can lead to higher standards are wrong. The main beneficiaries of a global “floor” of rights will be developing countries, where the race to the bottom is most accelerated (as with the movement of production and jobs from Mexico to China).

Genuine comparative advantage for lower-wage countries is legitimate, if it helps them develop, if wages and conditions improve, and if workers have a voice in society. But artificial advantage based on human rights violations is illegitimate and should be halted by international rules.

Not country or firm should gain a competitive edge in international trade by jailing and killing trade union organizers, outlawing collective bargaining and strikes, ignoring life-threatening workplace hazards, exploiting vulnerable children, discriminating against women and minority groups, or forcing workers to labor at the point of a bayonet. Neither should they gain from subtler forms of repression such as systematically firing worker leaders, favoring government-run unions or deliberately holding wages and benefits below productivity levels.

A new system linking trade and labor rights should provide myriad opportunities to invoke codes of conduct, guidelines, best practices, global compacts, cooperative activities, technical assistance, capacity building, hearings, reports, recommendations and other “soft law” measures. Many of these intermediate steps can help improve labor standards and working conditions. But recalcitrant, exploitative multinational companies and authoritarian government will scoff at them unless forced to pay a price at the end of the day.

It should be a long day. The global community must find the right mix of roles and responsibilities under regional and international trade arrangements (NAFTA, Mercosur, FTAA, EU, APEC etc.) and organizations (ILO, WTO, UN, NAFTA Labor Commission etc.) to create and implement a rules-based system of international labor rights encouraging respect for workers’ rights without need for sanctions – but keep sanctions poised to apply as a last resort when all else fails.

Jane Collins

While it is clear that fine minds on the left can disagree on this issue, I believe that social clauses in trade treaties harm workers. This is not only because they are limited and ineffectual, but because they create new institutions and processes that are simulacra for our hard-won institutions of governance and regulation, but within which workers have no rights or recourse. In this way social clauses are consistent with a broader neoliberal agenda of restricting citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Neoliberalism presents itself as a negative project. Its proponents claim that it is not about building anything, but about clearing a space for markets to operate. In fact, however, neoliberalism creates institutions and practices. It creates trade agreements that are called free, but that consist of thousands of pages of fine print protecting first world intellectual property. It allows continued agricultural subsidies in industrialized nations while prohibiting them in the developing world. It creates new contexts for elites to come together to discuss new transnational rules—in Doha, Banff, Cancun and Miami. And it creates new channels—in the form of “social clauses”—for the supposed remediation of problems created by transnational trade. These channels lie outside the courts and the legislative process of any nation, in a twilight zone of newly created institutions and rules.

NAFTA’s labor and environmental side agreements were drafted in late 1993 as a way to gain broader public support for a trade agreement that many people felt would hurt labor and the environment. The labor side agreement, called the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation, was charged with enhancing communication among the labor ministries of the signatory nations, promoting each country’s compliance with its own labor laws, and encouraging them to improve their laws. “Public actors” from the three nations are allowed to bring complaints before National Administrative Offices, addressing the failure of a government to enforce the law. They cannot file complaints against specific corporations or seek specific remedies. If the NAO refuses to hear the complaint there is no remedy, and there is no recourse if a government refuses to fix a situation identified as a problem. So far, the NAOs have heard 27 complaints, prescribing Ministerial Communications, publication of reports, public hearings or conferences, but no specific remedies.

No one—not even the side agreement’s most outspoken supporters—have argued that the NAALC can generate concrete gains by forcing employers to change practices. But a number have argued that working within this framework can build knowledge and foster coalitions among labor unions and ngos. I would argue, however, that the cost of participating in such a process is too great. Taking the remediation of labor’s complaints, not only off the streets, but out of the courts and away from the National Labor Relations Board, and placing them in a new framework without the power or obligation to enforce law or mete out justice, drains energy and attention from contexts where workers have real civil and constitutional rights. It engages us in shadow boxing with corporate actors who are protected from any real consequences. Susan George has said that “the common denominator of neoliberal institutions is their lack of transparency and democratic accountability,” and I think the institutions surrounding social clauses are a good example of this.

Jill Esbenshade

The inclusion of labor standards in trade treaties is an important step in the much longer struggle for actually improving working conditions. Codified commitments on standards have not always led to improvements it is true, for example many countries that have ratified the International Labor Organizations’ core standards do not enforce them. Individual companies that have adopted codes of conduct in recent years are more often than not contracting their production to facilities that continue to violate the standards set forth in these codes. There is certainly a danger that countries may use their ratification of I LO principles as a sign of their upstanding record, as the defunct UN proposal for a Global Social Label would have allowed and that companies will wave their codes of conduct in the face of accusatory protestors and journalists. However, this does not negate the importance or usefulness to workers of such unfulfilled commitments. In fact, there have been a growing number of occasions in which workers and their advocates have been able to capitalize on such commitments. Codes have proved in a few outstanding cases to offer workers another tool with which to organize and to pressure transnational corporations.

There is, of course, the crucial question of enforcement. While enforcement of codes remains a miserable failure for the most part, unions in Guatemala, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia and elsewhere have been able to use codes as a point of leverage when independent mechanisms of verification are in place. Independent monitoring organizations provide workers a place to lodge complaints, an ally in seeking redress or compliance, and a means of taking the local government to task overly

blatant non-enforcement of its own labor laws. It is doubtful that an independent enforcement apparatus would emerge alongside the inclusion of labor standards in trade agreements. However, such inclusion would set the stage for an apparatus to develop as it is slowly doing in the arena of company codes of conduct, which also began as only words on paper. I think NAFTA has taught us a lesson: even weak enforcement regimes create a point of convergence for cross-border labor activism and a channel for creating both media and public attention around specific campaigns.

Finally, codifying principles in law can bring legitimacy to ideas. It is clear that among the American public, at least, there is little sympathy over the violation of the rights to associate freely and bargain collectively. Hence, anti-sweatshop activists often focus on child labor rather than the most pressing concerns of workers in their campaigns in order to gain public support. While our national laws should already provide validity for such standards, reasserting them on the international level may help to revive widespread legitimacy for basic labor rights

Robert J.S. Ross

The “social question” haunted the West throughout the nineteenth and much of the 20th Century. The question was this: could a society of nominal equals before the law, where poverty and social exclusion characterized the conditions of the working class and others at the margins of power and privilege, attain stability without (or with) Draconian repression?

By the third quarter of the 20th Century one kind of answer had been made: citizenship was understood to be substantively social as well as legal and formal. At the center of social inclusion, paradoxically, were institutions shot through with complex layers of radical dissent and social accommodation – labor movements – unions and parties. Having secured the rights to their legal existence they were in turn able to secure to labor some share of the fruits of economic growth.

Now the social question is global. The respondents to our symposium reflect in part the debate on the world scale – including its misunderstandings. First, in its most common forms the “social clause” idea is more nearly procedural than substantive: rather than a global “minimum wage” (or living wage) it focuses on the ILO 1998 “core labor rights”: the right to free association, to collective bargaining, to be free of forced labor and discrimination and child labor. Should such rights be effectively enforced the probability that national communities of workers could gain a share of the growth they produce would increase– something not now happening in China or much of the Western Hemisphere. This addresses a matter raised by Edna Bonacich and responded to in another way by Rich Appelbaum: the low wage advantage of developing nations would not be lost by such reform; but workers’ ability to share the growth would be increased.

Of course in the perspective of Jennifer Bickham Mendez procedural rights of association for labor are not critical or threshold rights that give them some priority for the women workers in the maquila sector. Bickham Mendez has a political quarrel with the way Central American unions prioritize the gender specific needs of women workers. Suffice to say that this is a matter that cannot be solved without rights to association in any case.

While Rich Appelbaum endorses a social clause he endorses a form that is not on the table on a global scale – the idea of a nationally-relative minimum wage. Though correctly noting that Richard Rothstein proposed a fair method to gauge national minima to levels of development, the Appelbaum (and Bonacich) vision is way past the politics of the issue – but perhaps such a vision is what is needed to blast through the opposition of anti-worker governments in the world’s low-wage export platforms.

Lance Compa – the United States’ preeminent authority on global labor rights uses the key concept of the corporate globalizers to justify an alternate vision: a rules-based regime of global commerce. Global capitalism claims to want it: Compa notes that workers don’t have it. Compa points out the critical response to those who see the social clause as a “Northern” imposition on the Global south: in many industries (e.g., apparel, toys, and consumer electronics) the competition for investment is among the developing countries and the labor standards issue is critical among them.[1]

Jill Esbenshade is properly concerned about enforcement. Many experts consider the ILO a good inspectorate presently without powers of enforcement. Neil Kearney of the International Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation says: Like many octogenarians the ILO needs a new set of teeth.

Jane Collins raises among the most provocative dimensions of this question – one common in the global justice movement. Rather than reform the emerging bourgeois global regime, it is argued that it is better to kill it; asking for workers' rights within it will only legitimate bad institutions. This reflects crudely the popular perceptions of the social democratic/Bolshevik divide over reform and revolution. But look again: did revolutionaries anywhere fail to fight for the rights of workers to association? The political script of the struggle for decency was many voiced and multi-layered: “bring down state” was one voice; “give us our rights” was another. Sometimes these voices were one chorus. For example, despite their divide over just such questions as the ultimate viability of constitutional democracy in capitalism, socialist and communist cadre built the industrial unions, fought for legal protection for them, and thus enfranchised a class.[2]

[1] (See Ross and Chan”, “From North-South to South-South: The True Face of Global Competition,” *Foreign Affairs*, 81:5, Sept. 2002 (http://www.clarku.edu/~rross/CSP02/04_Ross_Chan_8_13.pdf)

[2] For this argument see my contribution, in a forthcoming volume edited by W. Robinson and R. Appelbaum, “Global Capital/Global Labor: universal standards and the future of solidarity”.

Contributors

Richard Appelbaum is a recent past-chair of PEWS, and is professor of Sociology and Global & International Studies at UCSB. His next book (co-authored with PEWS council member Bill Robinson) is *Critical Globalization Studies* (Routledge, forthcoming 2004). For his current writing relevant to the arguments in this article, see <http://repositories.cdlib.org/isber/cgs/>

Jennifer Bickham Mendez is Assistant Professor at the College of William and Mary. Her book *The Global Here and Now: Gender and the Politics of Transnationalism in Nicaragua* is forthcoming with Duke University Press. Her current work focuses on Latino/a immigration in suburbanized communities in the Southern United States.

Edna Bonacich is professor of Sociology and Ethnic Studies at UC Riverside, and a past chair of PEWS. She has written and done research on the apparel industry and participated in anti-sweatshop struggles. Her current work focuses on the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach as strategic nodes for organizing against corporate dominated globalization

Jane Collins is Professor of Rural Sociology and Women's Studies at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her most recent book, *Threads: Gender, Labor and Power in the Global Apparel Industry*, was just published by the University of Chicago Press (September 2003).

Lance Compa is Senior Lecturer at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations in Ithaca, New York, where he teaches U.S. labor law and international labor rights. He is co-editor of *Human Rights, Labor Rights, and International Trade* (University of Pennsylvania Press 1996), author of *Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States under International Human Rights Standards* (Human Rights Watch 2000), and co-author of *Justice for All: A Guide to Worker Rights in the Global Economy* (AFL-CIO Solidarity Center 2003).

Jill Esbenschade is Assistant Professor of Sociology at San Diego State University and author of

the forthcoming *Monitoring Sweatshops: Workers, Consumers and the Global Apparel Industry* (Temple University Press).

Robert J.S. "Bob" Ross is Professor of Sociology and Director of the International Studies Stream at Clark University. His book, *Slaves to Fashion: Poverty and abuse in the new sweatshops* will be published in 2004 by the University of Michigan Press

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PEWS Section Activities at ASA 04 The Political Economy of the World System section invites submissions for four paper sessions and a roundtable session. The section is also co-sponsoring a session with the Section on Marxist Sociology. Also, note that there is a Regular Session (sponsored by ASA) on world-systems, which is accepting paper submissions.

Submissions should be made through the online submission system at the [ASA Annual Meeting website](#), which will open in early December.

The deadline for paper submissions is January 15, 2004.

Paper Session 1:

Theme: "Organized violence in the modern world system"

Organizers: Dag MacLeod (dag.macleod@jud.ca.gov) and Wally Goldfrank (wally@cats.ucsc.edu)

Paper Session 2:

Theme: "Changing intellectual property rules and their impact on development"

Organizer: Sarah Babb (babbsa@bc.edu)

Paper Session 3:

Theme: "Globalization of service work"

Organizer: Rhacel Parrenas (rparrenas@facstaff.wisc.edu)

Paper Session 4:

Theme: "World Systems vs. World Polity Approaches"

Organizers: Al Bergerson (albert@email.arizona.edu) and Chris Chase-Dunn (chriscd@mail.ucr.edu)

Roundtable Sessions:

Organizers: Paul Gellert (pkg1@cornell.edu) and Andrew Jorgenson (jorgensonandrew@hotmail.com)

Regular ASA Paper Session:

Topic: World-Systems

Organizer: Elson Boles (boles@svsu.edu)

Paper Session co-sponsored with Section on Marxist Sociology

Theme: Marxism and Globalization

Organizer: Ellen Rosen (eirosen@brandeis.edu)

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PEWS XXVIII

PEWS XXVIII Annual Conference - Call For Papers

LATIN@S IN THE WORLD-SYSTEM

April 23-24, 2004
Berkeley, CA

The 21st century will be crucial for the future transformation and/or demise of the Capitalist World-System. This historical system has lasted for more than 500 years. Depending on our social agencies in this moment of bifurcation, the transition towards a new historical system could lead to a better or worse system than the present one. Nothing is predetermined nor guaranteed about the future. There could be a more fair, just and egalitarian historical system or a more exploitative and coercive one. A major historical process in this transition is the transformations at the core of the capitalist world-economy. One of these transformations is the significant growth and political/cultural impact of Latin@ populations within the United States, the most powerful core country in the world-system today. In the year 2000, non-Hispanic Whites were a demographic minority in 70% of the U.S. cities while Latinos were the fastest growing population. Latin@ populations increased 50% between 1990 and 2000. The majority of them are working class and racialized subjects (Chican@s, Salvadoreans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Indo-Latinos, Afro-Latin@, etc.) Today Latin@s constitute the largest minority in the United States: they represent 12.5% of the total population. Conservative estimates made by the U.S. Census of Population project that by mid-21st century non-Hispanic Whites will be a demographic minority in the U. S. and Latin@s will be the largest minority with 25 percent of the total population. Alternative estimates suggest that if the Latin@ population continues growing at the same rate of the 1990s, they will represent at least half, if not the majority, of the total population of the U. S. before mid-century.

These processes posit some important challenges that are the heart of the contemporary debates about the decolonization of the U.S. Empire and the future transformation of the world-system towards a new historical system. If the legacy of White supremacy in the United States continues, we could have within a few decades an "Apartheid" form of democracy where the demographic majorities are politically excluded by the demographic minority, that is, the social majority would lead the social minorities as it has always been for the last two centuries but with the aggravated fact that now non-Hispanic Whites will be the demographic minority not just in a few states but in the whole country. In this context, can identity politics provide an answer or is it part of the problem? What forms of democracy can provide a solution to these dilemmas? Can a progressive multiculturalism or critical cosmopolitanism contribute to the challenges of the 21st century? How can equality be reconciled with fraternity given our epistemic, class, gender, racial and colonial differences? The increased representation of minorities in government structures is important but not sufficient to challenge the ideological and political hegemony of non-Hispanic Whites and U.S. imperial power around the world. This leads to one of the main goals of this conference: How to think about the decolonization of the American Empire in the 21st century? How can Latin@s contribute in developing a qualitatively different relationship between the United States and peripheral regions in the capitalist world-economy? Although Latin@s cultural legacies includes a diversity of world cultures (Arab, Jew, European, indigenous peoples, African, Asian, etc.), Afro-Latinos and Indo-Latinos are often discriminated by Euro-Latinos. Which traditions, imaginaries and identities will prevail within the Latin@ population in the 21st century? And which will be important for the future of the capitalist world-system given their strategic location at the center of the U.S. Empire? This leads to another major question: How can Latin@s build a different relationship within themselves and with other groups (Asian-Americans, Euro-Americans, African-Americans, Native-Americans, and oppressed people in other parts of the world) that could break away with the legacies of White supremacy, patriarchy and coloniality domestically and abroad?

The Black-White paradigm of race relations in the United States has contributed to the erasure of other racialized subjects of the U.S. Empire such as Latinos, Asian-Americans, and Native-Americans. We would like to have a transracial and transethnic dialogue about the decolonization of the American empire in the 21st Century that would include a diversity of groups beyond identity politics. Which alternative forms of knowledge, existing cultural/spiritual movements and political projects can provide a gateway for new forms of thinking beyond Eurocentrism and fundamentalism or colonialism and nationalism? Which ethical imperatives and utopian imaginaries are we going to build in order to confront the challenges of the post-socialist and post-national liberation movements of the 21st century? Can border thinking, diasporic perspectives and transmodern strategies of decolonization be useful for the decolonization of the U.S. empire? Which alternative cosmologies and spiritualities can contribute to the building of an ethics of liberation beyond Eurocentrism and White supremacy? What alternative worlds can we imagine that could contribute to the future bifurcation towards a new historical system beyond exploitation and domination?

Given the outlined questions, possible panels for the conference might include the following:

- *Latin@s, Decolonization, and the African Diaspora in the Capitalist World-System
- *Indigenous Peoples, Indo-Latinos and the Decolonization of Land in the Americas
- *Democracy and U.S. Racial/ethnic relations in the 21st Century: Apartheid or Diversity?

- *Latin@s and the Future (Demise?) of the U.S. Empire: Continuities and/or Discontinuities
- *Heterolatinidades: Colonial/racial Immigrants and Subjects of the U.S. Empire
- *Decolonizing Spirituality: Euro-Latin@s, Indo-Latin@s and Afro-Latin@s Spiritual Practices
- *Paradigms in Latin@ Studies: Decolonizing Knowledge Production

We will provide lodging for conference participants. Selected papers from the conference will be included in the annual series published by Paradigm Press.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS OF PAPERS OR DETAILED ABSTRACTS IS FEBRUARY 1, 2004

Those interested please send a title and an abstract to:

Prof. Ramon Grosfoguel, Prof. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, or Prof. José D. Saldivar University of California at Berkeley
Department of Ethnic Studies
506 Barrows Hall #2570
Berkeley, CA 94720
USA

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IN MEMORY OF MIGUEL KORZENIEWICZ

By Gilbert Merkk

Dear friends and family members,

I have only the most positive and warm memories of Miguel, from the first time that he interviewed at the University of New Mexico. Miguel was hired to fill the position that I left open Sociology when I moved to the UNM Latin American Institute. Miguel's recruitment was something I felt wonderful about for several reasons: he was a fellow Argentine specialist and aficionado de lo porteño, he was trained at Duke and doing pioneering work on global commodity chains with Gary Gereffi, and above all, as a person he was so charming, honest, sincere, and unassuming.

After Miguel arrived at UNM from Duke, I was extraordinarily busy with the Institute and its demands, so I wasn't around Sociology as much as I wanted. Miguel made up for this by calling me once a month or so to arrange a get-together for lunch, usually at the Duck Pond. I would bring a sandwich and Miguel just a bag of carrot sticks, celery, and perhaps raisins. We usually spoke in Spanish when other people were not around. Our conversations would begin with the current state of Argentine affairs, would on to Sociology Department business, and end up on topics of globalization. Every now and then we would meet in my office just to talk about Argentina with an enthusiasm that only Argentinofilos might appreciate: about historical figures such as Yrigoyen, the peculiarities of the Argentine elite, porteñoworking class culture, or the mafia-like features of the Argentine business establishment. Miguel had a fine mind that commanded the respect of all his colleagues: inquiring but cautious, theoretical but empirically oriented, determined yet flexible.

I had always hoped that Miguel and I would have the chance to teach together, but that course kept getting put off until it was too late. After his accident, my respect for Miguel increased even more. The fortitude and spirit with which he coped with his injuries was remarkable.

We all hoped that medical advances would eventually lead to a method of reconnected his severed nerves, but it was not to be.

Miguel lived up Campus Boulevard from my house, and every morning he walked early to work. My most indelible memory of Miguel is to see him

about eight o'clock in the morning, striding to work in white shirt, tie, and thin black sport coat, which is all he wore he wore even cold weather.

Several times I stopped to pick him up, but one day he told me that he actually preferred to walk for the exercise. After that let him walk. Later after his accident, I was glad that Miguel had insisted on walking when he could. In my minds eye, I still see Miguel striding down Campus Boulevard on a crisp winter morning with all that energy and determination. I miss him still. Miguel's life was a life well lived and his courage under adversity an inspiration to all who knew him.

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SECTION AWARDS FOR 2003

PEWS Book Award, 2003: Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures, 1400-1900*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Lauren Benton's impressive *Law and Colonial Cultures, 1400-1900*, makes a major contribution to understanding the institutional dynamics of colonialism, by exploring the interaction of overlapping legal systems at different historical moments, in settings that range from West Africa to South Asia to Latin America. In addition to showing how legal processes constructed imperial domination, Benton explores efforts by indigenous and subordinate individuals to use the different legal systems and fora to improve their positions.

Careful historical research in a broad range of contexts gives Benton's theoretical and analytic insights extraordinary power. *Law and Colonial Cultures* presents a new perspective on the construction of the modern world system, while offering valuable lessons for contemporary discussions of institutional reform and governance in post-colonial settings.

Terence K. Hopkins Dissertation Award, 2003

Jon D. Carlson, "The Expanding World System and the Roots of Globalization" (Arizona State University, 2003).

Jon Carlson's comparative analysis of the incorporation of four regions into the European-centered state system (the northwest coast of America, the Asante Kingdom of West Africa, Abyssinia-Ethiopia, and Japan) makes an important contribution to our understanding of the development of the modern world system. Conceptualizing a "zone of ignorance", distinct from the external arena, Carlson shows how geographical fact and fantasy combined to motivate the decisions of state and non-state actors with regard to territorial expansion. Through the innovative use of historical maps and detailed narratives, Carlson's dissertation provides a rich and complex account of systemic expansion.

PEWS Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award, Immanuel Wallerstein

In 2003, the Political Economy of the World System section added its Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award to the long list of honors that Immanuel Wallerstein has received worldwide (including, the long overdue Distinguished Career Award from the American Sociological Association in 2003.) Needless to say, we cannot begin to detail the breadth or depth of Wallerstein's achievements. Suffice it to say, that his writings have inspired at least two generations of scholars within and far beyond the PEWS section. At the same time, his activism in the ASA (including as a founder of the PEWS section) has opened up the institutional space within sociology for the scholars he has inspired to "unthink" and rethink the social sciences. With this Award we recognize Wallerstein, not only as an acute analyst of the inequalities of wealth, status and power that have characterized the modern world system, but also as a consistent and principled voice against the inequalities and injustices of the contemporary world system.

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PEWS Awards Nominations for 2004

The Political Economy of the World System section is accepting nominations for two awards to be given at the 2004 ASA Meeting in San Francisco: (1) Distinguished Book Award; and (2) Distinguished Article Award.

Distinguished Book Award:

This annual award is given to an outstanding book in global or comparative-international sociology. Books published in 2001, 2002 and 2003 are eligible for consideration. A letter of nomination (including self-nominations) and a copy of the book should be sent **to each of the three members** of this year's award committee:

Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz (Chair) rk81@umail.umd.edu

Department of Sociology
2112 Art-Sociology Building
University of Maryland, College Park
College Park, MD 20742

Mridula Udayagiri
Sociology Department
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6005

Robert Ross
Department of Sociology
Clark University
950 Main St.
Worcester, MA 01610-1477

The deadline is April 1, 2004.

Distinguished Article Award:

This biannual award is given to an outstanding article in global or comparative-international sociology. Articles published in 2001, 2002 and 2003 are eligible for consideration. A letter of nomination (including self-nominations) and a copy of the article should be sent **to each of the three members** of this year's award committee:

Gay W. Seidman (Chair) seidman@ssc.wisc.edu

Sociology Department
1180 Observatory Dr.
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706

Val Moghadam
Sociology and Anthropology Department
Illinois State University
Campus Box 4660
Schroeder Hall, Rm. 338
Normal, IL 61790-4660

William Robinson
Department of Sociology
2834 Ellison Hall
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9430

The deadline is April 1, 2004.

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IROWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

q **Publications from PEWS02 Conference:** The Institute for Research on World-Systems (IROWS) at the University of California, Riverside hosted the annual spring Political Economy of World-Systems (PEWS) conference at UCR May 3-4, 2002 on the theme of "Hegemonic Decline: Present and Past." See <http://www.irows.ucr.edu/conferences/pews02/pews02page.htm>

Three books composed mainly of papers presented at the conference are moving toward publication:

- ∨ [Thomas E. Reifer](#) (ed.) *Hegemony, Globalization and Antisystemic Movements*. Paradigm Press.
- ∨ Jonathan Friedman and Christopher Chase-Dunn (eds.) *Hegemonic Declines: Present and Past*. Paradigm Press, and
- ∨ [Christopher Chase-Dunn](#) and E. N. Anderson (eds.) *The Historical Evolution of World-Systems*, Palgrave

q **JWSR published a special issue on globalization and the environment:** The *Journal of World-Systems Research (JWSR)*, co-published by IROWS and the Center for Global, International and Regional Studies at UC-Santa Cruz, has published a new special issue on globalization and then environment edited by Andrew Jorgenson and Ed Kick. See <http://jwsr.ucr.edu/index.php>

q **Johns Hopkins Book Series:** IROWS Director Chris Chase-Dunn is the Editor of two book series focusing on global social change at Johns Hopkins University Press. Valentine Moghadam's *Globalizing Women* will be along shortly, as will Bill Robinson's *A Theory of Global Capitalism*. Stephen Bunker and Paul Cicantell's *From Amsterdam to Amazonia* is in the works.

q **PEGSC Specialization:** The Department of Sociology at the University of California, Riverside has established a new graduate specialization in Political Economy and Global Social Change. See <http://www.sociology.ucr.edu/pegsc/index.html>

Research Projects: IROWS is currently sponsoring four on-going research projects:

∅ **Waves of Globalization:** the National Science Foundation's Sociology Program funded our study of economic globalization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. [Andrew Jorgenson](#), Rebecca Giem, John Rogers and Shoon Lio have made major contributions to the project this year. A [paper](#) based on the results of

this project was presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association in August 2002. See <http://irows.ucr.edu/research/globres/globproj.htm>

∅ **Cities and Empires:** Another IROWS project focuses on time-mapping the growth of cities and empires in Afroeurasia over the past 3000 years. Alexis Alvarez and Daniel Pasciuti have contributed greatly to this project. A [paper](#) based on the research of this project has been published in *Cross-Cultural Research*. See

<http://irows.ucr.edu/research/citemp/citemp.html>

Ø **Global Elite Formation:** IROWS has begun research on the evolution of a global elite over the past 160 years, looking at the wealthiest and most powerful individuals, families, firms and political organizations since 1840. Dr. Thomas Reifer currently leads this project. Christopher Schmitt applied for UC-MEXUS

funding to study U.S.-Mexican elite ties.

Ø **Biotechnology and Hegemony:** IROWS is starting a project that will time-map the global emergence of the biotechnology industry in order to consider its potential effects on regional and international economic comparative advantages. Chase-Dunn presented a preliminary paper on this topic at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in November of 2001 and at the World Congress of Sociology in Brisbane, Australia in July of 2002. See <http://irows.ucr.edu/papers/irows9/irows9.htm>

IROWS Working Papers are available at
<http://www.irows.ucr.edu/workpaptoc.htm>

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CALLS FOR PAPERS

CALL FOR PAPERS

Work and Occupations invites you to submit your manuscripts for peer review and possible publication. *WO* is a scholarly, sociological quarterly that publishes original research in the sociology of work, employment, labor, and social inequality in the workplace, labor force, and labor market. Consult the latest issue of *WO* for manuscript formatting and submission instructions. Manuscripts will not be returned. Send three copies of your paper to: Daniel B. Cornfield, Editor, *Work and Occupations*, Box 1811, Station B, Department of Sociology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37235. E-mail inquiries may be directed to the Editor at this address: daniel.b.cornfield@vanderbilt.edu

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Publication Announcements

Trouble in Paradise: Globalization and Environmental Crises in Latin America
by J. Timmons Roberts and Nikki Demetria Thanos

Routledge, July 2003 ISBN: 0415929806

\$18.95 paperback, currently \$13.27 at Amazon.com

J. Timmons Roberts is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Environmental Science and Policy Program at the College of William and Mary, USA.

Nikki Demetria Thanos works in Mexico as a Popular Educator and Political Analyst for Witness for Peace.

"Trouble in Paradise helps the non-indigenous, non-Spanish speaking

citizens of the world to take a peep into Latin America's ecological crisis, its roots in globalization and unequal development, and the indigenous responses to ensure survival in the 21st century."

--Vandana Shiva, Executive Director, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology

"This eminently readable book is a "must read." Grounded in an understanding of global, historical, structural, and cultural forces, the authors explore the "other side of development," namely pollution, disease, deforestation, habitat loss, and social dislocation. Yet the authors also address how social movements and democratic processes can enhance sustainable development."

--Susan Eckstein, Professor of Sociology, Boston University

"Trouble in Paradise is particularly impressive in that the authors construct a coherent account of the diverse environmental issues of Latin America by framing them in terms of globalization and neo-liberalization processes while at the same time providing an empirically rich portrayal of these issues. Roberts and Thanos' topical coverage of Latin American environmental issues is impressive, ranging from the industrial maquiladoras at the U.S.-Mexico border and the suburban industrial wastelands of southern Brazil to the green revolution fields of Central America and the Amazon rainforests. The authors' thoughtful concluding chapter, on the key role that "building a global civil society" must play in solving Latin American environmental problems, is a particularly bold, but pragmatic statement of the agenda we face as global citizens."

Frederick H. Buttel, William H. Sewell Professor of Rural Sociology and Professor of Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison

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Chapter 2: Pollution Havens on the U.S./Mexico Border? NAFTA, Free Trade, and the Environment

Chapter 3: Green Revolutions, Deforestation, and New Ideas

Chapter 4: Hazards of an Urban Continent

Chapter 5: Bio-splendor, Devastation and Competing Visions in the Amazon

Chapter 6: Indigenous Peoples, Development Megaprojects, and Internet Resistance

With Leo B. Gorman

Chapter 7: Building a Global Civil Society: Living What We Know

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A Few Words from the Editor:

I would like to thank all of the many contributors to this issue of PEWS News, especially our Guest Editors for the Symposium, Gay Seidman and Robert Ross, and their authors. The PEWS Council decided in Atlanta to add this feature to our newsletters, and we hope that this discussion will stimulate further debate; responses for the Spring newsletter in April are quite welcome. We also welcome other contributions for the newsletter and for the Section website (see the Call for Submissions below). Beverly Silver is currently updating the website, and the goal is to improve communication between members of the section via the listserv, website and newsletter. Please email me with contributions and suggestions for accomplishing this goal (paul.ciccantell@wmich.edu).

Paul S. Ciccantell

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Perennial Call for Submissions for PEWS NEWS & PEWS WEB

Yet another reminder to send in items for **PEWS News**:

- Calls for Papers
- Change in position
- New publications
- New Syllabi posted for sharing
- New AV materials
- Discussions of PEWS issues
- Editorial on PEWS politics

All of these are also suitable for PEWS web. In addition:

- Links to activist sites
- Links to your web page
- Links to any web page of interest to PEWS members
- Data Sources on- or off-line

- New publications
- Syllabi: especially those on line for others to view

Send items to Paul Ciccantell paul.ciccantell@wmich.edu

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