

GLOBALIZATION OF CAPITAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM, THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a historical analysis of the development of capitalism, the labor movement, and the struggle for social rights within the context of the globalization of capital and capitalist relations on a world scale. It argues that as capitalism developed from its commercial and industrial origins and spread to various corners of the world through the export of capital, it affected changes in the international division of labor, shifting production from the center to the peripheral regions of the global economy, thus bringing about transformations in the structure of production and the control and exploitation of labor on a global scale. The intensification of the exploitation of labor led to the ensuing class struggles between labor and capital—struggles led by the labor movement to protect and advance its social rights and interests. The globalization of capital and changes in the international division of labor greatly affected the social position of labor worldwide and gave rise to the control and exploitation of labor across the globe and to the potential for the international solidarity of the working class in its struggle to safeguard its social rights and strive towards the building of an equitable and just society.

Keywords: Globalization, Capitalism, Labor Movement, Social Rights.

INTRODUCTION

From its early beginnings in the 18th century, and its subsequent evolution during the 19th and 20th century, capitalism has gone through various stages of development and expansion on a world scale. In this process, capital has expanded from the national to the international and finally the global level, developing a complex web of commercial and production relations around the world. The movement from the national to the global level has brought with it a number of important characteristics that have had, and continue to have, an immense impact on labor and its hard won social rights that define the daily lives of millions of working people throughout the world. Globalization of capital and capitalist production relations have in this way effected changes in the process of capitalist development, resulting in the transformation of the international division of labor, changes in labor relations at the global level, and restrictions on the social rights of labor and other affected populations. Thus, the movement of capital across national boundaries has through this process ushered in a period of shifts in production from one geographic area to another and from one type of economic activity to another, depending on the requirements of the global production process guided by global capital that is an integral part of the globalization of production leading to the global domination of the biggest and most powerful capitalist interests that now operate in every corner of the world. What is the impact of this process on labor, and on working people in general, how has this process become transformed, and how is it affecting the lives of ordinary working people and their rights across the globe are the topics of this paper.

An analysis of the nature and dynamics of labor relations in various sectors of the U.S. and global economy would provide us with the necessary insights to an understanding of the nature of work under capitalism and relations between labor and capital at the point of production. Such relations, which are at base a manifestation of larger, capitalist relations of production (i.e., class relations), become evident in their social form as workers confront capital and capitalist management who extract from them ever-growing sums of surplus value or profits. It is in this context of the struggle between labor and capital at the point of production that we begin to see the class nature of this struggle—a struggle that in its broader *class* context becomes a *political* struggle involving the state, hence a struggle for the institutionalization of social rights,

and ultimately state power. As the globalization of capital accelerates, and its internal logic and contradictions become apparent, the situation is bound to facilitate the further organization and radicalization of labor to demand their social rights—not only for the right to organize and belong to a union, but also to improve working conditions, increase wages and benefits, and a host of other rights that are the basis of basic social/human rights in any modern society—food, shelter, health care, education, social security, employment, and a guaranteed minimum income. The balance of forces in this struggle between labor and capital beyond point-of-production work relations thus translates into a struggle for the possibility of transformation of the capitalist system in the direction of greater social/public responsibility for the rights of wage labor and laboring people in general.

It is for a clear and concise understanding of the labor process and labor relations under advanced capitalist production—a process that explains the structure of labor relations within the context of broader class relations at the global level—and their implications for the social rights of labor, that this paper was conceived. The detailed analyses of the changing nature of work in late-20th-century U.S. and global economy provided in these pages is intended to expose the inner logic of global capitalist production, with the hope that such understanding of the underlying contradictions of advanced, global capitalism can be put to use by labor in its struggle to effect change toward the ultimate transformation of capitalist society into a social order that provides greater rights to working people throughout the world.

This paper addresses a number of these questions centered on the social rights of labor in varied historical, spatial, and topical contexts, examining many of the issues central to the development of capitalism, the capitalist labor process, the changing nature of work, and labor-capital relations in the United States and the global economy in the late 20th and early 21st century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The development of capitalism during the course of the 19th and the 20th century has resulted in control over labor to assure its continued exploitation and creation of ever higher levels of surplus value, which constitutes the very basis of the accumulation of capital under the capitalist system. This process of control and exploitation of labor at the point of production had developed and matured during the 19th century through the de-skilling of labor (Braverman 1974). The growth and development of capitalism in Europe and the United States from its competitive to monopoly stages was facilitated by this process in all major sectors of industry across the national and later the global economy. In this expansive process, the capitalist state has come to play a central role to protect and advance the interests of capital and repress labor in the intense class struggle between labor and capital that has been developing over the course of the past century (Boyer and Morais 1980).

As we enter the 21st century, the maturing contradictions of late capitalism—which have been developing with great speed throughout the 20th century—are beginning to surface in a variety of forms and are calling into question the process of capital accumulation that has facilitated the control and exploitation of labor in the U.S. and other countries around the world for decades. Although recent developments in the world economy have their roots in earlier times when the consolidation of U.S. power began to take hold on a world scale, the transformation of the labor process through automation and high technology on the one hand, and the globalization of capital and the restructuring of the international division of labor on the other, has effected changes in the nature of work (Bina and Davis 2000)—changes that are a manifestation of ongoing class struggles between labor and capital over the past two centuries (Boyer and Morais 1980).

In the struggle between the two contending classes that characterize the nature of the production process in capitalist society, the control and exploitation of labor are the dual motive forces of capital accumulation that assure its continued growth and expansion. While the logic of global capitalist development over the course of the 20th century has led to the growth of transnational monopolies and thus effected transformations in the labor force structure, the labor process, and the nature of work at the point of production in various productive settings, the central characteristic of capital during this period has been the further intensification of control and exploitation of labor, as well as the restriction of the social rights of labor, throughout the world.

This was accompanied by a worldwide process of economic imperialism, as the export of capital replaced the export of goods that was characteristic of the earlier stage of capitalist expansion. Monopoly rule over the global economy facilitated by the advanced capitalist state set the stage for the globalization of capital and capitalist relations across the world and led to the consolidation of capital's grip over the world economy. This provided the political framework for the direct role of the advanced capitalist state in

protecting the interests of capital and restricting the rights of labor around the world (Szymanski 1978; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001).

Under capitalism, the intensification of the exploitation of labor has meant the continuation of the struggle between labor and capital, but the specific nature and forms of labor control have varied from one industry or economic sector to another, as well as across national boundaries. Thus, the labor process and forms of labor control have historical and spatial dimensions (Lembcke 2002: 11-24). While, therefore, an analysis of the historical development of basic industries, such as auto and steel, reveals the methods and tools of control utilized by management during the course of capitalist development over the past century, an analysis of the labor process today as it develops in the context of the world economy shows us the varied forms of labor control and exploitation of labor on a world scale. In this sense, the globalization of capital has ushered in a process of control, exploitation, and repression of labor across national boundaries that are now global in nature. This process has severely curtailed the struggles of labor unions and other labor organizations to fight for the rights of workers and thus delayed improvements in the condition of labor around the world for decades.

The current condition of labor under late capitalism must thus be seen within the context of its temporal and global dimensions, but it is one that still manifests itself in determinate national settings that are historically specific. Although the development of capitalism through its competitive and monopoly stages has resulted in its expansion from the national to the global level, its contradictions at the higher, late-monopoly stage unfolding on a world scale affect the process of control and exploitation of labor in its own home base in a contradictory way: Expansion abroad translates into contraction at home and, thus, changes in the nature and structure of the labor force, the forms of control, and the nature, rate, and intensity of exploitation in different sectors of the economy (Berberoglu 2002). And this has given rise to varied responses in various sectors of the global economy in different national/local settings.

As the class struggle between labor and capital develops and matures, and as the working class becomes increasingly class conscious and acts on behalf of its own class interests, the central imperative of transformation of the capitalist system demands a careful study of the nature, mechanisms, and processes of control and exploitation of labor, and the responses labor has provided to fight for its own rights and interests in the struggle against capital and the entire capitalist system.

THE LABOR PROCESS AND CONTROL AND EXPLOITATION OF LABOR: THE HISTORICAL AND SPATIAL DIMENSIONS

The labor process under capitalism, which rationalizes the control and exploitation of labor, has a dual dimension that facilitates the accumulation of capital across time and space. These are the historical and spatial dimensions of control and exploitation of labor that characterize the capitalist labor process.

The historical dimension involves a process by which labor has been controlled and exploited from early (competitive) to late (monopoly) stages of capitalist development. In this process, labor—through its role in the continued accumulation of capital—becomes a commodity and is exploited through capital's appropriation of surplus value that facilitates the capital accumulation process. To accomplish this, capital extends its control over labor and subjugates it to its dictates, such that labor becomes an appendage of capital and of the entire capitalist system. This process has been evolving over the course of the past three hundred years, but it has intensified with the rise of monopoly in the early 20th century, when capitalism reached its highest and most pervasive stage, establishing the material basis for the global expansion of capital and the capitalist state (Szymanski 1978, 1981).

The spatial dimension involves the geographic sphere of control over labor across national, regional, and international boundaries, such that capital accumulation, thus control and exploitation of labor, takes place at the local, national, and global level (both domestic and transnational). Hence, the movement of capital beyond national boundaries for expansion abroad integrates capital into the global capitalist network within which it comes to control and exploit low-wage unskilled menial labor in sweatshops around the world. The global expansion of capital on a transnational basis thus facilitates the spread of capitalist relations of production and with it the control and exploitation of labor across national boundaries (Berberoglu 1987, 2003). As rival capitals expand across the globe to accomplish this for their own supremacy over the global economy, the working class across the globe increasingly comes under their direct control and domination, and the exploitation of labor on a global scale thus becomes realized for the production of surplus value throughout the world.

The historical and spatial dimensions of the labor process under capitalism have a special significance for the growth and development of capitalism and capitalist relations over the course of the past several

centuries across the globe. While the original accumulation of capital in the 16th through the 18th centuries was facilitated by commercial capital through worldwide trade under conditions of colonialism and imperialism in the early stages of capital accumulation that led to the establishment of the capitalist system in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America, the later development of capitalism on a global scale facilitated the shift from the export of goods to the export of capital that came to play a central role in the expansion of transnational production, as capital invested in peripheral regions of the world through the transfer of the productive base abroad came to establish capitalist production relations that played a crucial role in the establishment of capitalism across the globe (Warren 1980; Szymanski 1981).

The export of capital, the basis of the worldwide expansion of finance capital, was thus in a good position to play a catalyst role in establishing and consolidating capitalist rule over the global economy during the late 19th and early 20th century. The dominant role of finance capital in the 20th century and its reach across the globe, especially in the postwar period, thus marked a turning point in both a historical and spatial sense, in that global capital now came to represent *both* a historical legacy of its origin and evolution across time *and* a spatial configuration in which it played a dominant role as it dictated its terms on a worldwide basis (Harvey 2002). The consequences of this for peripheral regions of the world were very real, often with catastrophic results. The situation in the advanced capitalist centers was likewise severe, but the development of a strong labor movement there counteracted the negative impact of the globalization process in Europe and North America well into the 20th century. Still, the emergent labor movement, fragmented and divided along racial and gender lines, was no match to the combined power of capital and the capitalist state that acquired its dominance over labor, hence control over the labor process and exploitation of wage labor in a variety of industries that facilitated the accumulation of capital (Szymanski 1978).

THE RISE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The development of class consciousness among the working class is not an automatic process, but it *is* nonetheless a direct outcome of the conditions of work and life under capitalism experienced by millions of workers (Lembcke 1988). This process, once fully developed, draws workers into the class struggle—a struggle which is *political* in nature and is waged against the ruling capitalist class and the entire institutional structure of the capitalist system, including the state (Berberoglu 2001).

Historically, the central facilitators of the development of class consciousness and class struggle in factories, mines, and mills have been trade unions and subsequently their affiliated political associations and political parties—i.e., organizations of workers that have articulated and advanced the class interests of the working class in a broader political context, with the aim of taking state power away from the capitalists.

The longer history of capitalist development in Europe led at an earlier period to the development of radical workers' organizations of different political persuasions—from anarcho-syndicalist to communist, as well as traditional reformist—as manifested in the Paris Commune, the First International, and later the Bolshevik revolution, among others. Various radical anarcho-syndicalist, socialist, communist, and other labor organization and parties thus have their origins in these and other struggles of the working class against capitalism in Europe from the late 18th to the early 20th century (see Katznelson and Zolberg 1986).

In the United States, the later development of capitalism delayed by a century the emergence of a broad-based workers' struggle against it, but did result in the formation of similar, parallel organizations informed by these collective historic experiences of labor that span over two centuries. By the mid 19th century, the U.S. working class had all the signs of a developing mature proletariat ready to take on the system that controlled and exploited them so brutally (Boyer and Morais 1980). Playing a critical role in the Civil War and in the victory over the slave system that blocked the further development of its interests in the fight against capitalism in the north, the U.S. working class scored many victories in determined struggles against the bosses that were often bloody and caused labor some tragic setbacks (the most prominent of these was the struggle for the 8-hour day). But the momentum of these struggles at century's end resulted in the formation and development of important labor organizations in the late 19th and well into the early 20th century: the Knights of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Socialist and Communist Parties, and numerous other politically oriented radical unions and parties were all the outcome of this unfolding process of maturing working class consciousness and class struggle that labor began to wage during this period of turmoil and unrest in the United States (Boyer and Morais 1980).

Similar struggles during the Great Depression, led by the Communist Party, scored important victories in organizing efforts through unions and political action, e.g., through the C.I.O., to improve the condition of

labor, while at the same time helping to advance working-class consciousness among a growing number of workers who had found themselves in the midst of a great economic catastrophe of rarely-seen proportions (Green 1976: 27-51; Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 1989).

The postwar repression of labor, which through the McCarthyist witch-hunts and expulsions of leftists from the major unions, such as the CIO and the UAW (see Keeran 1980; Levenstein 1981), effectively set back the labor movement by many years; it had a devastating impact on labor's political muscle, for it successfully neutralized the influence of organized left groups on the labor movement and the direction it took in the conservative 1950s—a predicament from which U.S. labor was unable to recover for decades (Lembcke 1988).

The decisive presence and role of communist, socialist, labor, and other workers' political parties in Europe (and their absence or extreme weakness in the United States) is the chief factor that explains the differential position and prospects of labor in Europe and the United States in recent times. The existence and strength of an independent workers' political party is, therefore, of crucial importance to labor and the labor movement in the United States in its political (class) struggle against the capitalist state.

Things are beginning to change on this front, however. There are renewed calls for the formation of a new, independent workers' party, while older parties and organizations on the left are beginning to mobilize their forces with increasing vigor. As the transformation of the world economy continues and the globalization of U.S. capital further weakens the U.S. domestic economy and plunges it into a major crisis in sectors of the economy in which organized labor has heretofore been concentrated, and as U.S. workers begin to experience a further decline in their standard of living, there will be increasing pressure from below to mobilize and fight back to regain labor's lost power that it once had and exercised to advance its own interests. The critical factor in this regard is the central role of an independent workers' party which will have to take up the task of leading U.S. labor in the class struggle that will intensify and spread in the years ahead (Katz-Fishman et al 2005).

Given the decline of the U.S. economy and its global political economic position since the early 1970s, however, there are growing signs of a resurgence of the labor movement based on an expanding multi-racial/multi-national working-class coalition that is beginning to link up with other progressive forces in society to confront the rapidly deteriorating conditions affecting a growing number of working people. As the crisis worsens and more workers become affected by a further deterioration of the economy, they will in turn contribute to the growth of a new coalition of forces that will increasingly come to challenge the capitalist class and the capitalist state, in effect the very foundations of capitalist society (Berberoglu 2009).

Such conditions have in the past led to civil wars and revolutions, and nothing in the American experience precludes or prevents just such an outcome if events warrant it, and the underlying material conditions lead to it. The only missing factor in this formula for change and social transformation of systemic proportions remains class consciousness and political organization. Although these are not processes that develop automatically—in fact they require a great deal of effort to attain them—the material conditions that would set the stage for the working class to accomplish the necessary tasks to defend itself and advance its class interests are well in place and are developing with increasing speed (Perelman 1998; Katz-Fishman et al. 2005).

To realize these goals to their fruition, it now remains for the highly class-conscious and dedicated workers and their allies to provide the necessary leadership to set the great masses of the working class into motion—a movement which, in the final analysis, represents the only viable way out of the crisis of capitalist society that afflicts the United States and other advanced capitalist states today across the world.

GLOBALIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE LABOR PROCESS UNDER ADVANCED CAPITALISM

The labor process has been thoroughly transformed under advanced capitalism, such that it has brought changes in the nature of work and social relations at the point of production. This has been facilitated by capital through automation and the application of high technology on the shop floor. The mechanization of production has exacerbated the de-skilling process, led to greater unemployment, and to the intensification of the exploitation of remaining workers. Stripped of their traditional skills that provided them a degree of control, workers laboring under advanced technology have become transformed into robots performing simple tasks organized through mass production techniques that increase output and productivity on a grand scale, while turning labor into a disposable component of the production process that can be easily replaced (Bina and Davis 2000, 2002).

An important element affecting the transformation of the labor process under advanced capitalism is the transfer of high technology to peripheral areas of the global economy for the exploitation of low-wage labor. Outsourcing of production to the periphery for mass production of electronic components and textiles based on the use of cheap labor has become a key element in the worldwide production of commodities destined for markets in advanced capitalist countries (Safa 1986; Sklair 1989; Bonacich 1994; Rosen 2002). Employing young female workers in plants that blanket the world at wages that are less than one-tenth of that paid to workers in Europe and North America, transnational corporations leading this process have turned the world into a vast industrial operation that has transformed the capitalist labor process on a global level (Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1983). As female labor has become the basis of these operations in mass production across the periphery, the labor process in this region has increasing taken on a gendered character (Miles, 1990; Beneria 2003). Thus, the global division of labor has developed increasingly along ethnic and gendered lines.

A diverse labor force employed in numerous countries around the world linked to corporate centers based in the advanced capitalist countries adds a new dimension to the traditional labor-capital relationship. And labor movements throughout the world are responding to this new reality by becoming increasingly transnational, as they engage in cross-border organizing efforts in their fight against the transnational corporations (Stavis and Boswell 2008). This makes the struggle against global capital more promising, as anti-imperialist struggles in each country bring together labor in a united front against global capital for the transformation of the global capitalist system.

Yet another element that is characteristic of the advanced stage of capitalist development under globalization—a development that is a product of the transformation of the international division of labor itself—is the decline in employment in the traditional manufacturing sector and an unprecedented increase in employment in the service sector of advanced capitalist countries. Thus, in the United States, while the proportion of those working in the manufacturing sector fell from 25.1 percent of the labor force in 1970 to 9.7 percent in 2008 (more than a 60 percent drop), the proportion of those working in the service sector increased from 68.8 percent of the labor force in 1970 to 84.6 percent in 2008 (U.S. Council of Economic Advisers 2009: 338). Overall, employment in the goods-producing sector experienced an equally dramatic decline—from 31.2 percent of the labor force in 1970 to 15.4 percent in 2008 (U.S. Council of Economic Advisers 2009: 338).

This shift in the labor force structure of advanced capitalist centers from manufacturing to service-based employment is made worse by the precarious character of the service sector made up of low-wage, part-time, contingent labor that is non-union and highly exploited and oppressed. In looking at data on the “living wage” (defined as the amount needed to bring a family of four to the federal poverty line, calculated by dividing that year’s poverty threshold for a family of four by 2080 hours—52 weeks x 40 hours per week), we find that in 1968 the minimum wage covered up to 94 percent of the living wage, in 1979 it covered 81 percent of the living wage, but that in 2003 it covered merely 57 percent of the living wage—a dramatic decline over the previous three and a half decades (Collins and Yeskel 2005: 111). By 2008, the minimum wage continued to cover no more than 57 percent of the living wage.

It is partly due to the shift in the labor-force structure of advanced capitalist countries, and the lower wages associated with it, that the consumption power of the working class of the advanced capitalist states has declined and, as a result, the growing income gap between labor and capital fueled by this underconsumption, coupled with increasing consumer debt, has contributed to the current global capitalist economic crisis. But, more than the economic consequences of this downward spiral for the working poor and labor in general, the U.S. and global working class has been suffering from the social impact of these changes in the international division of labor, which is the inevitable outcome of the capitalist globalization

process.

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR UNDER CAPITALIST GLOBALIZATION

In the era of global capitalism, i.e., in the advanced stages of neoliberal capitalist globalization, the exploitive nature of relations between labor and capital have become more pronounced, and their prevalence everywhere in the world have made it a visible feature of the global capitalist system. Today, as class divisions widen and as the gap between labor and capital leads to increasing polarization and conflict, the social impact of this process is becoming more and more prevalent in capitalist societies across the world.

With the spread of capitalism and capitalist relations of production throughout the world, capital has effected transformations in the class structure of societies with which it has come into contact. As a result, the class contradictions of global capitalism—labor versus capital on a global level—have become the primary source of class conflict and class struggle across the globe (Katz-Fishman et al. 2005).

As capitalist expansion at this stage of the globalization of capital and capitalist production relations has brought with it the globalization of the production process and the exploitation of wage-labor on a world scale, its intensified exploitation of the working class at super-low wages in repressive societies through much of the world has allowed transnational corporations of the leading capitalist countries to amass great wealth to build up a global empire through the powers of the imperial state.

Changes in the international division of labor over the past three decades have brought about varied social impacts on workers in both the peripheral and advanced capitalist countries. While the shift in production to low-wage peripheral regions has meant super-exploitation of labor in sweatshops, working long hours under unsafe working conditions for a few dollars a day (Rosen 2002), the flip side of this process of outsourcing has been rising unemployment and underemployment in the advanced capitalist countries, forcing workers on to welfare or to take up low-wage part-time service-related employment with little or no benefits. This process has not only translated into deterioration of the standard of living of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries, forcing them into debt, bankruptcies, and foreclosures, but also into the depths of poverty (Berberoglu 1992, 2003, 2009). And the situation in the periphery is even worse, as workers labor long hours for very little pay, with little or no regulations to protect them against abusive employers.

The low wages of workers in the sweatshops of transnational corporations operating in third world countries have sunk the working class into the depths of poverty across the world, such that of the just over six billion people on the planet, nearly half, or three billion, live on less than \$2 a day, while more than 1.6 billion people try to live on less than \$1 a day. On the other side of the equation, immense wealth of billions of dollars are held by a tiny minority of less than 1% of the world's population who owe much of their wealth to the workers and peasants who are the real producers of this wealth (Petras 2007: 88-95). The surplus value extracted from the working class on a worldwide level is thus the very basis of the accumulation of capital by the capitalist class the world over. The resulting income and wealth inequality has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, between capital and wage labor, and between the advanced capitalist countries and their less developed capitalist satellites in the periphery (Berberoglu 2009).

As the condition of the working class deteriorates under capitalist globalization due to shifts in the international division of labor, the social impact of this process is so pronounced that it is now threatening the survival of the entire capitalist system. Workers lack decent housing, their health is deteriorating without proper health care and a public health insurance system, their children are undereducated as the demand on family labor to subsist takes them away from schools, and their growing debt to creditors is sinking them into debt-bondage through underpaid wage-slavery that is the hallmark of global capitalism in the early 21st century. In short, the working class, in both the periphery and the advanced capitalist countries, is suffering from the enormous social consequences of the global accumulation of capital in the hands of a small class of capitalists who have plundered the world and enslaved its people (Petras 2009).

GLOBALIZATION, LABOR, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL RIGHTS: THE TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

The global expansion of capital, which has caused so much exploitation, oppression, and misery for the peoples of the world, has at the same time created the conditions for its own transformation. Economically, it has afflicted the system with recessions, depressions, and an associated realization crisis; politically, it has set into motion an imperial interventionist state that through its presence in every corner of the world has incurred an enormous military expenditure to maintain an empire, while gaining the resentment of millions of people across the globe who are engaged in active struggle against it (Petras 1998, 2009).

The global capitalist state, acting as the repressive arm of global capital, has come to exert its control over many countries in order to facilitate the exploitation of labor on a world scale. As a result, it has reinforced the domination of capital over labor and its rule on behalf of capital. This, in turn, has greatly politicized the struggle between labor and capital and called for the recognition of the importance of political organization that is necessary to transform the global capitalist system (Beams 1998; Katz-Fishman et al. 2005). In considering the emerging class struggles throughout the globe, the question that one now confronts is thus a *political* one. Given what we know of neoliberal globalization and its class contradictions on a world scale, how will the peoples' movements respond to it *politically* worldwide? What strategy and tactics will be adopted to confront this colossal force? It is important to think about these questions concretely, in a practical way—one that involves a concrete analysis of existing conditions and organized political action.

Understanding the necessity of mobilizing labor and the importance of political leadership in this struggle, radical labor organizations have in fact taken steps emphasizing the importance for the working class to mobilize its ranks and take united action to wage battle against capitalist globalization (Munck 2002; Stevis and Boswell 2008).

Strikes, demonstrations, and mass protests initiated by workers have become frequent in a growing number of countries controlled by the transnationals in recent years. Working people are rising up against the local ruling classes, the state, and the transnational monopolies that have together effected the super-exploitation of labor for decades. Various forms of struggle are now underway in many countries under the grip of transnational capital. These struggles are part of the process of broader social struggles to secure rights that have been denied to labor and other oppressed and exploited groups in capitalist society for so long. Together, they constitute the collective will of the people to fight for their social rights through organized political action.

CONCLUSION

The development of capitalism from the 18th through the 20th century has effected changes in the labor process and the control and exploitation of labor through transformations in the structure of the labor force and production relations at the local, national, and international level. The process of transnational capitalist expansion on a global scale has been such that it has led to the emergence and development of forces in conflict with this expansion. The working class has been in the forefront of these forces. Armed insurrection, civil war, and revolutionary upheavals are all a response to the repression imposed on working people by global capitalism and its client states throughout the world.

Together, these struggles have been effective in frustrating the efforts of global capital to expand and dominate the world, while at the same time laying the foundation for the emergence of an international working-class movement that finally overcomes national, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries that artificially separate the workers in their fight against global capitalism. In this sense, labor internationalism (or the political alliance of workers across national boundaries in their struggle against global capitalism) is increasingly being seen as a political weapon that would serve as a unifying force in labor's frontal attack on global capital in the early 21st century.

The solidarity achieved through this process has helped expand the political strength and social rights of the international working class and increased its determination to defeat all vestiges of global capitalism throughout the world to build a new egalitarian social order that advances the interests of working people and ultimately all of humanity.

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