

GLOBALIZATION AND CROSS-BORDER LABOR SOLIDARITY IN THE GUATEMALAN MAQUILADORA INDUSTRY pdf

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Armstrong, Robert, Henry Frundt, Hobart Spalding, and Sean Sweeney Working Against Us: AIFLD and the International Policy of the AFL-CIO. NACLA: Report on the Americas. Google Scholar Mas de años del movimiento obrero urbano en Guatemala: El protagonismo sindical en la construcción.

Labor Organizing in a Lean World: Workers of the World Unite? The guards have upset some of the workers, but I think that most will stay in the union. Many of the workers greeted their union sisters and brothers across the street and organized a spontaneous demonstration despite the presence of the armed security guards. The PVH campaign, which had actually begun in , continued for several more months during which PVH and the Guatemalan government attempted to crush the union. Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees launched a consumer campaign against PVH and used trade pressure to end the impasse. Finally, in August , the PVH workers negotiated and ratified the only contract that exists in the Guatemalan maquiladora industry—in fact, it is one of only a handful of contracts that exist in the entire Central American maquiladora industry. Moody discusses how corporations and nation-states have restructured the world economy, a process they initiated in the s in response to a severe crisis. Three strategies were adopted for restoring growth and profits. The first was that corporations began closing down factories, laying off hundreds of thousands of manufacturing workers in the s and s. The third response to the crisis, adopted in the s by nation-states both in developed and developing nations, was neoliberal economic policy—deregulating national economies, lowering tariff barriers, cutting back social programs, privatizing publicly-owned enterprises and industries, and attacking labor unions. Such policies, along with regional trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement NAFTA , created a boom in foreign investment in countries like Mexico, where the maquiladora industry has rapidly expanded over the last fifteen years. Moody discusses these shifts in the world economy and their impact on workers and labor unions. For example, Moody reports that union density rates have fallen in the United States, France, and Spain, and in several other developed countries. Social Movement Unionism For all the bad news about globalization, neoliberalism and lean production, there is cause for optimism. In many of these cases workers were not only resisting low wages, work speedup and poor working conditions, but as Moody illustrates, they were also challenging their very own unions that had accepted the basic premises of neoliberalism and made concessions to transnational corporations. Moody has nonetheless identified a key point: Moody argues that this new model emerged in Brazil and South Africa and that: Central to this view of social-movement unionism are union democracy and leadership accountability, membership activation and involvement, a commitment to union growth and recruitment, and a vision and practice that reach beyond even an expanding union membership to other sectors and organizations of the working class. This view sees unions taking an active and leading role against international and domestic capital and their neoliberal economic allies. For example, TIE organized a trinational auto parts workers conference in Ciudad Juarez in and a trinational conference for telecommunication workers in Tijuana in TIE has also developed close links with the newsletter Labor Notes. I agree with Moody on a number of issues, but differ with him on two major issues. Japan investing in the United States. I agree with Moody on this point—yet this does not mean globalization is a myth. The situation today is that transnational corporations, especially in the highly mobile garment industry, can move production facilities and factories very quickly. Not all corporations are equally mobile, of course, and there are limits to capital mobility. A False Dichotomy Certainly, capital mobility and globalization have not eliminated the possibility of social change. In fact, as Moody points out, workers and labor unions from all over the world are fighting back and they are forming cross-border ties with each other. I believe that this categorization of cross-border labor organizing efforts is simplistic, and constitutes the fundamental weakness of Workers in a Lean World. However, rank and file democracy is not a magic bullet. Moody overlooks other forces—capital mobility, state repression, corporatist labor unions e. Moody argues that rank-and-file

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democracy is all that is needed, but it should be noted that capital mobility can limit the effectiveness of democratic, as well as bureaucratic, unions. In reality, cross-border labor organizing is a complex process that is not easily accomplished. It was the combination of all these factors that produced a stunning victory for the PVH workers. Moody simply does not adequately address these multiple factors. Thus ITSs pose a dilemma for Moody—are they positive or negative? From my perspective, then, *Workers in a Lean World* includes too many broad generalizations. The PVH case has many important lessons for activists and academics; one of the most crucial ones, I believe, is that there are no simple answers. The PVH workers struggled for eight years, but they finally won. I believe that academics and activists need to carefully examine successful and unsuccessful cases of cross-border labor organizing, and I maintain that this process could spark discussion about the future of the labor movement in a globalized and lean world. *Workers in a Lean World* moves us in that direction and I hope that this review and other new studies contribute to this crucial debate. See Rob Lambert and Eddie Webster, *A New Model for a New World? Success While Others Fail: Get articles and upcoming events delivered every month.*

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2: Maquiladora - Wikipedia

Cross-border labor solidarity campaigns often involve spontaneous and clandestine activity. I learned that fact first-hand while doing research on the Phillips Van-Heusen (PVH) campaign in Guatemala City.

At the Lunafil thread plant in , and the U. Negotiations won monetary compensation for laid-off workers. Although bargain- ing has yet to occur, the company improved wages and working conditions, and acknowledged the union. Accelerating pressure on contract purchasers Sears, J. Even though the incipient maquila unions remain fragile, GLEP, Guatemalan labor orga- nizers, and a representative of the ILGWU are working to approach other maquiladora workers in an effort to encourage them to organize. The Leslie Fay workers, who had mounted protests to prevent the company from shifting operations to Guatemala, left the United States thinking Guatemalan workers were the problem. Recently, GLEP supporters have extended the call for codes to the rural sectors. In the United States, they are leafletting Starbucks, a popular gourmet coffee company, demanding adoption of a code of conduct that would require Guatemalan planta- tion owners from whom they purchase to respect basic rights, pay a living wage, and honor safety and health standards. This involves pressuring the U. GSP allows for penalties against countries which do not make progress in eliminating five types of labor violations: Because maquiladora owners regularly commit four of these abuses--there is no slave labor in the maquiladora-- there were ample grounds for action. In , Guatemala was placed on GSP probation. All this pressure had an effect. In late , Guatemala revised its labor code to speed union recognition and improve rights for women. For the first time, it punished several cor- porate violators in the maquiladora sector. In mid- , when President Jorge Serrano Elias attempted to assume dictatorial powers, unions participated in the battle to restore constitutional rule. The private sector, and eventually the military, refused to support Serrano because they feared the loss of U. By , facing insistent demands from the U. Trade Representa- tive was poised to drop its review but twice backed down, first because of ILGWU mobilization over Leslie Fay, and then after police attacked protest- ing workers at the Empresa Exacta cattle ranch in the western highlands who were demanding union recog- nition to assure their legally required minimum wages of two dollars a day. The police wounded 13 workers, killed two, and abducted one, later dropping his tor- tured body from a helicopter. Maquiladoras are especially problematic because they can close quickly, move out machinery, and reopen elsewhere in the same country or a nearby country whenever an organizing drive begins. One innovative approach proposed by Guatemalan trade unionists has been to organize in the neighborhoods where maquiladoras tend to be concentrated--not only inside the factory. Then, should the factory leave, the workers have some organization, and they can better discuss and confront their problems. In thinking out a fresh approach to organizing, Guatemalan unions are debating what tactics are most useful under varying conditions of repression. At issue is the extent to which repression has changed from being officially sanctioned as under the regimes of Romeo Lucas Garcia and Efraim Rios Montt, from to to being controlled by specific owners or landholders who have certain military connections. Even under officially sanctioned repression, as in the case of Coca Cola, organizers could sometimes achieve victory through noisy public demonstrations in conjunction with international support. Others remain willing to hold a well- publicized demonstration in front of a plant, but are less convinced that the clandestine door-to-door work can be done safely, even though it would increase union membership. A fresh approach requires examining the old issue of gender practices and beliefs. The trade-union move- ment on both sides of the border is male in leadership and self-conception, although both men and women belong to unions. To assist in, and not to undermine the organization of must alter their perceptions of women as primarily housewives, not workers, who are fragile and need protection by male trade unionists, and who in a short time will be out of the factory and back where they belong, in the home. Within the Guatemalan labor movement, this understanding is one most men share with the many women who see their factory work as temporary and their maquiladora wages--even absent ones. Despite the female leadership of maquiladora sit-ins, male trade unionists have been

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hesitant to organize the maquiladoras in part because they see the workers there as less "real. While some women workers hold this view, many, in increasing numbers, reject it. In the Guatemalan labor movement, women are inventing a grassroots working-class feminism. The advantage of corporate codes is that they offer the U. It should be axiomatic that if a worker at a cattle ranch which exports beef to the United States is dumped out of an army helicopter to prevent him from organizing a union, as happened at Empresa Exacta, or if a labor leader at a banana plantation that sells to Chiquita is shot dead by anti-union thugs, as just happened at the Chinnok Finca in the eastern part of the country, we would not buy Empresa Exacta beef or Chiquita bananas. Labor solidarity must determine how to generate a larger, more analytical, creative and activist "we. While other groups have effectively documented cases of rights abuses, what makes GLEP-Guatemalan labor solidarity worthy of imitation is its cultivation of a two-way process in g 0.

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3: This website is currently unavailable.

Globalization and cross-border labor solidarity in the Americas -- Globalization and cross-border labor solidarity in the Guatemalan maquiladora industry -- The Salvadoran maquiladora industry and cross labor solidarity -- The Honduran maquiladora industry and cross-labor solidarity -- Ni un paso atr s! = Not one step back!

Labor unions historically have provided skilled and unskilled workers with better working conditions and higher wages. Although union leadership, organizers, and members in the United States have generally exhibited racist and sexist attitudes over the years, unions have nevertheless been valuable for people of color by protecting and furthering their labor rights. However, globalization has challenged the power of unions in industrialized nations. People of color and women employed in manufacturing are particularly vulnerable to the loss of unionized jobs. Unionized manufacturing industries offer relatively high wages and generous benefit packages. Unfortunately, these industries have been experiencing most of the job losses due to globalization. When unskilled workers lose these jobs, they generally tend to find employment in the predominantly nonunion service sector, where wages are significantly lower and benefits, especially health care, are often minimal or nonexistent. Two main reasons for such shifts are the extremely low labor costs and the authoritarian political systems found in these nations. For example, average labor costs in China are approximately 20 to 30 times lower than in the United States or Germany. In addition, the authoritarian governments and business culture of developing nations offer corporations a legal environment with little to no labor or environmental protections, which further reduces production costs. Such governments also often control and discipline their workforces through the use of police and military forces, in part to prevent autonomous worker organizing. Usually these developing nations establish what are commonly known as export processing zones EPZs to attract foreign companies. These are special industrial parks, such as the maquiladoras along the Mexican side of the U. Child labor, sexual favors as a condition for continued employment, retaliation against union organizers, and violations of labor laws are common. All these factors artificially prohibit labor costs from rising to the levels predicted by free market economics. As a consequence, unions in developed nations experience job losses and reduced negotiating power. Another common trend is for corporations to threaten relocation in order to extract concessions from their employees in high-wage nations. This has resulted in stagnant real wages, benefit reductions, and a disciplined contingent labor force in the United States and other industrialized nations. This corporate strategy is similar to that used by businesses in the United States from the s to the mids. Specifically, employers would use race to divide worker solidarity and prevent the formation of stronger, racially integrated unions. For example, white workers would be disciplined with threats of losing their jobs to blacks, and vice versa, pitting worker against worker. Globalization still includes racial elements that pit workers in high-wage regions, typically whites, against those in low-wage regions, typically Latinos, Africans, and Asians. Labor scholars and union leaders argue that all workers in an enterprise need to be organized, regardless of geographic locale. This requires union members of advanced nations to develop a class-consciousness inclusive of race, gender, religion, culture, and geographic location, which can lead to transnational labor organizing. A major reason for this is that governments of capitalist nations traditionally tend to be dominated by, and therefore express, upper-class and business interests. This also explains the historically hostile attitude of U. Consequently, workers have had to engage in transnational labor organizing largely on their own. The logic behind transnational organizing is that by organizing all the workers of a corporation, regardless of locale, it becomes harder for the company to shift production from facilities experiencing labor actions, such as a strike, to others that are not. It also prohibits the company from pitting its unionized high-cost employees against its nonunionized low-cost workers, who are typically in poor nations and are often nonwhites and women. In addition, unionizing workers in poor nations has the effect of raising their wages and benefits and creating a better balance with those in richer nations. In the long run, this reduces the competitive advantage of outsourcing and pitting

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developed-nation workers against those in developing regions. It also has the positive effect of improving the quality of work life and the standard of living for employees in poor nations. One is the International Trade Union Confederation ITUC , which is based in Brussels and has more than affiliates representing more than million workers in more than nations. In addition to the work of traditional labor unions, there are also examples of transborder organizing performed by indigenous people and activists. One example is Via Campesina, a transnational movement of small- to medium-scale farmers, landless peasants, indigenous communities, and rural women. Its goals include providing access to land for local people, instead of basing land acquisition on free market forces as provided by the WTO and FTAs. Another goal includes food sovereignty, the ability to be self-reliant for food production rather than depending on international trade for food access. Finally, the movement also supports sustainable methods of agriculture based on local traditions and farming techniques. TIE is a decentralized nonprofit network that practices social movement unionism. Its goals include promoting social rights for women, immigrant workers, and people of color, as well as the development of democratic institutions where they do not exist. It also seeks to link economic rights with political rights, especially the freedom of association and the freedom to form a union in nations where such freedoms are still suppressed. The network opposes corporate globalization centered on FTAs that represent neoliberal policies, lean production, and casual employment, which are seen as privileging capital at the expense of labor, indigenous people, and local communities. The network includes workers that are both organized and unorganized in the informal, agricultural, and industrial sectors. The TIE especially targets industries dominated by transnational corporations TNCs in export-oriented sectors such as textiles. It encourages self-organizing and a variety of other activist strategies ranging from the local to the international level. Finally, the network attempts to promote solidarity between workers of developed and developing nations. It operates in most parts of the world, including Asia, the Americas, and Europe. For one, most labor legislation is nationally based. Given national sovereignty, corporations operating in different countries often have to comply with local labor laws, which tend to be much weaker than those of developed nations. In addition, many developing nations prohibit the very existence of independent labor unions. For example, many Mexican and Chinese labor unions are government controlled, often to the detriment of the workers. In fact, there are many cases where corporations have colluded with host developing nations to prevent the formation of unions. This is typically the case in EPZs. National labor laws are often suspended in these special zones in an effort to attract foreign investment. Another obstacle to transnational labor organizing is that even if a collective agreement is signed with workers in developing nations, corporations can easily relocate production to other EPZs around the world to evade higher labor costs. In such a case, the corporation effectively pits a national labor force in one developing country against that of another, and the workers willing to accept the least in terms of wages and benefits will win out. This also relates to the problem of divergent national interests. For example, workers in a poor nation may wish to focus on human rights issues, whereas those in developed nations may want to focus on improved benefit packages. Finally, a major obstacle to transnational labor organizing is the existence of free trade institutions themselves. Specifically, most free trade rules mandate that participating nations conform to legal standards at the lowest common denominator. This significantly reduces the power of labor overall. However, there have been cases where labor organizers have used free trade rules to the advantage of workers on the grounds of human rights, for example. Globalization based on neoliberal principles presents a significant challenge to labor and political rights throughout the world. Nationally based organizing has been ineffective at addressing these issues, leading to the need for transnationally based organizing, particularly in light of the evolution of the globalized production process. In order to be effective, organizers are focusing on the importance of new ideologies that challenge the dominant ideology, which they believe privileges capital over labor and citizen rights. This includes developing transnational solidarity inclusive of geography, race, ethnicity, and gender. Evidence indicates that such an approach to worker rights is promising. However, globalization is a significant and ongoing process that is unlikely to reverse course. For this reason, the reaction from labor is also ongoing and

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solidifying into transnational alliances between unions, independent workers movements, activists, and many other groups. Interestingly, the same telecommunication technologies that have made globalization possible are also enabling transnational organizing. For example, the Internet has proven to be an important tool for uniting diverse groups worldwide, helping them spread their message and coordinate their efforts. Groups such as the indigenous Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, have used the Internet to recruit supporters and disseminate their message internationally. TIE is another example of activism based on Internet communications. Gender and Transnational Protest. Available online from Cambridge University Press. Power, Politics, and Social Change, 5th ed. Transnational Cooperation among Labor Unions. Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms. University of Minnesota Press. Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective, 3rd ed. John Asimakopoulos Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

4: Globalization and Cross-Border Labor Organizing | Armbruster | Journal of World-Systems Research

Globalization and Cross-border Labor Solidarity in the Americas: The Anti-sweatshop Movement and the Struggle for Social Justice Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval Psychology Press, - Business & Economics - pages.

5: Toward a New Internationalism: Lessons from the Guatemalan Labor Movement | NACLA

Globalization and cross-border labor solidarity in the Americas --Globalization and cross-border labor solidarity in the Guatemalan maquiladora industry --The Salvadoran maquiladora industry and cross labor solidarity --The Honduran maquiladora industry and cross-labor solidarity --Ni un paso atr s! = Not one step back!

6: Labor Organizing in a Lean World: Workers of the World Unite?

The proliferation of garment industry sweatshops over the past 20 years has generated numerous cross-border (transnational) organizing campaigns involving U.S., Mexican, and Central American labor unions and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

7: Project MUSE - Movement Theory and International Labor Solidarity

Title: Globalization and Cross-Border Labor Organizing: The Guatemalan Maquiladora Industry and the Phillips Van Heusen Workers' Movement Created Date.

8: Transnational Labor Organizing | www.enganchecubano.com

In addition, labor rights and solidarity organizations, like the Campaign for Labor Rights, Witness for Peace, and the US/Guatemala Labor Education Project (US/GLEP), along with many other groups, have also played key roles in the formation of maquiladora unions in Nicaragua and Guatemala.

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