The “Globalization” of Labor and Working-Class History and its Consequences¹

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Abstract

Labor historians from Europe and North America frequently assert that their discipline is not in a healthy state. Such a picture is a distortion, however, for the world does not stop at the equator: in various regions of Latin America, Africa and Asia the historiography of workers and labor movements has made great strides in the last twenty to thirty years. Labor history’s “globalization” calls for a new type of historiography, which transcends old-style labor history from North America and Europe by incorporating its findings in a new globally-orientated approach. This article discusses some of the main issues involved: problems of a general theoretical nature, of conceptualization, multidisciplinary, and sources. The article also identifies a few research desiderata.

Labor historians from Europe and North America frequently assert that their discipline is not in a healthy state. Unambiguously they remind us of the boom in such studies during the 1970s, when, largely under the influence of the student movement, a mighty tide of monographs, dissertations and articles were written and published in their fields. It is, of course, undeniable that the interest in working-class history within the North Atlantic area declined from the end of the Eighties, if not earlier. Many students have turned to other topics, and their teachers also changed course, choosing new subjects which attracted their interest or promised more in career terms. Likewise, many scholarly journals have changed or expanded their titles or subject matter, while others stick to the old profile and are losing subscribers. This is not an exact diagnosis, but we cannot ignore the general and relative decline in the fortunes of labor history writing.

On the other hand, such a picture is a distortion, for the world does not stop at the equator: in various regions of South America, Africa and Asia the historiography of workers and labor movements has made great strides in the last twenty to thirty years. That has led not only to an enormous amount of publications, but also to institutional initiatives. Some examples:

In December 1996 the Association of Indian Labour Historians was founded in New Delhi. Since then it has organized four successful conferences (Delhi 1998, Noida 2000, 2002, and 2004). Although the initiators either live in New Delhi or studied there, i.e. belong to the same network, the association has forged good links to other large cities.

In late December 1999 the Pakistan Institute for Labour Education and Research organized in Karachi the first conference on the history of labor and labor movements in Pakistan (“Labor in Pakistan”).²

In 2000 members of the Brazilian National Historians' Organization (ANPUH) formed a section for the study of working-class history (*Mundos do Trabalho*). When ANPUH held its national congress the following year (22–27 June 2001, Niteroi), that section had grown to the second largest.

In 2001 (25–26 April), the conference "Twentieth Century Iran: History from Below" was hosted in Amsterdam, providing the first opportunity for Iranian historians in exile to discuss with an Iranian historian living in Iran research into the history of the Iranian working class.³

In the first two days of June 2001 there was a similar event at Hanyang University in Seoul, the very first South Korean conference on working-class history, with the theme "Cultural Histories of the Korean Working Class."⁴

Finally, at the end of 2001 (December 4–6), the first conference on Indonesian workers' history was held in Bali, under the title "Reconstructing the Historical Tradition of Twentieth Century Indonesian Labor."⁵

These examples amply prove that labor and working-class history has gradually become a subject of research all over the globe. I am therefore of the opinion that one cannot really talk about a "crisis" in our field, but has to differentiate between continents and subcontinents. Outside the North Atlantic area, where labor history established itself in the 19th century and since then has developed strongly despite various ups and downs, different, yet synchronous tendencies have emerged.⁶

In the first place, there are countries in which no extensive research was conducted during the entire period. To this category belong, on the one hand, some countries where wage labor is weakly developed (parts of Africa south of the Sahara) and, on the other, Arabic countries where historiography is in a crisis, due to research being hampered by strict Islamic interpretation and political repression.⁷

Second, there are the former and still existing "real socialist" states, where history could be written from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint only. Labor history served as a science of legitimation,⁸ in which, as the Hungarian historian Emil Niederhauser has commented, "paradoxically only the movement was seen, and the economic and social conditions were ignored or treated only in outline. There was much heroic struggle and many victims, which were not in vain as they produced in the last resort the happy present."⁹ Within this "real socialist" context different paths were possible: a) the Polish-Hungarian variant, in which important scientific innovation was permitted before the Communist collapse of 1989–90¹⁰; b) the Russian approach, with labor history enjoying an upsurge after 1956 which collapsed and was replaced by dogmatism within a decade;¹¹ and c) the Chinese road, marked by a crisis in the humanities, and in labor history, caused by the transformation to capitalism "from above."¹²

The third group consists of the highly developed capitalist countries outside the North Atlantic area: Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In Japan the history of wage labor was neglected for years by "bourgeois" as well as (the influential) Marxist scholars. The situation began to change in the 1960s, when a school of native historians strove to concentrate on a history from below, "of the ordinary

people." They produced narrative history and tended to romanticize the agrarian underclasses.¹³ The Society for the Study of Labour History was founded in Australia as early as 1961, and its journal *Labour History* is relatively widely read.¹⁴ At the beginning of the 1990s it seemed that there was a crisis in labor history in Australia, but that danger seems to have passed. The author who wrote an article in 1991 with the title "The Strange Death of Labour History" presented another eight years later with the title "The Revival of Labour History."¹⁵

A fourth contingent can be found on the periphery or the semi-periphery, countries which experienced rapid economic growth, and all its attendant consequences, since the 1960s. Many of these states experienced a boom in labor history, but not all, perhaps due to political factors. The development seems to have been most spectacular in Latin America, where, especially in the 1970s, discussion in North America and Europe prompted many historical studies on industrial labor. The general interest soon spread from this base to encompass other non-elite groups: peasants, small businesses, indigenous peoples, the "blacks" and the immigrants.¹⁶ John D. French has summarized this development:

Those Latin American countries with strong workers' movements have long had a critical mass of labor studies scholarship, most notably Mexico, a world in itself but also Chile and Argentina. After the turbulent 1970s, the field also took off with particular strength and innovativeness in Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador. [...] Scholarship on labor has also shown sustained vigor in Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and Uruguay. The study of urban and rural labor has also gained visibility in the modestly-industrialized countries of Central America. In the Hispanic Caribbean, the study of labor has flourished in Puerto Rico while interesting work has been produced on Cuba as well as the Dominican Republic. As for the English-speaking Caribbean countries, still too often ignored, excellent work continues to appear that builds on the classic historical monographs written by Ken Post and Walter Rodney in the 1970s.¹⁷

The situation is equally remarkable in South Africa. There, too, an upturn in labor and working-class history commenced in the 1970s, albeit with a division between proponents of a "narrow" (institutional) and a "broad" (social and cultural) approach. "Indeed, a bifurcation has developed within South African radical historiography: while labor history focuses on the workplace, industrial relations, and working-class organization, social history considers the fate of the working class and other oppressed groups outside of industrial production." The reason for this split lies in the political development after 1970. The new trade-union movement felt the need to possess a "personal" historiography, and "some of the first efforts in labor history were prompted either directly by the needs of the new unions, or were clearly inspired by similar concerns."¹⁸ Simultaneously another development was gaining ground: South African historians, who had studied abroad, mainly in Great Britain, returned home and fostered a broader based labor history. A symptom of this is the History Workshop Movement, which was inspired by the works of Ralph Samuel, E.P. Thompson and others.¹⁹

In India, where portions of the intellectual elite are strongly influenced by the British university tradition, interest in labor history began to grow from the late 1960s.²⁰ Many of the first monographs were strongly traditional, even if some authors relatively early on began to link institutional aspects with the broad stream of social history.²¹ A special impulse emanated in the 1980s from the so-called *Subaltern Studies*, of which Ranajit Guha is the main protagonist. While this is a very politicized tendency which concentrates on the history of poor and landless peasants,²² it has produced some excellent studies.²³ Alongside this new development emerged a third current, consisting of young historians interested in labor history, which distanced itself from *Subaltern Studies* and placed more emphasis on workers and their families. This third contingent showed comparably more interest in infrastructural problems and also initiated the establishment of an archive for labor history.²⁴

The fortunes of labor history took a different course in Nigeria. Nigerian historiography grew rapidly from the 1950s, but it had a strong political orientation and occupied itself primarily with decolonization. The historians' community split in the 1970s between traditionalists and reformers, with the latter advocating "the broadening of historiography beyond purely political matters to include social, economic, and cultural issues."²⁵ The reformer wing provided impulses for the study of labor history, but this tendency ended in a cul-de-sac in the 1980s, probably on account of the wretched state of the country.²⁶ Another symptom of decline was the fact that *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, which was founded 1956 and had regularly published labor history pieces, ceased publication in 1985. The study of history in Nigeria, one expert noted in 1997, "is being threatened with extinction."²⁷

These four major tendencies outside the North Atlantic Region become clearer against the background of two other developments. Firstly, historians in Europe, North America and Australia evinced an interest as early as the 1950s in the workers' movement in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This attention, which owed a lot to the contexts of the Cold War and decolonization, was politically motivated: anticommunist sentiment and the accompanying desire to investigate the degree of communist influence on the working classes in those regions.²⁸ However, there were also socialist or communist historians at that time who worked on the history of semicolonized countries or of ex-colonies.²⁹ Somewhat later and under the influence of the international students' movement, young Japanologists, Sinologists, and Africa experts became involved in the study of the labor history in their specific geographical area of research. Several dissertations and monographs ensued.³⁰ While Communists and anticommunists frequently restricted themselves to institutional questions, the followers of the "New Left" usually preferred to research wider themes.

Secondly, in some countries which had witnessed the decline in the study of the institutional side of labor history, a continuity of sorts followed because scholars moved into neighboring fields of social history, for example women's studies or research into ethnic groups and immigrants. By "globalization" of la-

bor history I mean not only an enormous geographical extension in the field of knowledge but in content as well.

Labor-history writing does not exist in a vacuum. Trends in one country or region influence colleagues abroad. One aspect of labor studies with many adherents was, of course, the history of the "Internationals" (First, Socialist and Communist), another how events like the Paris Commune or the Russian Revolution affected developments in many lands.³¹ However, a *systematic* type of transnational communication between historians of labor seems to have begun on a cautious note only in the 1960s, despite the pioneering work of the *Grünbergs Archiv* (1911–1930) and the *International Review for Social History* (1936–1940) of the International Institute of Social History (IISH).³² The exchange of opinion across borders was given institutional status in 1965, the year the International Conference of Labour Historians (Internationale Tagung der Historiker der Arbeiterbewegung—ITH) was founded in Austria. The conferences held annually since then in Linz were unique in that historians from East and West met on an equal footing. But even before this singularity became redundant with the collapse of Communism in 1989, the dialogue in Linz had become arid, not least on account of the structural exigency to avoid controversy. Since the early 1990s the organizers have been trying to resolve the ITH's crisis through higher standards of quality.³³ Symptomatic for the growth in international links was the establishment of the International Association of Labour History Institutions (IALHI) in 1970, and the issue, from 1972, of the USA-based *Newsletter: European Labor and Working Class History* (since 1975: *International Labor and Working Class History*). As regards labor studies on an international note, the different national developments of the labor movements had been examined on parallel lines in publications since the 1950s, albeit sporadically.³⁴ Serious international-comparative studies took off only in the course of the 1970s and have proliferated enormously since then.³⁵

All these developments were centered in North America and Europe. That situation is now undergoing rapid change, largely due to economic globalization: proletarianization, new forms of workers' protest, new labor movements, and the growing consciousness of worldwide interdependence, i.e. One World, despite the contradictions in the production and distribution of wealth and resources. This "globalization" in the study of labor history calls for a new type of historiography, one which "overtakes" old-style labor history from North America and Europe by incorporating its findings in a new globally orientated approach. That is, indeed, an extremely ambitious project which has scarcely begun. Many of the goals of this new departure are unclear or need elucidation. Some of the challenges facing us in the near future are discussed below.

General Theoretical Questions

My first complex of questions focuses on theory. At the moment, the scientific-theoretical status of a globalized labor history is unclear. Two approaches are possible in principle. The first is of the opinion that the new phenomenon is re-

ally about a "universal history of work," in which case the task consists of recounting the development of contractual relationships and labor movements all over the globe as comprehensively as possible. The second holds the view that the subject matter is "a history of globalized work," looking at contractual relationships and labor movements from the topical perspective of the "globalized" economy. It follows from the latter view that a global labor history is first and foremost the history of an important aspect of the present capitalist global economy, namely the labor aspect. Another conclusion is that we are dealing with a kind of contemporary history, the reconstruction of tendencies and models, which have brought us to where we are today in the economic sense. I tend towards this view, agreeing with Bruce Mazlish:

[All] history is contemporary history in the sense that the perspective brought to bear on past events is necessarily rooted in the present. In this light, global history may simply be more conscious of its perspective and interested in focusing it more directly on contemporary happenings, as well as on the past. Serious problems of selectivity or documentation then remain, as they do with any history."³⁶

According to this interpretation, global labor history is characterized by two approaches: 1) focusing on the history of globalization, "that is, it takes existing processes, encapsulated in the 'factors of globalization' and traces them as far back in the past as seems necessary and useful"; and 2) focusing on "processes that are best studied on a global, rather than a local or a regional, level."³⁷ That entails being prepared to go far back into history, for Raymond Grew has warned us. "Chronological constriction is a price historians should not pay for expanding their geographical horizons."³⁸

A second important question is linked to the first: whoever studies social processes in play all over the world cannot but be dissatisfied with the traditional definitions of society. Rooted in the nineteenth century, these postulate a direct link between "society" and "the State." In that sense one can talk about German, Japanese, or Nigerian society. I see no reason, however, for adhering to such a geographically restricted definition.³⁹ If we believe that developments within the territory of a national state are strongly influenced by transnational or transcontinental processes (migration, war, etc.), then it is clear that we have to construct a definition of society which is not restricted by geography. I prefer the term "world society" in the sense that this concept implies differences and diverging developments that are based in the course of history:

The scientific observation of the world society will concentrate on how this system comes to terms with historical conditions and 'the simultaneity of uneven historical development' and brings them to fruition for the construction of the global model.⁴⁰

A third question hinges on how one defines and periodizes capitalism. It is well known that many definitions of "capitalism" are circulating, including the

"transition" controversy of the 1950s (Maurice Dobb versus Paul Sweezy) and the so-called Brenner debate of the 1970s. Two contrary views appear. First, the tradition of Adam Smith, with Immanuel Wallerstein as a contemporary protagonist, who defined capitalism through the market. Second, the tradition of Karl Marx, with Ernest Mandel and Robert Brenner as modern protagonists, which defines capitalism on the basis of production relations. According to the first concept, world capitalism exists since the fifteenth century, according to the second from the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century. Global labor history has to address this controversy. I tend toward the Marxist definition, albeit with an important qualification: in capitalism labor can become a commodity in several ways, that is, not only via wage labor but also through slavery, sharecropping or debt peonage.⁴¹ All these forms of dependent labor rightfully belong to the research spectrum of global labor history. That holds true for the forms of labor which are necessary to sustain the laborer-turned-commodity (subsistence labor), and also for attempts to partly decommodify labor, as in "real existing socialism" and states with a developed social welfare system.⁴²

The fourth central question centers on the common ground shared by philosophy and history. In general, history written outside Europe is the historiography of "(not) yet," of "absences;" in the words of Dipesh Chakrabarty, "the 'failure' of history to keep an appointment with destiny (once again an instance of the 'lazy native,' shall we say?)."⁴³ The announcement of the *Subaltern Studies* project is similarly worded: "The central problematic of the historiography of colonial India" was the "historical failure of the nation to come into its own, a failure due to the inadequacy of the bourgeoisie as well as of the working class to lead it to a decisive victory over colonialism and a bourgeois-democratic revolution of the classic nineteenth-century type."⁴⁴ This "problematic," though couched in Comintern phraseology, is really a Western topos.⁴⁵

And even when the intention is to write non-Eurocentric history, the effort may not be entirely successful, as in the case of Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History*.⁴⁶

"Wolf's focus on non-Europeans in world history is especially useful in revealing how difficult it is to construct a single master-narrative, for there must necessarily be levels of experience he does not describe—levels at which people struggle to create new ways of giving cultural form to social action, levels at which local experience escapes from the regularity of 'universal' processes."⁴⁷

The analytical problems lay probably much deeper than conventionally imagined. It therefore does not seem improbable to me that the various dichotomies in which we normally think (body/spirit, free/not free, agriculture/industry, formal/informal, etc.) are a major barrier to really grasping what is happening worldwide in the sphere of labor.⁴⁸

Concepts

Any historian who has attempted to apply the concept of "working-class" to a concrete subject of research knows that the reality is more complex than the theory. In the traditions of Karl Marx or of Max Weber and Goetz Briefs, workers, regardless of gender, are a) individuals who b) live exclusively by selling their labor power to an entrepreneur for a wage; and c) that they conclude this contract with the entrepreneur voluntarily and for a limited period. In the so-called Third World, and, if one looks closer to home, in the highly developed capitalist countries as well, such "laborers" are a rare species indeed. Workers are seldom isolated individuals but part of a family or a household that carries out different kinds of work and pools the wages paid for it. And a corollary: the workers, in order to survive, need reproductive labor produced by themselves or others, spending their wages on rent for suitable accommodation, food, etc.:

The real proletarian, who provides his own reproduction exclusively from what he earns, is at most the Yuppie (Young Urban Professional), working as a key employee on his way to the top of a multinational concern. For lunch he buys a sandwich and meets his Yuppie wife (perhaps she is a stock-exchange broker or a professor) for the evening meal in a restaurant, while a domestic servant cleans their rented apartment.⁴⁹

The mobility of workers can be restricted in several ways, for example, by the debts they incurred by borrowing from their employers, which leads to a form of debt-slavery, or by living in factory accommodation, by work permits, by debts to friendly societies or plain ties to an extended family. Workers are often employed not as individuals but as a group, as in subcontracting.⁵⁰

Workers can have more than one employer. This is now quite common in peripheral regions of the world economy or in the Russian Federation, but multiple occupations were not unknown in Europe or North America in the past either.⁵¹ Furthermore, some workers have income that does not result from wage labor. André Gunder Frank has rightfully drawn our attention to the "fluidity in owner-worker relations." He mentions the example of "a single worker who is simultaneously (i) owner of his land and house, (ii) sharecropper on another's land (sometimes, for a half, sometimes for a third), (iii) tenant on a third's land, (iv) wage worker during harvest time on one of these lands, and (v) independent trader of his own home-produced commodities."⁵²

Besides such "formal" deviations from the "pure" status of wage-labor, we find a series of implicit cases of exclusion from belonging to the working class: policemen, prostitutes, or domestic servants, for example. Another questionable premise is that there was a sharp division between "workers" and other social categories (unfree laborers, lumpenproletariat), while, in reality, the borders were often flexible: workers in Naples who worked at night as thieves,⁵³ the sup-

posedly self-employed who worked for two masters, or slaves in the Deep South of the USA performing classical wage-labor for their owners.

Complex reality, then, should encourage us to rethink the concepts of "working class" or "the workers."⁵⁴ In searching for a new approach, we have to consider that in capitalism there *always* existed, and probably will continue to exist, several forms of commodified labor side by side. In its long development capitalism utilized many kinds of work relationships, some based on economic compulsion, others with a noneconomic component. Millions of slaves were brought by force from Africa to the Caribbean, to Brazil and in the southern states of the US. Contract workers from India and China were shipped off to toil in South Africa, Malaysia or South America. "Free" migrant workers left Europe for the New World, for Australia or the colonies.⁵⁵ And today sharecroppers produce an important portion of world agricultural output. These and other work-relationships are synchronous, even if there seems to be a secular trend towards "free wage labor." Slavery still exists, sharecropping is enjoying a comeback in some regions, and so forth. We can summarize by saying that capitalism could and can choose whatever form of commodified labor it thinks fit in a given historical context: one variant seems most profitable today, another tomorrow.

If this argument is correct, then it behoves us to conceptualize the working class as one (important) kind of commodified labor among others. Consequently, so-called "free" labor cannot be seen as the only form of exploitation suitable for modern capitalism but as one alternative among several. We therefore need to form concepts that take account of more dimensions. As is well known, "classical" analyses of the working class were based on the power relationships within the work process, a combination of three elements: "(1) purposeful activity, that is work itself, (2) the object on which the work is performed, and (3) the instruments of that work."⁵⁶ The product of that work is the fourth element of Marx's analysis. A modified approach could incorporate these dimensions of classical Marxist analysis by distinguishing six important elements:

1. The relationship between the worker and his or her *capacity to work* (Does the worker have control over his/her body, or is it the employer or a third party?);
2. The relationship between the workers and his or her *means of labor* (are these in possession of the workers, the employer or a third party?);
3. The relationship between the workers and what they *produce* (What portion of the yield or profit belongs to the workers, to the employer or to a third party?);
4. The relationship between the worker and the other persons in his or her household (What kind of social and economic dependence exist between the workers and the others in the household?);
5. The relationship between workers and their *employer outside the immediate production process* (To what degree is the worker in the debt of his or her employer by virtue of the accommodation or the loans the latter provides?);

6. The relationship between *groups of workers within the work environment* (Are the workers subjected to forms of dependency towards fellow workers?)⁵⁷

Multidisciplinarity

Developing global labor history involves perforce extensive cooperation with some other disciplines: subdisciplines in historiography, ethnology, and sociology, to a certain extent, and aspects of studies in industrial relations.

1. Among the historical subdisciplines of great value in our context is the historiography of slavery, which developed more or less independently of labor history. The journal *Slavery & Abolition*, founded in 1980, has published an impressive number of studies, and while the majority of these were written outside a labor history framework, a convergence of interest is now visible.⁵⁸ In like manner, family history is another important subdiscipline which of late has begun to reach out beyond the Northern hemisphere.⁵⁹ Women's or gender history is of comparable significance and both often focus on the world of work in research. The last important subdiscipline worth mentioning for our purposes is the history of migration, which has now shifted emphasis to the lands south of the Equator.⁶⁰

2. Ethnology offers a starting point in two respects. First, diachronic subjects, as the following example illustrates. Ethnologists have been carrying out fieldwork among the Iatmul, a small ethnos in Papua New Guinea, since the 1920s. Up to about forty years ago they lived from fishing and agriculture, but then began to move into the cities, where they came wholly or partly proletarianized. The reports of British, Australian, and Swiss ethnologists who have visited the Iatmul time and again in their original villages, and later in the squatters settlements in the towns, can be read as a kind of long-term study of proletarianization processes.⁶¹ Also relevant are historical studies from so-called ethnohistory, a branch of ethnography which concentrates on the early contacts between the indigenous populations in Africa, Asia and the Americas and their colonizers.⁶²

3. Studies from the sociology of work in the "Third World" could be of great benefit. One example is the work of Jan Breman who has been studying labor conditions in South Gujarat (India) since the early 1960s. His research, based on field work spread over forty years, shows changes and trends in the life of working people in this part of India.⁶³

4. Industrial relations and labor economics which, after early attempts, really only gained ground after the Second World War, had from the outset a strong historical component. This has declined in recent years. When one looks at the early numbers of the most important journal in this field, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (founded in 1947), one finds regular contributions on the history of the trade unions in various countries, albeit from a Eurocentric perspective. The editorial board are attempting to reintroduce the historical approach, but without much success in recent years. That this is recognized as a deficit is reflected in the fact that some universities in English-speaking countries have

merged labor history and industrial relations, a strategy more common in the US and Australia, and that a new journal, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, was established in Britain in 1996.

Sources

The expansion of the research field necessitates the utilization of additional sources, indeed, of all kinds of sources. I limit myself here to the more urgent desiderata:

1. Far more kinds of written sources have to be tapped than was the case hitherto. This applies to authentic contemporary sources (personal reports, autobiographies etc.) and also to derivative texts, whether published or not. We need to study publications from the natural sciences, or field studies and reports which were written for another discipline. One example is the colonial literature on how the indigenous population was effectively integrated into what was for it an alien work process.⁶⁴ After decolonization this literature adapted to the new situation, studying the difficulty of "taming" many new proletarians: they very slowly adapted to the heteronomous discipline of "modern" factories, they did not save from their wages and took off for their native villages for long periods, etc. These tensions, euphemistically titled "labor problems," gained increasing attention after 1945.⁶⁵ At the same time, anthropologists were investigating the social and cultural background of the "natives" in order to understand what made them so unruly.⁶⁶ Contemporary studies were soon supplemented by historical studies on the genesis of such "problems."⁶⁷ The reports of labor experts and lawyers were important in this connection who, following the establishment of the International Labor Office in 1919, examined the consequences of interstate agreements for labor conditions in the colonies.⁶⁸

2. For the "globalization" of worker's history, oral sources are more centrally important than is generally the case. For example, if one wants to write the history of casual labor in a slum district, one usually finds that there is very little written source material or photographs. Interviewing those involved is therefore the most important source of information, a source, of course, which needs checking against others. In recent years oral history has begun to spread to the poorer countries.⁶⁹

3. Digital sources. The data banks at our disposal for quantitative studies usually pertain to a certain region. In places where a well-developed bureaucracy existed at a relatively early stage, we naturally find more data than in regions where this was not the case. That means in practice that there is a general dearth of data for the countries of the so-called Third World, and that this information has to be found elsewhere. We are dealing here principally with three kinds of databases: referential (lists of documents or databases), full-text (where documents are reproduced in their entirety) and factual (statistical data online).⁷⁰ Full-text data banks are useful written sources, whereas the factual material enables the researcher to conduct serious studies based on statistics, for example, demographic material or lists with wages and prices.⁷¹ Besides assem-

bling such metasources, one has to resort to a second technical activity, namely making the data banks from the various geographical regions compatible with one another: directly comparable job or occupational descriptions, weights, measures etc.⁷²

Amassing, conserving and making these new sources generally available is a huge challenge. In many Third World countries there are few funds for air-conditioned archives in which paper, photos, audiotapes and videotapes can be stored for long periods. That is all the more regrettable seeing that conservation problems in those countries, because of high humidity, insects or rodents, need more attention than in Europe or North America. Despite the formidable nature of such a challenge, real success can be attained, as has been demonstrated by the activities of the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute in Noida (India).⁷³

Research Problems

Proceeding with a new approach to labor history along the lines mentioned above also necessitates the formulation of new research desiderata. This is one of the most important next steps and we can build on initiatives of the last two decades. I suggest the following in the knowledge that the list is far from exhaustive:

1. Key concepts of labor history from various cultures: the problems of compatibility and transferability. Many key concepts from the North Atlantic tradition are poly-interpretative even *within* the same context—a British "trade union" is not the same as a French *syndicat*—or do not have an exact equivalent from one language, or from one culture, to another.⁷⁴ As a result, problems of translation and comprehension ensue and these need to be addressed. This is especially true for the concept of "work."⁷⁵ But the problems do not stop at terminology, as Craig Calhoun has correctly noted: "Translation adequate to comparative analysis requires an interpretation of a whole organization of activity, not just the matching of vocabulary."⁷⁶

2. Guild and similar organizational forms of work were to be found not only in Europe but, among others, also in Asia and Africa, sometimes far into the twentieth century.⁷⁷ A transcontinental comparative research program could resolve the question of the conditions under which guilds originate, if there is a logic in their development, and how they die out or become transformed in other bodies like employers' associations or trade unions.⁷⁸

3. Conditions of employment in early capitalist trade companies. An organization like the "United Dutch East Indian Company" (VOC, 1602–1795) employed not only sailors and soldiers but also gave work, directly or indirectly, to carpenters, rope-makers and other skilled workers in Europe. The company was also master of the fates of countless peasants and plantation workers in different parts of Asia. This "social" side of the history of the VOC has received scant attention to date because historians usually found the financial, economic, maritime and political aspects of the company's activities much more attractive. An historical study integrating all these aspects would show the VOC in a new light,

how an early capitalist “multinational” used different forms of employment and exploitation in changing combinations.

4. The transnational study of occupations. Exemplary in this regard are the coordinated studies by Klaus Tenfelde and Gerald Feldman on comparative miners’ history, or a similar project about dockworkers recently concluded by Sam Davies and others.⁷⁹ I think other global studies are possible, not just about workers in the classical sense (metal or textile operatives, building workers etc.) but also including groups such as hawkers, nurses, domestic servants or prostitutes.⁸⁰

5. Commodity chains as labor chains. The concept of “commodity chains” has been turning up in different guises since the 1960s, in France as the *filière*-approach, and in the last ten years more internationally due to the research of Gary Gereffi and Miguel Korzeniewicz.⁸¹ Christopher Chase-Dunn defines a commodity chain as follows:

A tree-like sequence of production processes and exchanges by which a product for final consumption is produced. These linkages of raw materials, labor, the sustenance of labor, intermediate processing, final processing, transport, and final consumption materially connect most of the people within the contemporary world-system.”⁸²

The core idea is very simple: every commodity has come into existence through a production process in which labor power and means of production have been “combined.” The means of production themselves are in turn a product of a combination of labor power and other means of production. The labor force also consumes goods like clothes and food, which in *their* turn have been produced through a combination of labor power and means of production. In short, the ultimate production process that results in a “finished product” is only the end point of a bundle of chains of production processes. This concept, really the achievement of contemporary economists, has hardly been touched on by historians. I know of only two examples (about shipbuilding and flour, 1590–1790), both of which are heavily orientated towards economics.⁸³ The formulation of theory, too, concentrates one-sidedly on economic aspects, especially on today’s “globalization.”⁸⁴ In this case as well, the social historian has his work cut out.

6. The relationship between world trade and internal political conflicts has been the theme of an interesting debate in political science since the 1980s. Ronald Rogowski was the initiator, who, starting from the Stolper-Samuelson-Theorem (1941) about the consequences of tariff policies, formulated the theory of a direct connection between dependence on trade on the one hand, and the coalitions or conflicts between big landowners, industrialists and the labor movements on the other. Rogowski’s model seems too simple, but his initiative at least provides social historians with food for thought in innovative studies. That is all the more applicable when the analysis is not confined to one country but takes account of the interaction between national economies.⁸⁵

7. Transnational research on collective action, where more than one ap-

proach is possible. First, I mention the projects about the origins of labor movements, the history of revolutionary-syndicalist trade unions or workers' friendly societies, research organized by the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.⁸⁶ One critical point made with some justification is that the projects were additive: various national developments were put simply side by side and not as the expression of major social, cultural and political processes. Second, the interesting attempt to carry out a transnational study of labor unrest by the staff of the Fernand Braudel Center in Binghamton, New York. They came to the conclusion in the 1980s that there were different worldwide waves of militancy, at the end of both world wars or around 1970, for example. In order to examine the global nature of workers' militancy since 1870 more closely, four research steps were agreed upon: 1) To analyze a certain number of periodicals and almanacs for information on strikes around the world; 2) With this information to establish frequencies on a regional and global basis; 3) Compare these figures with what could be extracted from national statistical data; 4) Explaining a global model, with special reference to when the unrest unfolded, where the epicenters were located, and the degree to which the strikes were political.⁸⁷

This is a field with plenty of space for future research, and I wish to restrict myself to three possibilities. First, one could organize a fascinating study about the waves of protest between 1966 and 1976, which led to complex forms of interaction between the movements of students, women and labor. This reciprocal mechanism was seen not only in North America and Europe but manifested itself just as conspicuously in Argentina, Senegal, India, Japan, and other countries.⁸⁸ Second, researching into the reasons for the growth and decline of workers' anarchism, since more is becoming known about anarchist movements outside their classical home-grounds, in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Japan, or China.⁸⁹ Third, the phenomenon of machine-breakers (Luddites) is also worthy of investigation in a transnational perspective.⁹⁰

The historiography of labor on a global scale, then, offers a plethora of opportunities for new studies. Whether the challenge is taken up depends on our curiosity and the commitment of many.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Jan Lucassen and Alice Mul for their helpful comments on previous drafts. This article is an expanded version of the Third Arvind N. Das Lecture, given at the V. V. Giri National Labor Institute, Noida (India) on March 20, 2004.

2. The convenors were: Kamran Asdar Ali (University of Rochester, USA), Karamat Ali (piler) and Yunas Samad (University of Bradford, UK). See the report: Yunas Samad and Kamran Asdar Ali, "Labor in Pakistan," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 58 (Fall 2000), 314–317.

3. Convenor: Turaj Atabaki (International Institute of Social History [IISH], Amsterdam, The Netherlands). Three of the papers presented at this conference have been published in *International Review of Social History* 48, 3 (December 2003).

4. A report was published by the convenor Lim Jie-Hyun, "From Hard History to Soft History: Cultural Histories of the Korean Working Class," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 61 (Spring 2002), 169–172.

5. Convenors: Jan Elliott (Wollongong University, Australia), Erwiza (LIPI, Yogyakarta, Indonesia) and Ratna Saptari (IISH, Amsterdam).
6. For a more detailed assessment of the developments in Western Europe from the middle of the nineteenth century till now, see the introduction in Lex Heerma van Voss and Marcel van der Linden, eds., *Class and Other Identities. Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History* (New York, 2002), 1–39.
7. Shakir Mustafa, "Die Krise der arabischen Geschichtsschreibung," *wukûf: Beiträge zur Entwicklung von Staat und Gesellschaft in Nordafrika* 3 (1988), 11–19; Ulrike Freitag, "Die Entwicklung der syrischen Geschichtswissenschaft," *Periplus* 3 (1993), 83–93.
8. I have taken this concept from Oskar Negt's classic essay, "Marxismus als Legitimationswissenschaft: Zur Genese der stalinistischen Philosophie," Abram Deborin and Nikolai Bukharin, *Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), 7–48.
9. Emil Niederhauser, "Die marxistische Geschichtswissenschaft in Osteuropa," *Österreichische Osthefte*, 29 (1987), 147–157, here 149.
10. There are several good surveys of the more recent developments in the history of Polish workers. These include Anna Żarnowska and Janusz Żarnowski, "Forschungen zur Struktur der Arbeiterklasse in Polen," Klaus Tenfelde, ed., *Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung im Vergleich. Berichte zur internationalen historischen Forschung* (München, 1986), 781–816; Janusz Żarnowski, "Sozialgeschichte in Polen," in Jürgen Kocka, ed., *Sozialgeschichte im internationalen Überblick: Ergebnisse und Tendenzen der Forschung* (Darmstadt, 1989), 141–162; Waclaw Długoborski, "Die sozialgeschichtliche Forschung in Polen," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge 37 (1989), 81–115; Zenobiusz Kozik, "Research into the History of the Working Class Movement in Poland in the Years 1945–1987," in Marian Leczyk, ed., *La science historique polonaise dans l'historiographie mondiale* (Wrocław, 1990), 421–447; Anna Żarnowska, "Geschichte der Arbeiterklasse und der Arbeiterbewegung. Eine Umschau der Forschungsproblematik im letzten Jahrzehnt," *Mitteilungsblatt* [Bochum] H. 13 (1993), 4–40. Hartmut Zwahr singlehandedly created a research tradition in the GDR (German Democratic Republic), which, to some extent, was parallel to its Polish counterpart. His groundbreaking work was of course *Zur Konstituierung des Proletariats als Klasse. Strukturuntersuchungen über das Leipziger Proletariat während der industriellen Revolution* (Berlin, 1978), on the formation of the working class in Leipzig during the nineteenth century.
11. From 1956 onwards, there was a ten-year period of thaw in the Soviet Union. Subsequently, a new dogmatism gained precedence, which only from around 1987 lost considerable ground. See the introduction in Robert W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution* (Basingstoke, 1989). For the period 1956–1966 see also Nancy Whittier Heer, *Politics and History in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).
12. Erika Langhans, *Die "Krise der Geschichtswissenschaft" in der Volksrepublik China* (Bochum, 1985), 130–131. More recent developments are discussed in Mechthild Leutner, "Sozialgeschichte in der VR China: Modernisierungsparadigma statt Marxismus?," *Berliner China-Hefte* 11 (September 1996), 47–63.
13. Carol Gluck, "The People in History: Recent Trends in Japanese Historiography," *Journal of Asian Studies* 38 (1978–79), 25–50. Innovation was not restricted to this approach, however. See for example Nimura Kazuo, *The Ashio Riot of 1907. A Social History of Mining in Japan*, ed. Andrew Gordon, trans. Terry Boardman and Andrew Gordon (Durham, NC, 1997).
14. Eric Fry, "The Labour History Society (ASSLH): A Memoir of its First Twenty Years," *Labour History* 77 (November 1999), 83–96; Greg Patmore, "'The Right Wing Won't Write'—*Labour History* in 1962," *Labour History* 82 (May 2002), vii–ix.
15. Verity Burgmann, "The Strange Death of Labour History," in Bob Carr et al., *Bede Nairn and Labour History* (Sydney, 1991), 69–81; *idem*, "The Revival of Labour History," David Palmer, Ross Shanahan, and Martin Shanahan, eds., *Australian Labour History Reconsidered* (Adelaide, 1999), 240–244.
16. Walther L. Bernecker and Thomas Fischer, "Neuere Forschungstendenzen über soziale Gruppen und Ethnien in Lateinamerika (19. und 20. Jahrhundert)," *Periplus* 9 (1999), 60–81, here 63.
17. John D. French, "Latin American and International Working Class History on the Brink of the 21st Century: Points of Departure in Comparative Labor Studies," *Development and Society* [Seoul National University] 29, 2 (2000), 137–163, here 138–139. See also *idem*, "The Latin American Labor Studies Boom," *International Review of Social History* 45 (2000), 279–308.

18. Jon Lewis, "South African Labour History: A Historiographical Assessment," *Radical History Review* 46–47 (1990), 213–235, here 213 and 218.

19. Belinda Bozzoli, "Intellectuals, Audiences and Histories: South African Experiences, 1978–88," *Ibid.*, 237–263; Alan Cobley, "Does Social History Have a Future? The Ending of Apartheid and Recent Trends in South African Historiography," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27 (2001), 613–625.

20. On early Indian labor history see: Sanat Bose, "Indian Labour and Its Historiography in Pre-Independence Period," *Social Scientist* [New Delhi] 143 (April 1985), 3–10, and Ranajit Das Gupta, "Indian Working Class and Some Recent Historiographical Issues," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31–8 (February 24, 1996), L27–L31. The breakthrough in the late 1960s is for instance noticeable in the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* since 1968.

21. Ranajit Das Gupta is perhaps the most important example of this. Some of his essays are collected in: *Labour and Working Class in Eastern India. Studies in Colonial History* (Calcutta, 1994).

22. Almost all of the founders of the *Subaltern Studies* had been a member of or had sympathized with the Naxalites, a movement inspired by Maoism, which originated in 1967. Many Naxalite intellectuals were not successful in establishing real contact with their target group of poor farmers, because they mainly knew them from Mao Zhe Dong's disquisitions. The *Subaltern Studies* were a reaction to this: they wanted to explore Indian social history in more detail. See Partha Chatterjee, "Subaltern History," *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (London, 2001) vol. 22, 15237–15241; Dilip Simeon, "Subaltern Studies: Cultural Concerns," *ibid.*, 15241–15245. The following websites contain bibliographical information: <www.lib.virginia.edu/area-studies/subaltern/ssmap.htm> and <www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/ind/subalter.htm>.

23. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working Class History: Bengal, 1890–1940* (Princeton, 1989); Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labour Servitude in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 1990).

24. Important publications from this circle are for instance: Dilip Simeon, *The Politics of Labour under Late Colonialism: Workers, Unions and the State in Chota Nagpur, 1928–1939* (Delhi, 1995); Janaki Nair, *Miners and Millhands: Work, Culture and Politics in Princely Mysore* (New Delhi, 1998); Samita Sen, *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India: The Bengal Jute Industry* (Cambridge, 1999); Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900–1940* (Cambridge, 1994); *idem.*, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850–1950* (Cambridge, 1998); Chitra Joshi, *Lost Worlds of Labour: Culture and Community in North India* (Delhi, 2002).

25. A.O. Adeoye, "Understanding the Crisis in Modern Nigerian Historiography," *History in Africa* 19 (1992), 1–11, citation on 3. One can gather from Terence O. Ranger, "Towards a Usable African Past," ed. Christopher Fyfe, *African Studies Since 1945: A Tribute to Basil Davidson* (London, 1975), 17–30, that this view was also put forward in other African countries.

26. See Toyin Falola's interim report, "Trends in Nigerian Historiography," *Transafrican Journal of History* 10 (1981), 96–112.

27. J.I. Dibua, "The Idol, Its Worshipers, and the Crisis of Relevance of Historical Scholarship in Nigeria," *History in Africa* 24 (1997), 117–137, here 117.

28. For example on Latin America: Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1957); *idem.*, *The Communist Party of Venezuela* (Stanford, CA, 1969); Boris Goldenberg, *Kommunismus in Lateinamerika* (Stuttgart, 1971). On South East Asia: Ruth Thomas McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, 1965). On Eastern Asia: Robert A. Scalapino, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920–1966* (Berkeley, 1967); *idem.* and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley, 1972). As late as 1983, Scalapino published *The Early Japanese Labor Movement. Labor and Politics in a Developing Society* (Berkeley, 1983), a study which according to the preface dated December 1982, "was completed precisely twenty years ago with the exception of the final 'summary chapter.'" See also the bibliography in Enrica Colotti-Pischel and Chiara Robertazzi, *L'Internationale Communiste et les problèmes coloniaux 1919–1935* (Paris, 1968).

29. For instance in France: Jean Suret-Canale, *L'Afrique noire—l'ère coloniale* (Paris, 1964); Jean Chesneaux, *Le mouvement ouvrier chinois de 1919 à 1927* (Paris, 1962); English version: *The Chinese Labor Movement 1919–1927*, trans. H.M. Wright (Stanford, CA, 1968). Ches-

neaux even developed a labor scheme for western historians of the Chinese working class. See his "Perspectives des études d'histoire contemporaine chinoise," *Archiv Orientalní*, 31 (1963), 310–320. For an evaluation of Chesneaux's work see: Arif Dirlik, "Beyond Chesneaux: Workers, Class, and the Socialist Revolution in Modern China," *International Review of Social History* 48 (2003), 79–99.

30. For instance, Manfred Pohl, *Die Bauernpolitik der Kommunistischen Partei Japans, 1922–1928*, Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Bd. 62 (Hamburg, 1976); Regine Mathias, *Industrialisierung und Lohnarbeit. Der Kohlebergbau in Nord-Kyushu und sein Einfluss auf die Herausbildung einer Lohnarbeiterschaft* Beiträge zur Japanologie, Bd. 15 (Wien, 1978). See also Bill Freund's survey, "Labor and Labor History in Africa: A Review of the Literature," *African Studies Review* 27, 2 (1984), 1–58, which discusses not only African but also many European and North American studies.

31. The historiography of the Internationals began at the latest with James Guillaume's study of the International Working Men's Association: *L'Internationale*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1905–1910). For an overview of the relevant literature until the middle of the 1980s see: Marcel van der Linden, "Internationalism in the Labour Movement, 1830–1940: Fragments of a Bibliography," Frits L. van Holthoorn and Marcel van der Linden, eds., *Internationalism in the Labour Movement, 1830–1940* (Leiden, 1988), vol. II, 624–654.

32. The official name of Grünbergs Archiv was *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*. The *International Review for Social History* was continued after 1956 as the *International Review of Social History*.

33. Helmut Konrad, "Die Krise überwunden. Die Linzer Konferenzen der ITH gehen ins vierte Jahrzehnt," *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 30 (1994), 575–578.

34. Early examples were Walter Galenson, ed., *Comparative Labor Movements* (New York, 1952), and Ludwig Reichhold, *Europäische Arbeiterbewegung*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1953). Also compare with: "Multiple Country Surveys of West European Labour History," Heerma van Voss and van der Linden, *Class and Other Identities*, 186–190.

35. Marcel van der Linden, "A Bibliography of Comparative Labour History," Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells, eds., *Australian Labour and Regional Change: Essays in Honour of R.A. Gollan* (Rushcutters Bay, NSW, 1998), 117–145.

36. Bruce Mazlish, "An Introduction to Global History," in: Bruce Mazlish and Ralph Buultjens, eds., *Conceptualizing Global History* (Boulder, 1993), 1–24, here 3.

37. Bruce Mazlish, "Comparing Global History to World History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28, 3 (Winter 1998), 385–395, here 389.

38. Raymond Grew, "On the Prospect of Global History," Mazlish and Buultjens, *Conceptualizing Global History* 227–249, here 235.

39. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Societal Development, Or Development of the World-System?" *International Sociology* 1/1 (1986), S. 3–17; Roland A. Axtmann, "Society, Globalization, and the Comparative Method," *History of the Human Sciences* 6/2 (1993), S. 53–74.

40. Rudolf Stichweh, "Zur Theorie der Weltgesellschaft," *Soziale Systeme* 1 (1995), 29–45, here 34. Stichweh also gives a short sketch of the history of the concept of "world society" (29–32). See also Theresa Wobbe, *Weltgesellschaft* (Bielefeld, 2000), who mainly focuses on the theoretical approaches by Peter Heinz, Niklas Luhmann, and John W. Meyer.

41. See also my essay on this topic "Global Labor History and the Modern World System. Thoughts at the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fernand Braudel Center," *International Review of Social History* 46 (2001), 423–459, especially 449–454. Marx admitted "that slavery is possible at individual points within the bourgeois system of production," but he added that "slavery is then possible there only because it does not exist at other points; and appears as an anomaly opposite the bourgeois system itself." Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth, 1973), 464.

42. Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Politics Against Markets. The Social Democratic Road to Power* (Princeton, 1985).

43. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" *Representations* 37 (Winter 1992), 1–26, here 5. Also see his book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000).

44. Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India," Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, 1988), 37–43, here 43.

45. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "'The Making of the Working Class:' E.P. Thompson and Indian History," *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997), 177–196, here 182. A related problem is the "epistemology of absence." "Rather than seeking to explain the presence of radically varying dispositions and practices, [labor historians] have concentrated disproportionately on explaining the absence of an expected outcome, namely the emergence of a revolutionary class consciousness among the Western working class." Margaret Ramsay Somers, "Workers of the World, Compare!" *Contemporary Sociology* 18 (1989), 325–329, here 325.

46. Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, 1982).

47. Steven Feierman, "Africa in History: The End of Universal Narratives," ed. Gyan Prakash, *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, 1995), 40–65, here 49.

48. Amiya Kumar Bagchi, "Dualism and Dialectics in the Historiography of Labor," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 19, 1 (1999), 106–121. For a first attempt to criticize Eurocentrism in migration theories see: Abol Hassan Danesh, "Migration, Inequality, and the Informal Economy: A Critique of Eurocentric Explanations of Rural Out-Migration in the Third World," *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change* 16 (1993), 51–68.

49. Hans-Dieter Evers, "Schattenwirtschaft, Subsistenzproduktion und informeller Sektor," ed. Klaus Heinemann, *Soziologie wirtschaftlichen Handelns* (Opladen, 1987), pp. 353–366, here 360.

50. Some examples are: John Buttrick, "The Inside Contract System," *Journal of Economic History* XII, 3 (Summer 1952), 205–221; Tim Wright, "'A Method of Evading Management': Contract Labor in Chinese Coal Mines before 1937," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981), 656–678; Craig R. Littler, *The Development of the Labour Process in Capitalist Societies: A Comparative Study of the Transformation of Work Organization in Britain, Japan and the USA* (London, 1982); Timothy Mixter, "The Hiring Market as Workers' Turf: Migrant Agricultural Workers and the Mobilization of Collective Action in the Steppe Grainbelt of European Russia, 1853–1913," Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixter, eds., *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800–1921* (Princeton, 1991), 294–340.

51. For instance: Eduard V. Klopov, "Secondary Employment as a Form of Social and Labor Mobility," *Sociological Research* 37, 2 (March–April 1998), pp. 64–87; Stephen Hussey, "Low Pay, Underemployment and Multiple Occupations: Men's Work in the Inter-war Countryside," *Rural History* 8 (1997), pp. 217–235.

52. André Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York, 1969), 271–272.

53. Thomas Belmonte, *The Broken Fountain* (New York, 1979), 112–117. The Swiss sociologist Christian Giordano recounts the even more extreme case of "the technician who worked for the Naples city council and at the same time was an assassin acting on behalf of jealous and vengeful husbands during his relatively unsupervised working hours." Christian Giordano, "Die Logik der informellen Ökonomie: Zur interkulturellen Analyse von Bewältigungsstrategien," Eberhard Berg, Jutta Lauth, and Andreas Wimmer, eds., *Ethnologie im Widerstreit. Kontroversen über Macht, Geschäft, Geschlecht in fremden Kulturen. Festschrift für Lorenz G. Löfner* (Munich, 1991), 143–157, here 150.

54. On the same subject: Frances Rothstein, "The New Proletarians: Third World Reality and First World Categories," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28 (1986), 217–238.

55. There is a good introduction by Lydia Potts, *The World Labour Market: A History of Migration* (London, 1990).

56. Marx, *Capital*, I, p. 284. See also Karl August Wittfogel, "Geopolitik, geographischer Materialismus und Marxismus," *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus* 3 (1929), 17–51, 485–522, 699–735, here 506–522, and Etienne Balibar, "Sur les concepts fondamentaux du matérialisme historique," Louis Althusser et al., *Lire le Capital*. Vol. II (Paris, 1968), pp. 79–226, here 98.

57. Naturally, dimensions may overlap. In the service sector, for instance, the means of labor and the labor product can be identical and in subcontracting the workforce may consist of household members.

58. Good surveys of the discipline are provided by the following two publications: Seymour Drescher, ed., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery* (Oxford, 1998); Paul Finkelman, ed., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (New York, 1998), 2 vols. The attitude of workers and their organizations towards slavery (especially during the American Civil War) did receive some attention. See for instance Michel Cordillot, *Des hommes libres dans une société es-*

clavagiste: les ouvriers du Sud des Etats-Unis (Paris, 1990). Prof. Dick Geary (University of Nottingham, UK) is organizing a transcontinental project in 2003–4 on the subject of “Labour in Slave and Non-Slave Societies: Brazil and Europe in the 18th and 19th Centuries.”

59. See for instance the recent volumes of the *Journal of Family History*, *History of the Family*, etc.

60. A survey of the research is provided by Robin Cohen, *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cambridge, 1995).

61. Gregory Bateson, “Social Structure of the Iatmul People of the Sepik River,” *Oceania* 2 (1932), 245–291, 401–453; *idem*, *Naven, a Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View* (1936; Reprint: Stanford, 1965); Richard Curtain, “Labour Migration from the Sepik,” *Oral History* [Papua New Guinea], 6 (1978), 10–85; Florence Weiss, “Abwanderung in die Städte. Der widersprüchliche Umgang mit kolonialen Ausbeutungsstrategien: Die Iatmul in Papua Neuguinea,” Micheline Centlivres-Demont, ed., *Un nouveau regard sur la ville: Contributions à l'ethnologie urbaine* (Berne, 1982), 149–166; Milan Stanek, *Sozialordnung und Mythik in Palimbei. Bausteine zur ganzheitlichen Beschreibung einer Dorfgemeinschaft der Iatmul, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea* (Basel, 1983); Florence Weiss, *Die dreisten Frauen. Eine Begegnung in Papua-Neuguinea* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996); Milan Stanek and Florence Weiss, “‘Big Man’ and ‘Big Woman’ in the Village, Elite in the Town: The Iatmul, Papua New Guinea,” ed. Verena Keck, *Common Worlds and Single Lives: Constituting Knowledge in Pacific Societies* (Oxford, 1998), 309–327; Florence Weiss, *Vor dem Vulkanausbruch. Eine ethnologische Erzählung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999).

62. There are several schools within ethnohistory. An important one is The Viennese School, which was founded in the early 1930s by Walter Hirschberg (1904–1996) and revived in the 1960s by Karl Wernhart. For an introduction see: Karl R. Wernhart and Werner Zips, eds., *Ethnohistorie. Rekonstruktion und Kulturkritik. Eine Einführung* (Wien, 2001). The North American School, which was organized around the American Society for Ethnohistory founded in 1954, is also influential. This school focuses on the original inhabitants of the American continent. <<http://ethnohistory.org>>

63. Jan Breman, *Patronage and Exploitation. Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat* (Berkeley, 1974); *idem*, *Of Peasants, Migrants and Paupers: Rural Labour Circulation and Capitalist Production in West India* (Oxford, 1985); *idem*, *Beyond Patronage and Exploitation: Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat* (Oxford, 1993); *idem*, *Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy* (Cambridge, 1996). See also Marcel van der Linden, “Refuting Labour History's Occidentalism,” Arvind N. Das and Marcel van der Linden, eds., *Work and Social Change in Asia. Essays in Honour of Jan Breman* (Delhi, 2003), 249–261.

64. Richard Brown observed that “After the First World War the focus of colonial interest moved from the acquisition to the maintenance of control, and the first stirrings about ‘development’ as a consciously-induced policy began. Embodied in Lord Lugard's *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922) and the French colonial minister Albert Sarraut's *Mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (1923), these shifts in the nature of colonialism were accompanied by the growth of an anthropology which its practitioners claimed was of great practical value.” A key role in the development of this literature was played by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia, which was founded in 1937. See Richard Brown, “Anthropology and Colonial Rule: The Case of Godfrey Wilson and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Northern Rhodesia,” ed. Talal Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London, 1973), 173–197, here 175.

65. For instance John Alvin Decker, *Labor Problems in the Pacific Mandates* (Shanghai, 1940; reprint: New York, 1978); John A. Noon, *Labor Problems of Africa* (Philadelphia, 1944); Virginia Thompson, *Labor Problems in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, 1947); Nikki R. Keddie, “Labor Problems in Pakistan,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 16 (1956–57), S. 575–589; Charles A. Myers, *Labor Problems in the Industrialization of India* (Cambridge, MA, 1958). In 1954, a large-scale research project on “labor problems” was initiated, on which, much later, ILO's *International Labour Review* wrote the following comment: “The scale of their enquiry—and its influence—were unprecedented.” “Introduction: 75 Years of the International Labour Review, A Retrospective,” *International Labour Review* 135 (1996), No. 3–4, pp. 1–9, here 6. The project was called “The Inter-University Study of Labor Problems in Economic Development,” was funded mainly by the Ford Foundation, and was run by John T. Dunlop (Harvard), Frederick Harbison (Princeton), Clark Kerr (Berkeley) and Charles A. Myers (MIT). The organizers explained the basis of their project in “The Labour Problem in Economic Development: A Framework for a Reappraisal,” *International Labour Review* 71 (1955), 223–235. They elabo-

rated on their ideas in: "Industrialism and Industrial Man," *ILR* 82, 3 (September 1960) and their book with the same title (Cambridge, MA, 1960). Afterwards, they reflected on the project in: "Postscript to 'Industrialism and Industrial Man,'" *ILR* 13 (1971), 519–540. The project involved thirty-five countries and resulted in the publication of at least fourteen books and twenty-three articles. See also: Richard Locke, Thomas Kochan, and Michael Piore, "Reconceptualizing Comparative Industrial Relations: Lessons from International Research," *International Labour Review* 134 (1995), 139–163.

66. The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Lusaka strongly promoted this anthropological research. A.L. Epstein's *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Manchester, 1958) was an important and characteristic publication. Other studies were, for example: Godfrey Wilson, *An Essay on the Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia* (Livingstone, 1941–1942); James C. Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, 1959); Max Gluckmann, "Anthropological Problems Arising from the African Industrial Revolution," ed. Aidan Southall, *Social Change in Modern Africa* (Oxford, 1961), 67–82. See also Michael Burawoy, "Anthropology of Industrial Work," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8 (1979), 231–266, and Vicky Smith, "Ethnographies of Work and the Work of Ethnographers," ed. Paul Atkinson et al., *Handbook of Ethnography* (London, 2001), 220–233. Another interesting perspective is offered by Hussein Abdulahi Bulhan, "Psychological Research in Africa: Genesis and Function," *Présence Africaine* 116 (1980), 20–42.

67. Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India: A Study of the Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854–1947* (Berkeley, 1965) is an important example of this.

68. See the conference report *The Recruiting of Labour in Colonies and in Other Territories with Analogous Labour Conditions* (Geneva, 1935). See also Edward A. Ross, *Report on Employment of Native Labor in Portuguese Africa* (1925), a report submitted to the Temporary Slaving Commission of the League of Nations.

69. The IISH, for instance, is currently carrying out oral history projects in Indonesia, Myanmar, and Central Asia (Coordinators: Turaj Atabaki, Ratna Saptari, Emile Schwidder).

70. Access to historical databases is, for example, offered by <www.internets.com/shistory.htm>, <www.abc-clio.com>, <www.rhd.uit.no/nhde/micro.htm>, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/history/research/dbase.html>.

71. Economic historian Jan Luiten van Zanden is currently setting up a website at the IISH, which will contain as many historical data on wages and prices around the world as possible in the near future. See <www.iisg.nl/hpw>.

72. The so-called HISCO project is an example. It is coordinated by Marco van Leeuwen, Ineke Maas, and Andrew Miles and should produce a "Historical International Standard Coding of Occupations." See Marco van Leeuwen et al., *Historical Standard Coding of Occupations* (Leuven/Louvain, 2002).

73. See <www.indialabourarchives.org>.

74. There are relatively few studies in this field that look beyond the North Atlantic region. An example of an alternative approach is given by Douglas Howland, "Translating Liberty in Nineteenth-Century Japan," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001), 161–181.

75. Such a study can relate to several other approaches in research such as: (1) historical studies of the genesis of the modern concept of labor in Europe; (2) studies in ethnology and "non-western" sociology; (3) the history of thought; (4) historical philology; (5) attempts by social scientists to define the concept of "labor."

76. Craig J. Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference* (Oxford, 1995), 59.

77. Many relevant studies of guilds in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia are already quite old. See for instance Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Guilds of China* (1909; reprint: London, 1964); N. Ghiulăa, "Les corporations de métiers en Roumanie," *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* 12 (1924), 522–554; John Stewart Burgess, *The Guilds of Peking* (New York, 1928); B. Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," *Economic History Review* 8 (1937), 20–37. The guilds in the Ottoman Empire have received a fair deal of attention in the past few years. See for instance Suraiya Faruqi, *Towns and Townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia: Trade, Crafts and Food Production in an Urban Setting, 1520–1650* (Cambridge, 1984).

78. Such a project is currently being set up by Suraiya Faruqi (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) and Jan Lucassen (IISH).

79. Gerald D. Feldman and Klaus Tenfelde eds., *Arbeiter, Unternehmer und Staat im Bergbau. Industrielle Beziehungen im internationalen Vergleich* (Munich, 1989); ed. Klaus Tenfelde,

Sozialgeschichte des Bergbaus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Munich, 1992); *Dock Workers: International Explorations in Comparative Labour History, 1790–1970* 2 vols. ed. Sam Davies et al. (Aldershot, 2000). See also Frank Broeze, "Militancy and Pragmatism: An International Perspective on Maritime Labour, 1870–1914," *International Review of Social History* 36 (1991), 165–200.

80. A project on "The Global History of Textile Workers, 1650–2000" is currently being prepared by Lex Heerma van Voss, Els Hiemstra, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (IISH). See <www.iisg.nl/research/textile.htm>.

81. Already in the 1980s, Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein had incorporated the concept in their world system theory. See their essay "Commodity Chains in the World Economy Prior to 1800," *Review*, 10 (1986), S. 157–170. Gereffi and Korzeniewicz tested the concept in a recent study "Commodity Chains and Footwear Exports in the Semiperiphery," William G. Martin, ed., *Semiperipheral States in the World Economy* (Westport, CT, 1990). The break-through came with the collection edited by Gereffi and Korzeniewicz: *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism* (Westport, CT, 1994). It may be added that studies into commodity chains were done much earlier. See for instance Alwin Oppel, *Die Baumwolle nach Geschichte, Anbau, Verarbeitung und Handel, sowie nach ihrer Stellung im Volksleben und in der Staatswirtschaft* (Leipzig, 1902).

82. Christopher Chase-Dunn, *Global Formation: Structures of the World Economy* (Oxford, 1989), p. 346.

83. Y. Eyüp Özveren, "Shipbuilding, 1590–1790," *Review* 23 (2000), 15–86; Sheila Pelizon, "Grain Flour, 1590–1790," *Review* 23 (2000), 87–195.

84. An overview was given by Philip Raikes et al., "Global Commodity Chain Analysis and the French *filière* Approach: Comparison and Critique," *Economy and Society* 29 (2000), 390–417.

85. Ronald Rogowski's standard work was *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments* (Princeton, NJ, 1989). Rogowski's "Political Cleavages and Changing Exposure to Trade," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987), 1121–1137, was a compact preliminary study. Rogowski's model was examined from a historical point of view in Paul Midford, "International Trade and Domestic Politics: Improving on Rogowski's Model of Political Alignments," *International Organization* 47 (1993), 535–564, and W.D. Garst, "From Factor Endowments to Class Struggle: Pre-World War One Germany and Rogowski's Theory of Trade and Political Cleavages," *Comparative Political Studies* 31 (1998), 22–44.

86. Van der Linden and Rojahn, *The Formation of Labour Movements, 1870–1914*; Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe, eds., *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective* (Aldershot, 1990); Marcel van der Linden, ed., *Social Security Mutualism: The Comparative History of Mutual Benefit Societies* (Bern, 1996); Marcel van der Linden and Richard Price, eds., *The Rise and Development of Collective Labour Law* (Bern, 2000).

87. Silver et al., "Labor Unrest in the World-Economy, 1870–1990." Also, Research Working Group on World Labor, "Global Patterns of Labor Movements in Historical Perspective," *Review* 10 (1986), 137–155.

88. Ramon Ramirez, *El movimiento estudiantil de México: julio-diciembre de 1968* (Mexico City, 1969); Philip G. Altbach, ed., *Student Protest* (Philadelphia, 1971); Horst Krüger, "Probleme der Studentenbewegung in Indien," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 17 (1972), 601–613; Abdoulaye Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar ou la révolte universitaire et la démocratie* (Paris, 1992); James P. Brennan, *The Labor Wars in Córdoba, 1955–1976, Ideology: Work and Labor Politics in an Argentine Industrial City* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), Chap. 5; Claudia Derichs, *Japans Neue Linke. Soziale Bewegung und Außerparlamentarische Opposition, 1957–1994*, Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Bd. 123 (Hamburg, 1995).

89. For example John W.F. Dulles, *Anarchists and Communists in Brazil, 1900–1935* (Austin, 1973); John Mason Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860–1931* (Austin, 1978); Thomas A. Stanley, *Osugi Sakae, Anarchist in Taisho Japan* (Cambridge, MA, 1982); Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley, 1991).

90. Donald Quataert, "Machine Breaking and the Changing Carpet Industry of Western Anatolia, 1860–1908," *Journal of Social History* 13 (1986), 473–489; Teresa Meade, "'Living Worse and Costing More': Resistance and Riot in Rio de Janeiro, 1890–1917," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 21 (1989), 241–266; Robert Y. Eng, "Luddism and Labor Protest Among Silk Artisans and Workers in Jiangnan and Guangdong, 1860–1930," *Late Imperial China* 11, 2 (December 1990), 63–101.