

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING,
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
AND THE GLOBAL CRISIS:
WHAT NOW FOR TRADE
UNIONS ?**

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OVERVIEW

- collective bargaining (CB) and the 'European social model' (ESM)
- challenges to national industrial relations regimes
- locating challenges within global restructuring of social / economic relations
- the dialectics of Europeanisation
- the current crisis: threat and / or opportunity for trade unions ?
- re-inventing Social Europe

CB AND THE 'EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL'

- encompassing CB (+ employment protection, welfare state) central to ESM
- like ESM itself, character differs significantly across countries (or regions)
- but typical characteristics:
 - delicate problems of solidarity / common rule
 - multi-level but hierarchical
 - dialectic of conflict and partnership
 - complex interaction with state regulation
 - nationally bounded and diverse systems

CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL CB REGIMES

- CB no longer nationally insulated
- MNCs: regime shopping ⇒ concession bargaining
- mergers and takeovers: bargaining 'partner' unstable / uncertain
- decentralisation of IR: erosion of encompassing regimes
- cross-class alliances negate intra-class solidarity

EUROPEANISATION OF CB ?

- Commons: extension of markets \Rightarrow pressure for 'the elimination of the competitive menace through a protective organization or protective legislation'
- but not automatic
- Europeanisation / internationalisation of CB necessary but problematic
- multi-level governance at company, sector and cross-sectoral levels: what impact ?
- 10 years Doorn: but still falling wage share – especially in eurozone

LOCATING ISSUES WITHIN GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING

Neo-liberal globalisation = class struggle from above

Dore:

attacks on established national employment regimes reflect 'not only flexibility/efficiency objectives but also the political objective of breaking the power of the trade unions and their ability to influence the electorate.... Politicians who responded with the legislation demanded by the powerful managerial class, were not just concerned with creating the conditions for national competitiveness. They were also engaged in class struggle'



NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALISATION



Ruggie:

'the rights enjoyed by transnational corporations have increased manyfold over the past two decades, as a result of multilateral trade agreements, bilateral investment pacts and domestic liberalization.... Globalization was a one-way bet for the business community: governments were needed to create the space within which business could expand and integrate, but they were not otherwise welcome'

EU: PART OF PROBLEM OR PART OF SOLUTION ?

- the ambiguous goal of 'social Europe'
- secondary (cosmetic ?) function of 'social dimension' and social dialogue
- EMU and SGP \Rightarrow national competition states
- EU enlargement: extension of 'Anglo-American' capitalism, dilution of ESM
- UK: from maverick to mainstream ?

DIALECTICS OF EUROPEANISATION

national autonomy	↔	supranational authority
democracy	↔	technocracy
workers' rights	↔	prerogatives of capital
social regulation	↔	market liberalism

- social dialogue: search for 'middle way'
- outcome always limited: multiple veto points
- 'modernisation' of social welfare / labour law
- dialectic of re-commodification, technocracy and democratic deficit

THE (IM)BALANCE OF CLASS FORCES

- logics of influence and membership: what mobilisation capacity ?
- SEA: what you see is what you get (why Thatcher agreed ?)
- Scharpf: negative integration and weakening of national standards
- 4 freedoms + ECJ: 'restraint of trade'
- only surprise: that it has taken so long ?

NEW DIALECTICS OF EUROPEANISATION

- multi-level class struggle from above
- the assault on post-war class compromises
- popular disenchantment: EU now threat, not promise

national autonomy
democracy
social regulation
workers' rights

supranational authority
technocracy
market liberalism
prerogatives of capital

WHAT NOW FOR TRADE UNIONS ?

- global crisis: threat and / or opportunity ?
- can there be a return to business as usual ?
- *noi la crisi non la paghiamo !*
- beyond collective bargaining:
 - political mobilisation
 - community activism
 - social coalitions
- on the offensive ?
- reclaiming mobilisation capacity
- organic solidarity / internationalism

RE-INVENTING SOCIAL EUROPE

can trade unions repair the damage ?

- a new balance between national autonomy and supranational authority
 - more democracy , less technocracy
 - workers' rights, not prerogatives of capital
 - social regulation, not market liberalism
- wanted: strategic imagination !

NATIONAL AUTONOMY AND SUPRANATIONAL AUTHORITY



- neither divisive nationalism nor abstract internationalism
- after Laval: redefining subsidiarity

DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOCRACY



- drift to technocracy at European *and* national level
- Euro-democratisation requires national re-democratisation
- re-democratising trade unions: internal social dialogue

WORKERS' RIGHTS *VERSUS* PREROGATIVES OF CAPITAL



- free movement for workers, not employers
- casino capitalism is bankrupt, seize the time
- for a *real* offensive

SOCIAL REGULATION AND MARKET LIBERALISM



- attack is the best defence
- we need an alternative to the market mindset
- which means vision, determination and agitation
- building creatively on public anger
- another Europe is possible !

Merci pour votre
engagement !