

International workshop on *Labour and transnational action in times of crisis: from case studies to theory.*

(Centre for Advanced Study, Oslo; 27 and 28 February 2014)

Neo-liberal globalisation and Europeanization have put national labour movements under pressure. The increasing transnationalization of production and centralisation of economic governance within multinational firms and supranational organisations (EU, ECB, IMF, WTO) have put national trade unions in competition with each other. And yet, workers are not without weapons. Too often the structural constraints of the global economy are emphasised, at the expense of potential agency of labour. These economic and political integration processes have also provided new strategic possibilities for trade unions. Key here is the way of how trade union action at the local and national level may be connected across borders in moments of transnational solidarity.

The purpose of the workshop is to analyse transnational labour action in times of crisis, historically and now. ‘Labour’ includes trade unions but also other, more informal forms of collective action by workers understood in a broad sense. The overall ambition is to move beyond empirical description of cases to a conceptually informed understanding of collective action across borders.

In sum, the key innovative aspects of this international workshop are (1) a focus on the theorisation of transnational action, and (2) an emphasis on the new strategic possibilities of labour within the changing global economy.

We invite papers in the following areas:

- What types of transnational labour solidarity can we observe in the past and in what way may they be useful for progressive strategies in the future?
- What factors have facilitated or hampered labour agency in the past as well as in times of neo-liberal Europeanization and globalisation?
- What are the new ‘weapons’ of labour movements in our times of transnational capitalism and are there experiences by labour movements in the European and Global South, from which Northern trade unions could learn?
- How is labour agency conditioned by the current setting of transnational capitalist social relations of production both within the European Union and across the globe?

Confirmed speakers include Marcel van der Linden, Eddie Webster, Jane Hardy and Mark Anner.

Paper proposals of ca. 250 words should be sent to roland.erne@cas.uio.no by 15 November 2013. Colleagues will be informed by mid-December on whether their proposal has been accepted. There is no registration fee for the workshop and all participants will be provided with coffee/tea breaks, two lunches and one evening dinner free of charge.

A special journal issue and/or edited book will be published based on contributions to this workshop.

The workshop is organized by the research group *Globalization and the possibility of transnational actors - The case of trade unions* and will be held at the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science-and Letters in Oslo/Norway.

This research group is led by Professor Knut Kjeldstadli, University of Oslo/Norway, and includes Dr. Ann Cecilie Bergene, Work Research Institute (AFI), Oslo/Norway; Prof. Andreas Bieler, University of Nottingham/UK; Dr. Roland Erne, School of Business, University College Dublin/Ireland; Darragh Golden, Smurfit Graduate School, Dublin/Ireland; Idar Helle, Norwegian Union of General Workers, Oslo/Norway; and Dr. Sabina Stan, Dublin City University/Ireland.