

## PREFACE

This book is the second in a series of five that present the main results of an international research project that I have conducted under the title *Reinventing Social Emancipation: Towards New Manifestos*. The project's core idea is that the action and thought that sustained and gave credibility to the modern ideals of social emancipation are being profoundly questioned by a phenomenon that, although not new, has reached in the past decades such an intensity that it has ended up redefining the contexts, objectives, means, and subjectivities of social and political struggle. This phenomenon is commonly designated "globalization." As a matter of fact, what we usually call globalization is just one of the forms of globalization, namely neoliberal globalization, which is undoubtedly the dominant and hegemonic form of globalization. Neoliberal globalization corresponds to a new system of capital accumulation, a more intensely globalized system than the previous ones. It aims, on the one hand, to de-socialize capital, freeing it from the social and political bonds that in the past guaranteed some social distribution; on the other hand, it works to subject society as a whole to the law of market value, under the presupposition that all social activity is better organized when it is organized under the aegis of the market. The main consequence of this double change is the extremely unequal distribution of the costs and opportunities brought about by neoliberal globalization inside the world system. Herein resides the reason for the exponential increase of the social inequalities between rich and poor countries, as well as between the rich and the poor within the same country.

The project's assumption is that this form of globalization, though hegemonic, is not the only one and, in fact, has been increasingly confronted by another form of globalization. This other form, an alternative, counter-hegemonic form of globalization, is constituted by a series of initiatives,



movements and organizations that fight against neoliberal globalization through local/global linkages, networks, and alliances. Their motivation lies in the shared aspiration for a better, fairer and more peaceful world, which they deem possible and to which they believe they are entitled. This form of globalization is as of yet still emerging. Its most dramatic manifestation has occurred in the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre, of which five editions have already taken place (Porto Alegre, 2001, 2002, 2003; Mumbai, 2004; Porto Alegre, 2005).

To my mind, this alternative globalization, in its confrontation with neoliberal globalization, is paving a new way towards social emancipation. Such a confrontation, which may be metaphorically characterized as a confrontation between the North and the South, tends to be particularly intense in countries of intermediate development or in semi-peripheral countries. It is, therefore, in these countries that the potentialities and limits of the reinvention of social emancipation manifest themselves more clearly. This is the reason why four of the five countries in which the project was conducted are countries of intermediate development in different continents. The five countries in question are: Brazil, Colombia, India, Mozambique, and South Africa.

The new conflicts between the North and the South occur in the most diverse domains of social, economic, political, and cultural activity. In some of these domains, however, the alternatives created by counter-hegemonic globalization are more visible and consistent, not only because the conflicts are more intense in them, but also because the initiatives, movements and progressive organizations there have reached higher levels of consolidation and organizational density. I selected the following five domains or themes to be analyzed in each of the five countries included in the project: participatory democracy; alternative production systems; emancipatory multiculturalism, cultural justice and citizenship; the protection of biodiversity and the recognition of rival knowledges against neoliberal intellectual property rights; and new labor internationalism. To learn about the choice of countries and themes, as well as the assumptions underlying this project and the challenges it aims to face, the reader should go to the general introduction in the first volume of this collection.

The series comprises five volumes.<sup>1</sup> The first three volumes deal with the above-mentioned five themes. To be sure, the themes are not watertight; there is intertextuality, now implicit, now explicit, among the different books.

This volume deals, on the one hand, with non-capitalist production alternatives that for the past two decades have been gaining new life in their resistance to the social exclusion and wild exploitation brought about by neoliberal globalization; on the other hand, it deals with workers' new struggles against such exploitation, pointing to a new labor internationalism. Alternative models to capitalist development, generally known as solidary economy, are analyzed, and case studies of popular economic organizations,

cooperatives, communitarian or collective management of the land, and associations of local development are presented. Also analyzed are the new forms of the conflict between capital and labor, derived, on the one hand, from the end of the Cold War and, on the other, from the fact that in the last two decades labor has become a global resource, yet without the emergence of a globally organized labor market. From this disjunction has resulted the weakening of the union movement as we know it. Meanwhile, it is clear today that labor solidarity is reconstituting itself under new forms, both on a local and national level, and on a global level as well. This book deals in detail with some of these new forms.

The introduction, penned by César Rodríguez-Garavito and myself, traces the general pattern of the debates on non-capitalist production in the last 150 years and situates therein the various essays included in the book. It concludes by presenting a few proposals on non-capitalist production and the new labor internationalism.

The book is divided into four parts. In the first part, entitled *Toward an Economy of Solidarity*, four case studies are put forward that clearly highlight the dynamism of non-capitalist forms of production in different countries and sectors of economic activity.

In Chapter 1, Paul Singer analyzes the reemergence of solidary economy in Brazil in the 1990s. After a theoretical and conceptual overview of solidary economy, the author shows how the latter has taken many forms in Brazil, from the agrarian reform settlements (*assentamentos*) of the landless to self-managed companies, and from cooperatives to networks of solidary credit. He studies some of these initiatives in detail and asks whether solidary economy in Brazil is a mere response to the labor crisis or if it implies a systemic change toward socialism.

Chapter 2, authored by César Rodríguez-Garavito, analyzes cooperatives formed for garbage collection and recycling in Colombia. He is concerned with a group of ninety-four cooperatives, organized according to regional and national networks, which aim to change the conditions of exploitation of the recycling market and improve the living conditions of the recyclers. Rodríguez-Garavito's research shows that the cooperatives, in spite of the instability often caused by their democratic government, brought about substantial economic and social benefits for the recyclers, even though they could not change the structure of the recycling market, which continues to privilege large corporations.

In Chapter 3, Sharit Bhowmik discusses the role cooperatives play towards the emancipation of marginalized sections of the working class in India. He analyzes two cooperative experiences in detail: one of them, Ahmedabad, concerns a socially marginalized group of women waste pickers, who founded a cooperative with the support of the women workers union; in the other one, in Calcutta, workers reopened their factories as workers'



cooperatives after their employers shut them down. The author's overall objective is to study the factors that account for the greater or lesser success of cooperatives as instruments of social emancipation.

Teresa Cruz e Silva is the author of Chapter 4. Hers is a detailed study of the General Union of Agro-Pastoral Cooperatives (UGC) in Maputo (Mozambique), tracing its trajectory from the revolutionary, post-independence period up until its most recent phase, in which it had to undergo some changes in order to bring creative resistance against the state's neoliberal policies and lack of support. The author analyzes the way in which the cooperative managed to combine economic and social factors to improve the peasant women's lives, while turning the workers into actors in a progressive social transformation. She concludes by noting the demanding challenges that the UGC faces to maintain its economic viability and the rich alternatives of sociability it has created.

The second part of this volume, entitled *The Land Question*, is devoted to alternatives to the capitalist appropriation of the land.

In Chapter 5, Heinz Klug analyzes one of the dimensions of agrarian reform in South Africa, namely, the creation of a legal and institutional mechanism—the Community Property Association—through which rural communities may attain collective land property. This is an innovative mechanism that allows each community to choose its own internal rules for the use of the land, so long as they abide by the general principles of the country's constitution. Even though it emerges in an ideological context dominated by private property, and allows for different social processes in the different communities, this new legal form shows the vitality of collective forms of land property.

The next three chapters deal with the Landless Peasant Workers' Movement in Brazil (MST). MST's social and political relevance not just in Brazil but throughout the American continent justifies the attention it gets in this volume. There is, however, a further reason: the fact that one of the essays originally included in this project stirred up a polemic that I, in my capacity as project director, decided to include in the book, with the understanding that it could be the germ of an important political debate.

In Chapter 6, Zander Navarro offers a historical analysis of MST, highlighting the importance of the movement to keep the agrarian question on the political and national agenda and grant thousands of poor families and peasants access to land. He goes on to focus on the period in which the movement gained extraordinary political prominence, that is to say, from the mid-1990s onwards. The author is very critical of the strategies and forms of organization and collective action adopted by the Movement's leadership, which he considers authoritarian and non-democratic. On the basis of his harsh criticisms, Navarro puts into question the characterization of MST as an emancipatory political movement.

Having become acquainted with Navarro's essay, which Navarro himself had sent him, João Pedro Stedile, one of the leaders of MST, expressed his outrage to me concerning the terms and substance of Navarro's criticisms of the movement. I immediately offered to publish a reply to Navarro's findings, written by himself or by someone else indicated by him. It was a hard decision to make because such a procedure is most unusual in books in which research results are presented. I thought, however, that the importance of MST and my own solidarity with the movement called for it. João Pedro Stedile recommended Horácio Martins de Carvalho, who is the author of chapter seven. In this chapter, the author underscores the specificity of the trajectory of MST, as well the innovative character of its forms of organization, as the factors capable of explaining MST's lasting and remarkable presence on the Brazilian national scene, a presence all the more striking in view of the political and social power of the enemies of agrarian reform, and hence of MST. To characterize the action of MST, the author develops the concept of continuous social emancipation.

The topic of Chapter 8, by João Marcos de Almeida Lopes, remains MST. The author analyzes in detail the process that led to the foundation of a city in an MST settlement in the municipality of Rio Bonito. The discussions carried out to create a new "centrality" that encouraged different forms of management in the settlements and a better articulation of infrastructures and the construction plans that emerged from these, lead the author to the conclusion that the alternative production of collective life proposed by MST ended up giving shape to a new conception of a city.

The third part, entitled *New Labor Internationalism*, concerns itself with some of the new forms of international solidarity among workers and how they articulate themselves with new conceptions of trade unionism more closely related to questions of citizenship involving broader notions of wage labor or, more broadly, dependent work.

In Chapter 9, Hermes Augusto Costa analyzes some of the obstacles that the workers internationalism currently faces. He studies the organizational forms the workers internationalism presents, the theories and debates it arouses and, finally, the signs of continuity or rupture between the old and the new workers internationalism. This is a field in which the construction of the future depends to a great degree on the confrontation between radical and moderate arguments, and between optimistic and pessimistic positions.

In Chapter 10, Rob Lambert and Eddie Webster describe an innovative experience of workers internationalism: the *Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights* (SIGTUR). This is a network of democratic unions in the South (the "South" being understood here as a political and not geographical concept) involving ten countries—South Africa, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea, New Zealand and Australia—and intent on fighting for social emancipation and social



change. According to Lambert and Webster, the SIGTUR network allows for the construction of new opportunities and strengths for the workers movement, in spite of the adverse conditions imposed by neoliberal globalization and the "crisis of future vision" of the workers movement itself. Based on the new conditions created by cyberspace and combining traditional union organizations with the forms of communication and articulation proper to the "information age," SIGTUR illustrates the way in which a network organization may contribute to a new workers internationalism geared to grassroots mobilization.

In Chapter 11, Francisco de Oliveira considers the Brazilian experience of tripartite negotiation of sectorial chambers (an institutional innovation and a new form of trade union collective action emerging early in the 1990s and dismantled before the end of the decade), and wonders whether "the *International* could not once again be sung in São Bernardo" (one of the major regions where the experience of sectorial chambers was successful). He then identifies the phases through which the Brazilian union movement became part of workers' internationalism: anarcho-syndicalist influence at the beginning of the twentieth century; the internationalism of the Communist Party since the 1920s; and the workers internationalism that emerged during the military dictatorship (1964 to 1984), particularly around the large auto plants then being established in Brazil. Concerning the present, Oliveira believes that the ways in which workers act within the MNCs signifies a possible pathway to be followed by the new workers internationalism.

In chapter twelve, Roberto Vêras focuses on the joint struggle of the metalworkers unions of the two main Brazilian trade union federations for a national collective contract in the sector. The issue of the strike has a crucial place in the essay. The objective of the "strike festival" amounts to the creation of a national collective contract for the metallurgic sector to prevent the emergence of differences in salary and working conditions among the country's different states, as well as the loss of jobs in the areas of traditional concentration of the automobile industry. The struggle for the above-mentioned national collective contract created unprecedented opportunities for union articulation and encouraged other sectors to mobilize themselves likewise. It also made possible, according to Vêras, important international actions, such as the celebration of the first MERCOSUL Collective Contract.

In Chapter 13, Gabriele Dietrich and Nalini Nayak discuss the potential for counter-hegemonic globalization arising from the fishermen's movement in the state of Kerala, India. The authors describe how the fishermen's movement appeared in the last three decades as a consequence of the technological developments that led to the sector's increasing industrialization, jeopardizing the survival of traditional fishing. While approaching the way in which the fishermen's movement has been trying to oppose this tendency, the authors ascribe much importance to several types of discrimination that

interfere with the fishermen's movement of Kerala: class, sex, religion, and caste. In light of this movement, in which women play a crucial role, the authors argue for a trade unionism conceived as a social movement, building bridges and articulations with other social movements in different scales of action, whether local, national, or international.

The fourth part comprises two commentaries on the previous chapters, one by Aníbal Quijano on non-capitalist economy, and the other by Peter Waterman on the new workers' internationalism.

In Chapter 14 Aníbal Quijano presents a vast historical analysis of alternative production systems as an integral part of anti-capitalist and socialist movements of the last 150 years, and wonders whether neoliberal globalization has changed the social and political role of grassroots economic organizations. Taking the Latin American experience as a whole, the author raises a series of issues that should be addressed before answering the central question in this social and political domain: do these alternative production systems constitute in fact today an alternative economy?

In Chapter 15, Peter Waterman reflects on the dilemmas of the new workers internationalism and wonders about the windows of opportunity it may open once it breaks with the atavisms that today still beleaguer unionism and which often re-emerge as a form of boycott to innovation. This author's major concern is the relationship between emancipation and workers' internationalism.

As I have already mentioned, this volume is the second in a series of five volumes. A brief reference to the remaining volumes is therefore in order.

The first volume, entitled *Another Democracy is Possible: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon*, is concerned with participatory democracy. The main thesis of this book is that the hegemonic model of democracy (liberal, representative democracy), while prevailing on a global scale, guarantees no more than low-intensity democracy, based on the privatization of public welfare by more or less restricted elites, on the increasing distance between representatives and the represented, and on an abstract political inclusion made of concrete social exclusion. Parallel to this hegemonic model of democracy, other models have always existed, however marginalized or discredited, such as participatory democracy or popular democracy. Recently, participatory democracy has been gaining a new dynamics. It engages mainly subaltern communities and social groups that fight against social exclusion and the suppression or trivialization of citizenship and are propelled by the aspiration to more inclusive social contracts and high-intensity democracy. I mean local initiatives in urban or rural contexts that gradually develop bonds of inter-recognition and interaction with parallel initiatives, thus giving rise to the formation, as yet embryonic, of transnational networks of participatory democracy. To my mind, one of the major conflicts between the North and the South will increasingly result from the confrontation between representative and



participatory democracy. Such a confrontation, often shown in representative democracy's systematically denying the legitimacy of participatory democracy, will be resolved only to the extent that such denial is replaced by the development of forms of complementarity between the two forms of democracy that may contribute to deepen one and the other. Such complementarity paves one of the ways to the reinvention of social emancipation.

Volume 3, entitled *Another Knowledge Is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*, tackles the struggles and politics of the recognition of difference that in the past two decades have been confronting imperial identities, false universalisms, the coloniality of power, and imperial epistemology, which are as germane to historical capitalism as the exploitation of wage labor. In light of the global mercantilization of modern technical and scientific knowledge that is underway, and the more and more unequal access to information and knowledge that this causes, the confrontation among rival knowledges acquires special relevance. Such confrontation also derives from the latest advances in biology, biotechnology and microelectronics, which have transformed the wealth of biodiversity into one of the most precious and sought after "natural resources." Since most of this biodiversity is located in countries of the South and sustained by popular, peasant or indigenous knowledges, the issue (and the conflict) consists in deciding how to protect such biodiversity and such knowledges from the voracity with which the scientific, technological, and industrial knowledge transforms them into patentable objects and knowledges. The struggles and movements for self-determination and multicultural human rights are another object of study, as are the movements for the recognition of popular knowledges concerning biodiversity, medicine, environmental impact, and natural calamities.

Volume 4, entitled *Voices of the World*, is different than the previous ones. Rather than focusing on the scientific and social analysis of alternatives, it focuses on the discourse and practical knowledge of the protagonists of such alternatives. One of the core concerns of the project *Reinventing Social Emancipation* is to contribute to renovating the social sciences (see the general introduction below). One of the paths of this renovation resides in confronting the knowledge the social sciences produce with other knowledges—practical, plebeian, common, tacit knowledges—which, although being an integral part of the social practices analyzed by the social sciences, are always ignored by the latter. In this book, voice is given to activist leaders of social movements, initiatives and organizations, many of which are studied in the previous volumes. To this effect, long interviews were conducted and transcribed.

Finally, Volume 5, entitled *Reinventing Social Emancipation*, presents my theoretical, analytical, and epistemological reflection upon the major themes of this project and its main results. In addition, it reflects as well on the project itself as the construction of a scientific community under conditions and according to rules largely outside the conventional models.

Sixty-one researchers participated in this project; more than fifty-three initiatives were analyzed. A project of such proportions was possible only thanks to a demanding series of conditions. In the first place, adequate funding was available; I am grateful to the MacArthur Foundation for financial support. Second, the project was made possible by a number of coordinators, one in each country, who helped me to select the themes and researchers and, finally, to bring the various strands of research to conclusion. I was fortunate enough to have the collaboration of Sakhela Buhlungu in South Africa, Maria Célia Paoli in Brazil, Mauricio García-Villegas in Colombia, Shalini Randeria and Achyut Yagnik in India, and Teresa Cruz e Silva in Mozambique. My most heartfelt gratitude extends to all of them.

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Boaventura de Sousa Santos

**Note**

- 1 Besides this English edition, this series is also being published in Brazil (Civilização Brasileira), Mexico (Fondo de Cultura Económica), Italy (Città Aperta Edizioni), and Portugal (Afrontamento).