Cold war internationalism: the case of labor

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Methodology

• international organizations will be used as laboratories and platforms from which I get access to a wide range of actors and discourses and from which I can reconstruct struggles
International Labor Organization

• Founded in **1919**
  – To promote social peace
  – Against war and Bolchevik revolution
• 1946 ILO becomes a UN specialized agency
• The ILO has a **tripartite structure**
• Each member state sends to the annual conference
  • 2 government representatives
  • 1 workers delegate
  • 1 employer delegate.
ILO structure

Each government sends 4 delegates
2 gvt delegates + 1 worker + 1 employer delegate

Annual International Labor Conference
Votes on recommendations and conventions
The conference elects

Governing body
The executive body of the ILO
triartite(2+1+1)
Each composant constitutes a « group » (not organized nationally)

International Labor office or BIT
The ILO’s permanent secrétariat
Directed by a director (general)

Directors French Albert Thomas (1919-1932), British Harold Butler (1932-1938),
US John Winant (1939-1941), Irish Edward Phelan (1941-1948),
General director US David Morse (1948-1970), British Wilfried Jenks
United Nation Economic Commission for Europe

- Created in **1947. An all-European body.**
- **Seat in Geneva**
- The commission meets once a year.
- The secretariat is very powerful
- From 1947 to 1957 it is led by **Gunnar Myrdal, a famous Swedish economist (social-democrat).**
- **Specialized committees meet on a regular basis.**
- **The US** is a member of the ECE.
• UNESCO’s European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences.
• Based in Vienna from 1963 under the leadership of the Polish economist Adam Schaff.
UN Development Programmes

• Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance 1946-19
• UN Development Programme (UNDP) since 1965 (New York)
• UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) founded in 1966, since 1975 specialized agency of the UN
1-Labor as a Cold War issue
The three symbolic keys representing tripartism used at the inauguration ceremony of the ILO Building on June 6, 1926
David A. Morse (USA), Fifth Director-General of the ILO, 1948-1970
Three freedoms

Free economy

Forced or free labor

Freedom of association
The forced Labor decade (1947-1957)

- 1947 The American Federation of Labor raises the question of forced labor in the USSR at the ECOSOC conference.
- 1949 Creation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). End of a united international labor movement under the leadership of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)
- 1951-1953 Ad hoc committee UN-ECOSOC/ILO
- 1953 First report
- 1953-1956 ILO committee on forced labour
- 1956 Second report
- 1956 and 1957 Forced Labor Convention discussed at the International Labor Conference
- 1957 Convention 105 adopted (one abstention: the US employers)
Committee on Forced Labour, Geneva, May 1953. From left to right: Dag Hammarskjold (United Nations Secretary-General), Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar (Chairperson), David A. Morse (ILO Director-General) and Enrique Garcia-Sayan (former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru). May 1953.
Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar (India)
Chairperson of the ad hoc committee on forced Labor (1951-1953)
Freedom of association

• Convention 87 voted in 1948.

• Article 2
  Workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, to join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation.

• Article 3
  1. Workers' and employers' organisations shall have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives in full freedom, to organise their administration and activities and to formulate their programmes.
  
  2. The public authorities shall refrain from any interference which would restrict this right or impede the lawful exercise thereof.
What is freedom of association?

As a result of this conception underlying the entire monograph, the criteria applied to each individual issue are one sided and by necessity limited to one point of view only.

In CZ the government, the economic and administrative organs by mobilizing all efforts and all resources for the building of socialism ensure the interests of the people. That is also why the relationships between the TU and the state and the government’s economic agencies is one of mutual co-operation.

In the US the basic tenet is that within the framework of a free society there shall be quality of opportunity and representation to its citizens as individuals and as members of groups or associations.

Employers and workers are free to organize their own associations to conduct their internal affairs and to advance their interests. There is no governmental intervention in these.

This is well exemplified in the basically private and voluntary system of collective bargaining in the US.

AILO FEWO 8- 17, 6 January 1956. Response of the Czech gvt

• AILO FEWO 8-61 United states Response US gvt 20 sept 1955
C105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

- Article 1
- Each Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to suppress and not to make use of any form of forced or compulsory labour--
  - (a) as a means of political coercion or education or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system;
  - (b) as a method of mobilising and using labour for purposes of economic development;
  - (c) as a means of labour discipline;
  - (d) as a punishment for having participated in strikes;
  - (e) as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.
BHAKTAVATSALAM Government delegate, India, (Minister for Agriculture, State of Madras)

• In past controversy, many of us tended to assume that the countries of the world could be divided into two groups: those whose workers' and employers' organizations were independent and free from the control of their governments and those where they were not. [But] there are grades of shading, and variable and ponderable, and less ponderable, degrees of control (...) I would like to draw attention today (to) the development of a new class of management (...) (R)epresentatives from the relevant categories in such organization should be enabled to play their part in the I.L.O.”

• ILC 1956, 10 sitting, p133
2-From Common issues to unequal development
1-Productivity

• “the efforts directed in increasing productivity in both the West and the East countries are essentially alike but that the similarity of effort is completely obscured by the disparity of language; mainly for political reasons” ...I have often wondered if the subject did not lend itself for a general study or for an article in the International Labor review which would bring out the similarity of efforts and even of methods, the reasons why certain measures are taken in certain countries and the fact that most measures find their counterpart under one term or another in most other countries... it may contribute of the pacification of many minds”

• Jan Shuil, responsible for the TU activities in the ILO, 1952
• ILOA Z 11/1/2 Activities in the Field of Productivity, 1952-1956
2-Planning

Gunnar Myrdal, director of the ECE 1947-1957.
3-Manpower training

ILO International Training Centre, Turin, Italy
Opened 1964
Vistula Basin project (1968-1973)
(Archiv UNDP New York UN-A S-139/1/22)

• Direct involvement of the UN was small and most of the infrastructure and guidance was provided by the Polish government.

• The UNDP sent one single project manager complemented by highly trained short term consultants sent by specialized agencies: the WHO, the FAO and the World Meteorological Organisation.

• In addition 14 Polish Fellows were sent to various Western countries.

• In fact, as stated in the UNDP report

• “the project could be termed as one of “intellectual cooperation” rather than “technical assistance” in the conventional sense
Gunnar Myrdal in 1948

“Europe is going forward not back and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia particularly, will and should be more industrialized than before, a new balance between East and West must come. But it will not be the old one that left the East in a semi-colonial state”.

Geneva UN-ECE ARR 14/1360 080 Myrdal 1948.
Failure of the Industrial Commission for Eastern Europe

• In 1948 US and Western European delegates refuse to set up an industrial commission for Eastern Europe within the ECE

• In January 1949 Truman announces an international programme of development in the UN.

• For the Altman (Polish government delegate at the ILO Governing Body in 1949, 109, p.60)

  « It is merely an attempt to further capitalist expansion of the United States both at home and abroad by facilitating the direct domination of underdeveloped countries by foreign monopolies.»
• Development as a Cold War international project
Bulgaria as a model for agricultural development

• Bulgaria with its strong cooperatives tradition was seen as a model. Therefore already in 1963 Bulgarian authority organized a seminar on cooperatives for Asian countries with the support of the ILO.

• Jean Fauchon, Head of rural studies in the ILO and an expert on agricultural economy, believed “that the experience of these countries in the field of rural development can be usefully applied in many developing countries.”

• In 1970 Jean Ozet who had replaced him encouraged the creation of a rural development center in Bulgaria which could become a kind of hub for a network of analog institutions in less developed countries.
Czechoslovakia and Social security

- In 1956 Evzen Erban, Czech Minister of Social Security, expressed the wish that his country could organize a training seminar on social security with the support of the EPTA and the ILO.
- In 1957 in a letter to David Morse, the Belgian deputy director Rens said that the Czech project was serving propaganda purpose.
- Finally Czech actors could hold their first seminar in Prague in 1959. It became a way to promote a state-organized system of social security.
- When the minister Erban, who had been a social democrat before joining the communist party, pointed out that social security should remain a state undertaking and not be run by private companies, that resonated in fact with the ILO conventions and preoccupations of the time and indeed in the field of social security or health care, Eastern European countries had a lot to offer.
Seminar on small scale industry within the framework of overall economic development planning organized in September and October 1966 in Prag (with the support of the ILO and UNDP)

• “While recognizing certain advantages of a market oriented economy, most participants felt that in view of the range of problems facing the developing countries including the shortage of capital and foreign exchange they could not afford to rely wholly on the interplay of market forces. There should be a central authority of the government responsible for planning activities in major economic sectors of the national economy...”

THANK YOU
For your attention!

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