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His recent books published include :

- *Les Services dans l' Économie française* (Laurence Bancel-Charensol et Muriel Jougleux co-auteurs), Armand Colin, 1999.
- *La Mondialisation en Question* (Jean-Claude Delaunay éd.), L'Harmattan, 1999
- *Le capitalisme contemporain : questions de fond* (Jean-Claude Delaunay éd.), L'Harmattan, 2001.
- *Le capitalisme contemporain : des théorisations nouvelles ?* (Jean-Claude Delaunay éd.), L'Harmattan, 2001.
- *Les centres d'appels : un secteur en clair-obscur* (en collaboration avec Noel Lechat), L'Harmattan, 2003.

Wage Earners and their Conflicts Today in the World

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We would like in that short paper to draw the main lines of the political situation of wage earners at the beginning of the 21st century (first part) in such a way we could get some conclusions concerning factors of unity and factors of division and opposition among them, at a world scale (second part).

I. The Three Components of Labor Today and their Respective Dynamics

Labour, today, is composed of 3 parts. The first one is that of peasants, the second one is that of material production workers, the third one is that of services. What are their respective weights? Their dynamics? The answer to these questions is given on the basis of the well known three sectors statistics, the only we have at a world scale.

1. Labor and production in agricultural sector

Tables 1 and 2 concern not only workers but non workers also.

Table 1: Evolution of world active population by large categories (%) (1950-1990)

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	Total 1990
Agriculture	67.1	61.3	56.1	52.0	48.9	1222
Industry	14.9	17.2	19.2	20.3	20.0	500
Services	18.0	21.5	24.7	27.7	31.1	777
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	2499

Source: BIT Statistics (unity of last column = million)

Considering active population of agriculture, table 1 shows that the decrease of that category of population is a structural and heavy tendency. We can estimate that, in 2000, this kind of population was about the 47% of the total of world active people. Approximately the half of population is occupied feeding the other half, if we don't take into account.

Therefore, active population in the world is still working in agriculture, but less and less. Important movements of increasing productivity can be observed here. It is well known

that, in France for instance, active population of agriculture represents 4% of active population. In China, it represents 50% of active population (cf. table 2). Agricultural active population is mainly focused in countries which are industrially developing and in those which don't develop at all. For this part of active population, globalisation is likely considered with every negative approach.

2. Labor in material production

We name labour of material production the labour whose the results keep in them the track of raw materials, industrially transformed. It is here that working class is considered to be rooted. Considering that non active population is not very numerous, we can conclude that world working class represents 20% of total active population;

ILO statistics (table 1) show an important increase of workers between 1950 and 1980 (+5 percentages points) followed by the stagnation of that number between 1980 and 1990. As we know that that category of population is decreasing in industrially developed countries, these world figures could be considered as the arithmetic result of two sorts of movements : 1) Increase in under developed countries and 2) decrease in industrially developed countries; there would a sort of transfer movement between the two categories of countries : developed and emerging ones.

Table 2: Evolution of active population en China by large sectors (1981-2004)

	1981	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
Primary	68.1	62.4	60.1	52.0,	50.0	46.9
Secondar y	18.3	20.8	21.4	23.0	22.5	22.5
Tertiary	13.6	16.8	18.5	24,8	27,5	30.6
Total(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (u=10000)	44165	50112	65323	68855	73992	76823

Source : China Statistical Yearbook (2005)

3. Labor in service sectors

Table 3 shows the variation of relative weighs in the three sectors, in the world (1990-1950) and in China (2004-1981)

Table 3: Relative variations in the world (1990-1950) and in China (2004-1981)

By large sectors (points of percentages)

	Variations in the world 1990-1950	Variations in China 2004-1981

	(% points)	(% points)
Primaire	-18	-21
Secondaire	+5	+4
Tertiaire	+13	+17

It clearly results from these figures that the labour leader of these contemporary evolutions is labor in services and not the traditional working class. If we consider the evolutions in the world and in China, although for different periods of time, we can see that they are quite similar. Growth of tertiary labor is a rather recent phenomenon. In the developed countries of Europe, it is around the year 1975 that the service population went over 50% of the total active population. Right now, population of services in these countries is around 70%-80%. Is it a fake generated by globalisation or a new age of development? Personally, I think (with many others) that we belong to a “service society”; we analysed this situation with Marxist analysis in a book published in French in 1987 (The stakes of service society).

According to the contemporary tendencies that we observe, here are the main conclusions that we can draw;

(1) Labor is mainly agricultural labor. As we already noticed, half of the world population works for feeding the other half. In the future, it is likely that a lesser part of active population is going to be requested for this. But there can be compensatory agricultural works (for industrial purposes) which could lower the decrease of that category of population. Furthermore, there are new social responsibilities which are devoted to peasants (taking care of nature, for instance).

(2) Working class population is growing globally but at a lesser rate of growth than the services population. Working class, on which analysis of Marx and Engels were mainly relying, is following a plain evolution. At the side of working class, whose material production was (and is) the basis of her consciousness and of her strength, are developing other categories of wage earners : services active population.

(3) Services form a population heterogeneous. They are composed at least of two large sub-categories : 1) Those whose job is mainly oriented by globalisation (Global markets, finance, competition, transportation, commercial flows, and related technologies), 2) Those whose job is mainly stimulated by evolutions in the age of population, her localisation (cutisation of the world), her level of wealth, her level of needs according to the evolution of society (needs of health services, training, personal services, scientific research)

Considering these evolution, the questions raised are of twice nature: 1) How is evolving the political situation for wage earners? How class struggle is going from a

national point of view? 2) How proletarian internationalism is going to evolve from an international point of view?

II. Class Struggle from an Inside (National) and Outside (International) Point of View

We believe that, during the last twenty years, capitalism as a system has reinforced his sociological basis and capabilities, even if its internal contradictions has not disappeared at all. Capitalist class appears to day as being at the vanguard of the fight for liberty, after the open failure of the bureaucratic forms of soviet socialism. It appears as being at the vanguard of technological progress. By contrast, the wage earner class is divided and the interests of its components are opposed, sometimes strongly, from an internal (national) and external (international) point of view.

Knowing the difficulties, it seems clear that any revolutionary objective can only be a middle and mainly long term one, at the moment. We are going to analyze the situation by distinguishing its internal and external aspects, even if they are, nowadays, tightly connected.

1. Class struggle on the internal side

Factors of coherence and convergence between working class and other parts of wage earners are less important, in the short run, than factors of divergence and conflicts.

(1) gathering factors

Development of services relies on development of a high technological level industry. The term “post-industrial” to characterise present society is not convenient.

Services workers are also exploited, like industrial workers. They generate surplus-value. Some of them are well-paid at the moment, but it is a temporary situation. Capitalism is naturally greedy.

Female workers are mainly located in services sectors. Feminist movements will improve the power of traditional workers organisation.

(2) Factors of division and weakness

Working class is not only numerically decreasing. She is socially more and more under valued.

In a country like France, working class has lost her traditional allies : peasants, who are also decreasing and losing their previous position.

The new categories of wage earners have conceptions of life which are different from those of traditional workers.

Feminist movements usually think that working class is a Male movement and that unions don't understand theirs claims.

Among the new categories of wage earners, a part is well-paid while another part is

less and less well paid. Wealth gap is increasing every where. These new well paid categories have the feeling that they are technologically at the vanguard. They usually consider, contrary to working class, that globalisation is a good and normal process. Any return to nation is considered as a regressive behaviour.

Working class organisations have not a good understanding of all that. They try to get their head out of water. But they have much trouble to stay alive and they try to find solutions of short term.

2. External class struggle

The main factor of weakening of the traditional working movement comes from the fact that proletarian internationalism relies not only on political principles but raise also immediate economic opposition.

The main factors of weakening are the following

Workers of developed countries are more and more directly opposed to workers of emerging countries through sub-contracting, off shoring, delocalisation of industrial plants.

Workers of developed countries are divided into two parts. They are producers and consumers. As consumers, they want to get the higher benefit from underdeveloped countries. They can be incited to do that for the reason that they are internally exploited. They can hope solve their purchasing power problems by having the benefit of low price imports. It is completely stupid but very efficient. Therefore, they are in favour of the maximum rate of exploitation in emerging countries.

Considering their diminishing number and age evolutions, the rate of retirees for active workers is growing. Workers of developed countries can hope to get their pensions paid through the financial process of globalisation. Pension funds, for instance, are expecting to get money from the exploitation process of emerging countries.

Union movement is mainly national based organised. Unions have first a national view of their problems and of their solutions.

3. Summary of the part

Now, factors of division and of weakening of workers are far more powerful, according to our opinion, than factors of strength against the main tendencies of capitalism. Capitalist class is ruling the global process. They dominate class struggle inside nations and they manage their main oppositions. There is non global capitalist governance of world problems, only an effort in that direction. Anyway, they can consider that they are on the right way.

III. Conclusion: How Communist Theory Can Try to Handle the Situation?

Whatever leaders of capitalist class are going to say, they don't solve problems, with

wage earners and among them. Therefore, there is no reason for workers to capitulate and lose any hope. They have to undertake a long process of building a new kind of hegemony; it is difficult. But there is no other way, unless they finely accept slavery, which is possible;

On the internal side (nation) the objective is to get unity among traditional workers, services workers, and new categories of high tech and scientific workers. Class consciousness doesn't go down from the sky. It is a long way to go to that unity. But it was the same during the 19 century. The role of communist parties can't be put on the side of the road for such strategy. All these "social movement" theories are fakes, electoral elements of short term strategy. Communist understanding of the situation, deeply rooted in Marxism, is a necessity of our time. This is one of the reasons of the legitimacy of the WAPE, even if WAPE can't be considered as a political party.

On the external side, traditional goals of proletarian internationalism have to be preserved and extended, especially for the preservation of peace and of democracy between nations. But new items have to be added. Namely, the labor movement has to widen its international goals by including a high and very active practice of economic cooperation among nations