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Gresea International Seminar

24th November 2016

Transnational Corporations and Social Movements

Forms of resistance in the fragmented corporation

Centre des chartreux,
Rue des Chartreux, n°70
1000 Brussels

Registration is compulsory: info@gresea.be

Participation fee: 7 euros (free for unemployed workers, students, and the members of the network) (includes documentation and lunch)

Information: 32.2/219.70.76 - info@gresea.be -
<http://www.mirador-multinationales.be/>

Programme

Working languages: French – English – Spanish

8h00-8h30	Registration
8h30-10h30	<p>Panel 1: "From the integrated corporation to global supply chains: how to characterise the evolution of transnational corporations?"</p> <p>Transnational corporations have been an object of study until the 1980s when certain political concerns and the radical domination of neoclassical economics have progressively constrained this field of research. Still, transnational corporations have changed since Alfred Chandler's multi-divisional big corporation. First of all they have changed on the inside: the growing use of sub-contracting, the financialisation of companies, the remoteness of decision-making centres, management by restructuring. Today's transnational corporation can no longer be understood through yesterday's analytical frameworks. The environment in which corporations operate is also deeply changing. The proliferation of bilateral trade and investment agreements contributes to the creation of an "international legal architecture" that benefits private interests.</p> <p>Jean-Christophe Defraigne, economist, professor at the Université Saint-Louis, Brussels "The impact of financialisation on production processes and global supply chains"</p> <p>Wladimir Andreff, economist, professor emeritus at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne "Investment strategies of transnational corporations originated in emerging economies"</p> <p>Brid Brennan, researcher at the Transnational Institute (TNI), Amsterdam "Trade and investment agreements: towards an international architecture of impunity?"</p>
10h30-10h45	Coffee break

<p>10h45-12h15</p>	<p>Panel 2 "Transnational corporations and collective industrial relations"</p> <p>The globalisation of the economy has transformed the geography of industrial production. Transnational corporations from the South compete with oligopolies from the North. As some states from the periphery progressively gain a decisive place on the international stage of the economy, older centres of globalisation are faced with substantial de-industrialisation processes, both in terms of added value and employment. What are the consequences of this transformation on industrial relations in the new host countries or in the countries of origin of foreign investment?</p> <p>Violaine Delteil, economist, professor at Université Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle "Transnational investment strategy and social regulation in East European countries"</p> <p>Marcelo Delfini, sociologist, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (Conicet), Buenos Aires, Argentina "Employment and industrial relations in transnational corporations: case study of an Argentinian subsidiary"</p>
<p>12h15-13h00</p>	<p>Lunch break</p>
<p>13h00-14h30</p>	<p>Panel 3 "Regulation of global supply chains: perspectives"</p> <p>Faced with the absence of supranational social or labour law, NGOs and trade unions have long buttressed corporate social responsibility (CSR) arrangements, in order to regulate the social or environmental consequences of the action of transnational corporations. The failure of these arrangements raises again the issue of legally binding constraints. This panel will help review the initiative aimed at obtaining a UN binding treaty for transnational corporations.</p> <p>Melik Ozden, director, Cetim, Switzerland "A UN binding treaty for transnational corporations: challenges and perspectives"</p> <p>Erika González, researcher, Observatorio de Multinacionales en América Latina (OMAL), Spain "Putting an end to the impunity of transnational corporations"</p>
<p>14h30-14h45</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>14h45-17h00</p>	<p>Round table "Struggles within global supply chains"</p> <p>In the last decades the double movement of fragmentation and internationalisation bore multiple consequences on the forms of in-company social conflict. The increasing distance of decision-making centres as well as the competition induced within corporate groups have forced social movement actors to adapt their struggles, sometimes with little support from traditional trade union organisations. This round table will facilitate the interchange of experience concerning successful and symbolic social struggles.</p> <p>Jenny Chan, sociologist, University of Oxford "<i>Struggles at Foxconn in China</i>"</p> <p>Benoît Borrits, journalist and writer, co-founder and facilitator of Association Autogestion, member of the Espaces Marx scientific committee "<i>The fralibs: from transnational corporation to self-management</i>"</p> <p>Juan Montes Cató, sociologist, Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Laborales (CEIL), Conicet "<i>The Praxair in Argentina: trade union militancy within a transnational corporation in Argentina</i>"</p> <p>Eduardo Chagas, secretary general of the European Transports Federation (ETF) "The dockers' struggle throughout Europe" (TBC).</p>
<p>17h00-17h30</p>	<p>Closing by Gresea</p>