Globalization from Below: Labor Activists Challenging the AFL-CIO Foreign Policy Program

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Abstract
Building on Alberto Melucci’s argument that to understand a social movement, we must look at the period before emergence as a social movement, this article examines labor activists’ efforts to reform the foreign policy program of the AFL-CIO: has sufficient groundwork been laid that a serious possibility of an alternative globalization movement can emerge from within US Labor?

This article discusses general efforts to challenge the AFL-CIO’s foreign policy program. It examines the work of US Labor Against the War (USLAW) since its founding in 2003; the California State AFL-CIO’s formal repudiation of the AFL-CIO foreign policy program in 2004, and then efforts at the 2005 National AFL-CIO Convention to keep California’s ‘Build Unity and Trust With Workers Worldwide’ resolution from being fairly discussed at the Convention. Based on evidence presented, it then evaluates whether there is an alternative globalization movement emerging within US Labor or not.

Keywords
AFL-CIO, Labor, labor imperialism, labor movements, social movements, sociology, USLAW, WWSC

Introduction
The ‘anti-globalization’ movement exploded into US public consciousness in Seattle at the end of 1999, and part of the impact was due to the presence of labor unions in the protests. At that time, great hope was expressed by activists that the alliance between ‘Teamsters and Turtles’ would join the power of the labor movement with the environmental movement on a continuing basis and that, together, these would further propel forward the global movement for social and economic justice (which was how the activists’ conceived this movement). Unfortunately, this never happened.
While Labor’s role in the Seattle protests was vastly overstated — it was basically an effort to pressure the Clinton Administration into inviting AFL-CIO President John Sweeney “to the table” of global political-economic discussions, and went much further than ever intended on the streets of Seattle — it still suggested that something was happening within Labor beyond just getting Sweeney a seat; maybe things were not as ‘stable’ as tradition might suggest.

This suggestion, it is argued herein, is the more correct interpretation: there is something happening regarding globalization within the labor movement. This ‘something’ is small, it is not consolidated; yet it seems to be resonating — and expanding. And certainly, it is not controlled by the established leadership of the unions, although established leaders have been able to limit it to date. This ‘something’ is a globalization project from below, an effort ultimately to join the opposition movement to the top-down corporate-military globalization that has spread worldwide. This alternative globalization project within labor has emerged and is struggling to consolidate itself, despite opposition from established leaders, ultimately seeking hegemony over labor movement politics. Arguably, this alternative globalization project has the potential to develop into an actual social movement and, if its potential can be realized, it will attain hegemony over US labor politics — radically transforming the AFL-CIO foreign policy program from combating international labor solidarity to actively building this solidarity, with workers, peasants and all seeking a better world — thereby, making a substantial contribution to the advancement of the global economic and social justice movement.

The question addressed in this article is this: has the groundwork been laid sufficiently for the alternative globalization movement within the AFL-CIO to emerge and ultimately challenge the established labor leadership for political hegemony? And, if so, how can we understand these developments so as to help us better evaluate comparable developments in and around other social movements?

Understanding Social Movement Emergence

The argument is that analysts must understand the processes by which a movement emerges, and not assume that its entrance onto a scene is when things begin. In fact, the theoretical aspect of this article is based on Alberto Melucci’s (1989, 1995) argument that to understand a social movement, we must look at the period before emergence as a social movement — it is among the individuals and in the small groups that emerge that we can understand a social movement. Melucci questions the very basis of much established social movement research, arguing that a major weakness of this research is that movements have been generally treated as empirical realities, as though they already exist. He believes researchers need to recognize the constitutive processes by which they are constructed, i.e. that if one wants to understand the emergence and development of social movements, one should not treat a movement as a given, but rather focus on how it has been built. In fact, the central focus of his research has been to understand the processes of how collective action is created (Melucci, 1995).

Quickly, Melucci sees a two-part model of mobilization, based on creating a collective identity and then engaging in collective action. People have to join to construct a collective identity — which he defines as an ‘interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place’ (Melucci, 1995: 44) — and then, together, they have to challenge publicly the status quo at some level, each taking some personal risk (no matter how large or small) to help advance their political position. “Collective action,” he writes (1995: 61), “should be thought of as a construct ... Action is an interactive, constructive process within a field of possible project, creating a...
of possibilities and limits recognized by the actors.' In other words, he sees people coming together, seeking to address a problem, agreeing to build a group and then emotionally committing to that project, and then collectively carrying it out. The idea is that each collective action, in turn, generates more interest, more people and requires development of a more inclusive collective identity from which they engage further in collective action, ultimately – assuming they are successful – creating a social movement.

Carol Mueller, researching the origins of the women's movement, supports Melucci's approach. Analyzing Melucci's work through examining the origins of the women's liberation movement, she notes that Melucci's focus is on 'submerged networks' or small, separate groups, engaging in cultural experimentation, concluding that in these cultural laboratories, new collective identities are constructed from the expressive interactions of individuals experimenting with new cultural codes, forms of relationships, and alternative perceptions of the world (Mueller, 1994: 237). Further, she notes, 'The status quo must be challenged at the cultural level in terms of legitimacy before mass collective action is feasible' (Mueller, 1994: 239).

**Activists Challenge the AFL-CIO Foreign Policy Program**

It is argued herein that, by examining the efforts of US Labor's foreign policy activists as they have challenged the AFL-CIO foreign policy program, we can see how they have been able to win the much larger group of general labor activists to their side and that, together, these two groups of activists are laying the groundwork to contest Labor's established leaders for political hegemony over the Labor movement. It is argued that these activists have successfully challenged the status quo at the cultural level within the labor movement, and delegitimized the traditional AFL-CIO foreign policy program among general rank and file labor activists sufficiently so that the two groups can join and work compatibly against the established labor leadership.

The focus on activists is necessary, although not sufficient:

it is argued – following Golden (1988) – that researchers can best understand the development of a labor movement by focusing primary attention on activists ... Activists play key roles because they are the ones that do the conceptualizing and thinking for the movement, and through the framing processes (Snow et al., 1997 [1986]) are the ones who interpret the situation to members and to the outside public. They also serve as mobilizing agents, without whom there would be a severely limited amount of conscious collective action. Therefore, activists – both inside the labor center and throughout the supporting network – are central to the development of the labor movement as a whole ... At the same time, however, we cannot collapse our understanding of a labor movement to the activists. No matter how good or how innovative activists are, unless a substantial number of the members respond affirmatively to their efforts, there is not a labor movement but simply a collection of activists and/or organizations – and they are not the same. (Scipes, 2003: 13–14)

In other words, while recognizing that the affect of activists is important, we are trying not to claim too much. The focus herein is on the activists: has one smaller group of activists (i.e. the labor foreign policy activists) delegitimized sufficiently the traditional AFL-CIO foreign policy program to more general labor activists so they can work together? Or, to put it another way, has such groundwork been developed that an alternative globalization movement has emerged, one that ultimately could contest political legitimacy within the US labor movement?

How could we tell if this is correct? How can we 'measure' this? When talking about the labor movement – which organizationally consists of a number of national and international (having US and foreign members) unions and state-wide labor federations united in a labor center, such as the
AFL-CIO – we must focus on organizational change, and not just on individual actions. For example, a changed political position of a major organizational component would signify significant movement on a particular issue because of the extensive educational work and cohesive unification (building unity and solidarity relations) that must be done beforehand to cause such a change. It is argued that having an international, national or even state-wide labor organization (consisting of multiple international and national affiliates) formally repudiate the AFL-CIO foreign policy program would provide sufficient support to substantiate such a claim. Should evidence develop of such an event, then the possibility of an emerging alternative globalization movement is realistic and not just a labor foreign policy activist pipe dream.

And does the emergence of the US Labor Against the War (USLAW) and the Worker to Worker Solidarity Committee (WWSC) suggest that the next level of struggle will be at the organizational level? The question on the table now is this: will USLAW and the WWSC be able to motivate labor activists across the movement to mobilize sufficiently to formally repudiate the current AFL-CIO foreign policy program and force its reform?4

Answering that question remains in the future. For this article, the emergence of the alternative globalization project within labor is discussed by focusing specifically on efforts to understand and challenge the AFL-CIO foreign policy program. It is argued that a set of specific events during the mid-2000s – the founding of US Labor Against the War in 2003; the passage of the ‘Build Unity and Trust with Workers Worldwide’ resolution by the California State AFL-CIO in 2004; and both the passage of the resolution to ‘Rapidly Remove’ US forces out of Iraq, and the efforts to keep any affirmative discussion of the California State AFL-CIO’s ‘Build Unity and Trust’ resolution off the floor of the 2005 National AFL-CIO Convention in Chicago – mark a key ‘juncture’ in the struggle to reform the AFL-CIO foreign policy program. These events together suggest that the possibility of ultimate success has become real.

The literature on both AFL-CIO foreign policy and labor internationalism is discussed to provide an intellectual background to current developments. Then, USLAW is discussed, followed by a discussion of the WWSC. Accordingly, after illuminating the processes by which it has been done, the hypothesis that international labor activists have created an alternative globalization project from below within the labor movement is evaluated.

General Background

Unknown to most of the general public, there have been major efforts by union members to reform the labor movement in a number of different ways over roughly the past 40 years (since circa 1968), which have ebbed and flowed since that time.5 One such effort, which is the focus herein, has been to challenge the AFL-CIO’s foreign policy program. Initially, the goal was to stop the AFL-CIO from supporting dictators, military coups and the US Government efforts against progressive regimes around the world. However, this has subsequently developed to not only challenge the AFL-CIO foreign policy program, but to do this in conscious solidarity with working people around the world which, although not usually enunciated in these terms, means joining the global movement for economic social justice or, as otherwise known, the developing ‘globalization from below’ movement.

The efforts to create the new globalization from below project within the labor movement are rooted in three general processes that have affected the labor movement over particularly the last 40 or so years: intellectual efforts, particularly by those writing on labor history, to understand the development of the US labor movement, and particularly its imperialist foreign policy; labor activists’ efforts to expose and end this labor imperialism, while trying to build international labor...
solidarity (see Scipes, 2010a: 69–82); and general efforts to reform the labor movement (see, for example, Early, 2009; Fletcher and Gapasin, 2008). These three ‘streams’ combined into a river in the mid-1980s to create a number of projects to build conscious international labor solidarity.

**Building International Labor Solidarity**

During the 1980s, there were a number of internationally-oriented projects that were developed by labor activists and progressive union officials from within the labor movement, initiated in different areas across the USA, each designed to build international labor solidarity. The key development was the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador (hereafter, NLC). The NLC emerged in opposition to the Reagan Administration’s support for the reactionary government in El Salvador, and later, worked to stop the AFL-CIO from endorsing any possible effort by US President Ronald Reagan to invade Nicaragua. In a detailed analysis of the NLC’s work, Andrew Battista made the following evaluation:

> It was an integral part of the US Central America peace movement that opposed the Reagan administration and influenced congressional action on Central America, the most divisive foreign policy issue of the 1980s. The NLC also challenged the Central America policy and anticommunist international outlook of the AFL-CIO and sought to chart a new foreign policy for the US labor movement, and thereby provoked the most serious and open policy split in American labor in several decades. Further, the NLC contributed to the long and difficult task in rebuilding a strong labor-liberal coalition in American national policies. Last but not least, NLC was part of a larger and ongoing rift in the leadership of American labor that lay in the background of the dramatic 1995 leadership change at the AFL-CIO. (Battista, 2002: 422)

There were other projects that emerged from the grassroots within the labor movement. In 1984, Local 10 of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union refused to unload a Dutch ship, the *Nedloyd Kimberly*, that was carrying South African cargo when it tied up in San Francisco – the Local finally gave in after 10 days when a US Federal judge threatened to fine the Local $25,000 a day if it continued. This activity took place after considerable efforts in the Local to build support for liberation struggles in Southern Africa, and included considerable outreach to the various social communities in the Bay Area (Scipes, 1985). There were a number of projects across the USA, especially at the local level, that were working to support the anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa.

There were other, on-going projects. One of the most successful and long lasting was the Philippine Workers Support Committee (PWSC) initiated by John Witeck, then an AFSCME staffer in Hawaii. Witeck, who had traveled to the Philippines in 1984 for the International Solidarity Affair sponsored by the Kilsuong Mayo Uno Labor Center (KMU), had been so inspired that he got others to do the same and then set up a nation-wide network to build support for Filipino workers and to mobilize people for speaking tours by Filipino trade unionists. He published the PWSC ‘Philippine Labor Alert’ for years, eventually reaching 40 issues in 1998. One of the strongest PWSC chapters was in Boston, where activists developed extensive efforts to support Filipino workers.

The Labor Committee on the Middle East, developed in San Francisco, was a unique effort, headed by Jeff Blankfort and Steve Zeltzer. This was an effort to look at developments in the Middle East from a rank and file perspective, with the goal – unfortunately, yet unfilled – of getting Labor to break ties with Israel, and to actively support the liberation struggle of the Palestinians.

American activists – spearheaded by the United Electrical workers (UE), a union not affiliated with the AFL-CIO – began making connections with Mexican workers, and most especially with
the Authentic Labor Front (the FAT in Spanish) in the early 1990s (Hathaway, 2000: 175–96). This was joined by workers and organizations in the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, which united people from the USA and Canada with those in Mexico (Bacon, 2004; Vogel, 2006).

Along with these projects, there was an explosion of writing about AFL-CIO foreign policy. Not only did this focus on the foreign policy program overall, but there was an increasing amount of writing on labor’s foreign operations in particular regions – most importantly, Latin America – but in specific countries as well.5

These internationalist efforts – along with general dissatisfaction with the efforts of AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland – led to repudiation of Kirkland’s hand-picked successor, Thomas Donohue in 1995, and the election of John Sweeney to the presidency of the AFL-CIO (Dark, 1999; for details on foreign policy activist efforts, see Bacon, 1995; Battista, 2002; Buhle, 1999; Shorrock, 2003).

With the 1995 election of John Sweeney to the presidency of the AFL-CIO, the labor center appeared to have changed its foreign policy ‘stripes’. One of the things that Sweeney did was disband the semi-autonomous regional organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Western Europe, and put them under control of the newly established and centrally controlled ‘Solidarity Center’ (officially known as the American Center for International Labor Solidarity or ACILS). It appeared to have changed its international orientation from ‘anti-communism’ to ‘international labor solidarity’ (Scipes, 2000).

Sweeney’s election and apparent changes made regarding foreign operations caused foreign policy activists to shift focus for a while. Yet, by 2000, this started changing as critics such as Judy Ancel (2000), Peter Rachleff (2000), and myself (Scipes, 2000: 6–7) each published articles, noting specific problems that continued under the Sweeney Administration.

The biggest problem was the AFL-CIO’s continuing relationship with the National Endowment for Democracy or NED. The NED was established by the Reagan Administration in 1983 to do overtly what the CIA had previously tried to do covertly (Blum, 2000: 179–83; Golinger, 2005; Robinson, 1996; Scipes, 2005b). The AFL-CIO joined with the international wing of the Democratic Party, the international wing of the Republican Party, and the international wing of the Chamber of Commerce to serve as one of the NED’s four ‘core’ institutes (Scipes, 2005b).

A key development was the April 2002 coup attempt against democratically elected Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez – this is the coup attempt that an Irish film crew captured on tape and was later released as The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.6 The AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center aided the leadership of the CTV, both in organizing meetings with business and some political leaders before the coup, and with later denying CTV leadership involvement in the coup attempt itself (see Scipes, 2010a: 56–66).

Other activists contributed their research to deepening the understanding of AFL-CIO foreign policy. Around this time, Dean Frutiger (2002) examined labor’s campaign against China, and argued it was a continuation of their ‘Cold War’ policies, despite the claim that they had moved beyond them.

Tim Shorrock (2002, 2003) then weighed in with two articles on current AFL-CIO foreign policy. The latter one was particularly important as it detailed the emerging efforts to challenge the AFL-CIO foreign policy program from within labor.

Meanwhile, Fred Hirsch pushed forward his own efforts to again try to get the AFL-CIO to ‘Clear the Air’ about their foreign operations. He had initiated a resolution at the 2002 California State AFL-CIO Biannual Convention, and it appeared about to pass, when California AFL-CIO leaders in attendance offered a compromise: in exchange for ‘watering down’ the resolution, top-level AFL-CIO foreign policy people would come to California and have a meeting to discuss these issues with la accepted – n from Califor substantive d feared someti right to bring

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Changes in the Social Context

The question begging to be answered here is what happened, why have developments in the early 21st century seemed to have struck us in ways never before seen. To answer this, the changes in the social context must be considered. The focus is on social changes since the 1960s, their effects on individuals and how this has affected people specifically in the labor movement. The social context and labor activists understanding of it has dramatically changed. The changes have been linear, not the linear models from the 1960s and against the grain of the 1960s. The key social development in the 1960s was the war in Vietnam -- which in reality took place across much of Southeast Asia. Consciousness of this war, simply, was something shared by every person born in the USA between 1946 and late 1950s. Early 1962, it did not matter whether one

The AFT-CIO leadership under the Build Unity and Trust (BUT) platform in the late 1980s and early 1990s was unable to challenge the resolution forth by the Sweeden-controlled Resolution Committee for its work instead of condemning it. When delegates attempted to change the resolution, they were undermined preventatively, speaking by the Chair of the BUT. When the resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the over 1,000 representatives of almost all and a half million organized workers, the BUT leadership, believing the resolution to be a "hit" for the AFT-CIO, published a piece in its newsletter (Kolber, 2005) titled "AFT-CIO's leaders for their own benefit."
supported or opposed the war, everyone in this ‘Vietnam generation’ was aware of the war. People could not avoid it: not only was every male subject to be drafted into the military (affecting related spouses, lovers, siblings, parents, children), but the war was on the TV screen almost every night, especially after about 1967. Some people had to deal with the war more than others; but everyone was aware of it. Yet the war’s importance had an even larger cultural impact: it resulted in increased awareness of events outside of the USA, especially in Latin America, but within developing countries generally.

The war, however, was not the only thing going on. Tied to it – products of the Civil Rights/Black Power, Women’s, and Gay and Lesbian liberation movements – was the growing awareness and repudiation of societal oppression based on race, gender and sexual orientation. Overlapping this was the general social repudiation of the ‘stultifying’ personal culture of the 1950s, which was referred to through the celebration of ‘sex, drugs and rock ‘n roll’. And these processes not only affected college students, but extended into the working people’s lives and communities, and into the US military as well. In addition, some ‘New Left’ activists consciously entered into blue- and white-collar workplaces, and their related unions, thinking these would be good sites from which to continue their larger personal projects of changing US society.

Since then, other developments have affected the US social context. Included in this are the worsening economic situation; the increasing environmental awareness; the growing awareness of the limitations of the mainstream media; much more exposure to college education/experiences and associated critical thinking; greatly expanded global travel; and the growing awareness of the limitations of political institutions, especially regarding the ability and willingness of the government to address the needs of the ‘average person’. And then, there have been the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the Palestinian/Israeli ‘conflict’.

Those who were paying attention to change in the larger social context responded in a number of ways. A considerable number participated in one or more social movements – whether Civil Rights/Black Power, Women’s, Gay and Lesbian, anti-war, environmental/ecological movements and/or the resistance movement inside the military – and some joined established leftist (‘socialist’, ‘communist’, ‘anarchist’, ‘pacifist’) organizations, where they got training in thinking critically, organizing skills, and communicating.

Yet social movements ebb and flow (Melucci, 1989). Although much of the upsurge referred to in general as the ‘New Left’ receded after the end of US involvement in the war in Southeast Asia in 1973, part of the residue of the 1960s is that some people created social (pro-people) movement-supportive institutions during the upsurge and thereafter that have served as movement ‘nodes’ since then. These included additional Pacifica and other radio stations/networks; alternative publishing ventures, such as the feminist journal Off Our Backs, South End Press and Z Magazine; food co-ops; collective businesses, such as radical book stores, bars, bicycle stores, restaurants and bakeries; university-based projects, such as the Center for Popular Education at Florida State, for both students and the community; alternative health practices, especially around women’s health, as well as a growing network of sex-positive, pro-feminist sex shops, such as Good Vibrations in San Francisco; and alternative schools, some of which even flourished within established school systems, such as Inter-American Magnet School – which lasted 25 years within the Chicago public school system – with its emphasis on social justice and Spanish-language instruction in all subjects.

Joined with these projects were a growing number of liberation-focused cultural projects involving music and art. Feminist singers such as Holly Near, Chris Williamson, Geoff Morgan, and the women involved in creating Redwood Records; radical theater projects such as the San Francisco Mime Troupe and Ladies Against Women; art projects such as Northland Poster Collective and...
Syracuse Calendar Project; and individual performers such as Dave Lippman (aka ‘George Shrub’, the world’s only known singing CIA agent), KRS One, Anne Feeney and David Rovics, all provided cultural sustenance to activists and their efforts to create a better world, while contributing their own efforts to the larger project.

And these were in parallel with people trying to create more liberating personal relationships. Obviously, this was taking place within the growing number of gay and lesbian and bi-sexual relationships, but it was also taking place in some mostly heterosexual relationships, such as with the emerging practice of polyamory (simultaneous, multiple honest sexual relationships).

And at the same time, knowledge developed was being spread to larger audiences. Some of the people affected by these various processes also went into education, from pre-school to university. Some have spread their orientation to larger and larger groups of students, both in the classrooms and through writing textbooks and/or monographs. Others carried out critical research, and worked to get it published and available to the larger public. Many have practiced their research/writing skills in writing for many newspapers, magazines and web sites. And as these processes incorporated more and more of a global perspective, this resulted in increasing global travel, which, in turn, affected families and other relationships. Through these processes, however unstructured, experiences, ideas and different meanings have been transmitted to younger generations.

Some of the people who had participated in or had been exposed to these alternative ‘institutions’ went into the labor movement – either through their jobs or through employment in union staff positions – or were already there, yet became aware of these increasing possibilities/opportunities. Yet the biggest problem they were encompassed by – whether they recognized it immediately or not – was the declining vitality and decreasing density and power of the labor movement, especially since the early Reagan years.

The question ‘How to revitalize the labor movement?’ was soon put on the agenda. The lack of leadership – and especially the lack of militant leadership – became increasingly obvious. Those concerned about the well-being of the labor movement – for whatever reason – and who became active in their unions and/or the larger labor movement often initiated or joined union reform projects. Some reform movements targeted national or international unions – Mineworkers for Justice in the mineworkers, Steelworkers Fightback in the steelworkers, New Directions in the autoworkers, Teamsters for a Democratic Union in that union – while others focused on local unions. Other labor activists joined labor-church-community coalitions to try to get labor involved in labor-related issues in local communities, such as fighting to stop plant closures and economic dislocation. (This latter approach, in particular, led to labor activists interacting with those operating in other sectors of society, and so information/knowledge was shared across internal ‘movement’ boundaries to the benefit of all activists.) Tied to these efforts was an expanding understanding among activists that workers in the USA needed the support and solidarity of workers around the world to have a chance to defeat multinational corporations – and, in turn, that they had to be willing to meet with, learn from, and support workers’ struggles in different parts of the world.

In short, over time, there has been a growing understanding among those paying attention that the situation in the USA has been getting worse for most working people. The economic situation has qualitatively worsened for most Americans (see, among others, Foster and Magdoff, 2009; Greenhouse, 2008; Scipes, 2009b). Yet, while this understanding has been growing, so has the recognition that these are global processes and not just individual or small group ‘tragedies’; the struggle against NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) was perhaps the turning point (see Bacon, 2004). Working people have been seeking solutions to their deteriorating situations, and that has included efforts to reform their unions, but these efforts have been made within the context of a growing, albeit inchoate, understanding of what is commonly referred to as
‘globalization’. As one anonymous reviewer of this article summarized this: ‘anti-imperialist labor activists today operate in a context of an “anti-globalization” movement both inside and outside Labor that simply did not exist in the 1980s’.

These efforts were almost always ignored when they were not strongly constrained, if not virulently opposed, by the powers that be in these unions, regardless of level. Some of these anti-reform efforts were sincere, in that labor officials believed that outsiders were coming in to attack and weaken, if not destroy the labor movement, for their own self-interest; however, as far as this author knows, no efforts were made to destroy unions – most were efforts that challenged established business unionism, and were efforts to initiate a broader, social justice form of trade unionism. Most of the anti-reform efforts, in reality, were efforts to protect jobs, (often high) salaries and privileges of established labor officials, who were unwilling to make personal sacrifices for the good of the larger labor movement, despite whatever rhetoric they may have used. But the end result was that this prevented or constrained development of any new leadership, and this situation was even worse in the face of almost no leadership being provided by established leaders. The labor movement was getting clobbered.

Not giving up, labor activists and supportive academics began building new ways to communicate across the labor movement. One of the earliest and, to date, most important has been the monthly newsletter, Labor Notes, and the network that has developed around it; and their bi-annual conferences have brought folks from across North America (and often, elsewhere) to meet in person. Networks of union and university labor educators joined together to create UALE, the United Association for Labor Education. Other communication ‘nodes’ have included Labor Studies Journal, New Labor Review, Working USA, The Labor Educator, as well as the more recent WIN (Workers Independent News), the Labor Video Project in San Francisco, the TV-radio collaboration Labor Beat/Labor Express in Chicago, and the radio programs, ‘Building Bridges’ on WBAI in New York City and ‘Heartland Labor Forum’ on KKFI in Kansas City. These have been supplemented with labor activists using the internet, rank and file publications and email lists (such as Solidarity News Service), as well as labor reporting in leftist journals like Socialist Worker.

As more knowledge about, and opposition to, the AFL-CIO’s foreign policy program and operations has grown, these and other supportive networks have spread the word.

Yet, these efforts to deepen and widen the projects by labor activists – and the progressive movement in general – have not gone unchallenged. One of the responses to the 1960s has been a conscious political program by significant parts of the US elites and their supporters to ensure that the collective that emerged, and the ideology of collective responsibility to each other, never again raise its ‘socialist’ head (see Scipes, 2010a). Progressive movements challenging oppression and exploitation have been attacked for promoting particularly feminism, women’s rights, abortion, homosexuality, and other ‘disreputable’ goals such as gun control. Concepts that threatened established understandings, such as that of the US Empire, which challenge the ‘benevolence’ of US rule around the world, have been ignored or buried. Textbooks in many public schools have been prevented from sharing the true history of this country. Self-interest has been promoted as the ‘greatest good’, and limitations on the free market branded as ‘socialist’. In short, there has been a powerful project to create what has been called a ‘I’ve got mine, screw you, Jack’ culture and society, which is ultimately intended to keep people separated, isolated, alone and politically immobilized. And this has been promoted most virulently by the so-called ‘commentators’ on Fox News Channel, although many political ‘leaders’ and much of the mainstream media have accepted many of the limitations of Fox.
These attacks have had a negative impact. They have hindered collectivity, and especially collective solutions to social problems. They have kept people afraid, separated and alone— they have engendered mass immobilization. At the worst, they have encouraged the rise of the ‘Tea Party’ movement, where people engage in collective individualism in vain efforts to address real problems, instead of attacking the sources of their all too real problems through clear thinking, rigorous analysis, and collective activity.

The combination of vigorous efforts to promote individualism at the expense of collectivism, and almost no leadership in the labor movement to counteract this individualism and to address real problems, has only made things worse for labor activists. Still, the labor activists have continued to press on. And this can particularly be seen in efforts to build international labor solidarity: it is the growing social networks, with their increasingly dense nature, that have both supported the building of international labor solidarity, and supported the increasingly powerful efforts to reform the AFL-CIO foreign policy program.16

With this extensive background provided, it is now time to focus on the efforts within the labor movement to join the alternative globalization movement, the global movement for social justice and economic justice. There have been two efforts, one well developed but focused primarily on building an anti-Iraq War and now an anti-Afghanistan War movement within the US labor movement—US Labor Against the War (USLAW)—and the other challenging the AFL-CIO foreign policy program overall, and which is much less developed, the Worker to Worker Solidarity Committee (WWSC). And while these efforts are not opposed or in contradiction to each other—in fact, there are long-established relationships and activities among some of the people involved in both—most of the attention is placed on USLAW, which has made substantial political and organizational gains within the labor movement. However, it is argued that because of the nature of the WWSC’s political challenge to the AFL-CIO’s foreign policy program, the WWSC needs to be considered as well.

**Alternative Globalization within Labor: US Labor Against the War**

After its initial meeting in January 2003, USLAW was formally founded in Chicago in October 2003, at what was called the ‘National Labor Assembly of US Labor Against the War.’ USLAW was established as an organization based on a network of labor organizations across the country that were opposed to the US war in Iraq (Fletcher, 2003; see also Onasch, 2003). One of the key decisions, resulting in considerable legitimacy within the labor movement, was that USLAW established itself as an organization based on mandated support from rank and file union members, and not merely the efforts of activists or even progressive elected union leaders. As of mid-2005, USLAW had grown into a coalition of ‘over 110 unions, central labor councils, state federations and other labor organizations’ (Zweig, 2005: 62).

USLAW has been quite active since its founding, playing a key role in getting ‘unions, central labor councils, and state federations representing more than four million workers [to pass] resolutions since 2003 opposing the war in Iraq and calling for an end to the occupation, withdrawal of US troops, and redirection of resources to domestic social needs’ (Zweig, 2005: 61–2). In other words, activists and leaders within USLAW have acted within the parameters of the US labor movement to challenge traditional AFL-CIO support for the US Government’s foreign policy.

A major activity by USLAW was its very successful Iraqi labor leaders’ tour across the USA in early to mid-2005, and this was followed by subsequent tours in 2007 and 2009. In 2005, USLAW brought labor leaders from the three main Iraqi labor centers to the USA, and took them to over 25 different locations, allowing these labor leaders to tell their stories about labor organizing in Iraq.
and accounts of the war directly to American audiences. At the same time, Americans — mostly labor activists and supporters — were able to talk (through interpreters) directly to Iraqis, and to ask questions about the Iraqi labor movement and the war.

A key development in USLAW’s short but powerful existence was getting the AFL-CIO’s 2005 National Convention to pass a resolution demanding that US troops be ‘rapidly returned’ from Iraq (USLAW, 2005). The significance of this cannot be overestimated: not only did this resolution, in effect, overturn an AFL-CIO Executive Committee resolution (Chicago Indy Media Center, 2005) — an impressive result in and of itself — but this was the first time in its history that the US labor movement has challenged US foreign policy while at war, and demanded that the troops be brought home rapidly (Zweig, 2005; see also Sears, 2010).

Yet, at the same time, and while the National Convention is constitutionally the highest governing body of the AFL-CIO, this resolution was basically ignored by the leadership of the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO certainly has not followed up and implemented this resolution, either in whole or in spirit.

USLAW, however, has continued to do very important work. In 2009 alone, USLAW sent delegates (including two Iraq war veterans, representing Iraq Veterans Against the War) representing 186 affiliates and participated in the First International Labor Conference in Irbil, Iraq on 13–14 March (USLAW, 2009a). They sponsored a tour of Iraqi labor leaders who ended up attending the National Convention of the AFL-CIO in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in September, and where USLAW was able to win the passage of Resolution 16, calling for ‘Speedy Withdrawal’ from Iraq and to defend Iraqi labor rights (USLAW, 2009b). And they sponsored a successful National Assembly in Chicago in December, where they brought labor leaders from Iraq, Pakistan and Venezuela who spoke to the conference (along with a representative of the emerging Iranian labor movement). At the National Assembly, USLAW passed resolutions to end the US wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan; called for a US economy that provides good jobs and promotes peace; opposed military advertising in our schools; endorsed the 20 March 2010 anti-war demonstrations demanding the immediate withdrawal of all US military forces from Iraq; expressed solidarity with the working people of Palestine and Israel; and demanded an end to settlements in the West Bank and to the siege of Gaza. They also decided on an extensive 2010 plan of work and action (USLAW, 2009c; see also Lydersen, 2009).18

In short, USLAW is doing excellent grassroots organizing within the US labor movement, while working to build conscious solidarity with workers and unions globally.

**Alternative Globalization within Labor: Worker to Worker Solidarity Committee**

While recognizing and applauding the success of USLAW, it is argued that the work of the Worker to Worker Solidarity Committee (WWSC) cannot and should not be overlooked. It is important because it challenges the AFL-CIO foreign policy program as a whole, and particularly challenges the AFL-CIO’s relations with the US Government’s National Endowment for Democracy. In other words, taking a more pointed ideological approach than does USLAW, WWSC’s efforts have complemented and possibly helped advance USLAW’s efforts in some small ways. Yet the efforts of the WWSC are important in and of themselves. Nonetheless, the WWSC has been outside of the mainstream labor movement, focusing on mobilizing activists and not confining itself to the parameters of the labor movement; choices that have made it more critical — and, admittedly, much more marginal.
Challenges to the AFL-CIO foreign policy program have been carried out by a number of people over the years, although they have lacked an on-going organization. By themselves, however, these individuals could be dismissed as mere ‘gadflies’.

It was the actions in California that transformed the struggle against the AFL-CIO foreign policy program: when the California AFL-CIO unanimously condemned AFL-CIO foreign policy leaders’ efforts in June 2004 (Hirsch, 2004), it gave organizational backing to the multiplicity of individual activists’ efforts. In other words, the struggle went from being that of involved activists to one where representatives of one-sixth of the entire AFL-CIO national membership repudiated the foreign policy program of the national organization.

It was activists in the Latin American Solidarity Coalition (LASC), however, who took this project to the next level. Appalled by AFL-CIO operations leading to the attempted coup in Venezuela in 2002 – and aware of long-time AFL-CIO efforts to control Labor throughout the hemisphere – a number of activists within LASC got the Coalition to allow them to protest AFL-CIO foreign policy at the 2005 AFL-CIO National Convention in Chicago. Bringing some of their own people, and their own determination to build solidarity with the people of Latin America – specifically challenging US foreign policy – LASC members worked to build a demonstration at the Chicago convention. While challenging AFL-CIO foreign policy in general, the Chicago coalition brought together Latin American solidarity activists and contacts – a number from outside of Chicago, from places like Philadelphia and Tucson – together with labor people and other local activists.

In addition to building a local movement, activists gave a number of interviews and wrote articles to continue the challenge overall. At the same time, over 5000 packets were sent to labor organizations across the country, signed by the San Jose Central Labor Council leadership, encouraging them to support the California resolution at the convention.

As stated above, these activities were such that the AFL-CIO and Solidarity Center leadership felt threatened sufficiently to respond in an anti-democratic fashion, working to subvert the challenge against them.

At the 2005 AFL-CIO National Convention, the Chicago Coalition brought together over 100 people on the hottest day of the year – 103 degrees Fahrenheit – to march over a half mile and then demonstrate outside of the Sheraton Hotel, where Convention delegates were housed. The Coalition demanded that the AFL-CIO adopt California’s ‘Build Unity and Trust with Workers Worldwide’ resolution (Geovanis, 2005; Kaufman, 2005).

At the Convention, however, the AFL-CIO leadership decided not to let this resolution be discussed. As stated, the Resolutions Committee – under the control of John Sweeney and chaired by his ally, AFSCME President Gerald McEntee – advanced a reactionary resolution to the floor, praising the Solidarity Center for its work. While under consideration, Chair McEntee allowed several speakers to support the reactionary resolution. When opponents – those who supported the California resolution – sought their turn at the microphone, McEntee called out to the audience, ‘Did I hear someone call the question?’ A few delegates responded affirmatively, and McEntee gavelled the matter shut, never allowing any real discussion of the issue on the floor. The reactionary resolution was then passed by the Convention (Scipes, 2005c).

Despite McEntee’s actions, activists felt successful about what was accomplished at the Convention; however, it was not until later that the activists decided how to advance. There was a decision to try to formalize this work into an organization called the Worker to Worker Solidarity Committee (WWSC). The decision was later made to meet again at the founding conference of the Venezuelan Solidarity Network in March 2006 in Washington, DC (see Azikiwe, 2006; Kaufman, 2006).
At the conference of the Venezuelan Solidarity Network, WWSC members held a couple of workshops and formally launched the organization. They decided to picket the National Endowment for Democracy, and they threw a picket line up in front of its offices on 15th Street on 6 March. Approximately 50 activists chanted and made their presence known to the NED (see Ikeda, 2006). Then these activists decided to go to ‘another end of the funding pipeline’, and the demonstration was moved to the AFL-CIO headquarters on 16th Street, where the activists threw up another picket line.

The scene shifted to Detroit in May 2006, where WWSC members organized a very successful workshop about the organization and their work over the previous year. Activists from unions as diverse as SEIU (Service Employees International Union), AFSCME (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees), IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), AFT (American Federation of Teachers), IAM (International Association of Machinists), UE (United Electrical workers), OPEIU (Office and Professional Employees International Union), UAW (United Auto Workers) and CWA (Communication Workers of America) attended the workshop, expressing considerable interest in building support for challenging the AFL-CIO foreign policy program.

The struggle to challenge the AFL-CIO’s foreign policy program has reached a new level politically, although organizationally, the WWSC has seemed to dissipate over the past couple of years. Whether this network will reconstitute itself over the upcoming period or not remains an open question at the time of writing. Nonetheless, key people apparently are in touch with each other, so there is hope that they will continue to influence future discussions (Scipes, 2010a: 80–82).

**Synopsis**

This account of the extensive efforts combined together in this article – especially the establishment and development of US Labor Against the War, joined with the 2004 California ‘Build Unity and Trust with Workers Worldwide’ resolution, and then the anti-democratic efforts by the AFL-CIO leadership at the 2005 National Convention – show conclusively that an alternative globalization project within US labor has reached the point where collective contestation for labor politics hegemony is possible.

Certainly the emergence, development, and escalating scale and scope of the work of USLAW since its founding have further advanced this overall project. Labor foreign policy activists have successfully challenged the status quo at the cultural level within the labor movement, delegitimizing the traditional AFL-CIO foreign policy program among general rank and file labor activists. In fact, this foreign policy program has been delegitimized to such an extent that labor ‘leaders’ had to resort to blatantly anti-democratic acts to keep even a discussion from reaching the floor of the 2005 National Convention. This suggests clearly that established labor ‘leaders’ recognize the power of this challenge.

Yet, these activists have gone beyond mere delegitimization. USLAW has emerged as a significant force within the labor movement, although not yet strong enough to make the AFL-CIO Executive Council – the real decision-making group in the labor center – actively support its efforts. The WWSC, while continuing to be much more marginal, has been engaged in on-going efforts to publicly challenge the AFL-CIO foreign policy program as a whole, and especially its central relationship with the US Government’s reactionary National Endowment for Democracy but, again, its organizational future is much more problematic.

Whether or not these organizations, together or individually, can actually contest for political hegemony in the labor movement, remains to be seen. Much work remains to be done. Among other things: them over the

Further in...
other things, progress would require widespread education of AFL-CIO unionists and winning them over to force their leaders to consciously join the global economic and social justice movement, to help actualize the slogan, ‘Another World Is Possible!’

Further development of this work will probably require a linking of these international labor solidarity concerns with a program addressing the problems facing working people in the USA that sees the USA in a global context (see Scipes, 2009b). But the issue now is whether the activists have the skill and desire to make it happen – not whether it can happen at all.

Sociological Reflections

There is a lot to be learned from this study. Most importantly, Melucci’s focus on pre-emergence processes has been shown to be important: by understanding the processes by which a social movement emerges, we can observe the creation of a collective identity and see how the participants engaged in collective action, and we can better judge their chances for later success.

Creation of a collective identity is important. Understanding this process is important because it allows us to see how groups come together, create a group position while understanding their group position as being distinct from and challenging to those established ‘leaders’, and it shows that activists make an emotional commitment to reach their chosen goals that can, in some cases, last over a considerable number of years.

Likewise, taking collective action is important. Publishing articles and books, speakingpublicly, creating organizations, initiating resolutions, mobilizing demonstrations etc., all involve risks to one’s personal standing in the labor movement. Yet despite whatever personal risk was initially involved, collective action has brought the issue to more and more people’s attention and earned their support. It has caused subsequent activity, which, in turn, has furthered the process.

However, this case illuminates two things new about creating collectively. First, while Melucci is correct regarding the processes of developing a social movement, creation of a collective identity (e.g. as labor foreign policy activists) does not have to be a conscious process engaged in before anyone can take action. As seen in this case, individuals – often and usually operating alone, and in different parts of the country – took action based on their own moral or political understandings, and only later, upon finding out that there were other like-minded activists operating in the same ‘field’, did they begin thinking of themselves collectively. It was, however, because of this isolation from each other that such a long time was required for this collectivity to ‘germinate’. Second, though, this collective identity emerged over distance, which illustrates that physical closeness is not a requirement for creating a collective identity; the understanding of common purpose, willingness to work toward the same general goal, and emotional commitment to the process are central to building collective identity. As time has gone on, and with each publication or successful action, this collectivity has strengthened, as have personal connections, and conscious interactions and sharing have developed.

We must address Mueller’s contention that ‘The status quo must be challenged at the cultural level in terms of legitimacy before mass collective action is feasible’ (Mueller, 1994: 239). This study suggests that she is on to something very important: without the research and publication of findings from multiple cases, as well as an extensive range of efforts to build international labor solidarity, the ability to win general labor activists to the side of foreign labor policy activists would have been much more difficult, if not impossible. Particularly when challenging things that are embedded in the culture – such as, the idea that labor leaders will automatically act in the best interests of their members – the more evidence presented to the contrary, the greater the likelihood of winning others to one’s position.
Finally, this study also shows the necessity to consider the larger social context in which social developments take place — especially over longer time periods — and how its changing has affected the actors: otherwise, we could not understand in this case how developments in the early 2000s have been able to ‘stick’ in ways that earlier efforts did not.

**Conclusion**

In this article, it has been shown that there have been on-going efforts, particularly over the past 40 years, to build an alternative globalization movement within labor. These efforts have succeeded to the point where creating a mass movement is possible: the status quo has been attacked at the cultural level, and has been delegitimized, and at least two different organizations have been created to advance this alternative globalization project. Rather than looking at only what has happened, this article has illuminated the processes by which this delegitimization has taken place. It has shown that labor foreign policy activists — a sub-set of all labor activists — have been able to win their activist sisters and brothers to the point at which these activists have formally repudiated the AFL-CIO foreign policy program, at least in California, although indications are that this opposition is considerably wider than that. The article has also illustrated that through US Labor Against the War and the Worker to Worker Solidarity Committee, the effort to build a mass movement for alternative globalization within the labor movement has shifted from the cultural level to the organizational: whether the labor foreign policy activists can go far remains to be seen, although the work of USLAW particularly seems to be especially promising.

Finally, returning to our theoretical approach, this case supports Melucci’s argument on the need to focus on individuals and small groups that emerge beforehand in order to understand a social movement. While it could be argued that Melucci’s point cannot be confirmed until this examination is done beforehand and a social movement emerges — and certainly that would be a stronger argument — we should be careful and not be too quick to dismiss pre-conditioning activities, such as those discussed herein. The process of developing a social movement can be distinguished analytically, and whether an actual social movement emerges or not does not negate or delegitimize the groundwork done in the preceding period, which is necessary for developing the possibility that a social movement can arise. And should an actual social movement arise within Labor against the AFL-CIO foreign policy program, there is now a good picture of what it took over time, to get to that place.

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**Notes**

1 This analysis is based on the understanding that ‘globalization’ has two aspects, not just one as the mainstream media generally present (Starr, 2005; see Scipes, 2009a). One aspect is top-down, corporate-military globalization, whose purpose is only to ensure that multinational corporations have unimpeded access to the entire planet, regardless of the consequences to and effects upon people and the environment (see, for example, Friedman, 1999; cf. Sanders, 2009). It is this limited and detrimental approach...
that is presented as ‘globalization’ in the corporate media. Yet globalization has another aspect, and that is the bottom-up, grassroots globalization of women and men around the world, who are seeking another world, a better world, which is based on global solidarity, ecological and economic sustainability, and economic and social justice. It is this grassroots globalization – the global social and economic justice movement – that is fighting the values and the future of corporate-military globalization (Shiva, 2005; Starr, 2005).

2 The argument is that the established leadership of the AFL-CIO accepts the current top-down, corporate-military globalization project led by the USA (aka US Empire), although they demand that the corporations give them their ‘just due’, a right to organize workers and bargain collectively (see Scipes, 2010a, 2010b). The alternative globalization project rejects both the corporate globalization project and the US Empire, and, in active solidarity with peoples around the world, seeks to establish a new global social order based on economic and social justice. This would help transform the USA and all countries of the world (see Scipes, 2009a).

3 This is explicated in Scipes (2010a).

4 In September 2009, Richard Trumka, formerly President of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO from 1995–2009, was elected President of the AFL-CIO, to replace the retiring John Sweeney. It is too early to tell what Trumka’s foreign policy program will involve, but since he was a key member of the Sweeney Administration for the last 14 years, it seems logical to expect a continuation of the Sweeney program for at least a while.

5 The battle over the direction of the US labor movement emerged even before the founding of the American Federation of Labor in 1886. The struggle to build international labor solidarity actually goes back to the earliest years of the 20th century, as labor activists sought to support the 1905 Russian Revolution. The standard text for these early efforts is Naczk (1999); see also Scipes (2010a). This battle over the direction of the labor movement continued to 1949. However, the expulsion of 11 ‘left-led’ unions from the CIO in 1949 largely removed many of the proponents of a more encompassing ‘social justice’ unionism from the labor movement. It was only about 1968 when the issue could again be raised. Focus herein is on the ‘post-1968’ period.

6 Major works on the AFL/AFL-CIO foreign policy program have included Radosh (1969), Scipes (1989), Sims (1992), Scipes (2000, 2005a, 2005b). See Scipes (2010a, 2010b). I must ask forbearance of my readers for the considerable use of my own works. I have published widely on the AFL-CIO foreign policy program as well as other topics, and I have referred to my writings only when other material was not available.

7 The most complete listing of writings on contemporary efforts to reform the US labor movement that I know of is at: http://faculty.pnc.edu/kscipes/LaborBib.htm (consulted 9 July 2011).

8 To my knowledge, there has not been an overall account of labor efforts within the anti-apartheid movement in the USA.

9 The most complete listing of writings on the AFL-CIO’s foreign operations is at: http://faculty.pnc.edu/kscipes/LaborBib.htm#AFL-CIO_Foreign_Operations (consulted 9 July 2011).

10 This 75-minute movie can be viewed on-line for free at: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=5832390545689805144 (consulted 9 July 2011).

11 The media tends to refer to these people as the ‘baby boomers’. The term ‘baby boomers’ really refers to the large demographic cohort of people born between 1946 and 1964. The ‘Vietnam generation’ is a sociological sub-set of the larger cohort, and needs to be recognized as having social developmental processes distinct from the larger cohort.

12 One of the most amazing social movements to develop in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and which has largely been lost to history, is the anti-war/resistance movement that developed within the US military, against the war in Southeast Asia and/or the military itself. This is documented in the 2005 film, *Sir, No Sir!*, available from Netflicks. Many veterans ended up in blue-collar workplaces after their military service, and subsequently played important roles in struggles in the workplace.

The actions of African Americans in the struggles against white supremacy, particularly since the 1950s — whether in particular struggles, day-to-day resistance, teaching whites, and/or writing about this and related subjects — were exemplary, and still have not been given their proper respect. It is beyond
the scope of this article to do so here, but it is necessary to recognize their importance. These efforts certainly affected the labor movement, and especially labor activists of all colors. Thanks to an anonymous Critical Sociology reviewer who encouraged me to make this specific point.

Let me be clear here: I am not claiming that these events, other than the war in Southeast Asia, affected every person, or even that those who were affected understood them the same way; however, I am claiming that these developments took place, and that those who were paying attention to their larger social world could pick and choose what to focus on and how each would be understood.

By no means are the following mentions anything beyond my idiosyncratic listing, based on some of my experiences. This author does not claim that they are representative. Nonetheless, they give a small idea of what was taking place across the country although, obviously, this development was stronger in some parts of the country than in others. Also, whether they supported activists in general or were just places that ‘ordinary people’ could just check out, their very existence and different ways of interacting among the workers and/or between the patrons and staff seriously suggested that there were realistic alternatives to the status quo of mind-numbing, unquestioned capitalist consumerism.

These new pro-people organizations supplemented previously established ones, such as the journal Monthly Review or the Pacifica radio station in Berkeley, KPFA, both of which were established long before the 1960s. The point is not to ignore or forget earlier organizations/institutions, but to point out the explosion of these types of organizations since the 1960s.

We should be careful here: the existence of these social networks does not guarantee success. What they do is provide support, in this case for labor activists, so as to help ensure that the ability to achieve larger social justice goals is maintained and, ultimately, increased. The development of leadership — with clear vision, goals, organization, strategic planning, and campaign development — is likely to be more successful when these social networks exist than without them.

[VAW’s web site is at http://www.ivaw.org (consulted 9 July 2011).]

These references are just a few of the important entries on the USLAW web site. For a more complete and up-to-date account of their activities, along with movies they endorse and/or have helped develop, go to http://www.uslaboragainstwar.org

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