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Olympic sites: a celebration of Olympic values?

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Note

from the editor

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30-06-2011

In this special issue of CLR-News we have tried to document the construction involved for different Olympic Games, the social and employment issues and problems raised and the longer-lasting effects. CLR-News has reported earlier on trade union cooperation on international building sites and on the use of posted workers. And it has to be said that the Olympic sites in Barcelona were an important starting point for the posting debate in Europe. Another interesting aspect of Barcelona from the perspective of urban planning was that the (socialist) mayor had planned to build the Olympic village, for the lodging of the participants, as a project for future social housing.

One of the most important trade Union activists in those days was Manuel Garnacho, general secretary of FEMCA-UGT, the Construction Workers' Union of the Spanish UGT. During the fascist dictatorship of Franco, Manuel was active as president of the Young Socialists and as secretary of the Socialist Party PSOE in exile (in France). He was a close friend of Felipe

González who became party leader and prime minister later on.

During visits on the Olympics sites in 1988 a delegation of the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) found out that workers were engaged on these sites through all kind of subcontracting chains for one day, one week, one month. The Olympic swimming pool was built for instance with 38 subcontractors.

At that time the Spanish building unions were fighting for the first collective agreement in the construction sector after the Franco period. And of course contract compliance by everyone to the site agreements became a serious issue. FEMCA had the lead though CC.OO backed up locally. They were inspired by the industry-wide approaches practiced in Belgium and the Netherlands. The Belgian socialist union especially had a strong influence through its chairman Juan Fernandez, a good friend of Manuel and an activist from the exile period too, who was also one of the leading persons in the EFBWW in the 1970s and early 1980s.



become a trade union member. In the late eighties the UK had no binding agreements and no minimum wages and therefore the unions did not show great interest in such rules. So basically, the backing came from Belgium, Luxemburg, Spain and France. However, only a few years later, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy joined the campaign. And in 1993 the European social partners could agree on a

In fact the main incentives for a campaign aiming for European Regulations in the field of subcontracting, free movement and posting came from that side. The German colleagues were not very interested at the beginning; they did not see the issue. And they had to fight at home with the IG-Metal that was fiercely against any generally binding wages because of the famous "*Trittbrettfahrer*" notion: also non-members would benefit and it would take away the motivation to

joint statement in favour of decent rules for the posting of workers based on the host country principle.

Linda Clarke sub-edited this issue and has collected a remarkable list of contributions.

Starting in Barcelona, the contributors take you along the main experiences till the actual site experience in London. I hope you will enjoy this issue.

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Linda Clarke,
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OLYMPIC LESSONS: INTRODUCTION

The following six accounts of the construction of the Olympic Games since 1992 offer a fascinating and mixed picture of the significance of such a 'mega-event' to the development of the construction industry and, above all, to improving employment and working conditions and training.

In the cases of Barcelona and Atlanta in particular, and not without considerable efforts on the part of the trade unions concerned, the Olympics provided a catalyst for changing labour and employment relations. This was dramatic in the Atlanta case, where trade unions set up a camp on the site to force their case. The construction of the Barcelona Olympics, as assessed by Justine Byrne, 'precipitated notable innovations in both the nature and content of collective bargaining' especially concerning contracts, health and safety, union representation, and training. However, whilst ensuring 'industrial peace', such innovations remained uneven, with job security intensifying through the use of labour-only subcontracting and little improvements in training given the heavy reliance on posted workers to meet specific skills shortages. Indeed one of the most lasting legacies of the Barcelona Games was the Posted Workers Directive.

A similar picture is echoed in other Games, especially in relation to training, where the impact is clearly disappointing, even when great efforts have been made, as in the cases of Sidney and London. In other respects, the Sidney Olympics were, however, exemplary, especially in the collaboration between government, employers, trade unions and the workforce. Unlike London, however, there is little reference to the local community, perhaps because the Sidney Games were not located in one of the most deprived areas of Australia and did not promise to help address deprivation as in the London case.

In this respect, the construction of the London Games represents a new departure in aiming to fulfil social and economic purposes for the local area.

The most shocking cases are given by Athens and Beijing, with a lasting legacy of debt in Greece and health and safety problems in the China. In both cases, construction relied on often unskilled migrants working long hours and for low wages; indeed, for the Beijing Games 300,000 workers were recruited from different parts of the country! And, even though the Beijing account ends on a positive note in terms of improvements to the career prospects of Chinese construction workers, how much better would this legacy have been if good employment and working conditions had been in place?

From the accounts given we can discern that the construction of each of the Games leaves a different legacy relating, for instance, to: posted workers in the case of Barcelona; industrial action in Atlanta; cooperation in Sidney; debt in Greece; health and safety in Beijing; and local employment and training in London. Nevertheless, being such high profile construction projects, they do clearly serve as a means to improve employment and working conditions in the industry. The next objective must be to ensure that they also make a far more significant training impact.

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vanced Studies
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BARCELONA 1992

The Barcelona '92 Olympics are widely seen as a key recent example of the successful use of a "mega-event" as the catalyst for urban change and repositioning. At the same time, as the games put Barcelona on the map, reinvented and re-branded as a dynamic, modern, European creative city, the Olympics provided the pretext and justification for a process of urban transformation and regeneration on a scale not seen in the city since the mid-19th century. Between 1986, when Barcelona was named host city, and the celebration of the games in July 1992, a run-down industrial district was demolished to make way for the Olympic village, 15 new venues were built on the two main sporting sites, Barcelona acquired a five-kilometre seafront and beach, 78 kilometres of new roads linking the four major Olympic sites, and significantly expanded rail and sewage systems (Essex and Chalkey, 1998). Yet despite being at the very heart of the "urban spectacle" (Harvey 1989) that was Barcelona '92, and accounting for an estimated 85% of all Olympic-related investmentⁱ (GESQT, 1996: 18), the construction industry has received relatively little attention in the socio-economic analyses of the impact of the games. Most do little more than point to the quantitative increase in investment (much greater than initially expected due to rising costs) and employment (rather less than anticipated) in the sector in the run up to the games (see for example Brunet, 1995 or GESQT, 1996). Yet, in the light of both the research produced at the time and subsequent developments, it is apparent that the Olympic construction projects both exemplified, and contributed to, major qualitative changes in labour and employment relations in the construction industry with ramifications at the regional, national and even European-levelⁱⁱ. This makes Barcelona '92 the perfect starting point for comparative reflection on the legacy for construction employment and labour in other host cities.

Work on the Olympic-related construction and civil engineering projects coincided with an intense but shortlived upturn in construction across Spain in the second half of the 1980s. This boom followed a protracted recession (1975-1985) during which the Spanish construction industry had lost a third of all jobs and undergone an intense process of restructuring characterized by productive decentralization, fragmentation and flexibilization. During the recession, the largest companies diversified into other sectors, and externalized production in construction itself, shedding nearly all their directly employed on-site employees in favour of subcontractors, a pattern replicated by subcontractors who often contracted others in turn. These subcontracting chains often ended with the self-employed, real or apparent. At the same time, thanks to changes in employment law in 1984, different types of short-term temporary contracts providing for minimal or no severance pay became the norm.

The breakdown of the traditional productive structure and employment relations in the industry, and the implications of this for health and safety, skill formation, and union organization and representation almost inevitably brought tension. The late 1980s saw sometimes intense conflict between unions and employers struggling to define a new model of industrial governance in Spain's still young democracy. Conflict centred on renegotiation of the existing provincial-level collective agreements, union demands for new, national-level collective bargaining and agreements, and measures to combat both the industry's appalling health and safety record and the explosion of temporary work. In 1998, strikes involving the equivalent of over 60% of wage earners in the industry led to a loss of over 2 million working days nationwide (Byrne and van der Meer, 2003).

The Barcelona Olympics provided too good an opportunity for the unions to miss to push their demands. With Olympic projects already underway, in the negotiations for the new Barcelona biannual provincial-level agreement for 1988-1989,

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the Catalan branches of Spain's two main construction unions and national confederations, UGT and CCOO, demanded not just higher wages but qualitative changes in labour relations: first, economic disincentives against the use of the most extreme form of fixed-term temporary contract, and second, the creation of a bipartite workplace health and safety committee. Employers rejected both demands, leading to the breakdown of negotiations, frequent partial strikes in the first half of 1988 and, the announcement of a general strike to start on 12-15 September 1988. This strike did not take place, as just days before the start date, the regional government announced that it would issue a binding settlement. Taken at the behest of the Barcelona Olympic Organizing Committee (COOB) and city authorities, this step was justified on the grounds that continued industrial conflict would "gravely endanger the possibility of completing the Olympics projects as planned". The outcome, a binding resolution that in the absence of subsequent agreement between unions and employers, served as the collective agreement for the sector until 31 December 1989, went a long way towards satisfying the unions' demands. Along with a substantial 6% wage increase, it ordered the creation of a tripartite Catalan Construction Health and Safety Committee with powers and responsibility to inform, evaluate, and train on health and safety, acting in cooperation with site health and safety committees. Even more importantly for the unions, the award espoused a new interpretation of the 1984 labour reform which permitted the introduction of sector-specific measures providing higher severance pay (the shorter the contract, the higher the redundancy pay) for fixed-term temporary contracts of less than six months, a measure designed to discourage employers from using this type of short-term contract (ADIPROC 1992: 26-36; Vega López, 2003).

At the same time, in another ground-breaking step, the unions "signed labour agreements" with the two municipally-owned companies responsible for the construction of the Olympic village and one of the main sports arena establishing

on-site union offices, mechanisms for informal conflict resolution, and union involvement in enforcing compliance with health and safety rules. In this way, the public clients sought to ensure respect for the law, reduce the friction between workers and employers, and channel disputes through the unions, thereby pre-empting stoppages that might threaten the smooth completion of the Olympic projects. The unions, for their part, hoped that on-site offices would help them overcome the negative impact that company fragmentation, temporary contracts and self-employment were already having on their historically fragile workplace presence (ADIPROC 1992: 39-40).

In another groundbreaking agreement, in 1989, the Catalan construction employers and unions set up the Escola Gaudí, a pioneering bipartite, vocational and continuing training institution in a bid to address skills shortages in the sector. This was a source of growing concern given the breakdown of traditional in-company training due to the restructuring of the sector, and the anticipated demand for trades people on Olympic projects.

In all these respects (contracts, health and safety, union representation, and training), therefore, the Barcelona Olympics appear to have precipitated notable innovations in both the nature and content of collective bargaining. Change was achieved by the unions exercising their industrial muscle in the exceptionally favourable conditions resulting from the favourable labour market, the tight deadlines for completion of work, the high visibility and political importance of the Olympic project, and the fact that so much of this was publicly commissioned and financed. As so often in the past, construction workers and unions displayed their historic market sensitivity, and turned to the State to intervene to help them overcome employers' opposition to regulation and to union involvement in the workplace and the industry's affairs. In formal terms, the changes were highly significant, and the unions were understandably satisfied with the gains made.

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Two decades on, we are in a position to consider both the immediate practical impact of these developments on the Olympic building sites and their lasting legacy across the industry.

In terms of the Olympic construction work itself, two positive outcomes can be highlighted. First, despite a reported death toll of 12 workers and 51 serious accidents on Olympic sites between 1987 and 1992, industry analysts considered that accident rates were lower than to be expected on projects of this scale and complexity. This improved health and safety record was attributed in part to more systematic official control and inspection of Olympic sites and the intervention of the recently-formed tripartite Regional Health and Safety Commission, but also to the union's hands-on involvement in ensuring compliance with health and safety standards. Under the agreement signed with the municipal companies responsible for the key Olympic projects, union delegates were given offices and full access on sites, as well as co-responsibility in reporting and inspecting dangerous working conditions and practices (Llanos Gea, 1992). Second, both employer and union representatives stressed that the Olympic sites were unusually conflict-free, and that the individual and collective problems, which did occur, were usually resolved on site and without stoppages. The demand for labour, and corresponding opportunities for high earnings, helped ease tensions, as perhaps did the union on-site presence, and their commitment, after 1988, to maintaining the "Olympic social peace" in order to facilitate the smooth completion of projects. In this respect, however, it is significant that union sources themselves recognised that most disputes were resolved directly between management and workers, without their intervention (Miguélez and Carrasquer 1995 y GESQT, 1996).

Another, albeit extremely limited development was the employment in the Olympic Village site of trainee trades people who had completed a union-council sponsored course, and were employed directly by the large companies with six-

month contracts and under union supervision. The initiative was judged positively by industry insiders, but involved fewer than 100 workers (ADIPROC 1992, p.38).

The measures intended to promote job security appear to have been even less effective. As in the sector as a whole, temporary contracts were the norm on Olympic construction sites, where most workers were employed on a very short-term basis (contracts of 1 day, a week or a month were common) and with no right to severance pay. The proliferation of temporary employment went hand-in-hand with the explosion of sub-contracting (38 were reported to have taken part in building the Olympic swimming pool), often in very long chains. These often ended in labour-only subcontracting, then a relatively new development in Spain, and self-employment - as often false as real. Many workers made good money on the Olympic projects, but more due to the almost unlimited opportunities (when not obligation) to do extraordinarily long, and theoretically illegal, overtime, than to higher pay rates. Wages, in practice negotiated individually or collectively by workers with scant union involvement and little reference to official rates, in fact rose less than many had expected. In part this reflected the fact that much Olympic construction consisted of civil engineering projects that were machine- rather than labour-intensive. At the same time, the impact of demand on wages was mitigated by the influx of workers to Barcelona, whether independent migrants or brought by subcontractors, from outside the city or abroad (ADIPROC 1992: 44-78)

The relatively strong presence of foreign workers was another new and highly significant phenomenon associated with the Barcelona Olympic sites, and one which would have ramifications at the European level. Impossible to quantify with any precision, the labour inspectorate estimated that perhaps as many as 10% of all workers who had passed through the sites were foreigners, a very high figure for the time. In some cases workers from outside the EC (Morocco, Poland....) were

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directly employed by Spanish companies; in others they worked for subcontractors from other EU member states who brought labour from their country of origin (Portugal, Britain, Germany...) (GESQT, 1996, 20) This posting *avant la lettre* appears to have shown all the characteristics of the then still relatively unknown posting phenomenon: the co-existence of high-end posting of skilled workers to meet specific skills shortages, often in finishing and installation work, and the posting of both skilled and unskilled workers by companies who competed almost entirely on price, through the employment of workers not subject to local collective agreements and prepared to work even longer and for even less than their Spanish counterpartsⁱⁱⁱ.

This very brief overview of some characteristics of Olympic construction sites suggests the uneven impact of innovations in collective bargaining introduced in the run up to the games, apparently more successful in bringing industrial peace and improving workplace health and safety than in improving the quality of employment or meeting the industry's training needs.

An analysis of the wider impact and lasting legacy of the Barcelona '92 games suggests a similarly mixed picture. On the one hand, the positive legacy of the Games included the institutionalization in collective bargaining in the sector of two of the most important innovations achieved by the unions in 1988. Measures to promote more long-term contracts, and tripartite health safety committees, were confirmed in subsequent Barcelona provincial-level agreement signed in 1990 and, even more significantly, incorporated into the process of state-wide collective bargaining initiated in 1989 which culminated in the first ever national general agreement in construction signed in 1992. Equally, the Escola Gaudi served as inspiration for the bipartite, statewide Fundación Laboral de la Construcción, established in 1992, with responsibilities both for health and safety and for occupational and continual training in the sector. At the European-level, the heavy presence of EC migrant labour and con-

tractors on the Olympic sites coincided with the ongoing debate over posting, reinforcing the unions' case for EC regulation of the phenomenon if it was not to undermine both equal competition and labour standards on European construction sites.

In all these ways, therefore, Barcelona '92 constituted a catalyst for major changes in the regulatory framework of the Spanish construction industry. That much is clear. Nonetheless, twenty years after the event, the reality of Spanish construction sites leaves considerable room for doubt as to the efficacy of this form of regulation to control the most negative impact of productive decentralization, externalization, fragmentation and flexibilisation on working and employment conditions, training, and health and safety in the industry.

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- i. Here, "Olympic-related investment" includes projects not directly related to the celebration of the Games, but which may not have been carried out without them; the Olympic installations themselves (village, stadiums, etc.,) accounted for less than 10% of the total (GESVQT, 1997: 16).
 - ii. Coauthor of the working paper provided under his name in the references and director of the research teams, which produced ADIPROC, 1992 and GESVQT 1997, Faustino Miguélez, was responsible for most of the original research on which this report draws.
 - iii. For the subsequent development of posting in Spain, see the relevant chapters in Cremers and Donders (2004) and Cremers (2011).

ORGANIZING FOR THE ATLANTA OLYMPICS 1996

We started planning our campaign to unionize the Olympics in 1991. We knew victory would require our use of every available source to power and every avenue of militancy, a broad coalition, political juice, and as close to perfect a campaign as we could run. We began by meeting with Olympics Chief Operating Officer A.D. Frazier. He told us this would be the first completely privately financed Olympics and that they would do all the work as cheaply as possible. In response, we proposed a City Council resolution calling for work on the Olympics to be done at prevailing wages, to include training, health insurance, and pensions, and to be done with the utmost concern for safety. Both the City Council and Mayor Maynard Jackson supported the resolutions, and Mayor Jackson said the work on the Atlanta Olympics must be done by the union. Then we methodically began meeting with organizations and leaders to build support.

In March of 1992 we found out the Olympics Flag would begin flying over Atlanta the following September. Immediately, we began planning and mobilizing for the largest demonstration in the city's history. Every Friday morning our building trades and Jobs With Justice committee met jointly to plan the action and build the turnout with the assistance of Rev. James Orange. On September 18, 1992, we put 10,000 people on the streets of Atlanta and overwhelmed the Olympics flag ceremony. A few months later we met with our community allies in an all-day meeting to come up with a Christmas 'wish list' for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Thanks to all the effort that had come before, the list was not one of separate community and labor demands, but a single document with a single list of demands.

Stewart Acuff -
Currently national chief of staff in the Utility Workers Union of America, formerly President of the Atlanta AFL-CIO, the national organizing director of the AFL-CIO

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On December 22, 1992, three days before Christmas, 80 disciplined union leaders and staff and 20 equally tough community leaders took over the Olympics Headquarters to deliver our Christmas list and force a meeting. While I was in Mayor Maynard Jackson's office in a meeting about the subject, 100 of Atlanta's best warriors for social and economic justice were sitting in at Olympics Headquarters and forcing a two-hour meeting on what the 1996 Olympics meant for the workers and average people of Atlanta. The next day I got a call from Shirley Franklin, the Executive Vice President for External Affairs of the Olympics Governing Board, who later went on to be a two-term Mayor of Atlanta. She said they wanted a meeting the next week and they wanted the meeting at night in my office.

Shirley arrived at my office in the IBEW building at the appointed date and time. She brought a silk-stocking lawyer with her. After the niceties – how was Christmas, etc. – the lawyer look at me and said:

Stewart, I've been in this work for 25 years involved in labor and civil rights issues (he didn't mention always on the company side) and we know that action got our of hand, didn't go the way you meant for it to. I've never seen a group of folks take over someone else's space like that.

I replied:

Shirley, we've been telling you that we will do whatever it takes short of hurting someone to make sure the work on the Olympics is done righteous.

To which the lawyer said: "Does that mean breaking the law?" Shirley replied to him: "Of course it does, Lloyd." Then the future Mayor of Atlanta leaned forward, rested her arms on the side of my desk, looked me straight in the eye and said:

Stewart, when rich white men get scared, I get scared. And rich, white men are scared.

I responded that maintaining the status quo was not an option. Union density and market share and wages were either going to increase because of the size of the project or they

were going to decrease. The meeting ended with me wondering when they would call back for more substantive pressing of the issues. They never did.

We continued with our coalition work, deepening it especially with Concerned Black Clergy. My pastor, Rev. Tim McDonald of First Iconium Church, was Chairman. We grounded all our Olympics work in the larger community labor coalition. We also began preparing for the 1993 Mayor's race. We decided to endorse city councilman Bill Campbell, controversial, young and unknown. The business community and Ambassador Andy Young and some of the Civil Rights leaders were the Fulton County Commission Chairman Michael Lomax. But the county had done \$900 million of building non-union. Lomax was a non-starter.

In about March of 1993 the Olympic leadership announced that they would break ground on the new centennial Olympic Stadium on June 10 with much fanfare and civic celebration. Rev. McDonald convened the coalition. We agreed to erect a tent city on the site of the new stadium two months before ground breaking. We also decided to disrupt the ground breaking if we didn't have an agreement on construction of the stadium. As so we did. I slept every night on a cot under an Army tent with the side flaps raised. By mid-May the drama was building. About two weeks before ground breaking, every local newscast included a live shot from tent city with me and others promising the Olympics had to be righteous or there would be no groundbreaking and no Olympics.

Finally, on a Thursday night, two nights before the Olympic Stadium ground breaking, Rev. James Orange, Charlie Key of the building trades and I met in our tent city and came up with a strategy to take over the ceremony. As President of the Atlanta AFL-CIO, I knew the city budget well, how many police officers the city had, and how many they could deploy to this event. We had already called for a demonstration the

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morning of the groundbreaking which we knew would draw thousands of our members and allies. We decided that Thursday night to send 50 people at a time to climb over the police bicycle barricades, believing by the time we broke through a couple hundred of our folks we would have exhausted the police presence and we would simply take the stage and the microphones and turn the ground breaking into a rally for the just Olympics.

About 11.00pm that Thursday night Shirley Franklin arrived with soup for all of us. Rev. Orange and I pulled Shirley off to the side. "Shirley", I said:

Everything we said we would do, we've done. Now I'm telling you that if we don't have an agreement on the stadium by Saturday morning, there won't be a groundbreaking ceremony. Tonight we figured out exactly how to disrupt the ceremony and take it over.

Shirley said she'd make some calls that night. The building trades went into bargaining first thing Friday morning and by 6.30 Friday evening there was an agreement on the construction of the Centennial Olympics Stadium. The news Saturday morning of the ground breaking was full of the historic agreement reached the day before. Still 1,000 of our members and allies showed up for the rally we had pre-planned; only now it was a rally of unbridled celebration. We were joined by Ambassador Young and Olympics Chief Operating Officer A.D. Frazier. I was so overjoyed that I introduced Frazier, the target of our campaign, as my new good friend.

We were over the hump but we were a very long way from done. There are thousands of different jobs involved in staging the Olympic Games. We had broken the arrogance of the Atlanta Olympics governing body and guaranteed the work on the iconic and signature venue would be righteous. Another 30 venues would need to be either constructed or renovated or changed to accommodate Olympics sports. So we got busy on Bill Campbell's campaign, doing all we legally could to help him win the November election.

We were successful. The night of his victory party, Campbell asked me to stand with his family. After he thanked his family, he thanked me and organized labor, saying, "There ain't no labor like organized labor." I was so happy to work on his inauguration day. Instead of the usual corporate and political big wig events, we did a prayer service followed by a march to Dr. King's tomb, the county hospital, poor neighborhoods, and the State Capitol, finally ending at City Hall.

The new Mayor Campbell showed up late at the January Atlanta AFL-CIO meeting. He had the city beat press corps in tow along with his two young children. I introduced him almost as soon as he walked in. Mayor Campbell didn't speak long. But he spoke very powerfully to those warriors for justice:

I wouldn't be Mayor tonight without him, and that's why tonight I am announcing that I'm appointing Stewart Acuff as my representative to the Olympic Governing Board.

Everyone jumped to their feet at once, yelling and screaming, feeling the way that only comes when average folks unite in collective power and struggle mightily for justice and for victory.

Stuart Maxwell,
Senior National
Industrial Of-
ficer, Construc-
tion Forestry
Mining and
Energy Union
(Construction &
General Divi-
sion)

THE 2000 SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES - IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT AND TRAIN- ING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

At the closing ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games the IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch declared "*I am proud and happy to proclaim that you have presented to the world the best Olympic Games ever*"¹. Whether this statement remains true, only time will tell but, aside from the sporting and entertainment aspects of the Olympic Games, Sydney was also praised for its labour relations and for constructing the games venues on time and within budget. Constructing the games venues obviously had an impact on the employment of construction workers, but to what extent? And what of the training impact? Did the games lead to an increase in training for the industry and, if so, were the skills of existing workers upgraded, and did the number of apprentices and trainees increase? This paper provides answers to those questions.

The Size of the Construction Project

According to the NSW Government Audit Office the total construction cost for the Sydney Olympic Games was \$3,025 million². This included the government expenditure on the venues and the infrastructure (i.e. Homebush Bay rail line and Olympic Park Station, roads, ferry wharf, bridges, water services, landscaping, etc) and the private sector expenditure on the athlete's village and the main stadium. This was the largest single peacetime construction project ever undertaken in Australia. There was also another \$3 billion spent on games-related infrastructure, which included a \$2 billion upgrade of Sydney Airport, \$700 million spent on the Eastern Distributor roadway and \$320 million beautification of the Sydney CBD.

Two of the major facilities, the Sydney International Athletic Centre and the Sydney International Aquatic Centre were constructed as part of the NSW Government's bid to host

the Olympic Games. Both were opened in 1994. The bulk of the work, however, did not start until after the new NSW Labour government in 1995 formed the Olympics Coordination Authority (OCA). The OCA was given the job of constructing 15 new major Olympic sporting venues as well as the Olympic and Media Villages and it had less than five years in which to complete the task. A major part of its job was to produce a masterplan for Homebush Bay (the main Olympic site), which included setting out the location of each of the Olympic and Paralympic sporting venues, the location of roads and other essential infrastructure and design principles to guide construction³.

To the credit of everyone involved, especially the workers, all the permanent venues outlined in Sydney's Olympic Bid were completed by the end of 1999, fully nine months before the start of the Games. This allowed them to be fully tested before the Games began and represented the earliest completion of venues for a Games in Olympic history⁴.

The Collaborative Industrial Environment

The Sydney Olympic Games have been dubbed "*The Collaborative Games*"⁵ due to extensive collaboration between the government, private sector employers, the trade unions and the workforce. In terms of the industrial arrangements, the OCA delivery strategy encompassed:

- a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the state government and the Labour Council of NSW (the peak trade union body) which set a code of conduct for industrial relations on Olympic projects including 'no strike' dispute-settling procedures
- a conscious decision to leave the responsibility for day-to-day management of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) and industrial relations issues in the hands of the contractors

| Employed total NSW – Construction Industry (November quarter figures) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
| 209900 | | 184900 | 206100 | 220600 | 254700 | 235300 | 238200 | 243700 | 267900 | 279600 |
| Source: ABS Cat.6291.0.55.003 Labour Force Australia, Detailed, Quarterly | | | | | | | | | | |

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- a conscious decision to have only major builders and contractors with well-developed OH&S and industrial relations programmes on initial bid lists to ensure a smooth and orderly start to the Olympic construction programme
- provision for Project Agreements, that would apply to all of the different subcontractors and their employees working on a particular site, negotiated between builder/ contractor and the Labour Council and formalised by project awards (a legally enforceable document that binds anyone working on the project) endorsed by the NSW Industrial Commission
- maintaining regular executive-level contact with architects, engineers, builders and contractors to ensure continued commitment to successful outcomes on Olympic projects, and timely resolution of issues which could have impacted on delivery.



The MOU was signed in late 1997 and the key features included a commitment by the unions to ensuring delivery of all the 2000 Olympic and related projects on time and within budget, a common understanding on the issues of dispute resolution and occupational health and safety, a commitment to training and the payment of a project productivity allowance. In terms of the last matter, the parties negotiated a common project productivity allowance of \$1.85 per hour that operated as a *de facto* site allowance on all related construction projects⁶. In regard to training the MOU stated:

"The parties are committed to the establishment of project specific on-site and off-site training approaches to increase training opportunities and provide training in areas in the industry where there is expected to be a shortage of skilled and competent workers. This training will also include on site practical training in areas of work that cannot be taught in a classroom situation."

Impact on Employment

Over 40 000 workers were employed on construction projects overseen by OCA. From the time that OCA was founded in 1995, over 11 million hours of work were provided on construction projects for the Games. Further, it was estimated that every job on a construction site generated at least two more off-site jobs in the area of suppliers, material

| Original Applications Approved - NSW Building and Construction Industry (Calendar year) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| TRAINING TYPE | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
| Apprenticeship | 4707 | 4205 | 3559 | 3221 | 4299 | 4252 | 3207 | 3474 | 4166 | 5426 |
| Existing Worker Traineeship | | | | | | 314 | 767 | 1345 | 410 | 236 |
| New Entrant Traineeship | 28 | 106 | 191 | 125 | 117 | 135 | 287 | 355 | 456 | 407 |
| Total All Training types | 4735 | 4311 | 3750 | 3346 | 4416 | 4701 | 4261 | 5174 | 5032 | 6069 |

Source: https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/forms/documents/apprenticeships_traineeships/statistics/graphs/approvals/approvals_graphs_industry_end_2004.pdf

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producers, transport workers and other areas⁸. The impact on employment though was not immediately noticeable. The following statistics show that the peak employment period for construction work was in 1999.

What is surprising however is that there was not a significant drop-off in the post games period. This demonstrates the strength and resilience of the Australian economy⁹.

Impact on Training

To implement the training commitment in the MOU, the NSW Department of Education and Training coordinated a \$10 million construction training strategy. The funding actually came from the industry itself as it was made available from the interest earned by the monies in the Building and

Construction Industry Long Service Payments Scheme¹⁰. Nationally accredited training in skills, in areas where a likely skills shortage during the construction phase had been identified, was delivered through a network of government and private Registered Training Organisations. Training was provided to 12 250 workers, 30 per cent of whom were new to the industry.¹¹

The accredited skills training leading to qualifications was delivered on and off the job. This included providing training in periods of downtime caused by bad weather to minimise the slowdown of the construction process. Workers already onsite also had opportunities to acquire additional skills that companies would need in the next stages of a project. Special pilot programmes were established for people who were not usually exposed to this kind of structured training, including: housing sector workers (for the small subcontractors working on the Olympic Village); workers from Aboriginal and non English-speaking communities; pre-vocational courses for school leavers; and an IT and business management programme for small business owners¹².



One of the most critical parts of the training was on-site induction and safety training. This was provided for all 7 500 workers on the main Olympic sites. As noted by Andrew Ferguson, State Secretary of the Construction forestry Mining and Energy Union (the CFMEU),

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"Workcover requirements for site specific induction and OH&S is the law. There was more compliance ... andgovernment involvement in the project but the main difference was the attitude."¹³

The commitment to OH&S training led to the construction of the Sydney Olympic Games having a relatively good safety record, compared to the rest of the industry, but there was one fatal accident. Tom Pascoe, a scaffolder and father of three, was killed on the site of the Olympic Village after being struck by bricks that fell 3.5 metres from inadequate scaffold on 24 September 1998. (A monument has been erected to mark this tragedy and can be found at Avenue of Oceania, Pierre de Coubertin Park, Newington, NSW, Australia.)

In terms of the number of workers who entered into a formal contract of training (i.e. an apprenticeship or traineeship), the figures show a mixed result. The following table contains the number of apprentices and trainees who commenced their contract of training in the relevant years:

Surprisingly the peak in commencements for apprenticeships during the Olympic construction period occurred in 1999, which was the year in which the majority of venues were completed. As most apprenticeships are of 3-4 year duration, one would have expected the peaks to occur in earlier years (i.e. 1997 and 1998) if a maximum training impact was to be achieved.

Conclusion

The 2000 Sydney Olympics was an example of how collaboration between governments, employers, workers and their unions could deliver a major project on time, on budget, and provide greater employment and training opportunities for the local population. The increase in training, especially the OH&S training, improved the safety standards in the industry although as previously noted there was still one tragic death of a construction worker. Perhaps more could have

been done to increase the numbers of apprentices and trainees, as the lack of skilled workers is a reoccurring problem that emerges during the boom times of each construction cycle. But overall the construction of the Sydney Olympics provides a good template that other Olympic cities may wish to follow.

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6. The project productivity allowance was paid in addition to productivity payments for reaching specific stages of projects and incentive payments where milestones were reached early.
7. Webb, op cit., p.23
8. <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/13323/20020919-0000/www.gamesinfo.com.au/postgames/en/pg000912.htm>
9. In more recent times the Federal Governments stimulus package, introduced following the Global Financial Crisis, has lessened the potentially devastating negative impact on construction employment caused by the lack of finance for new projects.
10. This scheme provides payments to workers for long service leave based on their service in the industry. It is funded by a levy on building and construction work and is paid by building owners and developers.
11. Webb, op cit., p.24
12. Ibid., p.23-24
13. Ibid, p.26

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A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE 2004 OLYMPIC GAMES IN ATHENS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS IN GREECE

Introduction

Olympic Games are a serious event in both economic and political terms. Their organization includes the implementation of large-scale construction projects and the completion of significant infrastructure works. Olympic Games also attract global attention, bringing million of tourists, investors and other important people from the business world and politics in the Games' host city. From this angle, the Olympics represent a top level opportunity for economic development, affecting heavily the construction and tourism industry. In the case of the Olympics in Athens in 2004, this acknowledgement was made clear from the early 1990s, when the city was a candidate for hosting the 1996 Olympics. Relevant pre-2004 studies made by the Athens University of Economic and Business (ΟΠΑ), the Centre of Planning and Economic Research (ΚΕΠΕ) and the Confederation of Greek Commerce (ΕΣΕΕ) concluded that the Olympics would boost significantly the future economic growth of Greece. For this reason the vast majority of people and the political and economic institutions in Greece viewed the 2004 Athens Olympics in a very positive way. Further, the Olympics were considered as a national duty given the strong historical roots of the Olympic Games with ancient Greece and the rebirth of the Games in Athens in 1896. According to the Athens 2004 Organizing Committee, almost 97.5% of the population in Greece was in favor of organizing the Games in the country in 2000.

Nevertheless, the positive feelings and the great expectations were not associated with good planning over the organization of the Olympics. The cost of the Olympics was dramatically increased and, even a few days before the start of the

Games, there was widespread anxiety across the global community concerning whether the Greeks would finally manage to deliver the Games without problems. Instead of attractive comments for Athens, the international press was constantly very critical about the delays observed in scheduled construction works. Eventually, the Olympics in Athens took place without problems and perhaps the only black spot to remember was the low attendance levels in the stadiums and the sluggish ticket sales. Other fortunate events that took place during the summer of 2004, such as the triumph of the national football team in Portugal for the European Cup, made this period memorable for Greece. It was only two years after the introduction of the euro in the country and one more year of an impressive economic growth rate since 1996. Nevertheless, it was only some months earlier (December 2003) that the Greek government managed to obtain a €1.5bn loan from the European Investments Bank to finance the cost of the Olympic Games' infrastructure works. As such, the economic growth observed was fed by huge loans and debts that sooner or later would have to be paid back.



By the end of the Olympics the structural problems of the Greek economy started to emerge with greater intensity and the Greek construction industry entered a phase of recession (Kretsos, 2010). According to a study carried out by the Institute for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), around four months after the end of the Olympic Games (December 2004), the 'business expectation index' in the construction industry reached its lowest level (59.6) since that observed in March 2000 (164.2) (IOBE, 2004). Such development was indicative of the gradual reduction in employment in the construction industry after the end of the Olympics. To put it in simple terms, the construction boom before the Athens Olympics was associated with a post-Olympic crisis. This development had serious economic and social repercussions that have become more evident with the current economic and social crisis in Greece. The aim of this article is to assess critically the Olympics in 2004, focusing on the consequences in the construction industry and the Greek economy as a whole. It further aims to investigate why the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens are perceived by many analysts as a lost opportunity or even a mistake in the current context of economic crisis.

The expansion of the Greek construction industry due to the Olympics of 2004

For the most part of the last two decades the construction industry was the driving force of economic development and employment in Greece. The requirements of the efforts to hold a first-rate Olympics in 2004, in conjunction with the influx of EU funds in order to achieve this goal and also to modernize the country's transport infrastructure, helped expand construction activity and increased the number of people employed in the building/public works sector (Kretsos, 2005). The industry's economic size rose from €6.3bn in 1997 to €13.65bn in 2003, representing around 10% of GDP. The upward course of the industry had broader positive effects on economic growth rates and employment in related economic activities such as the plastics and building materials industries. According to estimates by IOK (2004), the national rate of unemploy-

ment fell by 1%-3% between 1995-2004 due to increased employment in construction alone. In that period many infrastructure works were completed (Egnatia Odos, Attiki Odos, Athens-Eleftherios Venizelos airport, Athens Metro etc.) through access to greater funding from the EU and the national budgets (Karousos and Vlamis, 2008; Kretsos, 2010; Ταρπάγκος, 2008).

Nevertheless, the industry continued to attract unskilled immigrants who usually worked longer and for lower wages than those set by the relevant collective agreements (Καψάλης, 2007). Symptoms of labour law violation in the industry were increased. In addition to this, a substantial number of engineers and other scientific staff continued to be employed as freelancers or independent contractors issuing receipts for services rendered, whereas the basic features of their employment relationship indicated that they were in practice typical full-time employees (<http://www.somtechnik.gr/>). Finally, workplace accidents continued to occur regularly, especially as the 'rush hour' of the Olympics approached. According to Labour Inspectorate Authorities (ΣΕΠΕ) in the 2000-2005 period, reported workplace accidents increased significantly, an increase largely due to efforts to complete work for the Olympic Games within the prescribed deadlines (Kretsos, 2007).

As such the Olympic Games in Athens acted as a catalyst for the increase in employment and economic activity in the sector for the period between 2000-2004. By the completion of the 2004 Olympics, many jobs were lost and broader labour law violation symptoms were exacerbated. However, the big shock in the industry was to come some years later with the upsurge of the economic crisis of 2009-10. After 2008 more than 32.000 jobs were lost; indeed, the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) argues that more than 40.000 jobs have been lost in the last three years. This means that the current crisis in the construction industry is the highest in the postwar period (see the press release of TEE, 10 April 2010 and Kanellopoulos, 2010).

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To summarize, the positive effects of the Games were only temporary in nature. Further, they did not affect the traditional labour process in the industry, which is characterized by symptoms of labour law violation and high labour intensity. The urgency to have everything ready on time resulted in more intensive work rhythms, unsocial long working hours, fatal and serious workplace accidents and a rise on undeclared and underpaid work across the industry.

Six years after the 2004 Olympic Games. Where is the glory?

The broader discontent and social unrest that prevails at the time of writing across the country have changed the way the project of the Olympic Games is perceived. The new regime of austerity has sparked a public debate regarding the factors that led to the explosion in public debt and to increased economic control of the country by the IMF and the EU authorities. Relevant articles in the press consider the Olympics of 2004 as part of the problem in the sense that the country was not able to take over such a demanding and highly risky project, resulting in turn in the expansion of public debt. As though opening a Pandora's Box regarding the current economic crisis in Greece, the Olympics are sometimes blamed because of the way they were managed by the dominant economic elites of the country, generating corporate profits through a broader exercise of political corruption and economic scandal.

While hosting a mega sports event, some escalation in costs is understandable as new projects may be needed; in the case of the Athens's Olympics there were dramatic escalating costs in several items including infrastructure, accommodation, catering, security, and the opening and closing ceremonies. Governments, construction companies and other authorities totally lost financial control as the 'rush hour' of 2004 approached. For example, the cost of the 19 stadiums and other essential Olympic infrastructure was estimated at €181.7m in

the initial proposal for claiming the Games to Athens; in 2000, this cost increased to €371.1m and became €1,507m in 2003, while the final cost announced in 2004 was even higher (€1,540m). Even Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee, criticized Greece's "overly ambitious and lavish" preparations. In an interview with the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* on 8th June 2004, he cited the exorbitant cost of the €189m elaborate glass and steel roof that had been fitted over the main Olympic stadium in Athens.

Nevertheless, six years after the completion of the Games, there is still not a definite and accurate calculation of their total direct and indirect cost. Initial estimates in the media talk about €36bn after a significant, wasteful extravaganza between 2000 and 2004. This is considered by many analysts and small political parties as scandalous when dramatic wage cuts are being imposed and basic workers' rights are under threat as a consequence of the austerity measures that have been agreed between the Greek government, European Central Bank and the IMF in the rescue plan for the Greek economy of May 2010.

More interest by journalists in the actual cost of the Olympics has challenged the pre-2004 strong faith in organizing the Games in 2004 in Greece as they make certain allegations over widespread corruption. The deal regarding the security system C4i for the 2004 Olympics is an indicative example. The C4i system, the cost of which was €255m, has never been used. Further, the C4i deal, awarded to San Diego-based Scientific Applications International Corporation (SAIC), with Siemens as the top subcontractor, was revealed to be related to secret bank accounts and cash transfers between the two biggest political parties of the country and Siemens (see relevant articles at www.iospress.gr and Χατζηγεωργίου, 2010).

The big issue

A leap into the unknown is always a challenging situation. Nevertheless, and as the case of the Olympic Games in Athens reveals, this is not always the wisest thing to do. It is unknown how much time it will take for Greece to pay back the ballooning costs of hosting the Olympic Games in August 2004. Athens is not the first city to find hosting the games a loss-making enterprise and a generous inheritance of debts. For example the 1976 Montreal games virtually bankrupted the city. Nevertheless, in the case of Greece the negative impact of the Olympics has been not only economic, but also political and social. Dominant indigenous economic elites and powerful political groups established a model of economic growth that expanded public debt and increased the economic dependence of the country on financial speculators. They further created devastating future economic burdens for younger generations and other vulnerable groups in the population by reducing the resources available to meet social and regional development policy.

Perhaps this is the most serious consequence of the mismanagement of the 2004 Olympics project. Lack of accountability in public accounts has in turn enforced the public sense of anger and discontent in the political system especially among young people. For example, the upsurge in massive riots in December 2008 was inspired by the anger of the youth and a broader sense of injustice, not only because of the police brutality but also because of the fact that it is more and more common for young workers to follow fractured transitions between education and work, interspersed by periods of unemployment and low-paid employment (CEC, 2007; Economides and Monastiriotis, 2009; Pollert and Tailby, 2009). Secondly, various demonstrations have taken place in Athens and other cities in the country in 2011-11, as a direct response to the austerity measures imposed. Such incidences are indicative of the character of political and social tension that prevails across the country at the time of writing. In this framework, and as long as there is no intention by the government to break the silence regarding the excessive costs of the

Olympics and how these costs resulted in the current excessive public debt and public deficit rates, it is difficult to expect that the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens will be remembered as a good thing by working people in Greece.

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CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN BEIJING 2008 OLYMPIC GAMES

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Beijing held the 29th Summer Olympics from August 8th - 20th 2008. To meet international standards, 37 competition sites, 5 related facilities and more than 60 training sites were completed before the end of 2007. A public notice issued by the National Audit Office of the People's Republic of China on June 19, 2009 said that the total investment in the Olympic sports ground and gym or stadium was 194.55 billion Yuan, equivalent to about 20.94 billion Euros according to the latest exchange rate.

Beijing constructed 31 competition sites, 45 independent training venues, 5 related facilities as well as 62 roads and 4 bridges around the different venues. The other venues were located in Qinhuangdao, Qingdao, Hong Kong, Shenyang, Tianjin and Shanghai. The 31 competition sites included 12 new venues, 11 existing venues and 8 temporary venues. The 12 new venues were National Stadium, National Aquatics Center, National Indoor Stadium, Beijing Shooting Range Hall, Beijing Olympic Basketball Gymnasium, Laoshan Velodrome, Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park, China Agricultural University Gymnasium, Peking University Gymnasium, Beijing University of Technology Gymnasium and Beijing Olympic Green Tennis Court. In addition, there were five related facilities, Olympic Village, the Media Village, the Main Press Center (MPC), the International Broadcast Center (IBC) and the Technical Operations Center.

To complete this gigantic project on time, Beijing recruited roughly 300,000 migrant workers from all parts of the country. To avoid labour shortages during the construction of the Olympic venues, Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-rural Development, Beijing Construction Industry Association and Beijing Construction Industry Human Resource Association raised the wage of Beijing migrant

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workers on February 1st 2007 and set a minimum increase of 30%¹.

The construction of the Olympics, in promoting the connection between Beijing and the rest of the world, stimulated the economy and increased the popularity of China. But the migrant workers who played a pivotal role in the project were not paid enough attention. Nearly all of them came from urban areas, and they mostly suffered from poor working conditions, long working hours, and high work intensity, as well as being threatened with wage arrears, industrial injury and occupational disease which cannot be compensated for, etc.

A 2008 news report lauded that the Olympic workers' maximum wage had reached 5,000 Yuan a month while the average wage was approximately 2,500 Yuan, which is about 269.10 Euros now. As for insurance, on April 26th 2007 the government declared that all Olympic workers were insured².

The information released by the government was always positive, while an interview conducted by Sports Illustrated in July 2007 uncovered some inside stories. The journalists interviewed 57 Olympic workers and 32 of them come from Henan Province. 30 workers worked on the Olympic Village and 14 in the National Stadium. The journalists found that their different wages were not determined by the building sites they were attached to, but by the contractors who employed them. A project contracted by a company can be divided into several parts and these parts can be further divided into smaller parts. In this system, workers employed by different contractors had different settlement methods and different wages. 18 workers were paid monthly, 4 quarterly, 20 annually, and 14 were not clear about the settlement at all. One worker claimed that all of them should be paid every ten days. Some said they were paid regularly, while some complained they had not been paid for over 50 days and did

not receive overtime pay. Five admitted their contractors were delaying paying in the recent period. Most earned 40 (4.3 Euros) to 60 (6.5 Euros) Yuan a day and only 10 people were paid over 70 (7.5 Euros) Yuan daily. The general wages were too low.

More than half of the workers worked over 10 hours a day without holidays all week except if they were ill or went home during busy seasons. A worker from Henan said there were no legal holidays on building sites.

Only 27 people were satisfied with the food provided by the canteen; 9 groused that the food was too salty without any oil, and 6.5 Yuan (0.7 Euros) a hot dish was too expensive for them. A Union Chairman said that a new and well-decorated canteen was built, but workers had to pay much more and it was open and frequented by workers in other sectors. None of them criticized the living conditions, although they had to share poorly ventilated rooms with up to 29 people, and some even had to crash on the floor. There was also a deluxe living area, but it was so small that not all the workers could use it. It had the same function of being frequented by others. During the limited leisure time, their top three recreations were watching movies in the service area, lounging, and reading books or surfing the net in the night school.

They did not have regular sex; 2 confessed to looking for prostitutes 3 or 4 times a month when they needed to; one said he went back home each month to solve this problem. 38 workers said they suppressed impulses or consoled themselves.

Most of the workers were not insured and some did not even sign the labor contract. When they were ailing, they cured their sickness in different ways: 11 bought drugs in pharmacies themselves; 14 went to small clinics or the health centre of the service area; 5 went to hospital and paid the bills out of their own pockets; a further 5 bore the pain with some

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drugs brought from their hometowns. 77.2% of the workers had not been injured on construction sites; only 2 had received treatment for their wounds out of the 12 who had suffered minor injuries, and the contractor only paid one worker's bill. Liu, a 55-year-old worker from Sichuan province, was seriously injured on May 9th 2007 in an accident that left him with two wounds in his leg and chest respectively. His contractor disappeared after paying for the operation and did not do anything about Liu's future³.

This interview revealed to us some covered-up truths, while much more truth remained hidden by the government.



There is a vivid example. According to the picture above, we can see a young guy who is a migrant worker with a red face. He got the colour when he did the painting in the Bird's Nest. The red pigment, which is a waterproof chemical coating, cannot be washed easily and does harm to people's health. The workers still constantly face a health crisis.

All in all, construction workers were serviced more than usual. The government built a 6,600 square metre service area

for the migrant workers in the Olympic Park in Chaoyang District. The service area had a reading room, a night school, a computer room, a projection room and some groceries and public phones⁴.

Besides, the workers gained increased training opportunities. The government trained them how to be citizens, how to deal with industrial accidents, etc. Construction workers were proud of their progress and the experience could help them to find better opportunities in their later career.

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THE FORTHCOMING OLYMPICS IN LONDON

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical assessment of the construction training and employment for the London 2012 Olympic Games. The Olympics is classed as a mega event and in recent years such events have been seen as a catalyst for the host city in terms of economic growth (Andranovich et al 2001). London won the bid to host the Games on 6th July 2005 and, according to London 2012 (2010a), the Olympics is one of the largest construction projects in Europe. This has potentially opened up the possibility for people living in the host London boroughs to be employed or trained to work on a large-scale construction project. However, such a possibility has been somewhat thwarted not only by the nature of the construction industry, including its overwhelmingly white male character, but also by the recent Conservative government's cuts which have hit these boroughs in a particularly serious way.

Background

The legacy of the Games was key to the London Olympic bid in 2005, which focussed on the regeneration of the East End of London and the creation of jobs (Barclay et al 2005; House of Commons 2007). London is very diverse, with an ethnic population (especially from Black and Asian minority ethnic groups – known as BAME) of 42% in comparison to 8% in the rest of England (EHRC 2009), and consists of 33 boroughs which are not the same in terms of economic and social activity. The hope has been that the boroughs hosting the Olympics – as well as London as a whole - will benefit from the increased skill and employment opportunities (ODA 2009). How far the Olympics can solve the social and employment problems of East London is, however, yet to be seen. Of the original five host boroughs, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham have the highest percentage of children living in

families receiving state benefits; Hackney has the highest number of young people not in employment, education or training (ONS 2010), whilst Waltham Forest has social problems in terms of a gang culture (Pitts 2007).

The construction industry is the largest employer in the UK with over 2 million people and is a significant contributor to the UK economy, employing one in 12 people (Dainty et al 2007; EHRC 2009). However, many are employed on a casual and ('bogus') self-employed basis and large projects in particular often rely heavily on an itinerant workforce (Harvey and Behling 2008; Clarke and Gribbling 2008). The workforce predominately consists of white males with a small number from ethnic minority groups and women (Craw et al 2007; EHRC 2009).



Construction Training and Employment Opportunities

The Olympic site consists of two separate parts, the Park and the Athletes' Village, each with different conditions and contracts, including training and employment targets under contract compliance clauses. In September 2010 6,243 were recorded as working for contractors on the Park and 4,090 on the Village, totally 10,333. Between April 2008 and September 2010 altogether 20,630 were employed on the Park for five or more days (ODA 2010a). A Memorandum of Agreement was original-

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ly signed, seeking to ensure direct employment and guarantee minimum rates according to the collective agreement. However, this did not apply to the Athletes' Village where conditions have been reported to be significantly worse, with excessive working hours, higher accident levels, and far less adherence to payment of the London Living Wage (*Building Worker* 2011). Adherence to direct employment is difficult to gauge, though earlier statistics from 2008 show only 68% Direct Employment in the Supply Chain (London 2012, 2008).

The Olympic Delivery Agency (ODA) was established by the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act, which received Royal Assent in March 2006. The Act was passed to ensure that the necessary planning and preparation for the Games could take place (www.legislation.gov.uk 2011; London 2012, 2011). Amongst others, the ODA's responsibility is to ensure that the infrastructure required to host the Games will be built, in addition to securing employment and training. In terms of training and employment, according to London 2012 (2010b), the ODA's targets on the Olympic site have been to:

- promote sustainable employment opportunities and boost skill levels locally and across the UK;
- create opportunities for women, disabled people and BAME;
- deliver a construction workforce of at least 15% of residents of the five Host Boroughs;
- ensure at least 7% of the workforce is made up of people previously unemployed before working on London 2012;
- place at least 2,250 people into trainee programmes, apprenticeships and work placements (up to 2012).

In 2008, the figures for training were rather more ambitious, with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS 2008: 3) claiming that:

We are committed to ensuring that 20,000 workless Londoners from the five Host Boroughs have permanent jobs

by 2012. We expect to see up to 12,000 extra job opportunities in the vicinity of the Olympic Park post-Games.

Whilst these figures would be a major boost to the deprived East End of London, it has not been clear how targets set for training and employment in relation to the Olympics are to be achieved or whether these were achievable in the first place. What is known is that London will host the Olympics in 2012 but what is unknown is who will benefit in terms of training and employment. To further our understanding about the potential benefits of the Olympics, Kasimati (2003) reviewed existing literature that focused on the economic impact of the summer games from 1984-2012. His findings showed that any pre-forecast of the games was never confirmed in any post analysis. This demonstrates that host cities may cite a great deal of potential benefit in hosting the Games, but not every potential may be realized upon completion.

It has been claimed that the number of people trained on the Olympic site is low. For instance, though the building programme began in September 2007, by 2010 Beard (2010a) was reporting in the *Evening Standard* that to date only nine individuals had qualified as trades people on the site. This information was obtained as part of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) introduced by the UK government in 2000, which provides those who make a formal request access to public documents. The nine trades people qualifying had been apprentices, combining on the job training with a recognised qualification. The number of apprentices planned to be on the Olympic Park has in fact fluctuated a great deal over the years and the targets set have always been claimed by the trade unions as anyway too low, given the size of the workforce. In 2008, DCMS (2008) reported that £50 million (58 million Euros) would be invested in construction, part of which would be used to deliver thousands of apprenticeship placements. Indeed, in 2011 the ODA was reporting that its target of 350 apprenticeships on site had been exceeded be-

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cause, by June 2011, 426 apprentices had had some experience of working on the site (ODA 2011). However, of these, only 60 apprentices had actually completed their training on the Olympic Park and the Athlete's Village (O'Sullivan 2011), representing less than 1% of the workforce.

Although apprentices may experience work on the Olympics, this does not mean that they are able to complete their training on the site due to the length of apprenticeships and the short period of time before completion in 2012. What is the plan for apprentices who fall into this scenario? Will they have the opportunity to complete their training on some other construction site? This may be a possibility, including with the same employer, though, where it is not and where an opportunity of moving to another employer is not provided, this will go against the ODA's target of sustainable employment. As claimed by George Guy, acting general secretary of UCATT:

The ODA has so far failed to grasp the opportunity of making apprenticeship training a significant legacy of the Olympics. If apprentices leave the Olympics site, the ODA can only rely on companies' goodwill to ensure that training is completed. (O'Sullivan 2011)

The question then arises as to what constitutes training on the Olympic site and in what areas? Does it refer to ensuring that people fully complete training in terms of receiving a qualification of having, for example, completed an apprenticeship? In terms of apprenticeships, effort has been overwhelmingly concentrated on the traditional trades, in particular electricians, brick/blocklayers, plumbers, carpenters, and painters and decorators. Alternatively, is training, as the ODA defines it, giving people the chance of a training intervention (ODA 2011)? One such training intervention has come from the National Skills Academy for Construction (NASfc), funded by the Sector Skills Council, ConstructionSkills, set up to provide training for the construction industry. Its aim has been to provide workers with the skills required to work on the

Olympic site, with short courses offered in operative skills, for instance operating plant such as fork lift trucks. However, although, an individual may take part in a training initiative, there is no guarantee that they will gain employment on the Olympic site or that the skills gained are the ones required on site.

According to the LOCOG (Local Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games), the measure of success of training and employment on the Olympic site is in terms of creating opportunities (LOCOG 2010). But how real are these opportunities and what may influence an individual in taking them up, for example, does everyone have equal access or resources in terms of ability or aspirations? Bux-Ryan et al, (2010) undertook research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to examine access to employment and training on the Olympic site. The findings showed that there was a lack of information about Olympic training and employment, despite there being various initiatives in place. These findings concur with Ethnos Research and Consultancy (2008) which conducted research on the views of residents in the London Borough of Newham to examine whether they are benefiting from the opportunities associated with the Olympics. Although none of the other host London boroughs were part of the research, the report does provide an insight into the factors that local people may face when trying to access any employment and training opportunity.

The ODA (2010b) argues that local people are receiving training, but it is unclear what 'local' means - whether it refers to those with a permanent address in one of the host boroughs or to those who have moved into the area especially to gain employment on the Olympic site. Clarke and Gribling (2008) conducted research into the training, recruitment and employment associated with the construction of the Terminal Five extension to Heathrow airport, a large-scale project in the West of London. They found that training and employment of local residents was limited and that the site depended rather

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on the large-scale use of migrant workers from other European countries. Beard (2010b), on the basis of information obtained under the FOIA, reported that on the Olympic site only 828 workers, or 13.2% of the total 6,277 workforce, lived locally.

The ODA (2010b) quantifies workers on the Olympic as those who have spent at least five days working on the Olympic Park or Village over a certain timeframe. On this basis, its official statistics show that, out of a workforce of 6243 on the Olympic Park in September 2010:

- 1430 or 23% were from the five host Boroughs and Barking & Dagenham, a quarter of whom claimed previous unemployment;
- 1947 or 31% from other London Boroughs, one-tenth claiming previous unemployment;
- 42% from outside London, of whom only 7% declared themselves previously unemployed.

For the Athlete's Village, the proportion of the workforce locally-based is rather higher with:

- 1151 or 29% were from the five host Boroughs and Barking & Dagenham, of whom 15% voluntarily declared previous unemployment;
- 1428 or 35% from other London Boroughs, with 11% declaring previous unemployment;
- 32% from outside London.

In terms of job brokerage on the Olympic Park, for which £9.6 support was given by the London Development Authority, 1069 are claimed to have been placed in work since April 2008 who were previously unemployed, of whom 79% were from the local London Boroughs, 51% from BAME groups, 19% women and 9% disabled (LDA 2008).

As a public body, the ODA has a statutory duty to promote equal opportunities (EO), so that much emphasis has been placed on increasing the number of women and those from BAME groups working on the project, including through the requirement that all main contractors have EO recruitment

policies and procedures in place (Foster 2010). Altogether 327 women have worked on the Park, representing 5% of the construction workforce and 2.2% of those in the manual trades. The jobs of those women brokered into employment have ranged from dumper-truck driver to general machine operative. In the Village the high diversity targets initially set have not, however, been met, with women representing only 3% of those employed instead of the target of 11%, only 14% from BAME groups instead of the targeted 15%, and 0.6% disabled though the target was 3% (ODA 2010a).

Bux-Ryan et al. (2010) have argued that the number of employment vacancies has tended to remain the same, as employers have moved employees from other sites to work on the Olympic Park. The nature of construction is such that the workforce can be mobile, allowing employers to relocate their employees to other construction projects rather than supporting the creation of jobs for the East End of London or sustainable employment (Barclay et al 2005; House of Commons 2007). One important factor is also the location of the contractors concerned; of £5.2 billion contracts awarded, £2.7 billion went to companies based in London (*Financial Times* 2010).

Other key issues

Health and safety on the Olympic sites has been a significant success story, with 13 periods of one million hours worked without a reportable accident (ODA 2010a). Altogether in the 45m hours worked, there have been 35 reportable injury accidents, two dangerous occurrences and one reportable disease. The accident frequency rate has been very low and none of the injuries incurred appear to have had a lasting affect. In addition, many thousands have received medical checks and there has been a drop-in health service.

In contrast, a black spot has been the exposure of a blacklist, a highly politically sensitive issue in the construction industry in Britain, following the disclosure of detailed information

kept on blacklisted construction workers, many of them health and safety representatives, who have been unable to obtain employment in the industry over many decades. On the Olympic site, a construction worker who raised concerns about the dismissal of a fellow worker discovered that an illegal blacklist was in operation and was then himself victimised and then dismissed. This has led to protests and prompted attempts to obtain a Europe-wide ban on the practice with the support of Members of the European Parliament.

Conclusion

As apparent from this account, the strategy for training and employment for the London 2012 Olympic Games has been based on targets, which have tended to fluctuate over the years. Although, there is a very large workforce involved in building the Olympics, there remains a lack of clarity as to who is or has benefited from training and employment opportunities. LOCOG (2008) argues that 'legacy' means different things to different people, and may include employment opportunities. But, for the people of the East End of London, the Olympics could have provided a far greater opportunity for many to experience work on a large-scale construction project, to be trained and to gain employment. Nevertheless there have been significant training and employment opportunities available on the site and what is questionable is perhaps rather whether it was too ambitious to think that the Olympics could solve the problem of social deprivation in the East End of London. In the context of the construction industry, the project has had certain exemplary aspects, including its health and safety record and working conditions. In other respects, though, including in its relative lack of diversity (with the exception of those whose jobs have been brokered) and the operation of a blacklist, it has continued to reflect the discrimination evident in the industry as a whole.

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Discussion

Segmented markets and core labour standards: monitoring vs labour control?

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Core labour standards as defined in the ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work have to some extent been mainstreamed in the last decades. Not only are they central to the ILO's Decent Work strategy, but the World Bank as well as a number of regional development banks have integrated CLSs into their lending requirements and Global Unions have successfully promoted them in International Framework Agreements (IFAs). The latter currently number around 90 agreements with MNCs, although Global Unions have developed different approaches resulting in significant variations in terms of procedure as well as inclusiveness. However, while IFAs secure access to management at HQ level and establish a terrain for management-labour dialogue at global level, their challenge arguably lies in the extent to which they can reach across different ownership and inter-firm structures (e.g. subsidiary, joint venture, subcontractor and supplier relations) as well as industrial relations systems. In the face of the increase in outsourcing and subcontracting over the last decades, a reach along value chains would be crucial to assist organising and improving working and employment conditions at the local level.

The rising power of lead firms – particularly buyers, retailers, and branded marketers – has prompted debates about the extent to which these lead MNCs can promote or enforce labour standards in their value chain. To some extent IFAs have adopted this logic of extending CLS provisions to suppliers and subcontractors. The point made here is that too strong a focus on the 'chain logic', whilst in itself important, occurs at the expense of 'societal and local logics' both at the level of production as well as the labour market. In other words, the acceptance of unproblematic inter-firm and labour market dynamics at the national and local levels defines the issue as

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one of implementation and monitoring, assuming that IFAs (or any other multi-stakeholder standard) are effective as long as implementation and monitoring are got right. At this point the focus then turns to the most effective approach to do so, with compliance vs commitment as opposite poles on a spectrum. An alternative view, however, emphasises precisely those power dynamics at the national and local levels that support or hinder any meaningful form of implementation and monitoring. As we will see, the construction sector is a particularly good case in point for the latter perspective.

Clearly, IFAs reflect sectoral specificities and try to anticipate their implications at the local level. For example, the model IFA designed by the then IFBWW (now Building and Wood Workers' International, BWI) went beyond the relevant CLS Conventions of the ILO (freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, no forced or bonded labour, no child labour, no discrimination) and specifically referred to Conventions, Recommendations and ILO Codes of Practice on living wages, hours of work, a safe and healthy working environment, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, reasonable housing conditions, and the establishment of an employment relationship. In a recent update¹, the BWI included a paragraph on migrant workers, re-emphasising their right to equal pay and working conditions as well as rights pertaining to identification, travel documents, and associated costs (see also the recently launched campaign on migrant workers, BWI Connect²). Crucially, with a view to the complex subcontracting chains in the construction sector, the model IFA extends validity to "subsidiaries, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and joint ventures".

Currently, the BWI has 16 IFAs within its remit (nine of these are in construction and one in the building materials sector³), agreements that have developed more differentiation and depth as they have evolved with time. Most importantly, strong provisions that extend the agreement to the sub-

contracting chain exist in many cases, amongst others Hochtief, Skanska, Impregilo, and VolkerWessels, and Pfeleiderer. Furthermore, there is a very clear recognition that the agreement is a starting point and requires further work, e.g. continuous dialogue on implementation, a reference group, and local measures such as training for management, unions and health and safety representatives. However, while past experiences have been integrated into recent practices, it is important to note the structural barriers IFAs encounter on two different levels: that of the labour market as well as in the sphere of relations of production and competition.

Research on the local implementation of the earliest BWI IFA in construction, concluded with Hochtief in 2000, for example, has highlighted the difficulties of targeting implementation and monitoring practices defined at the global level, on the one hand, and at local product and labour market dynamics, on the other⁴. Both, local management and unions in Brazil, Malaysia and Ukraine were more often than not unaware of the IFA. In these as well as in other countries, the emergence of the global construction industry has developed in parallel to that of local labour markets which are characterised by labour migration and informal employment. As Wells has commented, “informality is now the norm, rather than the exception, in the construction industry throughout much of the developing world” (2007, 91)⁵. Such labour market dynamics, together with restrictions on trade union organisation, result in different labour control regimes that would require locally different ‘politics of application’ of the IFA. In Brazil, for example, unions have difficulties in accessing and controlling worksites dominated by migrant self-employed workers, at the same time as their city-based structure impedes organising interests vis-à-vis the MNCs’ subsidiary. In Malaysia, the union landscape is fragmented along professional and political lines and hardly has the capacity to challenge the state-backed anti-unionism of MNCs, not to speak of representing informal international migrant workers. In Ukraine, it is the legacies of paternalism in former

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state-sector companies that stand in the way of any practical relevance of the IFA, both, for management and unions. These different labour control regimes point not only to societal and local differences but also to different dynamics of labour market segmentation – the paradoxical challenge lies in monitoring CLS through workplace organisation and extending this to unorganised workplaces.

Related to this is a similar point regarding relations of production and competition and their impact on implementation and monitoring in subcontracting chains. Such relations take different forms and can overlap to different degrees: industry dynamics might be based on different forms of vertical and horizontal cooperation and competition at the same time as the precise situation of a particular subcontractor might change from one project to another. Importantly, such forms of inter-firm dynamics cannot be abstracted from labour standards: differences in the latter lie at the base of differential strategies of production and competition (e.g. of upgrading as well as cost minimisation) which, in turn, engender specific dynamics of labour market segmentation⁶. With regard to IFAs this means that different functions in the policy cycle are performed by actors in different market segments and therefore have different interests: while standards are set at the level of the MNC which have the power to impose sanctions, i.e. discontinue contracts, the capacity for monitoring lies at the level of local contractors, i.e. where interests in monitoring compliance or sanctioning non-compliance are weakest.

Where does this leave IFAs? They have clearly been important in establishing a platform for social dialogue at the global level, including recognition of Global Unions in negotiating CLS, and assisted in the establishment of union structures within MNCs. Given the fragmentation and segmentation in the construction industry – in product, competition and labour markets – standards and policies negotiated at the global level might well be necessary in dealing with the emer-

gence of powerful MNCs but are not sufficient in tackling the frontier of control in local markets. This points to the limits of organising along value chains. However, we can also see innovative approaches emerging where Dutch construction unions, for example, have followed their lead MNCs abroad and conduct joint implementation and monitoring in the Global South. Equally, as this issue of CLR shows, major sports events such as Olympic Games and football World and European Cups can serve as focal points for labour standards and organising campaigns. What they also emphasise, though, is the importance for CLS instruments formulated at global level to take account of vertical and horizontal dynamics of segmentation, of capital and labour, at the local level. Even elaborate policies of implementation and monitoring are filtered through the local politics of labour control, particularly those that are based on monitoring through workplace organisation.

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1. See <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=47&Language=EN>
 2. See <http://connect.bwint.org/>
 3. These are with Hochtief, Skanska, Ballast Nedam, Veidekke, Impregilo, Royal BAM, VolkerWessels, Italcementi, Pfeiderer as well as Lafarge.
 4. Davies, S., Hammer, N., Williams, G., Raman, R., Ruppert, C.S., and Volynets, L. (forthcoming 2011) Labour standards and capacity in global subcontracting chains: evidence from a construction MNC, *Industrial Relations Journal* (42) 2
 5. Wells, J. (2007) Informality in the construction sector in developing countries, *Construction Management and Economics* (25) 1, 87-93
 6. See e.g. Grimshaw, D. and Rubery, J. (2005) Inter-capital relations and the network organisation: redefining the work and employment nexus, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, (29) 6, 1027-1051

Reports

Paul Chan, Uni-
versity of Man-
chester

Minutes CLR Annual General Meeting, Brussels, Friday 15 April 2011

Present: Rolf Gehring (EFBWW), Jan Cremers (Amsterdam Institute of Advance Studies, University of Amsterdam), Matthias Hartwich (Swiss Trade Union, UNiA), Linda Clarke (University of Westminster), Joern Janssen (CLR), Kevin Williamson (UNITE), Giel Beks (UEC, Netherlands), Paul Chan (University of Manchester)

1. Annual report of activities and finances for 2010

Jan reported on activities and finances for 2010. The 4 issues of *CLR News* published in 2010 comprised an interim report on research about bricklaying qualifications, experiences of migrants during the economic crisis, a report on various country observatories about the crisis, and health and safety. Jan reported that interest in *CLR News* has increased over the past year, demonstrated by the growth in the mailing list, expressions of interest to contribute articles to *CLR News*, and citations of *CLR News* articles.

Jan also reported on CLR's involvement in a research project examining the situation of posted workers across a number of European countries, including Spain, Italy, Romania, Norway, and the United Kingdom. This resulted in a CLR Studies publication *In search of cheap labour*, financed in part by the CLR budget. The CLR budget also part financed the report on bricklaying qualifications. Jan reported that a number of research seminars has been organised. Linda noted that CLR Great Britain has organised/is organising a number of research seminars, e.g. skills for low carbon construction (November 2010) and integrated VET for construction (May 2011).

Joern expressed concern that participation of a number of European members (e.g. Denmark, Germany and France) in activities organised by the CLR Network seems to be declin-

ing. Suggestions were made to see how membership across Europe could be invigorated, including the need for a specific contact in each country, and the possibility of engaging members through e.g. organisation of regular events and periodic newsletters. One of the barriers to an active CLR membership is the perceived relevance of CLR activities by the trade union movement. Joern observed that one way of getting trade unions across Europe to engage is to organise a transnational debate on a contemporary issue. One suggestion offered during the meeting revolved around the possibility of putting a proposal (e.g. for an Economic and Social Research Council funded Seminar Series) to run a series of seminars/workshops/debates on how transnational cooperation in the trade union movement can be better harnessed to tackle the ongoing crisis.

Regarding CLR finances, Jan reported that the annual deficit is currently around €270. The fixed running cost of CLR stands at around €400 per annum, which covers the hosting of the CLR website, association in Brussels, accountancy and banking costs. The main income of CLR is through the sale of books. Jan noted that the CLR bank account balance remains quite healthy at €5,000 for future activities. This includes a provision for publication costs in the future. Rolf suggested that having a reserve is not a bad thing if it supports activities that help raise the visibility of CLR. The possibility of increasing CLR finances was discussed, with a suggestion raised about the possible revenue stream obtained from the sale of publications arising from European research projects. However, there was concern as to whether one could sell such publications under the research funding rules.

2. Reports and planning

Belgium: Rolf reported that the EFBWW has not organised many activities in the past year, as a result of the organisation of the EFBWW-Congress. He reported on ongoing research projects that EFBWW is undertaking, including a project investigating the consequences of working with nano-

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materials in the wood-working sector. This project analyses the health perspectives (risk assessment and preventive measures) associated with the exposure to nano-materials. Rolf also presented another project relating to qualifications in the wood-working sector (with special emphasis on upholstery and cabinet making) and how vocational training is organised. He also reminded the committee that 28 April is Workers' Memorial Day.

Netherlands: Jan gave an update about the dissemination of the study of the Posting of Workers Directive. The dissemination will take place on 27/28 June during a large social partner conference where the posting of workers is the crucial issue put up for debate. However, Jan noted that the confederation of European employers BusinessEurope indicated that they were not interested in any revision of the Directive. Jan reported that he is involved in discussions about European perspectives of precarious working; these discussions will cover the implications of flexible working on the skills gap and social stratification etc. He is also assisting with preparations for a seminar on free movement and worker participation at the ETUC Congress in mid May in Greece. Jan is also following up with Solidar to develop work debating on precarious labour in Romania and Italy, and this is likely to start in June.

Switzerland: Mathias gave an update about the Swiss situation, including the publication and dissemination of a brochure about Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) covering concerns over subcontracting chains and the renegotiation (and marginalisation) of the collective agreement. He is involved in a campaign for a new agreement, which has at its core a critical point about eradicating abuse of the free movement of the workforce. Mathias also reported on a common platform on sustainable construction, and noted the start of a new study commissioned by a Swiss University investigating sustainable construction and financing matters.

UK: Joern reported that he wrote an article about social security for *CLR News*. Linda also reported on forthcoming seminars including one on integrated education on 20 May. Linda is also involved in a film series about building work, and writing a research proposal to form a European network to discuss labour process issues on energy construction, collaborating with Paul and Ian Fitzgerald (Northumbria University).

3. CLR News

A publication schedule for *CLR News* was agreed, as follows:

- CLR News 1/2011: Posting workers
- CLR News 2/2011: Olympics; with contributions from Barcelona (1992), Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000), Athens (2004) and Beijing (2008), and London (2012). A wider dissemination was considered, with the possibility of running a future seminar on worker participation on large sites.
- CLR News 3/2011: Strategies to deal with the crisis
- CLR News 4/2011: Plans of EFBWW and ETUC
- CLR News 1/2012: Low energy construction

4. Current projects

Linda gave an update on her ongoing research collecting and analysing oral histories of workers in the 1950s and 1960s. She noted that it would be good to extend this into a European-wide study.

Giel is working on the issue of health and safety from a European Works Council perspective. He reiterated the industry's underperformance on health and safety matters, and is in the process of organising a survey. Jan Cremers noted that more could be done to assess the practices of the European Works Council.

Rolf is currently involved in two main projects. The first relates to the operations of transnational companies, focussing particularly on the forms of worker participation necessary to deal with transnationalism in projects. The second project

relates to work relating to retrofitting for low energy. Joern proposed a CLR Seminar to discuss the diversity of national approaches to transnational cooperation and labour policies after the crisis.

Paul is undertaking a study investigating sexuality in construction, and is looking at sexual and gendered identities in the construction workplace and how workers negotiate between their private space of sexuality and public space of construction work. He would welcome any contacts from interested participants.

5. Discussion on the Crises Challenging Labour Relations

Rolf started the discussion by looking at the effectiveness of the trade union responses to the financial crisis, following on from the two-day workshop held in Brussels in May 2010. He argued that whilst people refer to the crisis as a critical change event, the response seems to be about maintaining the *status quo*. He observed that collective bargaining and working conditions seem to be on a business-as-usual basis and little has changed since before the crisis. The trade union response appears to deal only with issues relating to the precarious workforce (esp. interim workers, self-employed, and terminated contracts). Little attention has been paid to how the industry, and especially the sub-sectors, could be developed as we move forward and out of the crisis. It is also very difficult to determine the implications of the crisis since aggregation of effects at an industry-level is fraught with measurement problems. Thus, the crisis is seen to accelerate existing tendencies rather than generate fresh courses of action. The emphasis has also been on challenging the political direction of neo-liberalism, although this is done at a rhetorical level. It was decided that seminars to take discussions further (and to encourage real action) should be organised after the Congress in December 2011. Constraints have been identified, in particular the lack of resources to encourage cross-border work, and on multi- and large-scale sites. These limit-

ing factors might serve to restrain trade union responses to the crisis. Nevertheless, it was recognised that fresh strategic perspectives need to be formulated, especially in terms of challenging current thinking about production, and political perspectives about socio-economic development.

Joern raised the question as to how CLR and the EFBWW interact. He stressed the role of CLR to fuel debate without the constraints of established policies. In order to analyse the crisis, one must remove oneself from the crisis itself. He posed a number of questions, including:

- Where is the crisis in relation to the trajectory of development? Is this crisis necessary part of an economic cycle?
- What is the institutional form of labour relations? What is the nature of the crisis? For example, wage relations are increasingly unregulated. There are increasing disparities. The institutions that used to regulate wages are facing decline in power and disintegration of power. So, there is rising inequality in income and wealth. All these continue to reduce legitimacy of institutions including trade unions and employer federations.
- Is the 2008 crisis the first in the new economic formation, observed as a shift in the way capitalism is conceptualised? He suggested that capitalism today has taken a different form, that of financial capitalism, and a shift away from the ownership of assets to the ownership of debts.
- Where are the tensions (and intersections) between capitalism and socialism? Will capitalism (and current form of financial capitalism) prevail?

The discussion included a number of issues, which could be considered when framing future discussions. These include:

- There is current interest in the German model and industrial renaissance. However, with the current tone of bailouts across Europe, one of the critical concerns regarding the continued provision of collective bargaining remains.

Reports

- Fragmentation is perceived to be problematic. There is fragmentation within the trade union movement, with tensions raised between promoting an export-oriented industrial policy and one that safeguards social partnership and industrial democracy. Disparities are also widening in the construction industry, as evident from observations of increasing precariousness and youth unemployment, to the inability for youngsters to get into the labour market more generally.
- There was a suggestion made about compulsory membership into the trade union movement. It was agreed that the employer-employee relationship cannot be used as the guideline for strategies to safeguard social development.
- When referring to the "State", one must be mindful that nation-states are in competition with one another. So, there are limits to the use of the ILO instruments to regulate international practice. There is a need to include everyone under collective agreements. Individualised employment relationships end up with industrial tribunals, and further exacerbate the individualisation of the employment relationship.
- The breadth of what is covered in the collective agreement should be considered to incorporate not just working conditions, but also wider considerations of industrial peace.
- The focus on production is insufficient. There is a need to look at the reproduction of the workforce too.

ProBE: Olympic Seminar

18 February 2011, University of Westminster

Jörn Janssen,
London, 23
March 2011.

The project "construction and the games", presented at the University of Westminster as one of a number of projects to assess aspects of the Olympic Games in London, is now approaching a stage where its results will soon emerge. It is the project of a documentary film on the labour process on the Olympic construction site in London. CLR was involved in its conception from the start.

The 'Olympic Seminar' reported on the long-term outcomes of this event and related investments (Andrew Smith and Nancy Stevenson), on the participation of the neighbouring communities (Nancy Stevenson), on the creative impact for culture and business in the urban surrounding (Ilaria Pappalepore), on vocational education and training for construction in the vicinity (Aletha M. Holborough). Finally, a sample of the film was shown as work in progress (Margaret Dickinson) - for more details see: www.constructionandthegames.com/hidden/contact.html.

The film showed shots of workplaces and interviews with officers of the construction unions, Bob Blackman/GMB, Malcolm Davies/UCATT, and Tom Hardacre/Unite. The Olympic site, the same as the previous Heathrow Terminal 5 airport site, has been advertised by the respective authorities as a showcase of excellent working conditions. The film team is trying to monitor to what extent this ambition of the Greater London Authority is being matched by reality.

It should be mentioned that this was the second seminar of the Centre for the Study of the Production of the Built Environment (ProBE) established between Westminster Business School and the School of Architecture the Build Environment.

Reviews

Jörn Janssen,
London, 18
May, 2011.

Anne Dufresne: **Le salaire, un enjeu pour l'euro-syndicalisme, Histoire de la coordination des négociations collectives nationales.** Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2010, 205 pp. ISBN 978-2-8143-0049-1, € 18,-.

(The Wage, a Stake for Euro-Trade Unionism. The History of the Coordination of Collective Bargaining)

The employers of labour, capital and corporations, are global players whilst the representatives of labour, trade unions, are nationally organised: a profoundly unequal confrontation! In this book Anne Dufresne traces the recent history of attempts from the early 1990s up to date by European trade unions to redress this imbalance.

She provides a most detailed and accurate account of the development at three levels: the transsectoral as represented by the European Trade Union Confederation (First part); the sectoral, as represented by the respective European – in particular the Metalworkers' – Federations (Second part); and the transnational, by attempts of trade unions to coordinate labour policy in the European Union (Third part). Her account is based on a vast amount of documentary evidence, interviews with experts of the parties in industrial relations as well as academics, and participation in crucial workshops, meetings, and conferences. The emerging picture is an excellent and candid analysis of the whole process including exemplary details illuminating the very dynamics, contradictions, and even individual personal interventions constituting the reality behind a fairly consistent course of affairs since the early 1990s. Presenting the case of the European Metalworkers' Federation pioneering efforts to coordinate sectoral collective bargaining in the European Union is a stroke of genius. It exhibits the persistent fundamental obstacles to transnational wage bargaining under the auspices of national institutions of industrial relations. Also, as an exemplary case, the

transnational level is epitomised in the transsectoral 'Doorn Initiative' to cooperate between four countries: Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands. Five years of debate eventually came to a halt in 2002. More encouragingly, the campaign for statutory minimum wages by trade union think tanks – Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, Institut de recherches économiques et sociales, Think Network – can claim a considerable degree of success, though transnational coordination remains a remote objective.

The analysis pinpoints two main reasons why transnational collective bargaining has hardly made any progress. There is, of course, in the first place the disparity in the organisation of the negotiating parties, trade unions and employers' federations, enshrined in legal and institutional frameworks. Anne Dufresne identifies, secondly, as another major impediment, the dominance of German unions and their emerging preference for 'concessions' in wage bargaining for the sake of competitiveness and jobs for domestic workers. She summarises these two factors in the formula of "heterogeneity and German leadership".

The fact that "trade unionists have great difficulties to work out common politics" (116) explains why the European Trade Union Confederation was unable to develop "a political vision allowing to make progress on the wage front" and instead supported the 'social dialogue' which undermined European collective bargaining: "the social dialogue Committee and joint documents ... obviously do not allow to oppose wage moderation." (22) Under these auspices, the general development of wage bargaining, instead of consolidating in the wider space of the EU, has "driven the European system of industrial relations towards atomisation of bargaining with groups of enterprises." (160)

These rather negative judgements on the coordination of national wage bargaining in the European Union are, however, far from pessimistic. They are rather a realistic assessment by a passionate advocate of transnational wage bargaining. She pinpoints the conditions for success: "... a new specific juridical framework", as in place for agreements in transna-

tional corporations, also for European collective bargaining based on “unions as the only negotiators ... in order to recreate ... the pyramid of the hierarchy of norms and thereby the European system of industrial relations, for the very long term.” (160)

We ought to keep in mind that the organisation of employers’ federations is no better equipped for wage bargaining at European level and rather in a state of decline at all levels. Maybe the concept of employer-employee bargaining, the core function of industrial relations, is not the only and most promising model for the future. But this was not Anne Dufresne’s subject.

Jan Cremers/
AIAS - University
Amsterdam

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation, Conny Rijken (ed.), Wolf Legal Publishers, Nijmegen 2011, 512 pp., ISBN (softcover): 978-90-5850-653-5, € 55,00.

This book publishes the results of a research project funded by the European Commission and carried out by the University of Tilburg under the coordination of Conny Rijken. It is an international legal study based on the Palermo Protocol and covers Austria (Julia Planitzer and Helmut Sax), the Netherlands (Marijn Heemskerck and Conny Rijken), Romania (George Cristinel Zaharia), Serbia (Sanja Ćopić and Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović), and Spain (Fernando Manrique López and Francisco Javier Arrieta Idiákez).

One of the key conclusions of the research project is that there is a lack of shelters and of attention for victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) for labour exploitation. Furthermore, victims of THB for labour exploitation are more easily considered illegal migrants and expelled from a country than the traditional victims of trafficking. Combating THB for labour exploitation requires additional skills, knowledge and awareness for effective investigation and prosecution, as well as for the identification and assistance of victims of this

form of THB. Actors other than the police and the prosecution services (such as labour inspectorates, social investigation services and municipalities) have also become involved in these activities. It is unclear which role these actors can have in identifying victims and in investigating and prosecuting (cross-border) THB for labour exploitation and which improvements are needed. They are often unfamiliar with, for instance, the specific needs of victims, how trafficking networks operate, and how to cooperate with colleagues abroad. These problems obviously hamper the combating of THB for labour exploitation. In addition, difficulties in defining THB for labour exploitation still exist. Labour exploitation, as such, is not a term used in the Palermo Protocol or the EU Directive on Preventing and Combating THB and Protecting Victims. One can say that labour exploitation includes at least forced and compulsory labour and services, slavery and slavery-like practices, although this does not solve the problems encountered in defining the crime.

In this book, these and other problems are identified. It includes for the five countries the respective legal frameworks, practices of investigation and prosecution, concluding with recommendations, reviews the EU legal framework, and reflects on core problems according to five special aspects.

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