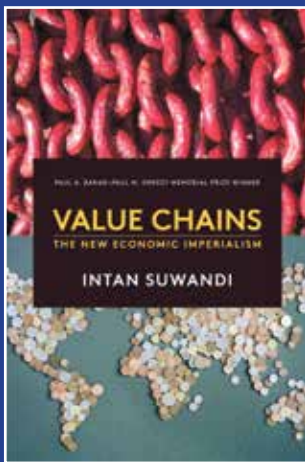


unequal exchange, along with other aspects such as energy, land, and raw materials.

■ ■ **Multinational corporations have consistently demonstrated an outrageous disregard for the inhumane conditions of workers in many sweatshops in the Global South where some of the actual value is created. Some human rights movements in the west, in turn, have drawn attention to this aspect of globalization. Their efforts have had an impact, however modest, in improving those conditions. How do you see the overall potential of such movements? Are they, theoretically at least, capable of taming the beast?**



Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST).



I think many of these movements, especially if done from the bottom up, with the working class themselves at the center of it all, are valuable. More recently, for example, workers' movements were able to pressure some big multinationals to take responsibility when their suppliers in the Global South closed their factories and fired their workers without paying their wages. So this kind of movement does not stop at the level of the suppliers (say, factories that make the products for big multinationals) and demand these suppliers improve their working conditions or pay higher wages, but traces the responsibilities back to the multinationals themselves. This highlights the fact that the multinationals are the ones who reap the most benefit from these workers' labor and must be held accountable when something bad happens to these workers. However, I think we can aim for wider goals – various movements around the world have adopted the MST's (Brazil's Landless Workers Movement) slogan of "Occupy, Resist, and Produce" and show that workers or peasants can take control of the means of production and create workplaces that do not adhere to the capitalist logic and imperative. We should continue these struggles – the issues are beyond "bad working conditions" or "low wages." Exploitation will remain as long as we do not abolish the very system that keeps it going.

■ ■ **Some observers argue that fierce turf wars over intellectual property rights, industrial espionage, open source movement, etc., are an important dimension of imperialism in our times. How do you see the role of such concepts in your theorizing about new imperialism?**

Let's take the issue of intellectual property rights. I think this is an important aspect of the new imperialism, although it should be seen in connection to the larger context. Multilateral and bilateral arguments such as TRIPS can serve as prime examples of how the powerful actors want to keep imperialist relations in place. Because of such agreements, for example, AIDS patients in African countries kept dying because the pharmaceutical companies in the Global North did not let these countries produce their own affordable drugs that could have helped save lives, just so these companies can keep accumulating profit. What is ironic is that a lot of research that became the basis of the creation of these drugs in the Global North was done in public universities. The same case with technologies that became the basis of a lot of components of US-brands of smart phones – these technologies were created in public universities but then got bought by private corporations/multinationals that later became the holders of the intellectual property rights. In this case, the state then allows, or gives legitimacy to, corporations to profit from these publicly-funded innovations. Then, in turn, these intellectual property rights became a tool for multinationals to keep benefiting from the misery of the peoples in the Global South. I hope this answers your question.

■ ■ **The massive transfer of jobs from the Global North to the Global South where labor costs less has created expanding frustration and dissent among workers in developed countries which, in some cases, has led to the election of regulation-friendly officials. How do you see the prospect of such forces in impeding the free flow of capital?**

I think many people are quite skeptical about the prospect "bringing back production home," especially considering the imperative of capital accumulation on the world scale. And I also think that the more important issue here is whether it is likely for the Global North countries to stop pursuing their imperialist agenda. Will countries like the United States, for example, continue to attack or dominate – whether through geopolitical or economic means – other countries that it perceives either as threats or potential source of crucial resources (think about the new Cold War

narrative that the United States has been using against China, or the recent attempted coup in Bolivia)?



The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is an international legal agreement between all the member nations of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

■ ■ **Then what's the deciding factor?**

I think the political dynamic in the Global South may be the more important issue here: If, say, more socialist candidates (fostered by leftist movements) win the election in the Global South countries and they can foster stronger challenges to the world's imperialist powers, then probably it helps. However, going back to my answer to your earlier question, the key here is movements from below, where the working class such as workers and peasants take control of the means of production and run the production processes, in which the labor process is no longer controlled by management serving the interests of capital. These movements have been going on for a long time, especially in the Global South (think about examples such as the MST in Brazil, the factory occupations in Argentina, and the communes in Venezuela), and let's make sure that they keep spreading and getting stronger.