

**Workers as travellers, migrants, and refugees:
Border-crossings in the construction of
proletarian public spheres in Europe**

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Come with us. We are sailing to a new world where men shall toil no more for money but learn to treat frontiers as hindrances and to live as brothers. Quoted in: Williams, F. (1960: 63).

The international mind knows no boundaries, and the BUchergilde Gutenberg no foreign countries. Knauf, F. (1928: 5).

Introduction

Theories of the dynamics of globalisation and individualisation devote much attention to the impact of the world-wide flows of knowledge and information that are facilitated by information and communication technologies. Such flows of bytes provide access to other and often very different cultures, values and norms, ways of life, identities, and life-styles. This 'virtual public sphere' is regarded as the potential source of the disembedding of both groups and individuals from their traditional economic, political, social and cultural structures. Such disembedding processes give rise to an interest in the ongoing struggles of groups and individuals to find new forms of re-embedding themselves in other and indeed 'strange situations'. This has also led to the need for an analysis of globalisation and individualisation in what can be best called a theory of the (dis-) location of the individual in the 'new times' of late modernity. It also directs attention to the consequent struggles of groups and individuals to establish some sense of relocation in times of ambiguity and ambivalence in the 'risk society' (Hake, 1999).

Globalisation and the possibility of a virtual public sphere, however, also involve the dynamics of open-ended opportunities for establishing new forms of communication, new networks of social relationships, and indeed the possibility of new virtual communities. This reconstitution of social relationships takes place in the 'new times' where both time and space are compressed in such a

way that relocation involves being present in ‘multiple places’ at the same time. Groups and individuals are simultaneously confronted with both the temporisation of daily life in the ‘here and now’, and the challenge of relocation in previously unknown territories where the ‘here can be anywhere and everywhere’. Learning to live a life increasingly involves the ability to manage everyday life in a multitude of locations, where the crossing of borders is a normal phenomenon (Edwards & Usher, 2000). This leads to a focus upon questions of the interplay of time and space involved in border crossings. There are, however, no ready-to-use timetables or maps available in these new times that can facilitate the management by groups and individuals of the temporality of multiple locations in the search for meaning, authenticity and identity. The more or less successful management of border-crossings by the ‘permanently learning subject’ has become the core of the analysis of adult learning in late modernity as a learning society (Glastra, Hake, Meijers, & Schedler, 2001).

When globalisation is understood as involving the unfettered accumulation and redistribution of capital in the deregulated world market, we look less to the start of a new historical phase in post-industrial societies, but rather at a new stage of development in the long-term construction of capitalist economic and social formations. This process of economic border-crossings started with the global expansion of the mercantile economies of Portugal, Spain and The Netherlands in the seventeenth century, which were later joined by the industrialising British and French empires in the nineteenth century. Today the United States of America dominates this ongoing process of global capitalism in post-industrial societies on the basis of its hegemony over the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc. Such long-term processes of world-wide economic and social development involved, and continue to involve, highly complex relationships of domination and subordination, together with exploitation and exclusion, between metropolitan centres and peripheries. Such relationships were and are manifested not only in the economic sphere, but also in the social, political and cultural spheres. These contributed to quite massive processes of disembedding and re-embedding for significant groups of populations, that are now manifest in global patterns of migration from the peripheries to metropolitan centres.

At the same time, similar patterns of domination and subordination were also endemic to the development of the capitalist formation as the driving force of European modernisation since the mid-eighteenth century. The transformation of mercantile and agrarian capitalism initiated by the advance of industrial capitalism was characterised by the gradual breakdown of the absolutism of the *ancien régime*, the emergence and self-organisation of the liberal bourgeois class from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, together with the development of the working class with its own organisations from the mid-nineteenth century. This emergence of the fundamental class structure of capitalist societies gave rise to increasing struggles between liberal bourgeois

dominance of the public sphere and the formation of public opinion (Habermas, 1963) and the efforts of the organised working class to challenge this dominance and indeed to establish an oppositional proletarian public sphere centred upon the formation of an independent working-class opinion (Negt & Kluge, 1973). An important aspect of this class struggle focused upon the bourgeoisie’s efforts to control and direct the learning available to the working class, and the struggle of working-class organisations to gain control of their own learning.

In this paper, we will address the processes of disembedding and re-embedding that were characteristic of the development of the proletarian public sphere during European modernisation. This will involve a historical analysis of the border-crossings that took place in the real time and real geographical locations of post-enlightenment Europe up to the Second World War. The larger process of European modernisation was marked by the crisis of agrarian society, (international) migration, urbanisation, the rise of organised science and industrialisation, giving rise to the fundamental transformation of the social formation associated with the emergence of the industrial bourgeoisie and the urban working class. Such a historical ‘great transformation’ (Polanyi, 1996), was significantly marked by changes in the social positions of traditional intellectuals and the emergence of new categories of organic intellectuals. This paper examines the often ignored, forgotten, and sometimes repressed dimensions of the development of the organisation of learning by the working class that also involved border-crossings undertaken by working people. The paper will present a historical overview that deals with the patterns of cross-cultural exchange of ideas, institutions and practices that characterised the organisation of learning in the proletarian public sphere. It is a historical treatise that examines some aspects of these cross-cultural influences that were mediated through the educational activities of working-class, indeed often revolutionary, organisations, in the form of both travel abroad and the acquisition of knowledge of ‘the other’ and ‘elsewhere’ by means of travel or by books, film or radio. The paper not only discusses border-crossing as a voluntary activity, it also pays attention to the less voluntary forms of border-crossing involved in migration and life in the diaspora. Intended as a proposal for a research programme on border-crossings and the public sphere, the paper will refer frequently to areas where more comparative historical research is required into this often ignored aspect of the proletarian public sphere.

Some theoretical notes on cross-cultural mediation and border-crossings

The phenomenon of cross-cultural mediation — or to put it more simply, the management of border-crossings between different societies and cultures has long enjoyed a significant place in the literature of historical and comparative adult education. From the early reports of individual travelers, writers,

journalists, teachers, adult students and artisans — through to the organised travel by civil servants and adult educators, to policy inspired studies of foreign practices on behalf of governments, there has been an interest in developments and innovations in other countries. This has long been dominated by the pragmatic interest in what could be learned from others. It can be argued, moreover, that the historical processes involved in this cross-cultural mediation of ideas, institutions and practices are in themselves legitimate objects for research by historians and social scientists (Hake, 1989).

Such mediation processes involved in the cultural mediation of ideas, institutions and practices between societies cannot be studied in isolation from structured social relationships. Studies of the social relations of cross-cultural mediation suggest that the patterns of cultural mediation are socially structured and highly selective processes both between and within societies. Cultural dissemination, reception and adaptation are sometimes undertaken by dominant groups, while at other times they are carried out by alternative or indeed oppositional, even revolutionary, groups. This suggests the need to examine the social organisation of the processes of cultural mediation. The term ‘social organisation’ is used here to refer to the complex range of institutions, groups and individuals involved in historically specific processes of border-crossings and cultural mediation between countries. Research on the period of modernisation in Europe has indicated in particular that this demands that attention be given to the roles played by artisan and workers’ movements, working-class organisations and proletarian cultural formations in the management of border-crossings.

This paper is concerned with the historical role played by a variety of cultural intermediaries in the mediation of border-crossings between different societies in the form of learning activities in the proletarian public sphere. The term ‘learning activity’ is used here to refer to those cultural processes of communication and learning involving adults, whether formal, non-formal or informal (Williams, 1961). Such cultural processes are understood in terms of the social organisation of deliberate, systematic and sustained activities undertaken by adults for the purposes of communicating and acquiring knowledge, skills and sensitivities (Hake, 1987). In this paper the central focus will be directed towards such learning activities in the context of border-crossings and cross-cultural mediation in the historical development of the proletarian public sphere. Research on the development of ideas, institutions and practices associated with the organisation of learning by adults provokes the proposal that the period of European modernisation was the fundamental ‘formative period’ in the development of the adult learning and adult education throughout Europe (Hake, 1994). This was indeed a period characterised by a high level of innovative activity, the establishment of a wide variety of new institutions and practices, while participation in organised communication and learning was extended to a range of new ‘publics’. These practices contributed in a significant way to the modernisation of the social institutions involved in the production and

reproduction of cultural meanings by way of socially organised adult learning. Furthermore, this period of European modernisation was characterised by a significant level of international activities involving border-crossings that were manifested both in travel and the cross-cultural exchange of ideas, institutions and practices among working-class organisations throughout Europe. Given the focus on the contribution of working-class movements and organisations to the proletarian public sphere, the paper focuses on ‘intellectuals’, or ‘opinion-makers’, and their contribution processes of border-crossings and cross-cultural mediation.

Literature and research suggest that five key questions are significant for the development of a research programme on the cross-cultural mediation of border-crossings in relation to the development of the proletarian public sphere. Firstly, it is necessary to identify the range of historical formations and movements that were actively involved in such activities. These may be readily recognisable working-class educational organisations, but they may also involve less directly obvious efforts to organise learning as an aspect of border-crossings. This suggests, secondly, that it is necessary to analyse such movements in terms of their relationships to broader movements, institutions and groups in society at large, that very often manifested historically specific relations to more general programmes of economic, political, social and cultural reform. They may have been radical, even revolutionary, movements that regarded the organisation of adult learning as an essential element in the struggles of social groups for emancipation. Attention must be paid, thirdly, to the complex range of interests and positions taken up by those involved in such movements. This can provide a basis for the identification of the class factions that were involved in the trans-national, national, regional and local leadership of working-class movements. At the same time, such analysis can facilitate the identification of those who played a prominent role in the leadership of managing border crossings through organised learning activities. This makes it possible, fourthly, to locate individuals who contributed as ‘intellectuals’ or ‘opinion-makers’ to the dissemination, reception and adaptation of ideas, institutions and practices involved in border-crossings between countries. Lastly, and fifthly, it is of some importance to examine the processes involved in the forming of the ‘publics’ who were addressed by cross-cultural intermediaries in the proletarian public sphere. It is of vital importance here to examine the social identity of the audiences addressed and the social relations between the disseminators and their publics. The work of De Sanctis (1984) on the formation of an autonomous ‘proletarian public’ is highly relevant in this regard.

Some further elaboration is required at this point with regard to the use made here of the notion of ‘intellectuals’ or ‘opinion-makers’ with reference to the proletarian public sphere. The contribution of intellectuals and opinion-makers within social movements to cross-cultural mediation has to be understood in terms of specific historical manifestations of the social practices associated

with cultural production and dissemination. Williams (1977) argues that the role of intellectuals and opinion makers within social movements cannot be reduced to an analysis of their specialised roles within the specific institutions identified with the historical manifestations of 'movement education'. He argues that it is important to analyse the role of intellectuals in terms of their variable social relations to both social institutions - with an emphasis upon specialised cultural practices such as adult education - and the broader cultural formations which manifest more general tendencies in cultural production and dissemination. Williams argues that this demands a historical analysis of the relationships between emergent cultural formations, together with an understanding of the oppositional relationships of intellectuals associated with such formations in relation to dominant cultural formations.

This use of the term intellectual involves a rejection of the exclusive notion of 'intellectuals' as referring only to a specific and restrictive notion of writers, philosophers and thinkers. Such an understanding of the intellectual is no more than a very specific and limited historical cultural formation more generally recognised as the 'intellegentsia'. As Williams points out, such an understanding of intellectuals actively excludes a wide range of other cultural producers and reproducers and in particular those many other kinds of intellectual workers who are directly and indirectly involved in the cultural production and reproduction carried out by working-class organisations. With reference to the analysis here, a limiting definition also excludes an important group of intellectuals who take oppositional positions with regard to the ideological apparatuses of the dominant social order. This is to come close to Gramsci's formulation of an understanding of intellectuals as 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals, that effectively moved the analysis of intellectuals into these very areas of exclusion involved in any analysis of the proletarian public sphere (Gramsci, 1957). The identification of intellectuals thus involves analysis of the identity of 'organic' intellectuals in the proletarian public sphere, whether they are:

*...peers, poets, propagandists, priests, peddlers,
politicians, performers, publishers, pamphleteers, playwrights,
publicans, and practitioners of the plastic arts.*

(Carlson, 1980) 'Organic intellectuals' are understood here as allied to and serving the interests of an emergent social class. As Williams' analysis suggests, the notion of the intellectual as an active cultural producer also opens up the opportunity to recover a much broader range of groups and individuals - in particular the self-educated artisan - who have historically been effective as cultural producers and reproducers in the proletarian public sphere.

It is also necessary here to clarify the historical forms taken by the 'mediation of border-crossings' in terms of historically specific cultural practices that can be empirically researched. When we focus on intellectuals and

their active mediating practices in managing the cross-cultural mediation involved in border-crossing, Vovelle (1982) has formulated the notion of 'cultural mediation' in terms of both the 'objects' - such as texts - and the 'people' that establish relationships between different cultures. In Williams' terminology, this is formulated in terms of the distinction between cultural mediation on the basis of 'material' and 'non-material' cultural resources. Hake and Marriott develop this distinction between material and non-material cultural resources in cultural mediation as involving a variable focus on:

...carriers of influence which were primarily symbolic and documents the kind of cross-cultural learning that came from reading the printed word. More pervasive (and of course overlapping with the symbolic word) was what one might call mediated influence, impact through the advocacy of individuals and groups who adopted exotic ideas and made them accessible to their followers. (Hake & Marriott, 1994: 2)

Such a distinction enables us to establish the basis for the primary focuses of empirical research into historical manifestations of these two forms of active cultural practices involved in border-crossings. On the one hand, the research of material cultural resources is a question of empirical research into the selection and reception from some body of ideas or accounts of practices from elsewhere. This leads immediately to the analysis of the specific positions of 'intellectuals' as cultural intermediaries in the mode of mediating border-crossings by means of books, journals, newspapers, pamphlets, correspondence and reports of meetings. This can be extended, as we shall see later, in terms of the intellectual as the translator of 'seminal' texts, a history of such translations, and sometimes their mistranslation. It also becomes necessary to extend this analysis into the development of new media beyond the printed and spoken word into areas such as the film, radio, theatre, and the arts.

What is also required, however, is empirical research and analysis of the material mode of the active and personal cross-cultural encounter with 'the other' and 'the elsewhere'. As has become very clear in recent research on border-crossings and cross-cultural mediation, very important empirical resources of such encounters involve accounts of the experiences and reflections arising from travel to other places. Such accounts of encounters with the other can be reported in ego-documents such as diaries, letters, autobiographies, life histories, and other forms of reports on travel such as articles, etc. These can be of great significance in shaping our historical understandings of border-crossings and the encounter with the ideas, institutions and practices in other countries.

The transformation of the artisan from plebeian to proletarian

In research on cross-cultural mediation in adult learning, it has become clear that access to literature and travel were of great significance in the shaping of understandings of the ideas, institutions and practices in other countries, together with subsequent efforts to adapt these in other places. Undertaken by a variety of cultural intermediaries, accounts of travel constitute vital empirical evidence for the reconstruction of encounters with 'the elsewhere'. It is instructive to note, however, that much research on cross-cultural mediation and cultural intermediaries in the field of adult education has largely focused on intellectuals with an allegiance to reform-minded liberal bourgeois social elites. These include the residual remnants of the key cultural intermediaries associated with traditional agrarian society such as doctors, clergymen, lawyers, and men, sometimes women, of independent means. It was among such cultural intermediaries, together with a growing number of progressive manufacturers that an interest in education in other countries developed during the 'pedagogical offensive' associated with the Enlightenment movement. The development of national systems of education during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave rise, furthermore, to travel by civil servants to investigate the nature of educational innovation elsewhere.

From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, however, there was a significant transformation of the range of cultural intermediaries involved in the cross-cultural mediation of border-crossings. Based upon the rapid expansion of the production and distribution of books, periodicals, newspapers and pamphlets, these new intermediaries aligned with the Patriot national and democratic movements included publishers, authors, journalists — in their more oppositional form as 'the friend of the people' — and in particular the emergence of the professional translator (Hake, 2000). At the same time, there was also the significant development of a radical artisan culture — at some distance from traditional 'plebeian culture' - that sought to replace 'ignorance' and 'superstition' with the mutual and self-enlightenment organised by artisans themselves (Hake, 1994a). Reading was not regarded here as a passive process of cultural reception, but as an active and selective process of cultural production that gave rise to a dedicated artisan literature. This led in turn to an extensive self-made educational repertoire among artisans that emphasised both mutual improvement by means of workingmen's associations and self-improvement through reading. The tramping artisan - the classic manifestation of the 'auto-didactic' or 'self-formed' intellectual — was a source of significant cross-cultural mediation throughout

Europe within this particular network of cross-cultural influences from the corresponding societies onwards into the Utopian Socialism of the early nineteenth century. The travelling artisan — and in some measure the seasonal migrant labourer — is the classic manifestation of the emergence of workingmen as border-crossers and cross-cultural intermediaries. These traditional artisan

cultural intermediaries can be best described as the *bricoleurs* of a self-made oppositional culture. This directs attention to the increasingly active role played by artisans in cultural creation and mediation as a constituent part of their own struggles.

The modernisation of society — with science, industrialisation and urbanisation as its major driving forces - contributed to the creation of a whole new range of cultural intermediaries with varying relationships to the most vital segments of the new social formation. Radical artisan intellectuals formed an increasingly oppositional formation throughout the nineteenth century that criticised the entire industrial capitalist order and had increasing links with revolutionary political formations such as socialism, communism and anarchism. The earliest responses by artisans to industrialisation became manifest in the transformation of their radical artisan repertoire with the emergence of the Utopian Socialists, and the subsequent rise of the proletarian cross-cultural intermediaries of revolutionary mid-nineteenth century Europe. It should not be forgotten that an artisan who had become a manufacturer, Robert Owen, organised the Association of All Classes and All Nations in 1835. Educational associations of working-men were closely involved in the revolutions of 1848 and 1871 in many European countries. Among these many workers' associations were those organized by Emigre' German workers such as the *Vereening tot zedelijk beschaving der arbeidende klasse* [Association for the moral improvement of the working class] in Amsterdam, and the *Deutsche Kommunistische Arbeiter Bildungsverein* [German Communist Workers' Educational Association] in London. In this context, it is impossible to ignore the foundation by the German refugee Karl Marx of the International Workingmen's Association in London in 1864.

In the period between the 1880s and the 1930s, the emergence of both modified and new positions for cultural intermediaries was associated with the respective responses of the independent organisations associated with the workers', women's and suffrage movements throughout Europe and indeed world-wide. These emergent constitutive elements of the capitalist social formation were clearly associated with cultural formations that played a significant role in the mediation of cross-cultural influences between different European countries. The period witnessed a number of significant changes in the major manifestations of intellectuals as intermediaries who managed the encounters between different cultures. At the most general level, the late nineteenth saw the growing transformation of intellectuals speaking to the popular class of the 'common working-man' into the rising voices of 'proletarian solidarity' (Simon, 1990).

It is relatively easy to trace the cross-cultural intermediaries associated with well-established educational reform movements — such as the adult schools, university extension movements and the folk high schools in the literature on (the history of adult education). However, it is much more difficult to establish the often diffuse influence of oppositional cultural formations operating in the

margins of the public sphere, and in some cases effectively operating as underground organisations. This is particularly the case with the mediating roles of émigrés and the diaspora. From the time of the first expulsions of the Jews, and the Protestant reformation onwards — for example Comenius and Huss - this was in many cases the direct product of the enforced travel by those, by both intellectuals and ordinary people, who were proscribed in their own society and sought refuge in a supposed safe haven elsewhere. During the early modern period, for example, the diaspora of Jews, Huguenots, and Greeks, many of them artisans, became important cultural intermediaries - often with underground printing presses as was the case of Greek exiles in Budapest - between their own countries and the host nations. The late eighteenth century had likewise witnessed a continuing stream of émigrés fleeing from political and religious repression - again including many educators.

During the nineteenth century, there were further manifestations of enforced exile among hundreds of thousands of Europeans who had participated in the revolutionary events of 1848, and 1871, referred to above. 1848 was followed by the migration of thousands of German artisans especially to North America (Scheid, 1993), England and Switzerland. Furthermore, this permanent migration was augmented by the growing number of migrant Scandinavian farm labourers and loggers who often returned home as proletarian intellectuals from the United States of America. They carried with them their English-language versions of *Capital* and made a fundamental contribution to the radicalisation of the working-class movement in the early 1900s including the Finnish revolutions of the early twentieth century (Kantasalmi, 1996). To this growing category of working-class internationalists, we perhaps also need to add the journalists and translators who were responsible for the rapid expansion of communist and socialist literature available to the organised working-class movement throughout Europe. No longer calling themselves ‘the friend of the people’, as they had done during the eighteenth-century radical artisan movements, they increasingly manifested a vital contribution to the literature of international working-class solidarity.

Emigré's and diaspora continued to be significant features of the European landscape during the early decades of the twentieth century. A particularly important field for further study involves the fate of worker educators in periods of revolution and civil war in such diverse countries as Spain and Finland, together with the active policy to undermine working-class literacy by Salazar's regime in Portugal. Whether by choice or forced into exile, the turbulence of the 1920s, and particularly the 1930s, was characterised throughout Europe by the (light of Jewish populations to other countries. While they are largely remembered for the many eminent academics, theologians and clergymen, authors and journalists, artists, musicians and actors, but also architects, scientists and engineers among them, their numbers also included many teachers and adult educators. It should not be forgotten, however, that many of these refugees were

workers and activists in working-class political organisations and trade unions. Although this has been examined in some cases with regard to those fleeing National Socialism in Germany and Austria (Steele, 1996), much more work is required in order to establish a full appreciation of the movements of working-class Jews that took place between the European countries. In particular we need to know much more about the networks that provided support to these émigrés, how they re-established themselves elsewhere, and their continuing struggles against National Socialism, and their work as cross-cultural intermediaries.

Yet another area demanding in-depth research relates to the efforts of European workers' organisations to provide some critique of developments in Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Soviet Union. These included the publications of left-wing book clubs and courses organised by a range of adult education organisations including working-class organisations. On the whole, however, mainstream intellectuals throughout Europe turned, on the one hand, inwards to the struggle against indigenous manifestations of right-wing movements, and, on the one hand, outwards towards providing support for refugees escaping repression. The last defiant expression of working-class international solidarity was the International Brigade that unsuccessfully fought alongside the final supporters of a democratic Spanish republic. Research is only barely starting to scratch the surface of the emigré's and the diaspora among the working class in Europe - extending as they did into other parts of Central, Eastern Europe and the Balkans - who were forced to flee the onslaught of fascism, National Socialism and the excesses of Stalinism. Irrespective of whether this involved elite intellectuals, adult educators, artisans or workers, more research is needed on the phenomena of migration, refugees and the diaspora which will open up this area of often repressed and underground patterns of cross-cultural mediation and border-crossings (Volkman, 1991).

Working-class organisations and workers' education

When adult learning is understood as the institutionalised provision of bourgeois initiatives such as university extension, popular universities, people's houses and folk high schools, its relationship with the organised working class is historically problematic. In the standard literature on the history of adult education, ‘workers' education’ organised independently by working-class movements is all too often considered as a set of phenomena quite distinct from those forms of adult education provided by other social groups for the workers. However, too sharp a focus upon the distinctiveness of workers' education organised by working-class movements can keep hidden a diverse range of educational practices that spoke to the workers in often diffuse ways as part of the building of the proletarian public sphere. It is necessary, therefore, to look more closely at the diversity among

emergent cross-cultural intermediaries who sought to speak to and claimed to speak in the name of working-class movement.

Some excellent studies have examined the historical development of independent working-class educational provision in particular countries. However, little recent systematic comparative work has been undertaken with regard to cross-cultural mediation between independent workers' movements in Europe. Where references can be found to cross-cultural mediation in the standard works on specific countries, they generally refer to the working out at the national level of the general positions on education formulated by the all-pervading influence of the Social Democratic party in Germany upon other countries, Austro-Marxism with particular reference to its educational theories, and the occasional reference to participation in international organisations during the early twentieth century. Such studies tend to emphasise the role of key party and union-based 'movement intellectuals' who made contributions to organised working-class under-standings of agitation and propaganda activities in the service of the class struggle. Furthermore, they often tend to focus on the development of social democratic reformism in most countries that led to the gradual acceptance of a distinction between cadre-training and more general educational activities for the mass membership of political parties and trade unions.

Also of some importance, but little researched, is the tendency during the 1920s towards the creation of national organisations for workers' education -such as the *Instituut voor Arbeidersontwikkeling - IvAO* [Institute for Workers' Education] in The Netherlands in 1924. Significant here was often the influence of the 1919 report on adult education and national reconstruction in Britain -which compiled reports recommending the creation of national institutes for workers' education in a number of countries. Similar reports elsewhere often included comparative assessments of the state of workers' education in other countries. This gradual institutionalisation of workers' education contributed to the transformation of party and union officials, often including those associated with social democratic youth movements, into an emergent cadre of professional cultural intermediaries as organisers, educators and teachers within the working-class movement.

It is necessary to explore these specific conjunctions in the development of indigenous forms of workers' educational organisations in relation to the broader constellation of workers' education and reformist cultural formations in the direction of 'socialism as a cultural movement' during the 1920s. One would welcome more research in terms of accounts of the active mediating role of this particular group of professional 'movement intellectuals' and their mutual encounters through their correspondence and meetings. A classic example here is Hendrik de Man. De Man was a Belgian social democrat resident in Weimar Germany, who was a much-translated author throughout Europe and a significant influence upon the development of socialism as a cultural movement — the so-called 'third front' alongside the party and the trade unions — during the late

1920s and 1930s. Indeed, De Man himself might stand as a symbol of a very specific category of cross-cultural intermediaries, namely those who voluntarily choose to live and work in other countries for a significant period of time. This particular biographical approach to the cross-cultural intermediary has yet to be researched in any depth.

The positioning of workers' education as the third front of socialism and increasingly as a cultural movement was indeed a specific feature from the 1920s onwards. National workers' educational associations increasingly positioned themselves as the cultural front of the social democratic working-class movement alongside the political parties and trade unions. During this period there was a strong tendency in Europe to organise a very broad repertoire of educational activities, in addition to courses, which were intended to promote a sense of socialist community among the mass membership. These included workers' bookclubs, drama, choral and artistic activities, film shows and radio programmes, sport and recreational activities, together with a variety of festivals and ceremonials - the latter including Sunday-morning family meetings. The 1927 annual report of the Dutch IvAO indicated that the five most popular activities were film shows, Sunday-morning meetings, courses, concerts and theatre performances.

In this particular regard, an area of cross-cultural mediation yet to be researched in depth includes the responses of workers' educational associations to the development of the new media represented by the 'modernist' arts, cinema and radio. The arts, cinema and radio as media for cultural production and mass communication enriched the technological possibilities for communication on an increasingly professional basis. This development in itself gave rise to the emergence of a whole new series of cultural intermediaries who were essentially 'urban intellectuals' in tune with modernisation. Whether capitalist, or critical of it, these new media and their accompanying intellectuals were frequently regarded by more traditional adult educators with quite significant trepidation. They were variously seen as a danger to morality, undermining sociability, a de-personalising tendency and a threat to social stability (Stifter, 1997). These modern urban cultural intermediaries were frequently a thorn in the flesh of adult educators. Nonetheless, the cinema and the radio offered growing opportunities for internationalisation and cross-cultural fertilisation that were frequently employed by the cinematic *avant-garde* and the modernist movement in art to open up new avenues for cultural mediation (Dvorak, 1997). These new media also played a significant role in the development of the educational repertoire of the organised working-class movement, as was the case with workers' film circles in Italy and the mobile cinemas in rural Spain.

There are few recent comparative studies that examine cross-cultural influences and cultural intermediaries with specific regard to international organisations for workers' education. As the important contemporary study by Hansome (1931) demonstrated, there was in fact a rapid growth of such organisations during the 1920s. A series of international conferences on workers'

education was held during the early 1920s. At the third conference, held at Ruskin College in 1924, accredited delegates represented the national organisations for workers' education from Austria, Belgium, British Guiana, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. These delegates included organisers of workers' educational organisations, union and party cadre, editors of workers' newspapers, and teachers. There were also representatives from a number of international organisations such as the Socialist Educational International, the International Federation of Women Workers, the International Socialist Youth, the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), the International Cooperative Alliance and the World Association for Adult Education.

The Socialist Educational International, an initiative by the IFTU arising from the second international conference on workers' education in Hanover in 1923, was specifically established in order to exert pressure upon existing independent organisations for workers' education and to encourage the establishment of new organisations. This argued that 'Due to the circumstance that the proletarian revolution will be achieved on a democratic basis, there is a pressing need for developing and educational work to create the spiritual preconditions for the class struggle'. One should note here an expression of the growing division during the 1920s between the priority given to 'agitation' and 'education' within workers' educational organisations. The cross-cultural mediation of this development has been barely researched in most countries and requires serious attention with specific regard to the cultural intermediaries who were involved.

Workers' educational travel: Learning or diversion?

A particularly interesting example of the educational activities of working-class educational organisations in the context of managing border-crossings was the development of educational travel for workers. While the cross-cultural mediation associated with the often unplanned and chance encounters of migrant workers declined as the borders of national states became effective barriers, the early decades of the twentieth century were characterised, however, by the formalisation of the encounter between workers from different countries. This became most manifest in the development of the educational travel undertaken by groups of workers that was organised by adult education institutions (Seitter, 1996) and in particular by the national institutes (Williams, 1960). The earliest accounts of such organised educational travel intended for workers can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century in the ranks of bourgeois-initiated educational associations, such as university settlements, and workers' organisations such as the German *Naturfreunde*. Necessary tensions often characterised their

relationships, as was the case in The Netherlands between the *Nederlandsche Reisvereening* - NRV [Dutch Travel Association] in 1906, and the *Nederlandsche Arbeiders Reisvereening* - NARV [Dutch Workers' Travel Association] in 1921. A classic example of cross-cultural borrowing, the NRV was established following a visit in 1905 to Toynbee Hall in London, where the Toynbee Travellers' Club had been organising foreign travel since 1889. Their general purpose was to encourage co-operative travel based upon a serious preparation which would contribute to the cultural and intellectual development of their members. The Dutch NARV joined the *Naturfreunde Internationale* - itself established in 1905 - in 1925, and in 1928 it amalgamated with the national institute for workers' education which was known henceforth as the *Instituut voor Arbeidersontwikkeling en Natuurvriendenwerk* [Institute for Workers' Education and Friends of Nature].

During the 1920s, a renewed international elan came to feature in workers' travel with: '...a vision of ordinary workers of many lands visiting each other, coming to know each other, forging out their understanding of each other's lives such bonds of peace as should never be broken' (Williams, 1960: 15).

In Britain, the Workers' Travel Association (WTA), established in 1921, organised travel for parties from Co-operative societies, Labour Party municipal councillors with an interest in urban management, trade union branches, and cyclists from the Clarion Club. Its use of advertising - supplemented the attention created by this new use of leisure time in the commercial popular daily papers - spoke in terms of '*Something More Than Holidays. See the World and Meet Its Workers*', and, '*Come with us. We are sailing to a new world where men shall toil no more for money but learn to treat frontiers as hindrances and to live as brothers*' (Williams, 1960: 63). In 1926, an occasional news-sheet called *The Travel Log* was so successful that it became a full-blown *Quarterly Magazine of Travel* by the end of the year.

This euphoria was not a phenomenon restricted to British and Dutch working-class organisations. The socialist parties in Belgium and Austria also established workers' travel organisations closely linked with their educational work. The conviction, that the spirit of travel was now well alive among workers, encouraged the WTA to seek support from the International Labour Organisation and the Socialist International for an international conference. Support was forthcoming, and the first International Conference on Workers' Travel was held at the headquarters of the Trade Union Congress in London in January 1927. Delegates came from Austria, Belgium and Czechoslovakia, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The Danish, French and Swedish working-class organisations did not accept invitations on the grounds that they had too little experience of organising educational travel, and '*...the Dutch decided against, for reasons which no doubt were important at the time but now seem rather obscure*' (Williams, 1960: 74). This conference resulted in the creation of the International Federation of Workers Travel Associations, despite some very

significant differences of approach - mainly differences between the British and the European delegations — to the pedagogical and organisational aspects of workers' travel. These different patterns of organisation and their consequences for the educational travel undertaken by workers remain largely unexplored topics.

This specific period of cross-cultural mediation did not come to an abrupt end following the emergence of Mussolini's Fascist movement in Italy during the late 1920s, or even after the National-Socialist takeover in Germany in 1933. British workers on organised educational visits to their German comrades were witnesses to the sorry debacle of the collapse of the Weimar Republic. This raises important questions with regard to what has been called 'a well-travelled democracy' - whether mediated through personal travel, reading, film and radio - during the 1930s. Long after German left-wing intellectuals, social democrats, trade unionists and numerous adult educators had been imprisoned in 1933 in the first concentration camps in the Emsland region on the German-Dutch border, British and other nationals continued to depart for organised workers' educational travel to Austria, Germany and Italy. The Austrian Workers' Travel Association was immediately suppressed by Dollfus in 1938 following the *Anschluss*. Even on the eve of the declaration of war on Germany in September 1939, British travel groups were still departing on trips to Germany. As Williams (1960: 115) remarks:

Indeed what strikes one most as one reads through the records of those years and scans the pages of The Travel Log is the myopic vision of most of these holiday makers. They saw what they wanted to see; which was friendliness, and hospitality and pleasant companionship. (Williams, 1960: 121)

Without pressing this particular case too far, it is instructive to note, nonetheless, that the WTA annual report for 1939 suggested that:

As far as it went, the 1939 season was a good one and but for disturbances would undoubtedly have yielded a higher total of bookings than 1938 if it had not been cut short. (Williams, 1960: 121)

Also unexplored in any depth is the deliberate fostering by the Nazis of visits by foreign observers and indeed organised tours by delegations from abroad. Such efforts to influence foreign opinion-makers continued to take place until well into the late 1930s, and indeed up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Furthermore, there is also evidence that some adult educators maintained links

with their contacts in Germany even when these now worked in the service of National Socialism (Griffiths, 1983).

Comintern and international proletarian solidarity

It is necessary to note that the dominant historical accounts have tended to over-emphasise social democratic reform tendencies in organised workers' education. A great deal of work has yet to be undertaken on the very real divisions within the organised working-class movement, and in particular the contribution of communist parties to workers' education following the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917. In some cases, as in The Netherlands, breakaway left-wing groups regularly challenged the reform tendencies in workers' education which they regarded as constructing a divide between cadre-training for the class struggle and a non-agitational approach to the enlightenment of the mass membership of the movement. The 1920s were indeed characterised less by the triumph of social democratic reformism, but rather by the development of the two hostile camps of social democratic and communist working-class organisations. An invitation to attend the third International Conference on Workers' Education in 1924, for example, was not sent to the post-revolutionary Russian workers' organisations. This was a result of the increasing struggle between the so-called 'Amsterdam rump' of the Second International and the Soviet-directed Third International that became known as the Red International or Comintern.

While the educational ideologies, institutions and practices of the Second International have been explored at some length - especially the growing dominance of bourgeois educational practices - this cannot be said of the Third International. In particular, there has been a failure to undertake research on the Third International's critique of the 'social fascism' supposedly perpetrated by the social democrats during the late 1920s. This is a major remiss for a period characterised by vigorous conflict between social-democratic and communist organisations on a broad front including their radically different positions on the education of workers and mass agitation. Much has yet to be uncovered with regard to the communist-inspired Marx Houses and Lenin Schools as these — for example in Britain - were known, and a whole range of left-wing groups which broke away from social democratic workers' organisations. In particular, we need to know much more about the overwhelming emphasis of the Third International upon agitation activities which were increasingly directed, financed and mediated from Moscow. During the 1920s and 1930s, to give just one isolated example, it is clear that the railway-line from Hamburg via Bremen to Groningen was a vital corridor facilitating the cross-cultural mediation of the Russian Revolution, the direction taken by the Dutch Communist Party, and the propaganda work among and organisation of the working-class in the northern provinces of The Netherlands (Hoekman & Houkes, 1993). There is also evidence that Comintern

representatives of Moscow in other countries, who were often communist exiles expelled from their own countries, played a vital role as cross-cultural emissaries in promoting the adoption of pro-Soviet policies by other communist parties. It is also important to note the role of international proletarian solidarity in the organisation of the support provided by communist organisations, such as Red Help, to communists fleeing from Germany (Weijdeveld, 1986). These cross-cultural dimensions of the 1920s and 1930s deserve a great deal more research.

Those involved in the Third International developed a complex repertoire of activities intended to promote the internationalisation of proletarian solidarity and to argue the Soviet case. Organised travel and exchanges, supported by youth camps, was an important aspect of these activities during the 1920s. In response to the development of the new media, there were also significant efforts to rejuvenate international proletarian solidarity by way of film distribution services and radio programmes for workers. In this, they differed little in form from, but added significantly to, the role played by left-wing workers' book clubs (Kaus, 1992). A not insignificant footnote here is the need for research on the contribution made to international proletarian solidarity by the Esperanto clubs organised by communist groups during the 1920s.

Also of some significance was the organisation of communist-inspired proletarian theatre. This was originally inspired by the example of Proletkult that was established in St. Petersburg on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Supporters of Proletkult were a very mixed bag of representatives of the communist party, trade unions, factory committees, youth organisations, artists, actors, musicians and auto-didactic workers. Film and theatre directors such as Eisenstein, Ewreinhoff, and Meyerhold were among them. They were convinced of the need to create a proletarian culture and that the workers themselves should carry through this cultural revolution. Proletkult rapidly constructed a vast network of workers' clubs, libraries, exhibitions, theatres, adult schools and even a Proletarian University. For Lenin, and later Stalin, Proletkult soon became a suspect anti-party organisation, and was made out to be a collection of '*...futurists, decadents, supporters of an anti-Marxist idealistic philosophy and the work-shy, renegades from the ranks of bourgeois publicists and philosophers*' (Gorsen & Knodler-Bunte, 1974), who claimed to determine the nature and direction of proletarian culture. As early as 1918, Lenin vigorously attacked Proletkult in his opening and closing speeches to the first conference of the All-Russian Association of Adult Education.

Although it was increasingly incorporated by the party during the 1920s - and definitively closed down by Stalin in 1932 - the example of Proletkult's street, community and factory theatre, nonetheless, provided a basis for the development of communist agitprop in other countries from the mid-1920s onwards. Supported in Germany (Hofmann & Hofmann-Ostwald, 1977) and The Netherlands (De Smit, 1993), for example, by communist organisations, agitprop groups at first comprised unemployed workers with no theatrical training who

wrote their own texts for performance. When a tour was over they returned to the ranks of the proletarian international of *Stempelbruder* - those living on meagre unemployment benefits. The spreading tentacles of the Moscow-inspired Comintern during the late 1920s sought to establish central control over agitprop groups by communist parties. Limited increasingly to 'educational theatre', agitprop groups were heavily subsidised by the communist parties and unemployed workers made way for professional actors. This marked a significant shift from the auto-didactic worker as a cultural intermediary towards the bureaucratisation of workers' theatre under the control of the party. At the international conference of the International Union of Workers' Theatre, held in Moscow in 1932, the main theme was the important role played by professional actors and writers within the communist proletarian movement. During the 1930s, these workers' theatre groups mainly appeared at meetings and demonstrations of the communist party, Red Help, International Workers' Help, and the Association of Friends of the Soviet Union. This remains a fascinating aspect of a largely ignored dimension of cross-cultural mediation in the broad field of workers' education in the cause of international proletarian solidarity.

A note on the translation of 'key texts'

A final reference must necessarily be made to research into cross-cultural mediation that took place by means of the translation of 'key texts' that form a very significant part of the material sources for historical research of border-crossings in the proletarian public sphere. Throughout the period of European modernisation the multiple translations of texts made a highly significant contribution to border-crossings and the development of trans-national public spheres. In addition to the cultural formations in the bourgeois public sphere, both wings of the working-class movement recognised the 'key texts' which influenced and shaped opinion at the time within the proletarian public sphere. The history of translation can make an important contribution to the study of key historical textual materials for the present-day researcher of cross-cultural mediation, the social organisation, and indeed the economics, of the translation, publication, distribution of texts, access to them as well as censorship are also vital aspects of research on cross-cultural mediation. This can be useful in analysing the different processes involved in organised attempts to disseminate particular ideas, institutions and practices. Also of interest here is the question of the selective translation, censorship and the banning of specific texts, which itself gave rise to the organisation of illegal and underground mechanisms for the distributing of texts. While the *Encyclopedia* had been printed in and could be freely read in The Netherlands, it was banned in France where it was imported by underground routes. Outside of Kaunas University in Lithuania, there is a statue which commemorates the 'book-carriers' who risked their lives by bringing in books in

ilu- Lithuanian language that had been banned by the Czarist regime and were printed by the refugee presses in Prussia. The history of such undertaken border-crossings has yet to be written.

While the translation of key texts is obviously of some importance in our understanding of border-crossings and cultural mediation, it is also necessary to examine in particular the role played in mediating processes by multiple translations. Of particular importance in the work of historical reconstruction of border-crossings mediated by texts is the recognition that many such texts were not necessarily consulted in the original language but in a third language. This makes it particularly important to identify those cultural intermediaries who were responsible for the actual practice of translation. One has to recognise, for example, that the reception of British ideas, institutions and practices in much of Central, Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia was very largely mediated via German-language translations from English into the vernacular until the late 1930s. This also raises one final but not unimportant aspect of the role of translation in cross-cultural mediation. It is necessary to reconstruct, on the one hand, the changing historical relationships through time in the intensity of translation activity, and, on the other hand, indications of patterns of preferential translation from and into languages such as English, French, Russian, German and Spanish let alone other European languages. For example, one of the books made available in Germany during the late 1920s to the members of the book club *Universum Bucherei für Alle* - whose founders included Maxim Gorki - was a translation of the Serbian author Milo Urban's novel *The Living Whip*, which was a vivid account of the struggles of peasant farmers against their feudal lords.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to provide the basis for an exploration of the historiography of the relationships between working-class movements and the development of border-crossings and cultural mediation in the broad field of communication and learning associated with the proletarian public sphere during the process of European modernisation. It has become clear that the cross-cultural mediation of border-crossings during the period of European modernisation did not remain the prerogative of intellectuals associated with dominant social groups and cultural institutions in the bourgeois public sphere that developed during the enlightenment period. Given the development of the class structure of industrial capitalism as a basic feature of European modernisation, a very significant degree of cross-cultural mediation in border-crossings was increasingly undertaken by intellectuals allied to oppositional movements and groups related to the organised working class. The analysis here has focused on those instances of border-crossings that were mediated by intellectuals as cross-cultural intermediaries with

particular reference to working-class movements. Given the focus on cross cultural mediation, the emphasis has been placed upon cultural formations and the intellectuals associated with these formations. Both the historical description and analysis of border-crossings have made use of a distinction between material and non-material forms for the mediation of border-crossings. Material resources involved the management of border-crossings in cross-cultural mediation through cultural artefacts such as printed texts, film, radio and theatre, etc. Significant in this regard was the importance of the translation of key texts. Non-material forms focused upon the mediation of border-crossings involved in travel abroad by migrant workers, emigres, refugees, and the development of diaspora. This examination has focused on these two categories of the mediating cultural practices of intellectuals in the actively selective processes involved in the mediation of border-crossings.

But what are we to make of the vast volume of all this cross-cultural communication and learning built around border-crossings? In the first place, the organisations operating in the proletarian public sphere made significant contributions to the establishment of an internationalist proletarian culture. Throughout the period of European modernisation, the proletarian public sphere made a very significant contribution to a cross-cultural process based upon critical learning about the existential struggles of workers at home and abroad. Secondly, through the selection, translation, publication and distribution of literature from a vast array of foreign languages, cultures and social circumstances, the proletarian public sphere contributed to a cosmopolitan proletarian culture. The intended purpose was to disseminate an awareness of the alternatives available for the organisation of society, and to enable working people to analyse their own situation and to take collective action. Thirdly, the proletarian public sphere manifested important ventures that constituted the formation of working-class opinion directed towards both a critical citizenship and international solidarity. In the often heady sphere of internationalism and class comradeship, solidarity was seen as class-based rather than based on nationalism. This sense of international solidarity gave rise, fourthly to a wide diversity of networks and organisations that were intended to provide support for migrants and refugees escaping from repression in their own countries.

There are particularly important questions of historical analysis, however, with regard to intellectuals and their cultural work in oppositional cultural formations that became relatively well established as trans-national organisations. This applies, for example, to the cultural organisations and intellectuals aligned with oppositional movements that sought to fundamentally transform, indeed to replace, the dominant social order by revolution. As with the socialist and communist movements, parties and unions during the 1920s and 1930s, there were very important problems in the relationships between those who were not as yet a governing class and the cultural production conducted by movement, party and union intellectuals. The analysis here suggests the need to examine In more

detail the unsettled and changing relationships in oppositional movements between 'intellectual leaders', 'movement intellectuals', 'intellectuals serving the same interests as the movement', and the worker as an autonomous producer of cultural meanings. This applies in particular to the often fraught relationships in cross-cultural mediation between the Comintern and the cultural practices of communist parties in other countries. The 'centralist direction' of the management of border-crossings and cultural mediation in this context might be appropriate euphemisms here.

A key question remains, however, with regard to the results of border-crossing by way of travel and reading upon the learning activities that were independently undertaken by working-class men and women. What did the auto-didactic worker actually make of all these interventions in the cultural life of the working-class that were intended to mobilise the workers to action within the context of the world-wide struggles of the proletariat? The overwhelming influence of histories of the increasingly institutional management of border-crossings means that the auto-didactic organisation of learning in the proletarian public sphere has not been researched in any depth. One is tempted to suggest that the everyday learning experience of the auto-didactic worker did not necessarily correspond with the nature of institutional provision by proletarian organisations. We need to know much about the manner in which the auto-didactic worker created a sense of coherence from the experience of an expanding range of managed border-crossings and cultural mediation. This is less a question of the effect of the learning activities developed by workers' organisations, but of the selections made by workers from the learning activities available to them in the proletarian public sphere. This question can only be answered in 'the first instance' by much more research on the 'learning repertoires' constructed by individual workers themselves. How did they make use of attending lectures, participating in study circles, watching films and listening to radio, in combination with schemes of personal reading and organised educational travel? In the literature on this period, the auto-didactic worker is all too often only indirectly recoverable in the reports of the organisers of the proletarian public sphere rather than in their own recorded experiences. What did they make of their experiences of voluntary and often enforced travels to other places? Quite frankly, we know very little. Such issues necessarily remain shrouded in the darkest depths of historical 'non-knowledge'. There is a great deal of work that needs to be done to recover records and accounts of these experiences. With regard to the later period covered here, and the subsequent history of the Soviet block in Europe until 1989, it is fortunate that massive archives have fortunately been rescued and are now available to historical researchers interested in the activities of the proletarian public sphere.

We return in conclusion to the question of the competencies required by 'permanently learning subjects' in order to be able to self-regulate border-crossings in these 'new times'. The conclusion here must be that they remain the

bricoleurs that they have always been during the ongoing and uncompleted periixi of European modernisation. The *bricoleur* of the self will continue to learn to live with uncertain and shifting locations in both time and space, while seeking to explain this to others. But there are no curricula that teach this art. For examples of how border-crossing in the global diaspora can be managed, we need to look no further than to those groups and individuals who - either in the present or in the past - have either chosen or have been forced to become migrants, seek to cope with loss, live in the turmoil of a strange place, and manage to survive, or not. It is in stories of the experience of migration as a form of border-crossing that 'learning to manage borders' can be witnessed at its best. It is also, unfortunately, the border upon which many have fallen, and will continue to fall, because they are at risk of not being able to tell their own story of their travels. Is the cross-cultural *bricoleur* of today's virtual society perhaps the late modern equivalent of the auto-didactic proletarian reading *Capital* by candlelight? Is this a case of *Deja vu*? Perhaps, but this does raise the fundamental question of a 'virtual public sphere' as a communicative public sphere. The reading undertaken by the reader of *Das Kapital* was an active practice involving participation in the solidarity of the proletarian public sphere. *Mais, cet n'est pas la meme viel* For many wanderers in the global diaspora of today's virtual society, the 'chat-room' comprises a refuge, a cyber community for an instant. But who does one actually meet in this virtual community? The real questions are whether one actually meets anybody, and whether anyone out there is actually listening to the stories told. The virtual public sphere can be a lonely place, even should it exist!

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