

Labour Movements Research Committee (RC 44)

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Mission of RC44

To encourage international research on labour movements, with a focus on their role both in industrial relations and in the political arena. Membership is open to any person engaged in research into Labour Movements or in Labour Movement activities.

Editor's Notes

The countdown to the ISA Congress in Durban in 2006 has begun. In this edition of the Newsletter, we have included the preliminary call for papers for RC44 sessions next year. Through this call, we aim to encourage current and potential members of the RC to begin preparations for July 2006. First we have to ensure that all members and prospective participants are paid up members of the ISA and RC44. This will help get us more than the eight sessions we are entitled to at the moment. Secondly, we would like to encourage those wishing to present papers to begin a conversation with the relevant session organizers. An enormous amount of exciting research is being done in all regions of the world and we would like to afford researchers enough time to decide which session is most appropriate to present in.

For activists and scholars in the field of labour studies in South Africa, Durban is particularly significant because it is the birthplace of a highly successful and militant phase of unionisation. The Durban strikes of 1973 resulted in the emergence of permanent union organization, something that had eluded previous generations of activists and worker leaders. Worker struggles of 1973 and after, put the South African labour movement on the world map and since then the movement ranks among the most innovative in terms of strategies, forms of organizations and campaigns. ISA Durban 2006 will provide us with an opportunity to assess not only the fortunes of the South African labour movement, but also those of other movements in a liberalizing world.

The other contributions in this Newsletter highlight the nexus of research, teaching and activism that characterizes moments of rebirth for labour studies. In his piece on SIGTUR, Rob Lambert argues that a transition to 'global social movement unionism' will "demand the research capacity and sociological imagination of intellectuals". Similarly, the Global Labour University (GLU) project discussed by Eddie Webster is an initiative that brings together researchers, academics and union activists.

Two new books that are at the cutting edge of labour and workplace studies are presented in this edition. We also continue with information sharing by running an article on the garment industry in Bangladesh. If you have any new information, book or research findings, please let us know.

Have a great May Day!

Sakhela Buhlungu

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ESTABLISHING PRECONDITIONS FOR A NEW UPSURGE:
The 7th Congress of Southern Initiative on Globalisation & Trade Union Rights
(SIGTUR)

Bangkok, Thailand 27th June to 2nd July 2005

by Rob Lambert

SIGTUR is but one initiative amongst other significant moves to construct a labour internationalism that is responsive to the predicament of labour in the era of neo-liberal globalization. There is a painful awareness of labour's weakness in the face of global restructuring. Global corporations relocate production at will, in many instances, moving from the unionized north to exploitable, non-unionised labour in the south. Through privatization, dominant global corporations acquire state assets. Public interest is transformed into shareholder need. Work is remodelled along lean production lines (intensification, outsourcing, casualisation). All these facets of change reflect a significant power shift from civil society towards global corporations.

Moody (1997) in his book *Workers in a Lean World*, has argued that unions seem 'paralysed' by these changes. Silver (2003) poses the question in her book, *Forces of Labor*, is the crisis of labour terminal as Castells seems to argue, or are we on the brink of 'a new upsurge' as Dan Clawson (2003) contends? This is not the place to engage this crucial issue. Silver, Clawson and other key contributors to the debate on the future of the labour movement will be at the ISA Congress in Durban, the site of the historic mass strikes of 1973, where discussions are likely to be lively and insightful.

The emergence of SIGTUR as a movement in the south over the past 15 years reflects an aspect of this debate. Democratic unions in the south are attempting to join forces in the construction of a global social movement form of labour internationalism, one that tries to come to terms with the reality of corporate power and ceaseless restructuring. In the furtherance of this aim, unions from fourteen countries in the politically defined south are meeting in Bangkok, Thailand from 27th June to 2nd July 2005 to review their predicament and plan a targeted campaign. SIGTUR brings together some of the driving forces of southern unionism such as COSATU from South Africa, the KCTU from Korea, CUT from Brazil, the ACTU from Australia, as well as the left wing of the Indian trade union movement.

At a preparatory meeting held in August 2004 in Bangkok, these unions identified labour law change as a major obstacle to building an effective response to global restructuring. With the sole exception of South Africa, labour law change in the south is consciously designed to erode union power and workplace solidarity to limit the possibilities of collective action. For example, the right to strike is being restricted in India. In South Korea, the law enables the state to confiscate the personal assets of labour activists. In Australia, a new wave of labour law 'reform' is stripping away long-standing trade union rights and as in Korea, strike leaders can be fined for lost production. The Congress will be exploring new forms of cross border resistance to these interventions. Other critical issues include the status of women workers in the south; how to build democratic workplace organization; the politics of labour in the era of globalization (the crisis of social democracy and the need for a vision of an alternative).

These weeklong Congresses, previously held in Australia, India, South Africa and Korea, are in themselves remarkable movement building events, quite unlike the traditional meetings of labour internationals. They are live in events in modest environments (not the hotels some established union leaders are used to). They are structured to maximize participation through workshops and plenary sessions. Union delegations comprise a mix between union officials and shop floor workers. Gender balance is asserted. Worker culture (songs, dance, poetry) is a

feature of every evening, following the strong traditions of the unions that participate. The South African unions sang themselves to victory against the apartheid state and repressive employers. The Korean unions call it 'body talk' – the discovery of the power in movement as individuals discover their personal capacity in unity with others. The process of the Congress itself is one of de-commodification, of transforming the sense of being an object, a thing, into a rediscovery of the power of one's humanity.

The location of this Congress is significant. Leaving aside Japan, Thailand is the Asian regions largest and fastest growing economy after China. When we were in Bangkok last August, we traversed the highway leading out of the sprawling mega city, to discover that as in China, the free trade zones that are home to the worlds leading global corporations stretch for hundred of kilometres without a break. The young women workers that power these factories will constitute the largest delegation at the Congress. They are part of the Alliance of Democratic Trade Unions and they are fighting for the right to organize genuine trade unionism in Thailand. Despite the odds against them, they have organized strikes and mass actions in the city. I was at one of these protest events at the entrance of the Ministry of Labour where the unions had organized a lengthy sit in. There were sleeping bags, pots and pans. They were singing, dancing and donning headbands similar to the Korean protests, confirming the demonstration effect of protest that Silver alludes to.

The SIGTUR Congress is one sign that global restructuring is generating a new kind of movement that is global in scope and social movement in orientation. There are no easy fixes, but something new is emerging. We might just be in the early phase of transition to a global social movement unionism. (This possible transition will demand much from intellectuals and their capacity to research and to develop a sociological imagination to counter the cold logic of market driven politics). Certainly, the search to re-empower labour is evident. Labour studies will have a crucial part to play in this process. That is why the ISA Congress in Durban presents such a vital opportunity. We hope that RC44 will reflect the current revitalization of labour studies and the opportunity the transition presents. Our hope is that an engaged sociology of labour will be strengthened and that this intellectual endeavour will contribute to the ultimate effectiveness of new labour responses. We are painfully aware that these are indeed dark times for anyone with a commitment to labour. Yet, in the midst of the triumphalism of conservative corporate values and the market vision of society, we continue our craft, working against the tide on many fronts.

Rob Lambert: rlambert@ecel.uwa.edu.au

A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON "CONTEMPORARY LABOR ISSUES"

For those who are interested in contemporary issues in and around the US labor movement, I want to let you know that I have established an on-line bibliography of resources, mostly by activists, staff members and engaged academics that is available to all. It can be found at <http://faculty.pnc.edu/kscipes/LaborBib.htm>. It is organized by subject and I've tried to make it user-friendly. There are links to useful web sites, and articles, when known to be on a web site, are linked so you can download them. And while most of the works are related to the US labor movement, I am adding books on workers' struggles in a growing number of countries around the world. This bibliography is an on-going project, and I would appreciate any suggestions for additions, including your own work. Please e-mail these to my work address, kscipes@pnc.edu I would appreciate full details on any item, and if it's available via a web site, please include the URL.

The more widely this is known, the more value it will have for all of us. Please feel free to pass on widely!

In solidarity

Kim Scipes: kimscipes@earthlink.net

ESTABLISHMENT OF A GLOBAL LABOUR UNIVERSITY

Report by Edward Webster

The fourth international workshop of the Global Labour University Project (GLU) was held at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg from 23rd to 25th February 2005. Sadly, one of the initiators of this project, Guy Mhone, fell ill just after the workshop began and died shortly afterwards (see obituary on page 6). This exciting initiative formally began last year with the launch of a Masters programme on Labour Policies and Globalisation at the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics, Germany. The GLU project is done in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the international labour movement and six academic partner institutions, the University of Campinas in Brazil, the University of Malaysia, McMaster and York University in Canada, Cardiff University and the University of the Witwatersrand. The aim of GLU is to analyse the challenges facing the labour movement in the era of globalisation and to assist workers and their organisations engage more effectively with rapid social and economic change. The globalisation process, it is argued, is undermining existing industrial relations and the social fabric of many societies, without providing an adequate new regulatory and protective framework. This requires research and debate on coherent social and economic labour policies in order to promote an inclusive and socially sustainable model of globalisation.

The purpose of the workshop in Johannesburg was to up-date the partner institutions on the first leg of the one year pilot Masters course, discuss plans for two text books and explore joint research initiatives. The Masters course is multidisciplinary combining sociology, history, labour law, economics and political science. The core courses are: Trade Union Strategies in a Global Economy; Governance of Globalisation; Strategies of Multinational Companies and Labour; Economic Policy and Union Strategy; Labour and Sustainable Development; and Organisational Development of Trade Unions.

Clearly labour worldwide has begun to explore systematically the possibilities of a global response to the challenges facing it. Significantly the GLU project involves the implementation of high level university programmes on labour policies and globalisation, not short in-house courses run by unions alone. It echoes the high level Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation presented last year to the General Assembly of the ILO. It is part of an attempt by the ILO to reclaim the lost ground in the mid-nineties to the World Trade organisation (WTO) by putting a stronger ethical framework on the global policy agenda.

In developing the programme it became clear to the initiators that a 'one shoe fits all' approach is not suitable and that the international labour movement needs different programmes that complement and support each other. As a result partners from the South were encouraged to introduce a similar Masters course in the Global South. Such an initiative could foreground Southern perspectives especially those from sub-Saharan Africa, a region of the world that has been excluded from the flow of trade and foreign investment that has gone elsewhere. It is also where some of the innovative social movement responses to globalisation are strongest. The next workshop is to be held in Berlin in May on the Effects of globalisation on national economic policies and trade union strategies. I will be inviting the organisers of this path-breaking initiative to participate in a panel on the role of universities in developing the analytical capacity and organisational of labour to our World Congress in Durban in July 2006. If members would like to participate and offer a paper will they please contact me: webstere@social.wits.ac.za

OBITUARY: GUY C Z MHONE (1943-2005)

The renowned development economist Guy Mhone passed away at a Pretoria hospital on Tuesday 1 March 2005, at the age of 62. He was the former Director of the Graduate School of Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Born in Luanshya, Zambia and raised along the border with Malawi (the country of his citizenship), Mhone resisted colonial Central African Federation repression and then the brutality of the Banda era. His early education was at Gloag Ranch Mission in Zimbabwe and Livingstonia Secondary School and Junior College in Malawi. He excelled, winning both the national student essay competition and a scholarship to the Ivy League's Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, USA. His masters and doctoral degrees in economics were awarded by Syracuse University in New York.

While completing his thesis on 'The Legacy of the Dual Labour Market in the Copper Industry in Zambia' (1977), he also served as associate professor at State University of New York. He later lectured at the New School for Social Research in New York City, Howard University in Washington DC, and the University of Zimbabwe, before coming to the School of Public and Development Management (P&DM), University of the Witwatersrand as a full professor in 1998. He was also director of P&DM during the early 2000s.

In the meantime, Mhone earned a reputation as a prolific and insightful analyst of social and economic problems across Southern Africa. He worked for the International Labour Organisation in Lusaka, Harare and Maseru; the Southern African Political Economic Series Trust in Harare; and the South African Department of Labour, where he was chief director for research in the first post-apartheid government. He also worked for numerous international agencies, for the Belize Ministry of Finance, and for the City of New York's Treasury.

His books included *The Political Economy of a Dual Labour Market in Africa* (1982); *Malawi at the Crossroads* (edited, 1992); *The Case for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe* (co-authored, 1992); and *The Informal Sector in Southern Africa* (1997). He published dozens of articles and chapters in major journals and academic books, on structural adjustment, labour markets, agriculture, industrialisation, the informal sector, women workers, HIV/AIDS and other facets of socio-economic policy. He worked in and wrote about every country in the region. The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa also commissioned a book-length study of African economies, which Mhone completed late in 2004 in spite of illness.

Throughout, Mhone's gentle temperament, quiet dignity, extensive experience, courage and powerful intellectual contributions – especially his theory of Africa's dysfunctional 'enclave' economies - inspired colleagues and students. He explored the limits of neo-classical economics applied to African conditions and in the process questioned dogmas associated with labour and capital market theory.

His last major address to his professional colleagues was ten weeks ago, as the concluding plenary speaker at an Addis Ababa conference of the Ethiopian Economics Association, the Dakar-based Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, and the New Delhi-based International Development Economics Associates. With characteristic humility and patience, he carefully balanced social-justice instincts and rigorous economic analysis, fusing conference themes on rural development with his own long-standing inquiries into linkages between workers and peasants; capitalism and non-capitalist spheres; the capital-intensive sectors and the mass of under-utilised labour; and inputs and outputs.

In the process, Mhone revived the best of the 1950s-era development economics sub discipline, and merged into it highly sophisticated critiques of mainstream economic theory established during the 1960s-70s, and policy lessons of neo-liberal failures from the 1980s-90s. His contributions to development economics will be valued for generations to come.

Guy Mhone is survived by his wife Yvonne Wilson and two children, Tamara (1970) and Zimema (1978).

Patrick Bond, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban

Date: March 03, 2005

Courtesy of IDEAs website: www.networkideas.org

NEW BOOK

Beyond THE APARTHEID WORKPLACE: Studies in Transition (2005)

Edited by EDWARD WEBSTER and KARL VON HOLDT

University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, www.ukznpress.ac.za

ISBN 1-86914-065-6

Has the apartheid workplace been superseded or entrenched over the past ten years of democracy in South Africa? In order to answer these questions, the authors of this book studied seventeen different workplaces, including BMW, a state hospital, footwear sweatshops and the wine farming industry. The editors broaden the definition of work to cover studies of the informal economy, including street traders, homeworkers and small rural enterprises. *Beyond the Apartheid Workplace* shows how South Africa's triple transition - towards political democracy, economic liberalisation and post-colonial transformation - has generated contradictory pressures at workplace level. A wide range of managerial strategies and union responses are identified, demonstrating both continuities and discontinuities with past practices. These studies reveal a growing differentiation within the world of work between stable, formal-sector work, casualised and outsourced work, and informal work where people struggle to 'make a living' on the margins of the formal economy. The majority of workplaces are marked by the persistence and reconfiguration of the apartheid legacy. The growth of casualisation and informalisation generates deepening poverty and exclusion among great numbers of households. These are some of the startling conclusions drawn by the editors of this groundbreaking collection, which will undoubtedly stimulate debate and further research among social scientists, trade unionists, managers and policymakers.

Edward Webster is the Director of the Sociology of Work Unit at the University of Witwatersrand. Karl von Holdt leads the workplace reconstruction programme at the COSATU-linked National Labour and Economic Development Institute.

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NEW BOOK	Labour in a Global World: Case Studies from the White Goods Industry in Africa, South America, East Asia and Europe Theo Nichols and Surhan Cam (eds.) Palgrave Macmillan, June 2005
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This book gets behind much of the generality about globalization and examines in detail the production of familiar white goods commodities in a range of countries--China, Taiwan and South Korea, South Africa, Brazil and Turkey. It makes a substantive contribution to the understanding of the diffusion of management methods, the role of the state in employee relations, the nature of trade unionism and the impact of social structure on production relations.

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Pre-publication endorsement

'This book makes an innovative contribution to our understanding of the ways in which workers across the world experience both the dynamic and uneven character of contemporary globalisation. The authors develop a systematic comparison of work and employment relations in factories in the same sector across many countries, and set this in the context of both national political and market conditions and wider international processes of market rivalry and corporate concentration. As such they demonstrate the great value of a comparative approach to contemporary industrial change.' - Tony Elger, Reader, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, UK

Article

Time to Make a Choice: The Garment Industry in Bangladesh

Shahidur Rahman, Centre for Work and Society in the Global Economy
Monash University, Australia

Since 1980, the garment industry in Bangladesh has become the main sector in export and a major source of foreign exchange. Two non-market factors have played a crucial role in ensuring this continual success of the garments sector: (a) large quotas under Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) in the North American market and (b) preferential market access to European markets. In spite of this, Bangladesh is facing the threat of losing these markets after 2004, as a new agreement has been made to phase out MFA. How the Bangladesh garment industry will face this challenge is a growing concern in the country since garment (clothing) is the most import export sector of the country. There has been a debate over whether Bangladesh will continue to follow the 'low road' (low wage and unhealthy working conditions) or will take the 'high road' by implementing high quality, high productivity and enlightened conditions for workers. My paper argues that in order to be competitive in the open market, the Bangladesh garment industry should follow the 'high-road'.

Outlining a study in contrast, I will first analyse possible consequences in following the low-road strategy and later argue in favour of the high-road strategy. It is true that since the very inception of the garment industry in Bangladesh, most of the existing garment factories in Bangladesh followed the 'low road' strategy. A crude and unconvincing picture is unveiled if we investigate the consequences of this strategy. Majumder (2001) found that garment workers were suffering from occupational hazards, uncongenial working conditions, absence of staff amenities, low wages, stringent terms and conditions of employment and excessive workplace stress. "The machine used for making sweaters has to be paddled with the right leg continuously for 12 hours with a short lunch break of only 30 minutes. Because of this, the entire right side is under constant movement while the entire left side remains idle. This led to her disability". (On Fazila, a garment worker, quoted from Majumder, 2001)

A devastating example of the lack of workplace safety was a fire in January 2005, in which 22 workers were burnt alive and more than 50 others injured at a knitting plant in Bangladesh. The accident might have been caused by an electric short-circuit. The number of casualties was large because they got stuck in the four-storey building with only a side door open and both the main gate and the emergency exit were closed. This is one of the adverse effects of ignoring safe working conditions in the factory. If such incidents continue, buyers may not pay attention to the Bangladeshi products in the future. The General Secretary of International Textile, Garment, Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF), Neil Kearney, shocked by the government's decision not to permit workers to form unions in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) before 2004, said: "World markets now demand good quality products at the right price produced without exploitation. Fail to do that after 2005, and markets will dry up. Bangladesh's manufacturers have, for too long, relied on low costs for survival. Survival will not come so cheap after 2005" (ITGLWF Press Release, October 2002).

It is evident from the above discussion that the garment industry in Bangladesh is facing immense pressure from several international sectors. The total phase-out of the MFA demands greater competition after 2004 as the garment industry in Bangladesh will compete in the open market. It can of course survive by further decreasing the human costs of production, but the dire consequences of following the 'low road' are menacingly conspicuous from the above discussion. It is therefore time to implement a new approach. Kochan and Osterman (1994) have used the term 'mutual gains' to describe this new approach where if we invest more in human resources, upgrade the skills of workers, and

improve organisational practices, the outcome will be higher productivity. The application of this mutual gains policy or 'high road' is evident in my research. I conducted a case study in 2003-2004, where I found that Muhammad Saidur Rahman, the owner of Bantai Industries Private Limited, a garment manufacturing business, opted for the 'high-road' strategy. Mr Rahman introduced worker benefits in health care, children's' education, family planning, day care, savings schemes, purchase discounts, development of social awareness and a number of other social services. On-site curative and clinical services are administered by hired health professionals who also work with family planning awareness, run by a specialized organisation in birth control. Children of the workers are included in day care, education centre programme and receive financial help from the employer. The ultimate result of these services is the lowest worker turnover rates in the country and a simultaneous higher level of productivity.

In order to support the high-road strategy, Begum (2001) attempted to assess the cost and benefit of undertaking good practices in the garment industry. The study revealed that the percentage of health cost against total cost was very low in all of the surveyed factories. Safety costs in the percentage of total cost was lower for the higher cost category factories and higher for the lower cost category factories. It showed that the higher the health and safety measures, the lower the work-hour loss and lower the person-day loss. The employers mentioned that the vital reason for such initiatives is profit making.

The pros and cons of the 'high road' and the 'low-road' strategies are clear from the above analysis. In 2005, the Bangladesh garment industry has to make a choice between these two strategies. We should always keep in mind that the Government and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Export Association (BGMEA) hold the key to the future of Bangladesh garment industry. A lot depends on the cooperation of these two major bodies while researchers too have some responsibility on this issue. Whatever policy they follow, they must realise its consequences in the long term. This is the time to make a choice not only for the existence of the garment industry in the competitive world but also on humanitarian grounds and ethical concerns.

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

XVI World Congress

THEME: The Quality of Social Existence In A Globalising World

Durban, South Africa, 23 - 29 July 2006

<http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/>

RC44 CALL FOR PAPERS*

**THEME: Global Restructuring and the New Worlds of Work:
Rediscovering the Power of the Labour Movement**

Deadline for submission of abstracts to Session Organizers: 31 October 2005

Please copy to Programme Coordinators: Anthea Metcalfe: antheam@yebo.co.za and
Rob Lambert rlambert@ecel.uwa.edu.au

Session 1: Theorising Labour

This session will be organised around Beverly Silver's recent book *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalisation since 1870*. The book recasts labour studies in a long-term and global framework and explores the likely forms that emergent labor movements will take in the future. Colleagues are invited to submit abstracts that engage with this argument.

SESSION ORGANISER: **Beverley Silver**, Sociology Department, The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, USA
E-mail: silver@jhu.edu

Session 2: Labour History in the Era of Neo-liberal globalisation

This session complements the theory session, i.e. the significance of labour as a category, and the significance of a labour history at a time when the category of labour is itself questioned. This session also reveals how the history of trade unionism remains rich, diverse and creative. This session showcases cutting edge labour histories both in the north (Europe, North America) and in the south. Comparative history, historiographical papers, and those with an historical perspective on contemporary issues are welcome. These histories raise many of the issues grappled with in the various sessions of the RC44 programme, such as forms of organisation; social movements; revitalization; politics.

SESSION ORGANISER: **Craig Phelan**, Editor of the journal, *Labour History*, Department of
American Studies, University of Wales, Swansea, UK
E-mail: c.l.phelan@swansea.ac.uk

SESSION 3: Global Corporate Restructuring & Global Governance

Economic deregulation flowing from neo-liberalism has intensified global competition, which has resulted in an acceleration of mergers and acquisitions, labour process change, work intensification, internal labour market segmentation, factory closures and waves of investment in the south. The privatisation of the state is a key facet of restructuring, creating new space for global corporations to colonize the state itself. These processes have been accelerated and consolidated by the new institutions of global governance such as the World Trade Organisation, which complements the strategies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The current proliferation of bi-lateral free trade agreements is a key facet of the new global architecture that legitimates and enforces these processes. This session explores these changes and considers their implications for labour movements.

SESSION ORGANISER: **Rob Lambert**, Organisational and Labour Studies, School of Business,
University of Western Australia, Perth, AUSTRALIA
E-mail: rlambert@ecel.uwa.edu.au

* This is a preliminary call for papers. The final sessions will be confirmed in the next newsletter. If you plan to participate in the XVI ISA World Congress, we would like to encourage you to join the ISA and Research Committee 44 via the ISA website:
<http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/>

Session 4: Changing Worlds of Work

Labour restructuring in the current period has reinforced old divisions and generated new divisions in the workforce. One important fissure concerns the employment contract. It divides full-time permanent waged work from other forms of employment such as casual, fixed-term and agency work as well as varied forms of 'dependent' self-employment. Outside the many officially recognised categories of work lies the informal sector, which embraces large numbers of workers in the south. A new more casualised workforce is growing in numbers in several countries, as part of a broader set of changes in wages and working-time conditions. This session will explore the implications of these changes for the structures and strategies of labour movements

SESSION ORGANISER: **Iain Campbell**, Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia **E-mail:** Iain.Campbell@rmit.edu.au

Session 5: Gender and Labour

This session will focus on the gender implications of the restructuring of work and the responses of labour to these changes. In addition, gender relations within the labour movement will be examined, particularly with regards to the role played by women in union revitalization. Globalization has led to the massive growth of the economy, in particular the service sector. The session will explore whether and how forms of managerial control in these new sectors are gendered and what this implies for collective organization.

SESSION ORGANISER: **Suzanne Franzway**, Gender Studies Unit, University of South Australia, Magill Campus, Magill, South Australia, AUSTRALIA **E-mail:** suzanne.franzway@unisa.edu.au

Session 6: Labour and Social Movements

This session will examine the impact of neo-liberal globalisation on labour movements as well as the responses of labour movements to these global challenges. In particular, the session should explore whether (and how) labour movements are finding common cause with other working class movements who are facing marginalisation and social exclusion. We face many of the same employers, but they and we operate within different economic, social and political contexts. Will economic and workplace restructuring and the consequent exclusion of large sections of the working class create conditions that will lead to 'the next upsurge'? What sort of model does labour adopt – a business union orientation, a focus on electoral politics, internal mobilization, or connection with other movements? How broadly or narrowly does labour define its goals and mission, and how does this interact with internal structure and external alliances? What accounts for greater and lesser degrees of success?

SESSION ORGANISER: **Dan Clawson**, Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. **E-mail:** clawson@SADRI.umass.edu

Session 7: Models of Union Organisation

Models of unions maintaining high levels of mobilisation and membership involvement in union affairs have continued to elude union movements across the world. Furthermore, the changing nature of work as well as the changing composition of the workforce calls into question the existing models of union organisation. This session will explore new ideas about existing and emerging models of union organisation. Exciting research is emerging out of the UK and the US about trends towards the 'revitalisation' of union organisation, but such revitalisation is not necessarily about going back to organising strategies of the past. On the other hand, some significant movements in the South did not go through similar levels of bureaucratisation as their counterparts in the North. How are they facing up to the challenges of a globalising world?

SESSION ORGANISER: **Sakhela Buhlungu**, Department of Sociology and Sociology of Work Unit, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA **E-mail:** buhlungus@social.wits.ac.za

Session 8: Transnational Organising

This session will focus on the limits and possibilities of current attempts for transnational organising. It will take an historical perspective of transnational organisation of the labour movement in different parts of the world. The session will also explore whether or not globalization presents new opportunities for transnational organizing that avoid reproducing relations of inequality between labour movements

of the global North and those of the global South. Relations between national and international labour organizations and social movements, which fall under the broad category of the “anti-globalisation movement”, will also be examined. Papers examining links between labour movements, on the one hand, and organizations that enforce ‘fair globalization’ are welcome in this session.

SESSION ORGANISER: Peter Evans, Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, USA
E-mail: pevans@berkeley.edu

Session 9: Trade Unions and Politics

How do trade unions relate to party politics? How is this relationship affected by economic restructuring and neo-liberal globalisation? In some countries, a strong link exists historically between unions and social democratic parties. Is this relationship redefined towards more independent trade unionism? In post-colonial societies, unions have often been subordinated to strategies of ‘national development’? What happens to the unions when such strategies become more neo-liberal? Are unions defending welfarism and national development against globalisation? Are they capable of developing a political alternative? How are political alliances and relationships to political parties redefined?

SESSION ORGANISER: Bjorn Beckman, Politics of Development Group, PODSU, Stockholm University, SWEDEN
E-mail: bjorn.beckman@statsvet.su.se

Session 10: The Changing Geography of Power

In the past decade or so, industrial relations scholars have become more interested in issues of space and spatiality whereas human geographers have begun to pay greater attention to the nature of working class life and industrial relations. The result has been the emergence of what some have come to call “Labour Geography”. Specifically, Labour Geography seeks to analyse the relationship between space and power. It is an approach that sees space not simply as a stage upon which social action plays out but rather, as a social product, which can be shaped and struggled over by various economic and political actors. Put slightly differently, it recognises that the geography of capitalism is something which is actively struggled over and which, in turn, can have dramatic impacts upon how practices of industrial relations and labour politics play out. Thus, how labour movements come to terms with the ways in which local communities are linked to the global economy or how the particularities of place mean that organising strategies, which are appropriate to one place, may not be for another have important consequences for how the geography of global capitalism is made. Taking the position that spatial relations are both constituted by, and constitutive of, social practices, through specific case studies this session will explore how the power of geography can shape the geography of power, and vice versa.

SESSION ORGANISER: Andrew Herod, Professor of Geography and Adjunct Professor of International Affairs, University of Georgia, Athens, USA
E-mail: aherod@uga.edu

Session 11: Trade Unions and NGOs: Surviving the Future

Papers exploring the links that have existed (and continue to exist) between unions and a wide range of non-governmental organisations are invited for this session. With the dominance of the neo-liberal policy agenda worldwide and the resulting effects on union density and scope, forging links with NGOs has become one possible union revival strategy to pursue. Similarly, NGO movements have benefited from the support of the labour movement. The seminal partnering between the 'Teamsters' and 'Turtles' in the Battle of Seattle is one illustration of this dynamic. Yet there undoubtedly exist challenges in managing this relationship stemming from the different frames of reference that may be adopted by unions and NGOs. The core questions being pursued in this session are: what are the possibilities for the union/NGO alliance in pursuing common change action agendas? What are the common issues between these organisations and unions? How do the contradictions play themselves out? Can these contradictions be managed so that both unions and NGOs achieve their objectives? Considering these questions is undoubtedly an intellectual project, and thus not only are case study, descriptive papers encouraged; but papers that seek to provide a broader intellectual contribution are also encouraged.

SESSION ORGANISER: Donella Casperza, Organisational and Labour Studies, School of Business, University of Western Australia, Perth, AUSTRALIA
E-mail: dcasperz@ecel.uwa.edu.au

For more information about ISA Durban 2006: <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/>

Join the Research Committee on Labour Movements (RC44)

What is RC 44? It is the Research Committee on Labour Movements of the International Sociological Association (ISA), the largest academic forum for those engaged with sociologically related issues of enquiry.

Mission of RC44: To encourage international research on labour movements, with a focus on their role both in industrial relations and in the political arena. Membership is open to any person engaged in research into Labour Movements or in Labour Movement activities.

Benefits of joining RC44:

- An opportunity to engage with interdisciplinary academics/researchers with similar interests. Current membership includes international academics/researchers from Africa, Asia, North and South America, Europe, Oceania and Asia.
- Regular newsletter featuring international articles on labour, reviews of new books, profiles of research units, conference proceedings, comments on recent publications on cutting edge research, conference and doctoral programme announcements, call for papers and more...
- Opportunity to participate in the RC44 session programme at the next ISA World Congress in Durban, South Africa in July 2006.
- Cost: 20 US Dollars for four years

For more information on RC44 visit: <http://www.socsci.mcmaster.ca/globalabour/>

OR E-mail: Anthea Metcalfe antheam@yebo.co.za

How to join the ISA & RC44? <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/>

Benefits of joining the ISA:

- Receive *International Sociology* (the official journal of the ISA)
- *ISA Bulletin* (the ISA newsletter) and the *Directory of Members*
- Discounted subscription to the other ISA journal, *Current Sociology*
- Reduction in registration fees at **ISA World Congress**, Durban, South Africa 2006
- **Over 60 years of age** -qualify for life membership of the ISA