

## Conclusion

In case this might seem in doubt, I have no intention of writing off workers, unions, the nation-state, enterprise-level struggles, the inter-state organisations, nor international labour research conferences. On the contrary, I consider that all of these have a role to play in the development of a new global solidarity movement appropriate to the conditions of a globalised, networked capitalism. It is simply that each of these bodies or instances has to recognise their loss of (assumed) centrality or privilege, to become modest contributors to something much larger – and rather more politically and theoretically complex and sophisticated – than they are. To make the point unambiguous: participants in the World Social Forums have so far consisted to some 80 percent of the university-educated! Welcome as they must be to any new emancipatory movement, they need to be accompanied by a dramatic increase in the number of working people, unionised or not.

Furthermore, the traditional international labour studies conference is not necessarily in the same parlous state as its object of study. Thus, the Labour Movements Research Committee of the International Sociological Association, announces in its latest bulletin (RC 44 Newsletter 2005) a whole series of coming conferences, including one of its own. This latter will consist of the following sessions, which seems to me thoroughly of our time:

- 1: Theorising Labour
- 2: Labour History in the era of Neo-liberal Globalisation
- 3: Global Corporate Restructuring and Global Governance
- 4: Changing Worlds of Work
- 5: Gender and Labour
- 6: Labour and Social Movements
- 7: Models of Union Organisation
- 8: Transnational Organising
- 9: Trade Unions and Politics Session
- 10: The Changing Geography of Power Session
- 11: Trade Unions and NGOs: Surviving the Future

One hopes, again, that this event, occurring as it will in Durban, the town which gave birth to the new trade union movement in South Africa in 1973, will have learned from other recent international labour conferences (and might add a 12<sup>th</sup> session on computerisation, communications and culture?).