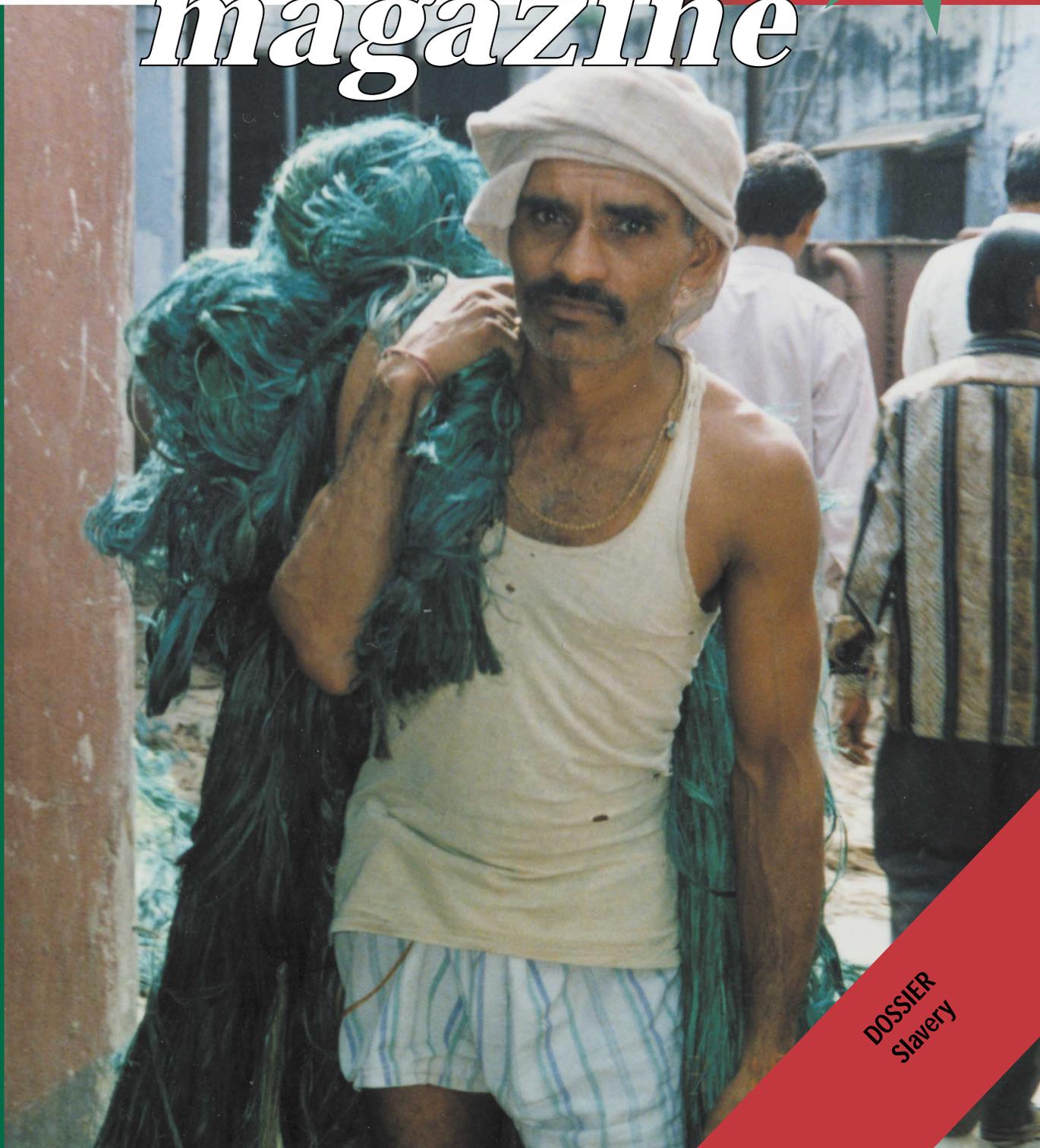


# LABOR

# magazine



**DOSSIER**  
**Slavery**

80<sup>th</sup> year, number 2002/4

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**Picture  
Slavery,  
also privatised**

# PORTRAIT

IBRAHIM KABHA HAIDER, CURRENT  
PRESIDENT WAS ELECTED SECRETARY  
GENERAL OF THE GUWP (GENERAL  
UNION OF WORKERS OF PALESTINE),  
FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN 1983. TRUE  
HERO OF PALESTINIAN TRADE  
UNIONISM, HE HAS BEEN FIGHTING FOR  
THE DEFENCE OF WORKERS FOR NEARLY  
40 YEARS, AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL  
AND AT INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS  
LIKE THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
ORGANISATION AND THE WORLD  
CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR.  
SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPLARY CAREER.

## *Ibrahim Kabha Haider*

**B**orn in 1938 in the town of Yabed-Jenine in Palestine, his professional experience however started in Germany in 1962, where he worked with the Mercedes Benz company in Stuttgart. It was at this time that Ibrahim Haider discovered the reality of the condition of workers. He therefore decided to defend them and became the president of the Organisation of Arab Workers in Germany, member of the Union of German Trade Unions (DGB).

### 1967, THE SIX-DAY WAR

In 1967, at the second Congress of the Union of Arab Workers in Cairo, Ibrahim Haider was sent there as representative of workers of Palestine. At this time, international tension was mounting. In fact, on 5th June, the Six-Day War

started, the third Israeli-Arab war, so called because of its duration. To recall, the territorial gains of the Hebrew State, following this short war were considerable: Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula were occupied, in the south. In the North, it

was the Golan Heights and in the East the West Bank and the eastern part of Jerusalem. We know that the Six-Day War represents one of the numerous events of extreme tension between Israel and Palestine. After these difficult historical events Ibrahim decided to return to Palestine for good.

### GENERAL UNION OF WORKERS OF PALESTINE

It was after these tragic events that the trade union career of Ibrahim Haider took a decisive turn. During the third UGTP Congress in Cairo, Ibrahim was elected to the post of assistant Secretary general of the Organisation. Not being afraid by nature to rise up to challenges at the height of his ambitions, he added this function to that of assistant Secretary General of the Union of Arab Workers. Consequently, his rise was international; during the fourth Congress in 1972, he was elected member of the general secretariat responsible for Arab and international relations. A post to which he was elected at the fifth and sixth Congresses.

### RECOGNITION

Then in 1983, our trade union friend received great recognition from his peers. In Tunisia, where



*Ibrahim Kabha Haider of the GUWP*

*Continued on page 23*



# A glimmer of hope...

*Political instability is spreading over the world. No solution in sight in the Middle East, the non-respect of the UN resolutions by the Hebrew state impedes each peace process, the situation of the Palestinian people is deteriorating and, in this violence upon violence, the number of innocent victims is rising day after day. The war threats of the United States against Iraq aggravate the climate, all the more so since the United Nations, in the circumstances, is finding it increasingly difficult to play the role it was created for.*

*Violence is gaining ground everywhere: in Indonesia, the Philippines, Ivory Coast...*

*In Colombia, too, where the Council of our regional organisation in Latin America, the CLAT, had planned to meet but found itself compelled to postpone this meeting on account of the guerrilla upsurge. And what can one say about the events in Moscow, which have put the nearly forgotten Chechnya conflict on the front burner again?*

*The world is not doing fine. According to the WCL, instability is rooted in social injustice. Globalisation is benefiting a small minority, marginalising the vast majority. There can be no democracy without social justice. Social justice stabilises, brings peace within peoples, between peoples. This is our basic conviction.*

*We have just visited the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, together with the ICFTU. Both financial institutions impose a certain model of globalisation. A model we turn down, and the WCL clearly told them so. We reject this model because it keeps crushing the developing world under the weight of an unbearable debt. Because it privatises without distinction, robbing the states of their ability to redistribute the produced wealth. Because it leaves the multinational groups a clear field to exploit the poor, to destroy the environment. Because it ignores the application of the international labour standards, an international legislation that should lead to the creation of decent and dignified jobs enabling access to health care, education and social protection.*

*Our future, such is our conviction, we have to create it for ourselves. Through our struggles, through our solidarity.*

*In this gloomy landscape, a glimmer of hope has come to us from Brazil, with the election Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva as President of the Republic. The victory of "Lula" has touched us in a special way. Not only is it encouraging to see that an overwhelming majority heard the former trade unionist, but also, and in particular, has he promised to make all-out efforts to realise the social integration of the sixty million Brazilians living in poverty and social exclusion.*



*A good example of solidarity. In combination with social justice, we have touched upon the real foundations of a globalisation with a human face.*

Willy Thys  
Secretary General

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## JOHANNESBURG

# World Earth Summit

FROM 26 AUGUST TO 4 SEPTEMBER, JOHANNESBURG HOSTED THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. NOW, A FEW WEEKS LATER, LET US TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT IS LEFT OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THIS INTERNATIONAL FORUM.

It should be pointed out first that the Johannesburg Summit was the most important United Nations conference ever. Indeed, 60 000 participants from 190 countries assembled to face a sizeable challenge: materialise the commitments made during the Rio Earth Summit (1992), halve the number of poor by 2015, give them access to water and energy, and implement a sustainable development (see the dossier in *Labor* 2002-3).

### THE "PRE-SUMMIT" EXPECTATIONS

According to the World Confederation of Labour, the Summit had to recognise the current imbalance between the dynamics of the global economy on the one hand and the situation and little encouraging prospects of the ecological and social dimension of

our planet on the other. The political leaders should acknowledge that the globalisation, as it is managed today, is at the root of this imbalance and that it is a matter of urgency to introduce ecological and social corrections to a model centred on free trade and on growth and competitiveness at any price. The traditional trickle-down strategies have not been and will not be sufficient. The world is in want of another kind of growth and of another way to do business and to control world trade.

### A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COMMITMENT...

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General, said he was satisfied with the results: "[...] *we didn't obtain everything, but I believe that, from a political point of view, the heads of State present here made commitments, there was the civil society, the private sector, individuals, there was a certain amount of commitment, an impetus we'll have to support. For the poor, there was the agreement on water purification, on energy, and the decision to exploit the planet's resources in a sustainable manner, an important agreement [...]*" (*Le Monde* dd 6 September 2002). Despite the optimism of the UN Secretary General, it would be proper to get a few things straight. First, it was important to the World Confederation of Labour that the Johannesburg Summit would not turn into a Doha+ instead of a post-Rio or post-Copenhagen Summit. The future of sustainable development must indeed not be left solely in the hands of the marketing executives of the large companies. The Summit pledged to encourage the application of the basic conventions on the workers' rights, but its commitment was too general and too vague. Two years after the political agreement of the Copenhagen +5 Summit, at which the workers' rights occupied a central place, the governments of the world (save a few exceptions) now seem reluctant to protect the workers and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).



Willy Thys, at the Johannesburg Summit



### MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Several opportunities in which the workers' rights issue plays a prominent role were missed or even purely and simply thrown away. Indeed, when the Summit called for cooperation relations between the United Nations system, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the financial institutions with a view to better world governance, it never mentioned the ILO. Twice the Summit called on the business concerns to act with a sense of responsibility, and twice it left out the framework the basic conventions on the workers' rights provide. Besides, the decent work theme was toned down and replaced by a more aseptic terminology ("income-generating jobs").

On the other hand, trade was perceived as a key element of development and is therefore omnipresent in the Summit's plan of action. So, the governments keep believing in the strategies of free trade and growth, without bothering about the equitable distribution of the gains from growth and trade. It is high time the International Labour Organisation was placed on the same footing as the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In view of these results, it is essential that the trade unions and the workers worldwide, and the ILO itself, react firmly and without delay, developing an overall strategy to protect the social development and the rights of the workers against the globalisation according to the neo-liberal model.

MD



*The trade unions, like the ILO, must protect development and the workers rights*

### A WORLD SOCIAL FUND

On the eve of the Summit, the WCL launched an appeal for a World Social Fund, according to the following principles:

- International "green taxes" could reduce ecological squandering and the use of polluting energy. At the same time, these taxes can constitute a financial basis to promote the social pillar of globalisation.
- The Fund could induce governments to pursue policies that are aimed at more respect for the core labour standards and at the creation of decent jobs.
- The Fund could redeem below nominal value the foreign debts of the countries in crisis. The reduced amount of these debts as compared to the nominal value would then be exchanged for commitments in the field of core labour standards and social security networks.



## 55th Annual DPI/NGO Conference

### THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR AND THE SOCIAL ACTORS

The WCL, as explains the Policy Resolution of the Bucharest Congress, pursues not only the advancement and unity of the trade union movement, but also stronger alliances with other social actors, other organisations in search of a humane globalisation in which the economy is at the service of man and not the other way round.

Every year, and this for 55 years, the United Nations Department of Public Information organises a conference in partnership with the civil society. A review of this year's meeting.

"Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict: A Shared Responsibility" was the —topical— theme the United Nations had presented for the 55th edition of the Conference, last September. It explored the role of the international community in supporting societies emerging from conflicts, focusing on those contemporary examples that have been the subject of concerted United Nations involvement. It demonstrated the crucial importance of cooperation and coordination between government and UN officials on the one hand and representatives of non-governmental organisations and trade unions on the other which, in the terms of the Conference, *have direct experience with activities in the field and with citizens who have met with violence or are in the vanguard of reconstruction and reconciliation efforts of the civil society*. The World Confederation of Labour, present at the debates, can only rejoice at

this initiative and joins UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who said he was pleased that the Conference "*emphasises the important role the UN, the governments and the civil society can play to help countries and communities recover from the ravages and traumas of a conflict*".

This year's debates were centred on the post-conflict situations in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Guatemala, Kosovo, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan and East Timor, but also on long-standing conflicts like the ones in Colombia and the Middle East.

### WHEN DID THE RELATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND THE NGOS START?

The importance of the cooperation with the NGOs as an integral part of the UN's information activities has been recognised since the creation of the Department of Public Information, in 1946. The General Assembly, in its Resolution 13(1), asked the Department and its auxiliary offices: "...to encourage and lend effective aid to the national information agencies, educational institutes and any other national and private organisation wishing to give publicity to the activities of the United Nations. With this and other ends in view, it should have a complete documentation service, provide or document speakers and place its publications, documentary films, video tapes, posters and other graphic documents at the disposal of these agencies, institutes and organisations."

In 1968, the Economic and Social Council, by Resolution 1297(XLIV) dd 27 May, asked the Department to associate the NGOs while preserving the spirit of Resolution 1296(XLIV) dd 23 May, which provides that an NGO "...must pledge to help the United Nations Organisation in its work and to give publicity to the principles and activities of the United Nations, in line with its own aims and goals and with the nature and scope of its competence and activities."





# Paraguay: no peasants without land, no land without peasants

In Paraguay the peasants have always been among the fiercest fighters in the social struggle. This attitude is understandable, knowing that lots of them are living in conditions similar to the ones of their "landless or almost landless" neighbours in Brazil.

Lingering over the figures, we see that in the Southern Cone Paraguay attains, with Brazil, the highest level of inequality in the matter of land distribution. 37% of the farms occupy less than 12.5 acres, whereas 1% of the landowners occupy over 2,500 acres an appropriate 78% of the land (source: CLADEHLT).

## AGRICULTURE VICTIM TO NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES

Paraguay is one of the South American countries where agriculture exerts the strongest influence on the economic situation. This is no wonder as the cash crops account for more than 50% of the GNP and around 40% of the active population is linked to this sector.

The socio-economic crisis in Paraguay is basically linked to the one of agriculture and to the application of neo-liberal policies centred on more extensive cash crops and not on the production for domestic consumption. These policies have fomented the public disinvestments in sectors that are essential to the Paraguayan peasants, an indiscriminate opening of the borders to imports and the liberalisation of the markets. As far as the social rights are concerned, the past years were marked by the peasants expressing their continuous discontent, feeling totally abandoned and demanding at any price social measures such as a revision of the land distributions and policies to protect their sector.

In many cases illiterate, landless, left without access to credits, lacking technologies and deprived of access to the markets, the peasants of this

Southern Cone country demand an urgent change in policy. That is why the rallying goes on.

## TRAGIC DEMONSTRATION

The rallying increased in recent years, meeting unfortunately with systematic repression. The member organisations of the WCL in Paraguay released lots of statements denouncing these anti-union acts. Last June, a peasant, Calixto Cabral, was assassinated during a peaceful demonstration rebuked by the Paraguayan authorities. The participants demanded the withdrawal of economic measures affecting the entire population of Paraguay. The demonstration was a joint initiative of several trade unions and peasants' organisations, among which the *Organización Nacional de Campecinos* (ONAC), affiliated to the World Federation of Agriculture, Food, Hotel and Allied Workers (WFAFW), one of the international trade federations of the WCL. It goes without saying that the Central Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT), affiliated to the CLAT and the WCL, protested in the strongest terms against the assassination of Calixto Cabral.

MD

## DEFENCE OF ALL THE WORKERS

The World Confederation of Labour states in its Declaration of Principles that "[...] *Each worker is a human individual, that is to say a being who is both free and responsible, and whose dignity is expressed in basic and infeasible rights, which must be respected by all, including the State and Society* [...]". In view of this principle the WCL cannot but condemn the reprisals that affected the peasants' demonstrations last June.



## THE COUNTRY

**Capital:** Asunción

**Population:** 5,730 millions inhabitants

**Official languages:** Spanish, Guaraní

**Political System:** Constitutional republic

**Natural resources:** iron, manganese...

**Workforce:** 2 millions (agriculture 45%)

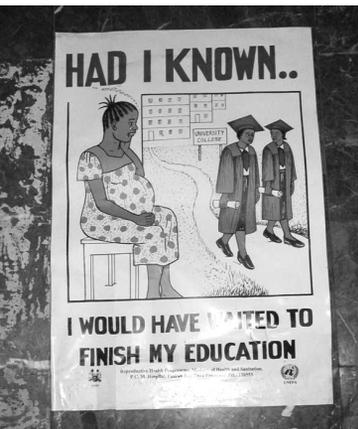
**Rate of unemployment:** 16%



6th Latin American Conference on the Rights and Freedom of the Workers



Demonstration in Palestine, last September



Official maternity campaign in Sierra Leone

## ● EUROPE WFBW seminar sets the tone for future actions in Central and Eastern Europe

Early in September 2002, the World Federation of Building and Woodworkers' Unions (WFBW) staged in Romania its first seminar for all its Central and Eastern European affiliates. Around thirty guests had made an appointment in Mangalia, a city at the Black Sea. The seminar welcomed among other Jacob Baciu, President of the *Confédération des Syndicats démocratiques de Roumanie* (CSDR). The debates were centred on the new labour code and privatisation. The seminar also worked out joint criteria for the communication and coordination of activities.

Another purpose of the seminar was to explain to the participants the principles, structures and activities of the WFBW. This theme was followed by an introduction to the Social Dialogue, in which the emphasis was on the relevant European Union policies. A number of countries are on the verge of entering the Union, which is why the trade unions from these countries ought to strengthen their contacts with the European institutions. The seminar ushers in a whole series of trade union actions in Central and Eastern Europe.

## ● INTERNATIONAL 3 800 Colombian trade unionists assassinated

According to recent figures, which the trade union confederations presented at a Conference of Amnesty International, 3 800 Colombian trade unionists got killed in the past fifteen months. In 2002, already 110 trade unionists met their death in the struggle to protect the workers' rights. The situation in Colombia is not improving, on the contrary. Last August, nearly 800 000 civil servants and peasants went on a two-day strike in protest against the economic measures the government of President Uribe had issued to make the labour market as flexible as possible. In plain terms:

lower the pensions, raise the retirement age and privatise the public services. That way the Colombian government hopes to reduce the rate of unemployment (currently 16%) and to create additional funds to lower the fiscal deficit. Julio Roberto Gomez, Secretary General of the CGTD, is convinced that those "political solutions" will only deteriorate the already difficult situation of the Colombian workers and that the privatisation will generate more unemployment. "They should distribute the wealth, not sow poverty", he said.

## ● WCL in the breach for the rights of the Palestinians

On 25-29 September last, a delegation of the World Confederation of Labour, led by its Secretary General, Willy Thys, conducted a mission to the Middle East. Jointly with the ICATU and the General Union of Palestinian Workers (GUPW), the WCL visited the

Damas and Ramallah Workers' Houses. It also met, in Jordan, the President of the GUPW. All these efforts fit in with the WCL's struggle for respect for the rights of the Palestinian workers.



*During the world day for the abolition of slavery, on 2 December, it will have to be recognised that this practice, officially abolished a century and a half ago, is not only still in existence, but also has more days ahead. There is a long list of countries involved and all continents are affected. From servitude for debt in Pakistan to confinement of domestic workers in embassies in*

*France, through quasi-feudal rural properties in Brazil, the list of the current forms of this reality is long.*

*Since the first international conventions, notably those of the ILO, slavery is less a practice of States imposing forced labour than that of private bosses. Labour unions, NGOs, international institutions... are trying to eliminate it.*

*But, as in the case of child labour, while these situations need to be strongly denounced, it is also important to encourage the States, which are taking measures against this practice, collaborate with them, and tackle the causes of modern forms of slavery. The primary causes, as usual, are poverty, marginalisation of women, inadequate education, etc.*

### SUMMARY

Slavery :  
the whole world is  
affected

An increasingly  
private affair

Although officially  
abolished, slavery  
still has to be  
combated

International  
Conventions against  
Slavery

Dossier prepared for WCL by  
Agency InfoSud-Belgium



# Slavery: the whole world is affected

SIERRA LEONE, BRAZIL, PAKISTAN...: THESE SYMBOLIC EXAMPLES MUST NOT HIDE THE FACT THAT IN ALL REGIONS OF THE WORLD, SLAVERY IS CAUSING HAVOC, IN VARIOUS FORMS.

**D**iamonds... In Sierra Leone, thousands of men dream of finding them in order to sell to improve their lives. How much? From 25 000 to 500 000 according to the source<sup>1</sup>. Many of them live in conditions close to slavery. 789 small-scale diamond mines were operating under licence in 2001 in this country; 200 others were awaiting authorisation. They generally cover a few square metres of alluvial lands, where as many as 50 persons can work. The working conditions, especially sanitary, are very bad. The “contracts” between the owner of the operating licence and workers are generally verbal. The men (there are very few women) are only paid in food and basic necessities, sometimes, a few tools. When they find a gem, they receive a commission on its price.

Why raise the issue of slavery? This (see p. 12-13) implies a form of personal dependence on the employer, preventing the worker, if he so wishes, from seeking employment elsewhere.

Thus, in Sierra Leone, the diamond seekers find themselves on the verge of such a situation. The Social Alert delegation, which conducted a survey on site, did not clearly establish the facts, but had some negative presumptions. It first observed a frequent indication of slavery: the diamond seekers live at their work place. It also

seems that the licence holders, who charge them for the tools and food, keep the workers in permanent indebtedness. When a worker finds a gem, he has no knowledge of the price at which his employer, who thus arbitrarily determines the part he will give the finder, sells this diamond. There is every indication that this part is always insufficient to pay off the debt of the worker, who is then forced to remain indefinitely in the service of the same employer. And, according to Social Alert, “*Similar situations could appear to be a practice on a massive scale*”.

## GETTING INTO DEBT BY WORKING

Perpetual indebtedness to oblige the worker to remain in the service of his employer is a common practice. It is encountered for example in the coffee plantations on the Guatemalan coast or in rural areas of Brazil. In Guatemala, we had the opportunity to visit such a *finca*, very close to the city of Malacatán. This property guarded by armed men, receives Indian families from Altiplano, during the coffee harvest, who live, eat and work on the plantation. At the end of the season, their salary is always less than what they owe the boss, which forces them to return the following year to continue to pay their debt.

In Brazil, the Pastoral Land Commission (Catholic CPT) and

the Movement of Landless Workers (MST) have often denounced the practices of land owners who recruit young unemployed men from other States. Recruiters (*gatos*) go out to hire these men, promise them a good salary and advance them money for the trip. Then comes the day of the first salary, when all the sacrifices made should be forgotten. Surprise: after deducting the travel costs, advance given to the family, price of tools, food bought —at exorbitant prices— from the shop located on the property... there is hardly anything left. Nothing, except a debt, immediately considered as an advance on the next salary.

“*If in theory the man can earn enough, he is confronted with an unverifiable calculation where two and two sometimes make three, at times eight, according to the circumstances*”, explains Ricardo Rezende, of the Pastoral Land Commission.

According to him, the worker has only three ways of extricating himself from this situation: “*pay the full debt, which is generally impossible*”; get to the end of his contract, but on condition that he is no longer in debt; or escape, at the risk of his life, because “*The fugitives run the risk of being captured, beaten, taken back to work at the plantation, or even murdered*”<sup>2</sup>.

According to the CPT, in August 2002, 18 landed properties were discovered, employing between 2

and 459 slave workers. Most of them are located in the States of Para, Maranhão and Mato Grosso.

The phenomenon is old. In 2000, Ricardo Rezende noted that the number of slave workers, very difficult to determine due to the secrecy surrounding the plantations, rose again after a decline. Altogether, in 2001, the CPT has identified 2 416 slave workers, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover ten years ago in the face of the gravity of the situation, the CLAT (Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores), had submitted a complaint to the ILO that was accepted for violations of Conventions 29 and 105.

#### SOLD BY AUCTION

Pakistan is also involved in slavery. The country's Human Rights Commission has denounced the fate of women and men who, being in debt, give themselves to some landowners of whom they become their property. They work in the fields, under the supervision of armed men, and are beaten when they try to escape. Around 50 000 persons are thought to be in this situation in the southern State of Singh alone.

The flow of Afghan refugees to Pakistan, in 2001-2002, has given rise to some new practices. Being without resources, Afghan families sell their children to traffickers



who organise auction sales where the buyers are mainly tribal chiefs. "Most of the girls become prostitutes; the lucky ones become domestic workers. Most of the boys go straight to the factories", recounts the journalist Andrew Bushell, who has observed these sales<sup>3</sup>.

These countries are only examples, like Niger, Sudan, Mauritania, Nepal... In the conflict areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, people in debt sell themselves or give their children to usurers; this is notably the case of unpaid civil servants<sup>4</sup>.

#### ALSO IN THE NORTH

The industrialised countries are not unaffected by this phenomenon, in the form of child trafficking, human slave trade for prostitution, clandestine workshops or even exploitation of domestic staff in the embassies<sup>5</sup>. In 2001, the (French) Committee against Modern Slavery took charge of 23 new cases falling within its criteria, not counting all those taking place.

The number of persons in slavery is very difficult to ascertain. Some NGOs speak of 700 000 to 4 million in the whole world. The differences are explained by the difficulty in defining slavery. According to Roger Plant, Head of the ILO Special Action Programme for combating forced labour, it is first necessary to establish a proper methodology before putting forward figures that are credible. But even without figures, there is no doubt that slavery exists and is creating havoc.

- 1 See *Sierra Leone: In search of the fifth "C" for diamonds*, Social Alert, August 2002. The information in this paragraph comes from this report.
- 2 Justicia Global: *Human Rights in Brazil*, 2000 (chap. *Forced Labour in Brazil: Events and Information*).
- 3 *News and Features*, 14-21 February 2002.
- 4 Bethuel Kasamwa Tuseko: *Esclaves des usuriers*, Agence Syfia, 15 April 2000.
- 5 See also Mamadou Diop, *Des Africaines esclaves de leurs compatriotes à Paris*, agence Syfia, 15 October 2000.



# An increasingly private affair

SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR HAVE A SPECIFIC MEANING IN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS, WHICH ARE INADEQUATE FOR ERADICATING THESE ILLS. THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS INCREASINGLY RESORTING TO THE PRACTICE.

Slavery and forced labour share certain characteristics with the various phenomena cited as examples in the previous pages: child labour, human slave trade, exploitation by domestic work. According to Roger Plant, of the ILO, others should be added like some forms of work undertaken by prisoners, certain types of compulsory community work, forced recruitment for agriculture... But these phenomena are not entirely the same as slavery and forced labour.

Likewise, it may be tempting to refer to workers subjected to extremely harsh working conditions as *slaves*. But it is not to minimise the importance of these situations that they are distinguished from the actual slavery. In fact, in the first case, the agreement is based on a work contract signed by two parties if not equal, at least free (in principle); the worker thus sells his work strength, not his person. Although he does not always have the choice, he remains free to break the contract according to certain procedures.

The slave, on the other hand, is forced into a working relationship owing to a personal dependence on his boss. He does not have the freedom to leave his boss who claims to have rights not over the work of the slave, but over his person, at times even over his children.

In the ancient days, the Romans applied to the slaves, not the right of persons, but the right of ownership, while granting them certain legal guarantees. Originally therefore, the slave is a vanquished enemy. The conqueror quickly discovered that instead of killing and eating their opponent to obtain strength, it was more effective to make them work. The vanquished person thus became the “property” of the conqueror, a perception favoured by the idea of inferiority, and often inhumanity, of racial groups subject to slavery.

## UNDER CONSTRAINT

This idea was taken up by the 1926 International Convention on the Abolition of Slavery which defines slavery as “*the state or condition of an individual over whom the attributes of the right of ownership or some of them are exercised.*” During the same period, the first ILO Forced Labour Convention was drawn up along the same lines (Convention 29, 1930): “*For the purposes of this Convention, the term forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.*”

The criteria determining forced labour are thus the threat and lack of willingness on the part of the individual to work. That defines

the legal form of slavery, and this definition is necessarily restrictive. We can in fact write an endless essay on the adjective “forced”. Any person who does not have a personal fortune large enough to live without working undertakes forced labour in a way. That is the lot of the vast majority of humanity.

But such a broad acceptance of the term is completely inoperative since it is a question of fighting against this specific phenomenon of slavery. It was thus necessary to delimit the scope of application of the conventions in a strict manner.

The difference between slavery and exploitation through labour is not always easy to define. The fact of being obliged to live at the work place is generally a significant indication. Other frequent signs: very heavy work schedules (from 12 to sometimes 18 or 19 hours a day), a small salary paid in kind, the lack of freedom (confiscation of documents, prohibition from going out, break in family and cultural ties...).

Slavery itself is defined by the two characteristics of forced labour (constraint and unwillingness, in addition to two other criteria: the presence of an employer who benefits from this work and physical restrictions on the freedom of movement of the worker.

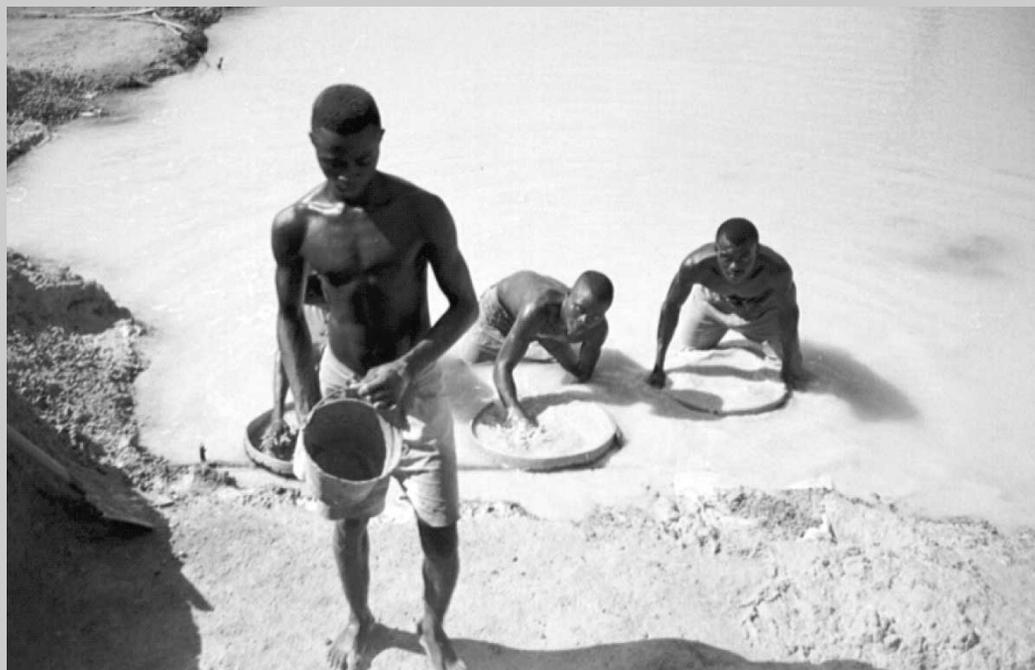
For Roger Plant, these two almost identical notions refer to different systems of exploitation. Forced

labour is rather the responsibility of public authorities, while the slave is under the thumb of private employers.

#### IN THE DAYS OF THE COLONIES

This distinction, he explains, is perceptible, in the provisions of Convention 29 of the ILO. The language used and the situations envisaged in this convention (community work, for example) refer to the reality of the countries colonised where, at the beginning of the 20th century, forced labour was frequently imposed by the colonial power. This inspiration is even clearer on reading the accompanying recommendation (nr. 36) which provides, for example, for the translation of the regulations into “*indigenous languages*” (Art. 1). It is the same in recommendation 35, adopted at the same time, on “*indirect forced labour*”: there, it is a question of avoiding “*the economic pressure which already pushes certain elements of a population towards paid work*”, notably through taxes. (Art. 2).

Convention 105 (1957), in short, does not modify the definition of forced labour given in 1930. It renders more explicit certain cases where it is prohibited (punishment of political prisoners, as a method of economic development, as punishment for having participated in strikes...), among which the work of common law prisoners is not



“The reverse side of globalisation”

included. It also confirms the trend of Convention 29: the reference to political prisoners corresponds to the discovery of camps in the communist countries.

Thus, with decolonisation and then the fall of real socialism, the forms of forced labour attributable to the States are less numerous, while private responsibilities are increasing, stresses Roger Plant. The ILO even sees it as “*the reverse of globalisation*”. The Brazilian or Pakistani plantation owners are private persons, like the Congolese usurers or traffickers of labour. The responsibility of the States now resides more in the control and punishment of acts of slavery.

Several national or international texts ban slavery, but are also gen-

erally addressed to States, not private actors. One of the defects of these legislations is their disparity. Consequently, although this practice is banned in most of the legislations, it is still very rampant. For the lawyer Georgeina Cabral, of the Anti-modern slavery Committee, “*Each [European] State has its own conception of the phenomenon. This directly influences their political choices: the repressive whole or the repression associated with the protection of victims.*”

Today, she adds, “*the legal slave condition has certainly disappeared from legislations in force, but has given way to a de facto reality.*” The means of combating this reality cannot thus be limited to a legislative body.



# Although officially abolished, slavery still has to be combated

TO COMBAT SLAVERY IS LESS A PROBLEM OF LAW TEXTS THAN POLITICAL WILL AND MEANS TO PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE. EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY.

At the international level, several clearly formulated texts ban slavery and forced labour (see p. 16). It is the same for the majority of national legislations, even if, in certain regions, *traditional* or *tribal law*, as it is known prevails, which tolerates this practice. Globally, the challenge thus consists essentially in putting into practice the existing legislations. The example of Brazil clearly shows the difficulty involved.

The Brazilian government actually seems desirous of putting an end to slavery and has put in place measures to combat this menace. In 1995, it created some mobile inspection teams, which paid surprise visits to the plantations. This work was considered by the Pastoral Lands Commission as “*serious and effective*”. Gradually, however, these controls have been relaxed<sup>1</sup>. The government has promised to tighten them again, and for this it receives support from the ILO, but the repression has in any case been rendered uncertain by the weakness of the penalties. According to Ricardo Rezende, “*the sentences are very low. The law provides for a prison term of 2 to 8 years and the confiscation of lands. In practice, when some landowners are imprisoned, it is in an open regime. Their sentence is also often replaced by the distribution of basic products to the poor.*” Expropriations are rare, adds the

CPT, which also denounces the payment of compensation to those whose lands have been expropriated “*which is up to 10 times the value of the property. This amounts to giving a gift to the slave traders.*”

## ACTING BEFORE AND AFTER

The Brazilian example shows that the fight against slavery must comprise several types of action: the political will to combat this practice, the collaboration of the legal apparatus —necessary to put an end to this practice—, the existence of measures to control a reality which remains largely clandestine... In addition, is the prior action against the causes on the part of the victims and, afterwards, short-term assistance to those who wish to escape from it.

For the ILO, the approach must be similar to that of child labour: not to brutally condemn the States where forced labour exists, but to encourage and assist them to combat it. The action programme of the ILO includes several types of practices.

The first is the identification of the problem, to know the scope and causes; this involves an enquiry and analysis. Such a programme is underway in Pakistan, also with the support of the ILO. To know and bring to the notice of public opinion the persistent problem of slavery constitutes the first indispensable step, particularly necessary for

those who, as consumers, refuse to buy products manufactured through the use of forced labour or the slave trade. The second is raising the awareness of: the authorities, on the importance and effectiveness of necessary action; the authors, on the respect for the dignity of each human being; and of the victims, who are very often ignorant of the law and their rights. Training, the preferred domain of trade union action, comes into play here.

Next comes prevention, the biggest challenge which is based on social development. Servitude for debt, for example, which is one of the causes of slavery, is not solely a problem of labour. According to the ILO<sup>2</sup>, to combat it requires “*measures in various areas: settlement of land problems [...], stable and permanent job offers, application of the minimum salary, schooling of children...*”. The responsibility rests with the States, but also with the international community. In fact, to undertake this kind of action, it is necessary to have prerogatives which unfortunately the States are often deprived of in view of their excessive debt burden.

## WITH THE VICTIMS

Fourth stage of activity: direct aid to the victims.

Certain associations, like the Swiss NGO *Solidarité chrétienne internationale* (CSI), make a practice

of buying back the slaves to give them their freedom. CSI claims to have freed more than 15 000 persons in Sudan since 1995. The practice of buying back slaves however poses an ethic problem: by partly joining in the game of the slave traders, can it not lead to legitimising slavery?

In several countries, there are trade union associations or others who come to the assistance of victims of slavery, notably those working in the embassies. There is, for example in France, le *Comité Contre l'Esclavage Moderne*; in Great Britain, *Anti Slavery International*; in Niger, *Timidria*; in Belgium, *Sûraya...*; in Switzerland, *Syndicat sans Frontières*, which closely monitors diplomatic circles in Geneva.

These associations aid these persons first by providing them with shelter, even suitable clothes when necessary, by regularising their situation and by assisting them in possible legal actions against those who have exploited them. Be they women or children caught in the net of forced labour, the reintegration into the legal spheres of activity is then indispensable: education for the children (such as initiatives supported by the IPEC programme of the ILO); the search, nay creation of employment for the adults, eventually accompanied by training, as done by the International Organisation for Migration.

Finally comes the penalty. For the WCL, "*forced labour and trafficking of human beings are violations of the rights of workers. If trafficking exists, it is because there are traffickers, ready for any form of*

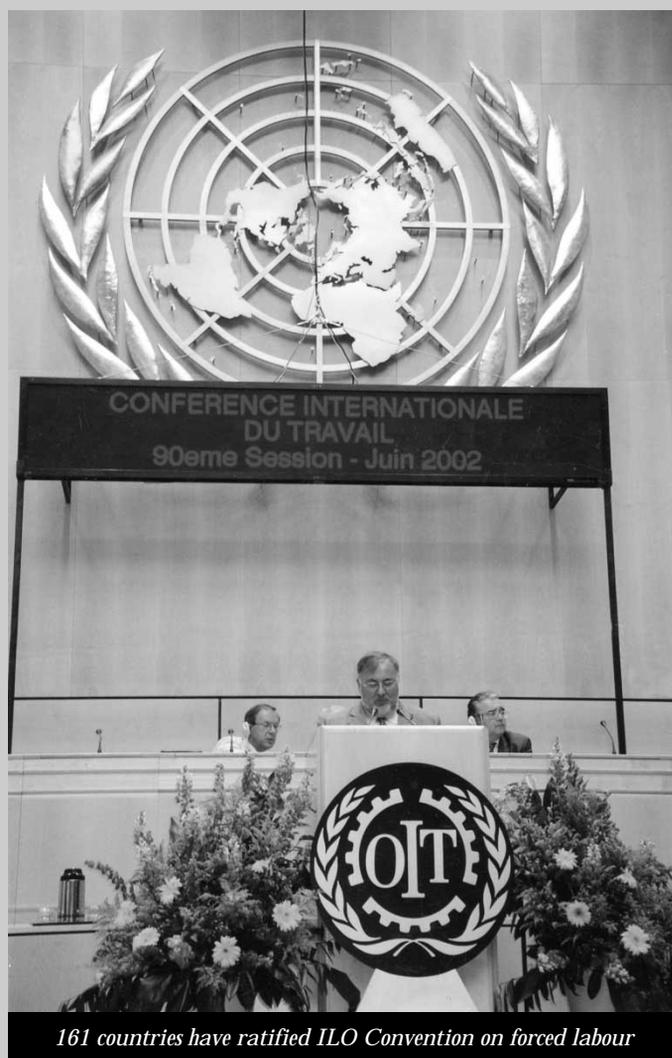
*exploitation of the misfortune of others in order to enrich themselves. If there is forced labour, it is because employers force them to work. If slavery exists, it is because there are slave traders. Everything must be done to ensure that the laws punish these practices and that their authors are punished.*"<sup>3</sup>

A key instrument of this action is the reinforcement of labour inspection, through adequate measures and autonomy.

#### STILL WORK TO BE DONE...

The ILO Global Report on Forced Labour mentions the role played by workers' organisations in the fight against forced labour: "*awareness campaign, research, organisation, negotiation, formation of alliances. At international level, they have played a major role in denouncing the cases of forced or compulsory labour...*" (p. 94). The WCL has done this in several continents.

At national level, a number of trade union organisations contribute to action programmes of the ILO or local authorities. If need be, they also exert the necessary pressure on these authorities. This is to ensure a large ratification of the conventions. Presently, 161 countries have ratified Convention 29 of the ILO on Forced Labour and 156 countries, Convention 105. Among the major absentees are the United States (C. 29) and Malaysia (which denounced C. 105 in 1990). That is the proof that even if the objective to combat slavery is largely shared, all the instruments are not yet in place to achieve this.



161 countries have ratified ILO Convention on forced labour

- 1 CPT: *Trabalho escravo no Brasil, até quando?*, Nov. 1, 2000.
- 2 ILO: *Halt to forced labour*, Global Report 2001, p. 112.
- 3 WCL: *Slavery today*, Annual Report annuel 2001, p. 48.



# International Conventions against Slavery

## THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENERAL

The **Charter of the United Nations** (1945) underlines “*the dignity and value of the human being, in the equality of the rights of men and women...*”. The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948) proclaims: “*No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.*” (Art. 4).

The **International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination** (1965) provides for the obligation of the States to ensure the “*right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work,*

*[...] to equal and favourable remuneration*” (Art. 5, e 1.).

**International Pact on Civil and Political Rights** (1966): “*No one shall be held in slavery; slavery and the slave trade, in all their forms shall be prohibited. No one shall be held in servitude. No one shall be compelled to undertake forced or compulsory labour.*” (Art. 8)

**Declaration of the Rights of the Child** (1979): “*The child [...] must not be subjected to the slave trade, in whatever form...*”

## ILO CONVENTIONS

**Convention 29 on Forced Labour** (1930) constitutes the basis of the legal arsenal of the ILO in this domain. The principle is clear: “*each member [...] undertakes to suppress the use of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms within the shortest possible period*” (Art. 1). Art. 2 states that the term forced labour shall mean “*any work or service exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.*” Some exceptions are tolerated: the military or similar service, the “normal” civic obligations, the work related to legal convictions, the work or service exacted in cases of emergency and the “*minor communal services [...] in the interest of the community.*”

**Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour** (1957) does not modify the definition of forced labour given in 1930. It makes more explicit certain cases

where it is prohibited (punishment of political prisoners, as a method of economic development, as a punishment for having participated in strikes...), among which the work of common law prisoners does not appear.

Conventions 29 and 105 are among those considered by the ILO as “basic”.

**Convention 95 on the Protection of Wages** (1949).

**Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies** (1997).

**Convention 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour** (1999).

**Convention 97 and Convention 143 (complementary) on Migrant Workers** (1949 et 1975)

**Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work** (1998)

## CONVENTIONS DIRECTLY CONCERNING SLAVERY

**The Slavery Convention** (25 September 1926), amended by the Protocol of 7 December 1953. Art.1 defines slavery as “*the state or condition of an individual on whom the attributes of the right of ownership or some of them are exercised*”.

**Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery**, 7 September 1956.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

ILO: *Halt to Forced Labour*, Global Report 2001, Geneva, 134 p.

WCL: *Slavery Today*, Annual Report 2001 on the Rights of Workers, Brussels, 49 p.

Acts of the seminar according to the ILO: *Modern slavery and traffic of human beings, what European approaches?* organised in November 2000 by the CCEM.

Revue *Esclave, encore*, trimestriel publié par le CCEM (31 rue des Lilas, 75019 Paris, France).

## WEB SITES

<http://www.ccem-antislavery.org>

<http://www.ccem-antislavery.org/INTERNATIONAL/ESPANA/esclavitud/esclavESP.html>

<http://www.antislavery.org>

<http://www.ilo.org>

<http://www.cptnac.com.br/>

<http://www.socialalert.org>

<http://www.cmt-wcl.org>



# Road transport: strong and lame

**T**he explosion of production has led to an increase in truck transport worldwide. Moreover, accelerated technical progress has resulted in faster and higher-quality transport... So, road transport seems to be in top form, but this is unfortunately far from being the case for the workers. The accent is more and more on profitability and efficiency, a trend that raises the pressure on the working hours and conditions. Besides, only a limited number of (international) standards are governing sector and offer no guarantee for a correct regulation of the everyday work.

## TRUCK DRIVER: A DIFFICULT AND HAZARDOUS JOB

Particularly in the developing countries—in Africa and in the Pacific, for instance—road transport is the *mode par excellence*. Roads make rural communities accessible and account for 80-90% of the passenger and freight transport. They generate a considerable turnover, but at the same time they absorb huge amounts of investment capital. This weighs heavily on

the foreign debts of many developing countries. Also, the overloading of trucks by the freighters causes accelerated road wear and tear, making the daily work extremely hard and dangerous. The number of people killed or injured in road accidents is way higher in the developing countries than in Europe.

## POLITICS AND FINANCES...

First, the size and the standards of the road system exceed in many cases the capacity of the countries to maintain it. That is why the national road maintenance budgets rarely satisfy the needs. Then, road management and maintenance come under too many services whose responsibilities overlap.

## AND THE WORKERS' RIGHTS?

Political and financial difficulties have repercussions on the working conditions of the truckers, of course. Heavy traffic on the arterial roads and fierce competition force up the working hours, also the often-underestimated nightly ones. Moreover, the employers do not

ROADS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE PRESENT-DAY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE, FOR PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRANSPORT ALIKE. YET, WORKING IN ROAD TRANSPORT IS NOT A MATTER OF COURSE. DESPITE THE GROWING NUMBER OF TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS, THE WORKING CONDITIONS ARE DETERIORATING AND THE SAFETY OF THE WORKERS IS OFTEN AT RISK. A SURVEY.





always correctly apply the standards for the equipment, which puts the workers at risk in some cases. Moreover, the latter have a great responsibility in the matter of road safety, towards the passengers but also when they haul high-value freight. Errors can have disastrous consequences. It is therefore obvious that truckers and public transport drivers must be paid correctly for the hours they work, which is really rarely the case. As a consequence of the liberalisation and privati-

sation of the transport market, the laws and regulations on the working conditions and circumstances are often ignored. As far as the training and sensitisation of the drivers are concerned, the necessary funds are in most cases lacking. Finally, worker participation and their right to speak are almost nonexistent in sector-related and company policy matters.

SG

## FRIENDLY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND FIOST

### *The European transport policy by the year 2010*

On 12 September 2001, the European Commission presented its White Paper: around sixty measures to raise the quality of road transport and to improve the application of the existing regulations by means of heavier sanctions and stricter controls. The proposals of the Commission are aimed, among other things, to:

- harmonise the driving time on the basis of 48-hour working weeks on average;
- bring the national regulations banning truck traffic weekends into line;
- develop vocational training;
- advance uniform road transport laws;
- harmonise sanctions and immobilisation conditions;
- raise the number of controls;
- harmonise the taxes on fuel for professional use in road transport by reducing unfair competition on the liberalised road transport market.

### *FIOST: work in the field*

FIOST, the International Federation of Trade Unions of Transport Workers, will concentrate on the preservation and improvement of the situation of the workers by pursuing the following policy.

FIOST:

- sets out to improve the working circumstances and the safety of the transport workers by means of:
  - a more exhaustive regulation of the working hours;
  - higher standards for the equipment;
- starts from working weeks averaging 36 hours and demands that all the sector-related activities are considered part of the working time;
- wants to give a new impetus to the training of transport workers;
- intends to encourage worker participation in the sectoral policies so as to set up ad hoc forms of participation in the companies;
- pursues a fair remuneration for the responsibilities and experience of the truckers;
- demands the preservation and improvement of the laws and regulations protecting the road transport workers.

We remind here that debates during the Congress in Casablanca, from 28 November to 4 December next, will be centred on safety.



# The working conditions of women in Sri Lanka: worth fighting for!

There are three important sectors in Sri Lanka in which women workers are the majority: the Export Promotion Zones, the Plantation Sector, and the sector of Domestic Work. All these female employees come within the concern, projects and programmes of the “National Congress of Women” (NCW) and the “National Workers Congress” (NWC). Because of the high migration rate of women to West and East Asian countries, the “Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment” (SLBFE) monitors most of the out-bound human traffic to ensure (female) migrant workers get a fair deal. But it’s a fierce battle. The implementation of labour laws falls far short of what it should be. And due to a lack of education and awareness, Sri Lankan women often hesitate to improve their own situation.

## DAILY LIFE IN THE EXPORT PROMOTION ZONES

The three major Export Promotion Zones (EPZs) of Sri Lanka were created in 1988 and are situated in Koggala (south), Katunayake (west) and Biyagama (centre). More than 90% of the employees in these zones are unmarried women within the age range of 18-25, particularly at machine operator level. The vast majority are internal migrants, moving from rural areas to live in crowded, uncomfortable boarding houses near the EPZs. They only earn US\$ 60 per month and are often harassed, but they seldom have recourse to trade unions because “The Board of Investment” — under which the EPZs function— follows its own rules and regulations. Therefore, working conditions vary. Some employers take good care of their staff, providing recreational facilities and even health care. Others only supply a midday meal and some tea...

## TEA PLUCKING AND RUBBER TAPPING TO SURVIVE

Sri Lanka is principally agriculture: tea, rubber and coconut being the major cash crops. The tea estates — mostly British owned— employ both Indian Tamils and Sinhala workers who often enjoy free housing, health care and food commodities. The Indian workers are even protected by a very powerful trade union. Rubber estates, though, are usually smaller and depend on workers from proximate villages. Anyhow, in all estates women do the menial, least paid jobs like tea plucking, rubber tapping, coconut collecting and weeding. One of the major problems of these female workers is the daily care of their children. Day Care Centres are not a common feature on estates and the earned wages (US\$ 1.20 a day) are inadequate to supply decent, healthy nutrition. Therefore, the National Workers Congress (NWC) supplies childcare services to support mothers working on plantations.

## THE INFORMAL SECTOR OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

Apart from the EPZs and the agricultural estates, many Sri Lankan women are informally employed in

IN SRI LANKA, 9.5 OF THE 19 MILLION CITIZENS FALL WITHIN THE AGE RANGE OF 18-60 AND ARE CONSIDERED AS THE “WORKERS OF THE COUNTRY”. APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THIS “LABOUR FORCE” CONSISTS OF WOMEN WHO ARE EMPLOYED AT ALL LEVELS IN BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. ON TEA PLANTATIONS, IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY AND IN TOURISM, WOMEN ARE EVEN THE LARGEST FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNERS OF THE COUNTRY! MOREOVER, WOMEN ARE THE MAJORITY IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR. WORKING CONDITIONS VARY, BUT MOST OF THE TIME THEY ARE NEITHER QUALIFIED TO DO THEIR JOBS PROPERLY AND SAFELY, NOR PROTECTED BY LEGISLATION OR TRADE UNIONS.





households as cooks, maids or childminders. This is an unregistered, unorganised group of workers having no labour laws to protect them. Their number is unknown, but probably 30% of all households in Sri Lanka employ a Domestic Worker, whether live-in or reporting daily for work. Working hours and conditions vary widely, according to the nature and the economic status of the employer. While some domestics are harassed and exploited, others are absorbed into the family and given very fair treatment.

#### TO THE PROMISED LAND?

Already 63 949 men and 115 103 women left Sri Lanka to find their professional luck abroad. This migration by the unskilled and semi-skilled started in the early 1970s, and is still going on today. The main destination used to be West Asia, but with an increasing demand for domestic labour, more and more women migrated to eastern countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong. A situation that often leads to

“human traffic”, organised by private agencies. These agencies often deceive the employees by offering them to foreign employers at the lowest possible cost. In most host countries, the women domestic has no rights, not even the right to possess her own passport. She often works very long hours in very poor conditions and is comparatively underpaid. Her recourse to justice and law in case of exploitation and abuse is minimal. In the majority of the cases, the damage to the family unity is far outweighs monetary gains. Husbands of migrant workers often squander the home-remitted money on alcohol and women; daughters are in danger of being sexually abused and sons drop out of schools and often take drugs.

#### PROBLEMS FACING WOMEN WORKERS

Now let's have a look on the main shortcomings and difficulties faced by unskilled and semi-skilled women workers in general. Although labour laws in Sri Lanka decree equal payment, wages are very low, particularly in the face of the ever rising cost of living. Therefore, women workers cannot provide their families with nutritionally balanced meals, which often leads to poor health conditions. Certainly when you take into account crowded, insanitary housing. Their husband having died due to situations of civil strife or to illness brought on by alcoholism, many women have to take care of their families alone. Working conditions are usually unsatisfactory, with a minimal or a total lack of occupational measures. And since they're most of the time not aware of labour laws, women are often harassed, exploited and even sexually abused by their employer. Moreover, many women are poorly educated and don't have the means to improve themselves in formal education or skills training. And last but not least: there are almost no facilities for women workers to obtain a life and/or health insurance.

#### THE THEORY OF THE LAW VERSUS REALITY

In theory, Sri Lanka boasts a system of excellent labour laws in favour of the employee. It stipulates equal rights for all and strongly advocates the superior position of women as child bearers and homemakers. Some ILO Conventions have been ratified by the government, and women organisations, NGOs and Trade Unions work for parity and justice to women. They even ensure counselling and free legal aid. But reality sadly shows that the implementation of these



*The NWC supplies nursery services to help working women*



*Sensitisation of the workers, a challenge for the trade unions!*

promising laws falls far short of what it should be. Exploited women are reluctant to resort to formal justice because legal fees are high and court cases often take very long to be concluded.

#### PROTECTION AND SUPERVISION BY THE NWC

Knowing all this, Trade Unions, NGOs and the government of Sri Lanka have to work together to improve the rights and working conditions of women and act on their behalf and in their favour. The National Congress of Women along with the National Workers Congress (NWC) are major activists in this sphere. The protection and supervision by the NWC consist of a wide variety of actions. As far as the Export Promotion Zones and the Plantations are concerned, the first concern is the Unionisation, together with creating awareness among the workers on human

rights, labour laws, nutrition, health and hygiene. Secondly union leaders and paralegal officers are learned to provide counselling and skills training in various different arts and crafts, in computer usage and in English. The NWC also operates as Migrant's Service Centre. For example a six weeks training course is given to equip departing women with needed skills, including the host country language and societal norms. Apart from that, the Centre helps returned migrants to save their earned money or to start up income generating ventures. In early 2002 the NWC inaugurated a "Domestic Workers Desk" to verify working conditions in this informal sector of labour. It makes women aware of human and worker rights and brings to public notice the plight of many domestic workers. We will encourage and support them, and wish them all the best!



## PRESS REVIEW



### CHANGE OF STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

[...] Since the failure of Seattle the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has revised its strategy. It has now put up “*the struggle against poverty*” as its ultimate goal. Under the cover of this —of course desirable— goal, the political world, worldwide, is enjoined to go back to the drawing board. The Conference on the financing of development, which was held in Monterrey (Mexico) in March 2002, was enlightening in this respect. Whereas it should have made possible to set up financing mechanisms and to make concrete commitments in favour of the poor countries, it indulged on the contrary in an alignment of the development aid policy (DAP) with the goals the WTO turned down in Doha, in November 2001. Thus, the text adopted in Monterrey confirmed that the principle of development aid had been abandoned. The goal, repeated time and again since the Bretton Woods agreements (1947), of allocating 0.7% of the GNP of the rich countries to the DAP, came to nothing. The heads of state were rather pleased with the “*debates on the proposals to liberalise the financing of development, including by having recourse to donations*”. [...] the United States President, Georges Bush, suiting the action to the word by announcing a donation worth 5 billion dollars, took the view that “*efficiency*” was the current priority. Condemning the chaos to which, according to him, development aid was leading, and calling into question the corruption and the absence of control over the destination of the funds, it was a matter of “*opening the markets, linking the aid to necessary economic and political reforms in the countries benefiting from the donations, in accordance with adjusted criteria* [...]”

Extract from an article by Ann-Corinne Zimmer: *Glissement progressif vers le « tout marché »* (gradual move to the “all-market”), *Le Monde Initiatives*, July-August 2002.

### • FAMINE?

Thirteen million Africans from five countries could starve before December unless sufficient humanitarian aid flows in. You see no people faint on barren soil, no bony children with empty looks, caught in a swirl of flies, no hungry cows with nothing to graze... yet. No, the spectacular picture is not on yet. Nevertheless, here in Swaziland, like in five other countries in southern Africa, people are already in search of food, bent over. Their survival now depends on humanitarian aid. No, there is no famine yet, not to the extent of the one that struck Ethiopia in 1986. But if this humanitarian aid does not arrive soon, and abundantly, famine will be there in three months' time.

Thirteen million human beings, in Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe, risk starvation. 300 000 of them could die before the end of the year, says the World Food Programme (WFP), a United Nations institution. It is a matter of urgency to distribute 1.2 million tons of wheat and, in addition, four million tons more before December. “*We have the food in stock*», says Richard Lee, of the WFP, «*but it is not enough. The stocks will run out in a few weeks, and we won't have anything to distribute.*”

Ramón Lobo, *El Pais digital*, August 2002

### • POVERTY IN PAKISTAN

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its study report has said that during the last three years poverty in Pakistan has increased, instead of decreasing, and the ratio of 32 percent people of the country living below the poverty line in 1999 will be much higher in 2002.

“It would not be an exaggeration to say that more than a third of country's population is currently living in poverty,” says the report [...]

This grim revelation is against all government claims that all its energies during the last three years were geared up to improve the poverty situation in the country. “The number of people falling below the poverty line is expected to have further increased after 1999, as growth has slowed, development spending has declined, and the country has experienced a severe drought, [...]”

Interestingly, the ADB has made the assessment on the basis of data of pre-Musharraf period, saying that the latest official data, which is prepared after every two years, has not yet been released. “It is about to be released, and once available we will upgrade our report in the light of this,” said Marshuk Ali Shah, Country Director of ADB in Pakistan.

While maintaining that ADB will support the government in its endeavour in poverty alleviation by providing assistance, Marshuk said that improving governance would be the central theme and major focus of ADB's poverty reduction strategy for Pakistan. “Direct assistance would be provided to support the government's governance reform agenda, [...]”

Nadeem Hussein, *Business Recorder*, August 2002

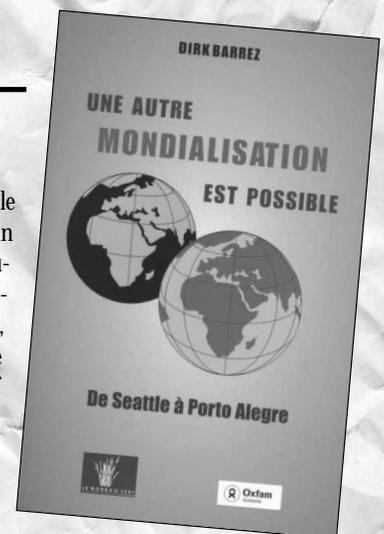
## BOOKS AND DEBATES



### ANOTHER GLOBALISATION IS POSSIBLE

At the latest World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, thousands of people assembled to prove “that another globalisation is possible”. A world in which man takes precedence over the economy and welfare is distributed in an equitable manner. Dirk Barrez, journalist at the Flemish broadcasting company VRT, met dozens of participants like Ignaco Ramonet, Bernard Cassen, José Bové and Walden Bello. They all expressed the same will to make the World Social Forum an annual gathering of movements and organisations in search of credible alternatives to the globalisation.

*Une autre mondialisation est possible* (Another globalisation is possible), Dirk Barrez, 267 pages, éd. Le Roseau vert.



# PORTRAIT

the seventh Congress of the Palestinian trade union organisation was held, Ibrahim became Secretary General of the UGTP. He was moreover re-elected to this post in 1989 and again in 1993, during a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Union. Let us remember here all the difficulties the members of the UGTP faced when they wanted to organise their congress on their national soil. This was the case, particularly for the ninth congress.

## DIVERSITY OF THE STRUGGLE

As we have mentioned further above, Ibrahim Haider distinguished himself by his ability to rise up to challenges. One easily notices his diversified course. Term after term member of the board of directors of the Arab Labour Organisation, member of the National Council of Palestine for more than thirty years and also member of the central Council of the PLO (Pales-

tine Liberation Organisation of Yasser Arafat) since 1983. This is not all; this untiring man is also experienced in the media since he is editor in chief of the magazine "Our Palestine". Never at rest, one does not know when he will stop. In any case, the WCL supports him in the decisive fight he has been carrying on everyday for several years.

*MD*

## International Campaign in Solidarity with the Palestinian Workers

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# trade union activities

## AFRICA

### African trade unions acquire planning culture

Following the halfway assessment of the WSM/DOAWTU five-year programme (1998-2002), which took place on 12-16 February 2001, the affiliates of the DOAWTU have requested for guidance to polish their planning skills. The technical team of the DOAWTU, with methodological support from the technical advisers' team of WSM/CNV-International, has complied with this request by providing methodological tools for helping the national organisations in this praiseworthy planning exercise.

This process usually results in a trade union development plan and comprises two main stages: strategic planning and operational planning. At the first stage, the national organisations specify their views, their mission, their long-term goals (on the basis of their statutes) and the basic values underlying all their actions. This stage consists, in fact, in a collective, realistic dream in which organisations project themselves in the future, making it their aim, for instance, to be on the trade union chessboard the first national, representative, autonomous, democratic organisation capable of taking national as well as international actions.

So as to translate their collective dream into a coherent programme, the trade unions set themselves criteria and indicators for the evolution and impact, in other words the lasting changes their actions will produce on the working class, the unemployed and the world of labour. They also identify the great actions and the resources enabling these actions and the follow-up/assessment mechanisms.

The second, so-called operational stage starts with a holistic analysis of the problems facing the organisation and the workers nationwide, in Africa and worldwide. The self-analysis is based on an analysis entity determined beforehand by the top leaders of the organisations (statutory bodies...). After the identification of all the groups concerned, each of them identifies and analyses its main problems in relation to the entity. The purpose is in fact to establish cause-and-effect relations between the problems and, later on, the means-end relations between the solutions to these problems. This work makes it possible to lead on to a choice of strategies, overall and specific goals, activities and indicators of achieved results. But all the stages are incomplete until the necessary resources for implementing the plans of action are identified and budgeted. In case of a five-year programme an overall and tentative budget suffices, whereas annual plans of action require more precision in terms of activities, expected results/progress, resources and cost estimates.

This activity, even if it is selective, has a strong impact on the lives of the organisations. The very fact that the whole exercise brings together representatives of all the member federations and unions as well as top leaders of confederation gives rise to a debate that enriches the culture of internal trade union democracy. Another striking observation is that in many cases people admit at the end of the exercise that they can make available insufficient resources to carry out their plans and therefore revise their action priorities. They also end the exercise with the firm will to carry out their plans of action, regardless the huge challenges they represent.

We express a word of thanks to the DOAWTU and WCL member organisations in Africa, which took courageous measures to contribute to respect for the rights. They started by getting better acquainted with each other and gaining a better insight into their trump cards, their strong and weak points and the constraints imposed by their environment, in order better to get organised with a view to a more coherent and more efficient trade union action.



*DOAWTU member organisations want to polish up their skills*

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