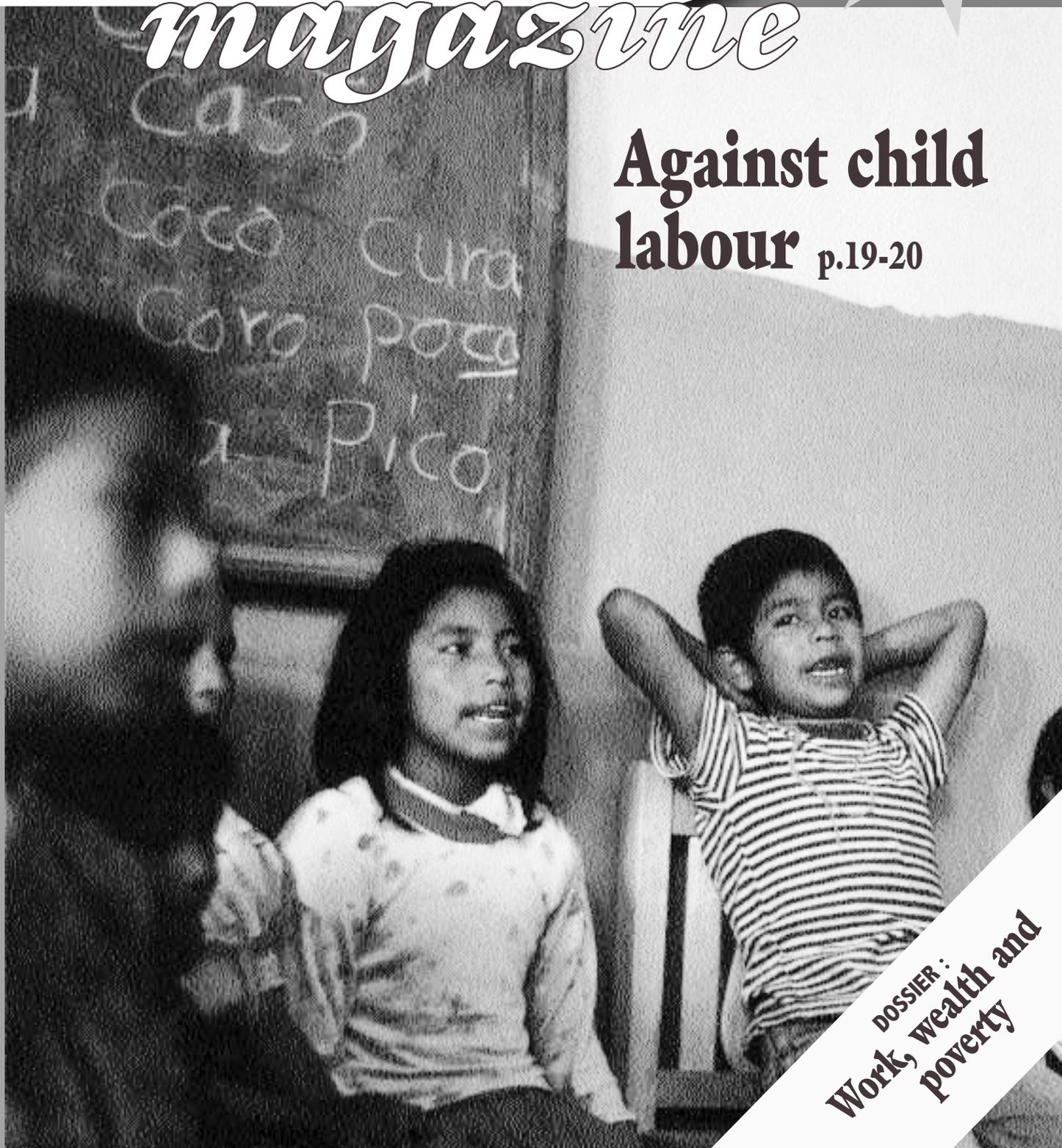


LABOR



magazine

**Against child
labour** p.19-20



DOSSIER:
**Work, wealth and
poverty**

78th year, number 2000/1

Responsible editor : Willy Thys

Revue trimestrielle • Three-monthly review
of the World Confederation of Labour
Rue de Trèves, 33 • 1040 Brussels

Review of the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) for training and information.

Editorial Address:

Rue de Trèves 33, 1040 Brussels
Telephone : 02/285.47.00
Fax : 02/230.87.22
E-mail: info@cmt-wcl.org
Web site:
http://www.cmt-wcl.org

Editorial Board :

Willy Thys, Eduardo Estevez,
Piet Nelissen, Toolsyraj Benyudin,
Necie Lucero, Freddy Pools,
André Linard.

Editorial office and secretariat :

André Linard (editor-in-chief)
Liliane Kennedy
Doris Baudewijns

Graphics:

Média Animation
Printing house Havaux, Nivelles

Drawings:

Quentin Van Gijssel

Pictures

WCL, Vivant Univers, André
Linard.

Responsible editor :

Willy Thys :
Secretary-general WCL

You may borrow articles from LABOR-Magazine on the understanding that you acknowledge the source and send us documentary evidence

A subscription to LABOR-Magazine (4 numbers) costs 38 euros or US\$40. By taking out a solidarity subscription (57 euros or US\$ 60), you make sure that we can add a trade unionist from a low-income country during one year to our mailing list.

Payment by transfer to WCL account no 799-5500605-28 with BACOB, Swift address: BACBBEBB.

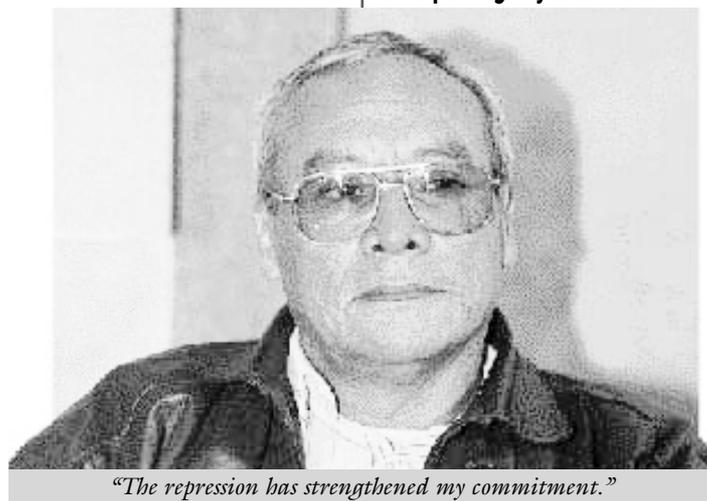
Please be so kind as to inform the secretariat of any change (address, number, language...)

ISSN 1562-5435

Cover picture
Children of Guatemala. Their place is at school

PROFILE

“I am from a farming background, born in the interior part of the country. My working life began at the age of six, helping my father on the farm.” José Pinzón was later to become Secretary General of the Guatemalan workers’ union. His story is similar to that of many of his countrymen in the fifties, but which later takes a different turn. “My father was a leading member of the community in which I grew



“The repression has strengthened my commitment.”

up”, explains José. “He organised the citizens to construct a road, a school, a health-care centre, and to install a telephone line for the community. This is what motivated me to come this far.”

FROM PUPIL TO TEACHER

A one-room wooden structure with a thatch roof : “My first three years of primary education were gained from such a place. For the next three years of school, I had to walk 8km each day. Fortunately, I had some good teachers who gave me so much motivation that I asked my father to seek for a scholarship for me to attend secondary school. Because my family was

José Pinzón is Secretary General of the Guatemalan workers’ union. He is from a farming background, and started working at the age of six. A teacher by profession, he is currently facing one of the most difficult periods of trade union suppression ever. Inspired by the example of his father, José Pinzón says he becomes more and more committed to his purpose with each passing day.

poor, I was thus the only one to benefit from further education”. Jose opted to become a teacher and was thus exposed to a world that was completely different from life in his native village. In his new field, he still continued to draw inspiration from his father’s example. Then came his first “real” job. “During the day, I taught the school children, but like my father, I organised a basic education programme for adults in the evenings”.

Gradually, the programme spread in the region. As a result, around 1960, “I was approached by a trade union executive, Tereso de

Jesús Oliva, and together, we started the Guatemalan Education Workers’ Trade Union (STEG) ; then the Guatemalan Federation of Farmers (FCG)”. In 1954, the regime of Jacobo Arbenz, which was sympathetic to workers, was toppled by a military coup. The result was a first military dictatorship led by Arana Osorio (1970-1974). It was during this regime that Tereso de Jesús Oliva was assassinated.

IN SPITE OF SUPPRESSION

“Violence is a constant occurrence in our country”, says José Pinzón. “The abduction of our comrades in the transport sector during my early years in the trade union, had a great impact on me. The upsurge of violence in the seventies and eighties discouraged some and motivated others. In my case, my convictions were reaffirmed. The stories of people like my father, as well as our own harsh experiences definitely influenced my level of commitment”.

And today, despite the end of the civil war in Guatemala, suppression of trade unions remains the order of the day. In August 1999, the CMT had to lodge a complaint with the President of the Republic, of aggression against the leaders and the offices of the CGTG. In November, there was a threat against the lives of the Bandegua banana trade unionists.

A.L.



Just a word ...

EDITO

The extreme right is always against the cause of workers

Human dignity is being threatened by economic injustice. In certain cases, it may also be threatened by the resurgence of those age-old adversaries: political intolerance are once again rearing their ugly heads. Intolerance thrives mainly on the insecurity of people faced with unemployment and poverty, and provokes old nationalistic reactions in this atmosphere of globalisation. It makes one recoil into oneself and reject the other person. Fear of globalisation has turned into fear of the outside world.

The delicate situation in which excluded or underpaid workers find themselves, leads some of them to opt for political ideologies that are anti-democratic. This is perhaps the result of the perverse effects of a globalised economy. Where all decisions concerning social and economic issues are taken in the inaccessible headquarters of multinational companies, in the G7 conference rooms or in the offices of the WTO, globalisation gives the average worker or citizen the impression that they have no control over decisions that actually concern them. One could call it a kind of neo-liberalism against democracy. It is therefore understandable that some take consolation in voting for parties that are inward-looking and adhere to solutions of a illusory past where all was well, with no foreign competition, no migrant workers, no youth without direction, no unemployment...

It must be said that such an attitude, however attractive it may seem to workers, is totally irreconcilable with the trade unionist movement. The extreme right, sugar-coated when it comes to winning adherents, always turns against the cause of workers and their organisations, after it has attained power. History takes an unequivocal stand on this subject : today the target is the outside world, tomorrow, something else, and the day after, it is the democrat.

The real struggle against job insecurity and poverty lies in adapting ourselves to today's economic situation. The response to a globalised economy should be an internationalised trade union, which far from superseding the trade union objective, would complement it where there are many issues involved.



Willy Thys,
Sec. Gen. of the World Labour Conference.

SUMMARY

CURRENT EVENTS - *Echo of the world*

4 Women - Marching to be respected



UNDERSTANDING - *In all letters*

6 The debts of countries



CLOSE-UP - *Regions of the world*

7 Unites States



FLASH - *Snapshots*

8 South Korea, Japan, Kosovo, Great Britain



DOSSIER

9 Work, wealth and poverty



TRADE UNION *Echo from the sectors*

17 Football: towards "clean" teams



WORLD *Crossed views*

19 Ratify Convention 182

21 Adult education is vital



DEBATE *Seen, read, heard*

22 Press review

22 To meditate on: Social economy



NEGATIVE *Stop on picture*

23

n°1 Labor



Women: marching for respect

“2000 GOOD REASONS TO MARCH...”: WITH THIS SLOGAN, WOMEN THE WORLD OVER WILL PARTICIPATE THIS YEAR, IN A WOMEN’S WORLD MARCH.

OBJECTIVES: TO FIGHT POVERTY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

International Women’s Day, on March 8, 2000 will witness the launching of activities relating to Women’s World March. A campaign to obtain protest signatures and specific activities reflecting the struggles and concerns of women’s movements will be organized in each country.

In June 2000, at the Beijing + 5 meeting, an international programme of the Action plan adopted by the 1995 Conference will be drawn up by the UN. On October 17, 2000, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the march will culminate in New York. Women from all the participating countries, 130 to date, will assemble in front of the United Nations headquarters, where the signatures collected will be handed over. On October 15, 2000, during the gathering of women from the United States, an International delegation will also be present in Washington. The march will take place in front of the headquarters of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund : a symbolic way to challenge the world economic and political powers.

Why a world march ? The idea came up after the women’s march against poverty, in Quebec in 1995. The presence of women from the South at that time recalled the importance of globalizing solidarity. In 1995, the World Conference in Beijing confirmed that women, the world over, were more than ever before, determined to fight for equality, development and peace. That is where the Federation of Women of Quebec launched the idea of a world march to fight poverty and violence against women. A platform for international protests was then adopted by 140 women from 65 countries. The aim of the march is to stimulate a great solidarity movement of women’s groups and to bring governments, decision makers and members of the civil society to support and effect changes to improve the conditions and quality of life of women in the world.

70, 50, 66: POVERTY MEASURES

Four billion people live under the relative poverty line, the majority of whom are women and children, and 1.3 billion under the absolute poverty line, 70% of whom are women. Women constitute half of the world’s population and provide two thirds of the hours of work. But, they earn only 10% of the world income and own less than 1% of the world’s fortune. This is why they want to tackle the structural causes of the phenomenon and demand from each State, the implementation of a plan to eliminate poverty as well as put in place a just world economic system which is participatory and binding.

Violence affects many women and girls. According to the UNICEF publication, *Progress of Nations* (UNICEF, 1997), only 44 countries in the world have adopted a law on domestic violence ; 17 have made rape by spouse a penal offence ; 27 have adopted laws against sexual harassment, and only 12 countries have a law forbidding female genital mutilation. The United Nations, alarmed by the dramatic increase in violence against women, has just decreed November 25 as *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*. This decision is an outcome of scheming by UNIFEM (United Nations International Fund for Women). According to UNIFEM, a quarter of the women in the world have been raped. Depending on the country, between 25% and 75% of women are regularly beaten in the home and 120 million women have been sexually mutilated.

The International Labour Organisation, in its report entitled *Violence at work* (1998), revealed that since certain work places and certain professions are more exposed than others to violence, women are more especially threatened because many of them in these professions are at risk. This is the case especially with teachers, social workers, nurses, as well as workers in the banks and in shops. Female migrant workers,



female workers in free zones and in the informal sector are also particularly exposed to violence.

A document of the Women and Work Department of the WCL¹ reveals that “Domestic workers, mostly women, are often subjected to sexual exploitation by their bosses at the very place where they work. The factors aggravating this situation are an isolated work place (house of the employer), contrary to male migrant workers who usually work in groups, at sites; the direct dependence on their employer (who pays, houses and feeds them); their constant presence in the work place”.

THREAT TO HEALTH

In the free zones, the situation of women is alarming. On the average, 80% of the labour force in these areas (27 million people in the world) are women aged 18 to 25 years. They are also exposed there to the risk of sexual harassment, which has become endemic in the “maquiladoras”. This is explained mainly by the concentration of young women from rural areas working far from their homes, and supervised by men.

Other forms of violence are more underhand. In Mexico, women are largely engaged in itinerant hawking, where the working hours are long. A study carried out by the “Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología” (Conacyt) and the Ford Foundation², shows that out of 426 female hawkers interviewed, 56.8% work for more than 48 hours a week. They carry goods which could weigh as much as 70 kilos, sometimes more than three times a day. Some carry out their activities by walking or standing for long hours. When these women have children, their babies suffer from low birth weight or congenital malformation, not to talk about premature births.

Another form of aggression: *Human Rights Watch* indicates in its report, “Crime or tradition? Violence against women in Pakistan”, that increased violence linked to gender is supported by a legal framework which is unfavourable to women and a legal system which traumatizes victims.

In most countries, the respect of the most elementary rights of women is yet to be instituted. But, accord-

ing to the organisers of the March, “women are also participants initiators or leaders of alternatives to poverty and violence. They have established cooperatives, groups for the defense of rights, community kitchens, trade unions, women centres. They now want to go further. And, that is what the March will bring them.”

Liliane Kennedy

¹ *Protecting women migrant workers*, WCL, in collaboration with the Asian Commission of Women workers of BATU (Asia), 1999, 13 pages.

² “*Condiciones de trabajo, fatiga laboral y bajo peso al nacer en vendedoras ambulantes*” (“Conditions of work, hard labour and low birth weight among hawkers”), Mexico, 1999.

Workshop in Costa Rica. The women are also leaders of alternatives





National debt



IT IS NORMAL TO BORROW

Borrowing is a normal practice between individuals and private companies. Thanks to Keynes, we now know that money can be borrowed even by countries. Being in debt is not the problem, but the ability to repay the debt. Funds that were borrowed by the countries of the South in the seventies and eighties were not invested into projects that would generate revenue which could be used to service the debts. In a few cases however, the existing development programmes were geared towards export. Quite often, world market trends resulted in reduced prices of exported goods, resulting in insufficient revenue to repay the debt. Last October, Michel Camdessus, who was then Director-General of the IMF, declared at the Confederal Committee of the World Confederation of Labour, that : *"If debts were waived without changing the development programmes, nations would fall back into debt within seven years"*.



owe a moral obligation to the South. Furthermore they believe that the money that has already been paid as interest is far more than the principal that was borrowed.

Others are looking for less radical solutions. For the past fifteen-odd years, the banks, the IMF and the lending countries have made efforts at debt re-scheduling : more time is given for repayments, in reduced but more frequent tranches, etc. Nevertheless, the debts must be paid. For this purpose, new loans were granted, to pay the preceding ones. As a result of this, and due to the accumulation of interest, some countries have already repaid the principal two to three times over, but are still in debt.

Then came the system of " compensation ", whereby a part of the debt is paid into funds set aside for development projects that benefit the people, the environment, etc. (whereas in many cases, the borrowed money was used on luxurious items, arms purchase, etc.).

Today, the idea of cancellation is being considered in international institutions, where not too long ago that term, according to Michel Camdessus, was almost taboo. As far back as 1996 the World Bank and the IMF decided on a cancellation plan, but for now only four countries have benefited from it. In September 1999 a new and more extensive plan was launched allowing for the cancellation of up to 70 billion US\$ in debt for the poorest nations, over a period of fifteen years. This would give these poor nations some relief. However, it is the creditors that set the conditions for cancellation, such as good governance, the fight against corruption, the launching of social programmes, etc. All these are factors that determine the application of debt cancellation.

The current developments are not accidental. The lending countries are prepared to waive these debts, which they would never be able to recover anyway, in exchange for some leverage over the development programmes of the debtor nations.

The private banks, for their part, have gradually made some provisions to write off unpaid loans, which was not the case ten or fifteen years ago. The sum total of the debt for the poorest developing nations is over 100 billion US\$.

Drawing extracted from a training instrument in BD: *The World Economy*, published by the World Movement of Christian Workers, Brussels, 1999 (available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Arab, ...)



THERE ARE DEBTS AND THERE ARE DEBTS

Almost every country in the world is in debt. Some of the funds are owed to only one country (i.e. bilateral debt). Other debts are owed to groups of countries that form organisations such as the World Bank. Such debts are known as multilateral debts. Yet another kind of debt is owed to private creditors such as banks.

When a creditor nation cancels a debt owed to it by another nation, it is the country's public budget –and therefore its citizens– that forgo the funds that were loaned. The management of private lending banks have more difficulty in waiving debt, because they run the risk of reduced profits.



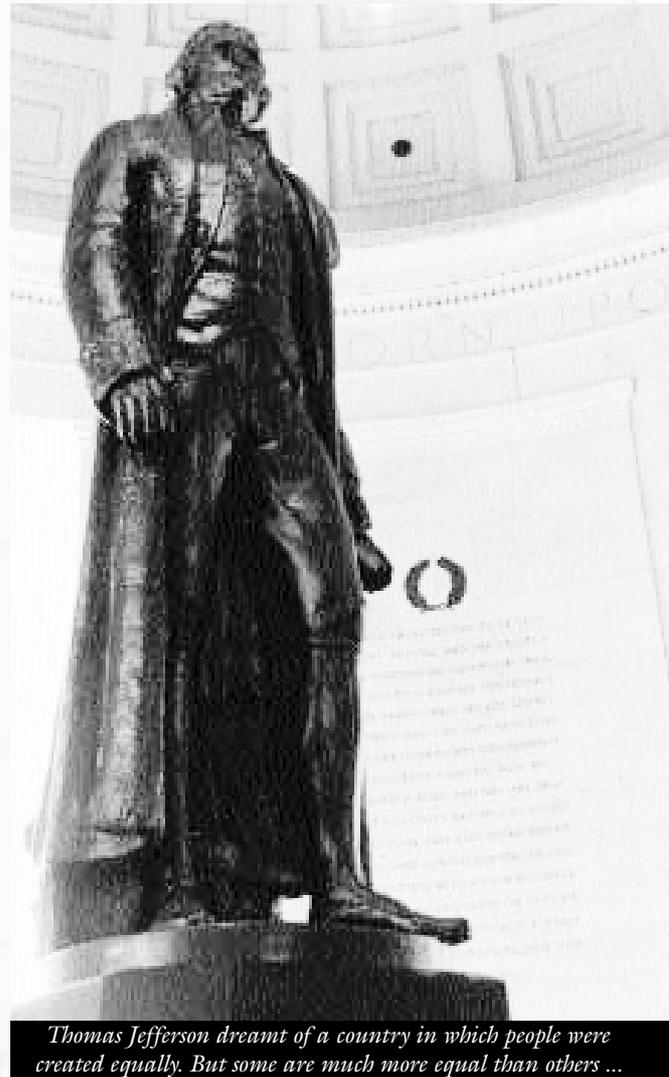
United States of America and the Eldorado myth

United States, where everything is possible... The myth of the self-made man, supported by some glaring successes, hardly hides the deep-seated inequalities that divide Uncle Sam's country. One explanation for this disparity lies in the stock-option system. Heads of companies in the United States receive shares with values corresponding to the profit margin of their companies. Thus, a decision in favour of mass retrenchment, which generally means an increase in the stock market price of a company, leads to two simultaneous results: impoverishment of workers who lose their jobs, and instant enrichment of officers who hold shares. In 1997 for example, nine new companies each cut between 3 000 and 9 200 jobs, whilst the profits of their top managers increased by about 20%. The IPS agency, which provided the figures, concluded during the annual worker's day in September that: *"the officials had 419 times more reasons to celebrate than the workers"*. This figure, as a matter of fact, corresponds to the gap in revenue between managers and employees in the 364 biggest companies in the US. According to Paul Tennessee, of the NAPFE trade union, real salary reduced by 1% between 1992 and 1996, whilst profits of companies increased by 58.1%. Macro-economic statistics, on the contrary, are favourable. Whilst the official unemployment rate is 30% in Indonesia and 10.2% in Europe (the average for the euro countries),

it is only 4.2% in the United States. *"If I lose my job this morning, I will get another one before the evening"*, explains a Washington taxi driver. But at what price? Many of the newly created jobs are found in the services sector, and are often unstable and badly paid. Many workers have fallen below the poverty threshold. Moreover, working hours are forever increasing (1966 hours per year).

Robert Reich, Minister for Employment in the first Clinton government concludes: *"This miracle is a delusion: our education system is in ruins, 44 million Americans do not have any social cover and the disparities in revenue is increasing each year"*.

(*Le Figaro*, 14 October 1999).



Thomas Jefferson dreamt of a country in which people were created equally. But some are much more equal than others ...

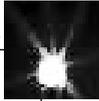
2,7 million = 100 million

According to the Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities, the richest 2.7 million Americans, that is 1% of the population receive more income than the poorest 100 million (38%). But above all, the gap continues to widen. From 1977 to 1999, the income of the richest has more than doubled (+115%); that of the middle class has increased by 8%; and that of the fifth most poorest has reduced by 8.5% (from 10 000 to 8 800 dollars on the average).

Thus the resulting disparities are the widest since 1945, according to the report of the above-mentioned Centre. According to the UNDP, the ratio between the incomes of the richest 20% and the poorest 20% is 8.9 to 1 (the highest in the industrialised countries).

Record

United States: 270 million inhabitants
Real GDP per inhabitant: US\$29 010. Human development index: 0.927 over 1. Illiteracy rate for ages 16-65 years: 20.7%. Last on the human poverty rate list for industrialised countries.



Inauguration of the offices of the Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs du Togo (CSTT), in Lomé



The Central General de Trabajadores (Honduras) conducted a seminar for women workers and workers in free zones, with the WCL (November 1999)



The WCL Confederal Board (October 1999) received Michel Camdessus, DG of the IMF, and (picture) Juan Somavia, DG of the ILO

Labor n°1

● SOUTH KOREA : The KCTU recognised ...and criticism

On 23rd November, 1999, the South Korean Ministry of Labour recognised the legal existence of the *Korean Confederation of Trade Unions*, established in 1995, after four refusals.

Two weeks before then, the KCTU had criticised the South Korean government's intervention against its

counterpart in Bangladesh. Seoul was in fact putting pressure on Dhaka to ban the organisation of trade unions in the free zones. The KCTU spoke on the subject, "*exportation of a repressive policy*" under which Korean workers had suffered for twenty years.

● JAPAN : Nissan cuts 21,000 jobs

After Renault-Vilvorde, it was Nissan-Tokyo. The highly indebted Japanese company, now 36.8% controlled by Renault, has announced a restructuring plan which will result in the elimination of 21,000 jobs in three years. It also intends reducing by half the number of distributors of their vehicles.

Against the norm, the value of Renault shares fell on the Paris stock market, after the announcement of this plan. Explanation: the fears of shareholders followed by the opposition reaction of Japanese workers.

(Source: *Nueva Epoca*, October, 1999.)

● KOSOVO : reconstructing employment

At least two thirds of the population of Kosovo are officially unemployed and those who are employed work mainly in the "*underground economy*". This is what is revealed in an ILO report entitled "*Employment and protection of workers in Kosovo.*" Only 35% of the population of Kosovo can be considered as economically active. A quarter of this work in the agricultural sector. In the civil service, salaries

are no longer paid, whilst some big private employers were forced to temporarily suspend their activities. According to the report, three positive factors compensate for this difficult situation: the transfer of funds from Kosovos working abroad, income generated in the underground economy, and the 47,000 jobs created by the presence of the United Nations in Kosovo.

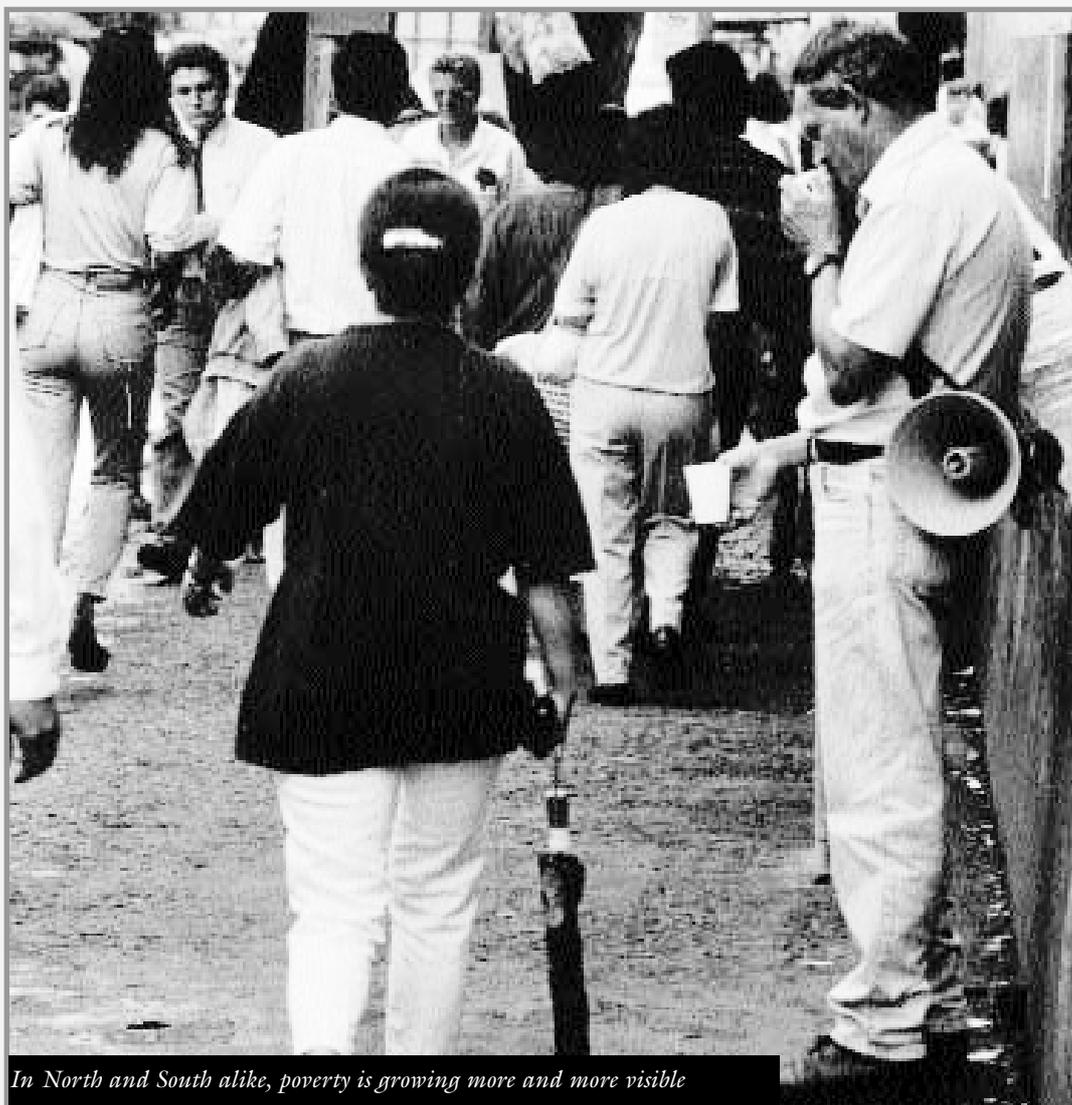
● GREAT BRITAIN : Ford against racism

The CEO of the Ford automobile company went to Great Britain to sign an agreement with the trade unions against racial discrimination in the company. A series of racial incidents occurred in the Dagenham factory, but the global policy of hiring was also in question. In 1997, seven Asian and West Indian workers were removed from the "truck" workshop in favour of Europeans; the salaries in this department are much higher and, curiously, the coloured workers are only 2%, out of the average

of 45% in the factory. In September 1999, several anti-racial demonstrations were staged in the company, after an Asian worker was assaulted by a White colleague.

The agreement signed by the President of Ford contains the undertaking to provide equal opportunities to all ethnic communities, in all factories of the group in Great Britain.

(Source: *The Guardian*, 26th October, 1999.)



In North and South alike, poverty is growing more and more visible

From Seattle to Copenhagen + 5 ...

After the WTO Ministerial meeting in December, came another event: an evaluation meeting on the fight against poverty, decided by the World Summit on Social Development at Copenhagen in 1995. Was it another event? Not really. Globalization and the increase in the wealth gap are not unrelated. This link, has certainly not been forged in a simplistic way,

but is very typical of a particular type of economy that enriches some disproportionately, compared to others. A type of economy, and how the workers' place is envisaged in it, as well as the importance given to fundamental rules aimed at ensuring decent working conditions and salary or the refusal to consider these rules. "The respect of social rights defined by the ILO is the first in the social secu-

rity net", declared Michael Camdessus, who was then the Director General of the IMF, during the WCL Confederal Committee held at the end of October 1999. In other words, the fight against poverty cannot be won through assistance aimed at correcting the results of socio-economic systems, but by correcting the structures of these systems.

TABLE OF CONTENT

From Seattle to Copenhagen + 5...

**NORTH-SOUTH
The huge gap**

The right to specific agreements

**IN COMPANIES
Shareholder and employee : Not the same struggle**

Beware of the trend

**DISCUSSION
Stakes in social clauses**

**OPENING
Three questions on globalization**

NORTH-SOUTH

The huge gap

FOR CENTURIES, LIBERALISM HAS AFFIRMED THAT THE INCREASE IN TRADE LINKS BENEFITS ALL STAKEHOLDERS. CURRENT HISTORIC EXPERIENCE SHOWS ON THE CONTRARY, THAT INCREASED LIBERALIZATION GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH AN INCREASE IN THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR.

“Poverty, not trade, is the main cause of bad working conditions, and it must be met by expanding commerce”, said the Director General of the World Trade Organization, Mike Moore, in Seattle.

This assertion is based on a presumption that the increase in trade relations benefits all intervening parties even if one has a strong economy and the other a not-so developed economy. Mike Moore thus returns to the conventional liberal argument of Adam Smith, David Ricardo etc., which states that the opening of borders is the best solution for economic devel-

opment. Mike Moore takes issue with those who “*demonize globalization*” : “*Anti-globalization becomes the latest chapter in the old-age call to separatism, tribalism and racism.*”

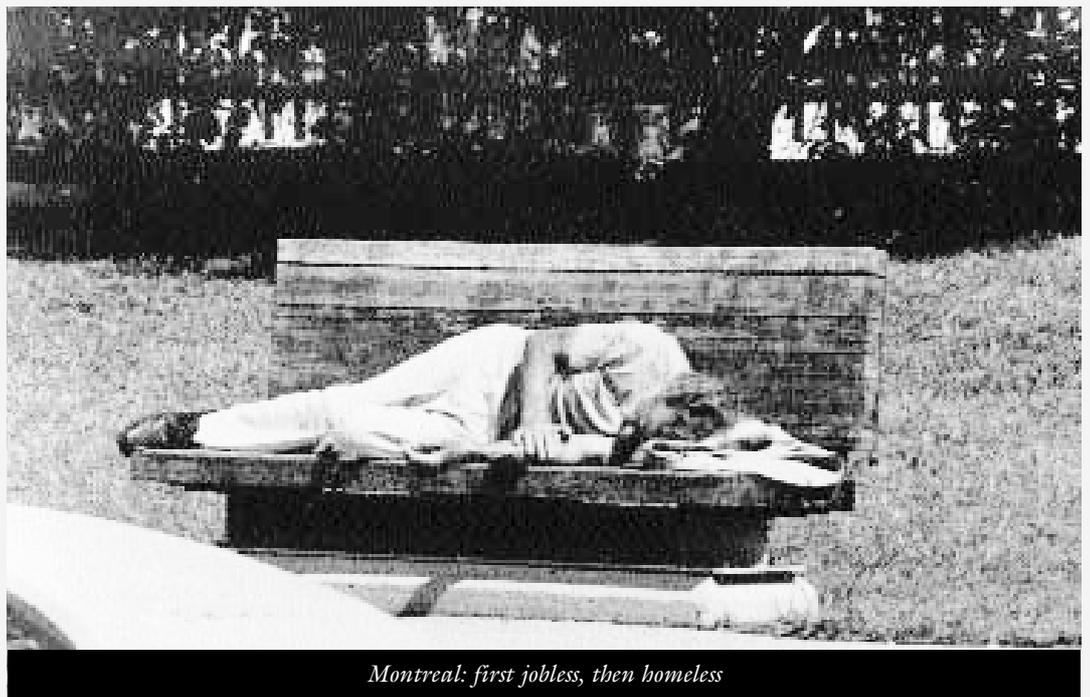
We must therefore not blame all the evil in the world on globalization. In so doing, the WTO Director General lumps globalization and internationalization together. He also touches on the fact that current globalization is different from the already old straightforward internationalization. As a matter of fact, it combines different realities: trade liberalization, deregulation of social relations,

weakening of the political power of States and the privatization of resources and decisions .

Current historic experience shows that two phenomena are playing out at the same time: trade liberalization for an increasing number of goods and services, and the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, between countries and within countries.

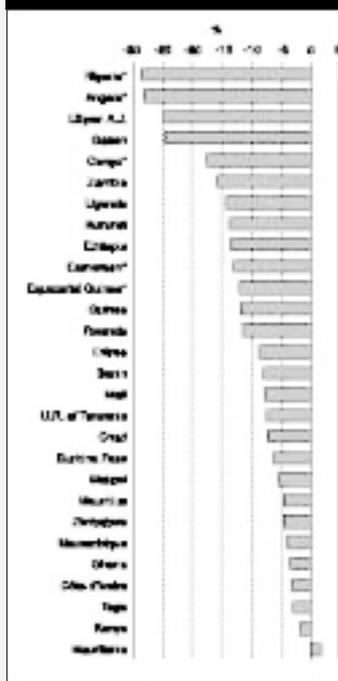
POOR WORKERS IN THE NORTH

Between countries: the 1999 UNDP Human Development report states that in more than 80 countries income per capita is lower than it was ten years ago or



Montreal: first jobless, then homeless

Loss of exports earnings in 1998 of selected African countries due to price movements for principal commodity exports (Percentage of total exports earnings).



Source: UNCTAD secretariat estimates, assuming 1997 exports volumes, based on UNCTAD, Monthly Commodity Price Bulletin

more ! It also mentions that between 1995 and 1998 the assets of the 200 richest people in the world more than doubled, to over 1000 billion dollars today, in accrued amount.

Within countries : Brazil is reputed to be the most inegalitarian country. In 1960, 50% of the poorest people had 18% of the national income ; in 1995, they had 11.6%. On the other hand, in 1960 10% of the richest people controlled 54% of the national income ; it was 63% in 1995. In China, 20% of the richest inhabitants share 47.5% of the national income, whilst 15% of the poorest share only 5.5% of this income (World Bank: *Poverty trends and voices of the poor*, quoted by *Le Figaro*, France, 14 October 1999).

In France, “*the wealth of the French is increasing, so are the inequalities*” headline in *Le Monde* (7 October 1999).

Another important phenomenon is the appearance, in the industrialized countries, of poor workers. The out-of-jobs no longer have monopoly over poverty. Salaries reduced to the lowest, trimming down of social security systems, extending part time work ..., all these factors contribute to the impoverishment of some, coupled with the enrichment of others (see also p.7) Even if there is increased social advancement (life expectancy, literacy, infant mortality...), monetary poverty is also increasing.

LOSS OF RESOURCES IN THE SOUTH

It is certainly not enough for two phenomena to happen at the same time for them to be linked. In the document published just before the Seattle meeting, the WCL however explains this link with two reasons.

First, there are numerous examples showing the direct relationship between the increasing assets of capital owners and decisions which result in job losses and income for others (see following article).

Then, internationally, it is more and more evident that the demand for the opening of borders is only one-sided. UNCTAD has stressed more than once, and again this year, the apparent or latent protectionism which prevents goods from countries of the South from entering markets in the North. The protectionism of rich countries has hindered exports from poor countries and forced them to resort to short-term, volatile capital in order to finance their trade deficits, observes UNCTAD (*Financial Times*, 21 September 1999). Crowning it all, with

increased dependence and indebtedness.

This loss of exports, and subsequent income for developing countries, results from the refusal on the part of the same people in whose countries most of transnational companies are found and who are incessantly calling for world trade integration to open up to them. This is a contradiction...

André Linard

¹ See: The Lisbon Group (under the management of Riccardo Petrella): *The limits to competitiveness*, Labor Edition, Brussels 1995 (available in French, Spanish, English and Italian).

² WCL: *Trade must be at the service of development*, Brussels, October 1999 p.21

The right to special agreements

“We urge that the Declaration to be adopted by the 3rd WTO Conference in Seattle should contain a clear and unequivocal reaffirmation of special and differential treatment as a fundamental principle of the multilateral trading system.”

This is an extract of the Santo Domingo Declaration, adopted on 25 November 1999 by the heads of 71 ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific). It claims the right to reject uniformity, which is part of world trade liberalization (“everyone receives the same treatment”), in favour of trade preferences, which takes into consideration the different development level of each country. In so doing, the ACP countries affirm that trade liberalization is not an end in itself: the ultimate objective is development. When increased liberalized trade allows this, it is acceptable, when it hinders develop-

ment, the latter should take precedence. Some countries should therefore continue to benefit from privileges aimed at supporting their economy, without being obliged to reciprocate. This is the argument supported by the ACP countries in negotiations with the European Union. It is also the opposite of the thinking prevailing at the WTO.

Trade union representatives of 15 ACP countries and France, meeting in November at Chalon-sur-Saône at the invitation of the CFTC, discussed nothing else apart from “stressing the importance of maintaining some form of privileged relationship between the European Union and ACP countries. As a matter of fact, they think (...) that it is important to safeguard mechanisms that correct international trade liberalization, for the benefit of human development.”

IN COMPANIES

Shareholder and employee: the struggle is not the same

EVERYWHERE, THE STOCK EXCHANGE BREAKS RECORDS. INCOMES OF SHAREHOLDERS ARE INCREASING, EVEN (ESPECIALLY ?) WHEN EMPLOYMENT IS DECREASING. HENCEFORTH, CAPITAL LOGIC TAKES PRECEDENCE. ROBERT COBBAUT, ECONOMIST AND DIRECTOR OF FOPES (BELGIUM), EXPLAINS THIS EVOLUTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.¹

It is easy to line up the figures showing that income of shareholders is increasing whilst that of employees is on the very low side. Today, the source of individual wealth is no longer the salary but the possession of shares. According to Jean-Louis Beffa, President of the Saint-Gobain French company, we are moving “from an employment productivity world to a capital productivity world.” This is why the famous creation of value is often invoked as priority objective: to create value is to increase the value of shares of a company.

“Most companies took advantage (of the period of poor growth) to allot a greater part of productivity gains to capital revenue, to the detriment of wages and employment,” writes Jean-Marie Harribey, economist at the University of Bordeaux-IV (*Le Monde*, 6 October 1999). Without establishing the same correlation, the International Labour Office observes, at the end of the meeting of its Governing Body in November 1999, that “generally, the gap between winners and losers of globalization has a tendency of increasing whilst deviations in income are increasing and state resources to improve the lot of less privileged citizens is decreasing”. The cake is small, so the

portion that goes to some, will inevitably not go to others.

FROM “FORDISM” TO “TOYOTISM”

The economist Robert Cobbaut recently tried to analyse the phenomenon, for industrialized countries, starting from “fordism”. At that time, he recalls, very high productivity gains, shared with workers allowed a reduction in prices and access to consumable goods by a large number of people. But since 1970, there has been a continuous decline in productivity, in different ways depending on the countries. After a distribution period rather favourable to labour, (1945-1975), capital owners are trying to re-appropriate the greater share.

In the United States, where the stock market is more active, the interest in owning shares rather lies in the expected increase in value at the time of resale, whilst in Europe, shareholders look forward especially to the sharing of profits.

The labour world is from now on, experiencing divergent changes according to the sectors. In the first sector that Robert Cobbaut calls the processing industries (vehicle assembling for example), “toyotism” prevails : “These workers must acquire to a large extent, the knowledge and skills pertaining to

the company, in order to be polyvalent, that is, capable of efficiently planning, supervising and assembling a largely automated system of machines (...). It consists therefore of building the confidence of workers without actually guaranteeing them stable employment (...) through a relatively high salary policy, and by offering productivity incentive”. In other words, a portion of the



In Geneva, in front of the Palais des Nations, use of economy, if it does not serve the workers.

income of workers depends on the positive results of the company.

A second sector concerns unskilled, and therefore easily replaceable employees, "whose status is characterized by what is known as market flexibility. It is the perfect domain of unstable job, part-time employment and "flexible" hours that destroy family life (...), sub-contracting to suspicious individuals."

PRIVATE INTEREST FIRST

In the third place comes the professional model. It "concerns jobs that bring innovation and dynamism to the company, especially in the high technology sectors (researchers, "developers", marketing creations, "managers" of great talents)." Very much sought after, these workers run the risk of leaving the firm at any moment, or even setting up their own company. They must therefore be retained and "motivated to manage the affairs of the company in the interest of the shareholders rather than to seek personal benefits; not only must they be offered a high level of income, but it must be done in a manner that aligns their interest with that of shareholders." Is it not better to make them shareholders themselves? This is the objective of the famous *stock option plan*, which allows shares to be acquired, and where necessary,

resold with increase in value.

Results : not only do the interests of different categories of workers become contradictory among themselves, which weakens their ability to react, but there is division between two categories of stakeholders. On one hand, shareholders, Board of directors, managers and, externally, creditors, whose interest lies in the company's profitability. On the other hand, the staff, clients, suppliers and sub-contractors, and the communities in which the business is established. For them, what is important is the existence of the company. In the trend of ideas marked by individualism, it is "considered normal and legitimate that the destiny of this collective establishment, that is, the company, which is the result of the cooperation of different categories of participants, be strictly subordinated to the personal well-being of shareholders rather than to the common interest of all parties involved, which would necessarily be negotiated."

Formerly, it would have been described as capital-labour contradiction, today it is winners and losers, but the results are the same.

A.L.

1 According to a paper by Robert Cobbaut at the 25th anniversary of FOPES (Faculté ouverte de politique économique et sociale), Louvain-la-Neuve, 20 November 1999. See also the dossier of *Courrier International: Pourquoi les riches s'enrichissent et les pauvres s'appauvrissent*, n° 466, 7-13 October 1999.

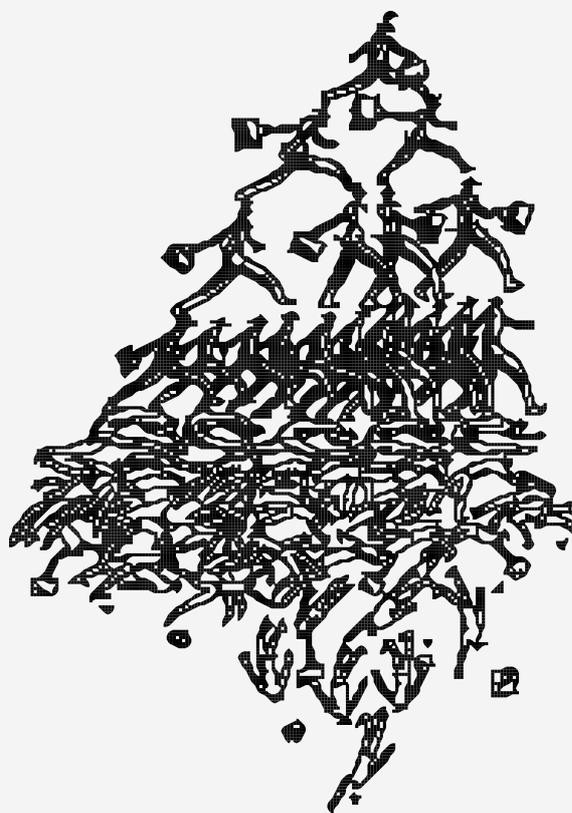
Pay attention to trends

A trend of thought is currently trying to legitimize the widening of the wealth gap by stating that it is not a problem, provided that the poor have a chance to get rich. Here are two examples.

In the Courier international (7 October 1999), David Goodhart, of the Prospect review, writes: "A justice theory, in the third route perspective, should stress that the gap is unimportant (...). Thinking in terms of a gap is based on an

primitive and henceforth defunct image of the creation of wealth."

On his part, the German Chancellor, Schröder affirms: "I no longer believe that it is desirable to have a society without inequalities. This results in the oppression of the individual. When the social democrats talk about equality, they should think of equality of opportunities and not equality of results." (Le Monde, 20 November 1999). The ideological offensive has begun.



DISCUSSION

Stakes in social clauses

SOCIAL STANDARDS AGAINST DEVELOPMENT ? IT IS A BIT LIMITED, BUT A NARROW ROUTE FOR TRADE UNIONS, WHICH ADHERE TO SOCIAL STANDARDS WHILE WISHING TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT IN COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTH. AGAIN, WE MUST KNOW WHAT DEVELOPMENT ONE IS TALKING ABOUT.

Social and environmental standards “*must be part of every trade agreement and, ultimately, I would prefer a system that provides sanctions against violations of all clauses of the agreements.*”

Bill Clinton, by this short phrase, has probably nipped in the bud every possibility of introducing any form of reference to social standards in the papers discussed during the WTO meeting, last December. Countries of the South, already hesitant even with-

out calling for sanctions, can no longer accept measures which they perceive as protectionists. Is this the end of every *social clause* ? It is known that this term refers to conditions attached to the granting of trade advantages in respect of minimum workers' rights, just as there exists a democratic clause in some agreements, referring to the democratic functioning and the respect of human rights.

According to the ILO, the social clause aims at “*the opening of mar-*

kets going hand in hand with improvement in the conditions of workers involved, and in any case with the abolition of abuses and the worst feared forms of exploitation”¹

In the social domain, the rights aimed by the conventions are those considered as fundamental by the International Labour Organization : the freedom of trade unions, prohibition of forced labour, non-discrimination...

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE

In Seattle, official negotiations for Europe and the United States as well as the trade unions insisted that social conditions of production should be taken into consideration in trade agreements. Opinions differed on its implementation.

Both the United States and the ICFTU pleaded for the creation of a working group, within the WTO responsible for social issues, with representation from ILO. As far as the United States was concerned, the respect of working standards would be one of the issues to be dealt with by this group.

The European Union, on its part, wanted the creation of a joint WCL-ILO forum on trade links, globalization and employment issues. This forum would be in charge of supervising the application of fundamental working standards, but without considering sanctions in the form of a rigid social clause.

The European Union therefore supported the position of the WCL, in any case, on the creation of this body outside the WTO structure. The



Cigar factory in à Pinar del Río (Cuba). How to guarantee decent working conditions for all ?

Secretary General, Willy Thys, declared just before Seattle, questioning “*the so-called expertise of the WTO in social issues. There is a competent and expert institution within the international panorama, capable of doing this, namely the ILO, whose democratic legitimacy is certainly not inferior to that of the WTO. We therefore request for closer collaboration between these two institutions on an equal footing*”. The WCL also stated “*refrain from according the WTO a legitimacy superior to that of other international bodies.*”

With the passage of time, the ICFTU's position on this issue has changed, to finally conclude that the status of such a body, forum or working group, within or outside the WTO, is not important, provided the issue of workers' rights is taken seriously. The trade union organizations won their first victory at Seattle when a sixth working group, unexpected in the beginning, was set up to deal with social issues. Undoubtedly, this option could remain ambiguous : proposed by Kong Hong, in other words by China, which does not want to hear about social clause, this working group runs the risk of becoming a side track. It however came up with the idea of a permanent but non-decision making forum (which was not accepted immediately). An idea which finally came to nought due to the total failure of the Seattle ministerial meeting and could be aborted for a long time if China becomes an influential member of the WTO.

STANDARDS PERCEIVED AS CONSTRAINTS

The main reason for this failure, according to most analysts, lies in the conflict of interests between

Europe and the United States. Two other factors are also responsible for this : the demonstrations of social organizations contributed to cast doubt on the genuineness of the WTO, and the countries of the South, excluded from important discussions, refused to allow documents of powerful economies to be imposed on them.

The opposition of countries of the South to social clauses, in particular, is based on three arguments. First, the fear of protectionism. There is the risk of using control over the application of working standards to protect markets of the industrialized countries from third world competition. Secondly, the use of cheap manpower in countries of the South, constitutes a comparative advantage, which makes goods from these countries more competitive. Already socially disadvantaged, the Third World is afraid of being deprived of the chance for economic growth.

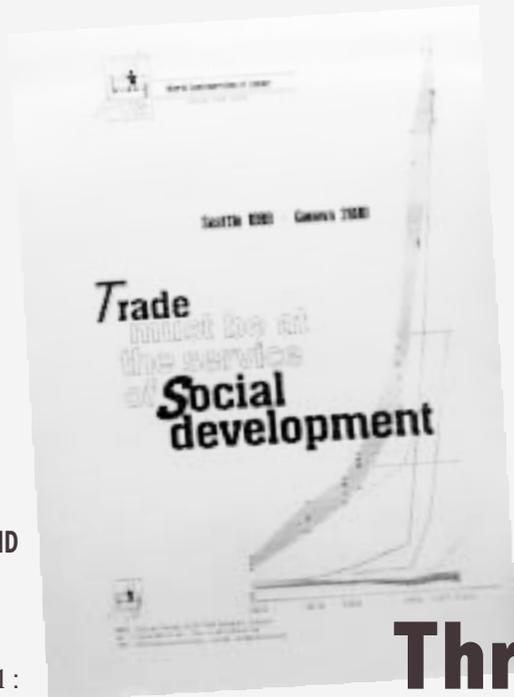
Lastly, social standards are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as constraints imposed by industrialized countries, which is considered as part of their history, but which takes longer to be respected everywhere. It is therefore a narrow route for trade unions, which support social standards but at the same time, wish to avoid hindering the development of countries of the South. On the eve of the Seattle meeting, the WCL reaffirmed its position. 80 trade union leaders, brought together by the WCL in Costa Rica, called for a “*multilateral and non protectionist social clause,*” “*urging*” its implementation, not to sanction countries that do not respect social standards, but reward those who take positive steps in this direction,

through preferential trade. It is to ensure independence from the economic interests of one industrialized country or another, that the WCL wants a control body independent of the WTO, whose decisions are too dependant on powerful countries and transnational companies.

Trade Unions of the Third World are increasingly sharing this point of view. They stress that in international circles, the views expressed are those of governments, not populations nor workers. Governments also signed the ILO Declaration in 1998, on the fundamental labour principles and rights, but they deny the WCL these same rights. The history of developing countries shows that, since economic growth is necessary, then right from the beginning, the distribution of benefits of the growth must to be insisted upon. This implies the respect of fundamental social standards. This idea is gaining ground.

¹ Report of the Director General, 1994, 58 p.

IN ORDER TO ADVANCE



GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIAL CLAUSES ON THE INTERNET

Attac international :
<http://attac.org>

Globalization look-out
 post:
<http://www.ecorpa.org/obs>

Human Rights for Workers
<http://www.senser.com>

World Trade Organization
<http://www.wto.org>

UNCTAD
<http://www.unctad.org>

International Labour
 Office
<http://ilo.org>

Supervision of multinationals
<http://corporatetwatch.org>

World Confederation of
 Labour :
<http://www.cmt-wcl.org>

FOR READING:

Seattle 1999 – Geneva 2000, Trade must serve Social Development, WCL, 1999, 19 p.

Florence Degrave, an economist, is a researcher at the FOPES and the Fondation Travail-Université (Labour-University Foundation), Brussels. She and others, have written a syllabus on globalization¹. To three questions on this subject, she has given three challenging and thought-provoking answers.

Three questions on globalization

Q. Is globalization new ?

F.D. : There are two trends in literature. One talks of globalization 20 years ago, the other goes much further back. Marx, already, brings to mind globalization of trade and the division of labour. The process has been in operation since the 16th century. The novelty, is the non-liberal ideological offensive to convince people that globalization is inevitable, that it must be accepted, adapted to, become competitive... In reality, globalization is an euphemism for capitalism.

Q. Is accepting globalization whilst modifying it in favour of workers, therefore capitalism ? Is it possible ? Is it useful ? Should the principle of globalization itself be questioned ?

F.D. : If we propose to reverse capitalism, with what should it be replaced ? I think we must look for alternatives to significantly correct the current situation, in the absence of pulling the stops on it. For example, a system where workers would have more say in the choice of what is produced, or in the organization of the business. Or better still, the respect of social standards. Call it a slap in the face of globalization, but this would be a significant corrective measure.

In affirming that globalization as it is, is inescapable, the possibility of choice is restored. It is given a place

in political debate. The neo-liberal ideology which claims that there is no alternative is thus nullified. It is a significant progress, borne by social movements.

Q. And what is the place of trade unions in all this ?

F.D. : It is not that simple. In the industrialized countries, trade unions have for a long time, discussed collective bargaining to defend gains at the national level. But for the last fifteen years, they have been negotiating with an employers' association which has its headquarters elsewhere, at the world level. The trade unions have taken long in realising that the employers have probably lost interest in negotiating.

But elsewhere, the trade unions are part of the emerging non traditional social movements. They must endeavour to be conversant with issues common to the different countries. There is the need for institutionalized places of solidarity at the international level. Therein lies the future of the unions, for workers to obtain pressure power and for stock gains to be redistributed.

¹ *Mondialisation. Des mirages et l'ultra-libéralisme à la nécessité de nouvelles régulations*, FEC-FTU, 1998, p.90 (In French only)



TEXTILE

Football : for “clean” equipment

June, 2000 : tens of thousands of spectators and millions of television spectators will be excited about football stars, who will be meeting in the Netherlands and Belgium for Euro 2000. The best sixteen teams, competing for a single trophy. But, are supporters interested in the shoes, footballs, outfit of players, and how these products are manufactured, by whom, at what salaries... ? It is to underline these conditions of work that associations (including “Solidarité Mondiale”) have launched the European campaign: *Euro 2000, human rights, right to a goal.*

These questions have already been raised during previous competitions, when it was revealed that child labour was used in the manufacture of footballs, especially in Pakistan. The International Federation (FIFA) reacted at that time by imposing rules to be followed by its suppliers. According to the organisers of the campaign, it is, a *“good code of conduct, which refers to the fundamental rights of workers such as defined in the main conventions of the International Labour Organisation”*.

Why then another campaign ? Certainly not to mar the festivities. But, first of all because the organisers of Euro 2000 are different : *“Presently, the national federations which constitute FIFA should themselves adopt and respect the campaign, and get the clubs and players to also respect it.”* Not forgetting UEFA, the European Union, which is sponsoring Euro 2000.

UNDIGNIFIED WORK

The second reason is the persistence, in the sports equipment industry, of inhuman working conditions. In April 1998, a session of the International Peoples’ court, studied the methods used by some big sports multinationals, including Adidas (main sponsor of Euro 2000) and Nike.

The former for instance was reproached for not paying for overtime (up to 4 hours a day in a factory in China) and for paying salaries

lower than the legal minimum. In the Formosa factory in San Salvador, workers work more than 60 hours per week, are subjected to verbal abuse and sexual harassment, etc. On its part, Nike was accused of having from 60 to 84 working hours a week, various abuses, use of chemical products without protection...

On its part, the Reebok Company in October 1999, took the trouble to disseminate a survey carried out in two factories working for it in Indonesia (see <http://www.reebok.com>). The report, entitled *“Caring for Rights”*, points out the poor hygienic and safety conditions in production (toxic emissions, exposure to dust and ultra violet rays...) and discrimination between men and women, as well as poor communication between management and workers. Other aspects like salaries, overtime and trade union freedom were studied with the Indonesian laws and the internal code of conduct in Reebok by experts.

CLEAN CLOTHES FOR FOOTBALLERS TOO : THAT IS THE OBJECT OF A CAMPAIGN DEVELOPING IN BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS, BUT WHICH INVOLVES THE WHOLE WORLD, ON THE OCCASION OF THE NEXT EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP. THE “CLEANNESS” IN QUESTION IS WELL UNDERSTOOD TO BE THE WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE PRODUCTION OF SPORTS ARTICLES USED ON THE PLAYING FIELDS.



Not so easy to enter textile and sports equipment factories and to take pictures in them. Here, a WCL delegation in Honduras



Here we find one of the limitations to this kind of activity, like other codes of conduct adopted by companies. The corrections announced by Reebok show that the conditions of work are far from adequate ; a

fortiori, by adopting a more critical view than that of experts, though independent, are nevertheless sent by the company.

SPECTATORS AND SPORTSMEN

The Euro 2000 campaign seeks as a priority to mobilize spectators. The action has also already found some echo among sportsmen themselves (see the inset). The campaign is not aimed at aggressiveness towards companies dealing in sporting equipment. Several of them have already adopted codes of conduct, by conviction or due to concern for their patent image : Nike, Adidas, Reebok... The campaign aims at encouraging them in this direction, by showing sensitivity to public opinion on the issue of the social "cleanness" of products.

Euro 2000 officially involves only the Netherlands and Belgium, however teams and supporters will be coming from all over Europe. With regard to shoes, footballs and jerseys, they are universal ; just like the rights of workers.

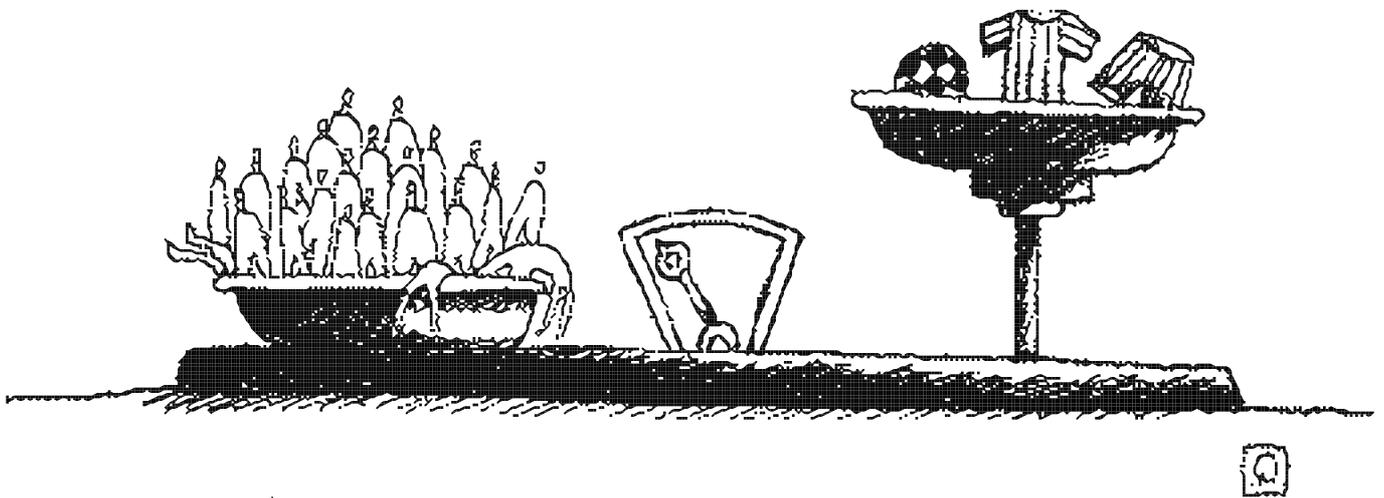
A. L.

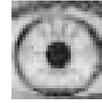
Trade Union of stars

Stars (but not all), footballers are also workers, just like cyclists and a lot of other athletes. It is not surprising that from now on, there exists sports trade unions. The Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPRO), for example, includes the national branches in 29 countries in Europe, Asia Africa and Oceania. That of cycling, AICPRO, affiliated to the WCL, is represented in 7 countries.

"The world of sports is quite individualistic and the trade union concept is not obvious there, explains Marcel Van Mol, Secretary General of Sporta, the sports service of Belgium CSC. But progress is being made. There are significant examples of experiences, for example when members of a national team demand bonuses." Some countries have even had strikes in sports. But, generally, the joint movements try to negotiate collectively for financial and "working" conditions with the direct employer (the club), with the national federation of the sport or with the authorities in the country.

From there a campaign for the conditions of work in the production of sports material must be taken seriously, there is enough time. "It is true, a lot of affiliates are interested in sports, and not spontaneously in the social aspects, adds Marcel Van Mol. A lot of sensitization needs to be done. But, here as well, things are moving. In any case, we, at Sporta, will join the campaign to be carried out during Euro 2000" The reason is stated clearly in the association's bulletin: "The millions that sponsors will give for this event is in sharp contrast to the salaries of workers manufacturing the sports equipment." That is why stars are interested in the other side of the picture ...





CHILD LABOUR

Ratify Convention 182

According to the International Labour Office (ILO) estimates, there are more than 250 million child workers worldwide, aged 5 to 14 years. To some people, this is a form of socialisation, or still an inevitable economic hardship. But this work often constitutes an exploitation of children, everywhere and in all sectors: agriculture, industry, trade... Many children also work in the informal sector, as domestic servants or employees, or are soldiers taking part in armed conflicts. Experts admit that it will take a long time to eliminate all forms of child exploitation, and that the issue is closely linked to that of social development. But States, employers and workers gathered at the International Labour Organisation have contended that certain aspects of this practice should not be tolerated and need immediate action. It is for this reason that Convention 182, which deals solely with the worst forms of child labour was adopted in June 1999 at the ILO. It is a new legal instrument, aimed at banning and taking immediate measures to eliminate these worst forms.

FIVE MONTHS' CAMPAIGN

First Seychelles, followed by Malawi in September and November 1999 respectively, were the first countries to ratify Convention 182, which will enter into force one year after its second ratification. Currently, the new Convention will allow priority action areas to be identified in the struggle against child labour and will deal with all the extreme forms of child labour under one law, other forms of child labour will still be covered by Convention 138 which is the fundamental international child labour law. Its objective is the total abolition of child labour. In order to achieve this, the convention must first be ratified by the States, and then implemented.

To this end, on International Human Rights' Day on 10 December, the World Confederation of Labor launched an action campaign, which will continue until 1st May 2000. All workers' organisations throughout the world that are affiliated to the WCL have taken and will undertake national initiatives to

get Convention 182 ratified by their national governments. The WCL has as a matter of fact, always worked towards the gradual eradication of child labour and for the immediate eradication of its worst forms. Wherever the WCL is present, activities have been organised in line with the theme and objective of the campaign.

These activities can take various forms, such as, circulation of a petition to gather the maximum number of signatures to urge States to ratify the new ILO Convention, media mobilisation, appealing to local and national political leaders to urge them to ratify the Convention, creation of vigilante committees to supervise the ratification process, and in the long term application of the Convention, information, mobilisation and sensitisation of the populace, organisation of public demonstrations and lobbying activities.....

GIVING OUT INFORMATION

In order to have an effective campaign, the WCL published an educational dossier on ILO Convention

ADOPTED IN JUNE 1999, THE ILO CONVENTION 182 IS AGAINST THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR. THE MORE REASON FOR IT TO BE RATIFIED AND IMPLEMENTED. THE WCL LAUNCHED A FIVE-MONTH WORLD CAMPAIGN TO GET THIS DONE. BY THE END OF NOVEMBER 1999, TWO COUNTRIES HAD RATIFIED IT ; IT WILL THEREFORE COME INTO FORCE IN NOVEMBER 2000.





182. This dossier is in the form of questions and answers. It explains what the new ILO Convention stands for and what constitutes the worst forms of child labour. It recalls the importance of the preceding ILO Convention, (C138) concerning the role played by the World March against Child Labour in

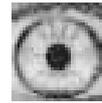
which the WCL actively participated in 1999. It touches on topics such as child labour in general, the question of education, the role of the different actors in the implementation of the convention and briefly describes actions which can be taken by governments within their national programmes to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. A poster and some stickers, as well as the already mentioned petition come with this educational dossier. The signatures collected will be sent to governments in May 2000. A small book to be signed by national personalities will also be circulated in each country and will be presented to the next International Labor Conference in Geneva in June 2000.

Delphine Sanglan

Convention 182: clear commitments

- *Governments must act immediately to eliminate the worst forms of child labour*
- *All children aged below 18 years must be protected against the worst forms of child labour*
- *To eliminate the worst forms of child labour means the elimination of :*
 - *slavery and forced labour*
 - *participation of children in armed conflicts, prostitution and sexual exploitation of children*
 - *the use of children in drug trafficking*
 - *all dangerous work likely to endanger the safety and moral and physical health of children*
- *Governments must define national activity programmes after consultations with trade unions and employers' organisations as well as other relevant groups such as children who have been victims of the worst form of labour and their family*
- *Governments must do all it can to enforce the Convention and failing which sanctions must be prescribed*
- *Governments must save children from the worst forms of child labour, help them and ensure their social integration when they decide to leave their job*





TRAINING

Adult Education is vital

On 14 and 15 March 1999, the WCL organised an information seminar for European organisations within the general framework of its training policy. The DG XXII Socrates European programme responsible for education and culture, sponsored the activity. Sixteen organisations from the European Union and other countries were represented, candidates yet to enter the programme were PECO, Cyprus and Malta. They exchanged information and experiences and established active co-operation among participants to enhance the training of adult trade unionists in Europe. This seminar also allowed WCL representatives to be informed about the Socrates programme and what it offers by way of enhancing adult education in the countries concerned. Several speakers who are experts in adult education contributed to this activity, due notably to their skills in project formulation. They helped trade union organisations to tackle their difficulties in making their expertise known as networks of organisations. Mr. Yves Beernaert, of the technical assistance office of the DGXXII, pointed out the opportunities offered by DGXXI to trade unions, in terms of services, assistance and advice, among others. A new programme known as "Gruntvig" will focus particularly on *life long learning* in adult education.

FOR EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY

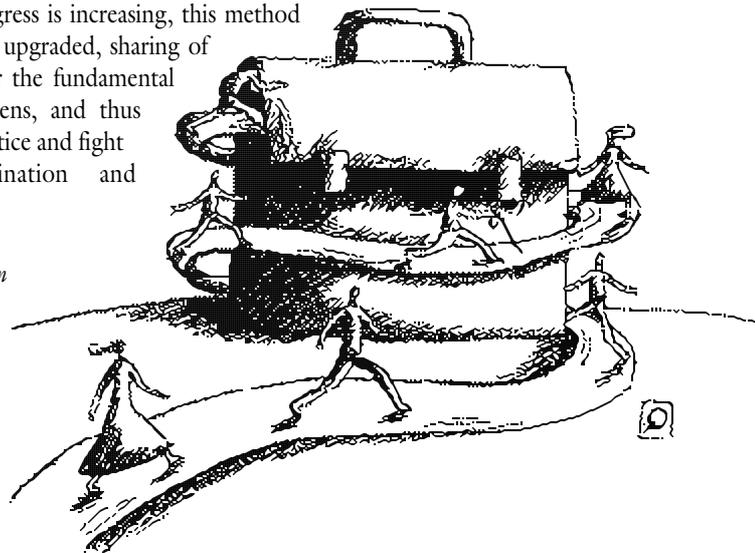
Three important themes caught the attention of participants. First, training of trainers for adults, an area which has received little attention, but constitutes an indispensable activity to ensure adequate training for adults. Secondly, linguistic training possibly coupled with TC (teaching by correspondence). Socio-economic issues are becoming globalised, and trade union activities must keep up with everything, whilst remaining democratic, which makes it essential for trade union representatives to have a good knowledge of languages. The third subject is equal opportunities, which takes into consideration adults with particular needs. This is the case with women, on one hand, because they are under represented in the trade union

decision making bodies, and migrants on the other hand. Due to the lack of training and their precarious social situation, the latter are often obliged to accept underpaid and/or illegal jobs.

After the seminar, six WCL organisations in Eastern Europe made proposals for projects which showed the priority concerns and main areas of interest. These areas of interest represent an unprecedented historic situation, due as much to the economic, technological and political changes affecting these countries as to the continuous changes in the high rate of migration recently observed in Europe. As a matter of fact, "*the Eastern European countries, where the movement of people has been liberalised, have become reception and transit places, whereas they were previously departure countries.*"*

The WCL intends to pursue its activity in the area of adult education among international organisations, which place emphasis on this type of transmission of knowledge and know-how, such as UNESCO during the Hamburg conference. At a time when knowledge and scientific progress is increasing, this method allows skills to be upgraded, sharing of values, respect for the fundamental rights of all citizens, and thus reduce social injustice and fight against discrimination and racism.

Faustina Van Aperen



ADULT EDUCATION IS A VITAL TOOL, WHICH ALLOWS TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS TO TRANSMIT KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW TO THE LIFE OF MILITANTS. THE EUROPEAN PROGRAMME SOCRATES GIVES TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS, A PUSH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. A RECENT WCL SEMINAR EXPLORED ITS POTENTIALS.

* *Annual report on workers' rights. 1999 Migrant workers.* Valérie Michaux. World Confederation of Labor: Brussels, 1999 p.7.



PRESS REVIEW

WE DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT IT

"Every financial activity would be shaky without a strong social pillar. The economic and financial pillar must meet the social pillar."

"Transparency is at the heart of the prevention of social crisis."

"We do not know enough of it regarding real standards of living, education, equality between boys and girls, access to clean water..."

"Private banks contributed to the creation of the debt problems, we must therefore get them to be part of the solution, even if this will cost them money."

"The respect of social rights defined by the ILO is the first of the tenets of social security."

Michel Camdessus, then Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, at the Confederal Committee of the WCL, in October, 1999.

SOCIAL FUNDAMENTALS

"According to the formula that the WCL uses, social fundamentals, are as important as economic fundamentals."

"The World Bank admits the importance of basic work standards, but is more reticent to recognise the rights of unionisation of workers and the principle of collective bargaining. It is absolutely necessary not to prevent the free organisation of workers in work places."

Juan Somavia, Director General of the International Labour Organisation, at the Confederal Committee of the WCL, in October, 1999.

• SLAVERY IN COTE D'IVOIRE

Fifteen thousand Malian children are treated as "slaves" on plantations in Côte d'Ivoire, and their transportation to Côte d'Ivoire has something in common with "child slavery", reveals a UNICEF report published yesterday by the Press in Mali. According to UNICEF, "they are piled up in storage shops" which resemble "slave purchasing posts in the negro slavery era."

LIBERATION (Paris), 9th November, 1999.

• NEW POLITICS IN ARGENTINA

Argentina's president-elect, Fernando De la Rúa, yesterday promised his country "a new politics" based on pluralism and transparency and a more austere form of government than that of flamboyant outgoing President Carlos Menem.

Mr. De la Rúa, candidate of the centre-left Alliance, defeated his Peronist rival by more than 10 points. (...)

The Buenos Aires stock market suffered an immediate setback. (...)

The President-elect has pledged to preserve the free-market reforms of Mr Menem, but with greater emphasis on social measures.

FINANCIAL TIMES (London), 26th October, 1999.

• LAOTIAN SLAVES IN BELGIUM

They come from Laos or Thailand and pay up to 120,000 Thai baths (about 3,000 US Dollars) to a ferryman/smuggler (...) Cooped up in their illegal workshops, they sleep on the bare floor under their machine. (...) They work, eat and sleep in the same place. If they share a room with others, a deduction is made from their salary. (...)

They could be forced to work from 7 am to 10 pm, that is, fifteen hours a day, for an absolute maximum monthly income of 15,000 to 20,000 Belgian francs (about 500 US dollars). (...) The big trade names are still the ultimate beneficiaries of the network, but they engage in cover-ups.

LE SOIR (Brussels), 27th October, 1999.

BOOKS AND DISCUSSIONS

A THIRD CHANNEL

Between the public sector, which does not aim at profits, and the private sector, which seeks to make profit, a "third sector" is emerging: the social economy. It seeks to be profitable, in order to be sustainable, while aiming at a social goal, such as the creation of employment in sectors responding to a collective need.

The book to which Patrick Develtere, of World Solidarity contributed, presented an unknown image of this form of economy: its implementation in countries of the South. Many examples are well known WCL organisations.

Contrary to the universal management model, the social economy enhances adapted forms of organisations. The book shows that it has a power to dispute the dominant system and it calls for new practices in international solidarity.

Jacques Defourny, Parick Develtere, Bénédicte Fonteneau (...): "L'économie sociale au Nord et au Sud" (Social Economy in the North and South) Published by De Boeck University, Brussels, 1999 (exists in French and Dutch; Spanish and English in preparation).



NEGATIVE

Stop on picture



The World Press Photo Foundation offers annual awards to the best photographs appearing in the world press. This selection confers an award on photographers whose works capture current events in the world with vividness and emotion.

This photograph received the third prize 1999 in the category: People in the News stories. It was taken by Michael S. Williamson, USA, Washington Post.

Here is a man who has the world in his hands, they say, and yet his private life has been so exposed as if that was the most important thing. Meanwhile, the world faces enormous problems... What a contradiction : On one hand, so much importance is given to the "petty miseries" of a great world leader, and on the other, very little is said about the big prob-

lems of ordinary people who lack a lot of things. The latter are not even sure they will be alive the next day, whereas the former is surrounded by security agents. He looks perplexed and lost, beside the symbol of his duty, as if he no longer knows what to do. But, what worries does he have ? Does he worry about the publicity given to his

image, or about the big things at stake ? Finally, looking at this photograph, I am also inclined to ask why the United States has so much to say, and not Chad or Egypt, for example ? Naive ?

*Choice and comments by
Maddie Geerts,
CSC Board member, Belgium.*

trade union activities

TOGO

FLOWERS AND STONES



Faster et cheaper. And more dangerous ?

“Zémidjan ?” “Are you going... ?” I was asked this question ten times, by motorcycle drivers, along the beach road in Lomé, in Togo. A White man walking must mean that he could not find a taxi. And, to be precise, these motorcycles are taxis: the *“Zémidjan”*.

François Agbo is Secretary General of the Togo Motorcycle Taxi Drivers' Trade Union (Usynctat). The zémidjans have increased in number a great deal, since 1990 when they appeared on the scene. There are more than ten thousand of them, all over the country. As a matter of fact, their customers immediately took to them since they wanted a fast and cheap means of transportation.

But, the motorcycle taxi drivers found difficulty in being accepted. First of all by the taxis on four wheels, which saw in them a cheaper competitor; and then by the authorities, who did not recognise this new profession.

Today, they have constituted themselves into a trade and are recognised. This led François Agbo, when interviewed by Jeune Afrique to say, *“You know the conditions under which the motorcycle taxis came unto the scene, and how they have saved the distraught population. Today, both flowers and stones are thrown at them.”*

AGAINST RACKETS

Among the criticisms levelled against motorcycle taxis by the authorities, is that they are dangerous. Looking at the way they drive around transporting customers, one wonders why there are not many more accidents. Do these motorcycles have brakes ? The police have instituted certain measures, such as the compulsory wearing of crash helmets and the possession of a motorcycle driving license. But, Usynctat has itself, confronted the problem headlong, providing driving lessons, teaching road signs and managing a co-operative for services and spare parts shop.

At the end of 1998, the Union, in conjunction with other transport trade unions, obtained permission to manage the profession themselves and see to it that drivers respect the laws. These checks will no longer be carried out by the security forces. Innocuous ? Not at all. In Togo, as in a number of countries in the sub-region, the police and the state police force take advantage of these checks to extort money from drivers and passengers. The trade unions have often condemned such behaviour, which according to them, has become “institutionalised practices”. In 1999, François Agbo met with trade unions in neighbouring countries to get them to take advantage of this Togolese success.



A public service on private initiative which has taken the time to persuade the authorities

A. L.