

## Special Feature: The International Labor Organization, 1919 - 1995

The unacceptability of the current world employment situation, however, and the negative consequences of defeatism both provide powerful arguments for renewing the post-World War II commitment to the objective of full employment at both the national and international levels. Progress toward such a goal can be safely assured by many different actions which are as doable as they are necessary.

Viable solutions must be found to the twin problems of mass unemployment and anxious workers in industrialized countries and of widespread underemployment and poverty in developing countries. ***Both problems represent an unacceptable degree of human suffering and an enormous waste of resources.***

The situation has led to growing social exclusion in all countries, rising inequality within and between nations, and a host of social ills -- among others, the growing frequency of violence and other anti-social behavior, homelessness, school avoidance, and abandoned or neglected children.

By contrast, the benefits of full employment are clear: other things being equal, it will achieve a greater degree of equity, increase national and global productivity, and strengthen social integration.

***The current situation, in a word, is morally unacceptable and economically irrational.***

What ILO is, how it works.

The U.S. and ILO Today

The Declaration of Philadelphia.

ILO, Human Rights & Child Labor.

ILO & Multinational Enterprises.

ILO & Cooperatives.

ILO & Women.

International Training Center, Turin, Italy

### In commemoration of ILO's 75th Anniversary, 1994:

***Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa:*** "We thank you, ILO, that you refused to forget us. We thank you that you did not tire in your struggle. We thank you for your sense of humanity and your commitment to justice which drove to reject the very idea that we should be in prison and that our people should be in bondage...Let us walk the last mile together."

***Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Dem., NY):*** "The ILO plays an extraordinary role in multilateral efforts to secure human rights worldwide...Indeed, the ILO was the first international organization to bring the subject of human rights to the world community."

***Elizabeth Dole, President of the American Red Cross:*** "The International Labor Organization is the United Nations' most effective advocate of human rights."

***Robert Reich, U.S. Secretary of Labor:*** "Throughout its long and distinguished history, the ILO has been committed to social and economic betterment among the community of nations through free and independent unions, employers' associations, and governments."

***Lech Walesa, President of Poland:*** "The ILO played an important part in the process leading to restoration of Polish trade union freedom."

***Senator Orrin G. Hatch (Rep., Utah):*** "The ILO played a major role in the explosion for democratic principles in Eastern Europe...By continuing to work within the organization, reviewing and where possible ratifying its conventions, we can help to foster throughout the world a true atmosphere of democratic freedom."

## The ILO: What it is. How it works.

"ILO": ILO is the acronym for the International Labor Organization, established by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 along with the League of Nations. The same initials, however, can also mean "International Labor Office," the organization's headquarters.

**International Labor Conference:** The International Labor Conference is the annual meeting of the International Labor Organization. A unique tri-partite membership structure represents nation-states, workers, and employers. Each of the member nations of ILO (171 in 1994) has the right to send four delegates to the Conference: two from the government and one each from associations of workers and employers. U.S. workers, for example, are represented by the president of the AFL-CIO; U.S. employers are represented by the president of the U.S. Council for International Business. Each delegate may speak and vote independently.

The International Labor Conference provides an international forum for discussion of world labor and social problems. It sets broad policies for the ILO and establishes minimum international labor standards through formal Conventions (currently 172), which have the force of treaties binding upon the governments which ratify them, and also through Recommendations (now 179), which are not subject to ratification but rather serve as guidelines for national policy.

**1994-1995 Program Priorities:** Every two years, the Conference adopts the ILO's biennial work program and budget, which is financed by member States. For the period of 1994-1995 the net budget amounts to US\$ 466.5 million (\$64.3 million from the USA).

There are three central priorities in the 1994-1995 period:

(1) *Promoting the advance of democracy*  
-- through the rule of law, tripartism

(government/workers/employers), sound industrial relations, and the elimination of discrimination.

(2) *The fight against poverty* -- by developing responsive training systems, employment creation schemes and social institutions; and by ensuring that restructuring policies take account of social needs.

(3) *Protecting working people* -- by creating safe and humane working conditions, reforming and extending social security and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups: child workers, women workers, migrants, and those working in the informal ["microenterprise"] sector.

Within these priorities, operational energy is focused on five key themes:

- international labor standards and human rights;
- equality for women;
- employment promotion and structural adjustment;
- environment and the world of work;
- the rural and informal sectors.

**The ILO Governing Body:** Between Conferences, the work of the ILO is guided by a 56-member Governing Body -- 28 governments, 14 worker members and 14 employer members. Ten of the 28 government-members have permanent, non-elective seats representing "states of industrial importance" (including the USA, represented by a high-ranking official from the Department of Labor). The other 18 government-members and all worker and employer members of the ILO Governing Body are elected every three years by their respective caucuses at the International Labor Conference.

**The International Labor Office:** The International Labor Office in Geneva serves as the International Labor Organization's secretariat, operational headquarters, research center and publishing house.



The chief administrator for ILO is a Director-General appointed by the Governing Body of the ILO Conference. Two Americans have served as ILO Director-General: John Winant, 1939-1941, and David Morse, 1948-1970. The current "D-G" is Michel Hansenne, former Minister of Employment and Labour of Belgium.

Administration and management are decentralized in regional, area and branch offices in more than 40 countries (e.g., ILO's Washington Branch Office). Counting Geneva headquarters and elsewhere, the ILO Office is staffed by about 3,000 employees, including many Americans.

The work of the Governing Body and of the Office is aided by tripartite committees covering major industries, and by committees of experts on such matters as vocational training, management development, occupational safety and health, industrial relations, workers' education, and special problems of women and young workers.

Regional conferences of ILO member states are held periodically to examine matters of special interest within the specific region.

## The U.S. and the ILO Today. An Interview with the U.S. Permanent Representative in Geneva, Ambassador Daniel Spiegel

By Donald Smyth,  
ILO Washington Branch

**Editor's Note:** In 1994, Congress appropriated a \$2.1 million grant to ILO's special International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor. The grant is administered by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs in the U.S. Labor Department. The U.S. membership contribution to ILO's regular budget is currently \$64.3 million. The new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-NC, calls the ILO "costly and archaic" and says that it is "ill-suited to an era in which the role of labor unions is vastly diminished." He advocates eliminating ILO from U.S. foreign aid (which constitutes, for all activities, slightly more than 1% of the federal budget).

Ambassador Daniel L. Spiegel has been U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva since November 1993. Former positions include director of the international practice of a Washington law firm; special assistant to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance from 1977-1979; and legislative assistant to Senators Hubert Humphrey and Alan Cranston. The following interview by Donald Smyth, ILO Washington Branch public affairs officer, is reprinted from the Fall 1994 issue of *ILO Washington Focus*.

**Q:** Ambassador Spiegel, you deal with a variety of international organizations in the United Nations. What is the unique role of the ILO in this galaxy of organizations?

**A:** First of all, the ILO, from an historical perspec-

tive, is the oldest independent UN organization in Geneva. Its organizational structure in tripartite [workers' and employers' representatives as well as governments]. But more important than its structure and its constitution is what it does as a member of the family of UN agencies. Its role in the promotion of social justice and its role in the field of technical assistance are extremely important today.

We are in a situation today where, with the Cold War ended, with peace finally coming to the Middle East, and with a democratic government in South Africa, many of the major political problems that bedeviled the ILO in the past years have now vanished. And thus the ILO has been liberated, so to speak, to begin working again on the important issues not only of social justice, but of providing technical assistance to economies in transition, as well as beginning to play an important role by injecting itself into the link between labor standards and trade with the new World Trade Organization. The ILO thus has unique relevance for the community of nations and for UN member countries.

**Q:** More precisely, in light of economic globalization and rapidly increasing unemployment on the world scene and major political change around the world, what do you see as ILO's principal role in world affairs?

**A:** There's no doubt that as trade expands, as we hope it will with the creation of the World Trade Organization, certain problems will come to the fore. Senator Tom Harkin was in Geneva recently. He said that with the expansion of world trade, he hopes economic growth does not come on the backs of children. Neither should it come on the backs of workers who are facing intolerable conditions.

As we enter an era of trade globalization and as we seek to bring developing countries and the newly-independent countries into the ambit of the world economy, the role of the ILO is absolutely

essential. This is very important to the United States.

**Q:** How important are the ILO's international labor standards, starting with the instrument on Freedom of Association, in promoting social justice and leveling the playing field in international trade?

**A:** It is in the field of standards where ILO carries out its unique role. The challenge is how to make sure that these standards mean something to workers. This is the task we face. We talk now about the three basic standards -- freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, and freedom from forced labor. These obviously are the core, the bedrock on which the other standards depend. Whether or not a country has officially ratified a particular convention is not important. We believe that the U.S. record of performance is very good. So, we want to participate in this process and, of course, there's a strong link between these standards mechanisms of the ILO and the promotion of social justice.

**Q:** The Clinton administration has taken a strong stand on human rights. Does the U.S. plan to work within the ILO to extend human and worker rights in a more active way?

**A:** Well, I think it's clear that human rights will play a very important role in the U.N. system as part of the international dialogue. It is at the very center of our foreign policy. The United Nations has a new High Commissioner for Human Rights, something the United States worked very hard to obtain. There's a strong link between human rights initiatives elsewhere in the U.N. and what the ILO does on the worker rights front. And I don't really see a separation between the two. Just as we support what the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Center do in Geneva, we certainly are going to support what the ILO is trying to do in the workplace. Here I refer again to those three basic core ILO conventions, which really

are a code of workers' human rights, economic human rights.

**Q:** *In light of the United States' poor ratification record -- we've only ratified as a country 11 of the ILO's 175 conventions since joining in 1934-- do you foresee, first, an improvement on this record and, second, a stronger leadership role by the U.S. in the ILO?*

**A:** Let me take the second question first, regarding the U.S. leadership role in the ILO. We are playing a strong role. The fact that [Labor] Secretary Reich was here for the very important 1975 ILO anniversary meeting and that the President considered coming here himself but was really prevented from doing so by the Normandy events [commemorating D-Day in World War II] show the importance that this administration places on the ILO. We take the work of the ILO very, very seriously.

Now, regarding our ratification of specific conventions. I know this is a source of concern to many governments. It is curious that we are not party to many of these conventions but it's really not because of our lack of adherence to the norms of these instruments. It really goes to the question of a two-part problem. Number one, the unique nature of our federal system, which sometimes makes it difficult by treaty to adhere to these standards; and secondly, a general historical reluctance by the Congress to accede to international conventions.

There's a U.S. tripartite committee looking at several of these conventions [the Presidents' Committee on the ILO established in 1980 and chaired by the Secretary of Labor, -- ed.]. We're looking seriously at the one on discrimination in employment. I think that we will slowly begin to ratify more of these standards.

On the other hand, we think that practical adherence to the norms underlying these conventions is equally important, and we think we have a very good track record in terms of our labor law and our practice. We also think that there's a role for multinational corporations based in the United States

to help in this business of adhering to norms, as in the child labor area.

We are going to continue to look at this situation, and hopefully, our track record on ratifications will improve.

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**Editor's Note:** *The Senate ratified a 12th convention in 1994, shortly after this interview -- No. 150 on standards for effective labor administration with participation of employers and workers. Five of the twelve U.S. ratifications have been since 1988.*



## Moments in History

*(Source: "The ILO: Looking back, looking forward," World of Work, The Magazine of ILO, June 1994.) 7*

**1818** English industrialist and humanitarian Robert Owen requests from the Holy Alliance meeting at Aix-la-Chapelle, France, protective measures for factory workers and the forming of a social commission.

**1831-34** Two revolts of silk mill workers in Lyon, France, are bloodily suppressed, with repercussions felt across Europe.

**1838-59** French industrialist Daniel Le Grand takes up Owen's ideas, addressing European governments and proposing international legislation concerning working conditions.

**1864** Founding of First Workers' International in Paris.

**1866** The first International Workers Congress demands international labor legislation.

**1867** Publication of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* (volume 1).

**1883-1891** Germany adopts laws on health insurance, work accidents, and pensions -- the first social legislation in Europe.

**1886** In Chicago 350,000 workers strike demanding an 8-hour work day. The movement is brutally suppressed in what comes to be known as the Haymarket Riot. Produces an international outcry.

**1900-1901** Concerned individuals from the spheres of politics, religion, parliamentary law, academia, and economics meet in Paris to create the International Association for the Legal Protection of Workers; a permanent headquarters opens in Basel, Switzerland, and undertakes the translation and publication of the social legislation of various countries. (ILO's direct precursor.)

## Moments in History

**1919** The Paris Peace Conference after WWI adopts a text which becomes Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles and then the ILO Constitution. All members of the League of Nations will be members also of ILO. USA stays out.

**October 1919** The first International labor Conference meets in Washington, D.C. and adopts 6 Conventions. The first Convention limits the hours of work to 8 per day and 48 per week.

**1920-1921** The ILO's office is established in Geneva; several Conventions adopted affirming fundamental human rights.

**1930** A new Convention aims at the progressive abolition of forced labor.

**1934** USA joins the ILO; uses ILO's help in planning Social Security program.

**1935** A new Convention reduced the 48-hour work week to 40.

**1940** ILO moves temporarily from Geneva to Montreal.

**1944** Declaration of Philadelphia.

**1946** ILO becomes first specialized institution to be associated with the United Nations.

**1948** David A. Morse, former U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Labor Affairs, is elected ILO Director-General and serves until 1970.

**1951** Convention No. 100 establishes equality of pay for men and women for work of equal value.

**1956** ILO begins its program of worker education.

**1957** Convention No. 105 proscribes forced or compulsory labor in all its forms.

**1958** International Mariner's Code arises from new Conventions.

**1959** Technical cooperation with developing countries now majority of all ILO activities.

## The Declaration of Philadelphia Concerning the Aims and Purposes of the International Labor Organization

### Aims and Purposes of the International Labor Organization

In May 1944, with the Second World War still raging, the 26th Session of the International Labor Conference met in Philadelphia. Twenty-five years earlier, in October 1919 in the Pan American Union Building in Washington, D.C. a few blocks from the White House, the first International Labor Conference had launched the International Labor Organization.

Now ILO had completed 25 years of work. It was time to review goals and get ready for the return of peace. What was to be ILO's role in the post-war era?

From those deliberations came a pioneering charter of universal human rights and freedoms adopted May 10, 1944 -- The Declaration of Philadelphia. A year later this Declaration became a model for the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In President Franklin Roosevelt's words, the Declaration summed up "the aspirations of an epoch which has known two world wars...future generations will look upon it as a landmark in world thinking."

Incorporated into the ILO Constitution, the Declaration of Philadelphia redefined the aims and purposes of the organization, giving ILO the new and more dynamic role of actively promoting workers' rights and welfare by improving the conditions affecting them.

### Text of the Declaration of Philadelphia

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization...hereby adopts...the present Declaration of the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation and of the principles which should inspire the policy of its Members.

#### I

The Conference reaffirms the fundamental principles on which the Organisation is based and, in particular, that:

(a) *Labor is not a commodity.*

(b) *Freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress.*

(c) *Poverty anywhere constitutes a threat to prosperity everywhere.*

(d) *The war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation, and by continuous and concerted international effort in which the representatives of workers and employers, enjoying equal status with those of governments, join with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare.*

#### II

Believing that experience has fully demonstrated the truth of the statement in the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation that lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice, the Conference affirms that:

(a) All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity.

(b) The attainment of the conditions in which this shall be possible must constitute the central aim of national and international policy.

(c) All national and international policies and measures, in particular those of an economic and financial character, should be judged in this light and accepted only in so far as they may be held to promote and not to hinder the achievement of this fundamental objective.

(d) It is a responsibility of the International Labour Organisation to examine and con-

sider all international economic and financial policies and measures in the light of this fundamental objective.

(e) In discharging the tasks entrusted to it the International Labour Organisation, having considered all relevant economic and financial factors, may include in its decisions and recommendations any provisions which it considers appropriate.

### III

The Conference recognises the solemn obligation of the International Labour Organisation to further among the nations of the world programmes which will achieve:

(a) full employment and the raising of standards of living;

(b) the employment of workers in the occupations in which they can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution to the common well-being;

(c) the provision, as a means to the attainment of this end and under adequate guarantees for all concerned, of facilities for training and the transfer of labour, including migration for employment and settlement;

(d) policies in regard to wages and earnings, hours and other conditions of work calculated to ensure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, and a minimum living wage to all employed and in need of such protection;

(e) the effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining, the cooperation of management and labour in the continuous improvement of productive efficiency, and the collaboration of workers and employers in the preparation and application of social and economic measures;

(f) the extension of social security measures to provide a basic income to all in need of such protection and comprehensive medical care;

(g) adequate protection of the life and health of workers in all occupations;

(h) provision for child welfare and maternity protection;

(i) the provision of adequate nutrition, housing and facilities for recreation and culture;

(j) the assurance of equality of education and vocational opportunity.

### IV

Confident that the fuller and broader utilisation of the world's productive resources necessary for the achievement of the objectives set forth in this Declaration can be secured by effective international and national action -- including measures to expand production and consumption, to avoid severe economic fluctuations, to promote the economic and social advancement of the less developed regions of the world, to assure greater stability in world prices of primary products, and to promote a high and steady volume of international trade -- the Conference pledges the full cooperation of the International Labour Organisation with such international bodies as may be entrusted with a share of the responsibility for this great task and for the promotion of the health, education and well-being of all peoples.

### V

The conference affirms that the principles set forth in this Declaration are fully applicable to all peoples everywhere and that, while the manner of their application must be determined with due regard to the stage of social and economic development reached by each people, their progressive application to peoples who are still dependent [colonies], as well as to those who have

already achieved self-government, is a matter of concern to the whole civilised world.

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### Moments in History

**1960** First ILO African Regional Conference opens in Nigeria.

**1966** ILO regional offices established in Africa and Asia.

**1969** ILO receives Nobel Peace Prize.

**1977** USA leaves ILO in protest against growing prominence at Conference sessions of matters related to conflict in the occupied Arab territories. Rejoins ILO in 1980.

**1978** ILO presses government of Czechoslovakia on behalf of freedom of association and expression for workers; similarly Poland in 1982.

**1983** Convention adopted on readaptation and employment of the handicapped.

**1989** Convention adopted on the rights of indigenous peoples. Michel Hansenne of Belgium becomes Director-General.

**1990** Environmental sustainability becomes a major ILO concern.

**1991** International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor is launched, thanks to a special contribution from Germany.

**1992** New policy of active partnership with countries in transition; first multidisciplinary team established in Budapest.

**1995** ILO membership reached 171 states when South Africa rejoined last year-- from 42 in 1919 and 58 in 1948. The regular budget has grown from \$4.5 million in 1948 to \$466.5 million for the 1994-1995 period.

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## The ILO, Human Rights, and Child Labor

In 1969 the International Labor Organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its accomplishments in the field of human rights. Some examples:

*Ten thousand prisoners are released from unlawful forced labor in an Asian state.*

*Bonded labor becomes illegal in another Asian state, one of the world's largest democracies.*

*Leaders of trade unions and independent employers' organizations are released from prison in several countries of Africa and Central America.*

*Countries on three continents accept international aid to eliminate child labor.*

### The Scandal of Child Labor

Child labor as a global issue is heating up again. To some extent, this is part of the escalating political prominence of human rights issues generally. But child labor is also becoming a hot trade issue with considerable power to motivate popular opposition to economic globalization and "free trade." For several years, an outcry against child labor has been gaining momentum in the Scandinavian countries, Germany, the United States,

and elsewhere. In the human rights movement, the growth and liveliness of child labor protest correlates closely with a conspicuous growth of trade in products from countries notorious for child labor. Finally, in the political battle about removing all barriers to the free flow of imports and exports in world trade, the silence of the GATT and NAFTA agreements on child labor (among other concerns of many voters) became one of the most telling weapons the proponents of fair labor standards could use against "free trade" advocates. Thus, also among business leaders and politicians, the issue of child labor has taken a quantum leap in significance.

In India alone, according to an independent study done for India's Labour Ministry, some 55 million children are working for someone other than their parents. Indian demographers expect this number to reach 70 million by the year 2000, as rapid population growth and other causes of rural poverty compel more families to depend on the wages of working children.

Although India outlawed child labor in the carpet industry in 1993, the law is almost impossible to enforce. A typical case, the son of a poor farmer in a drought-prone region, is described by foreign correspondent Molly Moore in a recent feature story on child labor appearing in *The Washington Post* (May 21, 1995): "I was sent here to work off the loans my parents took from him," whispers an 11-year-old boy crouching before a carpet loom. He nods toward the loom's owner just out of ear-shot in the hot, dim, mud hut. "Every time a carpet is finished -- after about two and a half months -- I get paid 300 rupees." That -- about 12 cents a day -- plus a meal at the end of each ten-hour work-day comprises his wages for knotting carpets from 7 a.m. to sunset. No days off, no vacations. His father sent him to the loom owner when he was 9. He has never been to school. Sometimes his employers' carpets are sold in high-priced carpet shops in major U.S. cities.

When his eyes grow bad from the constant close work in poor light or when the incessant knot-tying has taken the nimbleness from his fingers, leaving the joints stiff and swollen like those of an old man, his value as a carpet weaver will end -- probably before he is fully grown. He'll be replaced by a younger child, perhaps a sibling. But for small sons and daughters in the poorest families (and not only in India), the likely alternative to a sweatshop is not school; it is prostitution. Survival has few options.

Right from its beginning in 1919, the ILO has fought against child labor. One of the very first Conventions set the minimum age for children in industrial employment as 14. Soon other conventions fixed standards to protect children from the hazards of particular occupations. In 1973, Convention No. 138 and Recommendation No. 146 dealt with the question of child labor in greater detail. All countries ratifying Convention No. 138 agree to pursue a national policy designed to effectively abolish child labor and to progressively raise the minimum age of employment "to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons." The minimum age of fulltime employment is to be no younger than "the age at completion of compulsory education" but that standard itself varies from country to country. Convention 138 recognizes that the present socio-economic capacity to meet universal child labor standards is not the same in all countries. Thus in underdeveloped countries, the minimum ages of 13 for employment in "light work" and 15 for other non-dangerous work may be lowered



to be 12 and 14 years, respectively. In all countries, however, 18 is to be minimum age for employment in jobs likely to put the health, safety or morals of a young person at risk.

Recommendation No. 146 calls the attention of governments to a complete set of political, economic and social choices whose ultimate aim is the abolition of labor imposed on children: employment policies, quality of life and minimum wage for adult and youth workers, child benefits, development of means of education and vocational guidance and training, the creation of services for the protection of children, strengthening work inspection, and strict regulation of workers under 18 in order to prevent their exploitation.

### **The International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour**

Despite these important agreements of twenty years ago and longer, ILO estimates that, still, as many as 200 million children between the ages of 10 and 14 are working, often in dangerous, unhealthy and often inhumane conditions. In 1991, therefore, ILO launched the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour.

"The current situation of *laissez-aller* has to stop," said ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne of Belgium in announcing the campaign. "We must act now. The battle against child labour concerns all of us... The ILO is ready to aid by all means at its disposal those countries which wish to enlist its support in bringing this enterprise to a successful conclusion."

In 1994, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$2.1 million to support this program. The grant is being administered by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs in the U.S. Department of Labor.

Director-General Hansenne summarizes: "Childhood is a period of life which should be devoted not to work, but to education and training. Child labour, by its very nature and the working conditions under

which it is carried out, often compromises childrens' potential to become productive and useful adults in society.

"Finally, the use of child labour is not inevitable. Progress toward its elimination is possible wherever there is political will to oppose it with determination... Child labour is extremely expensive, first of all for the children, then for society in general. Poverty is not a blanket excuse.

"There are limits to what a human society worthy of the name can tolerate."

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### **Associated Press reports in spring, 1995**

--- *12-Year-Old Activist Slain*: ... Iqbal Masih was gunned down while bicycling in his village near the city of Lahore... "We know his death was a conspiracy by the carpet mafia," Ehsan Ullah Khan [chairman of an anti-child labor group] said, referring to carpet weaving firms here that employ large numbers of children because their fingers make small, tight knots. Iqbal...told delegates to an international labor conference in Sweden last year that he was sold into industrial slavery by his parents at the age of 4, then shackled to a loom for the better part of six years, working for the equivalent of 3 cents a day. In December, he was awarded the Reebok Youth in Action Award and planned to use the \$15,000 prize for higher education and law school. Brandeis University offered him a full scholarship when he reached college age. "He was so brave... You can't imagine," Khan said.

*April 19* --- *Killing Said Not to Be Political* : "A 12-year-old who led an international campaign against child labor was slain in a petty dispute and not by the carpet industry he condemned, the independent Human Rights Commission [a Pakistani nongovernmental organization] said." (*May 26*)

### **ILO & Multinational Enterprises**

In the complex and controversial area of the activities of multinational enterprises (MNEs), ILO has established the only universally recognized set of standards relating to the labour and social aspect of MNE activities: *The Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy*, voluntary code adopted by the ILO Governing Body in 1977 and addressed to governments, employers, and workers' organizations. Long study and negotiation preceded the consensus achieved on principles of employment, training, conditions of work and life, and industrial relations.

ILO's member countries -- whether home bases or hosts for MNE's-- report every three years on the application of the Declaration in their countries. In the event of disputes over the Declaration's principles, governments and, in certain circumstances, employers' or workers' organizations may ask the ILO for an interpretation.

In close coordination with the UN and other institutions, the ILO continuously researches the effect of the operations of multinational enterprises on labor and social issues. The operations of multinational enterprises are expanding, often with the encouragement of governments of both industrialized and developing countries (*continued next page*)

*(ILO & MNE's, concluded)*

seeking to attract foreign investment.

The globalization of the economy and the shift everywhere to the free market offer enlarged possibilities for investment, which multinational enterprises are quick to seize. In view of these facts, the ILO recently has intensified its efforts to promote the ap-

plication of the Declaration of Principles in each country, at the same time encouraging the implementation of the labor standards which directly relate to it.

## ILO & Cooperatives

One of ILO's longest-running programs is the Cooperative Program, established in accord with the the cooperative recommendation adopted in 1966 by the International Labor Conference (ILO Recommendation No. 127). The program's objective is to support and promote cooperatives in developing countries as a means of relieving poverty, creating employment and generating income.

For almost thirty years, the ILO Cooperative Program has collaborated with national cooperative movements, NGOs, governments, employers' associations, and workers' organizations in formulating and promoting policies, laws and programs which promote the four basic characteristics of a true cooperative: (1) voluntary membership, (2) autonomous decision-

making, (3) democratic control, and (4) equitable distribution of benefits and risks.

The intended beneficiaries are underprivileged workers who, through a cooperative structure, can create their own employment opportunities or acquire technical and managerial skills. This includes landless peasants, school-leavers, unskilled youth, unemployed graduates, and women. The ILO places special emphasis on improving women's social and managerial status within cooperatives.

At the request of governments, ILO experts are at work in many countries helping to set up or develop cooperatives in fields of production, marketing and supply services for producers, savings and credit, banking, and consumer supply.

The Cooperative Program offers advisory and information services on legislation and human resource development. It also provides technical assistance: on training cooperative trainers in cooperative colleges; on training cooperative managers on the job and in institutions; on the design of cooperative publicity and education programs; and on compiling cooperative management training manuals and methodologies.

for cooperatives. As governments limit the financial resources they can devote to development activities, cooperative movements (often, in fact, tied to governments in the past) are being freed from official control and given greater responsibility for planning their own development. This shift in emphasis from top-down decision-making by governments to the efforts of individuals and their own organizations and groups creates the prospect of an enlarged role for cooperative movements in accumulating funds for investment, creating job opportunities, and providing goods and services.

Under these conditions more than ever, ILO is helping producer cooperatives in developing countries meet international production standards. One objective is to enable them to export their goods to purchasing cooperative organizations in other countries. A related objective is to foster the exchange of experience and know-how among cooperatives by linking cooperatives in developing countries to those in industrialized countries.

ILO's technical assistance goes not only to formal cooperatives but also to similar economic self-help organizations of small producers, consumers, workers and the self-employed. At every opportunity -- with governments, the multilateral development banks, other development agencies, NGOs, and with workers' and employers' associations -- ILO stresses the important role such economic self-help organizations can play in stimulating self-employment and investment. It also emphasizes that the management of such organizations must remain in the hands of those directly involved -- the member-owners.



### Now, more than ever

The international debt crisis and the efforts of many developing countries to restructure their economies have a special significance

## ILO & Women

The protection of women's health and safety in the industrial workplace has been on ILO's agenda since the beginning, followed soon by the issue of equal pay for work of equal value. When ILO zeroed in after World War II on the needs of workers and poor people in Africa and Asia, its fundamental commitment to equal opportunity and universal human rights bumped smack into pervasive traditions of gender inequality. Well before the U.N. Decade for Women (1975-1985) awakened the "international development community" to the neglected role of women as agents of economic and social progress, ILO was documenting the participation and status of women in the work force; designing special training for women workers and entrepreneurs; and pressing governments, unions, and cooperatives for women's equal participation with men in decision-making, training, and positions of leadership. For current information on ILO's policies, programs, and publications on women, contact the following focal points:

-- At ILO, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland:

(1) Special Adviser for Women Workers Questions, Office of the Deputy Director-General; (2) Women-in-Development Program, Department of Technical Cooperation; (3) The Equality of Rights Branch; (4) ILO Central Library and Documentation Bureau; (5) ILO Publications Department; (6) ILO Regional Office for Arab States; (7) ILO Regional Office for Europe.

-- At other locations:

(1) International Training Center, 125 Corson Unita d'Italia, I-10127 Torino, Italy; (2) ILO Regional Office for Africa, 01 BP 3960, Abidjan 01, Cote d'Ivoire; (3) ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, PO Box 1759, Bangkok, Thailand; (4) ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Apartado postal 3638, Lima 1, Peru.

## ILO's International Training Center in Turin, Italy

The 30-year-old International Training Center of the ILO in Turin, Italy, is the largest training institute of the United Nations system. By 1994 it had trained nearly 40,000 people from 170 countries. Most of these alumni now hold responsible posts in government agencies and ministries, labor unions, women's organizations, cooperatives, and micro-enterprise or small business associations. All courses include an awareness of international labor standards expressed by conventions and recommendations adopted by ILO's tri-partite membership. The Training Center is committed exclusively to developing human resources, on the principle that investing in human capacity is the most efficient means of social advancement and of assuring the future of developing countries or those in transition. Training subjects are determined jointly by the Center's governing board and the ILO. Courses fall within the areas of management training, workers' education, industrial relations, and programs promoting women, health and safety, and social security. Two recent examples: (1) a course to promote entrepreneurship among Vietnamese women and help them understand the basic elements that are essential

for the creation of a small or medium-sized enterprise; (2) a course for employers and workers from a former communist country of central Europe on collective bargaining and effective negotiating techniques among social partners, demonstrating also the important role these have in achieving social progress.

A primary objective in the 1990's is to become an all-purpose training institution for decision-makers and others in a position to assure a cost-effective "national multiplier effect" for economic and social development, rather than remain a specialized technical training center.

