

## ILO now a front for IMF—and Soviets

By Rainer Apel

On July 15-17, the Schiller Institute Labor Commission convened a conference in Mexico City of trade union leaders from countries throughout the Western hemisphere, to map strategies for stopping the economic holocaust. At its Geneva meeting in June, the International Labor Organization became the forum for joint operations by the Soviets and the Kissinger crowd against the Mexico City meeting.

In the face of a massive assault by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the banking world against workers' living standards in all countries, the ILO has not only failed to come out in labor's defense, but the ILO leadership has even signed a pact with the IMF against labor. The June ILO conference in Geneva passed a "Resolution concerning the Most Urgent Problems of Africa," which contained the scandalous passage:

"In recent years, international financial institutions have proposed a number of adjustments and stabilization policies to African countries which are essential for the recovery of their economies."

The resolution did not admit that the IMF causes starvation, and deliberately so, but it did at least admit that IMF conditionalities "might also have undesirable social and political consequences." But therefore, it was resolved: "The role of the ILO in this context is to collaborate with the IMF in finding the most appropriate short and long-term policy measures which on the one hand redress the economies of the African countries concerned, and on the other hand avoid measures being introduced whose burden falls heavily on the poor . . . who are unable to absorb any further reduction in their standard of living if they are to survive."

Much of the labor union work in Africa, which has to proceed in an extremely repressive environment, depends on the ILO's support funds. That is the ILO's leverage. The resolution clearly means that the ILO will tell labor organizers in Africa to abstain from protest actions against the IMF's "adjustment" policies.

African participants in Geneva admitted: "The IMF is looting our nations, it is a colonialist institution," as a government representative from Swaziland put it. "Everything we earn, the banks carry out of our countries." The anti-IMF resolution of ORIT, the Ibero-American labor congress, which

was made available by *EIR* representatives to many delegates, met high interest. A labor union leader from Zimbabwe commented: "We should stop paying the debts, but the industrialized nations go with the IMF and the banks."

But Irving Brown of the AFL-CIO, who helped to build the ILO after the last world war, and Lane Kirkland, the president of the AFL-CIO, played a key role in demoralizing the anti-IMF ferment among the delegates. They prevented a thorough debate on the debt situation in Africa, and also in Ibero-America. On the other hand, they left ample opportunities to the Cubans and Nicaraguans, who had sent sizable delegations to Geneva, to rally support for Fidel Castro's fake front against the IMF among delegates. Asked by *EIR* what he thought of the Cuban organizing, Kirkland said he was unconcerned: "There is no discussion on debts. There is no such discussion here."

Kirkland's statement reflected the deal which his AFL-CIO had made on June 25 with the Soviets, according to which the Cubans would receive even more seats on the ILO's more important committees.

When a representative of the independent labor movement of Nicaragua reported to the ILO on violent attacks and political repression of non-governmental organizations like the COSEP by the Managua junta's shock troops, the infamous "turbistas," ILO officials intervened in the debate and postponed it to a later date. Representatives of the Soviets and their client-states naturally approved.

Cuban organizing in Geneva paid off. Immediately after the close of the conference on June 27, Cuban, leftist, and communist labor representatives from 12 Ibero-American countries met in Madrid to prepare Castro's "anti-IMF" summit of July 15 in Havana. These were the CUT representatives of Brazil, Chile, and the Dominican Republic, the CSTC of Colombia, the CST and ATC of Nicaragua, the Cuban CTC, the CGTP and Luz y Fuerza of Peru, the P-CNY of Uruguay, and the Comisiones Obreras of Spain. The CTM of Mexico sent an observer. The meeting in Madrid, which had been prepared in Geneva, obviously had the backing of Kirkland's and Brown's AFL-CIO.

Kirkland and Brown have not been as tolerant toward the organizing of the Schiller Institute's Labor Commission for an Ibero-American debtors' cartel. Commission members have come under immense pressure from the labor attachés at U.S. embassies in Ibero-America, acting on orders from Kirkland's AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington. One labor representative in Geneva called this illegal meddling, "Kirkland's revenge for the Schiller Institute's labor lobbying in Washington."

"The Soviet influence at the ILO is immense," said one of the delegates, "because when the Americans left the ILO for some time, the Soviets practically took over the organization. When the U.S.A. came back, they entered as just a minority partner, nothing else."

These facts are also known to Brown and Kirkland. Why do they work with the Soviets, then?