



Global



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Workers make protest against high interest rates

The Brazilian trade union centrals UGT, Força Sindical (FS), Central dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras do Brasil (CTB) and Nova Central Sindical dos Trabalhadores (NCST) were united in a protest against high interest rates. The protest took place on April 17, in front of the Central Bank, in Sao Paulo.



This act happened on the same day that Copom (Committee of Monetary Policies) decided to raise the Selic tax - the referential interest rate tax in Brazil, in 0,25%. Despite being a low raise, it means a reversion in the tendency of low rates of the last two years.

Canindé Pegado, secretary general of UGT, said that this act is a result of the unity of action of trade union centrals involving the fight for the reduction of interest rates, because the change of the Selic tax directly reaches the Brazilian people.

Pegado also explained that there are two trends within the Federal Government, one that is called monetarist, which wants to control inflation through high interest rates, and the other, defended by trade union centrals, which is developmentalist and fights for a growth in the GDP, because, this way, it creates the growth of the country, with job and income creation and, consequently, improvement in the living conditions of the population.

"We cannot remain indifferent, if the interest rates continue to rise, there will be recession, because with an increase in prices, population will buy less. High interest rates were never the remedy to contain inflation in any country of the world. Our priority is the GDP growth that creates an improvement in the living condition", Pegado affirmed.

To Marcos Afonso, secretary of UGT's press department, today's date is a historical day for the Brazilian trade union movement. The four trade union centrals are united, once again, in an unified and solidary act to show to society and to the government the position of workers, who "want higher investments, enlargement of the job market and significant improvement in the wage remuneration", Marcos Afonso ended. *(Giselle Corrêa, da UGT)*

Contain inflation? Yes, indeed.

But not at the cost of our jobs

UGT feels sorry, once again, that the government punishes workers by making a great mistake while raising the Selic tax in 0,25% to 7,5% per year.

On April 17, officials from UGT were in the TV show *Câmera Aberta Sindical*. Watch the video. >>

That made Brazil take the wrong direction of the global monetary policy and, along with Argentina and Russia, it is the third G-20 country to raise its interest rate in the last two years. This decision has the goal of containing consumption and, consequently, prevent inflation from remaining high, but it will punish workers who might loose their jobs and inhibit the GDP growth.



This decision is more an expression of a wrong economic policy and an attempt to contain inflation through a decree. Instead of stimulating the growth of Brazil through an increase of productivity to answer consumption, we are trying to fix a plane that is already flying.

This measure puts the trade union movement on alert. Contain inflation? Yes, indeed.

But not at the cost of our jobs.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT

Against espionage

Roberto Santiago calls general to explain espionage against trade unions

The Labour, Administration and Public Service Committee approved the application 230/13, which invites general José Elito de Carvalho Siqueira, head minister of the Department of Institutional Security of the Presidency of the Republic, and Wilson Roberto Trezza, director general of the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Abin), to provide clarifications against unionists of Porto de Suape, in Recife (PE).



During this meeting, some parliamentarians even suggested a visit to the office of the general, but Roberto Santiago, president of Ctas, and vice-president of UGT, was incisive while mentioning that the law is for everyone.

"Out of debt, out of danger. The general is supposed to make an official statement, and after that, if we are not convinced, we are going to ask for his dismissal".

According to an article published in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, the general and the director made an op to foresee a possible strike in the harbor as a form of protest to the provisory measure 595, which removes the autonomy of States to perform bidding of new cargo terminals.

"We do not want the general to snoop popular movements. Democracy is supposed to be preserved. Where I come from, there is a proverb that says that the stick that hits Chico, also hits Francisco", punctuated Santiago.

The writer of the application, deputy Paulo Pereira da Silva (PDT party-Sao Paulo State), says that the complaint is serious and shows an anti-democratic attitude of the government. In the end, Santiago states that "if the general does not make a statement by Wednesday, deputy Paulinho will come up with another application so that the summons is put to vote", he ended.

Democratize communication

Trade union movement will step pressure on governments in order to democratize communication

Trade union officials and advisors from 12 Latin-American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay) reaffirmed, during the seminar Democratization of Communication, which was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, the defense of freedom of expression as key element in the TUCA (Trade Union Confederation of the Americas) policy and also as a main goal to be defended by trade unions of these countries in this event that took place on April 3 and 4.



Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, said that democratizing means of communication is essential to guarantee workers rights and to discuss their priorities.

"It is not possible that half dozen people are in charge of communications in Brazil and in the world. We must change this figure and the path is via the trade union movement strongly stepping pressure on governments."

Victor Báez, TUCA secretary general, affirmed that the "media latifundium" in the hands of a few groups end up becoming a de facto power. "This power provides them the ability to fall upon the political and social settings and influence on the daily lives of workers. This concentration halts the consolidation of freedom of association", he said.

Gustavo Gómez, one of the main people in charge for the writing of the project of the new telecommunications law in Uruguay, stated, through his speech, that the concentration of means of communication happens through the fact that newspapers, magazines, radio and television channels are controlled by the same owner, and that is analog to bankers and latifundists. He believes that the political decision of the trade union movement affiliated with TUCA put this issue on its agenda.

Omar Rincón, communication coordinator of Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), one of the institutions that supported the organization of this event, said that it is necessary that the funds of official advertising should also be democratized. "Community means and non commercial ones need resources, which are still being financed", he emphasized.

Is the Brazilian government afraid of the democratization of communication?

Last February, César Alvarez, executive secretary of the Ministry of Communications, announced in a seminar of the TeleTime magazine, in Brasilia, that the government of Dilma Rousseff, would give up on the proposition of a new law for the communication sector that was created in the last year of Lula administration, which was, at the time, in charge of minister Franklin Martins. Why?

UGT pays homage to journalists and defends freedom of act

The **National Journalist Day** was celebrated On April 07 and UGT salutes this communication professional for its importance and seriousness of its work and collaboration for society.

It is through means of communication that we are able to understand what is going on in the world and UGT defends freedom of expression of workers of this area, in order to democratize access to information and end the manipulation of large medias.

UGT understands that a media democratization is necessary for a better action of journalists and, this way, what really goes on in the backstage of public, trade union, political, economic and international decisions reach society and, through that, journalists are able to give workers the power to discuss what is their priority.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work

ILO: "The World Day for Safety and Health at Work in 2013 focuses on the prevention of occupational diseases".

Worldwide, occupational diseases continue to be the leading cause of work-related deaths. According to ILO estimates, out of 2.34 million occupational fatalities every year, only 321,000 are due to accidents.

The remaining 2.02 million deaths are caused by various types of work-related diseases, which correspond to a daily average of more than 5,500 deaths. This is an unacceptable Decent Work deficit.



The inadequate prevention of occupational diseases has profound negative effects not only on workers and their families but also on society at large due to the tremendous costs that it generates; particularly, in terms of loss of productivity and burdening of social security systems.

Prevention is more effective and less costly than treatment and rehabilitation. All countries can take concrete steps now to improve their capacity for preventing occupational diseases.

As every year, the ILO Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment has prepared a report which calls on governments, employers, workers and their organizations to collaborate in the development and implementation of national policies and strategies aimed at preventing occupational and work-related diseases.

Unionism as a "legislator"

Through ILO's tripartite system, unionism - organization of workers - is an equal partner to employers and to the State and, therefore, it may be considered one of the essential "legislators" in the construction of the international system of labour rules.

This statement was given today by Stanley Gacek, assistant director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) office in Brazil, in a lecture that took place on April 11, in the International Congress on Trade Union Rights, organized by the State Public Prosecutor in Fortaleza, Ceara. This event, which ends tomorrow, was also attended by Luís Camargo, Labour attorney general, and by representatives of workers' organizations.

"Unionism is an essential and indispensable partner to social dialogue with the State, employers, at all levels", Stanley Gacek said. ILO's assistant director also mentioned the relation between unionism with the State as an employer, recalling that the collective bargaining in the public administration will be one of the topics of the next International Labour Conference. The 102nd ILC will take place from June 5 to the 20th, in Geneva, and it is the main annual meeting of ILO, one that is attended by representatives of all the 185 member States.

"This is an important opportunity for the public unionism in the process of collective bargaining in public administration: while it tries to negotiate its own demands and improvements in working conditions, it may also discuss the agenda on the improvement of quality of public services", he concluded.

This event is organized through a partnership with the Group of Studies in Defense of Labour Law and in the Labour Process (Grupe), with the Federal University of Ceara and with the Forum of Trade Union Centrals in the State of Ceara (FCSEC). (ILO news)

[Watch the lecture of Stanley Gacek](#)

Brazilians and Italians debate health and security at work

On April 04, **UGT** attended the International Seminar on Health and Security of Workers Brazil/Italy, in Praia Grande, Sao Paulo. Canindé Pegado, UGT's secretary general, represented the president of UGT, Ricardo Patah, in the opening session.

This event continued on April 05, and was focused on seven classes: commerce and civil construction workers, workers of food and chemical industry, telephony workers, metallurgists and security technicians.

During the two days that these event last, event that was organized by UIL (Unione Italiana Del Lavoro), Ital, Italian institutions, and by Força Sindical, with the support of UGT, the following topics were discussed: the health of workers exposed to asbestos, construction of public policies, advances in this area, civil and criminal rights related to accident at work, disability retirements, among others.



According to Cleonice Caetano Souza, who is also director of UGT's National Department on Health and Security, this meeting is essential to advance in the achievements that aim to improve the quality of labour health both in Brazil and in Italy. "The valuation of the working class and a better income distribution are primordial to boost the internal economy and to the growth of any nation".

UGT convenes militants for an act on the World Health Day

On April 10, UGT, along with militants from several affiliated trade unions, attended a massive act related to the World Health Day, which was celebrated on April 07.

Organized by UGT's Department of Health and Security at Work, in a partnership with representatives of other trade union centrals and social movements, this event, which began at Patriarca Square, downtown Sao Paulo, marched through the streets of the city until the front of the City Council, where a session with the Health Commission took place, in which the agenda was the World Health Day and the strengthening of SUS (United Health System).



According to Cleonice Caetano Souza, director of UGT's National Department on Health and Security, the state in which UGT finds itself is deplorable and that stimulates trade unions and social movements to get united and to face constant attempts to dismantle this system that is so important for the population.

"SUS is the best medicare that people have and we must fight to improve this system and advance with public policies that increase the life quality of population and, consequently, the lives of retirees in Brazil", Natal Leo, secretary general of UGT's Trade Union of Retirees, Pensioners and Elderly People, explains..



"The União Geral dos Trabalhadores reaffirms its historic commitments to the working class, while seeking to expand its methods of action, with ethics, courage and the certainty that Brazil can be better and more just. "
Ricard Patah – UGT's President]

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