



## Unified act starts salary campaign

Ricardo Patah, president of the Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo and president of UGT, Miguel Torres, president of Força Sindical and Luiz Carlos Motta, president of Fecomercários, besides other union chairpersons from 65 unions of commerce workers from the country of the state of Sao Paulo, were present, on August 25, in an act in front of the Federation of Commerce of Sao Paulo which marked the beginning of a salary campaign, organized by commerce workers unions represented by Fecomercários.



"Commerce is responsible for high profits and we must take this money and give it to the workers", Patah emphasized. The salary campaign of workers in Sao Paulo has started two months ago and there is still no sign of an agreement with companies.

And now, Patah, who presides the largest institution of the class, representing 450 thousand workers, wants to expand it into an unified campaign with workers from all over the state. a class with 2.5 million workers.

"The commerce workers must be motivated to serve the Brazilians. Employers have a lot to give us this year", Luiz Carlos Motta stated.

UGT and Força Sindical decided to start an unified campaign to show the strength and solidarity of union institutions in defense of the interests and concerns of workers. Ricardo Patah reminds that this is not the first time that these union centrals are working together in defense of one single cause, however, this is the first time that UGT and Força Sindical got together to elaborate an agenda with requests aiming towards 1,5 million workers in the state of Sao Paulo.

Miguel Torres, president of Força Sindical, pointed out that the association of the two centrals is not summarized into the act and requests that were done together, but to the interests of workers as a whole. The president of Força Sindical guaranteed that from now on, workers from the commerce, service and industry areas, as well as others classes that are represented by it, will have one single voice. "From now on, if commerce workers need support to go on a strike, they can count on the support and presence of workers that are represented by Força", he guaranteed.

Workers from the commerce, industry and service areas, besides the ones that work in the food, textile, dairy, metallurgical and chemical industries and the ones that work in graphic companies defend, among other ideals, salary reposition higher than inflation, end of time bank, end of racial discrimination and adoption of a worker participation in company profits and 180 day maternity leave.

Prior to their visit to Fecomércio, workers were gathering in front of Fiesp (Federation of Industries in the State of Sao Paulo), to deliver the combined agenda of requests from workers in industries that are affiliated with UGT and Força Sindical. Together, workers will be stronger to coerce businessmen in favor of the ideals of employees in this sector.

## In defense of women!

**National Plenary Session of UGT** approved Letter of Joinville, that repudiates violence against women



Indignation towards violence against women has marked the solemn opening session of the 10th National Plenary Session of UGT, held in Joinville, in the state of Santa Catarina. Indignation marked the speech of Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, due to the appalling numbers of violence against women. "We feel nothing but indignation concerning this kind of violence that, according to statistics, is responsible for the murder of 28 women per day", Patah stated.

The **10th Plenary Session of the National Board of Directors** approved the "Letter of Joinville" that starts the process of a permanent campaign of UGT in disapproval to all kinds of violence against women.

It's unacceptable that criminals have their severe bails established by law substituted by food stamps or work in community services, under a clear disrespect to the Maria da Penha law.

"The decision of the Supreme Justice Court is even more sorrowful and reprehensible. Recently, it voted the obligation that the victim herself should make a formal accusation of the aggression, in a clear regression towards the articles established under this law, that determine a public claim to cases of domestic violence", Valdir Vicente de Barros, secretary of UGT's Public Policies Department, stated.

According to him, UGT, in its campaign, that will be nationally and internationally publicized, will demand that crimes against women should be considered "crimes of public domain", what will demand an immediate action from governments, through an investigation of crimes that were committed against women and the exemplary punishment of criminals, not relying on formal accusations of women that besides being victims are threatened by their aggressors.

### Education is priority to a "Brazil that we want"

During his intervention in the opening of the 10th National Plenary Session of UGT, held in Joinville, Santa Catarina, Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, once again emphasized education as one of the priorities of the union central.



"We are opening the event at a Theater and we need to interact with universities and the art world. And we are receiving today the Bolshoi Ballet. We've already organized an event celebrating 100 years of the union movement in Brazil at Faap, and after three years we are celebrating with ballet, art that means softness, determination, discipline, a lot of study and willingness. And that summarizes what UGT really has in its figure, which is determination, strength and will, that makes us accomplices of the Brazilian people."

**Students from the Bolshoi Theater School made an artistic show at the opening of the Plenary Session of UGT.**

"UGT sustains and enlarges its campaign in favor of a revolution in education, to search for quick answers to important sectors of the Brazilian working class, whether they are young, adults of elderly, since they are citizens, they are entitled to the legitimate right to participate in the construction of our Brazil."

Patah reaffirmed the independent position UGT is taking on the next presidential elections. "UGT will not support any presidential candidate and release its state branches and affiliated unions to support the candidates they are ideologically compatible or according to their regional political strategies".

"UGT is a central base-centred. Whoever determines the paths is not the board of directors or the national board of executives, but the base of UGT, the central of the Brazilian people", Ricardo Patah ended.

### The profile of the Brazilian elector has changed

A raise in the income changed the profile of the Brazilian elector, as stated by specialists.

With the fact that 9,5 million people have left the state of indigence and 18,4 million people left the state of poverty from 2004 to 2008, according to data from the Institute of Applied Economic Research (Ipea), the Brazilian candidates face, this year, a new electoral profile in the country.

Through the evaluation of specialists that were listened by Agência Brasil, these electors will have different preoccupations once they are voting.

To David Fleischer, political scientist of Brasilia University (UnB), people that used to exchange their vote for a meal in elections, will now be able to show less immediate preoccupations.

"These people that went through a social ascension will be less preoccupied in preserving their properties. They probably moved from their old residences, their children are now able to study, and they are now worried about other things", he said. *(Mariana Jungmann) (Agência Brasil)*

### Fight against anti-unionist practices

Representatives from ILO have meeting with representatives from union centrals

An accusation made by **UGT** at **ILO** (International Labour Organization) on anti-unionists practices adopted by some attorneys from MPT (Public Ministry of Labour) was the main topic of a recent meeting held in Brasilia. During this meeting, that gathered representatives from six union centrals, UGT was represented by the chairman **Avelino Garcia Filho**, from the **Command of Anti-unionists Practices**.

Last November, **Ricardo Patah**, **president of UGT**, had already presented accusations during an ILO meeting in Geneva (Switzerland). This same matter was discussed in several seminars that were organized by UGT, in a clear demonstration that the union movement does not accept, under any circumstance, the procedure that was partially adopted by a section of the **Public Labour Ministry**, which is contrary to the freedom of unions, informed **Avelino Garcia Filho**.

### Brazil: Violation of Union Rights in 2009

Every year the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** issues a **Report on Union rights**, and the report from 2009 shows an impressive raise in the number of unionists that were murdered in 2009: 101 deaths. From this amount, 48 victims were murdered in Colombia, 16 in Guatemala, 12 in Honduras, six in Mexico, six in Bangladesh and four in Brazil. **Josenaldo Alves da Silva**, director from a union affiliated with UGT, was one of the four victims in Brazil.

We emphasize below excerpts from the **ITUC** report that are related to Brazil.

The conditions of the job market in 2009 were tough in Brazil, especially due to the global economic crisis. The president **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva** faced hundreds of dismissals in the private sector and had to consider measures to maintain the workers conditions and the social dialogue between employers, workers and the governments.

Violence against activists and union leaders was serious and frequent in 2009



An example took place on June, 01, in Santana do Araguaia, state of Para: **Josenaldo Alves da Silva**, director of the Commerce Workers Union of Redencao, who was also in charge of the **Union Delegacy of Santana do Araguaia** and an employee of Bertin Cold Storage building, was murdered.

He was found dead with three shots in the head and the supposition of robbery was dismissed due to the fact that the murderers did not steal anything from the victim. The unionist had already been threatened due to his role in the defense of the workers rights in cold storage companies.

Precarious contracts are still a common practice in the violation of labour and union rights.

Although the fundamental union rights are guaranteed, the law shows a series of problematic areas. Public servants do not have the right to sign collective negotiations, and the negotiation of salaries in public or mixed companies is limited. Even considering that the right to go on strike is guaranteed to workers from the private and public sectors, strikes in public areas are subject to a group of rules that weren't established yet. Finally, the juridical tool named "obstructive interdict" has been used to prohibit or restrain strike pickets based on the defense of "propriety against interference or pillage".

### Strengthening Mercosur

Meeting of the Social Economic Consulting Forum at UGT emphasized the importance of a more united and solidary trading group.

UGT received on August 23, the visit of the Undersecretary General for South America, Central America and the Caribbean Ambassador Antônio Simões, from the Minister of External Relations and Bruno Bath, director of Mercosur Department of the Minister of External Relations, to a meeting of the Social Economic Consulting Forum (FCES). The meeting, that was intermediated by Valdir Vicente (UGT) and Darci Piana, coordinators from the Brazilian Section of FCES, discussed the results that were already achieved and prepared strategies to the Brazilian presidency of the trading group.

The ambassador Antônio Simões, who is also coordinator of the group Common Market - GMC to the Pro Tem Presidency - Brazilian PPT, that began in the second semester of 2010, emphasized the importance of creating a "Mercosur awareness" to make the public policies of the group real. Mercosur, a trading group that was created 20 years ago, is currently presided by Brazil in its rotating presidency, and Brazilian negotiators want to make advances in the creation of elements that are common to all citizens of Mercosur.

Simões emphasized the importance of creating a schedule so that the countries of the Common External Tariff are able to fit in, besides deepening negotiations in the service and governmental purchase areas, once there are discrepancies between countries that aren't able to keep up with the taxes.

### A tax to fight poverty

ITUC calls for UN Summit to endorse Financial Transactions Tax to help fund development and growth

The **ITUC** is calling on governments to commit to introducing a financial transactions tax (FTT) at September's United Nations Development Summit, that will take place in New York, from September 20 to 22, to help tackle global poverty and accelerate actions on jobs and climate change.



The **UN Summit**, to review progress on the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs), will take place against a background of growing global unemployment and inequality and major set-backs on economic development in countries across the globe.

"The global economic crisis continues to hit hard, with 200 million more people falling into absolute poverty since 2008, millions of young people with little or no hope of finding work, and women in particular being squeezed out of unemployment. The recession may be over for banks and finance, but the outlook for employment and for vital public services is bleak as governments cut spending in order to satisfy the money markets. A financial transaction tax not only makes good economic sense - it is also a matter of justice and equity", said **ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow**.

The **ITUC** declaration proposes to place the FTT at the centre of an overall package of measures which would also tackle corporate tax evasion and ensure effective regulation of banks and finance. The ITUC submission to the Summit sets out detailed policies and actions which would give a renewed impetus to meeting the MDGs, which on current measures are highly unlikely to be met, despite repeated pledges by governments.

### UGT participates in Union Forum of the Americas

The **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)** organized, on August 12, the Union Forum of the Americas, within the Social and Union Forum of the Americas, in Asunción, Paraguay. More than 500 unionists discussed topics such as precarious work, sustainable development, decent work, social economic conjuncture, political changes, militarization and free commerce Treaties in the region.



Unionists that were present, all organized around the main union centrals of the region, gathered around the Southern Cone Union Centrals Coordinator, that has 13 union centrals from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, representing more than 25 million workers in the continent, also debated over the defense, maintenance and enlargement of labour rights, deepening of democratic processes and the search for alternatives to keep the economic growth contrary to the neoliberal view.

UGT participated in the table with Cícero Pereira da Silva, who mediated the 1st panel and Laerte Teixeira da Costa, who mediated the 2nd panel. Valdir Vicente de Barros, secretary of UGT's Public Policies Department and Mônica da Costa Mata Roma, adjunct secretary of UGT's Integration in the Americas Department, participated in the debates. *(Marco Roza)*

#### Letter of Joinville was presented to Union Centrals

**Valdir Vicente, from UGT**, presented the Letter of Joinville, that repudiates violence against women, to union centrals of Mercosur, during a plenary session of the Southern Cone Union Centrals Coordinator.

**Valdir Vicente** emphasized the following topics:

-UGT demands fully respect towards the law 11.340 of 2006 (known as Maria da Penha law) and that it should be followed by citizens; this law recognizes domestic violence at all levels, whether physical, sexual, patrimonial or moral, and includes the psychological aggression: threats, humiliation, rejection, discrimination.

-UGT fights for an enlargement of a specialized system to serve women, aiming to strengthen conditions so that the victims keep on pressing charges with guarantees of security and integrity.

-UGT, under the terms of law, demands an exemplary punishment of aggressors. The right to life and physical and moral integrity of all human beings. UGT reaffirms its alignment to the commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

-UGT reaffirms its fight against violence to women and declares its will to do all it can, under its competence, and in collaboration with governmental organs and institutions of civil society to mobilize the entire society to the issue of violence against women and for the effective implantation of the Maria da Penha law, that prevents domestic and family violence against women.

-UGT, being internationalist as it is, defends a global and quick articulation aiming to an immediate release of the Iranian woman Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, sentenced to execution by stoning. The defense of life does not have color, borders, religion, nationality, class or such things.

#### Environment, energy and work

UGT was present in Montevideo on August 17 and 18 in the **Regional Seminar on Environment, Energy and Work**. Twenty chairpersons from 8 countries (Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Brazil) discussed the participation in COP 16 (Conference of the Parties) that will be held in Cancun (Mexico) from November 29 to December 10. A document (signed exclusively by ITUC) was discussed to be taken to the referred governing body of the United Nations in the end of 2010. The representation of UGT was in charge of **Domingos Fernandes**.

### International Youth Day

## UGT's Youth has a meeting with president Lula



On August 12, date in which it is celebrated the International Youth Day, João Vidal, adjunct secretary of UGT's Youth Department and Vice-President of the National Youth Council (Conjuve), along with state and municipal counsellors of youth departments, had a meeting with the president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Vidal made a speech representing all youth from the organized civil society.

During the meeting, the president Lula signed a decree to summon the 2nd National Youth Conference, that will be held in 2011. The first Conference, that took place in Brasilia, in April 2008, mobilized more than 400 thousand people all over Brazil and resulted in the definition of a range of priorities and resolution that should lead youth public policies at all governmental levels.

### UGT organizes 4th edition of the Project Youth and Unionism in Ceara

The activity had the participation of young union chairpersons from several institutions scattered all over northeast Brazil. Evanildo Cabral, director of the Sports and Culture Department of the Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo; Telga Stephany da Silva, secretary of UGT-CE Youth Department; Luiz Hernando Rios, adjunct secretary of UTAL (University of Workers of Latin America) and Marina Silva, coordinator of the Project Youth and Unionism of UGT, were also present at the event.

The activity has the support of the **Solidarity Center (AFL – CIO)**, and the methodological coordination of **IPROS (Institute of Social Promotion)**, through the participation of the educator Paulo.

## Democratization of Communication

Meeting of union communicators in Asuncion defines a Continental Conference on this topic.

Unions of the Americas should depend less on means of communication that are business-based to support their own communication platforms. This was one of the main conclusions of the meeting of union communicators of the region sponsored by the Union Confederation of the Americas in the Paraguayan capital.

The **journalist Mauro Ramos, Press Coordinator of UGT**, participated in the meeting providing a vast material in video and paper to illustrate his manifesto on the actions of UGT in Brazil.

**Victor Báez Mosquera, general secretary of TUCA**, expressed the commitment to support unions in the construction of a continental strategy of communication. He emphasized the challenge of reducing the inequalities between the centrals that are well structured and the others that need support in the communication area.



"The General Union of Workers (UGT) 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." Ricardo Patah – UGT's President

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