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October 15: Teacher's Day

Ricardo Patah, national president of União Geral dos Trabalhadores

On October 15 we celebrate Teacher's Day, perhaps one of the oldest and most valued dates in tribute to a professional class. It could not be any different: all of us remember our teachers. I dearly remember all of my teachers of elementary school. Their names. Their faces.



However, despite all of this care, teachers are, perhaps, the professional class that is worse treated in Brazil: extremely low wages and exhausting shifts. Full classrooms, disrespect and lack of working conditions.

Income distribution is the worse problem in Brazil. Nothing approaches us more to less developed countries than this inequality.

But the way we treat education in our country also equates us to "underdeveloped" countries. Health in Brazil, which is far from being reasonable, is still better than in most countries. Education isn't. We have serious weaknesses in our educational system and the largest one of them is the way we treat our teachers.

One of the key factors to face the terrible income distribution is a high quality education. And we cannot think of educational quality without valuing teachers. But this is far from taking place. On this October 15, teachers confronted the police in many cities in which they made protests. In some cities they found repression. But in all of them they found ill will and lack of understanding from authorities.

There is no doubt that education has been universalized in our country. In Brazil, in 1950, only 36.2% of children aged 7 to 14 years old had access to school. In 1990, this index had already reached 88%. Nowadays, the access to education is almost universal. There was also an important expansion in professional education. In 2007, enrollments in professional schools were nearly 700 thousand and in 2013 this number had reached levels higher than the double of it.

If schools grew a lot in quantity, the same thing did not happen in terms of quality. And the first aspect for good education is the valuation of teachers: by valuing their education, their career, their working conditions and salaries.

Education is in the core of UGT. In our Declaration of Principles, approved in our Founding Congress in August 2007, we clearly expressed that:

"We advocate education, knowledge, information and communication as the key elements of material and intellectual progress as well as well being. We defend an educational policy based on the generalization of public schools, on the reorienting of teaching content at all levels to turn it into an analytical, capacitating and innovative teaching, the training and re-training of teachers and the development of a high quality public teaching, updated with modernity".

On October 15 we congratulate teachers recalling a phrase of the educator Paulo Freire: "Education itself does not transform society, though without it society does not change either".

Strike of bank workers grows

Bank workers, who were outraged with the position of Fenaban in refusing to negotiate once again and presenting a new proposal to the class, increased even more the strike throughout Brazil. On October 08, a statement of the National Command recorded 10,369 closed bank branches and administrative centers.

The adhesion of strikers has gradually grown in Franca and surrounding area. On October 09, 39 bank branches are closed in the territory that this union represents. Out of this total, 19 are in Franca and 20 in its surrounding area. Now, there are nearly 550 idle bank workers, representing 45% of the total of this class.



Throughout Brazil, more than 10,800 workplaces, from bank branches to administrative centers were closed until last Friday, according to information from the National Command of Bank Workers

This class will continue on strike for indefinite time, until Fenaban presents a fair proposal, with an index that answers the needs of workers, restores inflation and provides raises in real terms.

The strike of Bank of Brazil already affects the distribution of cash holdings in Banks. With the downtime of the CSO (Center of Operational Support) of Campinas, administrative area in charge of logistics, cash started to lack in ATMs machines, fact that can be observed in the downtown branch of Bank of Brazil this morning, since some ATMs of this unit were not available. (Trade Union of Bank Workers of Franca and Surrounding Area).

CONTEC demands reopening negotiations with FEBRABAN

The National Negotiation Executive Bank Commission – CEBNN/CONTEC (National Confederation of Credit Companies Workers), led by Lourenço Ferreira do Prado, visited the head office of FENABAN (National Federation of Banks) to deliver a document demanding the reopening of negotiations.

Due to the offer made by FENABAN, which offered a 5.5% adjustment, which does not even restore the inflation of the previous period, the class demands a 9.88% replacement of inflation, a 5.5% increase in real terms and participation in profits and results compatible with major profits of these companies.

House of Representative approves PPE

House of Representative approves reduction of working hours for shift work in the Program of Employment Protection. The Plenary Session of the House of Representatives voted the Provisional Measure 680/15 on October 07, after intense negotiations and agreements signed by the government, representatives of workers and congressman Daniel Vilela (PMDB party – State of Goiás), writer of the Provisional Measure 680/2015, which creates the Program of Employment Protection, congressmen concluded the vote of the Project of Converting Decree Law 18.2915 just a while ago.

The articulation of congressmen Ademir Camilo, vice president of UGT, and Rogério Rosso, leader of PSD party, was essential to achieve the rejection of the item that made the negotiated part prevail over the legislated part. If this item remained, in the view of unionists, it would bring major losses to workers.

The Program of Employment Protection allows companies in financial difficulties to reduce wages and working shifts in up until 30%, as long as workers are not fired for just cause. In order to enable the program, resources from the Workers AID Fund will be used, and the government will pay up until half of the part of the wage that the worker will not receive, limited to 65% (R\$ 900.85) of the level of unemployment insurance (currently in R\$ 1,385.91).

With the pressure of UGT, the plenary session removed the most controversial item of the Provisional Measure. The rule determined that the collective convention or agreement would prevail over the Law, as long as they did not prevent or go against rights established under the Constitution, in conventions of the International Labor Organization ratified by Brazil and rules of hygiene, health and security at work.

To **Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT**, the suppression of the flexibility of the Consolidation of Labor Laws, in which the negotiated part prevails over the legislated part, is a victory to the working class. "UGT, from the start, condemned regressive additions to the text of the Provisional Measure. We do not accept a setback in workers rights", he stated. Patah had classified the approved report as a "punch against the working class".



DIEESE- Banks:
High Interest and
earnings record



See the strike
photos



UGT - DIEESE
To understand
the PPE

Cooperation UGT – UNI Global

UGT and UNI Global discuss increase of the cooperation between the institutions

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, the vice-presidents **Laerte Teixeira da Costa** and **Lourenço Prado**, **Moacyr Pereira**, national finance secretary, and **Marcos Afonso de Oliveira**, secretary of Communications, had a meeting on October 09, in São Paulo, with **Christy Hoffman**, secretary general of UNI Global, which is a trade union federation that gathers institutions from several professional classes of services in 140 countries.



“UGT is one of the pillars of UNI in Latin America, since both institutions detain the higher representation in the commerce sector”, Christy explained.

According to Patah, UGT is just like UNI and the representation that the Brazilian trade union Center has increased its synch with the international institution. “We believe that since we are experiencing this whole process of globalization, the struggle of the working class cannot be limited to the physical barriers imposed by borders. Nowadays labor subjects must be equally globalized, that is why UGT participates in international fights as the one of UAW (United Auto Workers), which fights an immense battle against Nissan of Mississippi or with UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers), in issues related to McDonalds and Walmart, among other actions”.

To Christy, these actions developed by American trade unions, in a partnership with Brazilian institutions, is both a sign of solidarity among institutions that defend labor interests as a sign of survival of the fight of workmen in the United States, since this country managed to, over the years, practically eliminate the labor fight.

Trans-Pacific Partnership: a global preoccupation

On October 05, after almost five years of negotiation, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States and Vietnam announced the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP in English).

This agreement, which depends on the approval of congresses of signatory countries to be effective, consists of a series of measures that increase the trade of products and services, only thinking of profits and damaging the working class. “There is a mechanism that allows a company to sue a country if a Law makes this company to loose profitability. This prevents a country from legislating”, explained Marina Silva, advisor of the Department of Integration to the Americas, who also participated in the meeting.

UGT in ITUC Human Rights Commission

On October 09, **Laerte Teixeira**, secretary of TUCA’s Social Policies Department and vice-president of UGT, attended a meeting of the Human and Trade Union Rights Commission organized by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in São Paulo.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC secretary general, opened the event and presented a general overview of human rights and the mission of the world unionism in the current situation.

Jeff Vogt, director of the Legal department of ITUC, presented his report on the violations of trade union rights, focusing on the list of countries with the worse situation, where less trade union rights are respected, as well as important regional data. As for the region of the Americas, the situation of the anti-unionist violence and impunity in Colombia and Guatemala were emphasized. The situation in regions and countries with global influence (China, Europe) was also discussed, as well as the new capitalism and the general offensive against social and trade union rights, including the right to strike. The need to reflect and create strategies on these issues combined, and not singly, was also emphasized.

There was a discussion on the conclusion and follow up of the Commission on the Application of Rules (CAN) number 104 of the International Labor Conference. Jeff Vogt addressed some of the conclusions of CAN, especially the conclusions of Mexico, which clearly prohibit the protection contracts.



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On the way to the March of Black Women

UGT hosts meeting of trade union centers and Inspir (Inter-American Institute for Racial Equality), to draw actions of racial trade union activity scheduled for the week of the March of Black Women, which will take place from November 15 to 20, in Brasilia.

Cleonice Caetano de Souza, director and secretary of the Diversity Department of the Commerce Workers Union of São Paulo, secretary of Health and Security at Work of UGT and representative of the trade union Center at Inspir, emphasized the importance of unit in the racial fight for the strengthening and achievement of rights.

“There has been a tendency of us, women, losing space. But we will not be defeated. And we also count on the support of colleagues from our trade union centers that have come to strengthen our activities. There are many men who understand that this fight is ours, of women and black women. It could be in the LGBT issue, of people on the streets, disabled people, in all issues we may find black people. And we know quite well how much discrimination accentuates and enhances it, when the issue is the color of the skin”, Cleonice emphasizes.



Jana Karen Silverman, from the Center of solidarity of AFL-CIO (largest American trade union Center), is in charge of the organization of the seminar of November and provided an overview on what will be raised. The following issues are in the agenda: discussing the subject of female black workers, black feminism, machismo and racism.



Photos of the UGT at the IndustriALL World Women's Conference

State Congress of Trade Union and Labor Law



Congress gathers ministers, jurists, attorneys, trade union leaders and specialists of the labor world in Montes Claros, Minas Gerais

This Congress will be a combined action of UGT's State branch of Minas Gerais and the Federal Bar Council of Montes Claros.

“The economic, ethical and political crisis that Brazil is going through demands an effective action of the trade union movement in the sense of contributing with proposals that might lead to a sustainable development with social justice”, **Paulo Roberto da Silva**, president of the branch of Minas Gerais, explained.

“It is a commitment of the current board of directors of UGT-MG to invest in the qualification of its affiliated institutions for a civic, autonomous and independent action”, Paulo Roberto concluded.

Unemployment among young people rises

Youth unemployment in Brazil has one of the highest rises in the world, ILO warns

The warning from the International Labor Organization that, through a report published on October 9, reveals that the slowdown of the national economy will be felt by the youth until the end of the decade. Brazil had the second largest leap in youth unemployment among the largest economies of the world from 2014 to 2015.

According to the report, the unemployment rate among the population aged 15 to 24 years old in Brazil suffered a major decline over the last years, declining from 17.4% in the first semester of 2010 to 13.8% in 2014. However, in the first semester of 2015 and prior to the deepening of the crisis, this rate had already leaped to 15.8%, three times the rate among adults.

“There is a significant increase”, said Sara Elder, author of the report, making a reference to youth unemployment in Brazil. Only the economy of Finland presented a higher leap, of 2.2%.



Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015

The UGT Global is the Newsletter of International Information of the União Geral dos Trabalhadores

The UGT union is an organization formed to defend the Brazilian workers across a broad trade union movement, national, ethical, supportive, independent, democratic and innovative.

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