



100 years of the Union Movement in Brasil

Unprecedented seminar of **GUW** gathers 700 unionists and intellectuals at FAAP to discuss a historical overview of the union movement and its future in Brasil

Counting on the participation of over 430 union institutions of Brasil involving around 700 unionists, teachers, scientists, researchers, jurists, sociologists and public authorities, **GUW (General Union of Workers)** nurtured the **National Seminar "100 years of the Union Movement in Brazil: Historical Overview and Future Challenges"** on May 15 and 16.



The event counted on the partnership with **FAAP (Armando Álvares Pentead Foundation)** that, even offered its facilities to receive the participants. It also counted on the support of **BNDES (Brazilian Development Bank)** and **PASI (Immediate Social Aid Plan)**.

During two days the participants had the opportunity to listen to dissertations from the lecturers, related to the Brazilian unionism from the last 100 years.

This meeting, according to the present personalities, was unprecedented in the History of the Brazilian unionism. "During the 50 years I've been working in the Law area, it's the first time I've seen and participated in something this big" said the lecturer Dr. José Carlos Arouca, judge at the Regional Labour Court. "We managed to gather more than 700 delegates from all the Brazilian states besides intellectuals and students and from this seminar we were able to take historical lessons out of it", said the president of G UW, Ricardo Patah.

Another unprecedented experience from the organizers was the live transmission of the lectures, through the internet, to Brazil and to the world, that were seen by internet users through the G UW website, even participating by making questions. Due to the success reached with the seminar, the directorship of G UW is already including it in its annual program. "Next year we'll have another event like this one to discuss 101 years of the union movement in Brazil" announced Chiquinho Pereira, national secretary of Organization and Union Policies.

The General Union of Workers (G UW) ended its National Seminar with a huge success approving a declaration that sums up the intense two days of work, in which it encourages "all workers and all the union movement to a unit in search of the construction of a new agenda" and reassures the "objective of strengthening G UW and consolidating it into the largest and better union central of Brazil".

Read the declaration to the workers, the union movement and the Brazilian people in full. [Declaração às trabalhadoras e aos trabalhadores, ao movimento sindical e ao povo brasileiro](#) .

Seminar of G UW had an intense and productive program



At the opening ceremony, Friday morning, several personalities participated in the round: Ricardo Patah, Canindé Pegado, Antonio Carlos Reis(Salim), Enilson , Davi Zaia, Lourenço Ferreira do Prado, Chiquinho Pereira, Roberto Santiago, Valdir Vicente de Barros, José Moacir, Marcos Afonso de Oliveira (all of them are members of the national directorship of G UW), Cláudio Lembo (Vice Governor of the State of São Paulo), José Roberto de Melo (Regional Labour Superintendent of the State of São Paulo) Rafael Freire Neto (Trade Union Confederation of the Americas), Dr. Davi Furtado Supreme Labour Court Judge and Regional President), Dr. José Carlos (OAB – Brazil National Organization of Lawyers of São Paulo), Roberto Freire, (Senator), Luíza Erundina (Federal Deputy), Márcio Dangirolela (Fiesp), Tadeu Moraes (Dieese - Inter-union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies), Natal Léo (Municipal Labour Committee), Cláudio Prado and Cláudio Fonseca (city councilmen).

After the opening solemnity the lectures began with the audience divided into four auditoriums. In the morning of May, 15, at the auditorium 1, the topic "From slavery to Labour laws" was covered under the responsibility of Cláudio Henrique de Moraes Batalha and José Antonio Segatto. At the auditorium 2, Paulo Ribeiro Rodrigues da Cunha made a lecture called "From the Constitution of 1946 until the 64 takeover". In the afternoon at the auditorium 1, David Maciel and Celso Frederico made lectures on the "Military Dictatorship (1964-1985). At the auditorium 2 the topic was "New Republic and the constitution of 1988", in charge of Marco Aurélio Santana.

On Saturday, 16, the morning had theme panels. At the auditorium 1, in charge of the lecturers José Dari Krein, Maurício Dias David and Ricardo Waherondorff Caldas, covering the topic "Union movement facing the world economic-financial crisis". At the auditorium 2 the lecturers Luiz Alberto de Sousa Aranha Machado and Marcos Tadeu Del Roio discussed over "Ideologies moving the world. Everything that is solid breaks in the air". The topic "Capitalist re-structuration and its repercussion in the union movement" was covered by Clemente Ganz Lúcio and Roberto Macedo, at the auditorium 3. As for the auditorium 4, Alexandre Pessoa da Silva made a speech on the "Union movement and social and sustainable environmental development".

On Saturday, in the afternoon, the organizers set, for the auditorium 1, the topic "Is the current union structure fit to the worker?" under the responsibility of the lecturers Davi Furtado Meirelles and José Carlos Arouca. At the auditorium 2, Rosana de Almeida Maia discussed the "Union movement facing the informal economy and precarious work". At the auditorium 3, Jair Pinheiro and Rafael Freire Neto covered the topic "Union movement, social movements and the migrations". At the auditorium 4 the topic was "Union movement and public budget", by Homero de Souza Júnior and Odilon Guedes.

Each one of these topics had at its respective table a chairperson and a writer. During the first part, the lecturers talked about the topic. During the second, they answered questions from the seminar participants and internet users.

GUW wants unemployment check enlarged to all the workers

The enlargement of the unemployment check should reach all the workers that were fired due to the economic crisis and not only to a determined segment. That is what the **General Union of Workers - GUW**, expects that the Ministry of Labour, **Carlos Luppi**, announces. The union central does not admit otherwise, because all the workers should be treated equally under the Law.

Ricardo Patah, president of GUW, reminds that the Federal Constitution guarantees equal political rights, assuring equal treatment to all, for that reason the ministry Carlos Luppi, cannot think about benefiting with more than two shares of the unemployment checks only ex-workers from the metallurgic, mechanic, textile, chemic, authomobilistic and rubber industry, as it was done before. That, other than hurting constitutional principles, is as injustice against the Brazilian worker, because it creates distortions in the choice of the benefited Brazilian sectors.

Patah claims for the extension of the benefit to other classes, reminding that "the crisis affects more some sectors than others, but all the workers that were fired should have the rights to the same benefit".

The unionist reminds that since last September, more than 700 thousand workers lost their jobs, with the companies alleging difficulties with the financial crisis, however, only 103 thousand workers, according to data from the Labor Ministry, had the right to receive two extra shares of the unemployment check.

"All the workers that were fired are just as victims of the crisis as the ones from the classes that were pointed out by the minister. It isn't fair, therefore, that they are discriminated by the government", said **Patah**, adding that "in case another discrimination towards the fired workers happen, **GUW** is following legal ways against the act of the minister".

International Labour Conference



The International Labour Organization (ILO) will arrange from June 3 up to the 19th in Geneva its Annual Conference that will discuss a world answer to the impact of the economic and financial crisis over workers all over the world.

ILO will arrange in this period a meeting of the Summit on the Global Employment, in which chiefs of State will participate, as well as an important number of panelists among them ministers, legislators, high representatives of employers and workers, regional and international organizations and world leaders from the public opinion.

The International secretary of the General Union of Workers (GUW), Arnaldo de Souza Benedetti, is one of the three representatives from Latin America in the coalition of workers of the Administration Council of the institution. The International Labor Organization (ILO) celebrated its 90th anniversary in the week of April 21 to 28, under the worse financial and employment crisis since the Great Depression.

To ILO, crisis always meant a sign of change. The organization was founded after the World War I, under the principle that "permanent peace can only be reached if based on social justice", as established under its Constitution. Along the last nine decades, ILO faced several crisis in the labor world and it made with timeless values, consistent messages and practical actions in benefit of social justice.

G UW participates in seminar on environment

Counting on the participation of 70 unions and institutions of South America, Buenos Aires hosted, in early May the 2nd Union Conference on Employment and Environment.



G UW (General Union of Workers) was represented by **Mônica da Costa Mata Roma**, Adjunct Secretary of the International Department of Integration for the Americas; **Josi de Camargo**, Secretary of Social Policies and **Cássia Bufelli**, Adjunct Secretary of the International Relationships Department.

The meeting was presided by the unionist **Victor Baéz Mosqueira**, general secretary of **TUCA (Trade Union Confederation of the Americas)**.

The final statement of the seminar expressed the importance of the participation of the union movement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an important multilateral space to face the weather change.

Another contribution of the declaration was the need of weather justice, where developed nations assume the environmental debt they have with southern countries. The document criticizes the growth model based on the exploration and abuse of fossil fuel such as gas, coal and oil.

Another issue highlighted at the conference was the importance of the management of chemical risks. And it was reassured the commitment of **TUCA** in assuming these challenges even considering the heterogeneity that distinguishes the union movement and the difficulties that must be faced.

"Our country is heterogeneous. From high urban concentrations to villages that still have a "good life". We must feed ourselves from these realities to, along with our allied organizations invigorate the alliances towards Copenhagen in December, 10 years since the Seattle meeting, where the union movement was one of the protagonists, to fight together for the social and climate justice".

G UW participates in meeting on Sustainable Development in the USA

G UW (General Union of Workers), through its adjunct secretary of the Environment and Sustainable Development Department, **Cristina Palmieri** participated in the 17th DSD (Division for Sustainable Development - United Nations) session, held on May 04 to the 15th, in New York (USA). The chairperson from **G UW** was part of the delegation from **ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation)**. The topics of this session were: agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and Africa, besides important issues such as: energy, sustainable development, economic crisis, food crisis and green economy.

On May, 20, **ITUC** welcomed the "official text" from this international meeting, since the same one will guide the negotiations until the COP (Convention on Climate Change) takes place in December, 2009, in Copenhagen, which is the **United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC)**. **ITUC** informs that the text recognizes the need of a "fair transition" to the workers that will be possibly be affected by the world efforts in reducing the carbon emission. Unions are engaged in the campaign to arouse the awareness on the need to support workers and communities in the transition to a society with low carbon emission, informs **Cristina**.

G UW participates in meeting on External Politics



Valdir Vicente, secretary of the **Public Relationships Department of G UW (General Union of Workers)** participated on May, 13, of "Meeting of External Relations, Social Dialogue and Friendly Participation" at the Itamaraty in Brasilia, in which several issues were covered, all of them related to the international matters of Brazil with several nations **of the world, emphasizing the negotiations concerning the WTO (World Trade Organization).**

The event was nurtured by the Presidency of Republic General Department with the special participation of the **ministers Luiz Dulci** and **Celso Amorim**. Several NGOs, authorities and union representatives were present. Besides Valdir Vicente, another member of G UW was representing the institution: **Antonio Cortizo**.

Educators Course at an International Level

With the objective of building a continental collective to educators with the capacity of generating processes of multiplication and management in union education and (re) building of knowledge, **TUCA-ITUC** initiated **its 1st Graduation Course of Educators at an International Level**.

It is a course that will last a year and will use methods with attendance, virtual and distance activities. The 6 modules that will be covered in this course are: 1) Analysis of Global Context and its impact in the region, the working class and fight organizations; 2) History, Structure and Work Plan of TUCA-ITUC; 3) Conception of Education of TUCA-ITUC; 4) Methodological Conception of Union Education of TUCA-ITUC; 5) Content of Union Education in TUCA-ITUC; 6) Planning - Segment - Evaluation of Union Education in **TUCA-ITUC** .

13 female educators and 9 male educators from the following countries participated in the meeting: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Venezuela.

G UW is the only Brazilian union central to participate in this course. It was represented by **Paulo Roberto do Nascimento**, Education coordinator from the **Institute of Social Nurturing of G UW**.



"The General Union of Workers (G UW) 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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