



UGT on the Unified May Day Parade

Manifestation in downtown Sao Paulo marks the launch of the Unified May Day Parade. **Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT**, showed support to workers that are submitted to degrading conditions at the Jirau Power Plant, in Rondônia.



Hundreds of workers gathered, on March 22, in downtown Sao Paulo, to launch the **Unified May Day Parade**, that will be celebrated, for the first time, by **UGT** in a coalition with the following trade union centrals CGTB, CTB, NCST and Força Sindical.

With the motto "Development with social justice", the trade union centrals stepped up pressure and intend to gather over 2 million people at the parade. Leaders from all the trade union centrals were present, newspapers on the event were handed and these leaders emphasized that united workers might change the path of Brazil.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, showed support to workers that are submitted to degrading conditions at the Jirau Power Plant, in Rondônia, and said that the Unified May Day Parade intends, among other things, to end situations like these. "We may find slave work in Rondônia, and all of us, together, must end this humiliation that such workers and many other ones go through everyday. That is why we are going to celebrate the May Day together and we will bring up our ideals", he said.

Canindé Pegado, general secretary of UGT, reminded that the five trade union centrals represent over 90% of the Brazilian workers, which shows that the unity constituted by them is strong enough to step up pressure so the authorities and end the social security factor, reduce the working hours for shift work down to 40 weekly hours, valorize the minimum wage, among other fights.

Cleonice Caetano Souza, secretary of UGT's Department of Health and Security at Work, asked for a minute of their attention to pay a tribute to women and request their participation at the Unified May Day parade. "Women make a strong difference in this country and they still have to live up with discrimination and inequality in the job market. We are going to join forces to end this once and for all", she said.

Among other topics, the following ideals will be defended:

- reduction of working hours for shift work without a reduction in salaries;
- valorization of the minimum wage;
- end of the social security factor and valorization of retirement paychecks;
- reduction of the interest rate;
- equality among men and women;
- professional education.

20 years of Mercosur

Seminar on the 20 years of Mercosur shows a positive scenario in Latin America



UGT organized, on March 29, in Sao Paulo, the "International Seminar on the 20 years of Mercosur". The event had the presence of several directors from UGT, besides the ambassador **Bruno Bath**, director of Brazil's International Relationships Department - section Mercosur, Dora Beruti, from **CGT Argentina**, **Ramón Ermácora**, from the Institute of Capacitation of the South, Adolfo Aguirre, from CCSCS, and **Victor Báez** and **Rafael Freire Neto**, both from **TUCA**.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, started the seminar reminding that he lived up close the creation of Mercosur and that workers have always dreamed of creating a network of activities that was common to South American countries. Nowadays this network does exist, although it brought along several obstacles that need to be discussed, such as laws for immigrant workers.

Otton Mata Roma, secretary of UGT's department of integration to the Americas, said that the trade union central has been developing a decisive work in South America. "UGT is in the core of Mercosur's discussions and currently workers are being listened in every discussion of the association. At least it is already possible to dream of a unified social security or a common currency in the Mercosur countries", he stated.

The scenario is positive but still, the seminar raised several important issues that should be faced. **Valdir Vicente**, coordinator of Mercosur Consulting Social and Economic Forum and secretary of UGT's Department of Public Policies, summed up quite well this issue. "We must rethink the role of society in this economic group and we must always include social issues in the discussions of the group", he said. *(Maurício Gomide / Redação UGT)*

Tripartite committee will monitor PAC work

Through a meeting at the Palácio do Planalto, on March 31, the creation of a Tripartite Committee was established to follow up, negotiate and monitor the PAC (Growth Acceleration Program) work, the Minha Casa Minha Vida Program (My house, My life) and all the work involving the Soccer World Cup and the Olympic Games.

UGT and other 5 trade union centrals participated in the meeting, as well as representatives from the construction companies Odebrecht, Camargo Correia, OAS and Andrade Gutierrez and the lawyer **Renilda Cavalcanti**, representing the National Union of Heavy Construction Industries. The Federal Government was represented by the minister **Gilberto Carvalho**.

The successive uprisings of workers in building sites of PAC hydroelectric plants have concerned UGT. "There shouldn't be working conditions in the PACs that are similar to slavery", said **Ricardo Patah** in an interview to the Agência Brasil. "The government should supervise".

"The problems are caused by the same things. They are workers who have to work under terrible conditions. There are discriminatory situations of workers who perform the same work. It is necessary to provide an equalitarian treatment to workers that were hired by construction companies and those that were hired by outsourced companies. These are people that had to leave their lives, their families, and work for the growth of our country. They cannot be treated as slaves", emphasized **Patah**.

UGT defends decent work at the Soccer World Cup 2014

With the goal of guaranteeing the ILO Decent Work principles at the structuring, development and finalization of the Soccer World Cup 2014 and Olympic Games 2016, the "Campaign for Decent Work at the World Cup" was launched on April 01. This campaign was organized by the **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)** and by the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** through a partnership with trade union centrals and international federations.

To Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, this event is extremely important to workers. "UGT, since its foundation, fights for decent work in Brazil. The use of ILO Decent Work principles in sportive events, such as the World Cup 2014 and the Olympic Games is an achievement to all the Brazilians".



The agenda of the campaign requests: the implementation of health and security conditions for workers while working in the construction of buildings/stadiums and increase of the creation of job positions for young people and women and the public investment should reflect fundamental labor rules and freedom of union organization.

Launch of the Play Fair Campaign in Brazil

An international conference organised by Play Fair and the Building Workers' International is opening today in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Conference will launch the BWI Campaign around the World Cup 2014, as well as the Olympic Games 2016 Play Fair Campaign, and will formalise the strategies and action plans around both campaigns.

For the first time in history, the world's two biggest sports events are being held in the same country, within two years of each other.

While countries and cities all around the world are rightly proud of hosting these big sports events, the workers (mainly located in Asia), who are making the merchandise for the events, such as T-shirts,, bags, shoes, stationery and other items, are too often victims of abuses and work in indecent conditions.

"Is it fair to go a mega sports event and pay a high price for a t-shirt that has been made by an underpaid worker in a sweatshop on the other side of the world?" asks Play Fair.

The campaigners want FIFA and the International Olympic Committee, together with the local organising committees, to accept their responsibility to make sure all production and construction around the events is done under decent working conditions.

"It is totally unacceptable that the workers involved in those massive sports events are still exploited. The workers should gain from these games too – not suffer from them," said **ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow**. "With this campaign, we aim to make sure that sports events are fair for workers involved in the making of sporting goods and the building of venues," she added.

"It's especially important for us that all work in constructions for the World Cup, no matter being it a stadium, road or a trainstation, must be constructed under safe working conditions", said **Ambet Yuson, the General Secretary for the Building and Wood Workers International**. "It is equally important that all stadia are free from asbestos."

Youth Department of UGT opens TUCA seminar

João Vidal, Adjunct Secretary of UGT's Youth Department, welcomed the young union leaders of the Americas.

Along with **Victor Báez**, general secretary of **TUCA** and **Brian Finegan**, from the **Solidarity Center of AFL-CIO**, **João Vidal, Adjunct Secretary of UGT's Youth Department**, representing the Brazilian trade union centrals, welcomed the young union leaders of the Americas that are part of TUCA Continental Youth Committee.



At the opening, **Victor Báez**, said that "if we do not communicate, others will do so for us (unionists) and the risk resides there, since these "others" are economic groups that are little or not committed at all with social-labor rights of the population of the Americas and the world". He also said that, concerning this issue, "young people will be our teachers while using new communication technologies".

USW thanks the Brazilian solidarity

USW, union that represents 1,2 million workers in the United States - mostly metallurgists, sent a message to UGT and other Brazilian trade union centrals that made a protest to the president Barack Obama against the restrictions to the union rights that some State administrations are promoting in the US.



The message, signed by **Leo W. Gerard, president of USW**, thanks the "solidarity of our Brazilian brother and sisters". And it adds that "the Brazilian union movement fought to take down a dictatorship that prohibited the collective bargaining, therefore, they know what they are talking about".

Through a letter to Obama, the Brazilian unions exhorted the USA to guarantee the "full union freedom, collective bargaining and freedom of expression and meeting".

UGT sends letter to support Portuguese people

UGT is aware of the problems that are currently being faced by Portuguese workers and sent a letter to support their representatives. Cut downs in labor rights and in pensions, besides other measures that were announced, and have caused changes in labor relationships and started an alert sign to governmental actions all over the world.

Portugal is going through a serious economic crisis and announced cut downs as measures to try and control its budget deficit. On March 12, over 180 thousand Portuguese people participate in two simultaneous protests that took place in the Portuguese capital. Lisbon and in Oporto.

"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

World UGT – the International Newsletter of the UGT Brasil - General Workers Union

GWU Communications Secretary: Marcos Afonso de Oliveira

Publisher: Mauro Ramos

