



GWU protests against high interest taxes

Six thousand workers made a protest for the decrease on the interest tax at the Central Bank in São Paulo on January, 21



Holding up strips, banners and flags, workers demanded urgent changes in the monetary politics. The meeting was led by the **General Workers Union - GWU** and other five union centrals. It started at 10 A.M. in front of the Central Bank, Paulista Avenue, São Paulo. The vindication is for a decrease of at least two percentage points in the Selic tax, currently set in 13,75%.

Ricardo Patah, president of GWU even threatened to lead an invasion to the Central Bank with the workers reminding that until December, 2008, there were over 600 thousand dismissals in Brazil and that in São Paulo there were over 260 thousand. "Thousands of those dismissals could be avoided if the interest tax in Brazil were lower", says the unionist, emphasizing that Brazil is the country with the highest interest tax in the world among those emerging countries and under development. "With the current monetary policy, bankers from Brazil have extraordinary profits and who pays for that is the working class", said Patah.

He admitted that **GWU** will discuss the proposal of going on a general strike at a national level against the interest tax. "If they don't reduce the interest tax, not only will we invade but we will implode the Central Bank", Patah pointed out.

Talking to the press, the General Secretary of GWU, Canindé Pegado, said that "if this act doesn't accomplish a positive result, we'll do another one, until our vindications are taken care by the government". Questioned about a general strike, Canindé said that "there has to be a shutdown in order to get the workers rights".

Chiquinho Pereira, Secretary of Organization and Union Politics of GWU, thinks that the unified act fulfilled its goals that were to take the message of the workers to the president of the Central Bank, Henrique Meirelles. "If our vindications are not taken care of, we'll perform an act in Brasilia. This situation is a disrespect that Brazil is going through", he says.

General Workers Union condemns reduction of only 1% in the interest tax

GWU condemns the decision of Copom (Monetary Politics Committee) of reducing in one percentage point the basic interest tax (Selic), announced on January, 21. According to the **president of GWU, Ricardo Patah**, this decision reflects the insensibility of the Central Bank towards the world economic crisis and it's a measure that goes on the opposite direction of the logic to the moment economy is going through, mainly when central banks of the world are reducing interest taxes so that the population gets to have access to credit.



The president of **GWU** says that once again the Central Bank gives demonstration that it's against workers and Brazil, and in defense of the bankers interests. To Ricardo Patah it lacks to the economists in the Central Bank a macro perspective of market, because facing the current situation it's necessary more credit to finance the level of consume, keeping the employment level at a height that guarantees economic stability.

"The Selic tax should have a reduction of at least 2%. The decision of the Central Bank only contributes to the inhibition of credit and unemployment", reassures the unionist.

Patah accuses the CB of acting against the workers, because the interest reduction of only 1% takes to the credit and consume contention, and consequently, reduces the economy growth rhythm and promotes the elimination of jobs positions, signaling to the ghost of unemployment.

Government starts to venerate anti-crisis proposal of GWU

Sectors of government are already adopting partially **GWU** proposals to fight the economic crisis. The president Lula himself has warned bankers and businessmen, so that there are no dismissals of workers, especially in those companies benefited with tax incentive or financing.

The **General Secretary of GWU, Canindé Pegado**, said that this is really good because it shows that GWU is correct while elaborating proposals. Pegado even participated in the meetings with the minister Carlos Luzzi, from Labor and Job Ministry and with the president Lula himself, opportunity in which the proposals against the crisis were delivered personally to each one of them.

After the meeting in the cabinet of the Labor Ministry, Luzzi started to defend the ideas of GWU, like the one of conditioning loans to companies, not dismissing workers, even indisposing with some companies sectors.

On Thursday, January, 22, the government released another R\$100 billion to BNDES (National Bank of Social and Economic Development) finance companies this year. The amount is equivalent to 10% of the debts from the public sector or 8,3% of the Brazilian GDP (R\$ 1,2 trillion). With the new resources, that will come from the Treasury, BNDES will have R\$ 166 billions to loan, 84,4% more than in 2008.

However, the important issue of this measure was the position of the minister Mantega that linked the disbursements to the maintaining of jobs. **Guido Mantega** was emphatic while stating that there will be a severe supervision made by the government to fulfill it, although it hasn't announced the penalties the disobeyers of the rules will be subject to.

President Lula said he was "scared" with the dismissals in December and that the official banks have to decrease their "spread" (difference between the tax they pay and the one they pass it on to the clients). Both issues were target at debate by all directorship of GWU and are included in their proposals to the government on how to face the crisis.

The secretary **Canindé Pegado** reminds that **GWU**, by elaborating their proposals, concluded that it isn't fair what has been happening, such as companies that loan money from official banks or benefit from government tax incentives and soon after doing so, dismiss workers. "To us, it's good to become aware that the government starts to speak the same language **GWU** does, what represents a victory in the current conjuncture", concludes **Pegado**.

President of GWU defends pact between the government, businessmen and workers to avoid unemployment

The national president of the **General Workers Union (GWU)**, **Ricardo Patah**, defended a pact between the working class, government and businessmen to avoid new dismissals of workers due to the economic and financial crisis. He arrived in Belém this Monday (26) to participate in the **World Social Forum** and command a wide program toward workers, coordinated by **GWU** itself.

At an interview to journalists, **Patah** criticized some segments of the business class that would be using the crisis as an excuse to put pressure on the government and make changes in the current labor legislation, for instances, the reduction of shifts and salaries. "We understand that the crisis is economic and financial, not a labor crisis" said the leader from GWU, that doesn't accept any measure that implies on reduction of labor rights. "What has been happening is a blackmail pressure by business people to tear down labor laws", he said.

The proposal of the union institution is that the negotiation to get over the crisis focus on other spheres that aren't linked to dismissals of workers. Some of the ways, he said, would be decreasing interests from the selic tax and permanence of fiscal renouncement with the guarantee of maintaining jobs. The union central also wants, among other issues, that the companies contemplated with public resources make the commitment of not firing their employees. "We want that, by receiving public resources, companies make the commitment with job maintenance", said, defending that a pact between government, workers and businessmen gets signed to assure the permanence of workers in their jobs.

To Patah it is not fair that a company gets benefit out of the fiscal renouncement and afterwards, fire workers. That is why, in his opinion, it is important that any public money released to companies gets accompaniment from workers unions to verify if the agreements are being fulfilled or not.

At the **World Social Forum**, **Ricardo Patah** opens, at 9 P.M., in the Palácio dos Bares, the National Plenary Session of **GWU** and releases a document reassuring this position. Afterwards, accompanied by the state president of the institution, José Franciso Pereira, commands the Workers March that will leave at 2 P.M. from the Princesa Isabel Square to meet with the great march from the Forum that will leave from the ladder at the harbor pier, in the end of the afternoon. The march will be marked for its many protests.

GWU releases manifest against the crisis

The General Workers Union released, this Monday (26) a manifest against the crisis.

The document, also signed by the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (Fiesp in Portuguese) and presidents of the following union centrals: General Workers Central of Brazil, Central of Workers of Brazil; Federation of Agriculture of São Paulo State; New Union Central and Union Force. Among other requests, is the one that the basic interest tax of the country drop to 8% per year "as soon as possible". The manifest also requests meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee (Copom) to happen every 15 days, as long as the crisis lasts. Currently these meetings happen every 45 days.

Still regarding interests, the manifest requests that they get reduced "drastically" and the bank spreads (difference between the interest that the bank can get and the one it passes on to the client).

The fourth issue requests an increase of the number of members of Copom from three to seven, giving room to other government areas, from the academic area and productive force in the discussion over the interest tax in Brazil. The document says that "the Brazilian society waits from the government practical and immediate measures to fight the crisis"

[Read the document in full](#) (Portuguese)

The idea of heating up the market with a refrigerator



Marcos Afonso de Oliveira

By taking a quick look at the website Agência Brasil, responsible for divulging news from the Federal Government, I came across an interview of the minister **Miguel Jorge**, from the Development, Industry and External Commerce Ministry, talking about a government program on how to motivate the consumer to take away from home old refrigerators and exchange them for new ones.

It would not only be a way to heat up commerce but a way to contribute with energy saving. In the opinion of the minister, the program will result in an economy equivalent to what is generated by a turbine of the Itaipu Dam. Last year, each turbine generated an average of 5,26 gigawatt/ hour, or the equivalent to the electric energy consumption of six months of a city the size of Campinas.

The idea is quite interesting. In fact, the minister makes crystal clear that, independently to the international economic crisis that already pulls out the nerves out of the Brazilian working, political and business classes, has the existence or the possibility to come up in another, in this case the energetic. Even if Miguel Jorge doesn't state in his interview that Brazil might take this risk, the release of this program, also with the objective of saving energy might lead to such presumption.

Another benefit would be the reduction of the emission of polluting gases from old refrigerators. And yet another one: the project foresees exemption from taxes to producers. Obviously, as long as there are no mass dismissals, as the president Lula has been requesting, after GWU delivered to him a brief with alternatives for the country on how to face the crisis. Another issue is that CEF (Caixa Econômica Federal) participates in the long term credit concession to the consumers. And an unemployed consumer doesn't have conditions to buy anything, especially a new refrigerator.

Evaluating through its optimistic side, it could even generate new jobs. Not only in refrigerator producing industries as in stores and recycling sectors. Now it is time to think and see if the business sector will not inlay in the price of new refrigerators the amount paid for the old one in this transaction. And this doesn't include the expenses deriving from the process of disassembling the equipment from the consumers houses.

With or without the energetic crisis, this idea should have already been released because the government always worries about this problem, even by using the daylight saving time. But let's face it, better late than never. **(Marcos Afonso de Oliveira is secretary of Publicizing and Communication of GWU)**

Requião receives the visit of GWU

Governor Requião, from Paraná state, proposes a committee in defense of work and to fight the crisis

The governor **Roberto Requião** got together this Tuesday (January, 27) with GWU and representatives of other Brazilian union centrals and from Diesee (Interunion Department of Statistics and Social Economic Studies), to discuss the impacts of the world economic crisis to the workers. From the meeting, that took place in the Araucárias, in Curitiba, the decision of creating the Committee in Defense of Work came out. The committee is made of government representatives, workers and businessmen to evaluate impacts and take measures against the crisis and its effects on job.



"The crisis was caused by the financial market, by the capital market. But now, who caused the crisis wants to take advantage from it to withdraw workers rights, wants to propose the flexibility of the labor laws. It has to be crystal clear that it's their crisis, not ours. Therefore, why do they want to present the bill to the State, that is helping banks and companies and workers, wanting to withdraw the few rights we have?" said the president of the **General Workers Union (GWU) in Paraná, Marcelo Urbaneja**.

Dia do Aposentado**Retired Day****24 de Janeiro**

"We defend a public Social Security, basic, at a universal level, that guarantees the acquired rights and the expectancy of rights to assure the maintenance of the real value of benefits, that annul the Social Security Factor, that restrain the increase of the minimum age to retirement, that allow its multi part social control (government, businessmen, active workers, retired and pensioners), that fight the fiscal renunciation and evasion, that turns it into universal through the unification of formal and informal markets with the clear objective of guaranteeing a future social security that brings dignity to the current and future generations."

Item 48 of the **Declaração de Princípios** (Principle Declaration of GWU)

Secretary of GWU participates in the Plenary Session of the Union of Transport Workers

By participating, on Monday (19), in the plenary session of **the Union of Drivers and Workers of Urban Transportation** in São Paulo, representing the national directorship of **GWU**, the director **Marcos Afonso de Oliveira**, from the **Publicizing and Communication Directorship**, said that the current financial crisis has been interfering on the rights conquered by the workers. "**GWU** defends and always will the reduction of shifts without decreasing salaries, the only practical way to create new job positions", said.

Still regarding the subject, **Oliveira** warned that under any circumstance the Brazilian working class is going to afford the costs of "this irresponsibility of the business class", by making a reference the companies that get financial help from state banks and that, even doing so keep on complaining about the crisis so far as to fire employees. "The union class affiliated to the GWU will not faint away and will keep on resisting to any and every measure that cause more damages to the workers", concluded Oliveira. (with Agência Brasil).

GWU from Goiás discusses state congress

The second plenary session pro-foundation of the regional **GWU** - Goiás counts around thirty unionists representing several unions of workers, among which the ones of industrial technicians, agriculture, bankers, public servants, electricians and others, decided to create an **Organizing Committee Pro-Foundation of the GWU** - Goiás, that will be responsible for the organization of the GWU State Congress in Goiás.

Called by **Luís Roberto Dias**, secretary of **GWU** in the Midwest Region and president of the **Union of Industry and Agriculture Technical Workers of Goiás**, the meeting counts on the presence of the **Secretary of Organization and Union Politics of GWU**, **Chiquinho Pereira**, and Economic Adviser of GWU, **Eduardo Rocha**.

After the opening made by Luís Roberto Dias, **Chiquinho Pereira** presented a wide historical and critical point of view of the union movement, talked about deep modifications operated in the world economy, identified the impacts of these changes in the union movement, discoursed over the history of the GWU foundation and pointed out a list of new challenges for those that wish to build a new historical cycle of the Brazilian union movement in the XXI century.



"The General Workers Union 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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