



## Christmas and New Year's Reflections

2008 was a year of challenges and conquests (many conquests) to the **General Workers Union**. We reached the end of the year with over 500 validated unions. We're walking towards the integration and unity in action around Brazil, which we want more fair, much more democratic and with social inclusion. Building the unity in practice requires that we maintain the focus on important national issues that mobilize us.

We learned through the idealization and construction of the **General Workers Union** the importance of including and managing different points of view, to create a strong institution that currently has the respect of all the powers in the Republic, especially from the president Lula that always receives our visit to share with the central his strategic preoccupations in favor of Brazil.



In 2009, through state actions, along with workers, we will orchestrate a way out of the world crisis  
Ricardo Patah  
president of GWU

2009 will be the year in which we will have to confirm that our efforts towards concrete manifestations of the world economic crisis. We'll keep on taking priority over job, income distribution, social inclusion. We will keep waving the flag in favor of a much more fair Brazil, generating opportunities to youths, protecting the elderly, using well the energy of our people. Each unemployed Brazilian is a national heritage left aside. It's something we cannot afford, in a nation under construction, in which there's still a lot left to be done and that needs to double the efforts to Health, Safety and the accomplishment of Peace for all of us.

The **General Workers Union** will keep on being mobilized to aggregate its contribution to the improvement of the Brazilian social tissue. In order to do so, it mobilizes its best intellectual scenarios, incorporating the experience of each one of its affiliated union and joining them all in an action in favor of our country, Brazil.

## **GWU project that changes severance pay indemnity fund (FGTS, in Brazil) remuneration has a favorable point of view at the Chamber of Deputies**

The Committee of Participative Legislation of the Chamber of Deputies approved the suggestion of change in the Law 8.036 of the Severance Pay Indemnity Fund, presented by the General Workers Union - GWU. The project that changes substantially the remuneration of the severance pay indemnity fund, will benefit 30 million workers that opted for the fund.

The project had as its writer the Federal Deputy Luiza Erundina (PSB) and counted with the support of over a million workers, whose signatures were collected in every Brazilian city, for 14 months. Now, in order to be taken to a plenary session, the project must get a favorable point of view from the Committees of Justice and Finances and Budget.



Ricardo Patah, president of GUV, says that the approval of the project by the Committee of Participative Legislation is a great victory of GUV, but also of the Brazilian workers that, since the implantation of the fund, have already accumulated losses of over R\$ 55,7 billion due to low remuneration by the Caixa Econômica Federal to the severance pay indemnity fund participants.

Out of the eight main suggestions presented by GUV, the five main ones, that change substantially the remuneration of the severance pay indemnity fund, received favorable points of view. They are:

The index of Monetary Updating, that updates the balance of the fund accounts, should go from RT (Referential Tax) to the IPCA of IBGE. Point of view of the writer - approves, proposing that the change of the Referential Tax by the IPCA gets done.

50% (fifty per cent) of the profit obtained with the FGTS in housing financing and infrastructure public works and basic sanitation should get back to the worker. Currently all the money goes to the government. Point of view of the writer - approves, proposing that 30% of the net profit obtained with money investments of workers into the FGTS get back to the worker.

The worker might invest up to 10% of their FGTS in stocks/ investments. Point of view of the writer - approves, proposing that the amount to be invested can reach the maximum of 5% (five per cent).

Reduce from 3 years to one the fixed time for the worker to be able to withdraw the FGTS under an inactive account, whenever not under FGTS terms. Point of view of the writer: approves the reduction.

Whenever the company collects the FGTS with a delay, 75% of fine out of the money collected should get back to the damaged worker. Point of view of the writer: approved that 50% of fine should get back to the worker.

### **Losses under the FGTS correction**

Parallel to the suggestion approved by CLP, the senator Tasso Jereissati came up with the Senate Law Project (SLP) number 193, that has as its objective to alter the correction formula of deposits made under accounts linked to the FGTS, substituting the referential tax of interest by the IPC (Index of Prices to the Consumer) of BIGS (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). The project was already approved by the Social Matters Committee and follows legal channels at the Senate.

According to Mario Avelino, president of the Easy FGTS Institute, the loss of profits accumulated from the referential tax regarding the IPC during the period of November, 2002 to November, 2008 comes up to 30,34%. "That is equal, under an accumulated loss of R\$ 131,9 billion (referential balance) of R\$ 55,7 billion, not considering the loss of new deposits that were made from 2002 and on, which sums up to a total loss of over R\$ 60 billion", he says.

## GWU representatives participate in Mercosur meetings in Bahia

Under the attribute of coordinator of the Mercosur Social Economic Consulting Forum, representing the **General Workers Union (GWU)**, **Valdir Vicente de Barros**, secretary of Public Politics participated in the 36th Meeting of the Common Market Council that took place at the Costa do Sauípe, Salvador, Bahia, from December 13 to the 17th. The central issue was the international economic crisis and the social aspects. **Eleuza de Cássia B. Macari**, president of the Women Committee at the Coordinator of Union Centrals of the Southern Cone participated in the meeting of Mercosur presidents.



Speaking on behalf of **GWU** and the **Mercosur Social Economic Consulting Forum**, Valdir Vicente said that this meeting is historical to the working class, "because for the first time the Common Market Council promotes a specific meeting to social matters", reassuring that the last time the subject was brought up was 10 years ago, in Rio de Janeiro, when the Social-Labor Declaration of Mercosur was promulgated.

**Secretary Valdir Vicente de Barros**

**Vicente de Barros** reminded that the integration evolves, besides commerce matters, "aspects and social effects which recognition implies in the need to predict, analyze and resolve different problems created due to this very integration" pointed out. He also defended the importance of the participating countries to make an effort to fulfill the international conventions of **ILO (International Labor Organization)**.

## Bahia hosted union meetings

The **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**, the **Coordinator of Union Centrals of the Southern Cone (CUCSC)**, the **General Workers Union (GWU)** and other union centrals promoted in Bahia the **Latin America and Caribbean Union Meeting** and the **7th Mercosur Union Summit** under the 1st Summit of Latin America and Caribbean Presidents on integration and Development.

GWU participated in the event with a delegation that hit the highlights. **Valdir Vicente de Barros** (Secretary of Public Politics), **Otton da Costa Mata Roma** (Secretary of Integration to the Americas), **Eleuza de Cássia Buffeli Macari** (Adjunct-Secretary of International Relationships), **Cícero Pereira da Silva** (1st Adjunct-Secretary of Integration to the Americas), **João Marcos Pereira Vital** (Adjunct-Secretary of Youth Secretaryship), **Avelino Garcia Filho** (Effective Member of Fiscal Council) and **Márcio Luiz Fatel** (President of the Federation of Commerce Workers of Bahia, affiliated to GWU).



The **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**, that organized the meetings in Bahia is presided by the North American **Linda Chávez Thompson**, its general secretary is the Paraguayan **Victor Báez Mosqueira** and its secretary of Social Politics is the Brazilian **Laerte Teixeira da Costa**, vice-president of **GWU** (Photo of the 1st Executive Meeting of **TUCA**).

# 10 years of Mercosur Social Labor Declaration

## Anniversary of Mercosur Social Labor Declaration was celebrated in Bahia

On December, 14, 2008, the 10 year anniversary of **Mercosur Social Labor Declaration** was celebrated. It regards a tool signed by the presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, that best expresses the option of the participating nations to enroll an integration model capable of harmonize economic and social welfare growth. The celebration happened in Salvador, Bahia, during the solemnities around the Summit of Presidents of Mercosur, promoted by the Ministry of Labor and Job in a partnership with SGL (Sub Group of Labor) 10, the **Coordinator of Union Centrals of the Southern Cone (CUCSC)** and **Mercosur Social Economic Consulting Forum**.

The Social Labor Declaration, according to **Valdir Vicente de Barros**, Secretary of Public Politics at **GWU**, is the only supranational tool of Mercosur that, in some way, regulates all labor rights. "However, this declaration is not attached, which is: there is not a supranational instance to solve the controversies that usually occur in job relationships", informs Vicente de Barros, reassuring that these controversies might be pointed out by the Social Labor Committee, created by the declaration itself.

The secretary of Public Politics of **GWU** reminds that "the appropriate jury to judge the disregard of the principles held within it is the International Jury of UN (United Nations), because in it are included the ILO (International Labor Organization) conventions. Valdir Vicente de Barros, that also integrates the Mercosur Social Economic Consulting Forum notes that, to the workers, instead of a simple declaration at Mercosur, there should be a letter of fundamental rights accompanied by a jury of solutions to controversies at supranational level.

Containing 25 articles, the Mercosur Social Labor Declaration works as a "Letter of Rights" that defends individual and collective rights of workers. In the document it is condemned any sort of discrimination, forced labor, defends labor rights of immigrant and border workers, prohibits child and underage labor; collective negotiation and the right to go on strike. The social labor declaration was signed on December, 10, 1998 and expresses the option of Mercosur integrant countries as a role model of integration capable of harmonizing the economic and social welfare growth.

## José Olívio Miranda de Oliveira

The Salvador Declaration, approved at the Latin America and Caribbean Union Meeting and the 7th Union Summit of Mercosur was dedicated to the brother José Olívio Miranda de Oliveira that passed away on December, 10, 2008, in Salvador, Bahia, his hometown.

Olívio was an important unionist in Brazil and Latin America. He had several union positions in Brazil. Between 1998 and 2002 he was a member of the Administration Council of ILO representing workers of Brazil and the Southern Cone..

In 2003 he started working at the direction of **CIOSL**, currently **CSI**, taking the position of adjunct secretary. In 2007 he left CSI and started taking part of the ILO team covering the programs of **ACTRAV/ILO** to Latin America and Caribbean.

Olívio had an important role on the construction of the Coordinator of Union Centrals of the Southern Cone and was always an important **ORIT** collaborator and now at **TUCA**. One of his great merits was the preoccupation with spreading out the importance of the fundamental rules of ILO in Brazil

## GWU at the Immigrants march defending Universal Rights of Every Citizen



**GWU** participated on December, 14, of the Immigrants march, event that highlighted the celebrations of the Immigrants International Day, celebrated on December, 18. On this date, in 1990, the United Nations (UN) adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The march, that left from the Praça da República heading to the Praça da Sé, central region of the capital of São Paulo state, gathered together around three thousand people, counting with the presence of several institutions that represent immigrants, among them NAFWA - National Association of Families and Workers Abroad - GUV affiliated.

During the act performed at the Praça da Sé, GUV was represented by the executive secretary Tadeu Amaral, that affirmed that the defense of the immigrant worker rights is one of the flags defended by the central. The director of NAFWA, and GUV counselor, Chico Rosas, highlighted the importance to the immigrants cause, they counted with GUV affiliates, that in its foundation manifest, gives priority to the defense of immigrant and excluded workers.

During the march people screamed word of order against neoliberal globalization, against sorts of forced migration of Native American people, against racist and xenophobic manifestations towards people and immigrant communities, against degrading working conditions and slave work and also against the European Union's Return Directive and other ways of immigrant criminalization.

## GUV participates in foundation act of NCUW

**Marcos Afonso da Silva, secretary of Publicizing and Communications of GWU (General Workers Union)** represented the union institution at the opening seminar of the NCUW (National Confederation of University Workers) that took place at the Novotel São Paulo Center Norte (Vila Guilherme) on December, 28.

The program had lectures on matters regarding collective interests such as "International Economic Crisis and Development", given by the professor Marcos Cintra, vice-president of FGV (Foundation Getúlio Vargas). The dean of UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Ângela Uller talked about "Education, Capacitation and Recapacitation" and the political scientist João Guilherme Vargas Neto lectured about "Brazilian Union Organization". The president of the Institute for Applied Economic Research, Márcio Pochmann, talked about "Development and Labor Relationships in a Contemporary World".

In the end of the afternoon the ceremony of the **NCUW** opening whose term of register at the Ministry of Labor and Job was ratified on October, 8, 2008. The president Murilo Celso de Campos Pinheiro said that from now on the new confederation starts being a legitimate tool of defense of professionals connected to it and a dialogue channel with the society. According to Pinheiro, the creation of a confederation with the NCUW characteristics, "is a great victory to us, because it reaches an ancient wish of our categories" he said.



"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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