

March opens Social Forum in Porto Alegre

On the afternoon of January 23, the march of trade union centrals marked the official opening of the Theme Social Forum, in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul.



This demonstration was attended by hundreds of workers and was led by UGT and other trade union centrals, as well as by activists.

The event, created as a counterpoint to the Davos World Economic Forum, Switzerland, gathers social movements and left wing organizations in the capital of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. In addition to trade unions, the march was attended by militants from political parties.

Militants from União da Juventude Socialista (Union of the Socialist Youth) and from a group of alternative media manufactured thousands of masks with the face of Edward Snowden and distributed to participants. They ask Brazil to grant asylum to the ex technician who revealed details on the American espionage program.

Sebastião Melo (PMDB), current mayor of Porto Alegre, and Olívio Dutra (PT), ex governor of Rio Grande do Sul, were in the march. Sebastião, who walked alongside Isabel Kausz dos Reis, director of the Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo, was sure to wear a cap of UGT, affirming that she has respect for the work it performs in defense of the workers interests. The Theme Social Forum ends on January 26.

President of UGT defends costing of the trade union system

Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, defended a strong attitude to guarantee the costing of the trade union system, which suffers from actions of the Public Prosecutors Office.

His speech was made on January 25, during the Seminar Labour Space, at the Theme Social Forum, which gathers representatives from 30 countries in Porto Alegre. Patah also defended the union of trade union centrals concerning relevant issues such as the end of the social security factor, the decrease of the working shifts and the eradication of child labour.



Throughout the seminar, Edson Ramos, secretary general of the Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo and member of the National Board of Directors of UGT, coordinated the table "Perspective of unionism in the XXI Century and system costing".

Patah demands actions towards an improvement of quality of life

On January 24, Ricardo Patah attended the seminar Labour Space, at the Theme Social Forum, which is taking place in Porto Alegre, and assured that society and politicians should make a commitment concerning the adoption of sustainable measures, to guarantee a better quality of life in Brazil and in the world.

"Brazil is going through a special moment and people are showing that they want better living conditions. In order to achieve so, they are willing to give their contribution. What is lacking is political will. Street protests sign that this path is necessary towards the achievement of change that the population is pointing out", said Patah.

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UGT has a meeting with the Labour Minister

Labour minister receives the visit of UGT officers and announces changes in his department

On January 23, Manoel Dias, minister of Labour and Employment, received the visit of Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT and of other officers who are part of the Board of executives, in Brasilia.

This meeting, which was followed by a lunch, took place at the Nacional Hotel, and gathered a little over 20 officers from UGT.

Ricardo Patah said to the minister that workers support him in order to the Labour and Employment Ministry go back to the time in which it was led by the ex-minister and ex-president João Goulart, a time in which workers had major achievements and the minimum wage was one of the fairest.



The president of UGT reminded the minister that the central was the one that grew the most last year, and currently it represents 7,5 million workers in more than 1,100 affiliated trade unions.

Francisco Pereira, aka Chiquinho, secretary of UGT's department of political organization, told the minister that workers are concerned with possible changes in the regulatory rule 12, which deals with security at work in machines and equipments, since it has been "attacked" by the business sector, whose goal is to remove workers rights.

The minister guaranteed Chiquinho that, in his management, no workers right will be removed and that any change made in legislation will solely have the focus on the improvement of working conditions.

Canindé Pegado, UGT's secretary general, reminded the minister that the pact for the adjustment on the minimum wage needs to be renewed and, in order for that to happen, it is necessary that the government and workers go back to a negotiating table. Pegado said that the trade union centrals and the government need to discuss a new policy for the minimum wage, recalling that both active workers as retired workers need to recover their purchasing power with a fair policy of adjustment.

UGT's vice-presidents Lourenço Ferreira do Prado and Antônio Carlos dos Reis, aka Salim, also questioned the minister concerning actions of the Labour and Employment Ministry and achieved guarantees of actions with the goal of improving the State Superintendences of the Ministry. By the end of the year, his department will be supplied with new and modern facilities.

After listening to the unionist Miguel Salaberry pointing out losses against workers, due to the fact that there is no effective deadline for employers to perform the legal homologation along with the workers respective trade union, which causes serious damages while workers attempt to withdraw the FGTS (severance pay indemnity fund), or even while registering for the request of the unemployment check, Manoel Dias guaranteed that he will study the elaboration of a normative instruction to establish a deadline for the legal homologation of workers along with trade unions in 10 days after the worker is dismissed.

The minister also announced the creation of a Workers University, with the goal of performing professional qualification towards the job market demands. Manoel Dias said that he will create the observatory of workers, a place that will be used to increase discussion among trade union centrals, workers and the government.

UGT participated in debate on decent work for the youth

UGT's National Youth department and other organizations of the civil society attended a meeting of the sub-committee of decent work and youth, organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. This meeting took place on January 21 and 22 in Brasilia/DF.



During this tripartite meeting, those who attended were able to discuss and debate the creation of the National Plan on Decent Work for the Youth, with the goal of achieving transparency of actions, suggesting strategies and proposals that will be implemented and assuring that those are indeed reached.

All the National Plan had, as its priority focus, more and better education, this way, attendants debated the adopted guideline for the systematization of the plan.

In order to give continuity to dialogue, this group has already scheduled dates for the next events in which, among other programs, they discussed statistic data from the Ministry of Education (MEC). *(Giselle Corrêa, UGT's newsroom)*



To Manoel Dias
2014 will be the
year of
professional
qualification

Solidarity to workers of Nissan USA

Trade union centrals from Rio unite in an act of solidarity to workers of Nissan in Mississippi

With war mottos such as "united workers shall never fall", carrying flags and banners, nearly 200 participants attended the protest on the morning of January 22, an act organized by UGT, Força Sindical and CSP Conlutas in support and solidarity to workers of Nissan, Mississippi, USA.



This protest took place in front of the car dealership Leauto Nissan, in Botafogo, south region of Rio, with the goal of publicly announce anti-unionists practices adopted by the multinational company. This was the fifth act held in Brazil after the world campaign was launched in 2013 by the United Auto Workers (UAW), an American trade union institution that has come across resistance to represent workers of assemblies plants.

Ricardo Patah, UGT's national president, reinforced the importance of solidarity in a country that hosts many multinational companies. "If we are not careful, we will have a increasingly wild capital", he stated, criticizing the fact that the international president of Nissan is Brazilian and also commenting the retaliations suffered by the leader of the automobile manufacturer, Chip Well, who expressed a favorable position towards trade union in a television national network.

"We are claiming a better day for our workers of Nissan Mississippi, USA. Therefore this repudiation act to the treatment given to them", Nilson Duarte Costa, president of UGT Rio de Janeiro (UGT-RJ) cleared out. "It is an absurd that Nissan does not allow its workers to found a trade union, as well as not being entitled to their rights. Especially in the United States, a country that considers itself democratic", he added.

Otton Mata Roma, president of the Commerce Workers of Rio de Janeiro, also made a speech on behalf of the 12 million Brazilian commerce workers. "Nissan treats its workers with neglect aiming towards unnecessary profit that it sucks in human blood and it tries to disseminate its anti-unionist policies worldwide", stated Mata Roma. "Being workers as we are, in a democratic country in which the trade union action is strong, we cannot allow that this country that considers itself the largest democratic country of the world have this kind of position", he concluded.

Weak economic recovery does not extend to jobs

The weak global economic recovery has failed to lead to an improvement in global labour markets, with global unemployment in 2013 reaching almost 202 million, the ILO said in a new report.

The Global Employment Trends 2014 report said employment growth remains weak, unemployment continues to rise, especially among young people, and large numbers of discouraged potential workers are still outside the job market.

On current trends, an additional 200 million jobs will be created by 2018. This is less than what is required to absorb the growing number of new entrants in to the labour market.

"What is urgently needed is a policy re-think. Stronger efforts are needed to accelerate employment creation and to support enterprises that create jobs," said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder. (*Notícias da OIT*)



See an executive summary of the report (in Spanish)

Global Employment Trends

The number of unemployed worldwide rose by 5 million in 2013 to almost 202 million, a 6 per cent unemployment rate.

Some 23 million workers have dropped out of the labour market.

The number of jobseekers is expected to rise by more than 13 million by 2018.

Some 74.5 million people in the 15 to 24 age group were unemployed in 2013, a 13.1 per cent youth unemployment rate.

Around 839 million workers lived with their families on less than US\$2 in 2013.

Some 375 million workers lived with their families on less than US\$1.25 a day in 2013.



UGT and trade union centrals prepare an act for April 9

On January 27, UGT and representatives from other trade union centrals had a meeting at UGT's head office in order to follow up debates on the combined agenda in defense of workers.



Among the issues that were debated over the event, there is the one related to actions towards a major national mobilization - expected to take place on April 09. The defense of workers in sports events and the fight for decent work were also discussed, especially during the Soccer World Cup, which will take place this year.

Trade union centrals will have a meeting with president Dilma Rousseff. This legal hearing is pre-scheduled for January 30. In this meeting, the combined agenda of workers will be presented once again, and it includes, among other issues, the end of the social security factor; 40 weekly hour working shifts; correction of the IRS chart; it is against the law project 4330, related to outsourcing; it is in favor of a fair adjustment of the FGTS.

State companies will attend discussions of interests

At the Labour Commission, Santiago approves participation of workers in meeting of state companies regarding wages

Written by federal deputy Roberto Santiago (PSD) and unanimously approved under the Labour Commission (CTASP), the Law Project 6051/13, which allows workers that are members of administration councils of State companies to participate on discussions and votes concerning trade union relationships, remuneration, benefits, advantages, is following legal channels under a conclusive figure and will be analyzed by the Commission of Constitution.



"Currently, the Law prevents the participation of employees representatives in discussions and votes concerning trade union issues and issues related to remuneration in the administration councils of these companies. However, the participation of employees is essential and democratic", explained deputy Roberto Santiago.

This participation includes meetings on issues regarding complementary and relief social welfare. This proposal removes the prohibition of workers to participate in councils on these meetings, as established under the Law 12.353/10, which establishes this rule to avoid a conflict of interest.

To deputy deputado Roberto Santiago (PSD-SP), writer in this commission, the employees representatives in the council will certainly be carrying "the necessary and indispensable contagious of points of view of those who nominated them to this position".

Employment balance in 2013 was the worst in years

Despite a balance of over 1,1 million formal jobs created in 2013, this number was the lowest in the ten last years, according to a result of the General Registry of Employed and Unemployed Workers (Caged) publicized today, January 21, by the Labour Ministry. Brazil ended the year of 2003 with 821.704 formal jobs created. By the end of the following year, this balance reached 1,7 million jobs. Since then, the lowest index took place in 2009, with a balance of 1,2 million job positions.

However, Manoel Dias, minister of labour, does not see a reason to be worried. He recognized the existence of oscillation in job creation, but he is optimistic while considering that these numbers have ended every year in a positive balance. "Everything oscillates, economy and everything else, it is natural. What matters to us is that, on an average of 20 years, we are creating more than 1 million job positions every year, in some years we create more, in others, we create less. What really matters is that we are almost reaching full employment".

"The União Geral dos Trabalhadores 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." Ricard Patah – UGT's President

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