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## Workers lodge a protest in the march of the Forum



Over 1.500 workers connected to **the General Workers Union (GWU)** joined the mass of over 60 thousand people to request decent work to everyone.

The “**March of the Workers**”, that celebrated the official opening of the World Social Forum on January, 27, in Belém, was commanded by the national president of the institution, **Ricardo Patah**, and by the state president of GWU, **José Francisco Pereira**.



With strips, flags and screaming words of order, workers walked from the Princesa Isabel square, at the Condor neighborhood, suburb of the city, until the ladder of the harbor pier. All over the route that was made of over six kilometers, there were several protests, especially against the dismissal of workers due to the economic crisis.

At the march of the Forum, other union centrals were present and reinforced the protest, with **GWU** leaders, Union Force and Unique Central of Workers walking side by side with manifestation of repudiation to any measure that intend to reduce labor rights.



By evaluating the movement, the state president of GWU, José Francisco, made compliments to the march, stating that it represented the indignation of the people excluded from the world, with workers spreading out the word: they're not going to accept dismissals nor disrespect to their rights.

“The unity of the industrial and union class shows that we're together in this fight”, said, requesting even more respect to the people of the Amazon, that according to him, need to have their rights preserved.

## GWU hits the highlights at the WSF

The **General Workers Union (GWU)** had an outstanding participation at the World Social Forum, that took place in Belém/ Pará. The union central gathered over 1.500 workers at the event, representing more than 100 institutions from all over Brazil. All of them participated actively in the program organized to debate issues regarding the labor world, highlighting the world economic crisis and issues of the social area.



The national **president of GWU, Ricardo Patah**, was in Belém and showed the strong position of the institution towards the crisis: GWU doesn't accept any negotiation with the government or the business class that reduces labor rights, position also shared and defended by the state president of the General Workers Union, **José Francisco Pereira**, that received many compliments on how he organized the participation of the central at the **World Social Forum 2009**.

The program of GWU in the forum began on January, 27, with the National Plenary Session, that took place in the Palácio dos Bares. In the event it was released a document in which the central points out solutions that the government and businessmen can take to avoid dismissals of workers and the loss of new job positions. Among these paths are the end of overtime work and the guarantee that the companies that receive public resources don't promote dismissals.

After that, workers participated in the "March of the Workers", that joined the great opening march of the Forum. The march represented the unity of the union movement, with representatives from all centrals walking side by side defending the same objectives: to assure labor rights and demand providences from the government so that the workers are not damaged by the crisis. "The crisis is economic and financial, and not labor-related, therefore we are not going to accept that they tear down the Labor Laws", said Patah.

On January, 28, Ricardo Patah, José Francisco and other union leaders participated in the National Meeting of Commerce Workers, held in a hotel in downtown Belém. In the meeting once again the financial crisis was debated, with the commerce class setting its position on the issue.

The presence of the national leaders of union centrals led to a series of other debates within the Forum. During the opening of the tent "Labor World", at the Federal University of Pará, one of the facilities of the WSF, Ricardo Patah was emphatic while positioning one more time on the crisis: "We cannot allow that the blackmail from the business class tears down our rights", he stated.

Besides issues towards the labor area, GWU, once again, made the difference in the Forum, by bringing up to debate matters connected to the social area that also mattered to the workers. Child-related violence, Environmental Education, Sustainable Development and Human Rights were topics presented and discussed with the class, showing why this union central, with only a year and half since its foundation, is already the third largest in the country.

### GWU had good highlights in the World Social Forum

The **GWU (General Workers Union)** had an outstanding actuation at the ninth edition of the **World Social Forum (WSF)**. The result, according to the National Secretary of Publicizing and Communication, **Marcos Afonso de Oliveira**, was only obtained due to the action of the union leader **José Francisco de Jesus Pantoja Pereira**, president of the GWU in the state of Pará and also National Secretary of Human Rights of GWU. "Thanks to the engagement of "Zé Francisco", GWU was able to occupy all areas at the WSF. By the way, our union central was involved with the World Social Forum since its organization process in the capital of Pará", explains Marcos Afonso. During a week Belém opened its Amazon doors to the world and in this important event counted on the registered mark of **GWU**.

## 8th World Union Forum

Hundreds of workers from several countries participated in the opening of the 8th Trade Union Forum on Wednesday (January, 28), an event that happened in Belém as part of the World Social Forum 2009. During the debate, that gathered leaders from some of the main Brazilian and international union centrals, the fight against the global financial crisis and the preservation of labor rights was the predominant topic.

The **president** of the **General Workers Union (GWU)**, **Ricardo Patah**, criticized the businessmen: "We cannot allow that business blackmail tears down the labor rights as it intended to do a while ago. We are not going to allow the reduction of our salaries and rights, we need to be united to fight this blackmail."

"The crisis was not created by workers, the crisis belongs to the financial system. When countries like Brazil, Mexico and Russia went through financial crisis, the United States and the IMF made them pull down their pants. And now, that the problem was created there, what are we going to do? Applause?"



The director of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Brazil, Laís Abramo, speeches at the opening of the World Social Forum by the side of the president of the GWU, Ricardo Patah. Photo: Fabio Rodrigues Pozzebom/ABr

To **Victor Báez**, general-secretary of the **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**, the position of the workers must be clear: "To the World Bank, the IMF and the right governments, the objective in the stage after-crisis is to get back to the model that led to this crisis. However, before the economic crisis, there were already the political, social and environmental crisis, and we need to get over this reality. We want millions of job positions and zero speculation".

Adjunct-secretary of the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, **Mamunata Cissé** also talked about the need of a global combat to the neoliberal model: "We will reach the social environmental catastrophe and will have terrible consequences to mankind and the world if we don't change right now our way of life and our model of production and consume", said.

In the opinion of the director of the **International Labor Organization (ILO)** in Brazil, **Laís Abramo**, "the crisis starts to leave the range of the financial system and strongly reaches the real economy, affecting jobs, salaries and labor rights all over the world". ILO released this Monday the report over the situation of workers in Latin America: "The report already shows effects of the process of deceleration of the economy in the labor world, threatening the conquests that were obtained over the last years in many countries, including Brazil".

Despite the treats, Laís affirms that there is, under the field of action of ILO, optimism regarding the unfolding of the crisis: "There is a feeling of extreme satisfaction while realizing that many of the dogmas that were behind the organization of the international financial market and that ruled the process of globalization over the last year are crashing down. It's a contradictory feeling, because there is in the ILO the preoccupation with the effects of this situation, but also the joy of realizing that there are alternatives", she said.

**General-secretary** of the presidency of the Republic, the minister **Luiz Dulci** reaffirmed to the workers "the commitment of the government Lula with the fight against the negative impacts of the crisis and with the advances in the social change" and talked about the historical opportunity that opens up to Brazil: "We need more public investment and widen the social programs. What collapsed was the neoliberalism, the model imposed to the world over the last decades", he said.

The fight for the preservation of the workers rights, according to Dulci, is a fundamental tool to detain the crisis: "The international union movement never had such a great responsibility. Nowadays, organized workers have the possibility to contribute to the economic and political democratization of the world. It's indispensable to preserve the workers rights. If there is no pressure, conservatives will end up recovering the neoliberal model. It's not enough to remove the ruins of neoliberalism, it's necessary to create a new world order", said the minister. (Maurício Thuswohl) (*Carta Maior*, 29.01.2009)

## In defense of children and teenagers

### Workers approve proposition so that crimes against children and teenagers are not covered in Pará

On the last day of speeches at the World Social Forum, the General Workers Union (GWU) approved a proposition that will be delivered to the Legislative Assembly of Pará so that crimes against children and teenagers are investigated and verified all over their extension. "Nothing must be covered in this country, because the crime against children and teenagers is one of the most hideous there are", said the state president of the union central, José Francisco Pereira, indignant at the accusation that authorities and authorities relatives of the highest rank of the state were involved in cases like these. "If it was a worker, they would definitely have punished him." he said.

The discussion over the topic was made during the Seminar "Facing sexual violence against children and teenagers", fomented by GWU, under the tent "Labor World", in the Federal University of Pará, one of the territories of the WSF. At the speech, the writer of the Parliamentary Committee of Investigation on Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Teenagers, state deputy Arnaldo Jordy (from the PPS party) drew a picture on the situation of the violence against minors in the state and said that, if it's up to him, no case will be neglected and that everything will be part of his report so that there is an exemplar penalty to the responsible people. Jordy informed that, in a little over a month since the Investigatory Commission was opened, over a thousand accusations of violence against children and teenagers have been received, many of them involving mayors, city councillors, deputy, jury councils, businessmen, policemen and relatives of important people of the state.

Most of these people were already under investigation for quite some time, but the lawsuits were sleeping like a log, because it's a net of huge power", said, making compliments to the initiative of GWU of bringing to discussion issues like these that matter to society. "It's necessary to put these issues more in the agendas of debates so that we can build a better world", emphasized, acclaiming the society to get together to change "this unworthy world we have".

The deputy reminded that the Investigatory Commission was opened through accusations of sexual violence involving children and teenagers that live in the region of Marajó, and that, if by that time, the case of the deputy (Luiz Seffer), accused of abusing a child that lived with him in his residence, had already come up, perhaps the debate on the issue didn't even exist. "Don't believe the parliament as a tool of change of anything at all, because it exists more to preserve than to alter what already exists", affirmed, reminding that he's part of a tiny minority that fights for changes. "The parliament only changes if there's a lot of social pressure, on the contrary the Investigatory Commission itself will be served as pizza", said Jordy.

**Senator** - The senator José Nery (PSOL/PA) also talked to the workers and reassured his support to GWU to keep on defending the fights of labor interest, among them, the ones related to the end of slave work.

### Government accepts to negotiate new formula to the social security factor



The Social Security minister, **José Pimentel**, and the General-Secretaryship of the Presidency minister, **Luiz Dulci**, got together with the **president of GWU, Ricardo Patah**, and representatives of other five union centrals, besides the writer of the law project that follows legal channels in the chamber, deputy **Pepe Vargas (PT-RS)**.

The social security factor was created in 1999 as a way to postpone the concession of retirements and by doing so relieve the bills of the Social Security. The calculus of the factor takes in consideration four aspects: the aliquot part of contribution, time of contribution to the social security and life expectancy of the contributor.

While leaving the meeting, Pimentel summed up by informing that the participants will get back together on February, 16, when the deputy shall present a pre-project with the topics already consolidated.

## Decrease in the industrial production worries directorship of GWU

The **president of GWU** got back to criticizing the business class, especially the segments that, during the world economic crisis, were assisted by the government with fiscal incentives or finances from public banks. "It's complicated and even hard to understand how some companies, even receiving loans from the public sector, are firing and consequently lowering the level of production. Patah made these considerations after getting to know the fact that the performance of industry decreased 12,4% in December last year, according to the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics).

The decrease, considered by the government itself as the highest since 1991, worried the national directorship of **GWU**, the president **Ricaro Patah** have shown that the decrease of production has as its main cause the world economic crisis. "Unfortunately this results in dismissals of workers what is deeply worrying", said Patah, reminding that until last December over 650 thousand workers were fired all over Brazil. Many of the companies that registered decrease in production, were aided by the government, whether with fiscal incentive or loans from public banks. "Where has the money gone?", wondered Ricardo Patah.

Besides the automotive industry, other 24 sectors out of the 27 researched by the IBGE pulled back between November and December. "**The directorship of GWU will remain ready to act to defend the legitimate rights of the working class**", pointed out **Patah**, waiting, from the president Lula, new actions so that the country keep on growing and industries produce resources with the opening of new job positions, "and still everybody wins", concluded the president of **GWU**.

## Motorcycle couriers request capacitation courses and registration

The union of motorcycle couriers of São Paulo requested capacitation courses and formal registration free of charge

The union of motorcycle couriers of the state of São Paulo requested to the minister of Labor, **Carlos Lupi**, capacitation courses free of charge and a campaign to encourage the formalization of workers of our class. The judgement was held on February, 5, in Brasília, and counted on the presence of the **president of the General Workers Union (GWU), Ricaro Patah**.

We came to ask for a capacitation course to our class. In São Paulo, 85% of our class is currently working in the informal market, so we came to ask for a national campaign to the Labor Ministry in São Paulo, last year, we made a campaign, along with the ministry, and led 428 companies to a round table. This action conducted to around six thousand job formalizations, affirmed **Alexandre da Silva Pinto**, general-secretary of the **Union of Motorcycle Couriers of the State of São Paulo**.

The intention of the campaign proposed by the union is the decrease of the informality and accidents. In São Paulo, there are over 25 accidents involving motorcycles each day. Still, according to the union, from two to four people die every day due to these accidents.

The **general-secretary** of the union believes that if the capacitation courses are free of charge - that usually cost from R\$ 50 to R\$ 100 - it might contribute to the decrease of these negative index in the traffic.

In Brazil, around 95% out of the million motorcycle couriers are not formal workers. It's mandatory to the company formalize, not the legal person to the motorcycle courier, affirmed Patah.

According to the union representative, the minister made a commitment to help and, probably, there will be another judgment next week with the presence of the Ministries of Labor and Cities. (*Agência Estado, 05.02.2009*)

## Unionism loses Antonio Edmundo Pacheco

The national directorship of the General Workers Union (GWU), becomes aware, with great grief of sorrow, of the decease of Antônio Edmundo Pacheco, that took place on Monday, February, 2, in Florianópolis (Santa Catarina). He was coordinator of the Social Economic Consulting Forum of Mercosur, representing the National Confederation of Commerce (NCC). The coordination of the Forum is in the range of NCC and GWU.



The body of Antonio Edmundo Pacheco was buried in Blumenau, at the funeral Valdir Vicente, National Secretary of Public Politics. Valdir Vicente highlighted that Edmundo was always an active leader, acting seriously, whether conducting works at the Consultive Forum, whether as the president of the Commerce Federation of Santa Catarina.

## National Directorship of GWU receives the visit of unionists from China

The national directorship of the General Workers Union (GWU) received on February, 3, a delegation of Chinese unionists. The goal of the visit of the Chinese workers was getting to know the organization system of the industry sector; the paths and actions that aim to protect the workers rights; the role of the Brazilian unions on the elaboration, implementation and inspection of the labor legislation.

Unionists from China gathered information along with the directorship of GWU on the relationships between union organizations and the Executive and Legislative powers; main practices on the relationship companies and unions; situation regarding the work condition and salary; the role of the union on the technical training, protection of workers rights and interests.

The visit of the Chinese delegation was arranged through the International Relationships Secretaryship of GWU, whose cabinet member is the union leader Arnaldo de Souza Benedetti. According to the adviser Marina Silva, from the International Relationships Secretaryship, the delegation had the following union leaders from China: Zeng Fanxin (Vice-President, from the Beijing City Federation of Unions), Zheng Zhangshi (President of the Union Corporation of Shougang), Du Zhenjiang (President of the Union of Electronic Products Workers of Beijing), Ni Xueling, (President of the Wangfujing Department Store (Group) Co. Ltd Beijing Union, Zheng Tienan ( President of the Union of Workers in Energy of the Investment Holding Co.Ltd) and Yuan Guihong (Worker of the International Department of the Beijing City Federation of Unions).



**"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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