



## No to slave work

With the support of **TUCA**, **UGT Brazil** marched against slave labor in the fashion industry in Sao Paulo.

On August 26, around 1000 Brazilian and Bolivian workers marched through Sao Paulo to protest against the use of slave labor in the productive chain of the textile industry in the country.

Protesters occupied the Oscar Freire Street, where the shops of major names in national and international fashion, such as Havaianas, Calvin Klein, Brookfield, Adidas and others, are concentrated.

With the support of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas, the protest was organized by **UGT** and the **Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo**, through a special moment in which the exploitation of labor in slave-like conditions has called the attention of the Brazilian people.



"While the stores in Oscar Freire maintain this European appearance, typical of developed countries, many workers who sew clothes that are sold here work in the worst conditions," said **Chiquinho Pereira**, from **UGT**.

"We disagree that there is still slave work or child labor. And the products that are paid ten or twenty cents, are sold for R\$ 200 or R\$ 300, not to mention the fact that commerce workers earn an average salary of \$ 1,000.00. It's absurd! These big brands pay very low values in their goods, sell them to the layer of society that does not see price and commerce workers don't have an adequate remuneration. So, we are doing this activity to draw the attention of society, to prevent the marketing of products that are made through slave work or child labor", warns **Ricardo Patah**, **national president of UGT**.

Ivan Gonzalez, political coordinator of **TUCA**, said that the fight against indecent working conditions in the fashion industry is part of a broader fight shared by the entire international trade union movement: the fight for decent work. "Last week we were at the Maracana stadium with the workers that were on a strike for security at work and better salaries", he said to the protesters. "The fight of the trade union movement and the fight of these workers have the same goals."

[Take a look at the gallery of pictures of the march](#)

UGT negotiates, contractors give in and

### The strike ends at the Maracana

The strike of workmen that were working in the improvement of the stadium ended. The agreement took place after a long meeting between members of the national board of directors of UGT, along with leaders from the Union of Workers in the Industry of Intermunicipal Construction of Rio de Janeiro (Sitraicp), and the contractors of the Maracana Association Rio 2014.

It took more than seven hours of talk, that went all through the night and resulted in the proposal that was approved by an assembly that happened on the following day.

The proposal that was accepted by the workers is as follows: - immediate 60% raise over the basic needs assistance value, that increases from R\$ 100 to R\$ 160,00; - standard of workmen health insurance plans equal to plans of workers in charge; - full payment of strike days; - one year employment stability for workers that are members of the committee that led the strike.



A 90 days deadline was also established, so that workers and contractors are to keep on negotiating additional measures of security at work while improving the stadium, extension of health insurance plans to their relatives, implantation of a biweekly wage advance and concession of a new raise for the basic needs assistance.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, announced that the negotiations "were extremely difficult, but in the end, common sense eventually prevailed as well as the will of all to deliver the Maracana stadium on time for the opening of the World Cup."

Nilsom Duarte, president of UGT's State branch of Rio and president of the Union of Workers in the Industry of Intermunicipal Construction of Rio de Janeiro (Sitraicp), considered both the strike and the agreement "a victory and a clear message that workers are ready to go on a fight to defend themselves when their rights and their lives are at risk", referring to the accident at work that hit Carlos Felipe da Silva Pereira, a workman, and the fact that outburst the strike.

### Play Fair Campaign: Against slave work

The Oscar Freire street was chosen to host the protest of UGT, since it's famous for selling the most expensive clothing products of the market - the luxury of its shops, many times hide a chain which profit comes from the injustice of work: either against those who work in offices as well as against those that sell the clothes.

A few weeks ago, labour prosecutors have dismantled an underground garage in downtown Sao Paulo that had Bolivian and Peruvian immigrants in a situation similar to slavery, who worked and lived in the same place, bathed with cold water, had no access to drinking water and were not free to leave without the consent of the employer, performed their duties not following minimum standards of security and were poorly paid.

What shocked the society was the fact that, despite the inhuman conditions in which they worked and lived, Bolivians and Peruvians workers sewed clothes of the Spanish brand Zara, which sells its products in Brazil at very high prices. For example, while sewing a pair that is sold for R\$ 200 at stores, the workers received less than R\$2, and they even had to share this amount with other people.

### ITUC in Brazil

Sharan Burrow meets with union leaders from Brazil and talks about crisis threats

Through a meeting with union leaders from Brazil, the **general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Sharan Burrow**, criticized cuts in social investments taking place in Europe and in America, and appealed to unions so that they do not allow any attack on labor rights if the crisis gets here.

"What we have seen in European countries might quickly affect Latin America and the entire world, if we are not strong enough to prevent that from happening", said the general secretary of ITUC, an organization that represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliated institutions (one of them is UGT).

Brazilian people communicated to Sharan Burrow their preoccupation towards the advance of recessive anti-crisis policies.



Facing cuts in social expenses, a decrease in labor rights, reduction of salaries, dismissals and privatizations that are currently taking place in Europe and in the United States, the Brazilian union leaders expressed, to the general secretary of ITUC, their concern about the application of the "same recipe" to deal with the crisis, when it gets - if it does - to Brazil.

"What should be our strategies to fight against the crisis?", **asked Ricardo Patah, president of UGT**. "We have seen that the union movement had a combative speech in international forums, but the restructuring policies are still advancing. We have to work hard to bring on real changes," he added.

The meeting was attended by a delegation composed of the following secretaries of the UGT: Otton da Costa Mata Roma, from the International Department, Marcos Afonso, from the Press Department, Fátima Cristina Palmieri, from the Environment and Sustainable Development Department, John Vidal, from the Youth Department and Valdir Vicente, from the Public Policies Department.

### Dilma receives the visit of trade union centrals

**Antonio Cortizo** and **Rumiko Tanaka** represented **UGT** at the meeting

On August 29, the president of Brazil, **Dilma Rousseff**, received the visit of directors from UGT and other trade union centrals, to anticipate on the announcement of measures that will be adopted by the government aiming to protect the country against the crisis.



According to the vice president of UGT, Cortizo Antonio, who, along with the adjunct secretary of UGT's Finances Department, Rumiko Tanaka, represented the trade union Central at the meeting, the president asserted that, despite the measures announced, "we will not get into a recession policy."

Dilma said that, among the measures, there are cuts in public expenses that might enable an increase on the primary surplus. Antonio Cortizo emphasized, however, that this measure will only give results if its accompanied by a reduction in interest rates.

According to the director of UGT, the president Dilma pointed out that the measures should decrease the interest rate, although the tools that were used in 2008 will not be the same for now, and quoted that some classes should be benefitted with salary adjustments, especially in the education area.

### Serra opens lecture cycle on the conjuncture of UGT

UGT, as a plural institutions, started a lecture cycle, on August 29, to discuss the national political conjuncture. And the first guest was the ex-governor, José Serra, who was at the head office of the institution, in Sao Paulo, to talk about the international scenario and the importance of actions of the union movement in public policies to help on the economic growth of a nation. It drew the attention due to the process of deindustrialization of Brazil and the need to think of social policies of universal coverage, that would have, as a result, the creation of jobs for the Brazilian people.

"UGT is a trade union central aimed towards social inclusion, employment and citizenship. We have a project of debate and dialogue with people that have a cosmopolitan outlook, and our colleague Serra fits this figure, since his origins go back to the student movement and since he worked on important positions of the national politics, with innovative proposals that many times we are not able to see", **Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT**, says, who tries and searches for a new shape to this trade union central, with influence on public policies, such as health, education and security at work.

**José Serra**, who is grateful for the support that was given to him in Brazil, states that he is bonded to the institution, that he has always accompanied the growth of UGT. He pointed out three important things: the international crisis, the social policies and the union movement.

Serra drew attention to cuts in expenses, explaining that this is a generator of unemployment. United States and Europe, each one with its respective fiscal concerns, left aside the question of employment, and that has weakened them.



"From 2002 to 2010, data show that employment in Brazil increased to layers of society that earn up to two minimum wages, however, the number of formal jobs for people that earn more than R\$ 3 thousand has dropped. Which means that we are losing quality jobs", he emphasizes.

### More unity in the Southern Cone

The **Southern Cone Trade Union Centrals Coordinator (CCSCS)** and the Council of the **Southern Cone Workers (CTCS)**, signed, in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay, a historical merging agreement of the two institutions, that aims to deepen the unity of union action in that region.



The document, that was signed on August 22 by **Valdir Vicente de Barros, general secretary of CCSCS** and secretary of UGT's Public Policies Department, and was also signed by **Cicero Pereira da Silva, president of CTCS** and adjunct secretary of UGT's International Department for the Americas, and it establishes the merger of two institutions that have as their main objective strengthening the self-organization of workers, turning the Social-Labour Declaration of MERCOSUR into an effective tool, and contributing to the integration of production processes in the region, among other things.

"It didn't make sense to have two organs and, therefore, there was a merging operation", said Cícero, who emphasized the work of union education that was organized by the Council through INCASUR, which head office is based on Buenos Aires. (CCSCS, 30.08.2011)

### Changes in the International Area of UGT



With the election of the new board of directors in the last congress of UGT, the international area will have two new members: **Otton da Costa Mata Roma**, commerce worker from Rio de Janeiro, who will now head the International Relationships Department, and the bank worker from Presidente Venceslau, **Sidnei de Paula Corral**, who will head the International Department of Integration to the Americas.

**Arnaldo de Souza Benedetti**, bank worker from Ribeirao Preto, chose the Department of Union Education and will preside the institute of education of UGT (**Ipros**-Institute of Social Promotion).

**Otton (in the picture)** already has his first mission: the international solidarity to workers in Colombia.

### UGT receives international seminar on youth

UGT received, on August 30, a regular meeting of the **Youth Committee of the Southern Cone Trade Union Centrals Coordinator (CCSCS)**, in which young union leaders that represented the trade union centrals that are affiliated with UGT.

The opening of the meeting was attended by the general secretary of CCSCS, Valdir Vicente, who is also secretary of UGT Brazil. Valdir emphasized the strategic importance of the Youth Committee to present proposals of Public Policies that are specific to young people of the Southern Cone, keeping in mind the UNASUL. **Héctor Castellanos**, Technical Secretary of CCSCS was also at the opening.

In the afternoon, the opening of the International Seminar "Education and labor - Challenges for the youth" took place, and it lasted until the following day. The opening session of the seminar was attended by Rafael Freire, secretary of Economic Policies and Sustainable Development of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas - TUCA - and also by the president of UGT Brazil, Ricardo Patah.

### 1st Regional Meeting on Decent Work

The **Department of Employment and Labour Relationships (SERT)** organizes on the September 16, in Tupa, Sao Paulo, the first regional meeting of preparation for the 1st State Conference on Employment and Decent Work, held on November 24 and 25 at the Memorial da América Latina, in Sao Paulo.

In the process of conference, another two regional meetings are expected. One is scheduled for September 29, in Americana, and the other one will take place on October 20, in Praia Grande.

"These meetings are another opportunity to be heard by a greater number of people, besides being heard by delegates who will attend the State Conference," said the **Secretary of Department of Employment and Labor Relationships, David Zaia**,



Next year, the 1st National Conference on Decent Work will take place in Brasilia, and in the meeting that will be held in November, the 70 delegates that should represent the state in Brasilia will be chosen. The delegation will be composed of businessmen, workers, public power and the organized civil society.



"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