

Theses of the 3rd Congress ¹



By
The Workers' League (Brazil)
2015

¹ Machine translated and prepared by Maoism Library from
<https://ligaoperaria.org.br/2015/05/13/teses-do-3o-congresso-da-liga-operaria/>

Brazilian Trade Union Movement: Historical Overview

"The entire history of capitalism is the history of the most ferocious struggle of the working class against its exploiters."

History of Political Ideas – Academy of Sciences of the USSR – 1954

The Origins and Beginnings of Class-based Trade Union Organization in Brazil.

The Brazilian working class originated in the mid-19th century, in a context of decline in the use of slave labor, where the economy was based on the monoculture production of coffee for export. It was with coffee capital, and subordinated to the interests of English financial capital, that the first industries in Brazil emerged. The rise and development of capitalism brought with it the emergence of a new class – the proletariat. The first forms of organization of the working class then arose. Mutual Aid Societies and workers' unions were organized, which had a welfare character and eventually gave rise to trade unions. The initial objective was to help members in cases of illness, disability, unemployment, widows' pensions, etc. The Imperial Fluminense Typographical Association, founded in 1853, was one of the oldest professional organizations to emerge in Brazil. In 1858, the Beneficent Society of Shop Assistants was founded. In 1873, the Mutual Aid Association of Employees of the National Printing Office and the Mutual Aid Association, called the Workers' League, were founded. In 1880, the Central Emancipationist Association was organized. In 1884, the Beneficent Union of Shipbuilding Workers was founded. In 1900, the Workers' Circle of the Federal District was founded, and, before that, in 1890, the Center of the Working Classes was active in Rio de Janeiro. This organization had a relatively long life.

From 1900 onwards, the organization of associations and unions increased. The Constitution of February 24, 1891, already indicated freedom of association. In 1906, unions emerged for bricklayers, quarry workers, painters, shoemakers, the Workers'

Union of Diverse Trades, etc. Union organization began to spread, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul.

One of the first organized struggles, held in Rio de Janeiro, occurred in 1858, when typographers, dissatisfied with their meager wages, went on strike, demanding a daily increase of 10 tostões ² in their earnings. This strike lasted several days and was victorious. The typographers were at the forefront not only of the struggles but also of the organization of the working class in Brazil.

Along with the increased occurrence of strikes, other forms of organization also emerged: the Manifesto to the Proletarians, drafted at the Second Brazilian Socialist Congress (1902), demonstrates, albeit timidly, the influence of the ideas of Marx and Engels:

“The history of human societies, from their formation and wherever they have developed, is the very history of class struggle; and from this incessant struggle has resulted, in the course of time, the elimination of some of these classes, so that it can currently be considered that only two remain, extreme in opposing camps, irreconcilable in their interests: these are the class of the bourgeoisie and the class of wage earners.”

The struggle already demonstrated that victory could only be achieved by taking into account that the struggle of the working class is one and not of several isolated categories. Thus, trade unions were born, whose main objective was to win rights. The main demands of the time were: wage improvements and a reduction in working hours.

As early as 1892, a national workers' congress was held, but the planned national organization of workers was not structured. The organization of workers at the national level occurred at the first Brazilian Workers' Congress (1906), which, with the participation of 43 delegates, formed the Brazilian Workers' Confederation (COB), whose struggle was focused on basic demands, with an intense campaign of solidarity with workers' struggles in other countries. During this period, the struggle was most intense in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism predominated, concentrating on the struggle within factories through direct action, but

² Pennies - ML

denying the importance of political struggle and the need to constitute a working-class party. It saw trade unions as the organizational model for an anarchist society.

The Brazilian Workers' Confederation (COB) was effectively organized in 1908 by 50 trade union associations from Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Bahia, Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco, and other states. The COB led important struggles. Among them, it carried out significant popular agitation of a general nature: it organized and directed, in 1908, the anti-militarist popular movement; the campaign against the execution of the Spanish anarchist leader Francisco Ferrer, even organizing a march in which more than 5,000 people participated. Under the influence of the anarchists, the COB had a weak structure and began to decline, remaining inactive until 1912.

In 1912, at the initiative of the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation, a commission was formed to reorganize the COB (Brazilian Workers' Confederation), and a congress was convened for this purpose. The COB was revived, and with it, *Voz do Trabalhador* (Voice of the Worker), its newspaper, which reached a circulation of 4,000 copies. The COB then developed intense work among workers and trade union organizations, notably a broad campaign against the high cost of living, with assemblies and rallies in all states and a large demonstration and march in Rio de Janeiro on March 16, 1913, with the participation of more than 10,000 people. It also led the Santos dockworkers' strike in 1912 and fought against the law expelling strikers. This law stipulated expulsion not as strikers and revolutionaries, but as pimps and thieves, which aroused great indignation among the workers. COB sent delegates to Spain, Portugal, and Italy – countries from which the bulk of immigration came – to tell the workers in those countries what was happening in Brazil.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 resonated in Brazil: during the sailors' revolt against flogging, led by João Cândido, they proclaimed: "Let us do in Brazil what the Russians did in Russia in 1905."

From the beginning, the leaders of the ruling classes and their State sought to control the labor movement. To this end, they used various forms of co-optation, such as in 1912, when the president of the "Republic," Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, sponsored a workers' congress at the Monroe Palace (seat of the Senate) with the aim of forming union "leaders" conciliatory to the government. This congress was organized directly by Lieutenant Mário Hermes, the president's son. The working class considered this initiative a "farce," and it bore no fruit. The organization resulting from this

Congress was stillborn and did not progress. The period from 1903 to 1909 is marked by a rise in strikes and mobilizations. In 1903, a strike by cart drivers shook the country's capital (Rio de Janeiro). In 1905, there was a major strike by railway workers in São Paulo and another by workers at the Port of Santos (and it should be noted that among the most harshly repressed strikes were those that directly affected the coffee trade). In 1907, bricklayers, printers from various companies, and bricklayers in the city of Santos went on strike and won the 8-hour workday in São Paulo. Metalworkers at the Ipiranga factory in São Paulo also managed to reduce the workday to 9 hours.

From 1911 to 1913, there was a certain reflux, when the dismantling of unions by the police was accompanied by more repressive legislation for the expulsion of foreign workers. While the anarcho-syndicalists, when launching strikes, saw them as a moment to “prepare for the general strike” that would destroy capitalism, those who led the “yellow” unions were short-sighted and did not question the system.

Throughout the imperialist war of 1914-1918, the labor movement in Brazil fought against the war. Large street demonstrations were held, and in October 1915, the COB (Brazilian Workers' Confederation) held a Peace Congress, launching a manifesto to the workers that stated:

“We call upon the proletariat of Europe and America to take revolutionary action, which will overthrow the current state of affairs, sweeping from the face of the world the gangs of potentates and murderers who keep the peoples in slavery and suffering.”

The period spanning 1917 to 1920 was characterized by an irresistible wave of mass strikes that in many places reached enormous proportions. This was a response to the precipitous fall in workers' wages and the intensification of exploitation following the production crisis after World War I. This was the case with the general strike of 1917 in São Paulo, which began in a textile factory and received the initial solidarity and support of all workers in the textile sector, followed by other categories. The strike was total, even reaching the interior of the state. In a few days, the number of strikers grew from 20,000 to 45,000 people. The repression unleashed against the strikers was violent, often leading to the deaths of workers, as was the case with the shoemaker Antônio Martinez, who was shot in the stomach during a workers' demonstration. Despite this, the strikes continued to spread.

In 1917, the Russian proletariat opened a new era in the history of humanity. The Russian workers, united with the peasantry, overthrew the bourgeoisie from power and established their proletarian state, becoming an example and the vanguard of the world workers' movement. The October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia resonated intensely in Brazil, and the unions promoted assemblies, conferences, and rallies in solidarity with the Revolution and against the foreign intervention that attacked Soviet power. At the Trade Union Congress held in 1920, a salutation was approved which stated: "We salute the Russian proletariat, which has so high raised the torch of triumphant revolt, opening the path to well-being and freedom for the workers of the world."

Between 1918 and 1920, these strikes erupted in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santos, Porto Alegre, Pernambuco, Bahia, etc., always demanding wage increases and better working conditions. During this period, there was a broad campaign by workers for the establishment of the 8-hour workday. Of particular note in this movement was the unique strike of the construction workers in what was then the Federal District (present-day Rio de Janeiro). After working 8 hours, they would go home. Thus, they achieved victory in their cause, which constituted an important step towards the subsequent establishment of the 8-hour workday for all workers.

This period corresponded to the peak of the anarchist movement, which was until then the most significant leadership of the Brazilian labor movement. But, at the same time, anarchism showed the serious limitations that it never managed to overcome. Astrogildo Pereira, then an anarchist militant who later became one of the most important communist leaders, refers to the strikes of that time as follows:

"The great strikes and mass agitations of the 1919/20 period exposed the theoretical, political, and organizational incapacity of anarchism to solve the problems of leading a revolutionary movement of historical magnitude, when the objective situation of the country (in connection with the world situation created by the imperialist war of 1914/18 and the victory of the workers' and peasants' revolution in Russia) had opened favorable perspectives for the overthrow of the dominant bourgeois feudal power. The realization of this fact, resulting from a spontaneous and, indeed, instinctive process of self-criticism, which intensified mainly during the second half of 1921, in the form of heated discussions in the workers' unions, led directly to the organization of the first

communist groups, which would constitute the initial step towards the founding of the Communist Party.”³

During this period, the State – due to its biased actions during the struggles of the working class, always in defense of the dominant classes – clearly appeared to the proletariat for what it truly is: an institution of the dominant class. The proletariat began to understand that it was not enough to fight only for economic demands. The problem of conquering political power emerged forcefully before the working class. The anarchists could not solve this issue, since they immediately wanted a society without a State, without government, and without laws, constituted by workers' federations. They utopically preached a society without a State and without government and were not only incapable of giving a just direction to the workers' movement but, worse, they diverted their actions from the correct historical course of that movement. The vertical decline of anarcho-sindicalist influence in the workers' movement then accelerated. The proletariat was advancing in its understanding that it needed to unleash political and ideological struggles, not restrict itself to struggles of an economic nature, constitute a political party independent of other classes, develop its own policy in relation to other classes in society and the State, and prepare the conditions for the conquest of power by workers and peasants.

The Advancement of the Workers' Struggle with the Founding of the PCB – Communist Party of Brazil.

The founding of the Communist Party took place amidst the intensification of the workers' struggle in the country and the powerful influence of the October Revolution in Russia, which, masterfully led by Comrade Lenin, defeated absolutism, ended the exploitation of workers, and liberated Russia from the yoke of imperialism. This event had a great impact throughout the world, propelling peoples to struggle.

The founding of the Communist Party constitutes a landmark in the labor movement and in the life of the Brazilian people. It corresponds to the needs of social development. With the growth of capitalism, the class struggle becomes clearly defined. Workers carry out combative strikes, hold street demonstrations, and demand their rights. Transformations of a bourgeois-democratic character are on the agenda and begin to demand a radical solution. Even then, the agrarian and anti-imperialist

³ Astrojildo Pereira, Problems magazine, nº 39, 1952.

revolution requires the leadership of the proletariat, an indispensable condition for it to fully accomplish its basic tasks. But the working class, when founding its Party, is still quite young. Only during the First World War does capitalism in Brazil gain greater momentum. Light industry expands, particularly the textile sector, and maritime and rail transport systems are expanded. Alongside the bourgeoisie, the proletariat develops, selling its labor power not only to national capitalists but, mainly, to imperialist companies. The working class is largely composed of workers from the countryside and from workshops and small businesses, notably bakers, bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, printers, blacksmiths, hatters, and other professional sectors. The trade union movement, although combative, presents many weaknesses. The proletariat is barely beginning to acquire political consciousness. It is influenced by foreign immigrants who, although experienced in struggle and with a spirit of organization, are generally supporters of anarcho-syndicalism. Until then, Marxism was very little known in Brazil, and even among the advanced intelligentsia, anarchism prevailed. All this could not fail to have repercussions on the newly founded Party, which reflects the virtues and defects of the working class. Despite having emerged under the aegis of the Third International – to which it is affiliated as one of its sections and whose program and statutes it accepts – the Party knows little about Marxism and is far from mastering it. He lacks sufficient clarity to orient himself correctly in carrying out the great and historic tasks he proposes to undertake.

On March 25, 26, and 27, 1922, the Communist Party of Brazil, PCB, was founded in Niterói, under the initial acronym PCSB-IC (Communist Party, Brazilian Section of the Communist International). Its founders were: Joaquim Barbosa (tailor), João Pimenta (typesetter), Abílio de Nequete (barber), Astrogildo Pereira and Cristiano Cordeiro (journalists), Manoel Cedon (tailor), Luiz Peres (street sweeper), Hermógenes da Silva (electrician), and José Elias (construction worker), almost all of whom came from anarcho-syndical movements, with the exception of Manoel Cedon.

Despite its weaknesses, the founding of the Party represented a leap forward in the struggle of the working class. It achieved great influence among workers, elevating the economic struggle of the class to the level of political struggle, the revolutionary struggle for power. The entire growing labor movement of the 1920s, after the founding of the PCB, entered a new phase. Strikes became increasingly frequent and radicalized. Several class-conscious and combative organizations and unions emerged, forcing the State to concede on formulating laws regulating labor. The main demands of the time

were the 8-hour workday, the right to vacation, an end to night work, wage improvements, regulations for female and child labor, among others.

The struggle is to overcome the anarcho-syndicalist legacy, workerism, and to understand the reality of countries dominated by imperialism, semi-feudalism, and pre-capitalist relations. The first three congresses of the Party were held, based on the false thesis of agrarianism versus industrialism, demonstrating from the outset a misunderstanding of the character of the native big bourgeoisie and advocating that the country was governed by a supposed contradiction within the dominant classes, which opposed the maintenance of the agrarian system to an industrializing process. In an attempt to break with economism, the shortcut of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc (BOC) was taken, entering for the first time – a move that was repeated on many other occasions – into reformist electoralism. In 1928, the BOC contested the elections and elected two mayors in Rio de Janeiro.

Although the country was experiencing the end of the process of domination and bankruptcy of the old slave-owning oligarchies and was going through moments of great agitation produced by the bourgeois democratic revolutionary movements, the Communist Party was not the protagonist of that rich revolutionary situation, lacking as it was a proletarian ideology and line, and the scientific understanding that could indicate the immediate and long-term tasks. Even though it was not at the center of events (the Tenentismo movement, the Prestes Column, the Liberal Alliance, the 1930 Movement), it was clearly influenced by the theses of the fragile national bourgeoisie, which fought in military movements simply for the change of the country's leaders.

Getúlio Vargas's Intervention in the Labor Movement

The 1930s began with a profound crisis of capitalism worldwide, followed by the rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe. The 1929 crisis fueled the imperialists' appetite for Brazil's riches, and the struggle between them for possession of these riches intensified. During this period, the penetration of German and Japanese imperialism into Brazil intensified, in addition to the already strongly established British imperialism. With the coffee crisis that followed the Wall Street crash of 1929, a climate of revolutionary fervor was created, the power of the landowners declined, and, financed by Yankee monopolists, the big bourgeoisie and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, mainly the military sectors, led by Getúlio Vargas, seized power, overthrowing the pro-British government of Washington Luís. Once installed, Getúlio

reconciled with the coffee barons, the lords of the Old Republic, betraying the democratic aspirations of the tenentist movement.

The rise of Nazi-fascist forces in Europe was growing as an alternative to imperialism in the face of the crisis and the growth of the revolutionary struggle of the peoples. In Brazil, too, the fascist threat was evident, with Getúlio Vargas becoming increasingly close to the Nazis and their followers in the country, the Integralists. Throughout the world, anti-fascist popular fronts were being formed, with significant worker participation.

As a result of a split within the ruling classes, the Vargas regime initially sought to control the labor and union movement by bringing it into the state apparatus. One of its first measures was the creation of the Ministry of Labor in 1930, with the clear objective of developing a union policy aimed at containing the working class within the limits of the state and formulating a policy of conciliation between capital and labor. This was also the objective of the 1931 “unionization law” (Decree 19,770), which, contradicting the freedom of union association existing at the beginning of the 20th century, created the pillars of state-controlled unionism in Brazil. Unions were recognized and officially sanctioned by the government, and to obtain “legal personality” and represent the working class, they needed, in addition to registration with a notary, to also be recognized by the Ministry of Labor. The law prohibited all “ideological propaganda” (read: communist) in unions.

In presenting the decree on unionization, Lindolfo Collor, the first Minister of Labor in the Vargas government, stated: “Unions or class associations will be matters of your immediate prerogative, under the cautious supervision of the State.” And at a rally attended by workers and union members in São Paulo in June 1931, he said: “It is time to replace the old and negative concept of class struggle with the new, constructive, and organic concept of class collaboration.” The decree also established financial control by the Ministry of Labor over union resources, prohibiting their use by workers during strikes, and defined the union as an organ of collaboration and cooperation with the State. It allowed delegates from the Ministry of Labor the right to participate in workers' assemblies, prohibited the development of political and ideological activities within unions, vetoed their affiliation with international trade union organizations, denied the right to unionize to public employees, and limited the participation of foreign workers in unions, since a large part of the combative labor leadership was still, at that time, of

foreign origin. It can be said that the only favorable point for the working class in this law – defined by the workers as a “Summary of the 'Carta del Lavoro' of Italian fascism” – was guaranteeing union unity. Otherwise, it tied the trade union entities to the State.

It is important to highlight how significant segments of the working class reacted to this law. Enduring coercion and outright repression, as well as ideological manipulation, the workers resisted, responding to the calls of the labor leadership and not submitting to official norms. Union autonomy, originating in the first decades of this century, was maintained until the mid-1930s. Only 25% of the unions in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and Rio Grande do Sul accepted the norms of this unionization law. The strike movement, contrary to what official history states, was intense during this period and, as a consequence, the proletariat gained numerous labor advantages, such as the vacation law, paid weekly rest, the 8-hour workday, regulation of women's and minors' work, etc. It should be noted that some of these laws already existed even before 1930, but were limited to certain categories such as railway and port workers. In these cases, the workers' struggle aimed at extending these benefits to all categories of the working class. At that time, these tendencies existed within the labor movement: the anarcho-syndicalists, who, although in decline, managed to group their followers in the São Paulo Workers' Federation; the socialists, who created the coalition of proletarian unions in 1934 and also fought for complete union autonomy; and the communists, who also in 1934, created the Regional Trade Union Federation in Rio and São Paulo and who, the following year, held the National Convention of Workers' Unity, bringing together 300 delegates representing more than 500,000 workers when they reorganized the Unitary Trade Union Confederation, the central trade union of the entire labor movement in Brazil.

On October 7, 1934, a significant demonstration took place, demonstrating the rise in political awareness among the working masses. On that day, the Integralists announced a large demonstration and military parade in São Paulo to commemorate the second anniversary of the creation of the Integralist Action. In Praça da Sé, a traditional center for workers' demonstrations in São Paulo, the Integralists intended to swear an oath of allegiance to the “Brazilian Führer,” Plínio Salgado.

An anti-fascist front was formed, and the decision was made to clarify to the people, through a manifesto and press releases, the reasons why workers' organizations

were demonstrating against the Integralist demonstration, since the Integralists were boasting that they would employ in Brazil the same methods of physical liquidation of political adversaries and opposition organizations that were being fiercely applied in Germany and Italy.

To combat the Integralist demonstration, two commissions were formed: one for popular mobilization and another for the military. The latter included the tenentist leader João Cabanas, the former commander Roberto Sisson, and Euclydes Krebs, representing the PCB (Brazilian Communist Party). It organized the strategy for attacking the Integralist demonstration. Each area of Praça da Sé, where the fascist march was to culminate, was to be guarded by one of the organizations participating in the movement. A joint call to action was also drawn up. In addition to the groups mentioned above, the Coalition of Proletarian Unions and dozens of anti-fascist unions and organizations signed it. The newspapers *A Classe Operária*, *O Homem Livre*, *A Manhã*, *A Plebe*, and *A Plateia* began to publicize the event. On October 4th, *A Plateia* featured on its front page: "The PCB invites all left-wing parties and workers' unions to a United Anti-fascist Front". On the 6th, the headline was: "For the first time in São Paulo, a massive rally against fascism."

The march of the "green shirts" was protected by the police and stretched for almost two kilometers along Brigadeiro Luís Antônio Avenue. When fascist slogans began to be chanted, the left-wing militants started chanting "Down with Integralism!". These first protest demonstrations were violently repressed. A burst of machine gun fire was used to clear the Praça da Sé of the demonstrators occupying it. But this only inflamed tempers. When the counter-demonstration resumed, a new shootout broke out between the security forces, on the side of the Integralists, and the anti-fascists. Mini-rallies were then held in each corner of the square. Fúlvio Abramo, Hermínio Sachetta, and others spoke at them. The majority of the Integralist militants fled at the very beginning of the conflict. A witness described the scene:

"They were taking off their shirts even while running. In that hellish capital that Praça da Sé had become, brazenly and courageously, laughing, an anti-fascist, Vitalino, a cart driver and junkyard owner, amused himself by helping them take off their shirts. Years later, he boasted of possessing, as souvenirs, more than a dozen of them in his house, kept as trophies of a historical moment."

Faced with this disorganized escape, the communist humorist Barão de Itararé ironically quipped: "An integralist doesn't run, he flies." The clash resulted in the deaths of three fascists, two policemen, and an anti-fascist student, in addition to 121 wounded. The following day, the police occupied the unions in Rio and São Paulo and arrested 74 anti-fascist leaders, but integralism in São Paulo had suffered a blow from which it would never fully recover.

The historic event that took place in Praça da Sé that Sunday afternoon served as an example for the entire country. Conflicts multiplied, and democratic and popular forces did not allow Brazilian fascists to storm the streets of major cities and intimidate the proletariat. They would not allow what happened in Italy and Germany to happen here. The Battle of Praça da Sé was also the initial moment in the formation of the broad Anti-Fascist Front in Brazil, which would find its main expression in the National Liberation Alliance, founded the following year.

Alongside the labor struggles, the mobilization of the working masses grew. In response to this situation and following the guidelines of the Communist International (Comintern), in March 1935, the Communist Party of Brazil, by then already including Luiz Carlos Prestes in its ranks, founded the ANL, the National Liberation Alliance.

Acting as an anti-fascist, anti-imperialist popular front and fighting for the establishment of a revolutionary popular government in the country, it quickly transformed into a mass movement. Cited even as an example of a democratic popular front by the VII Congress of the Communist International, the ANL, in a few months, reached 400,000 members, a large part of them workers and wage earners.

The government, anticipating a popular advance, initiated its repressive action. On April 4, 1935, five days after the first rally of the National Liberation Alliance (ANL), it decreed the National Security Law, which prohibited the right to strike and dissolved the Unified Trade Union Confederation, considered clandestine because it was constituted outside the official unions. A few months later, Filinto Muller, chief of police of the Federal District and a Nazi sympathizer, on the government's orders, declared the ANL illegal. Thus, distanced from the masses by immediate illegality, the ANL and the Party, making conceptual errors, promoted an armed uprising, which, due to a lack of preparation among the urban and rural masses, ended up being reduced to uprisings by military units. The insurrection was defeated, and a repressive escalation that had already been brewing prior to the uprising by the Vargas government fell upon the popular masses. Even so, they managed to seize power for three days in Natal and

some cities in Pernambuco. The government intensified the repression and declared a state of siege. It also created the Commission for the Repression of Communism; union and worker leaders were arrested, deported, and killed, and combative unions were summarily shut down.

From then on, the “yellow” associations, already existing since previous decades, advanced into the union field, and the process of control and co-optation of union leaders by the Ministry of Labor intensified. A docile union bureaucracy was created, linked to and handpicked by the State, whose objective was none other than to control workers' demands. “Peleguismo” (a term referring to the subservience of union leaders to corrupt union leaders) was implemented, configuring a unionism without authentic roots and which remained distant from the working class during the 15 years of the Estado Novo dictatorship.

In 1939, aiming to further consolidate the state-subordinated union structure, Decree-Law No. 1,402 was enacted, establishing union classification; for a category to be recognized as such, it had to be approved by the Union Classification Commission, a government body linked to the Ministry of Labor. Thus, the union structure began to be decided against the will of the workers, with sectors organized separately and in isolation, vertically. The law did not allow horizontal organization at the municipal, state, and national levels. The Ministry of Labor also decided on the territorial base of each union organization. Also created in that year was the Union Tax, established against the will of the labor movement, which, through the compulsory payment of one day's work per year by all salaried workers, constituted a robust financial source for the State and for the maintenance of the corrupt union leaders. Because the money was not even controlled by the workers and could not be used at the most necessary times, such as during strikes, the union tax created the necessary financial conditions for the transformation of unions, which, from organs of class struggle, became organizations providing social assistance, a function that should belong to the State and not to the workers' unions.

In the 1940s, the labor movement continued to develop amidst many difficulties. In 1943, the Vargas government prohibited collective bargaining and the right to strike. During World War II, the leadership of the Communist Party advocated “national unity against fascism,” claiming it was to pressure Vargas' reactionary government to declare war on Germany and aid the Soviet Union. This policy disregarded revolutionary

struggle, prioritizing support for the government, which had never hidden its sympathy for fascism and only entered the war under pressure from the Americans and on their orders, without ceasing to persecute the Communist Party. It sophistically argued that the just way to support the USSR in the war was to isolate Vargas' pro-Nazi government and develop the revolutionary struggle for power. Vargas reached the end of the war in ruins and was overthrown by a military coup. After the end of World War II, the Unified Workers' Movement was founded on April 30, 1945, publishing a manifesto signed by more than 300 union leaders from 13 states. This manifesto defended freedom and autonomy for unions, and democratic liberties, but fell into the same trap of fighting for a "democratic electoral code that establishes sound and respectable norms for the holding of free and honest elections."

After the end of World War II, with the enormous prestige achieved by the USSR and communists worldwide, the Communist Party emerged from clandestinity considerably strengthened. Its leadership, far from investing in the organization of the masses and the construction of instruments for the struggle for political power, became immersed in electoralism and constitutionalism. The PCB reached approximately 200,000 members and, in the 1946 elections, elected a group of 15 federal deputies, with Luiz Carlos Prestes being the senator elected with the highest number of votes.

A similar process occurred throughout Latin America and in numerous European countries, such as Italy and France, with their respective particularities. Again, the reaction struck the Communist Party in stages. First, it declared it illegal, using the Cohen Plan¹, and with that, 200,000 members disappeared overnight; then, communist mandates were revoked amidst violent repression. Severely battered and back underground, the Party began, with the January 1948 and August 1950 Manifestos, an attempt at self-criticism in the face of legalistic illusions.

The Class Struggles of the 1950s and the Search for a Class-based Path.

After going through a period of intense persecution of communists and class struggles in general, which led to disorganization and a predominance of reformist positions within the leadership, the trade union movement experienced a new surge.

In the late 1940s, the struggle for its reorganization along the revolutionary path was already underway within the Communist Party. With the defeats and failures of its

political line, which made its opportunistic character evident, the Communist Party began its search for the revolutionary path. In August 1950, the Party made a serious attempt to break with reformist positions and adopt a truly revolutionary line. The August Manifesto, which embodies this attempt, is oriented towards revolution and armed struggle. By proceeding in this way, the Party achieved some successes, and this, evidently, would be reflected in the struggles of the working class. There were numerous demonstrations for trade union freedoms, against the presence of imperialist forces, and in defense of national wealth. In this context, the campaign for the creation of Petrobras was the most significant, and a broad United Front was formed against the approval and implementation of the Brazil-US Military Agreement. Significant strikes led by the Party occur, seeking to instill greater combativeness in mass actions in the cities and to focus on the development of the struggle in the countryside. The Inter-Union Unity Pact was created. Several revolutionary peasant movements emerge, and powerful strikes erupt in the main working-class centers. Led by the Party, the strikes take on a more radical character, and peasant actions in various places result in clashes with the police, with prior preparation for self-defense. Examples include the battles of Porecatu (PR), in the early 1950s, and Trombas and Formoso (GO). The latter was an arduous and lengthy struggle between squatters and landowners, ending with the victory of the squatters.

Thus, in the early 1950s, under Vargas's last government, the labor movement once again reached a significant scale. It's important to remember that the Brazilian working class doubled in size between 1940 and 1953, reaching approximately 1,500,000 workers in industry. Strikes became frequent. In 1951, nearly 200 strikes took place, affecting almost 400,000 workers. The following year, they spread, totaling almost 300 throughout the country. In 1953, the working class's struggle against hunger and the high cost of living involved approximately 800,000 workers. In São Paulo alone, more than 800 strikes took place, encompassing all professional categories. The strike of 300,000 workers in São Paulo, which included textile workers, metalworkers, carpenters, bricklayers, printers, and others, dates from this year. The May 1st celebrations are characterized by their political nature, raising the banner of defending national wealth and opposing the presence of imperialist forces.

The various factory committees created by the communists expanded the presence of unions within the factories, giving them a horizontal structure. These were undoubtedly years of progress in the organization of the working class. Their

fundamental demands were directed against hunger and the high cost of living, but, as demonstrated above, they were not limited to the economic sphere. Especially from 1950 to 1955, led by the communists, the workers' struggles took on a class-based character.

In January 1948, the Central Committee published a manifesto that initiated a self-criticism of constitutional illusions, which became more emphatic and profound with the August 1950 Manifesto. In this manifesto, it proposed the formation of a Democratic Front of National Liberation to seize power, establishing a popular democratic government intended to carry out the program of the democratic, agrarian, anti-feudal, and anti-imperialist revolution.

In practice, important advances were also recorded, such as the campaign for blank votes in the 1950 presidential elections, a more class-conscious approach to the labor movement, and, despite limited penetration in rural areas, important land struggles were launched, such as those in Porecatu, Paraná (50). These would unfold into armed struggle for several years, such as those in Trombas and Formoso (in Goiás, from 54 to 57), which, led by the Communist Party, would conquer the land. The entire period is marked by cowardly assassinations and massacres of militants by the repressive organs of the State.

In the Trade Union Report, in May 1949, the communist leader Maurício Grabois called for "putting the party at the forefront of the masses," "organizing the proletariat in the factories," "organizing the struggles in the countryside," "mobilizing women and young people," and "fighting against imperialism." He emphasized that "the most important task in mass work is to organize and unite the working class, based on companies and workplaces where strong trade union organizations must be formed, capable of leading the masses in the struggle for their demands and confronting the attacks and arbitrary actions of the reaction... As for the unions controlled by the Ministry of Labor and the police, our position is one of combat and unmasking of all ministerial bureaucracy that impedes the free organization of workers, of defending trade union freedom, against the regime of intervention in the unions, of fighting against the betrayal and corruption of the boards constituted by the union bosses, and against all means that the reaction uses or intends to use to impose its control on the unions... This, however, does not mean that we should simply abandon the current unions. On the contrary, in unions where it is possible to act in defense of the masses,

using their headquarters and assets, we must join them without the slightest fear or sectarianism, mobilizing the workers, putting the union at the service of the corporation, especially with a view to preparation and the unleashing of struggles for their demands. But this work in the union must also be supported by the organization of workers in the factory, an organization capable of guaranteeing the continuity of the struggle in the face of any reactionary blow to the union... Regarding the organization of strikes, it advises that "they should not rely exclusively on central committees, but also on the sub-committees of the company sections, which guarantee the organization and a better integration of the masses in the struggle." During this period, the important experience of creating free workers' associations supported by grassroots organizations in the workplaces took place, and this orientation of the PCB became the main line of union action, although it emphasized the need to intervene also in reactionary unions. In fact, the great workers' struggles of the 1950s were based on the organizational structure of workers' associations and their impetus in this class-based and combative line.

However, in essence, the leadership of the Communist Party persisted in its reformist line, prioritizing what it called the national bourgeoisie, and, above all, failing to give the agrarian question and the role of the peasantry the necessary importance. Consequently, it did not follow through on defining the struggle, failing to formulate and define a clear and concrete line for its development. For example, the people's army, according to the 1950 Manifesto, would be formed simply by purging the "fascist elements" from the bourgeois armed forces. Once again, and unequivocally, the lack of confidence in the masses is evident. In fact, the policy expressed in the 1950 Manifesto was largely boycotted. Right-wing positions, with Prestes at the forefront, gained momentum, and in 1955, back in the electoral arena, the Communist Party was involved in Juscelino Kubitschek's presidential campaign, consolidating its electoral and pacifist tactics.

The Return to Reformist Trade Unionism with Prestes' Self-criticism

With the new guidelines set forth by Prestes in the 1955 Manifesto, the strength accumulated by class-based trade unionism in the previous five years would not serve to elevate the political organization of the working class, including its ability to resist the coup that would occur in 1964.

The 1960s were dominated by reformism, and workers' struggles were led by sectors of the working class linked to the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB). After immense strike demonstrations, the III National Trade Union Congress was held, seeking a single national organization to coordinate the trade union struggle: the General Workers' Command (CGT). The CGT predominantly held reformist positions and maintained close contact with the government, especially the government of João Goulart. During this period, the Pact of Unity and Action (PUA), an inter-union organization that brought together port, maritime, and railway workers, was very active.

In 1960, the CGT played a significant role in the Parity Strike, in which 400,000 civilian workers paralyzed maritime, rail, and port transport throughout the country, demanding equal pay with the military. Also in 1962, it played a major political role in the general strike that demanded, among other things, the repeal of the National Security Law, the granting of the right to strike, a 100% wage increase, radical agrarian reform, an immediate price freeze on basic necessities, strict enforcement of the law controlling the remittance of profits abroad, and the right of peasants to organize unions.

Thanks to the large workers' mobilizations and strikes that shook the country, on July 13, 1962, the right to a 13th salary or Christmas bonus was established by law (No. 4,090) during the João Goulart administration.

Strikes followed one another rapidly. In 1963, the famous strike of 700,000 workers took place, which, among other demands, aimed at unifying the base date for wage agreements, in order to prevent adjustments from being made at different times for various categories. Had this demand been successful, it would have meant a significant change in the labor legislation in force since the Estado Novo (New State). Despite this, the strike achieved other victories, obtaining an 80% increase for all workers, in addition to forcing employers to engage in dialogue with various worker categories represented by the Joint Action Pact (PAC), an inter-union group that led the strike. The strike of 700,000 workers constituted one of the largest strike demonstrations in the entire history of the Brazilian labor movement.

Remember, for example, that the metalworkers of São Paulo reached a high degree of mobilization during that period. According to the account of a union activist, "there wasn't a single company in São Paulo where there weren't union delegates." He adds that the metalworkers didn't picket within their own category, as the support was

unanimous, but rather sought the support of other sectors, such as textiles, chemicals, footwear, etc. He also mentions that, with the 1964 coup, in addition to all leadership being crushed, the 1,800 metalworkers' union delegates in São Paulo were denounced to the police and lost their jobs.

The countryside was also affected by the advance of popular struggles, echoing the fight against large landholdings throughout the country. The struggle against imperialism and large landholdings was taken up by the entire combative trade union movement. Workers began the mobilization process in 1955, with the emergence of the first Peasant League in Engenho Galiléia. A year earlier, the Union of Agricultural Workers of Brazil (ULTAB) had been created, and little by little rural unions flourished. It was the decisive entry of the peasantry into the national political scene, demanding a radical transformation of the agrarian structure, through the replacement of large landholdings with peasant and state ownership. They demanded access to land for those who wished to work, as well as the extension of labor legislation to the countryside, with the aim of guaranteeing some minimum rights to rural workers.

The lack of proper leadership caused much damage to the workers' struggle in Brazil. Between June 1963 and November 1964, the Communist Party of China meticulously denounced the five Khrushchevite theses. The Two Alls (Party of the whole people and State of the whole people), it said, decreed the end of the class party and the dictatorship of the proletariat, denying class struggle in socialism. The Three Peacefuls (peaceful seizure of power, peaceful coexistence, and peaceful emulation) disarmed communist parties for the struggle against the state of the exploiting classes and against imperialism, for national liberation.

The theory of peaceful "transition," the CCP argued, pushes parties toward electoralism and conciliation. The distorted concept of peaceful coexistence begins to advocate pacifism in capitalist countries, no longer distinguishes between just and unjust wars, and capitulates to imperialism.

With "peaceful emulation," the role of productive forces is overestimated, placing the need for better performance in companies in the manner of capitalist management under the guise of competition with imperialism.

In fact, a policy of collusion and struggle began between Russian social-imperialism and imperialism for the division of the world. Due to the profound weariness of the Communist Parties from open collaboration with the bourgeoisie of their countries, many of their cadres broke with the leadership in pursuit of revolution.

Faced with the shameful capitulation of the leadership of the Brazilian Communist Party under Prestes to the 1964 coup, the remaining revolutionary cadres, such as Marighela, Joaquim Câmara Ferreira, and Mario Alves, as well as numerous young revolutionaries, broke with the leadership and founded various organizations, turning to armed struggle against the dictatorship. The vast majority were killed by reactionaries or by the collusion of revisionism and reactionaries, slowly disintegrating in the confrontation, in prisons, in exile, later in bourgeois parties, or heroically exhausted themselves over time. Others survived with dignity.

The Labor Movement During the Military Regime

The labor movement, along with the peasant struggle, was a priority target in the repression unleashed by the regime that was established in 1964 as an armed counter-revolution in power.

Through jingoistic rhetoric and propaganda promising growth, increased production, and inflation control (or rather, manipulation of inflation indices), the coup plotters justified wage freezes; repression of unions and strikes; the end of job security; increased working hours; land concentration, including in foreign hands, etc. The anti-strike law dates from June 1, 1964.

Anti-proletarian legislation constituted not only an instrument for increasing the exploitation of labor, but also an indispensable anti-national tool for the internal counter-revolutionary classes. The austerity measures led to a reduction of more than a third in workers' wages, exhausted by long working hours, in addition to the need for other family members to join the workforce.

In the countryside, foreign capital took control of the production of equipment, seeds, fertilizers, and marketing. The growing need to export agricultural products to compensate for the investments of monopoly capital in the country promoted an increase in land concentration, the consequent and massive expulsion of peasants from their lands to the cities, expanding the reserve army of labor, while Brazil began to import food.

Despite the violent repression unleashed by the military regime, important strikes did occur. In 1967, the Anti-Wage-Freeze Inter-Union Movement (MIA) was created, and a portion of the union leaders wanted to keep the movement within the

limits tolerated by the Ministry of Labor. However, anticipating the general strike planned for October 1968, the time of the metalworkers' collective bargaining dispute, the Osasco leadership launched a strike, believing in the possibility of its extension to other regions. Beginning on July 16th with the occupation of Cobrasma, the strike reached the companies Barreto Keller, Braseixos, Granada, Lonaflex, and Brown Boveri. The following day, the Ministry of Labor declared the strike illegal and ordered intervention in the union. There was also the presence of military forces who controlled all exits from the city, in addition to surrounding and invading the factories, which caused the strike to lose its initial momentum. On its fourth day, the workers returned to work. It was the end of the Osasco strike, which went down in history as a testament to the working class's resistance against the dictatorship and wage cuts. Another strike broke out in Contagem in October 1968, protesting wage cuts, lasting four days and ending with the military occupation of Mannesman and intervention in the union.

In the late 1970s, strikes resurfaced. Especially in 1979, important strikes occurred, such as those at Volkswagen in the ABC region of São Paulo, at Mannesmann, by construction workers, and by state teachers in Minas Gerais, among others. However, the militancy of the masses, expressed in such strikes, was generally channeled into electoral politics, a fact that is clear today, where opportunism is at the core of the reactionary state's management.

Military management evolved into a form of rule of law. The civilian managers who succeeded them continued the wage squeeze, with the minimum wage reaching the "hefty" sum of R\$ 300.00. Steel mills, Vale do Rio Doce, the electricity sector, oil, and everything else continues to be sold off at bargain-basement prices, and to this are added the counter-reforms and attacks on workers' rights being carried out by the current administration.

Creation of the CUT: New unionism or Orange Unionism (red on the outside and yellow on the inside)?

Cut Was Created Based on Cadres Trained by the Catholic Church, With the Blessing of Karol Wojtyla, and by the American Trade Union Movement (LADESIL), With Strong Funding from European Social-democratic Trade Union Centers.

The creation of CUT completed the organic division of the Brazilian trade union movement and followed the political project of the PT (Workers' Party). In June 1980, a few days after the formal creation of the PT (Workers' Party) with its first national meeting, the so-called "ENTOES" (National Meeting of Workers in Opposition to the Union Structure) emerged, which would later be called "ANAMPOS" (National Articulation of Popular and Union Movements). This movement brought together the core of unionists who would form the CUT (Unified Workers' Central) in 1983. The Catholic Church, swayed by the preachings of Pope John Paul II and his protégé Lech Valessa, played a decisive role in these articulations, through sectors of the Workers' Pastoral, Land Pastoral, and Basic Ecclesial Communities, providing meeting places, all kinds of infrastructure, resources, and personnel, with the direct intervention of activists and priests active in the workers' movement. Marked by deep-rooted anti-communism, ANAMPOS, the then union arm of the PT, in addition to the support of the church, mainly the Catholic Church, was financed with substantial resources from the central labor unions. European trade unions, with the construction of large physical spaces such as Trade Union Schools, resources for their organization and financing, salaries for union leaders, trips throughout the country and abroad, etc. These resources never stopped flowing into the PT's coffers.

Counter-revolutionary courses from IADESIL (American Institute for the Development of Free Trade Unionism) and CIOSL ⁴ were designed to train trade

⁴ International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' a split from the World Federation of Trade Unions in 1949. Created under the direction and support of US imperialists to respond to the WFTU's communist leanings. - ML

unionists, such as Luiz Inácio himself, through long trips to the USA. Lula had been introduced to the São Bernardo union in 1969 by the then “intervening” police officer, a friend of the military, Mr. Paulo Vidal, from whom he inherited the leadership of the union in 1975. He was trained at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, United States, around 1972-1973, already as a trained trade unionist in one of those “training courses” where one learns the most refined art of demagoguery of the tightrope-walking, anti-communist union leaders who present themselves as leftists (appearing to be radical or moderate according to the convenience of opportunists in the service of imperialism). In 1978, Luiz Inácio joined other union leaders (Jacó Bittar and Wagner Benevides, oil workers; Olívio Dutra, bank employee; João Paulo Pires, Henos Amorina, and José Cicote, metalworkers; among others) who, like him, attended IADESIL/CIOLS courses to discuss the creation of a new political party. The entire self-proclaimed “new unionism” driven from São Bernardo do Campo relied on members trained by him and the “workers' circles” of the Catholic Church. As is widely known, since the ABC strike that triggered a major political crisis in the country, Luiz Inácio was recommended by the éminence grise⁵ of the fascist military regime, General Golbery do Couto e Silva, as a strategic reserve against the advance of communists and other leftist forces within the union and popular movements. Later, Luiz Inácio, along with Fernando Henrique Cardoso and other “personalities” such as Roberto Civita, Celso Lafer, Celina Vargas do Amaral Peixoto, and Jacqueline Pitanguy, took part in the initiative of Yankee imperialist circles, the “Inter-American Dialogue.”

It's worth remembering that, with very rare exceptions, the unanimous position among the political currents that called themselves Marxist was to attack Luiz Inácio as a sellout pushed by the masses, as soon as the first strikes in the ABC region occurred. But, as soon as Luiz Inácio embraced the idea of creating the “Workers' Party,” all these people changed their tune and became his worshippers.

On May 1, 1979, in São Bernardo, the founding manifesto of the Workers' Party (PT) was launched. At that time, the transition from military rule, driven by imperialism and with the collaboration of the Brazilian left, was underway. Almost the entire Brazilian left had already capitulated to the reactionaries. The suspension of Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5), the establishment of a multi-party system, and the amnesty law, approved in 1979, marked a new social pact: that of concerted action and

⁵ ‘Grey Eminence’, An influential adviser to those in power who operate outside of the public’s eye. - ML

class collaboration. The union leaders who founded the PT, notoriously anti-communist, gained prominence through the media monopolies amidst the wave of workers' strikes that shook Brazil.

On the international stage, new elements emerge in the dispute between the imperialist powers, which will leave their mark on the formation of the PT (Workers' Party). In 1978, the Polish cleric Karol Wojtyla assumes the papacy, under the name John Paul II, and will play an important role in the ideological offensive of imperialism against the revolution.

The bourgeois restoration in China had been consummated, and imperialism was taking advantage of the manifestations of discontent occurring in countries subjected to the domination of Russian social-imperialism. In Poland, a wave of strikes in 1980 led to the founding of the Solidarity trade union, a clerical organization led by Lech Walesa, a close associate of Karol Wojtyla. With its anti-communist preaching and having managed to attract relative mass support, Solidarity became a worldwide sensation, attracting all reactionary and counter-revolutionary currents (with the exception of those linked to Soviet revisionism).

This same alliance of the Catholic Church (all its wings), with the various Trotskyist and semi-Trotskyist currents, the renegades and repentant ex-guerrillas who were beginning to return to the country, formed the PT (Workers' Party). The discourse of defending petty-bourgeois socialism and anti-boss radicalism was used to gain prestige among the masses. The revisionists, who initially opposed the PT, would soon join the popular electoral front supporting Lula as president. Defeated in the first presidential elections, the PT brazenly assumed its bourgeois positions, with successive internal splits.

The trajectory of the CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores - Unified Workers' Central) is similar; it's part of the same process. Like the CIOLS, its emergence in August 1983 already bears the mark of "yellow" unionism. Divisionalists, the PT (Workers' Party) unionists broke with a process that had been underway since the early 1980s, a process that relied on the wave of strikes of the period, to build a single national trade union confederation. And the role of the CUT is to propel the construction of the PT. And, like the PT, the CUT initially adopted an ultra-radical, anti-PT and anti-Getúlio Vargas discourse. Little by little, this discourse and its practice transitioned from liberal radicalism to class collaboration as a doctrine. Today, both the

party and the confederation are under the absolute control of the same Articulação (Articulation) current, originating from the CIOLS and led by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, which came to be called Campo Majoritário (Majority Field) and, even with the PT's decline, continues to maintain hegemony.

In an article published in the magazine Democracy and Socialism – No. 1 – the economist Paulo de Tarso Venceslau, then a member of a PT (Workers' Party) directory in São Paulo, acknowledges that these European trade union federations contributed around 400,000 dollars and that this fact was widely reported in the press at the time and publicly acknowledged by ANAMPOS (National Association of Labor and Employment Unions).

The dispersion of the labor movement, caused by the military coup, the lack of a class-based and combative orientation, and the consequent predominance of right-wing opportunism within the revolutionary and trade union movement, totally tied to the State (as characterized the PT in its origins), facilitated the implementation of the PT's political project. Thus, fertile ground and a relatively easy path were found for anti-communist trade unionists, repentant guerrillas, Trotskyist students, intellectuals of the liberal petty bourgeoisie (CEBRAP, financed by the Ford Foundation), and many other renegades of Marxism and traitors, financed by the European bourgeoisie and the Church, to advance their project. Political parties that initially opposed the CUT's divisive project, such as the MR8, PCdoB, and PCB, among others (still underground), are now either properly sheltered in positions within the central union and the government or in total support of its anti-people policy.

At its founding, the CUT, undeniably financed by imperialism, had to adopt combative positions to attract followers, mobilize the masses, and gain strength, marking its actions with strikes, struggles for wage adjustments, defense of “radical agrarian reform under workers' control,” repudiation of the IMF, and fierce disputes over control of unions with traditional union bosses.

During the Sarney administration, he radicalized his positions against the government's proposed social pact, marking the period of his national and international prominence. In September 1988, the CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores - Unified Workers' Central) approved its support for Luiz Inácio's first candidacy and began a gradual, yet systematic, process of softening its rhetoric and increasing the

bureaucratization of the central organization, making it increasingly difficult for delegates to participate in subsequent congresses.

During the Collor administration, the CUT's policy of class collaboration became more explicit, prioritizing “negotiation” and “concertation” and partnerships with employers through participation in Sectoral Chambers (a mechanism adopted by the government to defend the interests of monopolized sectors and harm workers).

The combative 32-day strike by oil workers during the FHC administration in 1995 was disavowed by Luiz Inácio, and the Central Union, through its president Vicentinho, worked to isolate it, pressuring the workers to back down without any gains. Coupled with the electoral battle was the compromise with participation in the government's pension reform and the betrayal of accepting the change from length of service to length of contribution, among other things.

The measures to relax labor rights implemented by FHC (Fernando Henrique Cardoso) regarding time banks, outsourcing, and temporary contracts were welcomed in discussions with the CUT (Unified Workers' Central) and implemented in its affiliated unions. Furthermore, the private pension plans through pension funds were initiated by CUT member Luiz Gushiken, who provided full support to FHC.

The CUT (Unified Workers' Central) culminates its electoral path and role as an electoral springboard for the PT (Workers' Party) with the election of Luiz Inácio as president of the “Republic,” with the big bourgeois/landowner José Alencar as vice-president, in a formation of the alliance of opportunists with forces of the bureaucratic big bourgeoisie along with the large landowners.

Luiz Inácio Appointed Marinho to Head CUT.

Without the slightest ceremony, President Luiz Inácio nominated and guaranteed the election of Luiz Marinho as president of the organization. He had not been nominated by the delegates of the CUT congress, nor did he emerge from any debate within the Articulation itself; it was a direct “nomination” by the President of the Republic. This is nothing new; among other episodes, the decision to affiliate with the ICFTU stands out, decided at the 5th National Plenary of the CUT, held from July 15 to 18, 1992, an issue that met with enormous resistance from the central's base. Luiz Inácio went to the plenary and personally orchestrated its approval through maneuvers typical of the mafia-like unionism practiced in the ABCD Metalworkers' Union and

others. A man he personally trusted, Marinho became known in the ABC region for his good relationship with transnational automakers, his ardent defense of participation in sectoral chambers, the flexibilization of labor rights, time banks, salary reductions, negotiation of dismissal quotas, and outsourcing.

In 1984, Marinho joined the ABC Metalworkers Union as treasurer, a position he held for six years; during the 1990-93 term he was secretary-general, succeeding Vicentinho as president in 1993, a position he held until recently. His leadership of the ABC Metalworkers Union is marked by a good and direct relationship with the headquarters of the multinational companies located in the ABC region. Always yielding to pressure from the automakers, Marinho made several trips to Germany and the United States, signing agreements detrimental to workers, disguised by a corporate discourse and class collaboration.

Evidence of the close relationship with transnational corporations is the support given by Volkswagen, Ford, GM, Mercedes-Benz, and Scania to the Union's Documentation and Memory Center (ABC de Luta – sic) and all of the Union's social activities. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Development (ILDES), social-democratic bodies directly funded by the German government, are the Union's main partners. All this class collaboration translates into wage suppression for ABC ⁶ metalworkers and large-scale outsourcing, as well as time banks, negotiation of vacations, 13th-month salary, among other violations of rights, and even the implementation of controls typical of the Nazi Gestapo, with performance evaluation committees formed by management and company committees to assess worker productivity and initiate dismissals.

And Luiz Inácio Marinho, now Minister of Labor, is showing his true colors: one of his first actions as president of the CUT (Unified Workers' Central) was to deliver a document to the government where the CUT, in addition to defending the pension reform, argues that the reforms expand rights. After meeting with the Minister of Finance, Antônio Palocci, he came up with the idea that it would be possible to reduce interest rates on bank loans with deductions directly from workers' paychecks; that is, workers would become hostages of the banks and suffer deductions even before

⁶ The ABC Region is an industrial region in Greater São Paulo, Brazil. - ML

receiving their salaries. Luiz Inácio Marinho, while president of the CUT, also engaged in orchestrating the sabotage of the July 2003 strike by federal employees.

CUT Summit Helps Implement Counter-reforms.

The appointment of Luiz Marinho to the Ministry of Labor exposes the nefarious role of the CUT leadership in the workers' struggle and definitively tore away the mask of classism that covered their monstrous face from birth. Besides defending [the CUT], they occupy positions in the leadership of the bourgeois-landowning state to implement the imperialist policy of cutting workers' rights and state intervention in the labor movement. Through labor and union counter-reforms, they aim to satisfy the IMF's dictates of further oppression of workers and seek to establish a union monopoly in the hands of the CUT and similar union stooges.

Recent corruption scandals, the mensalão scandal ⁷, etc., have proven the true interests of the group that created and led this labor union. The first CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores) board included those who are now at the center of the mensalão crisis, among them Delúbio Soares. Despite the electoral maneuvering of those leading the formation of Conlutas ⁸ and other unions that remain trapped in electoral manipulation, the prospects for the struggle are growing. This exposure has intensified the decision of other combative sectors to break with the CUT and build a labor movement centered on class struggle, which is developing step by step.

⁷ 2005 scandal in which Lula's first administration was accused of vote buying when they paid a number of deputies in the parliament to vote in favor of the legislation the government hoped to pass. - ML

⁸ 'Central Trade Union and Popular CSP-Conlutas' An split from CUT which maintains much of the same lines and perspective without being explicitly tied to the PT. - ML

Self-criticism of State-controlled Trade Unionism and the Formation of the Workers' League

The Pursuit of Building a Class-based, Combative, and Independent Trade Unionism.

The Workers' League emerged from our break with state-controlled unionism in September 1995 and was formally established at its first Congress held in March 1997. Its existence has been marked by the defense of class struggle and combativeness, and by the relentless fight against opportunism, corporatism, class collaboration, legalism, and pacifism so characteristic of this old and bankrupt Brazilian unionism, represented by the current central labor organizations.

The prospects for growth of communist trade unionism among the working masses of our country are very promising. The condition for this is to always fight to remain firm in our revolutionary and class-conscious principles, always placing the interests of the poor and oppressed masses of our country first, serving the workers' struggle on a global level.

The League has maintained that Brazil is a semi-colonial country in which a bureaucratic capitalism has developed, supported by semi-feudal relations, particularly in the countryside, as a necessity for imperialism to deepen its domination and subjugation of the country, mainly by the United States (Yankee); imperialist domination is exercised internally by the reactionary and oppressive classes (big bourgeoisie and latifundia) subservient to imperialism, who make up the old and rotten State and subject our people and country to the interests of imperialist monopolies.

The Brazilian people are composed of the following oppressed classes: the proletariat (workers, wage earners in general, semi-proletarians), the peasantry (peasants in their various strata, poor and middle), the petty bourgeoisie (intellectuals, students, teachers, other liberal professionals, artisans), and the middle bourgeoisie (small and medium-sized urban and rural landowners, oppressed by monopolies; despite being oppressed, these sectors are hesitant because they fear the class struggle of the proletariat and the poor peasantry).

The League has also maintained that the situation in Brazil has worsened, that the crisis is deepening, and that the government is riddled with corruption. And that this crisis is one of bureaucratic capitalism, part of the larger crisis of the entire global imperialist system. And that the masses always fight, and we, as part of the masses exploited and oppressed by the bourgeoisie, the large landowners, and imperialism, are also part of this new revolutionary wave that is beginning to rise throughout the world. The League has always pointed out that the crisis in the country will continue, that great struggles will arise, and that our movement must prepare to defend the rights of the working class and all the people, and in particular, actively support the struggle of the peasants for the conquest of land and the destruction of large landholdings.

The League has maintained that the most important aspect of our struggle is the conquest of power, having power, because without power we can have nothing but illusion. And that for this it is necessary to unite the masses around the Agrarian Program and the Defense of the People's Rights, to organize the disorganized power of the masses and to destroy the three mountains (large landholdings, big bourgeoisie, imperialism) that oppress us and that represent the old and rotten power. This means: 1) giving all the land to the poor peasants, destroying the large landholdings. This is the only condition to end hunger, guarantee work for millions who have been expelled from the countryside to the cities, and guarantee cheap food on the worker's table. 2) Confiscate and nationalize all the large companies of the bourgeoisie. 3) Sweep away the domination of imperialism by confiscating all the properties of transnational corporations. To topple the three mountains and demolish the entire state apparatus that sustains the old and decadent power of the reactionary classes, and to build upon its ruins the new state which, with the establishment of a New Democratic government, will march uninterruptedly towards the construction of socialism.

Since its inception, the Workers' League has put its proclaimed objectives into practice. By offering firm and active resistance to the increased exploitation and oppression by the State and the bourgeoisie, which falls upon the working class as a result of the deepening crisis of capitalism, the League has rejected traditional wage campaigns and organized days of struggle with strikes and mobilizations, with combative demonstrations, and supported all the struggles of the working class (bus drivers, construction workers, metalworkers, street vendors, van drivers, teachers, oil workers, public servants, etc.). The unions affiliated with the League have confirmed in practice the thesis that "in times of crisis, those who fight the least lose the most." A

series of rights that the yellow unionism (CUT, Força Sindical ⁹, CGT ¹⁰, etc.) sold to the bourgeoisie (time bank, for example) were maintained in the League's area of operation.

We believe that a true and authentic Trade Union Center for Brazilian workers will be the product of a prolonged class struggle against the bourgeoisie, large landowners, and imperialism, against all opportunism, based on combative classism and class independence.

The League has actively participated in popular struggles, land occupations in the city, and in denouncing and fighting against the policy of assassinating the poor practiced by the Military Police and the state apparatus. The heroic resistance of Vila Corumbiara and Vila Bandeira Vermelha ¹¹ stands out, with their victorious occupations of land belonging to the municipalities of Belo Horizonte and Betim. In Betim, the occupation of abandoned municipal land by 200 families of poor workers cost the lives of fellow workers Elder Gonçalves de Souza and Erionides Anastácio dos Santos, who were murdered by shots fired by the military police who invaded the encampment on April 26, 1999, on the orders of Mayor Jésus Lima (PT).

The League, fighting for the formation of a worker-peasant alliance, has mobilized material and human resources among workers and in the city to support the struggle of poor peasants for land and the destruction of large landholdings; to support the production of poor peasants and the fight against monopolies and hoarders; and to defend what is being conquered and built against attacks from large landholdings and the old State. The construction of the Leagues of Poor Peasants in northern Minas Gerais, Rondônia, the Midwest, and other regions of the country, moving towards the creation of a unified League of Poor Peasants throughout Brazil, demonstrates the growth of the new peasant movement in our country.

The League has pointed out the seriousness of the imperialist crisis and, in particular, of the American economy, and that preparations are underway for a Third World War, and the cowardly aggression against the Afghan and Iraqi people is a sign

⁹ 'Trade Union Force' An even more openly "centrist" split from the CUT associated with the "centrist social democratic" party "Solidarity" - ML

¹⁰ 'General Confederation of Workers' An "center right" union center associated with the "Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement" - ML

¹¹ Two housing occupations lead by the 'LPM - Popular Struggle for Housing' and associated with the Brazilian New Democratic movement

of the gravity of their crisis, that the imperialists are doomed to defeat and their actions provoke more hatred of imperialism among the peoples, especially Yankee imperialism.

In all its activities, the League has reaffirmed its anti-imperialist stance. In May 1997, the League led a demonstration against the implementation of the FTAA ¹² (where the act of burning the Yankee flag, the most hated symbol by people all over the world, was resumed) and we also confronted the opportunistic “left” that joined the FHC ¹³ government to defend Mercosur as an alternative to the FTAA. In the March against hunger and the farce of the elections (September 2000), we held an act against the Yankees at the door of the business office in the center of the capital of Minas Gerais, and in the May 1st celebrations, the march ended in an anti-imperialist act with a demonstration of support for the Palestinian people. On that occasion, the Yankee flag and the Zionist flag of Israel were burned. In April 2003, a large protest against the Yankee invasion of Iraq was organized in the center of Belo Horizonte. The flags of the invading troops of the USA and England were trampled by the workers. The police who charged against the march had to retreat under a hail of stones thrown by workers and locals passing through Praça Sete, the site of the confrontation, which was under renovation and had an abundance of Portuguese cobblestones.

In the political sphere, the League has fought against the opportunism of the electoral “left” and against the farce of elections, a path used by imperialism to maintain its domination. And, finally, the League recognizes Marxism as the scientific ideology of the proletariat, fundamental for guiding the struggle of the peoples to end imperialism, build socialism in every country and, by ending class society, achieve worldwide enlightened communism. In its permanent development: Marxism– Marxism-Leninism – today is Maoism, its third, new and superior stage.

League Organization

Goals

The Workers' League reaffirms its objectives approved at the 1st Congress:

¹² ‘Free Trade Agreement of the Americas’ – ML

¹³ Fernando Henrique Cardoso, 34th president of Brazil from 1995-2003 – ML

- 1) Overcoming the consciousness of professional categories and even the sum of categories. It is very different. One must understand that we are all one single class of exploited people and that the exploiting classes exercise state power through law, parliament, justice, police-military repression, and government policy to impose and maintain their domination. Breaking with economism by developing mass work in the political, ideological, cultural, and organic spheres, surpassing the merely protest-oriented character, and addressing the question of power. We embrace trade unionism as an organization of economic resistance for the working masses and as a school of class struggle.
- 2) To develop a class-conscious spirit, to coordinate and organize urban and rural workers (agricultural laborers), seeking to develop and strengthen grassroots organization in the workplace, adopting different forms of struggle against employers and their state apparatus, always marking the main path through the affirmation of the principle that "to rebel is just," educating the masses to exercise this principle consciously and in an organized manner.
- 3) Break free from the State's control by coordinating the struggle, creating new forms of organization and material support to overcome and dismantle the bureaucratic machines that unions have become. These forms can be direct or transitional, depending on the particular conditions of each sector. Gradually abolish mandatory forms of contribution and develop organized forms of voluntary contribution. Gradually replace the presidential system of leadership with more collective and coordinated forms. Radically combat all types of deviation such as careerism, personalism, caudillismo, bossism, and all forms of individualism. Eliminate welfare dependency through permanent discussion with the masses.
- 4) Organize a network of solidarity among workers to strongly unite them in times of hardship. Create mutual aid funds.
- 5) To strengthen, as a strategic task, the constitution of the worker-peasant alliance to fight for land through the Agrarian Program, for the conquest of a true and new democracy. (see about the agrarian problem)

Principles

The Workers' League is based on the following principles:

- 1) The masses make history.

- 2) The struggle for rights is important, but the main thing is power.
- 3) Combat opportunism as the main danger.
- 4) To rebel is justified.
- 5) Relying on one's own strengths.
- 6) The need to protect oneself.

Given all the reasons that underlie the struggle of the masses for their rights, from historical conditions to the present, the movement cannot be so naive as to expect any democratic treatment from the State and the bourgeoisie. It is a necessity and a moral obligation to undertake all the tasks necessary to defend our movement and our organizations.

To maintain the status quo, the Brazilian state, the bourgeoisie, and the large landowners have extensive experience and spare no effort to destroy any organization that opposes their interests, that works to transform the land ownership situation and dismantle their system of exploitation and oppression. The system uses not only all the instruments at the state's disposal to repress and destroy our struggle, but also relies on numerous political and paramilitary organizations to carry out its criminal plans.

To raise awareness among the masses about repression, about the real and true concept of the State, its role, as well as to denounce the actions of the repressive apparatus. But it is not enough to denounce them; it is necessary to know how to combat them. Faced with the need for self-defense, many activities must be developed and organized. Starting with the participation of everyone in the defense of the organization, of the masses themselves, and of our leaders, who are the main target of elimination by the enemy. The basis of a just policy of self-defense is the just line of the organization, its application, and deep rooting in the masses. Other elements are:

- 1- Constant vigilance against enemy infiltration,
- 2- surveillance of enemy movements,
- 3- obtaining permanent information about the enemy and counter-information are essential activities for our protection and in which everyone should participate,
- 4- protecting the identity of comrades who are most exposed or who do not operate in the same area or sector is also important and necessary.
- 5- In actions that lead to direct confrontation with the repressive apparatus of the State, one must be minimally prepared so as not to facilitate the bandit and criminal action of the enemy,

- 6- In confrontations necessary for the conquest and defense of our rights, it is necessary to use camouflage and face coverings to protect the identity of our militants and activists.

To educate the masses about the historical experience of the struggle of peoples and of our Brazilian people, whose achievements, whatever they may be, were only possible through violent struggle. To educate the masses about the fact that the enemy permanently exercises criminal violence against the people and that the people have the sacred right to defend themselves by resorting to just violence. To raise the slogan: "to rebel is just."

Proper Moral Conduct

One of the most important daily struggles within the movement is to encourage everyone to strive for correct conduct, as a determining factor in destroying all the rot of hypocritical, individualistic, and selfish bourgeois morality. The fight for our greater goals can only triumph if we build, from now on, a new form of coexistence and relationship.

To combat all incorrect attitudes, not to cover them up, not to reconcile them with frivolous, cunning, shrewd, knowing, disloyal, and divisive conduct, regardless of who it comes from, is the main struggle we can undertake to forge collective morality and trust and the growth of each individual. Exercising criticism and self-criticism is the correct way to combat the ills that bourgeois society allows to penetrate us all. The society for which we fight and dream of achieving, socialism, is made of collective fraternity and solidarity, and we must practice them from now on. Let us fight to transform our organization into the embryos of the future society.

One of the key issues to highlight in this struggle is confronting the problem of alcoholism and other drug addictions. We all know how destructive this is for human beings in terms of physical and mental health, as well as social and family life. Capitalist society encourages and facilitates drug use for two reasons: firstly, it represents a fabulous business that generates billions of reais in profit; secondly, drugs and alcoholism are efficient tools for distancing the masses from a real understanding of their problems, making them apathetic and disillusioned, facilitating their exploitation and domination, creating an environment of social decay, and facilitating provocative and infiltrative activities of reactionaries.

The Role of the Leader

The leaders of class-based organizations, at any level, must be examples of discipline, seriousness, moral rectitude, and responsibility in carrying out their tasks. They must be examples of combativeness, solidarity, and commitment to the objectives of the movement. They must be firm in confronting the enemy, always vigilant in preparing the masses to face the violence that the bourgeoisie, the landowners, and the State perpetrate against them.

A leader cannot be fooled by the flattery that the government, the press, the bourgeoisie, landowners, and politicians sometimes offer to the people's leaders. This is always to buy them off, to remove them from the fight. The comrade who assumes a leadership role must be aware that the demands on him will always be greater, that he must always be the first to implement the decisions of the grassroots, and that everyone will be watching his political and moral conduct.

A leader must never use their position on the board for personal gain or personal projects. No one is obligated to accept a leadership role; but if they have accepted, they know that their responsibilities are greater; if they feel they are not capable of assuming them, they should resign.

The leader must be attentive, patient, simple, and humble in dealing with comrades and the masses. They must always be concerned with self-development, studying, and participating in courses and training activities organized by the movement, guiding their practice through constant criticism and self-criticism.

The leadership must pay particular attention to always supporting and encouraging women's participation. Without the participation and organized presence of women in our movement, the work with the masses is only half done in every sense, and there is no chance of victory.

Our struggle will be arduous and long. That is why it is also important to integrate young people and children into the struggle. To encourage study, sports, culture, to develop in them a love of science and work, and to incorporate them early into the class struggle.

Disciplinary Rules

The relationships among members of the Workers' League, whether at the grassroots or leadership level, are based on the principles of democratic centralism. Failure to comply with or violations of its norms and political line will be sanctioned based on the following criteria and punishments:

- 1- Mild violations: warning, criticism, and self-criticism.
- 2- Serious violations: removal from duties with or without loss of rights depending on the severity and conduct in response to criticism and punishment, criticism and self-criticism, and retraining through work.
- 3- Betrayal: expulsion and public denunciation of their actions.

For the evaluation and judgment of violations, a Special Disciplinary Committee will be organized, as indicated by Assemblies, meetings, or the Coordination. In this process, the member in question will have the full right to defend themselves. In the case of expulsion, the process will be carried out by a Special Tribunal formed for this purpose, appointed by the Council of Representatives or Assemblies.

Grassroots Organization

- ❖ Grassroots committees: organized by profession, away from the eyes of the employer and their agents, and may be located in places of residence or workplaces (factories, garages, construction sites, schools, etc.); ensuring the organization remains secretive.
- ❖ Working with the unemployed: organizing them by neighborhood to collectively address the problem of survival; developing mutual aid groups; developing vocational training activities; organizing those who have been expelled from the countryside and are willing to return to take land and guarantee their family's livelihood.
- ❖ Along with the grassroots committees, popular schools should be built; they are very important for the politicization of the work of the grassroots committees; adult literacy courses and vocational training courses are examples of activities that can be carried out.
- ❖ Full support for the struggle and organization of women. In the historical moment in which we find ourselves, of the development of a new surge in the popular movement, the organization of women in a vigorous Popular Women's Movement

becomes indispensable, bringing together the strength of half of the oppressed classes in the class struggle and combative action. Therefore, we support the construction of MFP nuclei alongside grassroots committees to boost women's participation, contributing to their politicization and confrontation of all forms of discrimination or depreciation of women.

General program of workers' resistance.

- Breaking with the IMF, with the non-payment of the external debt;
- Reduction of working hours without reduction in wages;
- End the wage freeze, with an immediate and full adjustment for all workers, compensating for the wage losses accumulated in recent years;
- Minimum wage as defined by the Constitution and calculated by DIEESE ¹⁴;
- For the restoration of rights taken away by the Social Security “reform” and improvement measures according to the interests of workers in Social Security and Welfare;
- Freedom and autonomy for trade unions, with recognition of the right to strike and decoupling of the trade union structure from the State, against trade union and labor “reforms”;
- For the unrestricted right to strike;
- Collective labor agreement, guaranteeing all the benefits provided for in current legislation;
- Collective bargaining;
- To end the Ministry of Labor's interventions in trade unions;
- Immediate satisfaction of the basic needs of the working population, such as food, health, education, housing, transportation, clothing, recreation, sports, culture, and leisure, with resources derived from the taxation of profits: financial

¹⁴ ‘Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies’, A body founded in 1955 to undertake research to be used as support for workers' demands in their unions. - ML

and banking profits, profits from multinational companies, and income from large rural properties and projects.

- For a new housing policy that effectively serves the interests of workers and where mortgage payments do not exceed 20% of family income.
- Repeal of the National Security Law and other repressive legislation that criminalizes social struggle;
- Broad and free political and party organization; an end to restrictions on free political and electoral propaganda; and the right to vote for illiterate people, soldiers, and corporals.
- Against the privatization of state-owned companies and the re-nationalization of all privatized companies;
- Against all and any type of discrimination against black people, women, and indigenous people;
- In defense of indigenous populations and for the immediate demarcation of their lands, in accordance with the recognition of the self-determination of indigenous peoples over their territories, within the perspective and framework of achieving a new federative order for the future New Democratic Republic;

On the Agrarian Question

(See Agricultural Program)

1. Elimination of all large landholdings and distribution of land to poor, landless, or small-scale peasants;
2. Nationalization of large rural capitalist enterprises and control of production by the workers;
3. Nationalization of all land for social use.

Regarding small and medium-sized rural producers:

1. Guarantee of the minimum production price set by rural workers;
2. Accessible and subsidized financing for small and medium-sized producers and for landless peasants that never exceeds 30% per year including interest and inflation adjustment;

3. Guarantee of storage and roads for transporting the products;
4. Silos and storage facilities, means of transport and distribution of agricultural products;
5. Free technical assistance that meets the interests of rural workers;
6. Extension of labor and social security rights to all rural workers, including a formal employment contract;

Regarding salaried rural workers and other activities in the countryside:

1. Formal employment contract and full labor rights for all rural wage earners;
2. End of slave and semi-slave labor, regularization of the situation of so-called “day laborers” and “itinerant workers,” with signed work contracts and all labor rights guaranteed;
3. Better wages for rural workers;
4. Against the construction of dams aimed exclusively at the interests of large capitalists, except for those in the Northeast necessary for water retention and irrigation that do not take land from workers;
5. Support for the struggle of peasants displaced from their land due to the construction of dams, demanding their resettlement and fair compensation;
6. Retirement [benefits -ML] due to age in rural areas at age 50 for men and 45 for women, provided that the amount is never less than the minimum wage;
7. Establishing agricultural insurance and subsidized prices to provide greater security for rural producers, preventing the loss of their assets through mortgages;
8. The implementation of public services such as transportation, electrification, sanitation, housing, health, and education, including agricultural education, in rural areas;
9. The construction of school networks in rural areas and special incentives for teachers and other education workers in rural areas, aimed at keeping people in the countryside;

10. Through the marketing of agricultural products directly between producers and consumers via production and consumption cooperatives, under the ownership and control of the workers.
11. In defense of gold miners and their free organization against the massacres and persecutions perpetrated by federal and state governments and large Brazilian and transnational companies;
12. Modifying the Mining Code to meet the needs of artisanal miners;
13. For the nationalization and state control of mineral exploration and for the purchase of all ore to be made by Caixa Econômica Federal ¹⁵ and Banco do Brasil ¹⁶;
14. Extending bank debts for agricultural loans, without interest payments, for the duration of frozen product prices or during floods, droughts, wildfires, and other adverse weather events.
15. Bank financing secured by production and not by land;

Regarding The Union Issue

To establish a free, independent, autonomous, and democratic trade union structure for workers, without any interference from the State or employers:

- Towards an end to state-controlled unionism;
- For the construction of a class-based, combative, and independent trade unionism, founded on the following principles:
 - Democracy: the union structure must be a mechanism governed by the broadest democracy at all levels and in all its bodies and instances, thus guaranteeing the widest freedom of expression of internal currents of opinion.
 - Class-conscious and militant: within the reality of class conflict in which we live, defending the unity of the working class around its immediate

¹⁵ 'Federal Savings Bank' a State-owned bank – ML

¹⁶ 'Bank of Brazil', the Central bank of Brazil - ML

and historical objectives, combating the politics of class collaboration and not agreeing with government plans that harm the interests of workers.

- Trade union action: combating all forms of exploitation, both in the city and in the countryside, using all forms of struggle deemed appropriate and that lead to real economic, political, and social gains for workers.
- Freedom and trade union autonomy: the broadest trade union freedom in all workplaces, at all levels, in all forms of relationship and solidarity at the national and international levels will be the principles of the new trade unionism. Workers will be sovereign in their decisions, not allowing interference from the employer class, the government, political parties, religious and philosophical conceptions, and other institutions.
- Trade union organization: trade unions will be organized by branch of productive activity. Workers will create their forms of organization from the workplace up to the Trade Union Federation, their highest body to be built in the course of the struggle of workers throughout the country. All workers will have their trade union organization, both in the private and public sectors at any level. Workers' assemblies will decide on their Statutes, obeying the principles set forth herein.
- Trade union elections: all trade union elections will be free and direct at any level. They will be controlled by mechanisms created by the workers themselves, guaranteeing democracy as defined in this charter of principles.
- Financial support: workers, in their various productive sectors and organizational structures, will create forms of financial support that guarantee the development of the struggle. All imposed forms of financial support should be abolished, with the workers' assembly being sovereign in deciding how to raise funds and how to distribute them among the various items of the union and solidarity action plan. Workers will freely decide on the use and destination of material and financial resources.
- Unionization: will seek the unionization of all workers with the aim of strengthening the struggle, organization, and financial autonomy.

- Regarding unity and the Trade Union Federation: class-based trade unionism is founded on the principle of trade union unity, always from the grassroots. This unity will occur from the organization in the workplace to the Trade Union Federation in its construction process throughout the workers' struggle for their social emancipation and that of the Brazilian nation.

To Build the Democratic and Strategic Program of the Workers.

This program should be understood as objectives to be pursued and achieved throughout the democratic revolutionary process, and fully completed with the total triumph of the revolution.

- 1- Establishment of the People's Republic of Brazil throughout the country, as a revolutionary class front, based on the worker-peasant alliance, under the hegemony of the proletariat and the leadership of its revolutionary party. A People's Republic of New Democracy supported by the armed and organized masses in the National Assembly of People's Power;
- 2- To sweep away imperialist domination, especially Yankee domination and all others that oppress our people and plunder the Nation, confiscating all transnational corporations – companies and banks – and canceling the external debt;
- 3- To confiscate and nationalize all state and private bureaucratic capital, all its properties, assets, and all types of large capital and large property;
- 4- Destruction of the entire latifundia system and confiscation of all its lands and properties, handing them over to landless or land-poor peasants, according to the criteria of the agrarian program that defines the plots by region of the country, all credit support and encouragement for increasing and massive cooperation, concluding the agrarian revolution;
- 5- To respect and safeguard the property of the national bourgeoisie (middle bourgeoisie), in the city and in the countryside;
- 6- Cancel all international agreements that are harmful to the country and its people, and establish a new policy of international relations based on the right to equality of nations and peoples and on proletarian internationalism;

- 7- Promotion of a new democracy, a new economy, a new culture, that integrates the national economy and develops it while recognizing the great regional differences and problems; stabilizes the living conditions of the broad popular masses in the countryside and the city with employment for all, large housing plans, sanitation and eradication of diseases, all centered on the cultural elevation of the masses, through mobilization and education linked to the social practice of the struggle for production, class struggle and scientific research, guided by the scientific ideology of the proletariat, to destroy imperialist culture and carry out national formation;
- 8- To defend and consolidate the rights and achievements of the proletariat, the popular masses, and indigenous minorities, ensuring true equality of rights for women in a General Declaration of the Rights of the People. To respect freedom of religious conscience in all its breadth, the freedom to believe and not to believe;
- 9- To permanently mobilize the popular masses under the leadership of the proletariat to complete the democratic revolution and move uninterruptedly towards the socialist revolution, developing within it successive proletarian cultural revolutions;
- 10- As part of the world revolution, to energetically and decisively support the struggle of the international proletariat, of oppressed nations and of the peoples of the whole world, fighting relentlessly against imperialism, opportunism and all world reaction.

Plan For Immediate Action and For Unity of Action.

To advance the struggle guided by the Strategic Program for profound transformations in our country, an immediate program of struggle must be highlighted, such as the Revolutionary Agrarian Program and the Defense of the People's Rights, a democratic and anti-imperialist program. This Program must be brought to discussion by all combative sectors of the Brazilian trade union movement to be adopted and serve to guide the concrete mobilization plans of the workers.

We reaffirm some key principles:

- Fight against the labor and union “reforms” of the IMF-Lula government.
- Fighting against wage stagnation.

- Fighting for an adjustment to the minimum wage, according to the amount necessary to cover the expenses of the worker and their family, as established in the Constitution and calculated by DIEESE.
- Fight against the privatization of Social Security and for a public Social Security system under workers' control.
- Fighting in defense of public education and healthcare, building affordable housing, etc.
- Full support for the struggle of poor farmers for agrarian transformation.
- For the liberation of peasant political prisoners and against the criminalization of popular struggle.
- Fight for monthly unemployment benefits, extended to rural and self-employed workers, paid for the duration of involuntary unemployment, and that this time not be deducted from the length of service to be counted for retirement purposes.
- Fighting for a reduction in working hours without a reduction in wages.
- Fighting for job security.
- For freedom and autonomy of trade unions; for an end to interference in workers' unions.