

# “He did not work because he did not want to:” a textile strike in the Labor Court (Bahia, 1948)

*“Não trabalhou porque não quis”: greve de trabalhadores têxteis na Justiça do Trabalho (Bahia, 1948)*

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## RESUMO

Com base em um processo trabalhista, o artigo analisa uma greve no ramo têxtil baiano em 1948. Logo depois de concluída, levada à Justiça do Trabalho, a greve foi objeto de uma queixa patronal, cujo ganho de causa motivou farta documentação comprobatória, no artigo retrabalhada como fonte para a pesquisa. Como fenômeno, a greve, ao mesmo tempo em que pontua o encerramento do ciclo grevista do pós-guerra, apresenta aspectos que se entrelaçam com características gerais do intervalo 1945-1964 (e além). O modo como a greve foi processada na Justiça do Trabalho faz ver como o sistema político, diante da presença do movimento operário, procurou aplacar temores e tensões contendo a insinuação dos trabalhadores, como uma classe, em cenário cujo conteúdo democrático o fim da ditadura do Estado Novo exigia.

Palavras-chave: trabalhadores; indústria têxtil; Justiça do Trabalho; Bahia; greve.

## ABSTRACT

Based on a Labor Court case, this article focuses on a strike in the textile industry of Bahia in 1948. After the strike ended the employers went to the Labor Court. Proving the strike to be illegal resulted in the production of much documentary evidence, used here as a historical source. As a phenomenon, the strike, which marks the end of a cycle of strikes in the post-war years, also has aspects related to the 1945-1964 period in Brazil (and later). The way it was treated by the Labor Court shows how the political system, in dealing with the labor movement, sought to minimize fears and tensions by containing the insinuations of workers as a social class, in a scenario whose democratic content strongly demanded the end of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship.

Keywords: workers; textile industry; Labor Court; Bahia; strike.

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In an inspiring article,<sup>1</sup> José Sérgio Leite Lopes wrote about the cycle of strikes which marked Brazilian social and political history. From 1978 to 1980 strikes caused fear, surprise and expectation all over the country. On the one hand, they caught off guard the analysts and leaders used (in their various manners) to tranquil and stereotypical predictions about workers in society. Passivity and fatalism, weakness and servility, being unprepared and out of date, lack of astuteness and of clarified values – amongst other disadvantages – prevented workers from being leading players. In this line of thought, the causes of this state of affairs were not restricted solely to the dictatorial repression of the 1970s. They had roots in rural soil, since successive migratory waves from the countryside to the city had been diffused in the working class. Being seen as atavistic, migratory contingents shaped by spoliation inundated the cities with values and practices seen as backward.<sup>2</sup> Given the strikes, however, these certainties would collapse.

At the same time there emerged expectations. Foreseeing possible developments one observer felt that he was witnessing the emergence of a new political subject. In 1978, using the suggestive title – “A party for the workers” –, he noted “movement aimed at creating a workers’ party” (with an electoral base in Greater São Paulo and the ABC cities). This inclination was raised together with the news that workers “no longer accept either the extremists of the right or the left; not accepting anyone who is willing to maneuver them as a mass and as an instrument, as happened in the past, whatever ... the ideology.”

According to the author, those who deemed it possible to ‘use’ workers by “creating parties for them” were mistaken.<sup>3</sup> A page was being turned; this was what his reasoning induced. Apparently, not only was there a social foundation for a party based on the working class, but there was also an unusual political vision among workers.<sup>4</sup>

Leite Lopes looked at the same phenomenon from another perspective and gave it the label of rupture that became associated with it. In noticing the persistence of the past (pre-1964), as well as the new (post-1978), he pointed to what was lost when the central reference was the large São Paulo industries: the continuity of a class culture based on social movements and practices of resistance from outside the factory metropolises. What was left as a result was a little explored field, the world of workers in factories in small cities. In mines, sugar mills or textile plants, in old steel plants and metal works – spread in various regional spaces –, worker groups were created whose class identities were based on constant contact with employer domination. This involved a

specific form of domination, the factory with working class town, involving housing and the daily life of the working class community, going beyond exploitation in the labor process.

Although it is wrong to say that Salvador was one of the small cities which Leite Lopes had in mind, it is a similar working class community – marked by the binomial of factory and working class community, with the presence of communist activists – which appears in the lawsuit filed by *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril da Bahia* (CPUFB), operator of the São Braz factory, owned by Martins Catharino. Its target were 17 defendants, i.e., 17 textile workers – men, adults – in São Braz, all of whom lived nearby in the suburban and railway district called Plataforma (Salvador, Bahia) in 1948.<sup>5</sup> These workers were sued for having gone on strike in breach of existing legislation and institutions. It was a serious collective transgression, as it was described. The aim in going to the Labor Court was to obtain legal authorization to fire the defendants – all of whom had employment stability.

Studying the lawsuit in detail, the hypothesis was formed that it did not just involve an employer trying to rid itself of 17 employees. The resonance that the São Braz stoppage had in reaching other textile mills in Salvador, raised the question the capacity of its scope. Therefore, as a form of retaliation, something else intertwines the parts of the litigation which we can see in the context of the functioning of the democratic system under the aegis of the 1946 Constitution. Looking through the 270 pages of the records, traces of an offensive against enemy lines can be found. With the employer asking the Labor Court for authorization to fire workers, it appeared to have been the time to attack a bothersome cell of the workers’ movement in an important factory in the industrial zone of Bahia.

At the time of the outbreak of the strike in Plataforma in 1948, it is worth noting that the Trade Union of Workers in Spinning and Weaving Industries of the City of Salvador (*Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias de Fiação e Tecelagem da Cidade do Salvador* – (STIFTCS) had already suffered intervention from the Ministry of Labor, a signal that textile trade unionism was in its context intolerable. Before this in 1947 it had been the turn of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) to be proscribed. While the party and the union were the target of neutralization, what was left the breaking of heads and workers’ public expression during the strike. Poor workers’ lives were tormented. “To the workers and the people of Bahia,” the textile workers address the public. “We sought an understandings,” but “they answered us with the police.” “This made us go on strike,” they continued. They asked for help from their

comrades “in workshops and factories, in the ports and docks, railways, the sugar mills, tanneries, bakeries, *transviários* (those working for the Transvia transport company), students and those living in nearby neighborhoods.”<sup>6</sup>

A lawsuit like the one discussed here, aimed at 17 São Braz workers, corroborates the potential of the Labor Court archives to explore the question which Marcus de Carvalho formulated to emphasize the problem of the political participation of the subordination classes. The question about what was a maneuverable mass open “to the interests of the superior groups” (or which went “beyond the established script”) is answered with investigation of leaders “capable of intermediating relations between political party *haute politique* and the immediate interests of workers.”<sup>7</sup> What is seen here is that the presence of local activists not only relevant to the community but also to communist party (CP) organization in the workers’ milieu, consisted of an electoral base for mass politics in the post-1945 era (the object of desire of political party competition). It was, thus, not only a punishment of those who disturbed the factory system: it was an incision to cut the knots which the São Braz workers had woven with networks capable of confronting employer influence in the factory system and the worker town. Nonetheless, the lawsuit does not allow us to see in a crystalline form the scope and the energy of these networks, because the 17 defendants were said to be responsible for the problems in the factory. Moreover, this article considers other possibilities of analysis opened by a source such as this one – a labor related lawsuit where the complaint came from the employer.<sup>8</sup> By crossing the sources and bibliography valuable questions arise for social history in Bahia.

## DIFFICULT DEMOCRACY

In his dissertation on the exercise of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in Bahia, the sociologist Antônio Sérgio Guimarães examines the new system of political representation established after the *Estado Novo*. Apart from the *Partido Social Democrático* (PSD – Social Democratic Party) and the *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN – National Democratic Union), he states that a third political force which projected itself consisted of “the professionals and factory workers organized around or ideologically drawn to the Communist Party.” In effect in Bahia the CP, despite the competition with *Getulismo*, found support in the trade union movement. However, Guimarães questions if – perhaps – its greatest importance resided “in the ideological struggle,” in

which “Marxist thought amplifies itself through the action of student organizations and spreads through professional sectors and middle class.”<sup>9</sup>

What explains the occasional greater importance of the student sector, professionals and the middle class within the PCB is not only their amplified role within the doctrinal dispute, reducing the variety of social experiences. What can also explain this slide – the party which states that it is from the working class comes to have greater relevance in the ideological dispute – is the fact that graduates, professionals and professionalized activists coveted more positions in the party political apparatus and in its press, especially when, on the one hand, the social movements suffered from economic adversity and repression, and on the other, radicalization led to institutional isolation (characteristics of the year of the strike analyzed here).<sup>10</sup>

For this reason, the social movements and experiences of the subordinate classes in Bahia need to be known better, including in parties such as the communist party. Afterward part of the relevance credited to media sectors can be revised. At a time when research on the Labor Court was incipient, José Raimundo Fontes brought to light workers acting in the legal cases.<sup>11</sup> Fontes – dealing with the context immediately prior to this article – found the same employer complaints against a worker. In November 1946, João Ribeiro dos Passos was dismissed. He was not only a communist and leader of the workers movement, but also an employee of *Companhia Linha Circular de Carris* (the company which had the concession for tram and lift services in Salvador). The employer had to prove publically, before the legal authorities, the serious error of the employee. Without this he could not have been dismissed with ‘just cause,’ since the defendant had employment stability. The decision of the court, issued at the end of 1947, in reconciliatory terms offered dismissal with compensation, which was received with commemoration on the streets of Salvador. Echoed on the streets, the communists had much to commemorate. They paraded without any embarrassment. It was a contentment which could not last, since the Cold War was on the horizon.<sup>12</sup>

The Cold War provoked similar results to what Paulo Fábio Dantas Neto identified in the effects of the 1964 Coup. In receiving the consent of the “political elites of Bahia,” the overthrow of Jango removed the “demand of political modernity” from its scrupulous sensitivity, cancelling practices such as “the guarantee of individual liberties, the political responsibility of government to representative institutions, strengthening pluralism, expansion of competitiveness in political society and the social scope of citizenship.”<sup>13</sup>

Problems resulting from this renunciation in 1964 – “the drastic reduction in the number of political actors,” “the prohibition of pluralism,” the blocking of the “differentiated transmission of interests coming from below,” plus “the expurgation of ‘communists’” – were in a timely manner detected in the labor lawsuit analyzed here from 1948, and pointed to the difficulties with the creation of a strong civil society (Dantas Neto, 2006, p.246, 159). While Castelo Branco was responsible for hunting out and purging trade unionism, Dutra in a similar form had been responsible for destroying and burying both *Getulismo* and the post-war workers’ movement, in which the PCB was a visible, popular, and massive, alternative. Nevertheless, since Dutra was elected president in a democratic form in 1946, he did not receive the same order to tidy up his house as was the case with Castelo Branco. For example, there was no space to bring the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB – Brazilian Labor Party) and *Getulismo* to an end. Nor did it eliminate the workers’ movement or the communists. However, the exile of the CP, anti-communism, interventions in trade unions, the liquidation of factory commissions, police repression and dismissals, amongst other initiatives, eroded the democratic practice reborn in the post-war period and consequently were evidence of the renunciation of the requirements of political modernity. This renunciation, which was not a particularity of Bahia, took place at a time of political opening which the constant rejection of the *Estado Novo* incited. Occurring under the ‘state of law’, it was neither imposed nor resigned, it was an unburdening. It unleashed conservative impulses and ended the obligation to coexist with activists, trade unions, factory and residents’ committees, associations, workers, manifestations and strikes.<sup>14</sup>

In 1948 the workers’ movement in Plataforma was affected, not only because the weavers in the São Braz factory led a strike which from a stoppage in a local factory became the spearhead for a general stoppage of all the local workers in that area. It was repressed because it was the slipping out of the grasp of employer dominion, of the intervention of the Ministry of Labor in the trade union for this group of workers; because it confronted the police and didn’t pay attention to the Ministry commissioner, even more because it showed evidence of being a social foundation for the CP. Employers had to be helped to enforce their disciplinary power over their employees. It was also necessary to reestablish respect for police and labor authorities. Hierarchy was at stake.

Continuing the struggles of those who preceded them in this economic area, which had already been in existence for a century in Bahia in 1948,<sup>15</sup> the workers of the São Braz textile factory went on strike. Following their example,

workers employed in other textile mills owned by *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril da Bahia* stopped producing (São João, Conceição, São Salvador and Paraguaçu). Afterwards, in a labor lawsuit taken by the company, the São Braz 17 defendants defended themselves from the accusations of Martins Catharino. Although this family was not a *quatrocentona* (i.e., it had not arrived in Brazil four hundred years previous), being recent Portuguese immigrants, it had aligned its name not only with the good customs of the traditional families with pleasant and respectable lives, but also with the order and progress of commerce, industry and education. Martins Catharino was thus the surname of both the employer and the lawyer. Some of the sued workers lived on Rua Úrsula Catharino, which was also the name of the school in the district in which they lived, Plataforma. The doctor of the factory crèche, Hermógenes de Oliveira, who was also a UDN councilor, was married to a woman from the Catharino family. If workers sought employment outside of the textile mills owned by *Companhia Progresso and União Fabril*, they would have to take care to remain in its good books, since one of the Martins Catharino women had married with a Batista Machado, another Portuguese family with interests in the area of manufacturing and textiles.<sup>16</sup>

By using the sources annexed to case JT 522/48, plus the documentation produced by the labor courts, we will reconstruct, first, the strike, and secondly the lawsuit against the strike.

## THE STRIKE

The background to the strike involved the demands of workers for direct negotiations with their employers. They were organized according to the binomial factory floor/factory town, and did this outside of the union for their category of workers. Alluding to the previous legal decision instructing the employers to increase wages, a pamphlet complained that: “until now that decision has not been fulfilled.” The text left it clear that the court order would be followed by “the organized struggle.” Due to the slowness of employers in obeying the court order, it was necessary to strengthen the existing connections through the formation of “sub-commissions in each section,” in order to demand readjustments “through a letter to the employer signed by all the workers.” This type of letter was called a memorial.<sup>17</sup>

On 6 July 1948 a memorial was addressed to the “illustrious directors of *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril da Bahia*” signed by workers from the São Braz factory. In the domain of the written word and with good calligraphy,

using a fountain pen, the petition was written on foolscap with a tone of supplication, though without admitting despair. It asked for an increase in wages to “undermine a little the predicament” experienced by the workers, “due to the increased prices in the market and the cost of living in general.” Repeatedly adducing their motives to the incompatibility of wages and the cost of living, stating that this would only relieve their “greatest expenses,” the memorial asked for a wage increase of 60% (afterwards altered to 80%). With margins written in a red pencil, the text concludes with information that is worth noting: “we did not turn to our trade union, preferring to deal with you directly, since that body is not worthy of any trust.”<sup>18</sup>

It needs to be said that in rejecting the use of the union, the workers did not refuse the existing union, recognized by the Ministry of Labor as the Trade Union of Workers in the Spinning and Weaving Industries in the City of Salvador (*Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias de Fiação e Tecelagem da Cidade do Salvador*). In announcing their lack of trust in it, the workers did not make an allusion to the fact that the union had been intervened in by the Ministry of Labor, a signal, as has already been mentioned, that textile trade unionism in Salvador had become a threat to the Ministry of Labor. It was of course also a threat to employers. Untouched by this – it is worth highlighting – were the organized workers in factories, which the above mentioned pamphlet wished to see submersed in groups in the sections of the São Braz mill. Whipping them, alongside the exploitation of the intense and badly paid labor, dearth was obvious, provoking more affliction. To some extent, as will be seen later, workers controlled part of the productive process, since the factory functioned as an old machine which, to meet its targets, demanded the interaction of the employees. One further element which the low salaries defiled.

At the beginning of September a memorial circulated through the hands of the Plataforma workers. Without forgetting the ‘rigors’ of the cost of living, the text this time was written by someone with less skill of letters, indicating not only a number of writers, but also the diversity between them. Speaking of diversity, coincidentally “male and female weavers” asked the company directors to facilitate “the discussion of the increase” which occurred “and was approved at the trade union meeting,” other evidence that they had discarded the representative imposed on them by the Ministry of Labor, but not the union in itself, whose facilities – far from their houses – they frequented and used. Reports from the press were cited about the “profits of the employers,” for which reason they deemed just “the concession on the pay increase.” At the end they note: “we need a piece of bread, since the situation worsens every day



for all of us workers.”<sup>19</sup> A few days later 18 foremen rejected this attitude by expressing their disagreement with the “movement which exists here.” They demonstrated consent “with the increase promised to our union by the employers.” Arlindo Pereira dos Santos, who would be a company witness in the lawsuit, was the eight signature.<sup>20</sup>

With an eye on the ongoing effervescence, the communist newspaper *O Momento* entered into action. It announced for the following day, 20 September, the consignment of a memorial with more than seven hundred signatures, an auspicious signal (for the communists) of the “highest level” in São Braz, a level also to be “reached by other companies” suffering from the “same ills.” In addition to indicating that São Braz’s employees numbered around one thousand, the newspaper brought onto stage an important actor: the Central Commission – the name given to the factory committee, the body which the above mentioned pamphlet wanted to see subdivided into cells per section. “The Central Commission,” the newspaper reported, had stipulated the following day to deliver the memorial “accompanied by the numerous workers’ commission.” Also keeping an eye on what the employers did, *O Momento* announced that the previous day the Social Service for Industry (*Serviço Social da Indústria* – Sesi) had promoted a recreational cinematographic session for workers during which ‘Dionísio’ (Dionísio Rodrigues de Menezes, the Ministry of Labor intervener in the textile unions) appeared with his ‘syrup,’ consisting of requests for “calm, calm and nothing else.” Interested in the mobilization, the CP newspaper exhorted the workers to act with independence, not to wait for the good will of the authorities, advising them to take care not to ‘delude’ themselves with amusements, such as those provided by Sesi. The report ended by referring to the telephone advising of the failed ‘caravan of cops’ dispatched from the Square of Piedade (in the center of the city), where the Auxiliary Police Station was located. According to the source, it was presumed that the police had sent it to Plataforma “at the order of Councilor Hermógenes Oliveira,” doctor of the São Braz creche and a member of the Martins Catharino family by marriage.<sup>21</sup>

Demonstrating their tired of waiting for the union, the Labor Court, and the Regional Labor Office (*Delegacia Regional do Trabalho* – DRT) – and having decided to “fight against the wage of hunger” –, the workers from the São Braz factory used a third scribe for one more memorial. They spoke again about the discussions in the union and in the resulting table of readjustments, which established at 80% the general level for the increase. In addition, they repeated that in “the optimal financial situation of the company, according to

the balance published in the *Diário Oficial*,” was in the public domain. This was “the greatest incentive” to their determinedness to fight to the end in support of the pay increase they demanded, since they were not allowed to doubt that they were the “producers and constructors of the powerful assets of the company.” Given the rising tide of difficulties suffered – “hunger beats at our homes” –, they declared in the memorial of 20 September, only wanting some relief which could mitigate the problems.<sup>22</sup>

With the intention of leaving clear that they were on the edge of the abyss, the São Braz movement had embraced the slogan of 80% after meetings held in a trade union whose governing board (headed by Intervener Dionísio) they disliked. They indicated the fatigue resulting from the wait for the solutions provided by the union and the labor institutions, and having in their sight positive numbers referring to the company finances, they did not hesitate in seeing their request – a simple request in their view, which encouraged them little and did not harm their employers – as the opportunity to affirm themselves as protagonists of economic progress, for which reason their readjustment was just. At every opportunity they stated that their wages barely defended them against the threat to fall in utter poverty, a miserable setback that needed to be avoided. The workers believed that someone would be concerned about them and perceive their merits. Whether or not they were irritated with the delay and the contempt, fearful of being pushed to desperate impoverishment – a much worse and quicker queue than the one expected to exhaust them –, the weavers went to the mill as normal. They presented themselves to work; this was their routine and it was not broken by them.

In its role of constantly tracking events and emphatically telling the working class about them, the PCB newspaper *O Momento* raised a warning against the “sordid maneuver” of employers seeking “divide the workers.” Intervener Dionísio, according to the source, was in São Braz wanting to make an agreement with the company and thereby undermine the mobilization. Instead of the censures of his ‘syrup,’ this time the ‘grub’ to be served by the councilor and doctor Hermógenes de Oliveira, the intervener’s companion on his visit, was rejected. However, *O Momento* preferred to publicize the interview with the Central Commission.<sup>23</sup> It was intended not only to use it for propaganda (which afterwards served as evidence in the case against the workers) but also to provide the committee with arguments and rhetoric.

“I have worked for more than 11 years in the factory, in the *warper* section.” This is how the newspaper presents Francisco Melo. It should be noted that his statement – like those of the others – does not consist of the

transcription of the spoken word, but the publication of a text written by the journalist. In the words attributed to Melo it can be seen that the machines were old and inefficient, which contributed to production not reaching what was intended, reducing wages at the end. Moreover, the lack of thread paralyzed work for hours and hours and sometimes entire days. As the workers were not paid per hour worked, but for what they produced, when they did not have work to do, the São Braz employees, – despite turning up to work – were paid nothing.

“Weaving is the worst part of the factory. First, because we only get paid for what we produce. Second, because we do not know what our production is.” This was one of the criticisms of Marcelino Silva Souza, the weavers spokesperson. He explained that the lack of spindles and ropes meant production targets were not met, preventing workers from reaching their objectives and getting paid for this. “Working in jalopies” was another censure aimed at the machinery. He also mentioned the lack of “good quality cotton,” without which the production could not improve. The division of the ropes was a “cloud of dust,” complained Manoel Salustiano. Without any equipment for the unhealthy conditions, the interviewee returned to highlight the problem of wages, which did not allow for proper eating. A pay increase was thus seen as “undelayable.” so that they could work and produce, eat and regain strength. In the waste sector (for raw material waste) the number of workers was insufficient. In denouncing the exploitation Eliezer Evangelista stressed that the work of two or three was being done by a single worker. The weaver representative Francisco Nogueira also emphasized the problem of solutions in the productive process, the factor of the depreciation of the wages received. In the absence of shuttles and rolls for the threads, the unfinished work remained in the machine, leaving for the following week “forty or fifty meters of fabric.” Since these workers were paid for what they produced, they wanted the factory to function properly, for production would be continuous and that they be paid well.

Despite these problems the mill managed to produce its fabrics, *O Momento* attributed the merits of this to the mechanics of the workshops, who performed ‘miracles’ in the repair of ‘unusable’ parts. Nevertheless, it wondered why the craftsman did not see ‘any reward’ by way of return. Rather, with no overalls being provided the newspaper denounced the rags they were dressed in, with the interview ending with the factory committee in the person of the mechanic Osório Ferreira dos Santos, the workers’ leader.

Apart from the question of wages and working conditions, some traces in the statements that *Momento* printed denoted the problematic hiccoughs which, whether due to the lack of capital, or the lack of supply of vital raw materials for the productive flow, preventing the workers from producing and being paid for this. Part of their discontent could have been resolved (or eased) with measures to restore manufacturing capacity and with a careful change in human relations. Although it was characterized by industrial paternalism – which could represent the existence of employers concerned about helping their employees with favors and benefits –, São Braz lagged behind its contemporary in Pernambuco called Paulista, not only in relation to welfare, but also in terms of industrial robustness. São Braz, thus, did not provide a good impression in the care it took in promoting the welfare of employees.

In its interview with the activist weavers from Plataforma, *O Momento* had as a target the Saturday when it was said that *Intervener* Dionísio and Councilor Hermógenes were going to São Braz to discuss the pay rise with its directors. This appearance was neither spontaneous nor casual, being much more of a premeditated act. After all the workers had demanded for that Saturday, 24 September, the response to the memorial they had submitted on 20 September. Evidentially those interested in this intrigue could understand that between the dealings of Saturday and the developments of the following days, there were confabulations, propaganda and agitation in Plataforma on Sunday and Monday, 27 September. Depending on the mobilization, the factory could have been in total silence on Tuesday 28 September. However, this was not how events unfolded.

Wishing to produce journalism for the working class, *O Momento* published the report about the ‘sordid’ employer maneuver which aimed to divide the São Braz workers. However, something which the communist newspaper did not know, something extremely petty, occurred on 23 September, the eve of the outbreak of the strike, which erupted on Friday, 24. A certificate drafted in accordance with the labor lawsuit filed after the strike provides evidence of the existence in the DRT of an official letter (dated 23 September) in which the Labor Inspector Hugo de Faria transmitted to the Auxiliary Police Chief the request – made by the union intervener union Dionísio Menezes – for the opening of a “rigorous inquiry” which could discover the roles of Francisco Melo, Marcelino Silva Souza, Francisco Nogueira dos Santos, Osório Ferreira and another five weavers in encouraging “a general strike in the textile industries,” at this moment only a threat. The certificate testifies that, in accordance with the investigations, the “aforementioned elements” – the nine summonsed

workers – met with communists.<sup>24</sup> In compliance with this all nine were summonsed to make statements in the Auxiliary Police Station, located far from Plataforma in Piedade. Invited to act the police came on stage to help the labor authorities (both the DRT and the Labor Courts) and employers, for whom, like intervener Dionísio, the solution to the wage question had to be found in the hands of the representative bodies.

Present in the Auxiliary Police Station (part of the Department of Preventative Police), seeing their statements being typed into the police records, nine workers from Plataforma had to answer questions for many hours on 24 September. At the end of the afternoon they left. They were welcomed by their colleagues and by the population of the local community, who “came down from the hills” to the seashore to greet them. Returning from the police they saw that while they were answering questions, São Braz had not been pumping out its fabrics as was usual. For a certain time it had come to a stop, as the employees had decided not to work. Having been demonstrated in the light of day, the unity and strength of purpose of the workers led to rejoicing in *Momento*, which covered the return of the commission to Plataforma. After its members had spoken the councilor and representative of the General Association of Workers (*Associação Geral dos Trabalhadores* – AGT) Florisvaldo Viana spoke, equally praising them. Probably at this demonstration there circulated a pamphlet – signed by ‘The Commission’ – which was aimed at ‘Comrade Weavers’ and protested about “our misery being too much!” Also alluded to was the ‘heroic,’ strike of 23 days which the “traitor Dionísio” had hoodwinked. In addition to receiving only one third of the pay rise obtained from the struggle, the workers did not get the paid rest – “which already is LAW” –, “and they do not want to pay us.” If they did not fight, it alerted, they would be “liquidated by hunger.”<sup>25</sup>

On the Saturday, when three more weavers presented themselves to the police, the workers’ resistance became stronger. A new pamphlet addressed to the employees of other textile mills told them of the strike in São Braz and expected the same gesture from the “workers in the other factories – São João, Boa Viagem, Paraguaçu, Conceição, Fiais and Fonte Nova.” In a note published in the press, *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril* spoke to “all its workers and the public in general” to recriminate with “those who were deluded about the legality and adequacy of the movement,” indifferent to the contrary opinions on the part of the official trade union for those workers and the DRT. The company enjoined all to return to work, promising that it would act ‘severely’ against those who disobeyed, “persisting with an attitude which could

lead to dismissal with just cause.” It also stated that it would not accept that ‘its workers’ would be used “as the means for a campaign to subvert order and the interests of the workers themselves.” Severe, threatening and patronizing, the warning hinted at future reprisals: on the one hand, repression of the activism emerging between it and its workers, and on other hand, dismissals.<sup>26</sup>

The workers confronted these warnings. On the morning of Monday 27 September, Conceição mill, located in Largo do Tanque, came to a standstill. Shortly afterwards, according to *O Estado* newspaper, in the factory’s premises a notable mass of workers “were waiting in the expectation that the other comrades would also abandon” production. They were “workers from other textile factories [who] were meeting there,” which is an indication that they were gathered in a picket. Having placed a large number of people near Conceição, the workers offered those inside the chance to adhere to the strike without problems, whether with the police, or being tarred with the label of strike breakers. The strikers also expected more to join them, stabilizing their number and gathering strength for everyone to march to the union’s head office.

At the same time *O Momento* reported strikes in São João (in Tainheiros) and Paraguaçu (in Papagaio), with the former being on its fourth day of stoppage, revealing that the workers had downed tools simultaneously with São Braz. On 27 September São João awoke garrisoned by police. A notice was stuck up on the gate stating that workers would only be allowed enter if they were appearing for work. This signified that in the previous shift workers had entered the factory but not worked. Cohesive, when sought out by the police, the textile workers would not accept their intermediation, stating that they would only accept conversations with their employers. Given this negative reply, according to the report in *O Momento*, the police left and the factory remained “occupied by the workers.” When the following morning they were told that only those going to work could enter the factory, the weavers once again refused their employers’ orders: they would not let the company close the factory gates and – without any clashes or problems – moved into it. The strike continued strong and serene in São Braz, São João and Conceição, in which had been recorded not only the submission of memorials but also the presence of commissions. On the morning of Monday 27 September, it was the turn of the six hundred weavers of Paraguaçu to stop work. Among the hundreds in Paraguaçu were female weavers who had demonstrated to *O Momento* their disagreement with the negotiations in the DRT.<sup>27</sup>

When Conceição was brought to a stop, 3000 workers were on strike. Having reached this number the strikers headed to the union offices and set up an assembly. Hundreds of women weavers, according to *O Momento*, went from there to the newsrooms of the large newspapers in order to clarify the procedures they had followed before the decision to go on strike. They went to the DRT as well, where they spoke with the *delegado* Hugo de Faria, who asked them to come to a meeting on 29 September in Vila Operária Luiz Tarquínio, owned by the *Companhia Empório Industrial do Norte* (the textile factory in Boa Viagem). For the DRT it was better to commence collective bargaining and acknowledge the arbitration of the Labor Court. However, for *O Momento*, only direct negotiation, propelled by struggle was acceptable.<sup>28</sup>

Both the increased mobilization and the behavior defended by the CP – emphasis on direct negotiation (counterpoising the factory committees and the company administration) –, led the liberal *Soteropolitana* (as those from Salvador are known) newspaper *A Tarde* to stamp on its front page the headline “they insist on not returning” and asserting that the strike was “encouraged by the communists,” while Hugo de Faria, from DRT, “could prove this.” The strike, “to the contrary of cooling, becomes each day more heated,” it observed. In fact more than 2000 workers took advantage of the invitation to appear at a talk with *delegado* Hugo de Faria and marched from Roma, where they had gathered, to the venue of the talk. Asked about the legal means available to deliver their requests, the workers, according to *A Tarde*, could only state that they had asked for an increase and that the strike arose out of “the ill will of employers.” Hugo de Faria called attention to the risk of “losing their jobs.” Without using the law, as they had done, they had committed “a serious error punishable in law with the rescission of their labor contract.”<sup>29</sup> The reminder, which afterwards became real, hovered in the air of the sanctions which the employer had ordered announced in the newspapers. Nevertheless, on 5 October the São Salvador textile factory came to a standstill.

Concomitantly to the converging advertisements and reminders from the company, the mainstream press and the DRT, the textile workers’ union (in the hands of a governing board run by Intervener Dionísio) publically called on its members to trust in the Labor Court in accordance with “the law and discipline.” Repeating the content of the pamphlet from the São Braz factory committee (as has been seen), the union alleged that the Labor Court had met workers’ demands in the past – such as wage increases and the paid rest law. However, while the committee noted the importance of the ‘organized struggle’ to define the result of the legal process, also denouncing that the law had

not yet been complied with by the employers, the union only remembered the victories to ask the workers to return to work. Finally, the union stated that the president of the Regional Labor Court (*Tribunal Regional do Trabalho* – TRT) Antônio Galdino Guedes had issued an order declaring open the collective bargaining between the workers' union and the employers. In stating that the strike could cause 'a situation of anguish' and 'deprivations' among the weavers, have 'harmful effects' for the economy and 'compromise the public order,' this order stated that the measure taken was the only solution.<sup>30</sup>

Called on to return to work by the union and (though this was really the same) by the *delegado* of labor to change the struggle for the law, the workers found themselves faced with another vicissitude when the police returned to the scene to quell the resourcefulness of the fearsome pickets and to cut off the leaders of the activists, returning the workers to employers who demanded them as theirs. As was usual on these occasions, the more success the police had, the more there emerged a division among the strikers, which in the press was total: 'orderly' employees on one side and a minority of troublemakers, "mostly members of the extinct Communist Party," on the other. Not by chance, the workers took out their manifesto and tried to raise their voice "for the workers and people of Bahia!" They emphasized again that they were fighting "against hunger," adding as well the "greed of employers" as the second opponent – in fact the probable cause of their hunger. Lamenting the usual resort of the employers to the police in order to deal with the question of workers, the leaflet noted that the profits of industry were not as bad as the pay of its employees, in other words they could be divided a little more. In the restricted world of its parsimonious resources, which the strike activated and consumed, they asked for donations, such as a day's wages, which – as everyone knew – was being eroded by the cost of living and low wages. It would just be an advance to help. Any help was to be sent to 98 Rua Barão de Cotegipe in the city center, the address of the union whose intervener they were fighting. The manifesto was signed by the Central Commission.<sup>31</sup> At this time, it is worth noting, the commission had almost reached the status of a union opposition.

In order to bring an end to the strike and to the lawlessness of the workers, who not only refused to do what they were ordered to do, nor let themselves be inhibited by the police – and also exhibited themselves throughout the city as pickets –, on Saturday 9 October, in response to the official letter dated the previous Tuesday, the labor *delegado* Hugo de Faria sent the *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril* a list of ten weavers who had participated in the



“commission which caused and directed the stoppage,” with the ‘principal leader’ being the mechanic Osório Ferreira dos Santos. A movement carried out in the absence of the union and without ‘legal support,’ the strike followed its course. On Tuesday 12 October, it was dealt a serious blow in Plataforma. In the afternoon the conductor Francelino Ferreira de Oliveira and two other witnesses appeared at the Auxiliary Police station to present to the police authorities the mechanic Osório and his wife Carmosina N. dos Santos, “arrested in *flagrante delicto*.” Francelino de Oliveira was also an investigator and had been sent to the area by the Directorate of Investigations, having gone early to the São Braz mill both to provide security to the factory facilities and to assure the entrance of those workers who wanted to work. In the company of “some other colleagues,” at seven in the morning he oversaw the entrance of “the large part of those who wanted to work” – though “under the protests of those who did not want to see the strike broken,” such as Osório and Carmosina. In his words, the police sought to interfere in order to dissuade them. Just when Osório seemed to have been beaten, he ran up to Crescêncio de Jesus and – “grabbed him” – punched him in the mouth, opening a wound (exhibited in the police station as proof). Carmosina then “using an umbrella hit him again on the forehead,” then the conductor, who was also an investigator, “arrested them.”<sup>32</sup> On this day the strike entered its ultimate phase.

Osório and Carmosina formed a notable couple. First, both declared themselves communists to the police; and perhaps they had done this more than once in life. Fifteen years older than Osório, Carmosina, at 53, was a courageous woman: involving herself in physical fights – attracting the anger of the fists of adult men – in aid of her spouse, who suffered the reprisals which her punches motivated. She had also been a candidate for state deputy in the 1947 elections, receiving 21 votes. (The well-known PCB trade unionist João Ribeiro dos Passos obtained 536 votes.) “Carmosina Nogueira. Militant. Nurse. Has popular prestige in the Plataforma district”, this was how she referred to herself to the political police.<sup>33</sup> Both were notable for this: they had fixed employment, receiving a monthly wage; he was a mechanic in the principal employer in the community, she was a nurse for the city government.

On the nineteenth day, 13 October, the strike ended.

## THE STRIKE SUED

The labor court lawsuit which is used here as a source can be seen as a collective complaint. Not the complaint of various employees against a single

employer, which comes to mind faster, but the complaint of an employer against a group of 17 employees, specifically chosen and all with stable employment. There are additional traits which suggest the collective character of the question opened by *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril*. First, the textile workers union, under the control of Intervener Dionísio, had recommended the immediate suspension of the strike and total confidence in the labor courts. The strike movement, in an incisive way, taken its head office away and therefore – obviously –, if there were clean elections it would have been the mainstay of the opposition to it.

In second place, the labor *delegado* Hugo de Faria not only reminded the strikers of the reprisals predicted and announced by the employers, seeking to undermine them, but also gave names and information to the side of the employers, as well as contributing to the production of reasoning opposed to the strike (for example, stating that it lacked legal support). For his part, when he opened the collective bargaining *ex officio*, the president of the TRT, left obvious his perspective, by declaring that the strike caused harm to the economy and increased class struggle. All censurable of course. Finally, the coverage of the mainstream press – which insistently published in almost all favorable reports (and those which were not), information about the illegality of the extinct communist party – adopted without any great difficulties the point of view of industry. The strike was illegal and unnecessary, and would damage social peace and the Brazilian economy. As *A Tarde* argued, they refused to return to work because they have been incited by alien elements of the CP. The protests against and distaste for the movement was wide-ranging. Thus, there were no obstacles to the employer ultimatum that it would do everything to punish “those who criminally dragged our workers into an illegal and unjustifiable labor stoppage.”<sup>34</sup> Repeating, it is worth noting, the paternalist feeling of guardianship and possession by the company over its. Its workers – or our workers – were not a lever for the CP to carry out its sneaky, anti-democratic and inauthentic purposes.

Pursuing the public authorization of the labor court to dismiss 17 workers with employment stability, *Companhia Progresso e União Fabril* prepared to present the abundant proof required by Decree Law 9070 which, in the absence of an ordinary law, regulated the right to strike recognized by the 1946 Constitution. The 17 defendants were described as having insidious attitudes and of having committed infractions, such as precipitation, daring and the stoppage of the factory, of embracing the red creed, invading their own union, organizing the factory commission – in the lawsuit they were labeled the strike

commission –, and dissenting from the duly constituted leaders and authorities. They were accused of a serious collective absence, aggravated by the surcharge that “their acts were crimes.”<sup>35</sup> They were also criticized for their acts being prejudicial to the economy. In summary, the illegality of the strike proved the legality of the criminals’ dismissal.

Through the legal representation of José Martins Catharino, a petition in the name of the president of the company, Eduardo Martins Catharino, dated 21 October 1948 (a little more than a week after the end of the strike) was sent to the district attorney asking for a judicial inquiry. This was what started the employer’s denunciation, with three facts being exhibited in it. The first– “public and notorious” – was that all 17 had played “an active and outstanding part in the illegal strike carried out in the absence of the Union.” In second place, armed with subterfuge,– “motives foreign to work and aimed at political objectives” –, they had collectively abandoned their work on 24 September “and had acted in an ostensive manner to cause the total stoppage” of São Braz. “And, furthermore,” because of the collective bargaining, they should have “waited, working, for the decision of the courts,” which did not happen.<sup>36</sup>

At the beginning of the court case, as has been mentioned, its collective character became obvious. At the first hearing the defense, confided to Jorge Costa Pinto, raised an objection and with the aim of protecting the weavers asked for the group of 17 defendants to be broken down into groups of four. In response the 1<sup>st</sup> Board of Reconciliation and Judgment (*1ª Junta de Conciliação e Julgamento* – JCJ) concurred, with the justification that it could not accept “the accumulation of so many complaints in a single process for the effects of a single judgment.” With there being 17 defendants, it would be difficult to measure the “greater or lesser participation of workers in a strike,” thereby Decree Law 9070 would not be obeyed. In reply the plaintiff appealed to the contrary and demanded that the case be kept together before the court. Judge Elson Gottschalk, however, replied by overruling the employer’s appeal as it was not supported by law, arguing that the overlarge number of defendants had to be reduced. “It facilitates the defense of the accused and it is convenient to justice,” he explained. Workers could take plural cases against employers, but not the contrary, he ruled.<sup>37</sup> The company appealed.

About two months after the case began the TRT decided to accept the appeal presented by the industry, overturning the decision of the Board of Reconciliation. The complaint thereby came to be dealt with as sole and indivisible, although it was against 17 defendants. With the case following the course the employer wanted, the accusation returned to demonstrate the facts.

The 17 “had participated in a strike against the precepts of Decree Law 9070, and in addition to this they were its planners.” They had also invaded their union building and demonstrated in the streets of the city. In these acts they had exalted the strike and had called on other workers to leave the small cloth factories. With Osório at their head, the leadership of the movement was composed of “lieutenant-places” and “exalted participants,” who interrupted passersby with the red pages of *Momento* in their hands. “Leaders of the strike” became – with the multitude on stage – “the new directorate of the union,” which had to be rebuffed by the defense of law and order, by employers, by the police and by other authorities, such as the DRT.<sup>38</sup>

Months later, after hearing various witnesses, and after almost a year since the strike in September 1948, after oral debate between the lawyers, the labor court unsuccessfully renewed its proposal for reconciliation. When the time came for the “resolution of the bargaining,” the company had already dropped its complaint against two of the defendants, while another had died. Exempted from the punitive sanction were four defendants who “had not worked because they could not have worked” (three had suffered accidents and another was ill). Among those who could have worked and did not, only one kept his job. The dismissals of the remainder (those who “had not worked because they did not want to”) were authorized: their right to employment stability was removed by the 1<sup>st</sup> J CJ.<sup>39</sup>

At the beginning of the case the defense of the 17 defendants managed to win at least two rounds. In one, as has been seen, it gained time for the weavers by having the case split, a reversal which the company managed to overcome. In another it managed to impugn in the questions asked by the company lawyer the assumption that the 17 defendants knew of the illegality of the strike and nonetheless induced their peers to join.<sup>40</sup> In turn, the workers sought to free themselves from the accusations of manipulation by communists and of violent behavior, dodging the accusation that they were chains of transmission of the illegal CP. It was clear in what they said that the stoppage was spontaneous, without leaders or physical and verbal offenses. They went on strike to have their wages increased. Having seen a strike as the means to resolve their problems, they sustained it independently of their union and the labor court.

The dispensed had canceled their stability through the cunning strategy of the plaintiff, who reworked the defense strategy to his advantage. In his closing arguments Martins Catharino stated: “none of the defendants left work due to the violence of their fellows. They went on strike because they wanted to. A typical spontaneous strike: arms folded with work to do and the

possibility to do it, duly guaranteed, as the cleaning workers of the factory had done.”<sup>41</sup>

The 1st JCJ endorsed this reasoning. “Without a threat or coercion of any nature,” the workers “had stood in front of their machines and refused to work.” In other words, although they had appeared for work, they had refused to produce, rebutting those who in the name of routine appear to do so. As a result, despite “the gesture of each being spontaneous and conscious, they cannot avoid responsibility.” By letting themselves be “deluded by the promises” of the agitation of the struggle and “even without an apparent leader,” they had cohesively handed themselves over to the “adventure of a strike, for all reasons illegal, although it could have been just. In the sentence the TRT reproduced this argument. “The proof that appellants indicted in the inquiry participated in a leading role in the strike is robust and invincible,” they guaranteed. “They themselves confessed without any masquerade that they did not work because they did not want to.” In fact the second defense witness spoke openly without subterfuge to the court, using words afterwards re-appropriated by the accusation. Claudemiro Santana testified that “he did not work because he did not want to,” since “no other workers was working and [he] the witness would not work by himself.” So frank and protesting when they crossed their arms of their own will, another inescapable responsibility was the ignoring of the union, the DRT and the *ex officio* collective bargaining of the TRT. When it was the turn of the Superior Labor Court (*Tribunal Superior do Trabalho* – TST) to give its opinion, nothing controversial was raised given the “hypothesis of the records” – 17 strikers “agitating their class under the pretext of getting a wage increase” – which would have had “serious impacts on production.”<sup>42</sup> At the highest level of the labor court system the appeal made by the labor side was ignored, rather the hypothesis proposed by the plaintiff company being chosen, with the wage problem being overruled by the productive sector.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Allied to the scenario of the retraction of the new political system (including labor institutions), the employers’ reaction managed to separate the workers from the benefits meant for, or which were theirs by merit. There was also unease with possible damage caused to the economy by the temporary shutting down of factories. Any discomfort with the (profound and elastic) socio-economic damage caused by the payment of low wages was invisible. Likewise

there was a labor related institutionality, created in the alliance between the PSD and the UDN in the Dutra government to bring an end to the post-war strikes, which in the present case contained a stranger in the nest: the CP. It must also have been the anti-communist cause which led one of the founders of the PTB and the labor *delegado regional* Hugo de Faria to act alongside the employers.

The slogan which said that workers need enlightenment, resourcefulness and strength was conveniently ignored. Precisely to reinforce the contrary, in other words their desire. In fact, the result of the court case asserted that the strike arose out of their willingness to fight and not their retraction. By refusing to be the transmission line for one party, the defendants and their witnesses assumed the stoppage as something theirs. The employers claimed the workers as something theirs as well, wanting to see their feeling of possession and their guardianship restored. Offering miserable wages was a part of maintaining employees and their families in a situation of dependence – and precisely for this it was questioned, besides their position in hierarchy. Perhaps it was not just an economic question, but also a routine to which employers were habituated. Although it did not appear in a deliberate or transparent form, the poverty resulting from the wage policy was an advantage for the Martins Catharinos when it was time for the community of Plataforma to evaluate the benefits of paternalism and to estimate the losses and damages in cases of confrontations. Another routine – perhaps the self-confident expectation of the Martins Catharinos in relation to the results of the law case – was the divorce between the workers' consumption power (the consumption of the poorest and most numerous) and the national collective interest, which tilted more towards the troubles of industry, including repugnance for the workers' movement reborn in the post-war period, thriving in strikes, factory committees, neighborhood struggles, trade unions and communists.

The textile strike in Salvador was a weighing up of strength between the workers' movement and the paternalism of industries, which counted on the assistance of the police, the press, the DRT and the Labor Courts. The factory with workers' housing was not intended to be a factory with workers' housing and a workers' commission. For this reason striking was a daring muffle with an extraordinary and incisive corrective. In the law case's rise to the highest reaches of the Labor Courts, it was seen from afar with raised eyebrows: the justice of their reasons was despised, an aspect that the lowest court admitted (despite condemning them). Aware of the expectation that they would be heard and listened to by the workers, the highest levels of the Labor Courts

ignored their appeals. Step by step the strike was deemed to be an adventure with the pretext of higher wages. Arbitrating the conflict, the just cause of the dismissals was authorized (and not the cause of social justice).

However, the textile strike in Bahia was not just the spearhead of a dispute with industrial paternalism. Various decades later, looked at from the present day, it appears to anticipate the strikes of 1968 and 1978, as it took place outside official institutions, throwing on them the pressure of the needs of the masses. It also involved what in the 1970s and 1980s would be established as the core of New Trade Unionism: strikes independent of the trade union based on the initiative of workers, based on concrete demands of daily life, and also the demand for trade union freedom and autonomy coming from the factories, and rebelling against the constituted authorities. A typical spontaneous stoppage: with arms crossed – as the lawyer Martins Catharino said –, very similar to the strikes with “crossed arms, machines turned off,” an expression that became famous at the end of the 1970s (and which was used to give a name to the industrial action in which workers turn up for work, go to their machines and do nothing).

The hypothesis worked with in this article was that – in the confrontations of the beginning of the Cold War (1947-1949) – it is possible to visualize important aspects to comprehend the 1945-1964 period. To reach this understanding, it has to be shown that the presence of workers in Brazilian politics as a social class is taken seriously.<sup>43</sup> From 1947 onwards the proscription of communists and the repression of workers’ struggles (the outcome of which was analyzed at a microscopic level here) were the reflection of the eagerness of the PSD-UDN alliance to dismantle trade unionism and the strikes which had reappeared at the end of the Second World War. This enthusiasm was maintained in the UDN move towards supporting a coup in the 1950s, since in the impetus of its initial success, declared anti-communism and hostility to strikes, social struggles, trade unions and workers’ rights were uninhibited, while at the same time political competition was missing an important actor (the communists).

What also has to be observed in addition is a particularity of the Bahian economy: the fiasco of its elites to develop it.<sup>44</sup> To the contrary of what occurred in some urban centers which passed through processes of industrialization, it may have been more difficult for the workers of Bahia to rise up again, due to the depressive levels of both the industrial sector and its moral, apart from the isolation of the CP or the partial space for the workerism of the PTB in Bahia. However, it is not assumed here that the workers were encapsulated

in a constant and atemporal subordinate role. In the place of being a given in a fragile economy, lacking any great density in factories, the reduction of the workers' movement was an intention of choices made, choices determined by the fear which the dominant classes felt, the same fear which fed the subsequent cultivation of the effects of these choices. It is thus possible to associate the closing of the public sphere with the need for the reduction of worker protest, as well as its control. Obviously the presence of Bahian workers was not annihilated, however, without the documentation which Fernando Teixeira da Silva possesses for São Paulo, it becomes difficult to measure how over the passage of time "allying strikes and negotiations" became "an effective form of pressure on the judiciary."<sup>45</sup>

The belief that the workers had rebelled because they obeyed an exogenous force was put to the side, though the employer accusation and the judicial arbitration emphasized that the workers, without an apparent leader, were encouraged by comrades from their own milieu. Although the assistance of the PCB had been perceived in contact with militant workers, the strike process lawsuit centered on the punishment of local leaders, which signified going beyond PCB activism and focusing on the Central Commission and its establishment in the factory or the willingness of workers to go on strike. Not only those of São Braz, it can be said. Giving up the snobbish habit of preventing the presence of workers through its prejudiced lack of composure was decisive for the employer to free itself from the annoyance it felt. The existence of something different from below was admitted. In Plataforma the citizenship of workers, or the citizenship of the most numerous, with their pressure for the distribution of income, in relation to labor rights and aspirations for political action, characterized the uncertain process in which the São Braz strike forms nowadays just a lost action. But it was, too, a breath of energy which gave rise to struggles – the previous ones and the current ones. It also represented a resurgence of worker dignity (afterwards castrated), similar to others in the worker movement in an uncountable number of episodes between 1945 and 1978.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> LEITE LOPES, José S. A formação de uma cultura operária. *Tempo & Presença*, n.220, 1987. See also from this author: Sobre o trabalhador na grande indústria na pequena cidade. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Cultura e identidade operária*. Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero; Ed. UFRJ, 1987.



<sup>2</sup> For greater details, see: NEGRO, Antonio Luigi; GOMES, Flávio. Além de senzalas e fábricas: uma história social do trabalho. *Tempo Social*, v.18, n.1, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> *Diário do Grande ABC*, 2 maio 1978. Aesp (Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo), setor Deops, 30-B-7, fls. 293.

<sup>4</sup> About two months after the *Diário do Grande ABC* had captured the tendency of the workers to aspire to their own party, the then president of the Union of Metal Workers of São Bernardo and Diadema, Luiz Inácio da Silva (Lula), invited to speak to oil workers in Salvador, saw in the low wages and in the ‘castration’ of unions a common situation of the working class. “The process of exploiting workers is a single one,” he said, “with the difference being the way it is felt.” Diagnosing the lack of options in politics, the trade union accepted the idea of the creation of a party which would be used, amongst other purposes, to restore the freedom restricted by the Consolidation of the Labor laws (*Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho*), which the trade unionist Lula repudiated as the AI-5 of the workers. *A Tarde*, Salvador, 15 jul. 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Memorial do TRT, 5ª Região, processo JT 522/48, fls. 77.

<sup>6</sup> “Aos Trabalhadores e Povo da Bahia”, c.6 out. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 77.

<sup>7</sup> CARVALHO, Marcus de. Os nomes da revolução: lideranças populares na Insurreição Praieira, Recife, 1848-1849. *Revista Brasileira de História*, v.23, n.45, p.209-210, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> The author draws here on the debate and the suggestions that resulted from the seminar “A Justiça do Trabalho no Brasil: Perspectivas Históricas”, held by the Post-Graduate Program in History, Unicamp, on 13- 14 October 2011. The author also benefitted from the support provided by Lucas Porto Marchesini Torres e Jonas Brito, CNPq grantees.

<sup>9</sup> GUIMARÃES, Antônio S. *Formação e crise da hegemonia burguesa na Bahia*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais e História) – UFBA. Salvador, 1982. p.95.

<sup>10</sup> For greater details, see: NEGRO, Antonio Luigi. Um PCB é pouco, dois é bom, três é demais: a participação operária na política do pós-guerra. *História*, n.21, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> FONTES, José Raimundo. *A Bahia de todos os trabalhadores: a classe operária, sindicatos e política (1930-1947)*. Doctoral Dissertation in History, FLCH, USP. São Paulo, 1996. p.261.

<sup>12</sup> In 1946 US diplomacy detected rumors of the proscription of the CP. See: Allegations regarding the closing of the Communist Party. National Archives and Records Administration II (Nara II). General Records of the Department of State (GRDS), RG 59, M 519, no 15, 832.00/8-1646.

<sup>13</sup> DANTAS NETO, Paulo Fábio. *Tradição, autocracia e carisma: a política de Antônio Carlos Magalhães na modernização da Bahia*. Belo Horizonte: Ed. UFMG, 2006. p.71, 238, 249.

<sup>14</sup> For greater details about how the Cold War impacted on factory space with support from

policing policy, see: MELLO, Juçara da Silva Barbosa de. *Identidade, memória e história em Santo Aleixo*: aspectos do cotidiano operário na construção de uma cultura fabril. Masters Thesis in History – Uerj. Rio de Janeiro, 2008; REZNIK, Luís. *Democracia e segurança nacional*: a polícia política no pós-guerra. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. FGV, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> In relation to the Brazilian textile industry, see: STEIN, Stanley J. *The Brazilian cotton manufacture*: textile enterprise in an underdeveloped area, 1850-1950. Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 1957. p.21; DELSON, Roberta Marx. Brazil: the origin of the textile industry. In: VOSS, Lex Heerma van; HIEMSTRA-KUPERUS, Els; MEERKERK, Elise van Nederveen. *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. p.94, 95. See also: SAMPAIO, José Luís Pamponet. *A evolução de uma empresa no contexto da industrialização brasileira*: a Companhia Empório Industrial do Norte, 1891-1973. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais e História) – UFBA. Salvador, 1975.

<sup>16</sup> The prominence of the family began with the involvement in commerce of the Portuguese immigrant Bernardo Martins Catharino. The commercial sector of Salvador was a powerful economic elite: it was built around its association, financed the sugar aristocracy and also diversified its interests with the textile industry, of which Bahia was a pioneer in colonial Brazil. See: SANTOS, Mário Augusto da Silva. *Associação Comercial da Bahia na Primeira República*: um grupo de pressão. Salvador: Secretaria da Indústria, Comércio e Turismo, 1973; RIDINGS, Eugene. *Business interest groups in nineteenth-century Brazil*. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> Panfleto, s.d. JT 522/48, fls. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Memorial, 6 jul. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 69.

<sup>19</sup> Memorial, 7 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 70.

<sup>20</sup> Memorial, 11 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 97.

<sup>21</sup> *O Momento*, 19 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 42.

<sup>22</sup> Memorial, 20 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 60.

<sup>23</sup> *O Momento*, s.d., possibly 24 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 43. Source used in the next three paragraphs.

<sup>24</sup> Certidão da DRT, 2 dez 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 81.

<sup>25</sup> *O Momento*, 25 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 45. Panfleto, 25 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 178.

<sup>26</sup> Panfleto. JT 519/48. Aviso Importante. *A Tarde*, 27 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 56.

<sup>27</sup> *O Estado*, 28 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 59. *O Momento*, 28 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 46.

<sup>28</sup> *O Momento*, 29set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 47.

<sup>29</sup> *A Tarde*, 30 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 57.

<sup>30</sup> Aos operários das fábricas de tecidos, panfleto, c.30 set. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 78.

<sup>31</sup> *A Tarde*, 5 out. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 58. “Aos Trabalhadores e Povo da Bahia”, panfleto, c.6 out. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 77.

<sup>32</sup> Certidão da DRT, 2 dez. 1948. JT 522/48, fls.81. Certidão da DRT, 25 nov. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 86.

<sup>33</sup> Relação de candidatos à Assembleia Estadual da Bahia, 9 dez. 1946. Aperj, fundo DPS, D 885, fls. 364.

<sup>34</sup> Ao operariado da Companhia Progresso e União Fabril da Bahia. *A Tarde*, 5 out. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 58.

<sup>35</sup> JT 522/48, fls. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Petição, 21 out. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Ata, 5 nov. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 23. Despacho, 13 nov. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Ata de instrução da reclamação, 18 abr. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 126. Ata de Julgamento, 3 out. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 220.

<sup>39</sup> Ata de instrução da reclamação, 13 set. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 208.

<sup>40</sup> Ata, 5 nov. 1948. JT 522/48, fls. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Razões finais, José Martins Catharino, 13 set. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 209.

<sup>42</sup> Claudemiro Santana, second witness for the defense, 13 ago. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 174. Ata de instrução da reclamação, 13 set. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 208. Acórdão, 9 dez. 1949. JT 522/48, fls. 249.

<sup>43</sup> The idea of a workerism ‘reinvented’ by workers is presented in: NEGRO, Antonio Luigi; SILVA, Fernando Teixeira da. *Trabalhadores, sindicatos e política*. In: DELGADO, L.; FERREIRA, J. (Org.). *O Brasil Republicano*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003. v.3, p.90. This idea is recapitulated in: NEGRO, Antonio Luigi. *Linhas de montagem: o industrialismo nacional-desenvolvimentista e a sindicalização dos trabalhadores*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2004. p.164, where the following can be read: “the invention of the labor machine which Vargas created lacked the complement of the reinvention of workers. However, in the hands of workers and the TB-PCB – and this is what is argued here–, this complement could be a real supplement.” Referring to the 1945-1964 period, Fernando Teixeira da Silva wrote: “any attempt to think of *trabalhismo* without communism will always be precarious and very partial. Or, paraphrasing the historian E. P. Thompson, communism was the *alter ego* of the *trabalhista* left.” SILVA, Fernando T. da. *Breve história de erros e bodes expiatórios: PCB e trabalhadores*. In: FORTES, Alexandre (Org.). *História e perspectivas da esquerda*. São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2005. p.189.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding the relationship of Bahian political elites with the economic development of the state, see: DANTAS NETO, 2006, cap. 2, 3 e 5. Quanto ao declínio da indústria açucareira no Recôncavo, ver: ANDRADE, Manuel Correia de. *Modernização e pobreza: a ex-*

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pansão da agroindústria canavieira e o seu impacto ecológico e social. São Paulo: Ed. Unesp, 1994. p.93ss.

<sup>45</sup> SILVA, Fernando T. da. Entre o Acordo e o Acórdão: Justiça do Trabalho na Antecâmara do Golpe de 1964. Campinas (SP), 2011. (Manuscrito).

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