



# The Orange and Yellow-Green Cooperation: The FNV and CUT Partnership



Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)

V426c      Veiga, João Paulo Candia.  
A cooperação sindical laranja e verde - amarela : a parceria FNV  
e CUT / João Paulo Candia Veiga, Kjeld Aagaard Jakobsen. –  
São Paulo : Central Única dos Trabalhadores, 2011.  
254 p.

Inclui bibliografia.  
ISBN 978-85-89210-33-1

1. Cooperação internacional - Cooperativas. 2. Relações internacionais -  
Brasil - Países Baixos. 3. Sindicatos - Brasil. 4. Sindicatos - Países Baixos.  
5. Movimentos sociais. I. Jakobsen, Kjeld Aagaard. II. Título.

CDU 334.6(81:492)  
CDD 334

(Bibliotecária responsável: Sabrina Leal Araujo – CRB 10/1507)

Fonte documental: CEDOC – CUT

# **THE ORANGE AND YELLOW/GREEN COOPERATION: THE FNV and CUT PARTNERSHIP**



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KJELD AAGAARD JAKOBSEN

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

To Osvaldo Bargas, Karen Brouwer, Odilon Faccio, Jorge Lorenzetti, Rosiver Pavan, Jeroen Peinenburg, Tjalling Postma, Devanir Ribeiro, Francisco Urbano, Jan van Bentum, Henk van der Kolk, Gerloff van Rheenen, Orlando Furini Vincenzi and Willy Wagenmans for their interviews. To Maria Beccari, Delubio Soares de Castro, José Drummond, Mila Fratti, Silvia Portela, Patricio Sambonino, Giorgio Romano Schutte and Monica Valente for their various contributions and suggestions. Special thanks to Mireille Konstapel for organizing the interviews in the Netherlands and to Katia Beccari for setting up the table of projects implemented by the FNV in Brazil.

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# Acronyms

- ABVAKABO** – Dutch Trade Union of Public Employees
- ABC** – Region formed by the municipalities of Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo, São Caetano and Diadema
- ACO** – Catholic Action
- AFL** – CIO – American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations
- AI** – Institutional Act
- AIFLD** – American Institute for Free Labor Development
- ANAMPOS** – National Articulation of the Popular and Trade Union Movement
- APEOESP** – Public Employed Teachers Association of the State of São Paulo
- APERJ** – Prostitutes Association of the State of Rio de Janeiro
- ARENA** – National Renewal Alliance
- CAENI** – Study Center for International Negotiations
- CAPPS** – Political, Popular and Trade Union Advisory Center
- CCSCS** – Coordination of the Southern Cones’Trade Union Centers
- CEAS** – Center for Study and Social Action
- CEB** – Ecclesiastic Basic Community
- CEFURIA** – Sister Araújo Center for Urban and Rural Education
- CEDAC** – Education Center and Community Action
- CEDEC** – Center for Studies of Contemporary Culture
- CEDI** – Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information
- CEDOC CUT** – Documentation Center of the Single Workers Central
- CENTRU** – Rural Workers Center for Education and Culture
- CEPASE** – Center for Research and Social - Economical Advice
- CESE** – Ecumenical Coordination of Services
- CGT** – Workers General Command
- CGT** – Workers General Confederation
- CILAS** – Center for Labor Research and Trade Union Advise
- CISL** – Italian Confederation of Labor Unions
- CLAT** – Latin American Workers Confederation
- CMP** – Center of Grassroots Movements
- CNM** – National Confederation of Metal Workers
- CNMA** – National Environment Committee
- CNMT** – National Committee of Female Workers
- CNQ** – National Confederation of Chemical Workers
- CNQMT** – National Committee for the Issue of Female Workers
- CNV** – National Federation of Christian Unions
- CONAFOR** – National Education Council

**CONCLAT** – National Conference of the Working Class  
**CONCLAT** – National Congress of the Working Class  
**CONTAC** – National Confederation of Food, Agro-business, Cereal Cooperatives and Farm Workers  
**CONTAG** – National Confederation of Agriculture Workers  
**CONTRACS** – National Confederation of Commerce and Services Workers  
**CONTRAF** – National Confederation of Workers in the Financial Branch  
**CONCUT** – National Congress of the CUT  
**COSATU** – Congress of South African Trade Unions  
**CPI** – Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry  
**CPT** – Land Pastoral Commission  
**CPV** – Vergueiro Pastoral Center  
**CTA** – Argentine Workers' Center  
**CUT** – Single Workers Central  
**DESEP** – Department for Social, Economic and Political Studies  
**DETR** – Rural Workers Local State Department  
**DGB** – German Confederation of Trade Unions  
**DIEESE** – Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies  
**DNB** – National Department of Bank Workers  
**DNM** – National Department of Metal Workers  
**DNQ** – National Department of Chemical Workers  
**DNTE** – National Department of Workers in Education  
**DNTR** – National Department of Rural Workers  
**DNU** – National Department of Utilities Workers  
**EI** – Education International  
**EMA** – Environmental Multilateral Agreement  
**ENAFOR** – National Education Meeting  
**ENOS** – National Meeting of Trade Union Oppositions  
**ENS** – National Trade Union School  
**ENTOES** – Workers National Meeting in Opposition to the Trade Union Structure  
**FASE** – Federation of Bodies for Social and Educational Assistance  
**FEBRABAN** – Brazilian Federation of Banks  
**FES** – Friedrich Ebert Foundation  
**FETAG** – Local State Federation of Agriculture Workers  
**FETAPE** – Agriculture Workers Federation of Pernambuco  
**FNT** – National Labor Front  
**FNV** – Dutch Federation of Trade Unions

**GAOS** – Trade Union Oppositions' Support Group  
**GATT** – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade  
**GUF** – Global Union Federation  
**HBC** – Hexabenzene Chlorine  
**HIVOS** – Humanist Institute for Cooperation  
**IBGE** – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics  
**ICCO** – Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation  
**ICEM** – International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Unions  
**ICFTU** – International Confederation of Free Trade Unions  
**IFBWW** – International Federation of Building and Wood Workers  
**IFPAW** – International Federation of Plantation, Agriculture and Similar Workers  
**IFTGL** – International Federation of Textile, Garment & Leather Workers  
**ILO** – International Labor Organization  
**IMF** – International Metalworkers' Federation  
**INF** – National Education Institute  
**INSPIR** – Inter-American Trade Union Institute for Racial Equality  
**INST** – National Workers Health Institute  
**IOS** – Social Observatory Institute  
**ITUC** – International Trade Union Confederation  
**ITS** – International Trade Secretariat  
**IUF** – International Union of Food, Hotels, Restaurants, Tobacco, Catering and Allied Workers<sup>1</sup>  
**ITF** – International Transport Federation  
**KCTU** – Korean Confederation of Trade Unions  
**LO** – Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions  
**MERCOSUL** – Common Market of the South  
**MNC** – Multinational Company  
**MOMSP** – Trade Union Opposition Movement of São Paulos' Metalworkers  
**MST** – Landless Movement  
**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organization  
**NKV** – Dutch Catholic Federation of Trade Unions  
**NOVIB** – Dutch Organization for International Development Cooperation  
**NVV** – Dutch Trade Union Federation  
**OECD** – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development  
**OLT** – Organization at the Shop Floor

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After the merger with IFPAW it also included "Agriculture" in its denomination.

- ORIT** – Inter-American Regional Workers Organization
- OTM** – Workers Organization of Mozambique
- PCB** – Brazilian Communist Party
- PCdoB** – Communist Party of Brazil
- PIT-CNT** – Workers' Inter-union Plenary – National Workers Convention
- PLADES** – Development Labor Program
- PNF** – National Education Program
- PO** – Worker Pastoral
- PRONAF** – National Program for the Strengthening of Familiar Agriculture
- PSI** – Public Service International
- PT** – Workers' Party
- RedLat** – Latin American Research Network on Multinational Companies
- RSI** – Repetitive Strain Injuries
- SIPA** – School of International and Public Affairs
- SINDSEF** – Federal Public Employees Trade Union
- SNF** – National Education Secretary
- SOMO** – Research Centre on Multinational Companies
- SRI** – International Relations Secretary
- STAC** – Society of Cocoa Agriculture Technicians
- STR** – Rural Workers' Trade Union
- STRS** – Rural Workers Trade Union of Santarém
- TCO** – Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees
- TIE** – Transnationals' International Exchange
- TUCA** – Trade Union Confederation of the Americas
- UADW** – Universal Alliance of Diamond Workers
- UN** – United Nations
- UNCED** – United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
- UNI** – Union Network International
- USA** – United States of America
- VMP** – Trade Union Program of Co-Financing
- WCL** – World Confederation of Labor
- WFTU** – World Federation of Trade Unions
- WTO** – World Trade Organization
- YCW** – Young Christian Workers
- ZCTU** – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions



# CUT's forewords

The “Central Única dos Trabalhadores” (CUT) has grown up, got consolidated and was established as the biggest trade union Center in Brazil and Latin America during these 28 years of existence and counted on the decisive solidarity and support from FNV during all this time to get where it is. Although CUT’s construction is the work of the Brazilian workers, certainly, many of the initiatives and policies that we have implemented would not occur or would only be held much later if we could not count on the help of friendly organizations like the FNV.

However, for us, the end of the cooperation projects does not mean the end of the political relation that was built between FNV and CUT during this history of almost three decades. On the contrary; the new reality that was imposed must stimulate us to search new and higher levels of common work. Whereas the rising moment of conservative forces, mainly in the developed countries and the systematic attacks perpetrated to the welfare state, to the freedom of association and to the right of

collective bargaining we realize that there is much to be done and that the international solidarity of the workers is each time more important.

We would like to enjoy the well succeeded experience of FNV's cooperation with CUT to reflect about our own cooperation policy and international relations, mainly with the trade union centers from the Global South. We would like to repay the help received during all these years through the support to others that still need it.

That is the objective of this book. Introducing the story of that cooperation, how it was developed, which were the values and contents embedded in it and, particularly, how the cooperation projects evolved to a series of discussions and common initiatives of the two trade union centers.

In this publication we talk more about CUT's history than the FNV's, but the purpose was precisely to show the impacts of the Dutch solidarity that somehow began even before the foundation of our central in 1983 and thus, it was necessary to present certain details so that, mainly, the Dutch reader has the dimension of the importance of his contribution.

We would like to learn with that history and go on with that political re-

lation, because many of the problems that justified the cooperation in the past continue present like the defense of the workers' rights in a globalized economy where the multinational companies expand their power.

We also expect that this publication would not only be useful as the register of a strategic partnership that enabled a series of advances for the CUT and for the education and union organization of Brazilian workers. We want this report to be a reflection instrument so that the international trade union movement watches the importance of the solidarity among people, without losing respect to the particularities and the autonomy of each organization. And that the unionists' agenda, not only Brazilian and Dutch, prioritize the solidarity relation and the sum of efforts to the consolidation of common projects.

At last, in the name of millions of workers that CUT represents I would like to deeply thank for this international solidarity of our fellows in the Netherlands exerted by their trade union center, FNV, and stress that our common struggle goes on.

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São Paulo, 2011

João Antonio Felicio – Secretary of International Relations of the CUT.



# FNVs Forewords

## “28 years of cooperation CUT – FNV”

t was 3 years ago when I first visited CUT in São Paulo. It was then exactly 25 years since FNV and CUT had started a solidarity relation. This relation was started by my predecessors during the seventies. The trade unionist refugees from Brazil in the Netherlands made it clear that CUT had to play an historic and crucial role in the years to follow. At that time it was already clear for the FNV that a strong and representative trade union movement in Brazil was the key to democratic development. This was not always easy. CUT was considered as an illegal resistance movement by the military government of those days. I therefore really admire the men and women of these first hours, who despite the suppression believed in their cause and this way made the union grow and become a strong social force in society.

When I visited Brazil in 2008 I saw the product of these years of

struggle and steady trade union growth and development. Besides the colleagues of the CUT, I met with representatives of other institutions like the Economic and Social Development Council (CDES), representatives of companies like Akzonobel and the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (Dutcham). And everywhere it was acknowledged that the CUT was playing a very decisive role in society. For instance in the CDES they were contributing to the social dialogue with very concrete and constructive proposals for improvement of the conditions of the sugar cane workers, but also for conservation of the rainforest in the Amazon region. Another example I encountered illustrating the recognition of trade unionists in Brazil was the fact that the São Paulo Stock Exchange was the first in the world to have a woman trade unionist in its board. Under the government of Lula of that time there was a continuous social reform, in which the CUT played an important role, to mention a few examples like the negotiation of salaries by civil servants or the negotiation at central level about minimum wages. But most important breakthrough after so many years of actions was the recognition of trade union centrals as the formal representation of the workers in Brazil at national level, which brought to an end the permanent criminalization they had suffered.

Since then I have come to São Paulo on several other occasions, the last time was in November 2010 when CUT and the Social Observatory had organized a large seminar in which the results were presented of the trade union networks by the workers of the different companies that had been part of this. I was impressed with the improvements in working conditions that had been accomplished by these networks, thanks to the effort of CUT in close collaboration with the sector confederations and the complementary investigations of the IOS.

The relation between CUT and FNV has and will be in the first place a political one. We agree on the principles of decent work and the role

trade unions have to play to defend workers interests in society. In the past FNV has supported the CUT through its trade union cooperation program, which for the largest part has been financed by the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation but also by funds of the Dutch Trade Unions. This cooperation will be reduced in a few years due to recent economic and social developments in Brazil and the Netherlands. CUT and FNV will therefore be searching for new ways of working together. They will look for instance for innovative ways of supporting trade union movements in countries where trade unionists still have difficulty in managing by their own, not only in Latin America but also in the African continent. And there are of course the trade union networks within the Dutch multinationals that will keep on providing a platform for international trade union contact between workers of the two countries. And why not assume that the same will happen in the Brazilian multinationals that are nowadays conquering the world including the Netherlands.

Therefore we are convinced that this publication on 28 years of Brazilian Trade Union development contains important lessons and examples of what can happen in a country with unionists that never give up fighting for the improvement of their working and living conditions and are creative in finding ways to realize this. We are sure it will serve as an inspiration for those trade unions that are also fighting for their rights. For me as a leader of FNV it is an honor to be able to say that we have been allowed to contribute to this important struggle and we will continue to be part of it.

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Amsterdam, 2011,  
Peter Gortzak  
Vice – president of FNV



# Introduction

## The Netherlands' international development cooperation

Holland, officially named Netherlands, is an industrialized and developed country and is one of the 34 members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is of US\$ 792 billion and its per capita income is US\$ 48.460,00. Life expectancy of its 16.5 million inhabitants is around 80 years old (World Bank, 2008 data).

Its policy of international cooperation for development is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but since 1965 there is an area which is responsible for the international cooperation. Such area, which also has the status of Ministry, is administered by a General Directory and by a National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development. This latter manages the resources for international development that are used by Dutch civil society entities, albeit Unions and some big social agencies, that are focused on international cooperation, such as NOVIB, HIVOS, ICCO, among others, have

also defined programs directly with the Ministry.

The Netherlands is one of the four developed countries to follow the recommendation of the UN applying at least 0.7% of its GDP in international cooperation for development. The country intended 1.1% of its GDP in 1989 for this purpose, however, this value decreased to 0.78% ten years later. Currently, the ministry's budget for international cooperation is around 3.8 billion Euros annually, which represents roughly 0.7% of the GDP.

The first national labor organization in the Netherlands dates back to 1893. One of its main unions was the trade union of workers linked to diamond polishing. Several important labor laws were won after the general strike of 1903.

In 1973, the three main Unions, NVV – Dutch Federation of Unions (with a social democratic trend), NKV – Catholic Federation of Dutch Unions and CNV – National Federation of Christian Unions (predominantly protestant) began an unification process that, at the end of 1976, led to the fusion between only NVV and NKV, as CNV gave up on the initiative in the halfway.

That fusion created the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions (*Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging* – FNV), in a process that was only consolidated in 1982. FNV became, since then, the major federation in the Netherlands and nowadays it has 19 affiliated trade unions, which represent around 1.4 million unionized workers from a total of 1.9 million unionized in the country. The difference represents the membership of workers organized by CNV and a small federation of “White-Collar” workers (Social Observatory Europe, 2003).

The biggest union of FNV is *Bondgenoten* (“Union Allies”) formed in 1998 through the fusion of four trade unions: the industry workers (metallurgical, chemical, textiles, among others); the union of food workers and those in agriculture; the union of transport workers and the union of services workers (commerce, banks, security and informatics, among others). The union of construction workers is supposed to join them in 2011.

The concern about international trade union cooperation and the support to partners in developing countries have also been present during that process of unification. The three unions created a common fund for international cooperation in 1971 with an initial allocation of one hundred thousand Guilders, equivalent to nearly 45,000 Euros (current currency) or R\$ 106,000. In the following year they had ac-

cess to the first governmental aid and in 1975 a “trade union program of co-financing” (VMP) was established through an agreement among the unions and the government worth 4.5 million Guilders (2 million Euros) a year. That value increased to 8.4 million Guilders in 1988 and currently is around 8.8 million Euros.

Beyond these annual resources to perform its international cooperation, FNV also has the contribution of solidarity funds from the union itself as well as from some of its affiliates like *Bondgenoten*, the public service workers (ABVAKABO) and some others, summing a bit more than one million Euros, equivalent to 11% of the total yearly spent (FNV *Mondiaal*, 2008).

When FNV got consolidated, an “International Solidarity Fund” called “*Wij en Zij*” (“Us and Them”) was also created merging the already existing funds in NVV and NKV, as well as the “Fund of Social Projects” from FNV. However, this entity was formalized only in late 1984 and so hampering the access to significant resources from VMP in 1983 and 1984 (*Wij en Zij*, 1984). “*Wij en Zij*” has become the current “FNV *Mondiaal*” from 1997. According to Willy Wagenmans, hired in 1980 to organize it, the material and human resources at the time were scarce. When he began his work there were just two employees at “*Wij en Zij*” and the resources available to travel abroad only allowed a visit to some countries in any of the continents outside Europe every three years (Wagenmans, 2010).

The goals of the international cooperation for development established in that time by “*Wij en Zij*” were three:

- Building and strengthening of the trade union movement to improve labor rights and livelihood of the population, as well as to ensure trade union participation in the economic, social, political and cultural development of local societies;
- Enforcement of social, economic, political and cultural rights of people in the targeting countries;
- Promotion of means in order to allow the target groups to become self sufficient after the conclusion of the projects;

The cooperation would happen through the trade union movement in the developing countries, but the intention was to provide more than a mere financial and technical support when also including an exchange of experiences and information, promotion of mutual visits and

dialogue about common problems affecting Dutch workers and those of the countries that are receptors of solidarity.

The content of the projects was basically around capacity building and training of union leaders; vocational training and socio-economic projects, including cooperatives.

The principles that governed the cooperation offered by “*Wij en Zij*” were, mainly, to support structural and non-cyclical transformations; to involve the local trade unions in the activities and hold them responsible for the execution; the performers of the projects would also be responsible for the presentation of suitable reports about the activities and for the accountability of the financial resources application and, at last, for turning the projects self-sustainable or making it possible that from a certain point on, they were fully funded by the benefited organization (*Wij en Zij*, 1984).

Those goals and principles were reformulated for the last time in 2004, already under the aegis of FNV *Mondiaal* to “promote an international cooperation that contributes to the establishment of democratic and peaceful relations, promoting rights around the world”. This way, FNV proposed to excel for the support over the enforcement of democratic, autonomous and representative unions that try to supply the needs of workers in the developing countries and in those which are in a transition period, thus, contributing to social building and to fight poverty” (FNV *Mondiaal*, 2008).

Over more than thirty years, FNV kept its autonomy about the definition of the countries where it preferred to cooperate and also ensure some flexibility about the content of the cooperation projects in the scope of the parameters established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, despite of the attempts of the Dutch government since the nineties to submit social and union organizations to the dictates of the official policy (Postma, 2010).

The neoliberal conception that has been guiding deep transformations in the European cooperation for development in a general manner and for Dutch cooperation in particular was even more present since 2006. In 2010, beyond limiting resources and contents, the government imposed to the unions and social agencies of cooperation in the Netherlands that they should only work with the list of countries defined by the government as priority for the reception of cooperation.

FNV could bargain that in the appropriation of VMP from 2010 to

2014 it was still possible to use 40% of the resources in countries of its preference, but that forced it to make choices and reduce projects, as well not to start new activities, mainly in transition countries like Brazil. Beyond that, there are no perspectives of guiding change in that conservative political picture in a short term, what forces the international union movement to rethink the solidarity promotion among the workers from new shapes.

## The Brazilian reality

The situation in Brazil is distinct of the Dutch ones in many aspects. Although its GDP is higher, US\$ 1.5 trillion, as well its population of nearly 194 million inhabitants, in social aspects it is in an inferior situation compared to the Netherlands. Its per capita income is US\$ 8,040.00 and life expectancy is around 72 years old (World Bank, 2008 data).

Beyond that, while The Netherlands participation in the world trade in values is around 5%, Brazilian participation is five times lower (WTO, 2008). It is registered the presence of Dutch multinational companies in Brazil for several decades. Currently there are around 150 of them installed in Brazil against only nine Brazilian companies that invested in the Netherlands up to the moment. Out of these are *Banco do Brasil*, *Petrobrás* and *Braskem* among others.

Since the end of the 90's, the Netherlands is among the four main sources of direct foreign investments in Brazil, reaching the highest stock of investment in 2007 with US\$ 8.1 billion, according to data from the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Brazil. Data also show there is a great interest from Dutch companies on investing in the sector of oil extraction for the years to come.

The two countries are important commercial partners, as 40% of Brazilian exports intended to Europe go to the Netherlands, although the country is not their final destination. In the same way, around 25% of Dutch exports to Latin America have Brazil as their final destiny. Nevertheless, the agenda of these exports are somehow different, because the Brazilian products are mainly commodities and the Dutch ones are industrial goods.

Beyond social and economic differences, there is also a different historic about the political aspects on what is about the evolution of democracy. Regarding this last topic, Brazil has been through several pe-

riods of exception regimes in the Twentieth century and during the last period of military dictatorship, that ended in the mid 80's, the "*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*" – CUT, was founded. The FNV would establish with it one of the most durable and expressive cooperation for development in Latin America.

The origin of the first trade unions in Brazil also dates from the end of the XIX century and great mobilizations were registered in the two first decades of the XX century, even with the register of an important general strike in 1917. However, it was not possible to talk about trade unionism with a national dimension, because the existing trade unions in that time were basically placed in the axis São Paulo – Rio de Janeiro.

Political forces linked to the rising Brazilian industrial sector assumed the hegemony in the government since the "1930 Revolution" that made Getúlio Vargas the head of the government for 15 years. The main Brazilian labor laws were approved during that period, as well the regulation of trade union functioning. This regulation was inspired by the "*Carta Del Lavoro*" from the fascist government of Mussolini in Italy and placed a strong control of the State over the organization and over trade union activities in order to benefit business development. The most efficient instruments of that control were the establishment of single trade unions by professional category and minimum geographic representation of one municipality (union unity); creation of a trade union structure with local state Federations and national Confederations also by categories; compulsory financing of that structure by workers through the collection of one day of salary a year (Trade Union tax); control of trade union activities by the Labor Ministry; prohibition of strikes and definition of labor contracts and conflict situations by the Labor Courts.

Brazilian Constitution, approved in 1988, extinguished the control and the intervention power of the labor Ministry over trade union entities, but it maintained the other instruments, even the limitation of strikes.

After the end of the second world war, there were many attempts of establishing union centers, whose existence, however, was not predicted by the labor laws and thus, none of these initiatives got legal representation for the workers, although some national inter-union articulations, like the "*Comando Geral dos Trabalhadores*" (CGT) that lasted from 1962 until the military coup in 1964, existed de facto however without legal recognition.

The coup of March 31st, in 1964 led to the intervention of the Labor Ministry in thousands of trade unions, federations and even confederations controlled by leaders linked to the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) or other groups of the left, beyond the detention of many of them. Although two important strikes happened in 1968 – the metal workers of Contagem and Osasco – there was strong repression against authentic union activities most time of the dictatorship period and the government determined annually the allowed indexes for wage increases, impeding the exercise of collective bargaining. Unions led by “*pelegos*”<sup>2</sup> proliferated, they were conniving with the military government and with the companies, and real unionists had to act clandestinely.

Although, during the second half of the 70's the Brazilian economy was in crisis, mainly because of the extraordinary international interest soaring and because of the price of imported oil. The combination of elevated inflation and economic recession increased the already rising political demoralization of the military dictatorship. The opposition movement against the government in the social environment strengthened and in 1978 there was a strong and victorious strike in the automotive sector headed by the metallurgical unions from Santo André and São Bernardo do Campo against wage losses imposed by the government. These mobilizations happened again in the following years and were spread over to other professional categories all over the country.

However, the military government fought the strikes with interventions in several unions, the pickets were repressed by the Police, the meetings were watched by the security forces and many union leaders were arrested, including the then president of the metallurgical union from São Bernardo do Campo and Diadema, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, clearly establishing the limits of the Brazilian trade union structure and rules for the exercise of freedom of association.

Workers from distinct categories reacted against unionist “*peleguismo*” and opposition groups started to head many important unions<sup>3</sup> of the industrial, services and agriculture sectors. Public employ-

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(2) Pelego is the blanket between the saddle and the horseman so that he doesn't get hurt when riding the horse. It's an analogy for the union leader who impede that workers "hurt" the bosses.

(3) 1988 constitution approved the right of the public workers to being represented by unions, but without legal means for the performance of collective bargaining.

ees that were hindered of getting affiliated to unions , even though, were also mobilized and many strikes of teachers, health workers, and others also happened.

Although CUT has been funded only in 1983, it was born from these strands of the combative unionism that evolved faster after 1978. One of them was represented by unions that were led by activists that, many ways, started heading their entities and developed an authentic unionism, as the metallurgical unions mentioned before, oil workers from Campinas and from some other regions, many rural workers unions, among others. Another group of unions was the one where opposition groups won the trade union elections against “pelegos” like, for example, the bank workers union of São Paulo and of Porto Alegre in 1979, and others, and a third slope was represented by opposition groups in several categories. Some of them would head their unions later on, but others, of large importance, like the opposition movement of the metal workers of São Paulo (MOMSP), would never manage to win the elections in their unions. At last, many associations of public employees although not legally recognized also participated.

CUT was gradually structured and held congresses in 1984, 1986 and 1988. From the last one, the periodicity of the congresses became every three years and the principles enshrined in its Constitution Charter refer to its independence against the State, governments and employers, as well as autonomy regarding political parties; defense of freedom of association established by Conventions 87 and 151 of the ILO; class position and struggle for trade union unity from a political will of the workers and not from a legal imposition; assurance of internal democracy and freedom of expression of its affiliates and solidarity with the working class movements anywhere in the world.

The “*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*” operated in fact, not as a legal right, for 25 years and only got legal recognition after a constitutional change carried by Lula’s government in 2008.

During that period of building and even during the period of articulation of the authentic union movement and of the struggle for the democratization of Brazil, the Central could lean on the solidarity and international cooperation from many countries, mainly from Europe, and FNV has been present since the very beginning.

It can be considered that its first cooperation project with CUT was

the contribution through “*Wij en Zij*” of 29.793 Guilders (about R\$ 31.000) for the implementation of the foundation congress of the new workers center (*Wij en Zij*, 1984). The congress that was named I Congress of the Working Class (I CONCLAT)<sup>4</sup> also counted with the presence of “*Wij en Zij*” coordinator, Willy Wagenmans, who addressed the delegates and said during his speech that: “*For FNV, solidarity is one of the most basic elements of the trade union movement. For that reason, FNV considers its own duty to support the struggle for freedom, human rights and for trade union rights like we do supporting black workers in Africa, as well as the oppressed workers from Poland and Chile. As you fight on behalf of workers' rights, FNV supports and will always support the combative unions in Brazil.*” (W. Wagenmans’ greeting at the I CONCLAT, 1983 – CEDOC CUT).

That speech and “*Wij en Zij*” principles of action met the principles approved by CUT. The sum of the political views of both trade union centers formed the basis for the cooperation and political relations they established since then.

The support precedents for CUT’s foundation, the projects that followed during 28 years and their results will be introduced and discussed in this book that beyond this introduction will count on four chapters and a conclusion. They will mainly address FNV’s support for the strengthening of the CUT during its first years and its insertion in the agriculture workers field, for its national plan of workers education and its environmental policy, for the creation of the Social Observatory Institute and for the actions along with multinational companies. Political relations between CUT and FNV also entail a special mention, beyond the indirect support that was given to CUT and to many affiliated unions by projects of FNV through other international organizations, like the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), International Trade Secretariats (ITSs) and NGOs like the “Transnationals Information Exchange” (TIE).

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(4) I CONCLAT happened in 1981 gathering unions of all trends and created a Pro-CUT committee where the presence of leaders that were favorable to the Brazilian union structure was predominant. They maneuvered the situation so that the II CONCLAT didn’t happen in 1982 as decided previously. When trying to postpone it again in 1983, the leaders identified with authentic unionism held the congress with the presence of more than 5.000 delegates and founded the CUT in August, 28th 1983.



# Chapter 1

## The beginning of the cooperation between FNV and CUT and the organizational priority

**T**he cooperation of FNV with the “*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*” was held to support the organization and structuring of that new union Center, almost since its foundation and lasted nearly four years when the cooperation focus changed to support the development of its national workers education policy.

However, parallel to that change of focus, FNV together with some other European trade union confederations kept on supporting the organization of some CUT sectors, particularly of the rural workers, because they faced worse difficulties because of the nature of their economic activity. That cooperation lasted almost until 1999.

Although FNV supported CUT's strengthening in the beginning, through nongovernmental organizations that worked with trade union oppositions and combative unions, when the central could get structured and hold its II national congress in 1986 (II CONCUT), the FNVs Cooperation Department always tried to act coordinated with the National Executive Board from CUT. This was particularly to deal with cooperation projects' requested by several local state and regional structures of the CUT, beyond individual unions. However, CUT's cooperation strategy was to try channeling the international cooperation for the bodies of the central via the National Executive Board or through the Professional Departments in the case of affiliated unions.

That it doesn't mean that several local state or regional CUTs, as well as unions, individually stopped accessing international cooperation projects offered by other cooperation agencies from the Netherlands and from other countries, because in the period of the re-democratization there was a strong foreign interest on supporting the combative unionism in Brazil. Nevertheless, in the case of FNV, there was a short cooperation with horizontal instances from CUT and the projects it carried forward were with the National CUT's consent and one of them that stood was the support to the organization of a CUT's regional body in the South of Bahia state, called "*CUT Cacaueira*".

That occurred because of a special circumstance which was the involvement of FNV affiliated unions with the organization of a trade union network in the international production chain of chocolate and that included union entities and militants from that Brazilian region, then an important cocoa producer. That cooperation happened only in 1990, 1993 and 1994, but provoked a large political impact in the south of Bahia, as will be described further.

Beyond that, FNV has also contributed indirectly for the organization of unions and Professional branches from CUT through the support on projects from international union confederations and from some International Trade Secretariats (nowadays called Global Union Federations – GUFs) implemented in Brazil, as well as through some labor NGOs with an international scope like the "Transnationals International Exchange" (TIE) and the Young Christian Workers (YCW).

## 1.1. The dawn of CUT and the international cooperation

The opposition against the military regime in Brazil was strictly repressed after the coup that was perpetrated by military forces in 1964. The worst period was between the end of 1968 with the edition of the Institutional Act Number Five (AI-5) – that absolutely empowered the dictatorship – until the middle 1970's when a process started of a “slow, safe and gradual” political opening. In practice, this would last 11 or even 15 years, considering that the first direct elections for a President of the Republic, since the military coup, only occurred in 1989.

That “opening” was favored by the wear of the military government faced with the economic crisis coming from the increase of the interest rates over the foreign loans and of the oil price, because they impacted negatively the payment balance of the country. The “economic miracle” of exceptional annual growing rates between 1969 and 1973 was replaced by a blend of recession with increasing unemployment as well as growing inflation the latter caused mainly by the shock in the oil prices at the first moment. Paradoxically, the “miracle” also represented the deepening of the income concentration and poverty growth in the country. Beyond the growing decrease, Brazil began to live with a process of chronic inflation that impacted negatively the purchasing power of the salaries, with ripple effects over the living cost of the Brazilian population.

The social movement, better known in Brazil as “popular movement”, gradually began to get reorganized in the cities and in the country side around many themes like the end of the dictatorship and the struggle against the famine, as well as defending social demands related to living, health, education, land access, among others.

The “economic miracle” favored a significant growth of private business activities, particularly in the cutting edge, like the automotive sector, equipment production and others, as well as the expansion of national infrastructure coordinated by a series of state companies, mainly in the areas of electricity, telecommunications, transport, steel and so forth. Consequently, the number of workers in the industry and in the services also increased. A certain modernization was introduced in the agriculture, however, coexisting with the land concentration and vio-

lence from the landowners that took the life of 1.385 leaders and rural activists between 1984 and 2004, according to the Pastoral Land Commission, that was, at least, twice if we consider the data about violence in the rural areas since the military coup (Kotscho, 1981).

However, the increase of the number of urban workers due to the “miracle” didn’t contribute, in the first moment, to enforce the trade union movement. The governmental and business repression against strikes and claiming movements was overly strong and the unions, beyond the fact that most of them were controlled by the government, found themselves mostly under the leadership of unionists that cooperated with the authoritarian system, popularly named “pelegos”.

Therefore, in that moment the workers organization could not exist in the ambit of unions and the alternative that was found was acting inside the companies, through groups of trade union opposition and also participating in the initiatives of the popular movements in communities, social groups, clubs, at last, in the external community.

The support to these articulations, beyond the initiatives of the own social actors, came from some nongovernmental organizations, established with the aim of promoting actions, mainly to meet the demands of the popular movement, that often counted on an important help from the Catholic Church, an institution with great importance in Brazil, once three quarters of the population were catholic, at least until the end of the 1990s (IBGE, 2000). Moreover, in the 1970 decade and in the beginning of the following one, because of the repression, it was almost only possible to hold meetings, trainings and other activities with a political character in the spaces that were sponsored by the Church, particularly in the Dioceses and parishes where the religious were connected to or sympathized with the Liberation Theology.

The creation of the Basis Ecclesiastic Communities (CEBs), stimulated by the Vatican Council II, from the 1970ies, also had a great repercussion in Brazil and helped to boost that workers organization process, agglutinating the resistance against the military regime and adding itself to the tradition that the Church already had in the union area through the Catholic Action (ACO), Young Christian Workers (YCW) since the 1950ies that culminated in the creation of the Labor Pastoral (PO) in 1970.

Some of the first support organizations for the popular movement and for the union oppositions were FASE (Federation of Bodies for Educational and Social Assistance) and CEDAC (Education Center and Community Action) both based in Rio de Janeiro; CEAS (Center of Studies and Social Action) and CESE (Ecumenical Coordination of Services) in Bahia; CPV (*Vergueiro* Pastoral Center) in São Paulo, connected to the Dominicans order, among many others. Other similar entities were created after the political amnesty of September 1979 by exiled militants that then could return to Brazil and by activists that could leave the underground. Among them can be mentioned the CAPPS (Center of Political, Popular and Trade Union Advice), the CEPASE (Center of Research and Socio-Economic Advice) and the *13 de Maio* Center in São Paulo, the CEFURIA (Sister Araújo Irmã Araújo Center of Urban and Rural Education) in Paraná, the Center Josué de Castro in Pernambuco, the CENTRU (Rural Workers Center for Education and Culture) structured in several northeast states, among others organizations.

The proximity of those entities with the Church and the participation of ex-exiled people, including some unionists, in the coordination of many of those entities favored the establishment of relations with social organizations, unions and churches abroad, mainly in Europe. The deepening of those relations allowed the development of many cooperation projects used to support the popular movement and the trade union oppositions.

It was not uncommon either that representatives from churches or other foreign social organizations lived and worked in social activities in neighborhoods of the cities and in the Brazilian country side. They also promoted connections abroad that generated cooperation projects. One of these examples is from Jan van Bentum, charged by a protestant Church in the Netherlands to work in Brazil during generals Médici and Geisel's governments (1970-78), mainly with abandoned children and their families in poor neighborhoods, first in Santo André and then in the southern zone of São Paulo. When he started to work for ICCO in 1977, a Dutch cooperation agency connected to the Protestant Church, he influenced decisively that organization to support the entities that worked with the popular movement and militated together with the trade union oppositions, beyond social organizations active in other

areas. Further, ICCO would also become an important source of cooperation with CUT (Van Bentum, 2011).

Another important contribution for the establishment of relations of European entities with the authentic union movement in Brazil was the unionists that were exiled in different countries like France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Beyond the personal contacts that they established with leaders from several union centers and with social and ecclesiastical organizations from those countries, they also formed the Support Group for Trade Union Oppositions (GAOS) that released its first document about the political and trade union situation from Brazil in 1976 (Nascimento, 2006).

GAOS held a meeting in Brussels in March/April 1979, still before the political amnesty that would only get approved by the Brazilian Congress almost five months later. Beyond the presence of representatives from trade union organizations from Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Norway, France and Portugal, it was also registered the presence of a non-identified representative from FNV of the Netherlands, but it was probably Piet Jeuken, at the time responsible for its international relations. He had the FNVs foreign contacts and knew, at least, one of the Brazilian exiled, because both lived in the same city in the Netherlands (Nascimento, 2006 and Wagenmans, 2010).

The meeting counted with the participation of four members from trade union opposition groups of different categories in Brazil and was used to update the political and union situation for the non Brazilian participants and to enforce the international inter-union ties. The return of the exiled in that same year contributed to strengthen the union work, due to the direct performance of some of them that joined the opposition groups, or through support entities that they helped to create themselves.

FNV promoted the visit of a delegation to Brazil and to Colombia in March of 1980. Its members were Jan van Greunsven, a FNV leader; Piet Jeuken, advisor and responsible for the international relations and Gerard Arninkhof, journalist of the central. They went to São Paulo and to Rio de Janeiro, where they met groups of trade union opposition from many categories in the two cities, apart from leaders of the bank workers union from São Paulo, the metal workers union from São Bernardo and Diadema, still chaired by Lula, the journalists union and public

teachers union (APEOESP) both from São Paulo and the metal workers union of Rio de Janeiro. They also met representatives of the National Labor Front (FNT), as well as representatives of CLAT and ICFTU/ORIT in Brazil. They visited two Dutch companies: Phillips in Guarulhos and the Verolme shipyard in Angra dos Reis (FNV, 1980).

That kind of visit had five objectives: to personally express FNV's solidarity to the workers and their organizations in the developing countries, to improve the knowledge about the working process of the trade union organizations in those countries, to discuss existent projects through bilateral cooperation or via ICFTU and/or WCL, to discuss the continuity of projects or cooperation with new organizations and to establish contacts and supports among trade union organizations in the developing countries and the organizations responsible for the awareness work in the Netherlands through the release of reports and information about the local reality (FNV, 1980).

That visit in 1980 contributed a lot for FNV's comprehension of the Brazilian reality, the trade union movement development through the opposition groups and combative unions, the role of the support entities to the popular and trade union movement and, at last, about the behavior of the Dutch multinational companies in the developing countries and the hard situation of their employees (Wagenmans, 2010). The situation of exploration suffered by workers in companies inside Brazil and Colombia was released just after the visit by a FNV's publication (*Vergelijk*, 1980).

In the meantime, the trade union organization work in Brazil kept on, despite of the dictatorship. At the end of 1979 there was a National Meeting of Trade Union Oppositions (ENOS), and in 1980 a wider event was held and that was the National Meeting of Workers Opposed to the Trade Union Structure (ENTOES), gathering opposition groups and combative union leaders. However, despite of the amplitude of the meeting, it was not possible to find common purposes, because there was a basic divergence implicit in the debates about the role of the trade union oppositions, if they should take the leadership of the unions and take them off the official trade union structure, or if they should try to organize the workers out of the constituted structure. The meanders of those different trade union conceptions would be more explicit in

the future congresses of the CUT when it became clearer the dispute among most of the unions favorable to the creation of a union center that defended the immediate and historical interests of the working class, thus, a project with a strategic goal, and those that considered it as part of a larger movement of political and social transformation and, this way, consequently, a project of tactical nature (Bargas, 2011).

The first time those different positions were explicit through different congress theses was at CONCUT II in 1986 that culminated with the dispute of three slates for the executive leadership of the Central. This body was proportionally composed according to the voting percentage of each slate, as predicted by CUT's statutes, in the case of more than one competing.

That debate also included the role of the "Shop Floor Committees", because some of them were created in companies of the metallurgical and chemical sectors, where the trade union oppositions were strong, even generating bargaining spaces with the companies parallel to the official unions' representation. The big question was the autonomy degree and the relation of these "committees" with the trade unions, particularly when those were combative.

Still in 1980 it was created the National Articulation of the Popular and Trade Union Movement (ANAMPOS) that tried to enforce the authentic trade union work that already disputed some space with the Brazilian unionist wing, driven by the two communist parties at the time and by the "*pelegos*", also known as "Union Unity".

ANAMPOS developed activities all over the country and one of its first tasks was to contribute for the participation of the combative unionists at the I Conference of the Working Class (CONCLAT) that was held in 1981 and elected a Pro-CUT committee, and then, for the organization of the I Congress of the Working Class in 1983 when the "*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*" was founded.

That "articulation" also counted on a lot of support from the international cooperation mainly from entities linked to the Catholic Church and to the World Council of Churches that somehow tried to coordinate the projects of different ecclesiastical organizations. Among the cooperative entities ICCO and Novib from the Netherlands can be mentioned, as well as "Bread for the World", Misereor and the Konrad Adenauer

Foundation from Germany as well as some others (Ribeiro, 2011).

To reinforce the contacts with European trade union organizations, a delegation of four unionists linked to the combative sector went to Europe in 1981. That delegation was composed by José Domingos Cardoso (“Ferreirinha”), an ex-exiled and metal worker from Rio de Janeiro that would join the National Executive Board of the CUT in 1991; Jorge Bittar, president of the engineers union of Rio de Janeiro; Antonio Portela de Castro, a bank worker from São Paulo, and Jacó Bittar, president of the oil workers union of Campinas, and the first secretary of international relations of the CUT. After CUT’s foundation in 1983 there was a new initiative of visits to union centers and European social organizations, headed by the central’s president, Jair Meneguelli.

ANAMPOS reduced its performance with the foundation of CUT in 1983 and stopped working at the end of the decade when a pro – Popular Movements Center was created, an organization that was effectively founded in 1993 with the name Popular Movements Center (CMP) (Ribeiro, 2010).

After CUT’s foundation, FNV started to support its enforcement through cooperation projects with some of the earlier mentioned entities like CAPPS, Josué de Castro Center, CEDAC, EPAS<sup>5</sup>, CEAS and CENTRU. The latter was founded in 1980 by several rural union leaders like Manuel da Conceição who has been exiled in Switzerland and Margarida Maria Alves, leader of the rural workers union in Alagoa Grande in Paraíba, killed in 1983 by the order of sugar cane mill owners of the region. The main work that those pro – union entities accomplished with the trade union oppositions was to promote articulations and meetings, political and trade union education programs, to make travels possible whether necessary and to support the organization of the electoral dispute itself.

The option of supporting CUT’s building that way was because FNV, beyond refusing to work with the Brazilian unions connected to the official structure, sympathized with the strategy of organizing trade union oppositions to dispute the elections in the unions and then affiliate

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(5) It was not possible to identify the meaning of the acronym, but it was a support center for the trade union movement in Rio de Janeiro.

them to the CUT to organically enforce it. By the other hand, despite of the apparent end of the military dictatorship with the election of the presidential slate Tancredo Neves and José Sarney in the Electoral College in 1985, it was still uncertain if CUT would become viable as a trade union center. It was not possible to create it with its own legal personality, as the Brazilian legislation did not recognize the existence of trade union centers, what hampered the transference of resources from the exterior (Wagenmans, 2010). That problem was solved with the creation of the National Education Institute (INF) by the CUT to indirectly institutionalize its obligations and rights, among them, the possibility of receiving external resources through the banking network.

## **1.2. The international cooperation and the organization of the rural workers**

FNV began to support the rural workers trade union organization since 1985 channeling resources directly to some union entities like the Agriculture Workers Federation of Pernambuco (FETAPE), the Rural Workers Trade Unions of Marabá and the one of São Sebastião do Umbuzeiro as well as some projects for the Landless Movement (MST) supported by CUT unions.

The rural unionism in Brazil began to get structured faster in the early 1950s, following the rules that guided the creation of urban official unions with the particular characteristic of gathering under the same trade union representation farm workers and small farmers. As the rural workers trade unions (STRs) were created, Federations of Agriculture Workers (FETAGs) were created in each local state too, once there was a minimum of five STRs. That policy, mainly driven by the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and by sectors of the Catholic Church, led to the creation of the Confederation of Agriculture Workers (CONTAG) at the end of 1963. It was soon recognized by João Goulart's government, but its first president, Lyndolpho Silva, a PCB militant, stayed in office only for three months, as he was ousted by the military government that intervened in the entity right after the coup.

When CUT approved its statute at I CONCUT in 1984, it predicted the creation of a rural workers secretary among the other secretaries.

However, at the second congress, held in 1986, there was a resolution for the creation of the vertical structure of the professional branches from CUT. Thus, the metal workers national department (DNM), the chemical workers (DNQ), bank workers (DNB), utility workers (DNU), the teachers and general education workers (DNTE), among others arose. The figure of the rural workers secretary was excluded from the statute at III CONCUT in 1988.

Many rural workers unions were involved in the creation of the CUT since the very beginning. In some local states like for instance Acre and Amapá they were the only unions committed to the Central between 1983 and 1984. The number of STRs that got affiliated to the CUT increased significantly between 1984 e 1985 with the victory of many opposition slates in trade union elections. These slates got support for their organization and training from international cooperation mainly through entities linked to the World Council of Churches. For instance, CESE with headquarter in Bahia got resources to sponsor “mini-projects” for trade union organization in the agriculture. The achievement of the political control on many unions also permitted that some FETAGs got affiliated to the CUT (Vincenzi, 2011) and the rural workers at the III CONCUT in 1988, represented 32% of the delegates (CUT, 2010).

The congressional decision adopted by the CUT in 1986 to organize the trade departments led to the establishment of a “Pro – Department of Rural Workers” in the same year. The National Department of Rural Workers (DNTR) was founded in 1988 and it held its first congress in 1990 (Vincenzi, 2011).

The DNTR got FNV’s support in 1990 to organize its congress and also to structure some local state departments (DETRs). Nevertheless, in that same year, with CUT’s support, it presented an ambitious cooperation project for the international trade secretariat correspondent to the DNTR which was IFPAW<sup>6</sup> (International Federation of Plantation, Agriculture and Similar Workers) to strengthen the department. FNV decided to support the project, as it was part of its policy to contribute to the approach of national organizations to the ITSs (Van Rheenen,

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(6) IFPAW merged with IUF (International Union of Food, Hotel, Restaurants, Tobacco and Others'Workers) in 1994.

2010). Beyond FNV, two Swedish union centers (LO and TCO) that have a common international cooperation agency (LO/TCO) also supported the project<sup>7</sup>.

There was a first intermediate project held between 1990 and 1991 and another longer one implemented between 1992 and 1994 culminating with an isolated project in 1995 whose objective was to evaluate the general results of those initiatives as the accomplishment of the project itself. The content of those projects aimed to enforce the capacity of DNTR and DETRs' leaders to elaborate and articulate policies directed to the struggle of the workers in the agriculture, both for farm workers and small farmers. It was presented as an "alternative project for sustainable development" that considered the regional differences of the Brazilian agriculture, the environment as well as the need of women and youth inclusion. The themes included in the project were the social security of rural workers, agricultural credit, trade union education and familiar agriculture organization. However, the discussion about financial self-sustaining of the STRs and FETAGs affiliated to CUT was not included, albeit the project's development helped to expand STRs' affiliation to the central in an expressive way (Vincenzi, 2011).

An important component of the debate about the rural workers organization present in the DNTR and in the CUT itself was about the relation with CONTAG. That confederation was part of the Brazilian official trade union structure and suffered an intervention of the military government in 1964, but its control was recovered by progressive political sectors some years later. However, those sectors were very cautious in the execution of the union work during the military dictatorship to avoid new interventions of the Labor Ministry and tried to protect the interests of the rural workers connected to the agrarian reform in a strictly legal mark. Thus, the union action ended up prioritizing the performance in the legal field to the detriment of the mobilization, although it is not possible to consider CONTAG's leaders as silent or connive with the military governments.

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(7) The FNV used to work together with other European confederations on cooperation but this Dutch and Swedish project was also favored by the last secretary of the IFPAW before the fusion with IUF, Börje Svensson, coming from the agriculture workers union in Sweden.

However, when José Sarney became the president of the Republic in 1985, inaugurating the return of civilian governments during a period known as “The New Republic”, CONTAG’s leadership decided to support his policy of agrarian reform. CUT had actively participated in the campaign for direct elections in 1984 and opposed the presidential election through the Electoral College process<sup>8</sup>. The central organized many mobilizations and general strikes against the economic policy of Sarneys’ government and CUTs rural workers considered the agrarian reform purpose of the government too shy and saw CONTAG’s support to it as a disservice for the workers’ cause, beyond the violence in the field remained like earlier, even taking away Chico Mendes’ life, a CUT leader internationally known.

However, CONTAG, despite of being an official confederation and being able to elect its leaders through votes of one delegate by state federation, decided to democratize its electoral process already in the 80’s holding periodic congresses with the participation of delegates from affiliated unions that would discuss the conjuncture, approve an action plan and elect the entity’s leadership.

The accomplishment of congresses would allow CUT’s union to participate and to influence CONTAG’s policies, although they were in a minor number compared to independent unions or affiliated to other centers, but for many “CUT rural unionists”, the DNTR represented the alternative for the rural workers’ organization out of the official trade union structure, albeit paradoxically the STRs also were originated from the official and legally recognized structure. Beyond that, the acquaintanceship with officers of the official trade union structure was too hard in some local states, like, for example, in São Paulo.

That debate was only solved in a more consensual manner at a national plenary of the DNTR in 1993, when it was decided by most of

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(8) The successive presidents chosen after the military coup of 1964 were “elected” by a college composed by federal parliamentarians, senators and representatives of the local state parliaments where the party ARENA supported by the military always got most votes. With the defeat of the parliamentary amendment favorable to the introduction of direct elections for president of the Republic in 1984, the opposition slate Tancredo Neves – José Sarney was chosen this way with the support of ARENA dissidents. The president Tancredo Neves got ill on the eve of his possession and died further. Thus, the vested one was José Sarney, one of the dissidents above mentioned.

the delegates for the participation of the STRs and FETAGs affiliated to CUT at CONTAG. Though the DNTRs congress of 1990 already had decided for the participation at the V Congress of the Confederation in 1991 in which two CUT leaders were elected to compose its executive board (Bitterncourt, 1995).

That decision introduced an extra objective to the project supported by FNV and LO/TCO. The enforcement of the DNTR would also mean the political and organizational enforcement of “cutist” rural workers in the CONTAG, even with the possibility of its affiliation to the CUT. Such purpose was supported by the members of the “Classist Union Chain”, linked to the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), as they already participated in CONTAG’s structures and had joined the CUT in the early 90ies. Other rural union leaders, like CONTAG’s president at the time, Francisco Urbano, also supported that proposition.

The political formulations previewed in the project stimulated the accomplishment of a great mobilization in the defense of the claims connected to the agricultural credit for small farmers, social security for rural workers, among others. That first “struggles journey” was unitary involving CUT, CONTAG and the landless movement (MST) and gathered nearly 100.000 rural workers in Brasília for a week. On the following years it happened again as “*Grito da Terra Brasil*” (“Brazil Land Cry”) and contributed greatly to the acquirement of governmental programs like the National Program for the Strengthening of Familiar Agriculture (PRONAF) that was implemented in 1996, beyond politically getting the several rural workers organizations together (Urbano, 2011).

The VI Congress of CONTAG held in 1995 approved its affiliation to the CUT and elected four leaders nominated by the DNTR, including its president, Avelino Ganzer, a historical leader of the CUT originated from the STR of Santarém in the local state of Pará. Francisco Urbano was reelected president and remained in charge until 1998 when he was replaced by Manoel José dos Santos (“*Manoel de Serra*”), FETAPEs president and also a DNTR director.

The affiliation of the CONTAG to the CUT also enforced its international work with other organizations of familiar farmers in the *Mercosul* scope and its affiliation and participation at the IUF, beyond a great involvement in international campaigns assumed by the Central, like

for instance, the free trade agreements, where the dispute of interests between agro-business and familiar agriculture was quite evident.

That new reality achieved by the rural workers of the CUT and where the FNV – LO/TCO – IFPAW<sup>9</sup> – DNTR project performed an important role, allowed the discussion and approval of a new project to strengthen rural unionism known as the “CUT – CONTAG project”, actually a continuity of the previous ones of support to the “Sustainable Rural Development”. Beyond FNV and LO/TCO’s support to the Project, ICCO, which already cooperated with CUT and with many entities that acted in the rural area, also contributed such as a Dutch NGO called Solidaridad.

According to Francisco Urbano, that new Project brought two very important general earnings: *“it was a ‘road’ to build common points that eased the approach between CONTAG and CUT in the occasion and alternative projects of agricultural development began to be organized and systematized from the project, particularly the ‘agricultural integration program’ in 1998”* (2011).

He also observed that the project helped the leaders and advisors from CONTAG to overcome the difficulties they had to deal with, for instance, the cooperative theme and the elaboration of law proposals. The adjustments defined in the PRONAF due to the mobilization of the successive “Land Crys” were also born from the activities and reflections originated by the project. Although CONTAG disaffiliated from the CUT in 2009 to keep itself independent in the current framework of six trade union centers recognized by the government, the differences of points of view between it and CUT are small about the agricultural development policies and that was also the merit of the project (Urbano, 2011).

### **1.3. The cooperation and the regional trade union organization**

Although most part of FNV’s cooperation in Brazil passed by the National CUT, there is the register of some small direct projects to enforce

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(9) Until 1992 the Project had a direct monitoring from IFPAW through its representative in Brazil, José Barbosa Monteiro and IUFs regional office in Uruguay, but due to a series of operational problems and the merger process of IFPAW with the IUF made the FNV to operate it directly with the DNTR.

trade union organization like the local state CUT of Santa Catarina in 1989, the Association of Prostitutes of Rio de Janeiro state (APERJ) in 1992, and the home workers union from Rio de Janeiro city in 1994. However, in that scope, the project with a wider political impact was the one which helped to create the Regional CUT in the southern part of Bahia, the “CUT Cacaueira”.

The Transnationals International Exchange (TIE) an NGO present in many countries and that contributed with the establishment of contacts among workers and trade unions in multinational companies (MNCs) decided, in 1986, to start a work in the international productive chain of cocoa processing, whose industry was concentrated mainly in the Netherlands and in the USA, what involved the Food Workers Union of the Netherlands (“*Voedingsverbond*”), for its turn, affiliated to FNV. The then General Secretary of IUF, Dan Gallin, got interested by the idea, what also helped to involve the Dutch trade union center.

An initial mapping of that productive chain was commissioned to SOMO (“*Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen*”), a research center on multinational companies, of which FNV was already a client. That survey showed the links of the chain and the main cocoa producer countries of the world like the Ivory Coast in Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia in Asia and Brazil in Latin America, where the plantation is concentrated in the south of Bahia, near to cities like Ilhéus, Olivença and Itabuna.

The first contacts in Brazil were made in 1986 and the first workers' meeting was held in the Netherlands in 1987. The Brazilians who participated were union activists from the cocoa zone of Bahia connected to the Federal Public Service Workers Union (SINDSEF) and the Society of Cocoa Agricultural Technicians (STAC), as well as the Cocoa and Candies Workers Union from Espírito Santo that organized the factory workers of the then “*Garoto* chocolate company” based in Vila Velha, a city next to Vitória. From the Dutch side, there were representatives from the “*Voedingsverbond*” and also from the union of the Amsterdam Harbor Services that was the site for cocoa entrance in the Netherlands and from where it went to the processing factories in the city of Zandstaad (Peinenburg, 2010).

That meeting was another demonstration that it is possible to invol-

ve the workers at the shop floor in international trade union relations and one of the debates was about the possibility of including the cocoa in the “Fair Trade”<sup>10</sup> agenda (Peinenburg, 2010).

The articulation of the union organizations in the south of Bahia like SINDSEF, STAC and many STRs initially conformed a network that later became the “CUT Cacaueira”. The cooperation it received was from FNV and from the *Voedingsverbond*. The latter set up a financial campaign among its members in 1990 to offer a vehicle to the “CUT Cacaueira” in order for its leaders to move easily in the region and FNV also contributed to that campaign, beyond providing a project that involved trade union education activities and the international campaign for cocoa’s fair trade. That project was repeated in 1993 and 1994 with TIE’s participation, but the cocoa’s productive chain program was closed in 1995 with the accomplishment of a last world meeting in the Netherlands that counted on the presence of seven Brazilians (Peinenburg, 2010).

FNV spent nearly 230.000 Euros with those projects (Beccari, 2010) and the organizational balance of the cooperation was expressive, because beyond the expansion of the number of affiliated unions to the CUT in the southern part of Bahia, the regional CUT was created. That movement was also useful to strengthen politically the union and the grassroots movement in the region. In 1992, Geraldo Simões, who was one of the local union leaders involved in that process was elected as mayor of Itabuna city by the Workers Party (PT) and is currently a federal parliamentarian. After his election it was tried to establish a twinning between Itabuna and Zandstaad to be added to the already existing relationship among the Dutch and Brazilian unions of the cocoa sector, however, that initiative did not progress (Peinenburg, 2010).

#### **1.4. The cooperation through ICFTU, ORIT, ITSs and YCW**

The TIE earlier mentioned started to operate in Brazil in 1984 and three years later opened an office in São Paulo. That NGO contributed

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(10) “Fair Trade”: a concept that is opposite to the called “Free Trade” by defending that the trade of some goods should be regulated to contemplate many social aspects like fair payment to the commodity producers, respect for labor rights, environment protection, among others.

significantly so that many CUT unions from industrial sectors, like the metallurgical and chemical's sectors, could participate in international activities. It was a real "door opener" to the establishment of international relations in that level and without deeper considerations for the different political trends that drove the leaders from those entities. However, beyond the support to the campaign of the cocoa productive chain, the support of FNV to the TIE in Brazil was only punctual (Peinenburg, 2010).

Apart of the bilateral cooperation with CUT, far the most expressive, FNV's support to the Brazilian trade union organization also happened through international labor organizations based on the political field of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and in less significance those linked to the World Confederation of Labor (WCL).

Some of those projects were totally applied in Brazil and others involved third countries from Latin America, like, for example, the support for the accomplishment of several meetings of the union centers of the Southern Cone articulated in 1987 by the ICFTU. That initiative was later transformed in the "Coordination of the Southern Cones' Trade Union Centers" (C.C.S.C.S.) where the CUT participated since the very beginning. The "Coordination" received a new support for its development through a project demanded to the FNV by the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) in 1994 and other smaller projects in 2007 and 2009 directly negotiated between the C.C.S.C.S.'s technical secretariat and the FNV. Despite of those recent projects, the financial capacity of the "Coordination" increased due to the contributions of the union centers that participate in it. Its role in the beginning was to promote solidarity among those union organizations, having last at the end of the 1980 decade still two countries governed by military dictatorship – Chile and Paraguay. From 1991, its performance has been basically to organize the union intervention faced to the regional integration promoted by the Common Market of the South (*Mercosul*).

The Global Union Federations (GUFs) that took projects ahead in Latin America with Brazilian participation were the Public Services International (PSI), the International Transport Federation (ITF), the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers (ICEM), the International Federation of Building and Wood Wor-

kers (IFBWW), the Union Network International (UNI), The Education International (EI), the International Federation of Textile, Clothing and Leather Workers (IFTCLW) and the IUF. The projects supported by FNV that spent less resources in Brazil were the ones taken ahead by the last three and the GUF that most invested in trade union organization in the country with its support was the PSI.

However, due the plural nature of those organizations, the unions involved in the projects were not only the ones affiliated to the CUT, albeit this is the only trade union center in Brazil that the FNV works bilaterally with. Nevertheless, there were also a couple of projects proposed by some GUFs at times that only benefited organizations not affiliated to the CUT.

One important characteristic of FNV's cooperation is the preservation of relations and traditions. For example, it supported for a long time projects coming from Universal Alliance of the Diamond Workers (UADW)<sup>11</sup>, because the first union established in the Netherlands was in that sector and the same happened with the WCL and the YCW<sup>12</sup>, probably due the bias of the presence of NKV in the FNV's initial conformation. There were some WCL activities held in Brazil in 1988 and 1989 that FNV supported and the same in the case of the YCW between 1999 and 2007.

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(11) That international federation was one of the minor ones with less than ten members until its merger with the ICEM.

(12) WCL and its regional organizations merged with the ICFTU in 2008 founding the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the YCW didn't keep the same importance that it had in the beginning of CUT's foundation.



# Chapter 2

## FNV's cooperation for CUT's trade union education and for its environmental policy

**F**NV's involvement in the support of CUT's education policy was one of the most important partnerships achieved by the new unionism that emerged at the end of the military regime in Brazil.

That support replaced, partially, the projects that FNV held with a series of union organizations between 1985 and 1987<sup>13</sup> that mainly supported the opposition groups in the urban trade unions through training programs, because the support to the rural workers' trade union organization continued during the 90ies.

Actually, the trade union education was part and, at the same time,

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(13) See Chapter 1.

the continuity of CUT's organizational process and became a necessity due to the growth of its membership, particularly during the 80ies and early 90ies. FNV had a fundamental role for the development of the union education, not only sponsoring activities, but also debating the shape of the projects and the evaluation methodology of them. This last aspect was even processed in a special way through an external evaluation process between 1995 and 1996, supported by FNV, providing a deep reflection about the execution, the results and the state of the CUTs National Plan of Education (PNF) nearly eight years after its beginning. That work resulted even in the publication of a book that nowadays composes the modest collection of the Brazilian literature about the theme of workers education.

The current chapter describes the main aspects of CUT's education policy such as the general conception of the PNF, the rural workers' training, and that turned to the regional integration and to globalization, as well as its gender transversal approach. These aspects were all built in the cooperation projects of the FNV with CUT in that area and lasted until the end of the 90ies.

At last, at the end of the chapter there is also a comment about the development of the environment policy of the Central equally supported by FNV in the early 90ies when the world was preparing for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that was held in Rio de Janeiro – Brazil in 1992. We chose to include that theme in the chapter due the fact that it acquired at the time a great effort of debates and training inside the central, despite it was not included in the PNF and the Social Policies Secretary from national CUT was the body responsible for its implementation.

## **2.1. FNV and the CUTs trade union education**

The vertiginous growth of the number of unions affiliated to the Central in the 80ies made that the strategy of trade union education earned great importance. Through it, the cadres and the union leaders needed to participate in the processing of new knowledge to allow a minimum unity for union action and to absorb them in their daily activities. Beyond that, it had to be present the perspective of social emancipation based on the emersion of a new political actor, in this case, an indepen-

dent, classist and democratic trade union center in opposition to the corporatism that always stressed the relation between trade unions and the state in the Brazilian history.

This way, the “interim statute” approved at the moment of the center’s constitution in 1983, already predicted the creation of a “National Secretary of Training, Education and Culture” that under the further statutory changes became the National Secretary of Education (SNF) to, since the beginning, set a conceptual identity for the new unionism that needed to achieve national coverage. From that political decision of the Central, began the efforts to organize the local state and regional CUTs<sup>14</sup>, and their respective education secretaries, with the definition of goals, audience, methodology and own techniques and instruments for the training activities. From that, the trade union education got a strategic sense and priority for the consolidation of CUT’s trade union project all over Brazil.

The first secretary, Ana Lúcia da Silva, elected in 1984, coordinated on the following year the accomplishment of five regional seminars about the theme “trade union structure” to deepen the definitions of CUT’s political – organizational project. In the beginning of 1986, a national meeting of local state and regional CUTs education secretaries was held to identify the existent experiences and outline the first training plan with a national character, although it was still a preliminary discussion (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

However, one of the main responsible for the strategic drawing of CUT’s national education policy was the leader Jorge Lorenzetti, elected as the National Education Secretary in 1986, a mandate he filled until 1994<sup>15</sup>. He was also the author of the cooperation project that looked for FNV’s support for that policy.

FNV’s cooperation in that area begun in 1987 when CUT started to outline a national network of trade union education to take ahead its first activities’ plan in places articulated by the local state CUTs and in the existent union schools like the “*Cajamar Institute*” – INCA (São

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(14) CUT’s regional units, until 1994, were a formal part of its structure until the time the local state CUTs decided how to better structure the organization in the states.

(15) His successors were Monica Valente (1994 – 1997), Altemir Tortelli (1997 – 2003) and the current one José Celestino Lourenço, elected in 2003.

Paulo), the “*Quilombo dos Palmares School*” (Pernambuco) and the “*Sete de Outubro School*” (Minas Gerais) all created between 1986 and 1987. However, only the latter had an exclusive link with the CUT because it was built with resources from the Italian cooperation articulated by the CISL, one of the trade union confederations of that country. Nevertheless, CUT’s leaders at the time decided endowing it with its own legal personality, as the Central was not legally recognized as a union entity<sup>16</sup> and there was the concern that it could create any political or administrative problem for the school, because the Brazilian democratization was still very fragile.

The two other institutions were autonomous and were born from personal, party and union initiatives at the time. They responded to the formative demands from the CUT, but also offered programs of party training and for the popular movement, what took them to the situation of schools with an agreement with the Central. CUT tried to enforce its schooling organic network and between 1989 and 1990 some new schools were inaugurated like the Southern School, the São Paulo one and North I, respectively installed in Florianópolis – Santa Catarina; São Paulo, initially at INCA’s dependencies in the city of Cajamar and then transferred to the capital of the local state and Belém do Pará. Further, there would be created the schools North II in Porto Velho – Rondônia; Midwest, initially in Brasília and then transferred to Goiânia – Goiás and the Northeast school in Recife – Pernambuco. However, the physical structure and their dimension vary a lot. Properly, only the Southern school South and the “*Sete de Outubro*” were close to the European models of trade union schools considering the structure and facilities.

The national education policy is comprehended by two levels of organization. The first one with a horizontal approach through the inter – categories organization, like the National CUT, the Local State CUTs and their instances of deliberation, like the congresses held every three years, the annual national plenary, the national leadership of the central and its executive board. In the case of the vertical organization, they are considered the branches by economic activity composed by

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(16) See chapter 1.

the shop floor organizations, the local unions themselves, regional and national federations of unions and the national confederations.

The education system, that is also politically articulated with the bodies mentioned above, is composed by the National Education Conference held periodically in the space of some years to promote more theoretical and general debates about trade union training and without representing a deliberative instance; by the Annual National Meeting (ENAFOR) to evaluate the results of the previous year of the PNF and to plan the activities of the one to follow and the National Education Council (CONAFOR) that meets three times a year to supervise and generate the PNF's referrals. The CONAFOR is composed by the national secretary, a local state secretary for each geographic region of the country, representatives from the trade union schools, the confederations' education secretaries and the national coordinator of programs (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

The pedagogical base that guided the trade union educational project finds its roots in the educational emancipation methods of Paulo Freire, searching for knowledge autonomy and independent action, always with a popular and democratic cutting, in other words turned to the big mass of workers subordinated to an exclusionary social order. The union education strategy follows that inspiration, looking for the strengthening of an autonomous, solidarity and popular social movement.

Consequently, the bases for the constitution of the national education policy promoted by the network that came from the pedagogical conception and from the strategy defined by the CUT were the following:

- Adoption of methodological principles to develop trade union, popular and democratic education, as an alternative to the traditional education, considered authoritarian, elitist and exclusionary;
- Working through networks to provide qualified training to the local organizations and to the leaderships of the national instances.
- Adaptation of the activity programs to contemplate the programmatic axes oriented from the political challenges put to CUT in different conjunctures, whatever they are, the collective bargaining, the productive restructuring, the outsourcing and all the problems ousted from the great reforms of the state – particularly the privatizations and the opening of the economy that put the union situation in another level of struggle (CUT; 1999).

However, in the first two years of the PNFs implementation, the basic content of the seminars and courses aimed almost only the training of CUTs national and local state leaders, involving themes like the Centrals resolutions and its political concept, conjuncture analysis, among others. In 1987 there were held 31 activities coordinated by the SNF with 672 participants and, in the following year, there were 34 activities and 1.134 participants. However, it only succeeded on defining wider programmatic axes in 1988 and since 1990 the number of activities doubled and the number of participants would overcome the figure of 2.000 annually. (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

In 1993 it was elaborated a training activities plan that had ten programs: CUTs conception and trade union practice; collective bargaining; planning and trade union management; labor process and organization at the shop floor; leadership training; training of trainers; education regarding social relations between men and women; training for rural workers; cooperation and international and national exchange and, at last, memory and documentation (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

The PNF also had to be coherent with CUT's growth that expanded the demand of trade union education. If in the end of the 1980s CUT already counted with more than one thousand affiliated unions, ten years later that number had evolved to nearly 2.800 affiliated unions, from which around 1.800 unions were of urban workers, and almost one thousand were rural workers' unions. Currently there are 3.438 affiliated unions ([www.cut.org.br/institucional/38/historico](http://www.cut.org.br/institucional/38/historico) consulted in 06/05/2011).

The partnership that was established between FNV and CUT supporting the national education policy began, formally, through a preliminary project still in 1987 that had the aim of consolidating the vertical structure of the CUT, as well as implementing the instances and trade union education structures all over Brazil. The following projects, with biannual and triennial duration, began in 1989 and the last of them was approved by FNV in 1998 when the SNF also started to prioritize professional training with the funding of the Brazilian government.

Among those projects giving support to the PNF other punctual ones were included equally with a national character like the production of videos in 1992 to be used in some distance training courses,

the external evaluation in 1995, the support to the work of the Southern school in Florianópolis in 1996 and, on the same line, a project for the consolidation of the academic network Unitrabalho<sup>17</sup> in 1987 (Lorenzetti, 2010).

The FNV projects of support to the PNF also previewed resources to the constitution of local state CUT's training structures and to the maintenance of a fixed team at the National Education Secretary, because CUT had not enough own revenue to ensure the human resources required by the training structure of the Center at that moment.

A little before starting that new phase of FNV's support to the CUT, in 1985, an important rule for the Dutch cooperation was introduced that impacted positively the projects' development. By determination of the Cooperation Ministry of the Dutch government, the cooperation projects should be submitted to audits in the benefited countries and in the Netherlands. The audits involved the allocation of resources, the projects' evaluation and periodic *in loco* visits. That rule demanded the accomplishment of frequent contacts between FNV's cooperation department and CUT's SNF that happened, mainly, through faxes correspondence and later, through emails.

FNV's support to CUT's formation was audited since the beginning and the accountability had to be current so that the following resources were released and sent. That practice helped CUT to promote more efficient instruments of spending control, necessary, mainly, at a moment of high inflation and variable exchange rates when it was hard to plan and control expenditures and also contributed to develop evaluation mechanisms of the results of the central training program.

In the mid 90ies the entire national education policy of the CUT went through an internal review about its fundaments, objectives and methods, parallel to some reflection about CUT's own trade union strategy in a new political conjuncture of democracy and economic conjuncture where neoliberalism predominated. The education programs

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(17) The academic network Unitrabalho started to be articulated around 1992 and ended up by constituting a network of dozens of Brazilian universities that deal with the theme "labor" on its various aspects, like the sociological, economical and productive, among others, to produce studies available to the public and to the trade union movement. CUT's national education secretary was an important proponent for the network's constitution on its beginning and so it established some international contacts, including FNV.

based on the courses of “conception and trade union practice”, collective bargaining, union management, strategic planning, among other contents were shown insufficient facing the new conjuncture.

That reflection had its culminating point with the “External Evaluation of the National Education Policy of the CUT” demanded by the Central itself, as well as by some CUT partners, among them the FNV which sponsored its accomplishment.

The responsible team for that evaluation was divided in three groups with different responsibilities. The first one was the “evaluation committee” itself, composed by two Brazilian specialists on education management, the professors Rogério do Valle and Isaura Belloni and a Dutch one, the professor from the Social Studies Institute from Hague, Fritz Wils. That committee counted on the consulting of other two Brazilian specialists on trade union education, Silvia Manfredi and Luis Eduardo Wanderley. The third group, responsible for defining the parameters and supervising the evaluation process was the “interlocutor committee” composed by representatives of some foreign entities that cooperated with CUT’s education, among them, the representative of FNV’s cooperation department for Latin America, Gerloff van Rheenen. From the Brazilian side, among others, who participated was the national education secretary, Mônica Valente (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

Despite of more than 11.000 union leaders and activists having participated in CUT’s training programs between 1987 and 1993, it was shown in the evaluations final report that there was some exhaustion of the structures and programs adopted up to then. The conclusion was also that the union education had been “departmentalized” and was very locked into programs and thematic blocks that were meaningful in the period of CUT’s creation and consolidation, but needed to get adapted to the new challenges and agendas. It was necessary to enforce the human and pedagogical resources and modify the adopted methodologies, beyond enforcing new themes like the gender relations to be explored in a specific and transversal way in the training programs, beyond developing own instruments for the rural trade union reality, very little contemplated by the SNF.

Other criticisms appeared. On the external evaluation, it was also found some detachment from leaders and unions to the national education policy, being that some of them, even started to define their own

policies. It was also found that there was little articulation among the local state CUTs and the branches, these were more concerned on developing training programs directly turned to their necessities. The same way, new themes came up like demands for union training like the labor precariousness, the productive restructuring, the informality, the professional training, the organization at the shop floor (OLT) and the collective bargaining in a low inflation environment. The evaluation found that the training programs were not equipped to answer the new demands. At last, there was still an imbalance between grounding and methodological systematization due to the amplitude and the range of the training policies with a general cutting (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

In the 1995 – 1998 triennial project established with FNV, CUT tried to respond to the scarcity of the adopted instruments approaching studies and researches to the trade union education, in other words, to provide more empirical foundation to the training contents and change that initiative into a closer work similar to a qualified advisor for union leaders. Another corrective action was to reorganize the educational teams through thematic cores and improve the response to the different demands and different audiences like a way of “specializing” the trade union training.

Another critical theme was the resources management. Up to then, the training policies were very centralized at the national bodies of the CUT, and the constitution of education networks experiences involving the local state CUTs founded on the difficulty of management resources in a more decentralized manner. Thus the decision of the Central was to ensure the funding of the education network starting by the structures of the most articulated schools with the local state education secretaries. It was also decided that the SNF should advance fast towards a new training methodology articulating the new themes, programs and actions with the demands of the different audiences, specially the rural workers.

## **2.2. Trade union education and the rural unionism**

One of the goals of CUT's trade union education was also to promote the strengthening of social segments of low organizing tradition in Brazil and/or unions in more vulnerable professional categories like

the case of the rural workers. That second category has always been of special consideration due to the violation of labor rights and freedom of association in Brazil, particularly with the history of violence in the agriculture that remains until nowadays in the country.

CUT decided to strengthen the representative bodies of the rural workers since its foundation as a strategic aim to unite the struggles of the urban and the country side. The training with inclusion of specific contents linked to the trade union organization in the agriculture was a necessity to achieve that goal.

The trade union training was a central component of the first projects supported by FNV in the rural workers unions as moved ahead by entities like the CENTRU. It was also an important axis of the project supported by FNV and performed through the IFPAW. In the words of the general secretary of that international trade secretariat, Börge Svensson, “*it made sense to support the rural workers because Brazil was close to live an explosion of new unions in that sector all over the country*”. As there was already a large number of unions of agriculture workers at that time, this statement must be interpreted as the increase of the number of the union entities able to break with the barriers imposed by the military dictatorship and assume a more active posture faced to the social and labor problems in the country side.

Indeed, right at the end of the 80ies, complaints about child labor in the most different agricultural activities started to come up, like in sugar cane and orange farms in São Paulo and in the Northeast; tea and banana plantations in Vale do Ribeira; in the commodities chains like coffee, soya, tomato, among others. The same way, there were many complaints about slave labor on the bottom of production chains of meat, cotton and others. It was a great explosion of complaints, greatly because of the rising of the new rural, combative and active unionism, and that brought in its wake a new actor that would highlight the ideological political spectrum in the Brazilian country side: the movement of the landless rural workers.

The mobilization of rural workers exposed the reality of the violations of fundamental labor rights in the country side, a dimension that has always been left on a second plan in the history of the social movements in Brazil. In that moment, the end of the 1980ies, some important leaders from the rural workers' movement started to dawn, among

them, the union leader Avelino Ganzer who would become CUT's vice-president and DNTR's first coordinator, and further, CONTAG's international relations' secretary.

As the president of the rural workers union of Santarém (STRS), he is a good example of a CUT rural unionist. The STRS has a strong struggle tradition. Since its foundation in 1973 and after the authentic leaders took the control of the union from the "pelegos" in 1980, still under the military regime, it organizes the rural workers in the municipality. It is a large area of rivers and native forests that is being gradually devastated by the logging companies that operate in the region. The STRS leaders, most of them, come from traditional communities that were spread through the area of Santarém. Most of those communities are composed by families that inhabit the riparian areas of rivers and streams for decades and that live from extractive activities, gardening, fishing and small animal's growth. Organizing those families and workers is a herculean task due to the distances and the boats transportation costs, the only existent option for displacement in the region.

Situations like that motivated FNV to help the rural workers organization of the CUT. Beyond supporting DNTRs work through projects with the IFPAW, FNV also helped to consolidate the state bodies of the Department through the project of trade union training of the Central driven by the National Education Secretary.

In 1992, the DNTR started to share its training activities with the SNF. The rural leaders started to demand specific training policies and programs for the reality of the workers in the agriculture, what was different to the training programs drawn in the SNF pursued by a more generalist and focused scope on the urban and manufacturing labor world. Even so the programmatic content of the PNF turned to the training of leaders and union activists in the agriculture and was composed by action and trade union organization in the country side; cooperative and agricultural associations; farm workers; agrarian reform; productive chains of strategic goods (agro-business) and agricultural policies (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

That difference of approach for the trade union training brought up concerns for FNV. In faxes addressed to the National Education Secretary, Jorge Lorenzetti, FNV affirmed that it funded the rural workers training activities through the IFPAW, but at the same time it wanted some

information about what would change in the SNF and in the CUT's union training policy with the introduction of specificities for different professional categories. FNV, without interfering in the central decisions, wanted to ensure the continuity of CUT's education project, independently of the branches and concentration areas.

The external evaluation issued between 1995 – 1996 and supported by the FNV, also pointed on some of the existent problems in the trade union training aimed to the rural workers' organization like the ambiguity of the treatment given to the small farmers like if they were wage earner workers; the low knowledge about characteristics of the agricultural labor world, like the seasonality, the small economic weight of the rural workers' unions and the lack of articulation between teaching and research in that productive area, among others. The mentioned expectation was that the CONTAG's affiliation to CUT could solve these bottlenecks and indeed the "CUT – CONTAG Project" solved some of them (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

FNV's support to the DNTR was finished in 1995 with the accomplishment of an audit and an external evaluation of the results of that program which was replaced by the CUT – CONTAG project<sup>18</sup>.

### **2.3. Trade Union education and gender**

The struggle for equality of opportunities between men and women in Brazil faces the same difficulties found in other countries that have passed through a similar social, economic and political development. The participation of female workers in the constitution of the CUT was very important and the equality issue and the struggle against gender discrimination were very present in the Centrals debates since the very beginning, although not without facing difficulties and misunderstandings existent in a society that is predominantly macho like the Brazilian one which also echoes in the trade union movement.

That is why there was the concern of putting that theme on debate since the first congresses of the Central and the II CONCUT held in 1986, was a moment when the first formal instance of CUT women

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(18) See chapter 1.

organization was created, the National Committee for the Issue of the Female Worker (CNQMT). In 1991, it changed the name to National Committee of Women Workers (CNMT) (Lima, 1998). That committee was subordinated to the National Secretary of Trade Union Policy and similar committees were also created in some local states. The decision of connecting the committee to that secretary occurred by the understanding that the gender issues should be treated by the view of labor relations and the union performance, although since the beginning the feminist bias of women rights in the society as a whole was also present, as it happened, for example, with the resolution on the abortion right approved at the IV CONCUT in 1991.

Another concern was to expand the participation of female unionists in the spaces of the CUT because the CNMTs coordinator had no seat in its National Executive Board. Therefore a debate was started in the beginning of the 90ies about the implementation of minimum quotas for women in the horizontal and vertical instances of the Central. This was finally approved at a national plenary held in 1996 and firstly applied to compose CUT's executive board elected at its V Congress in 1997. That criterion was further extended to the composition of the trade union delegations for CUT's congresses and its national plenary and almost ten years after the quotas approval the National Secretary of Women Workers was created.

The education activities developed by the CNMT and by the PNF contributed for the CUTs progress towards more equality between men and women in the labor market and on the conduction of the trade union struggles. Many female organizations, NGOs and researchers about the theme in Brazilian universities started to cooperate with the CNMT since 1988 and in 1992 the program of "social relations between men and women" became a part of the national education plan.

The objective of that program was to sensitize a larger number of unionists for the questioning and overcome of different ways of gender discrimination in the labor world and in social relations as a whole; to intensify the trainers' training to deal with that theme in the education activities; to prepare trade unionists in order to organize and implement campaigns for equality of opportunities between men and women; to prepare leaders and female trade union leaders to intervene in the unions daily activities and, finally, to enforce a political ethics in

the CUT about differences between men and women and to overcoming hierarchy between the genders.

Its content and activities developed through FNV's support to the PNF were basically gender and unionism; feminine labor resources (perspectives for the 1990s); quotas of women participation in the CUT's leadership; women and labor (the different faces of discrimination); collective bargaining and themes connected to women rights; women in the production organization (specific for rural workers); labor methodology with women and union policies; bases for the composition of the education network on social relations between men and women (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, 1997).

## **2.4. Trade Union education, globalization and regional integration**

At the end of the 1980ies, the international trade union debate provoked mainly by European union centers discussed the models of social and economic development, the productive chains and the top role of the multinational companies on using its influence ability to reduce rights and earn competitiveness in the developing countries where the social actors and trade union movements were still in an organization process and many of them had just left military dictatorships. The “social dumping” practices, the degradation of social and labor rights and the way the developed countries still could submit poor countries to neocolonial structures and instruments were incorporated to the trade union agenda, at least in the cases of the Western capitalist countries and in the periphery of the system like the Latin American and the African continents.

The multinational companies from the rich countries started to be seen like the defining element of the new production models that still before the end of the cold war and the liberal policies of state reforms sketched the opening of the economies of the peripheral countries and global and regional commercial and economic integration. Those companies found ways of dribbling the national states to demote rights and introduce one of the most powerful instruments of pressure over the union movement: the displacement/closing of productive units and the transference to countries with lower social and labor costs. The same

way, the debate around globalization and its adverse effects, already well known in Western Europe, stimulated CUT's movement to get closer to governmental intervention instruments in a regional scope that had already been drawn by the Brazil – Argentina approach under the Alfonsin and Sarney governments.

It was in that macroeconomic environment that a kind of counter-offensive started to be sketched projecting some intervention capacity of actors from the civil society like it was the case of the union movement to the regional scope. It was that way that CUT's trade unions realized that the regional integration process of the Southern Cone could produce some control and pressure instruments on the companies, as well as a common regulatory frame work so that the regional integration did not promote the reduction of rights with the transference of plants and the decrease of employment levels as happened in Western Europe in the 70ies and 80ies.

In that moment, CUT's trade unions realized that despite of the regional integration happening in an intergovernmental way, it was important to influence the process because it was the construction of a new political – institutional environment with the definition of supranational rules and standards and that, directly or indirectly, there would be some space for the participation of many social segments, beyond governments, business and workers.

It was since 1991 that a part of the actions and training programs supported by FNV started to include the theme of regional integration and, particularly *Mercosul*, as a process of approximation among Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay involving workers' participation, even in a limited way in some labor sub-groups, such as the division suggested by the governments by the Las Leñas Summit in 1992.

This way, the cooperation with FNV had this indirect result of favoring CUT's more qualified participation in that integration process that began, and that seemed to evolve, at least in the beginning, as it happened in Europe since the 1950s. That support also favored CUT's participation in the Coordination of Trade Union Centers of the Southern Cone that also counted with FNV's cooperation for its operation and some education activities.

The Southern school of the CUT was constituted in that context of regional integration provided by the *Mercosul* and with the new pos-

sibilities of intervention by the social movements, specially the trade union movement. When the big renewal of the members of CUTs Executive Board occurred at the V CONCUT in 1994, Jorge Lorenzetti assumed the management of CUTs Southern school contributing to enforce the formative bias linked to the regional economic integration, as well as to the aspects linked to globalization like world trade, “social dumping”, global productive chains, among others, to stimulate union leaders to fight for the incorporation of a political and trade union dimensions in those new phenomena.

On what is about the union leaders’ training facing the globalization issue and the regional integration it is necessary to also recognize the role of the Social Observatory Institute and the CUTMulti projects because their research activities about the labor and social behavior of companies and the organization of union networks, both supported by FNV<sup>19</sup>, also implied on formative activities through seminars, conferences and publications. Among the themes that were dealt with we can mention the trade negotiations of the WTOs Doha round, multinational companies and global productive chains, outsourcing, corporate social responsibility, multinational companies and environment, Chinese economic presence in Latin America, as well as others.

## **2.5. The environment in the trade union agenda**

With the end of the cold war, the first half of the 1990ies witnessed great optimism with the ability of the international organizations on searching for global problems’ solutions, through large conferences of the most varied themes, from human rights to social development and from sustainability to the gender issue. Those new themes of the international agenda impacted the labor relations and expanded the trade union agenda as well. That post cold war dynamic increased CUT’s international agenda and ended up by bringing new themes to its trade union education program. The new theme for excellence was the environment issue, the concept of sustainable development and the rational use of natural resources inside the strategies of economic growth

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(19) See chapter 3.

and income distribution. The international reference that practically defined the contours of how that theme would be absorbed by the trade union movement was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or the “Earth Summit”, how it became popularly known, held in Rio de Janeiro in June, 1992.

Parallel to the huge CUT’s strategic trade union education project, FNV also supported lower purposes, but not less important in that time, like the CUT’s intervention in the environment issue that was still a little debated theme in the Central, although one of its leaders, Chico Mendes<sup>20</sup>, got international notoriety by the defense he made of the Amazon and the populations that inhabited it, and depended on it to survive. In 1991, FNV’s executive committee approved the Project “Development, Environment and CUT”, whose core was the stimulus of the debate around one of the new themes that began to enter the agenda of the trade union movement.

The concern of the trade union movement with the theme of the environment was enforced by the preparation of UN’s conference in Rio de Janeiro. CUT had a highlighted participation at the parallel events to the conference and started to incorporate the environment and the sustainable development concept in its agenda.

In the CUT, the theme stood under the coordination of the social policies secretary whose responsible was Rosiver Pavan, originated from a trade union of the education sector and leader of CUT’s national executive board between 1988 and 1994. Initially she represented the CUT in many international preparatory meetings aiming to prepare the union incidence at the UN’s conference, particularly the ICFTU that ended up by holding an international union conference before the “Earth Summit”, in São Paulo. Among other European trade union confederations, FNV was also represented at this conference by a member of the *“Industriebond”*.

In preparation for the conference in Rio de Janeiro, and to facilitate the Brazilian civil society participation in the same, the government organized a kind of parallel conference with non-governmental organizations, ministries and governmental bodies. The mobilization

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(20) Chico Mendes was murdered in front of his home in Xapuri, Acre by local landlords when he was 44.

resulted in the constitution of a group named “Government and civil society about the environment”, without CUT’s presence. However, the Central started to follow the discussions through its own environment committee.

That committee was born from a seminar about unionism and environment, held in 1990 and promoted by CUT, CEDI (Ecumenical Center of Documentation and Information) and the “*Cajamar Institute*” aiming to promote an ambitious development and environment project in the perspective of workers and unions. A working party was established to mature the idea and transform it into a project to be presented to CUT’s National Executive Board.

The committee was born from that assignment and was formally constituted yet in 1990 and denominated from then as the Environment National Committee (CNMA). It got a permanent character and was composed by representatives of SRI, DNTR and Desep (Department of Social, Economic and Political Studies) a CUT’s advisory body, the Inst (National Institute of Worker’s Health) also an advisory body of the Central, the chemical workers union of the ABC and the bank workers union of São Paulo. The CEDI was cooperated as an external advisor. Some local state CUTs like the one from São Paulo also created their own committees (Pavan, 2011).

After it was constituted, the CNMA faced its first big challenge that was to make CUT to be heard at the UNCED. To achieve this goal, it organized a series of preparatory seminars and regional conferences to the UN conference provided by the project supported by the FNV and that culminated with a national trade union conference held in the city of Santos in 1992. Although the interest of CUT rank and files and of part of the Centrals National Board was not so big during the preparatory process, this last conference was a success regarding participation and quality of the debates and CUT’s participation in the activities of Eco 92 was important including the installation of an own stand in the space of the parallel forum of the civil society that happened at Flamengo’s landfill in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Pavan, 2011).

The project sponsored by FNV lasted from 1991 to 1993 and beyond the support that provided the preparation and the participation of CUT in the United Nations’ conference ended up stimulating the transformation of the environmental theme in a permanent policy of the Cen-

tral and many of its affiliated unions adopted coherent policies with that position. For example, some unions from the metallurgical sector bargained asbestos banishment in the production of auto parts and the benzene in the steel mills. The chemical workers union of ABC in the mid 1990ies supported the shutdown of a factory that produced HBC (Hexabenzene Chlorine) an extremely harmful pesticide for health and for the environment, even with the loss of jobs. The national federation of CUT's utility workers has continually promoted campaigns in the defense of water and sanitation and in the petrochemical pole of Camaçari in Bahia a local CUT committee on environment was installed in the beginning of the 1990 decade (Pavan, 2011).

Changing the theme into a permanent policy made all sense, mainly in a country like Brazil where of the eight productive sectors with strong presence in the international market, four were highly harmful to the environment like pulp and paper, aluminum, iron ore and primary steel as well as oil drilling and petrochemicals (5th National Congress of the CUT, 1994).

However, the environmental issue lost room in the media and with the public opinion as the UNCED finished and its developments just became prolonged bargaining actions in the inner instances of the UN like the “21 Agenda” and the “Kyoto Protocol”. Inside CUT it was not different, although the environment question would never leave the agenda. FNV even supported together with the FES (*Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*) the accomplishment of an international seminar promoted by the CUT in Belém, local stae of Pará in 1998 about “Amazon, biodiversity, sustainability and labor”. The CNMA also remained and in 2009 it was changed into the Environment National Secretary and its actual priority is the incidence of CUT in the bargaining about climate changes and the reduction of gases emissions that provoke the global warming of the planet.



# Chapter 3

## Trade Unions and Confederations monitoring Dutch companies in Brazil – Successes and Challenges

One of the most successful initiatives in the ambit of the Brazilian trade union movement was the creation inside the CUT of a monitoring body to deal with the behavior of multinational companies in Brazil and three years later, the articulation of a project for the creation of union networks in them. The idea came at the late 1990 from the already consolidated connection between FNV and CUT since the 80ies. At that time there was a strong international debate going on about the linkage between international trade and labor standards. That debate increased with the end of the cold war and the growing international consensus around the liberal policies on trade and finances.

The economic globalization had given an enormous power for the

multinational companies that began to count on a higher freedom to move plants to developing countries when searching for cheaper labor. The so called “social dumping” and “greenwashing” in the environment case were strategies seen by the international union movement as a strong threat to the fundamental labor rights hardly conquered during decades of social struggle. Globalization was clearly a threat for the jobs, but in the mid 90's there was not the perception that the economic integration brought so much cost and so many difficulties yet. It was still predominant the hegemony of the neoliberal policies from the developed countries, the great promoters of the State reform processes and the economic and financial deregulation.

The 90's also witnessed the rise of proposals for the global governance strictly taken by some governments and international organizations to “manage” the private sector, what meant to establish limits for the depreciation of labor costs and the decrease of social rights, without, however, restricting the ongoing liberalization. The idea was to regulate the trade and investment flows starting by the international organizations, with the promotion of huge multilateral agreements around macroeconomic themes. The world lived the end of the cold war, and a great liberal consensus seemed to get consolidated with the end of Uruguay Round of the GATT and the creation of a new international organization to regulate the international trade. In this context, one of the most debated themes was that of the promotion of multilateral bargaining about issues connected to the international trade that would become rules implemented by the so newly created World Trade Organization (WTO).

Among the rules, labor standards that should follow the international trade agreements to avoid the social dumping were discussed. That schedule was defended by some developed countries, such as the USA and France, at the conclusion conference of the Uruguay Round of the GATT in 1994 and at the ministerial meeting in Singapore in 1996. However, these rules didn't thrive because of the resistance of many developing countries like Brazil that evaluated those initiatives as a way of introducing a new conditionality for trade flows that would end up by becoming a new non-tariff barrier, with a negative impact on the exports of the developing countries. It was in that context that trade union leaders from FNV and CUT glimpsed the chance of consecrate fundamental labor rights, enforced by an ILO declaration approved at

the 1998 Conference, through the creation of a kind of “watchdog”, in other words, a body under the control of the workers that would monitor the behavior of multinational companies in Brazil. If the governments didn't have the conditions to promote the core labor standards, workers organizations would do it, in a volunteer way, as an instrument of pressure on the multinational companies.

Parallel to the creation of the so called “Social Observatory” (SO), FNV and CUT understood that it would be important to link the research work, first object of the SO, to trade union activity of local unions and confederations, so that these trade union representations could use the research material systematized in their collective bargaining with the company and/or with the employer organization of the category. Thus, the institutional logo “Social Observatory: an initiative for the globalization of rights” was born as well as the purpose of linking the SO to the project called CUTMulti also supported by the FNV. The latter, in other words, represented a program to create union networks in multinational companies under the coordination of the International Relations Secretary of the CUT.

The idea was simple and ingenious: CUT, through CUTMulti, called the unions to form networks and pressure the companies to have them recognized and so to start a bargaining process that was at many times, informal, but that could lead, at the end, to real gains for the workers. With the information collected by the research, the unionists and workers started to know the “reality” of a company through different unions that brought information from its other units. That dynamic put a lot of pressure on the companies' management. They had to explain why the minimum wages, benefits and variable payment (the program of profit and results sharing) were different among the plants.

### **3.1. The Social Observatory and CUTMulti projects**

The first researches accomplished by the Social Observatory date from 1997 and CUTMulti started to work in 2001, but the purpose was always to match the creation of the networks with the research. For that reason, the two projects were connected since the beginning. Initially, the Social Observatory operated at the Southern School of CUT. However, it got its own legal personality in 2005 and named itself Social Ob-

servatory Institute (SOI). This entity developed specific methodologies for the trade union movement so that the researches turned information available for the union leaders to improve the collective bargaining with the companies, from questions related to the shop floor until the collective agreement or the bargaining with business organizations or employer federations. To achieve that, SOI counted, as founders and formulators, beyond the CUT, with the “*Unitrabalho*” network, the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE) and the Center for Studies of Contemporary Culture (CEDEC) – all with the same goals, what means to study the behavior of multinational companies (Brazilian and foreign ones) operating in Brazil on what covers the labor and social standards, referenced by the International Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2009).

Between 2000 and 2010, over fifty researches were issued in more than 40 multinational companies from that common methodological mark allowing the development of a compared model for the analysis, and made that a union performance in a company could be repeated in another.

The themes that supported all researches were always ILO conventions, the so called core labor standards, reaffirmed by ILOs annual conference in 1998. They deal with the rights of freedom of association, collective bargaining, prohibition of discrimination at the workplace as well as child and forced labor. There are also some standards connected with health and safety at work themes. Other issues were also incorporated to the researches and were used as the starting point for discussions with the union movement of the CUT as is the case of the Corporate Social Responsibility and of the environmental issues, like the climate change and the preservation of biodiversity. Issues directly linked to the trade union agenda were also developed from the agenda opened by the concept of decent work.

CUTMulti's project “Action to Face Multinational Companies” was increased by the end of 2001 with the aim of promoting workers organization in multinational companies that operated in Brazil in order to struggle for better wages, benefits and labor conditions. The idea was to promote networks formed by different unions to, initially, exchange information and then, start the collective bargaining with the company. For that, the company would have to recognize the trade unions' committee and would only do that if the network covered a

sufficient number of unions and workers.

Union leaders committed themselves to look for information about the plants, to develop a communication plan and, later, to outline a common strategy to approach the company and develop the social dialogue. Generally, it happened through meetings between workers and unions from each company to, initially, formalize the existence of the network among the union entities themselves. Later, planning workshops, seminars about collective bargaining and the systematization of instruments of monitoring and verification of the companies' practices were some of the activities developed by CUTMulti.

On a second moment an action plan was defined and the company was invited to participate. That strategy was formally recognized by CUTs 9<sup>th</sup> National Congress, when it began to be understood by CUTs affiliates as a new format of trade union action. The local problems started to be considered in a wider perspective, even with the approach to unions from the mother country of the company looking for the establishment of global framework agreements and to get international recognition of the trade union representation. Some of the unions' networks got international representativeness like in the cases of BASF and ThyssenKrupp.

In the words of the International Relations Secretary of CUT, João Felício, it is one of the “best elaborated projects out of the existing CUTs partnerships”, CUTMulti “greatly helps the Brazilian trade union movement to build what is fundamental for all of us the OLTs (shop floor organization)”. Actually, the bargaining between the network and the company doesn't create, necessarily, a union representation at the workplace, but approaches the parts to the social dialogue towards an OLT. In the case of ABN AMRO, for example, the bargaining even discussed about a space for the union to be used inside the Bank at the Paulista Avenue. In the case of BASF, the network consolidated the experience of existing shop floor committees and helped to create them where the process was ongoing, as in the case of Mauá (SP) and Camaçari (BA).

The creation of companies' networks “stimulates the unions' participation in the companies managements and in their governing bodies, which is an achievement of the European trade union movement, but that Brazil and Latin America are still far from reaching”, says Felício. In fact, CUTMulti points for important changes as it breaks with the

union representation by territory and professional category. The project encouraged the bargaining of the same agenda for different categories and showed the possibility of the existence of a unique national bargaining, as the example of what the bank workers do through CONTRAF. There is yet the possibility of the establishment of bargaining by companies in several countries, “why not to start establishing bargaining by production branch with other *Mercosul* countries?” asks Felício.

Despite of all these advantages, CUTMulti also faces difficulties. The biggest one is the corporatism from a part of the Brazilian union movement that prefers the bargaining to be mediated by the current structures, which force the bargaining through trade unions, with the monopoly of the representation of a determined category. João Felício explains that “the union structure hampers agreements with national coverage. A company ends up paying different initial wages, promoting different careers as well and safety and health policies also may differ from one local state to another. That happens because the current structure facilitates it and the companies prefer to spread the bargaining. Sometimes there are dozens of negotiations in the same production branch of the same company”.

As João Felício states, there are multinational companies that bargain with the trade union from a certain city where their branches operate and the workers “believe this is going to solve the problems of their professional category but they forget that the company has a branch somewhere else and they don’t look for a wider articulation with the union movement to define a common agenda”. A second problem sometimes is the exacerbated leftism that understands that “indicating participants to the companies’ governing bodies is to help managing capitalism”. There is, then, incomprehension to the right, for the corporatist model that defends the *status quo*, and to the other side where childish leftism tries to intensify the conflict with the companies as a step to “overcome capitalism”. CUTMulti is, thus, a project that helps facing those two obstacles. Union leaders learn how to exchange experiences and common understandings that lead the bargaining to a new baseline. The companies’ networks are the synthesis of that capacity to perform union solidarity and, at the same time, line up the interests and expectations in a common understanding about what the unions can do together.

The CUTMulti project was divided in three phases. In the first,

between 2001 and 2004, there were several attempts of creation of networks in multinational companies that interested the CUT, and partnerships already established with European unions. In the case of the Dutch companies, for example, SOI was already performing researches and, when CUTMulti was created, the researched companies were automatically prioritized by CUT for the organization of the networks. Unilever, AkzoNobel, Philips, ABN AMRO were some of the networks that were constituted in that first phase. German companies like Bayer, Bosch and ThyssenKrupp also had their networks constituted in that moment.

On the second phase of CUTMulti, from 2004, other categories also started the creation of networks. Miners, commerce workers, oil workers and their respective trade unions and confederations created their company networks. Vale, AngloGold, Carrefour and Wal-Mart were some of the networks created in that period. With the accumulated experience in the first phase, it was easy to know in which conditions there are bigger chances for the networks to thrive. For that reason, it was created a kind of networks ‘incubator’, in other words, the interested unions, with the lack of ideal conditions, showed the interest of taking the first step. The network stayed provisionally ‘incubated’ until it had the conditions to work by itself, what means through the effort of the unions involved. On the third phase, started in 2008, the well succeeded networks were consolidated and the goal began to be disseminating that experience for all branches and categories.

SOI’s work with the researches can also be divided in phases. At first, the discussion about the methodology to be developed began with its foundation in 1997. Some companies were used as a test, as were the cases of Sadia, Philips, AkzoNobel (*Tintas Wanda*), Unilever (*Cica* and *Kibon*). The research on the three Dutch companies also intended to subsidize a seminar that was held in 1998 during the visit of a FNV delegation to Brazil.

Workshops with union leaders were held and the SOI teams could have a general picture about how those companies behaved within labor relations. From 2000, SOI began to dispose a methodological instrument that was better developed and tested and some unions and CUT confederations started the discussion about how to organize the research at the shop floor. Issues like companies’ involvement, the type of information to be required from them and the way of incorporating

the unions and their leaders in the research were some of the big issues and dilemmas. With CUTMulti ongoing, from 2001, the Dutch companies began to be a priority on SOI's researches because of the special relation between CUT and FNV on what is about the actions to tackle multinational companies.

The unions were asked to found the networks by the International Relations Secretary from CUT, and as the results were achieved, the objective was to promote exchange of union leaders from Brazil with those from the mother countries of the companies. The creation of the networks and the research used to be articulated with the union of the category in the mother countries of the multinationals. The fact that a good part of the multinational companies have participated in some researches is to a large extent because of FNV's role on pressuring them in the Netherlands for that purpose. The exchange of workers also involved visits to the companies and the active participation of FNV ensured the success of those contacts.

To facilitate the whole process of contacts and involvement of transnational networks, FNV created the "Company Monitor", inspired in the experience of the Social Observatory from Brazil to monitor the behavior of Dutch companies, not only in Latin American countries like Brazil, Colombia and Peru, but also in South Africa and India. To coordinate the researches and elaborate the general reports, FNV hired SOMO, a Dutch NGO that is also dedicated to the study of multinational companies, whose technicians started to share many research assignments with SOI's team.

## Phases of the companies' monitor

**Tabel 1**

<b>Companies' monitor</b>	<b>Companies</b>	<b>Period</b>
<b>Phase 1</b> (partnership with SOMO)	Unilever, AkzoNobel, Philips and Philips suppliers	2002 – 05
<b>Phase 2</b> (partnership with SOMO)	Unilever, AkzoNobel, Philips, C&A and Wal-Mart	2005 – 08

Source: IOS

### 3.2. Union action facing Dutch companies in Brazil: successes and challenges

#### Dutch Multinational Companies Researched by SOI

**Table 2**

Company	Trade Union	Research Period	Company's involvement
ABN AMRO – Health and Security	SP Bank Workers Union	2002	Participation evolved with the research development
ABN AMRO 1	SP Bank Workers Union	2002-04	
ABN AMRO 2	SP Bank Workers Union	2005-06	
AkzoNobel	CNQ	2002-05	Contrary in the beginning, later on recognized the network
Ahold	CONTRACS	2003-04	Restrict participation
C&A	CONTRACS	2006-08	Participated on the research preparation, but didn't recognize the network
Philips suppliers	Manaus Metal Workers Union and CNM	2004-05	Participated from the beginning, but didn't want a common report with the suppliers; didn't accept the report's result about health and security
Philips	Manaus Metal Workers Union and CNM	2002-04	Participated in the beginning and recognized the network, but broke up with the unions in 2003
Philips – Health and Security	Manaus Metal Workers Union and CNM	2006-07	
Unilever 1	Campinas and Region Chemical Workers Union	2002-03	
Unilever Latin America	Redlat	2006	
Unilever 2	Campinas and Region Chemical Workers Union	2003-04	
Unilever AMA	Redlat	2006-08	

Source: IOS

The partnership between FNV and CUT, from the 2000s, was split in those two big initiatives – the creation of SOI and the CUTMulti project that involved the creation of union networks in MNCs, subsidized by the conducted researches, for some times with participation of the companies. However, the two dynamics didn't always occur simultaneously. Many times, it was difficult to organize the networks, mostly because that the unions affiliated to CUT didn't have the hegemonic trade union representation, like in Unilever. In other situations, the company refused itself to participate in the research, even with the existence of a network, like it was the case of AkzoNobel, at the first phases of the company monitor.

In general, in the CUTMulti case, the companies didn't recognize the unions networks. Many of them were pressed to recognize the network because of the Brazil – Netherlands trade union articulation. FNV in the Netherlands had a decisive role in the bargaining of researches to be issued in companies in Brazil, in the promotion of trade union leaders' exchange and in the visits to the companies' arrays, particularly through the experience of “Social Observatory Europe”.

The creation of the “Social Observatory Europe” was an FNV, DGB *Bildungswerk* (Germany) and CUT's initiative. It lasted from 2001 to 2004 and was sponsored by the European Union. The content of that project was the promotion of workers exchange from three Dutch multinational companies present in Brazil (Philips, AkzoNobel and Unilever) and three German companies (Bosch, ThyssenKrupp and Bayer) based on already held and ongoing researches by SOI, beyond the disclosure of the situation of those companies in the three countries and of the respective trade union realities.

Regrettably, the project could not be renewed, but it gave an important contribution for the strengthening of the international relations among the unions that represent the workers of those companies in the three companies. Specifically about the Dutch companies, the developed work was also articulated with the initiatives of the company monitor (Brouwer, 2010).

However, despite of that important step, there were institutional difficulties in Brazil to make the networks advancing faster. The Dutch multinational companies were used to operate from different unities

where the collective bargaining was always local. They always claimed that that union representation didn't exist because it was not predicted by the legislation. The companies were afraid that the network would replace the collective bargaining formalized with the local or regional employers' organizations. They always claimed that wages and benefits could not be unified because of the different costs of each region.

However, the CUTMulti project broke the comfort zone of the companies because the workers could follow what the same company did in the other plants. With that information, the workers started to use the networks to bargain informally the equality of salaries and benefits. As SOI's research released information about the companies and their plants, the workers could evaluate the wage and benefit differences among them, and thus, press for improvements. That dynamic was well succeeded among all the multinational companies that operated in Brazil.

This was a way for Brazilian and Dutch unions to promote what the American researchers, Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkинг (1998) called "boomerang effect". Brazilian unions denounced labor violations in production chains in Brazil. The issued information was used by the Dutch unions to press the array in the Netherlands which by their turn questioned their Brazilian human resources managers about their labor practices. So the original denouncement of the unions resulted in more pressure on the companies and from the arrays on their subsidiaries. Some victories were achieved through this resource like in Akzo Nobel, C&A, Philips and also in the case of Unilever in its food sector like the case of denouncement of child labor in its chain of tomato processing in Goiás.

Here there is space for an important observation. The academic literature about multinationals behavior on labor standards is heterogeneous. A good part of it sees the companies as transnational networks that operate over the States and other institutions (like the trade unions), and could that way standardize practices and behaviors to disseminate the "corporatist culture" in a transnational scope. Such approach understands that it is possible to get close to a "global model" for the capital – labor relation (Hayden and Edwards, 2001). Other authors are skeptical about that. The companies, in that case, must adapt

themselves to the local institutional environment (Dicken, 2007). That adaptation involves the recognition of the trade unions and the process of national/local collective bargaining. Even those companies with a strong anti – union behavior in their home countries end up bowing themselves to the influence of Brazilian labor relations. But those companies that bring practices of social dialogue and bargaining from their arrays are more prone to accept and understand SOI's research and the creation of networks, proposed by CUTMulti. That was exactly the case of most Dutch and German companies researched by SOI. Despite of all those factors, the results of each company show certain variability in the behavior. The most important variable is the presence of the union movement. In other words, in places where the trade unions were strong and with articulation with the Dutch or German unions, the organization of the networks was usually well succeeded. When the unions were weak or there was a lot of political dispute among them, the networks didn't thrive. In the case of the Dutch companies, almost all the cases were well succeeded.

## Unilever – a lost opportunity

Unilever was the most researched company by the SOI. There were three general reports, one report in the RedLat scope and another resulting from the EMA research. Unilever, until phase two of the company monitor, received the visit of many Dutch union leaders. However, the union network never got consolidated and CUT lost the most important union, what prevented further participation of the workers in the process of research and organization. The last work involving Unilever was held in 2008 by SOI and the University of São Paulo, through the Center of Studies of International Negotiations (CAENI). Through that and the *School of International and Public Affairs* (SIPA), from Columbia University, a group of researchers evaluated the two projects of the company in Goiás to fight child labor in the tomato production.

In the beginning (SOI, 2004), from 16 local trade unions of food, hygiene and beauty segments, seven created a “national committee” in 2002. They were unions linked to the Chemical Workers Confederation of CUT and the food workers ones connected with CONTAC and an

“independent” trade union, of local state scope, of the cleaning workers that represented the employees from Indaiatuba and Valinhos plants. That process was followed by the application of the questionnaires in some Unilever units. The executives of the human resources area, an ex-diplomat and a director participated in the creation of the “committee” with the promise that the union leaders would not transform that forum in a process of traditional collective bargaining. Pictures were taken from the meetings that founded the committee (network), and the union newspapers reported the events.

At the moment when the company realized that the “committee” was not representative of most unions and that it “threatened” the unions that were the closest to the company with a “national agenda”, it left the network and withdraw from the negotiation process. The “committee” was broken later and all the bargaining was turned bilateral between the Chemical Workers Union of Vinhedo (Campinas and region) and the company that started to deal with the bargaining with a “local” focus, in an environment of growing coping. SOI’s research, made at the factory in Vinhedo could not promote the inclusion of other trade unions and the dialogue process with the company was restricted to the researchers who, not successfully, mediated the contact of the union leaders with the human resources management. The company agreed on doing the research in the other plants once the local trade union agreed as well. When the team was prepared to apply the questionnaire with the employees at the Valinhos unit, represented by the Hygiene and Cleaning Trade Union of São Paulo local state, the leaders from that entity did not accept and the research was aborted.

## AkzoNobel – the most successful network

AkzoNobel is an emblematic case (SOI, 2002; SOI, 2008a). After more than two years of silence around SOI’s research undertaken with the trade unions of the three business divisions, the company decided to recognize the trade union “committee” and started to formally participate on the annual meetings. It collaborated with the research, received Dutch union leaders interested in deepening the relations with Brazil and developed a union approach like true stakeholders in an

integrative, cooperative and respectful “social dialogue” environment.

Around thirteen different unions had created the company’s “committee” in 2004 and the company was always clung to the “local” bargaining, union to union. In 2005 the company changed its strategy of approach and adopted a proactive position when searching for a permanent agenda of bargaining. That change counted with the pressure of the Dutch union on the array in the Netherlands, because of the union participation on the executive board of the company.

There has always been interest from the Dutch union for the operations in Brazil. Numerous visits were scheduled and some Dutch union leaders took forward the bargaining with the company in Brazil, “promoting” local activists to get engaged and to choose Akzo as a priority in the mobilization of the workers. Several visits of Dutch union leaders were held in many business units from Akzo in Brazil. Among them, Ben Rooddhuijzen, from *Bondgenoten* is to be mentioned. He was one of the promoters of the establishment of the AkzoNobel union network in Brazil. He went to Brazil several times along the years 2000 and was one of the responsible for the success of the social dialogue between this Dutch company and the Brazilian unions of the chemical branch.

At the end, it is one of the most successful union networks, and beyond the company’s recognition the network was also spread over other countries from Latin America (Mexico and Colombia).

## ABN AMRO – the acquisition changed the behavior

The first research at ABN AMRO Bank happened in 2002 and it was about health and safety at work, without the company’s participation. On the second phase of the company monitor the research boomed with the strong presence of the Bank Workers Union of São Paulo. The report was the point of the process that best advanced (SOI, 2006), with the bank yet under Dutch control. The bank strictly cooperated with SOI (2004 – 05), and even promoted a meeting with union leaderships from the Southern Cone of South America in São Paulo. The research motivated the bank to dispose a space, in its national headquarters, for the union’s activities. Even though, the bank hasn’t institutionalized a negotiation dynamic with the trade union or with the ABN AMROs

shop stewards. Partly, that is because of the fact that the bank workers already have a national collective bargaining, with the employer organization, FEBRABAN. Moreover, ABN AMRO Bank was proactive in the “new” social and labor agenda. It was the only bank considered “sustainable” and that presented to the market policies, actions and programs of Corporate Social Responsibility, what turned it different from other national and foreign banks in Brazil. Somehow, the research agenda was “enforced” by the social policies of the bank, which were not valued by the trade union. On the contrary, many bank workers trade union leaders strongly criticized the social responsibility actions of ABN AMRO as being merely social marketing. However, with the acquisition of ABN AMRO by Santander, the union leaders noticed that there is not the same interest of developing actions of corporate social responsibility anymore.

## Ahold – unsuccessful internationalization

Ahold is another interesting case. The Dutch retail chain started its international expansion in the 1990ies. It is known about the difficulty of generating scale economy gains in that sector because of the cultural differences and of the necessity of acquiring local products. The company bought some average size retail chains in the Northeast of Brazil, but didn’t implement information systems and processes of common management, in other words, it didn’t integrate its operations and continued to live together with distinct systems of information in Brazil. Those problems were shown by SOI’s research conducted with many local unions of commerce workers, most of them affiliated to the CUT (SOI, 2001). That difficulty of integrating the operations made that the Dutch company repeated behavior standards considered “local”, meaning, violations of rights ensured by ILO rules. The international “network” organized with the Dutch unions, SOI and CUT showed those problems, but the company could not properly respond to the input challenges. After that, the company promoted the makeup of its accountancy, an international scandal of great proportions that only reinforced its unsuccessful strategy of globalization. Finally, the Ahold units in Brazil were acquired by Wal-Mart.

## Philips – global competitive pressure affects dialogue

Philips is a well succeeded research case, with a wide participation of the CNM-CUT, of the Metal Workers Union of Manaus and with involvement of the Dutch “*Bondgenoten*” that pressed the company to collaborate with SOI. It was one of the three Dutch companies studied still in 1997 to subsidize the FNV delegation’s visit in early 1998. However, the first report issued with SOI’s methodology was conducted from the application of a large questionnaire in Manaus’ unit where the company produces electronics. On a second moment, already during the second phase of the company monitor, when the research was extended to the suppliers, the company did not want the release of a joint report. That way, other four company reports were made, all hired by Philips, but they didn’t appear as such. In the Philips report itself, the names of the suppliers were changed, as a request from the company’s array in the Netherlands.

The research results were presented to the Metal Workers Union of Manaus in August 2006. From it, the leaders requested a specific research about health and safety at work. The reason: the increasing incidence of Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) among the workers of the production lines and the increase of leave requests because of illnesses. The research brought up the leave registers in the union and in the regional offices of the Ministry of Labor in Manaus and concluded that the company had increased the speed of the machinery to meet production targets. World Philips evaluated the competitiveness of Manaus unit and pressed for more favorable global competitive conditions. SOI produced a report with these evidences and sent it to the company. The representative of the company disqualified the report. He said that it was not dealt with the company earlier, what was true, despite of the incisiveness of the research’s result. He even mentioned the fact that the research procedure was different from other researches’, and that it should have been shown to the company’s direction previously. However, at the same time, Philips’ network, inside CUTMulti’s Project, did not thrive. Union disputes derailed the stability of it.

## C&A – research changed company's behavior

C&A is a Dutch clothing company created in the end of the XIX century. It was not part of the company monitor research on the two first phases of SOI's project together with FNV. However, in a report about the clothing chain in São Paulo, the journalist responsible for the theme caught workers in awful labor conditions when labeling clothes with C&A stamps. The report was released through SOI's magazine in 2005 and a surprising bargaining process with the company was started.

Before that, however, the company had already been mentioned in an investigation conducted by the city council of São Paulo, in a Parliamentarian Committee of Inquiry (CPI) to evaluate jobs with irregular manpower, a good part composed by Bolivians, in neighborhoods like Brás and Bom Retiro in São Paulo. It is known that there are sweatshops confectioning clothes that employ migrant workers; most of them are Bolivians, in degrading conditions, of semi-slavery.

After SOI's complaint, the SOIs chair, Kjeld Jakobsen, delivered to C&A's president a formal request for the achievement of a research in the productive chain of the company. The company's management did not accept the request, but allowed the research to be driven in its stores to bring up the labor conditions of the directly employed workers, most of them in shopping malls. SOI's complaint stimulated CUT's leadership to include C&A among the companies whose behavior should be observed in Brazil. FNV accepted the purpose and the contacts with the company's array in the Netherlands and with *Bondgenoten* leaders, responsible for the trade union work at C&A, were established through FNV Mondiaal's advisor Andriette Nomensen.

At the end of 2006, the bargaining with the company began so that the research could happen. The company's management hired as a consultant the previous Human Resources director of Unilever. After one year, finally an agreement was met about the stores and how to address the involved unions. The results of the research indicated problems in the labor conditions and differences of payments and benefits among local states and regions in Brazil. The report was translated to Dutch and sent to the array. At the end, the direction of the company in the Netherlands did not talk about the results, but they were subject of

bargaining with the local union. Informally it appears that the array in the Netherlands didn't digest the complaints against the company, but at the same time it wouldn't have accepted some of the practices conducted by the company in Brazil. The fact is that after four years, C&A's president in Brazil left the company.

Through the union pressure in the Netherlands and the repercussion that the report caused in the company's array, C&A's behavior in Brazil has changed. It was an inedited case of research about the labor core standards conducted in a developing country and that counted on the participation and involvement of the company's subsidiary. Although the company does not recognize the unions' network created by CONTRACS, the workers recognize that the company promoted improvements in the labor conditions in the stores. Beyond that, the largest retail network signed, in February 2011, the National Pact for Slavery Eradication in Brazil. It was the first company from its sector to sign the document, which aims to dispose information so that the Brazilian society avoids the purchase of manufactured products made through slavery conditions or similar to. Besides joining the engagement, the company is obliged to engage its suppliers.

## EMA's research

CUTMulti and SOI produced, indirectly, other important results that have gone beyond the labor – capital bargaining.

In 2005, SOI's direction, with the support of FNV, took the initiative of inviting similar research entities and some unions from other Latin America countries for a meeting. The aim was to discuss the purpose of research achievements in multinational companies with the same methodology in many countries from the continent to produce reports with larger approaches.

Who participated on that were CILAS from Mexico, CUT and "*Escuela Nacional Sindical*" (ENS) from Colombia, PLADES from Peru, CUT Chile, CTA from Argentina, PIT-CNT and "*Cuesta Duarte Institute*" from Uruguai and ORIT (currently CSA), beyond CUT Brazil and the SOI itself. SOI's research methodology was exported to countries like Chile, where a workshop was held with that finality in 2006, at the

Chilean CUTs headquarters in Santiago.

That meeting and some others that followed created the Latin American Research Network on MNCs, better known as RedLat. Beyond the common methodology that was elaborated, RedLat published reports about the performance and behavior of Unilever, Telefonica and BBVA companies, as well studies about outsourcing in Latin American countries, Free Trade Agreements in the region and the current relations between China and Latin America. The latter allowed the accomplishment of a seminar with great repercussion.

RedLat was also an important instrument to make a research commissioned to SOI by the Swiss Cooperation Agency about the policy of multinational companies regarding the compliance of Environmental Multilateral Agreements (EMAs) in Latin America.

The results of that research (SOI, 2008) also revealed other aspects linked to the anti-union behavior of some multinational companies that were investigated in different Latin American countries and to the precariousness of the labor conditions. For example, in Ecuador, Nestlé “created” its own labor representation in the factory. In Colombia and Peru, Unilever deepened the outsourcing, because of the facility of hiring employees through cooperatives. Coca-Cola has a business model that eases the domestic adaptation because the bottlers are those who follow the labor obligations. It is no longer about bargaining processes or about strategic choices. There is, indeed, a combination between adaptation and precariousness that results on the reduction of rights and duties by the multinational companies in those countries.

## **The pact for the eradication of slavery**

Launched in May 19, 2005, the National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor is a deal on which companies, representative entities and civil society organizations commit themselves to protect human rights, eliminate situations of slavery and similar in the productive chains and to help with the inclusion of people who were rescued from degrading labor conditions in the market. The accessions are voluntary, made publicly and presume integrated actions among several social actors and the government.

The National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor is an initiative from the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Ethos Institute of Companies and Social Responsibility and from the “*Repórter Brasil*” Agency.

Its implantation was partly stimulated by the “Social Observatory in Magazine” (Nr 6, June 2004) about slavery in Brazil, particularly in the production of charcoal to feed the mills of iron ore in the Amazon region. That magazine, which was sponsored by the project of FNV with SOI, had great repercussion, as beyond the complaint showed the presence of slave labor in the international productive chain of iron ore produced in Brazil, sold to a big American multinational company, Nucor Corporation.

In 2007, the Social Observatory Institute assumed the responsibility for monitoring the compliance of the pact by the signatory entities and checked around 50% of them. A project sponsored by ILO in Brazil allowed the accomplishment of an unpublished research that interviewed dozens of companies in the country and promoted two big encounters in São Paulo. From that, through a multidisciplinary team of researchers, SOI proposed to monitor and generate reports about the actions undertaken by the signatories turned to the eradication of slave labor in Brazil and induce an exchange of that information among the companies and unions involved.

Currently, the monitoring committee of the Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor is composed by ILO, Ethos, “*Repórter Brasil*” and SOI.

## Conclusion

In a general manner, it can be said that the Dutch multinationals resisted on institutionally recognizing the effort of the unions in getting organized in “committees” or networks. While they could, they restricted the bargaining to the local scope and avoided at all costs the Brazilian trade union connections with the respective unions in their mother countries. The Brazilian labor laws, in that aspect, favors the strategy of the multinationals when spraying the capacity of union mobilization and stimulating the political – ideological cleavages among local unions. The only branches that escaped from that logic were the automotive and banking sectors. The latter was the only one that effectively conquered a national bargaining process recognized by the banks and their respective associations.

At the same time, an active Brazilian unionism, the partnership with FNV in the Netherlands and the leverage of resources to hold researches and to organize unions’ networks made the correct recipe to press the multinational companies so that they improved the labor standards in a developing country like Brazil. There are many cases in which the unions in their home countries convinced the companies to cooperate with SOI. So it happened with the Dutch multinationals – Philips, Unilever Bestfoods, Unilever Hygiene and Beauty, Ahold and AkzoNobel. In those cases, the unions in the Netherlands and in Brazil acted together, the arrays were consulted about the research and suggested that the subsidiaries in Brazil answered the demand for information.



# Chapter 4

## The political cooperation between FNV and CUT

More than the mere availability of public resources in the Netherlands allowing FNV to promote cooperation projects with CUT and other trade union organizations in the world, those projects were supported on important common values like the enforcement of freedom of association; respect for human and trade union rights; environment protection; defense of workers' rights and promotion of professional and political training. These last two items had a special implication related to the multinational corporations which CUT and its affiliates have been dealing with in Brazil from the projects supported by FNV.

However, beyond those themes that guided the cooperation for development offered by FNV to CUT, described in the previous chapters, we can also mention some concerns and special projects like, for example,

to ensure the gender dimension in the activities previewed by the cooperation and the opening to overcome prejudices that are present in the society, often even in the union movement, like the issue of sexual options.

Since the beginning of the 1990ies, FNV started to consider the inclusion of women as participants and recipients of the projects as one of the evaluation criterion of their consistence, before approving them. In the case of the projects supporting CUT, the union training already had that dimension and from the introduction of the minimum quota of 30% female participation in the Centrals instances of direction, through the statutory change approved in 1993, it started to be recommended that any collective activity also respected this minimum gender share.

The battle against the discrimination in the labor market, particularly the gender and race discrimination became a mark in CUT's action plans as its socio – political character was being affirmed. Beyond the gender quota mentioned earlier there were also claims turned to rights of the working women like the establishment of kindergartens at the work place, maternity leave time expansion, among others.

About the racial discrimination struggle there were complaints of those situations, campaigns for the accomplishment ILOs Convention 111 and, recently, the Secretary of Struggle against Racism was created to coordinate and forward policies to address that issue. CUT was also the protagonist in the creation of the Inter – American Trade Union Institute for Racial Equality (INSPIR) together with two other Brazilian union centers the CGT and "*Força Sindical*" as well as the ORIT in 1995.

However, from 2000 it was tried to expand that discussion with the accomplishment of a series of seminars about the theme "sexual options and labor market" with the concern of debating policies to fight the discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals in the labor market. Those seminars were supported by FNV.

In other words, the struggle against discrimination of any kind was added to the common values mentioned earlier and their set became a permanent and progressive basis to guide the political and trade union relation between CUT and FNV far beyond the cooperation projects.

However, the development of those relations was not simple, for many reasons that start with the language differences, because FNV leaders generally speak Dutch and English, while most CUT leaders only

speak Portuguese, going through the cultural differences and, mainly, the prioritization of each one of the union centers of the local themes and of the more immediate interest of their members.

FNV's president since its foundation until 1986, Wim Kok, who further became the Netherlands Prime Minister, for instance, was more concerned with what happened in Europe than in the other Continents, although he became more interested in extra – European unionism after a visit to Africa (Wagenmans, 2010). His successor, Johan Stekelenburg, had the same posture. Their priorities were nevertheless understandable considering the demands that were put for the workers by the structural adjustment of the labor market that followed the evolution of the European Union, particularly in the 1980 and 1990 decades.

In Brazil it was not different, at least during the first ten years of CUTs existence, as the primary concern of its leaders was the Centrals consolidation and the national struggles that it conducted during the democratization period of the country, leaving its potential of political actor in the international unionism on the background which was understandable as well.

However, that picture would change significantly during the 1990ies in both organizations, because FNV expanded its relation with some trade union confederations from the Global South and CUT developed a strategy to perform a larger international role.

However, the relations between CUT and FNV are a process of political construction still on the way and it can be divided in three phases, even with interfaces. Those phases would represent basically a first moment of seeking knowledge and mutual respect as well as of solidarity manifestations, a second phase of common actions of unions affiliated to FNV and to the CUT and, at last, the dialogue strengthening and common action of FNV and CUT around issues of the scope of international trade unionism.

#### **4.1. The mutual knowledge and the solidarity from FNV to CUT**

As mentioned earlier, the first visit of an FNV delegation to Brazil happened in 1980 when CUT did not even exist. That visit generated a

report and trade union publications that called the attention of Dutch unions to the political and labor situation in Brazil, as well as to the *modus operandi* of the Dutch Multinational companies in Latin America. Among other issues the delegation realized that those companies were benefited by the lack of trade union freedom and the Labor Ministry control over the unions in Brazil in order to pay low salaries and impose bad labor conditions (*Vakbondskrant*, 1980).

Just after the return of that visit that happened in March, FNV sent a protest telegram to the Brazilian Government because the imprisonment of 29 metal workers union leaders and activists from ABC on April 19, 1980, among them, the president of the metal workers union of São Bernardo do Campo, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. Those imprisonments, beyond the intervention in the unions, were a part of the dictatorship strategy to fight the strike in the automotive sector that already lasted 40 days in that year (*Vakbondskrant*, 1980).

Moreover, FNV never avoided manifesting its protest for the violation of human and trade union rights in Brazil, particularly when it achieved the limit of violence and assassinations, like, unfortunately, happened several times, even after the Brazilian re – democratization. FNV also supported directly the “Sector to Fight Violence in the Rural Areas” of the CUT which was later on incorporated by the DNTR.

As already mentioned, FNV was represented at the congress of CUT's foundation by the then “*Wij en Zij's*” coordinator, Willy Wagemans, but could not send any representative to the I CONCUT in 1984. There was participation in most of the following congresses, but until the VI CONCUT in 1997 it always happened through the representatives from the cooperation department and not through elected leaders of the Dutch trade union center.

A new FNV delegation visited Brazil in 1987 and completed an intense program organized by the TIE together with CUT and some of its unions. In that visit the Dutch unionists could already meet institutionally with leaders of CUT instances and from some affiliated unions. The delegation was composed by Henk de Koenig, vice-president of FNV; Greetje Lubbi, president of the “*Voedingsverbond*” (Agriculture and Food Workers Union) and two advisors (Peinenburg, 2010).

Three years later, in March 1990, two FNV representatives, Michel

Negenman, treasurer of the central and Willy Wagenmans, participated on an ICFTU delegation that came to Brazil to analyze the application for affiliation of the CGT (General Workers Confederation), ex-CONCLAT (Working Class Coordination) to that international union confederation. That application was strongly supported by the AFL-CIO, the national labor federation from the USA but was questioned by several European organizations aware of the labor situation in Brazil, particularly, of the dispute among organizations favorable to the current union structure like it was the case of the CGT and the ones that questioned it, like it was the case of CUT. By the other hand, there was the expectation that CUT could also apply for its international affiliation in a short time, and saved the American unionists, no one wanted to take a precipitated decision that could create more obstacles to that possibility.

The conclusion of the visit of that delegation led by the then General Secretary of the ICFTU, the Belgian John Vanderveken, was to recommend the postponement of CGT's application until it clarified in writing its position about the ILO Convention 87 once it was not ratified by Brazil, for its contradiction with the trade union unity legally imposed and that this Brazilian center supported. However, it was not a consensual recommendation, once AFL-CIO defended the immediate acceptance of the affiliation of its Brazilian ally.

CUT since its foundation had decided not to affiliate to any of the existing three world confederations, WCL, WFTU (World Trade Union Federation) and ICFTU because choosing one of the last two organizations would mean to be taking position in the Cold War dispute, either pro-capitalism or pro real-socialism, what contradicted its political conceptions. And, getting affiliated to an organization guided by a religious doctrine like the WCL would also be contradictory with its principle of autonomy, despite of the strong influence of the Catholic Church in the trade union movement that conceived the CUT. Those dilemmas disappeared with the end of the Cold War, making possible the opening of some debate inside the CUT, particularly in the process of preparation of the IV CONCUT that was held in 1991.

However, the opposition of many internal political fractions of the CUT to the affiliation the ICFTU, the only proposal on the table on those discussions, was intense with the argument of its pro-capitalist posture

and the history of some of its affiliated<sup>21</sup> supporting military regimes in Latin America. The report produced by the FNV representatives in that mission, beyond updating its information about the political and labor situation in Brazil after the possession of the first president of the republic directly elected, what happened in 1989, called the attention to the difficulty of the debate about the international affiliation inside the CUT, although the main leaders had stated that any decision would be taken until 1992 (FNV, 1990).

Willy Wagenmans would still return to Brazil twice as the coordinator of the cooperation department. First, as participant of a new ICFTU delegation in 1993 and then as an FNV representative at the VI CONCUT in 1997, already aiming the preparation of a visit from high level Dutch trade union leaders, what would happen in the following year.

That second delegation of the ICFTU was also led by its general secretary who, in that moment, was the Italian Enzo Frizzo. It came to Brazil after a demand from the CUT to help disassembling the accusation of right wing parliamentarians that the Central diverted financial resources from the international cooperation to the Workers Party<sup>22</sup> (PT).

The CUT's leadership, among other attitudes, delivered the copy of all its accounting to the Brazilian authorities and allowed the breach of bank secrecy from the Central and its leaders to show smoothness and transparency on what was about the use of those resources. The presence of the foreign delegation in that moment had the objective of giving a public statement that the international partners had full trust about the correct destination of the same and about the smoothness of the accounting. That was a successful counteroffensive and the investigation intended by the conservative parliamentarians did not prosper.

In the meantime, the responsible for the "*Wij en Zij's*" cooperation with Latin America, Gerloff van Rheenen, has also been to Brazil for

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(21) That had mainly been the case of AFL-CIO through its American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) that supported military coups in Latin America as it also tried to enforce union organizations with an anti-communist character contributing even to generate divisions in many of them in the continent. In Brazil, the AFL-CIO supported the CGT.

(22) That charge aimed to convene a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (CPI) to investigate CUT, but the real intention was to create embarrassments to the presidential campaign of Lula in 1994, once the polls showed him in the first place in the presidential run with 40% of voters' preference.

several times after being hired in 1990 to replace Willy Wagenmans in that role, when he assumed the coordination of the department. The same would happen from 1999 with the successor of Gerloff, Jeroen Strengers, and then with the new responsible ones for the cooperation with Brazil, in the cases of Wim Mellink and Tjalling Postma, as well as the consultant Patricio Sambonino.

Those visits from the FNV advisors to Brazil were very important, because they developed a deep comprehension around the Brazilian trade union reality, even about the meanders of the positions of the different political fractions inside CUT and contributed to form opinion in the Netherlands and internally of the FNV about the Brazilian reality and CUT's perspectives far beyond the trade union cooperation.

By the other hand, CUT's counterpart in that relations building during the first phase was much more modest. There were two delegations composed by some Brazilian trade union leaders that visited FNV in the Netherlands amid a travel itinerary to establish contacts with union centers in several European countries. One of them happened in 1983, just after the CUT's foundation with the aim of introducing the new Brazilian Center and to establish or to strengthen relations with friendly organizations. The other happened in 1991, right after the VI CONCUT with the objective of renewing relations and to introduce the political conceptions of the CUT approved at the III CONCUT in 1988, and consolidated at the next congress, actually, very disputed by several political fractions and the delegates that were part of the so called "trade union articulation", the majority group. The debate was around the traditional ideological polemic about the role of the Central in the political change of the Brazilian society.

In the meantime, who kept the most permanent contacts between CUT and FNV was Jorge Lorenzetti, the National Secretary of Education elected at the II CONCUT in 1986.

Apart from the solidarity manifestations already mentioned, the dialogue between the two centers was mostly around the cooperation projects, but that did not hinder an important discussion to go on about the possibility of a triangular cooperation involving FNV, CUT and the OTM (Organization of Workers from Mozambique) in the area of union training to be applied in that African country and which

included themes like content and training methodology, selection of participants and the relation between training and policies and trade union strategies (FNV, 1991).

That joint cooperation did not materialize, although some CUT trainers had participated, in the 1990s, in training programs in the chemical workers union of OTM organized by ICEM and in the construction and mining workers union of Mozambique (independent union), sponsored by IFBWW.

That picture of the relations between FNV and CUT, as well as among some of its affiliated unions would only change in the second half of the 1990 decade due to changes in the international policies of both organizations. The creation of the Social Observatory in 1997 with the support of FNVs international cooperation also contributed greatly in order to this “quality leap” to happen.

## **4.2. The joint action of FNV and CUT trade unions**

Properly, the joint action among Brazilian and Dutch unions is recent and was driven by the researches made by the Social Observatory in Dutch companies, by the articulated networks through the CUTMulti project, by the creation of the “company monitor” in the Netherlands and by the exchanges that were facilitated by the “Social Observatory Europe” project. However, there were previous facts from the TIE project aimed to promote trade union actions in the international production chains and in that case, mainly, in the cocoa processing sector in 1986.

The leaders from the representative union of those workers in the Netherlands, the “*Voedingsverbond*”, were sure about the importance of the international action toward the companies from the food and agriculture sectors, with the goal to defend workers’ rights all over the world, even in the Netherlands, beginning with the cocoa harvest, going through its processing and transportation, until getting to its final transformation into chocolate and its derivatives. That Dutch union acted together with the union network in the cocoa region of Bahia already mentioned in Chapter 1 through the TIE project. That relation generated, at least, one example of a solidarity supranational trade union action, in any case, the initiatives to face the arbitrariness from an

American multinational company, in this case, Cargill.

That company operated a plant of cocoa processing in Ilhéus called *Cargill Cacau Ltda* subordinated to the unit of this multinational corporation in the Netherlands called *Gerkens Cacao*. In 1990, it sacked six employees without justification and in January 1991 it did the same with Zenildo Paulino de Santana, one of the main opposition leaders to the direction of “*Sindcacau*” Trade Union which was affiliated to CGT. That arbitrariness characterized a serious violation of the right to freely organize and provoked reactions.

The “*Voedingsverbond*” leadership looked, immediately, for contacts with Cargill’s management in the Netherlands to revert the situation, but although it was responsible for the supervision of the unit in Brazil, it defended that layoffs was an internal subject of the Brazilian administration and could do nothing about it. The responsible for international relations of this Dutch union, Dick de Graaf, went to Bahia to press the company and even participated in a workers assembly in front of the factory’s gate. Simultaneously, the “*CUT Cacaueira*” filed a legal action claiming the reintegration of the fired member. Facing the international pressure and the risk that the case could assume a wider dimension, Zenildo was reintegrated and soon the opposition won the election in the union (Peinenburg, 2010).

The internationalist tradition of the “*Voedingsverbond*” followed its fusion with the other three unions that formed the *Bondgenoten* and its president, Paul Andela, became the International Relations Secretary of the new entity. He has also been to Brazil following the formation of union networks in the Dutch companies from the “Social Observatory Europe”<sup>23</sup> (OSE) project and had a strong involvement trying to establish a supranational bargaining – Brazil and the Netherlands – in the Ahold supermarkets’ chain.

The previewed exchanges provided by this project that started in 2001, were able to deal with several themes, mainly, the functioning of the social dialogue in the two countries focusing the collective bargaining, the productive restructuring in the companies Philips, Unilever

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(23) See Chapter 3.

and Ahold (later replaced by AkzoNobel) and how the unions could interfere. Initially, the Brazilians brought a series of local problems for discussion, for example, layoffs of workers. But soon, they realized that it would be more productive for the development of the bilateral trade union relations and for the “networking” to deal with more general themes regarding both countries (Brouwer, 2010).

The balance made by Karen Brouwer, executive coordinator of the OSE, in general is positive, because she considers important to put the unions from different countries in contact, although there were “ups and downs” in the case of the union networks that were tried to be organized. For example, at Philips there was a little mutual interest on taking initiatives in that sense and at Unilever the articulation of a network advanced in the beginning, but later the contacts started to dissolve. But, at AkzoNobel, the work continued the same even after closing the project. She also realizes that it was necessary a period of maturation and that it is very important to have the involvement of the global union federations like IUF, ICEM and IMF in the case of the mentioned companies (2010).

The “*Bondgenoten’s*” president, since 2002, and reelected in 2011 for a new mandate until 2015, Henk van der Kolk, considers that the “international union networking”, like the work started by the OSE and by the “company monitor”, is fundamental to answer to the corporations organization through global production chains, although he also recognizes the difficulties for that in a country with the Brazilian dimensions, where the same company has many plants, often distant one from the others and where they use a lot of young workers in the production, more vulnerable to layoffs (2010).

He also observes that this work should go on, even after the end of the OSE project in 2004 and of the “Monitor” in 2010, with own efforts from the involved unions and the GUFs that currently would be more aware of the necessity of international campaigns to press the companies to respect workers’ rights in the production chains (2010).

In that process of interchanges there was the participation of many Brazilian unions from the food, neatness and cleaning, chemical and metallurgical sectors. The events held in Brazil with the participation of Dutch and Brazilian unionists were normally facilitated by the an-

nual conferences, “Research and Trade Union Action”, organized by the Social Observatory that always dealt with any current theme of common interest.

In the Netherlands, there is only one union performing in all the considered companies, the *Bondgenoten* opposite to Brazil where due to the official trade union structure there are dozens of union entities representing the workers from Philips, Unilever and AkzoNobel, what establishes an extra challenge for the Brazilian unions to create national networks by company, always hampered by the distance, lack of structure and, whether not, by political differences.

The experience provided by those interchanges shows that there is the need and potential for a permanent supranational performance in those Dutch multinational companies. The *Bondgenoten* leaders already adopted the goal of incorporating the international union action in, at least, four sectors and five multinational companies, in each of them, to the daily job of the union in the Netherlands, until 2014 (Van der Kolk, 2010).

For the “*Bondgenoten’s*” president, the sum of the international solidarity with the protection of the workers’ rights and interests at a national level, comes from a pragmatic formulation, because in an open world economy it is necessary to contribute to improve labor conditions everywhere to ensure a more balanced business competition and so, to also defend the welfare of the Dutch workers (Van der Kolk, 2010).

In this moment, when each time there are more multinational companies of Brazilian capital being established worldwide, it is demanded that the CUT and its confederations also develop a more pro-active international policy to defend workers’ rights and interests that mean and promote international trade union solidarity. The entities that are able of doing that won’t start from nowhere, as the experience of the international cooperation acquired during all these years offers lessons to develop an efficient own policy.

### **4.3. The dialogue and the common action of FNV and CUT**

CUT’s affiliation to the ICFTU and its regional organization for the Americas, the ORIT, in 1992, as well as the resolutions of the V CONCUT

in 1994, put to the Central the need of performing the role of a more prominent political actor in the international trade union scenario.

That policy previewed the development of stronger South – South relations, because the ones that CUT practiced up to then were basically limited to the contacts provided by its participation in the Coordination of Trade Union Centers of the Southern Cone and by its recent affiliation to ORIT. The purpose, developed from 1994, was to extend the relations to Africa through a wider cooperation with COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) and with the union centers from the Portuguese spoken countries in Africa. In Asia they were trying for more contacts with the KCTU (Korean Confederation of Trade Unions) and in Latin America the intention was to also extend the dialogue toward progressive union centers without any international affiliation yet, aiming to bring them to the ICFTU/ORIT field and then, enforce a stronger classist view inside those organizations.

Regarding the relations of CUT with trade union organizations from the developed world (North), the objective of its new international policy was to overcome the relation that was strongly based on the international cooperation projects and promote a positive confront of the Central conceptions in the dialogue with partner organizations from Europe and North America, inside the ICFTU, as well as in the ILO, and in other activities with international organizations like the WTO, OECD, etc.

In that sense, one of the northern organizations seen by CUT leaders as very important for the development of that policy was the FNV, for many reasons: the cooperation relation from FNV to CUT that already surpassed ten years, the strong presence of Dutch multinational companies in Brazil, the share of values and identities, the influence of FNV in the international trade union scenario, among others.

However, as mentioned earlier, despite of the visit of some leaders of this Dutch national federation in previous moments, the existent relations were actually kept by the Dutch side basically through the “*Wij en Zij*” advisors. The priority relations of FNV was with the union confederations from other European countries and the international policy of its affiliated unions towards the developing countries, with a few exceptions, happened exclusively through the global union federations

and not through bilateral relations.

One theme that enabled an initial dialogue between CUT and FNV, although without involving the set of the directions of the two union centers yet, was the purpose of introduction of a “social clause” in the WTO rules as a way of fighting the “social dumping”<sup>24</sup>. That debate was very present in the international trade union movement between 1994, when the Uruguay Round of GATT was concluded and 1996, when the first ministerial conference of WTO was held in Singapore. FNV supported the proposal as did the CUT, although with caveats and concerns that this “clause” could become a protectionist instrument to harm the exports and the economies of the developing countries (CUT, 1994).

Trying to lift that bilateral relation, CUT’s leadership took the initiative, in 1996, of asking the FNV to organize a visitor program for a delegation of Brazilian leaders to come to the Netherlands and that this visit also included a meeting with its Dutch counterpart. That trip would be entirely paid by the CUT, what was somehow unusual, because normally its leaders and advisors only traveled when invited by other organizations and with tickets and accommodation sponsored by them.

The initiative had a fundamental support from the advisors of the cooperation department from FNV that agreed with the finding of the lack of closer contacts between the leaders of both centers. The visit happened in May of 1996. The Brazilian delegation was composed by João Vaccari Neto, CUT’s general secretary; Altemir Tortelli, Vice-President; Monica Valente, national education secretary and Kjeld Jakobsen, Secretary of International Relations. The program included the visit to unions affiliated to the FNV like the “*Voedingsverbond*”, the participation in a mobilization of workers from Philips in Eindhoven, the visit to a school of professional training, meetings with advisors and with the executive leadership of FNV, among other activities.

The developments of that program that lasted one week were very positive and the visit contributed to diversify the themes that were li-

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(24) That concept meant the unfair competition in the international trade through the reduction of production costs provided by the disrespect to the fundamental labor rules like the use of child labor, slave labor, lower salaries to women, lack of union freedom and collective bargaining, among others.

kely for discussion between the two union centers. Beyond that, FNV was in a presidency transition process, because Johan Stekelenburg had already announced that he would leave the position and a possible successor could be Lodewijk de Waal that was also a member of the executive board of the Dutch Central and responsible for the coordination of the collective bargaining of FNV, as well as the president of “*Wij en Zij*”. Indeed, he ended up by assuming the federation’s presidency in 1997, what was very promising for the international policy of FNV, as he was very interested in that activity and also on extending the relations beyond the European Union and the developed world.

Moreover, FNV’s congress in 1997 was one of the first ones where an union center from a developing country, in this case the CUT from Brazil, was invited to participate, what became a routine for the following congresses, although relatively restricted to the union centers from the South which the Dutch Center prioritized relations with for informal political reasons. Beyond CUT, those priorities included the COSATU, KCTU and the ZCTU (“Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions”) and a few more (Van Rheenen, 2010).

The visit of CUT’s delegation to the Netherlands in 1996 urged FNV to repay it and it was decided to hold a visit of a Dutch delegation to Brazil in the beginning of 1998. To help preparing it, the “FNV Mondiaal’s” coordinator<sup>25</sup>, Willy Wagenmans, took advantage of his presence at the VI CONCUT held in 1997 in São Paulo to discuss a proposal for visit program and also to order from DIEESE a research about the labor conditions and behavior of three Dutch multinational companies in Brazil: Unilever, Philips and AkzoNobel<sup>26</sup>. It became one of the first researches of the Social Observatory and was used to subsidize a seminar held in São Paulo during the stay of the delegation.

If previously the concern was with the low intensity of the contacts of FNV leaders with CUT and Brazil, that visit overcame the expectations. Firstly because of the Dutch delegation’s composition: Lodewijk de Waal, FNV’s president; Henk van der Kolk, general secretary that in

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(25) “*Wij en Zij*” changed its name to “FNV Mondiaal” in 1997.

(26) See chapter 3.

2002 would be elected as “*Bondgenoten’s*” president; Cees de Wildt, leader from the “*Industriebond*” (Industry Workers Union) in the city of Tiel; Gerloff van Rheenen, “*FNV Mondiaal’s*” advisor for Latin America and Andriette Nomensen also an advisor of that department for international campaigns. Second, for its length of ten days, an unusual term for an international trip of the president of an European Center and, on the last place, for the interest and availability of the delegation on knowing CUT and Brazil’s reality.

The program, beyond the mentioned seminar, included meetings with CUT leaders and from affiliated unions, visits to companies of Dutch capital like the “*Tintas Wanda*” (AkzoNobel) in Itapecerica da Serra, *Cica* in Jundiaí (Unilever) and Philips in Manaus, a visit to a rural settlement in Sumaré, visits to slums in Manaus and to a project of sustainable forest production in Itacoatiara, Amazonas, as well as to activities in Brasília.

The visit, beyond updating FNV’s knowledge about Brazil and the CUT generated a diary written by Lodewijk de Waal and a publication of “*FNV Mondiaal*” about the trip (1998). Its results were extremely relevant.

On the first place, it established an information interchange and regular and permanent opinion exchange between CUT’s Secretary of International Relations and the “*FNV Mondiaal’s*” advisors and, when not, through meetings with the FNV’s president himself.

Those consultations also started to happen during ILO and ICFTU activities, although it wasn’t always that the leaders of the two centers shared opinions about all the international themes they dealt with, like, for example, about ICFTU’s operation and its management structure or about the best cases of ILO’s conventions violation to be discussed annually in the committee of application of standards, but at least both organizations became aware of the views of their counterpart and the arguments that justified them.

On the second place, the research held by DIEESE about the mentioned Dutch companies and the seminar held to discuss them enforced the FNV’s interest and the “*Industriebond’s*” on supporting the constitution of the Social Observatory and, consequently, the developments of its work like the further constitution of the CUTMulti project and the

trade union leaders' exchanges.

On the last place, beyond the most regular consultations between the two union centers, a more collective and substantial process of discussions about the themes linked to the globalization and to the international unionism begun too. For instance, CUT, COSATU and KCTU held annual meetings in each one of their countries since 1995, with the support of the German foundation "*Friedrich Ebert*", to discuss themes of common interest and the fourth meeting of the series happened in 1998 in Germany.

FNV had shown interest in participating on that dialogue and was invited to watch to the last encounter where it proposed the accomplishment of the meeting of the following year in Amsterdam. That meeting happened in the second semester under the FNV auspices when there was given a nickname to the group, the "Four Tops", inspired on a North American vocal quartet that was very successful in the 1960ies.

Beyond advancing on the definition of a common agenda that included the union action together with the multinational companies, trade and workers' rights, among other themes, they also debated the perspectives regarding the 17th ICFTU congress in April of 2000. In that aspect, the meeting produced a common proposal for the creation of a working party in the ambit of that international confederation to elaborate a strategy to deal with informal labor. That proposal was approved by the congress, but, ironically, only FNV was further invited by ICFTU's general secretary, Bill Jordan, to join the working party.

There was yet a second meeting among the centers CUT, COSATU, KCTU and FNV in 2001 in Utrecht, in the Netherlands during the congress of the latter but later on the initiative vanished, although the three union centers from the South still meet sporadically during the annual ILO conferences and during the great events of the World Social Forum. However, it was never possible to establish, indeed, a solid coalition, even informal, to constantly express common positions around certain themes, although there surely was a consensus about many subjects.

After the visit of the FNV delegation to Brazil in 1998, the contacts between the leaders of the two countries became more frequent. The current FNV president, Agnes Jongerius, when she still was its vice-

president came to Brazil to represent the FNV in the World Women Conference of the ICFTU and visited the CUT together with the “FNV *Mondiaal*” advisor, Annette Tesselar. The then CUT’s president, Vicente Paulo da Silva (“*Vicentinho*”) went to the Netherlands right after and during the VII CONCUT in 2000, FNV was represented by its general secretary, Henk van der Kolk and the advisor Jeroen Strengers.

In the most recent period, the contacts between the leaderships were in charge of, mainly, CUT’s president, Artur Henrique da Silva Santos, who attended FNV’s congress in 2009 where he made a presentation about the system of social security in Brazil and FNV’s current vice-president, Peter Gortzak who is also “FNV *Mondiaal*’s” Vice-president. He has been to Brazil at least three times in the last three years to discuss, mainly, the possibilities of cooperation between the two union centers, considering the changes in the cooperation policy for development of the Dutch government and the consequent exclusion of Brazil from the list of targeted countries.

The possibility that the leaders from the two union centers are considering is the promotion of common cooperation with third countries of mutual interest from Africa and Latin America that are in the list of the Dutch government.



# Final remarks

The development of the cooperation between FNV and CUT during these 28 years represents an extremely rich set of initiatives where there was no lack of purposes, ideas and either boldness from both sides. The three main moments of the cooperation that, through many details, involved the support to CUT's organization, the structuring of its national policy of trade union education and the implementation of actions to face multinational companies intertwine with the three phases of the political relation between the two union centers mentioned on chapter 4: mutual knowledge and solidarity, common performance of the Dutch and Brazilian unions and the common performance of CUT and FNV in a transnational scope.

However, the most important question to be answered is about the role that these political relations and the cooperation meant to the two union centers. Probably we have to deepen this discussion to get closer to a definitive answer, at least about what happened during the three past decades. As we could see, there are many actors from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean that participated on this history and not even all could give its testimonial and, beyond that,

the future of that relation is still to be defined.

Gerloff van Rheenen's reaction when faced with that question during the interview given to one of the authors was that "*the international cooperation is not decisive for the consolidation of union organizations that have political ability and representativeness like, for instance, the CUT, despite of the difficulties it met. The 'good organizations' are consolidated independently of receiving external support and in the case of organizations that don't have these requirements, it won't be the cooperation that will solve the problem*". However, despite of that pragmatic view about the role of the cooperation of trade union confederations from developed countries in the benefit of trade union organizations in countries of the developing world, he also recognized that the cooperation could ease the consolidation of a central like CUT of Brazil (2010).

Henk van der Kolk argued in the same direction when stating that the choice of FNV for some partners in other countries came from its evaluation about the possibility of establishing coalitions with trade union organizations that could be strengthened with its support and CUT was, certainly, one of them (2010).

These two testimonials seem to be the key of the issue, at least, on what is about the CUT. With all the access it had to the international cooperation, and to the one from FNV in particular, that partnership facilitated and accelerated processes, as well it allowed to implement many initiatives that in another way would not happen, either due lack of resources, or because the lack of momentary political comprehension about the importance of certain themes or simply by exclusion of them from the trade union agenda due to more immediate priorities.

In that sense the content of the projects of the cooperation and, mainly, its timing, were fundamental. For example, if there was not the questioning to the corporatist trade union structure and the electoral disputes at the end of the 1970 decade and in the beginning of the following one with the old "*pelegos*", on its majority, encrusted in important unions since the military stroke and worn before the workers, it would have been more complicated for CUT to assume the management of those unions, because at the end of the 1980ies, there was some recycling in the corporatist unionism through a new generation of more active leaders better tuned with the rank and files' interests that they represented and therefore harder to defeat. Thus, the external support

for the trade union oppositions that advocated for an authentic, combative, democratic and organized unionism up from the ground came at the right time.

CUT could, the same way, have taken much longer to implement its national plan and education network if it had to count only on its own resources when it started to do it. Organizing the local state CUTs and the respective education secretaries would have also been more difficult. That would have equally reduced its political and organizational capacity to efficiently respond to the different conjunctures between mid 80ies and the end of the 90ies when Brazil went through the transition process from a dictatorship toward a democratic regime amid the change of the “developmentist” economic paradigm into neoliberalism.

The case of CUT’s environment policy is even more emblematic, because if there was no support given by FNV from 1990, it would have been very difficult for the Central to achieve the role mentioned on Chapter 2, because it was fundamental to begin that work before the “Earth Summit’s” start, an event for excellence that would give visibility about the environmental theme before the workers and the public opinion in a general manner.

In the case of the support to the projects that allowed the creation of the Social Observatory and the CUTMulti, although the timing was connected to the moment of the discussion about “social dumping”, the decisive was the will of FNV on getting involved directly in actions to ensure the respect for workers fundamental rights in the multinational companies and their productive chains. The Social Observatory researches about the companies’ behavior linked to the core labor standards of ILO was one of the first practical experiences of monitoring and promotion of those conventions in an international level next to the private sector. That experience also allowed the development of research methods, even in a Latin American dimension and, in the case of the CUTMulti project it enforced the practice of trade union operations through networks.

Due to the content of the various cooperation projects described earlier it is also possible to verify that it strengthened CUT’s trade union conception on important values shared with FNV like the defense of freedom of association, promotion of a democratic and representative trade unionism and the implementation of a socio-political unionism

able to propose wide and contemporaneous agendas in defense of the historical and immediate interests of the working class, as well as to fight all kinds of discrimination.

Equally important, was to realize that the cooperation did not happen exclusively in one way, because some projects followed Paulo Freire's precept that the "educators and students must educate themselves mutually" like it happened, for example, with the well succeeded experience of the social observatory supported by FNV that encouraged the Dutch center to establish its own "company monitor" creating as a synthesis a series of common actions of the Brazilian and Dutch unions in front of the multinational companies of Dutch capital. The same way, we should mention the strengthened political relation between CUT and FNV, mainly, from the end of the 1990s, what allowed both centers to adopt certain common positions before the conjuncture.

Another important issue to be marked is about the quality of the relations between the two organizations on what is about the management of the cooperation projects considering the financial values and the risk that of the donor using it to impose its view and methods. However, Willy Wagenmans affirmed that there has always been a "*mutual climate of respect and responsibility between CUT and FNV*" about the definition of the cooperation projects and the management of them.

That position can be confirmed through the intense communication between the two union centers, occurred since 1987, about the projects' developments, transference of resources and accountability. There were many situations on which the projects had to be rescheduled in terms of deadlines and values due to unexpected situations and there has always been the necessary flexibility of FNV to solve those problems without violating the dictates established by the Cooperation Ministry of the Netherlands. In one of the moments when the Ministry tried to modify the cooperation policy in the 90s and define the list of countries that the cooperation agencies from the Dutch civil society should support, those organizations reacted in defense of their autonomies to choose their partners abroad. At a meeting of those agencies on which FNV also participated and which was held in Hague a statement was produced regarding that position ("Pulchri Papers"). The then international relations secretary from CUT, Kjeld Jakobsen, could present his statement about the importance of the

Dutch cooperation with Brazil, the democratic relation between FNV and CUT and the existence of the necessary flexibility to solve unexpected situations before the Brazilian conjuncture, normally dynamic and uncertain (Own experience).

In the conversations between FNV and CUT's representatives to define the projects, it always got clear that they would not be permanent and that one of the cooperation objectives was as to contribute to the self-sustainability of the policies in the future and if we look to the three big cooperation programs held with CUT, union organization, the PNF and action in front of the multinational companies we will see that the support to each one of them prevailed for, a little longer than ten years and now those initiatives continue by their own legs.

To reinforce that effectiveness aspect of the cooperation and the self-sufficiency of the benefited actors, beyond answering a requirement from the cooperation ministry from the Netherlands, there were many external evaluations of the projects that FNV held with CUT. So it was the PNF's evaluation mentioned on Chapter 2 and the evaluation of the support project to the DNTR, both held in mid 90ies. The support projects to the Social Observatory and to the CUTMulti also went through external evaluations and the most recent one was concluded in 2008. Those evaluations never proposed the shutdown of the projects due to any problem on its execution. On the contrary, their reports always issued suggestions for their improvement and for eventual methodological changes, what we can consider as an endorsement for their continuity.

At last, the financial value spent from the Netherlands through FNV with CUT's cooperation projects that until 2009 reached nearly fifteen million Euros and the history of almost three decades of cooperation talks by itself of the importance given to that relation by the Dutch fellows (Beccari, 2010).

The responsibility for CUT's construction is undoubtedly of the Brazilians and it represents nowadays almost half of the workers in the country that are organized in any of the eight existent trade union centers. CUT has not stopped growing through all these years, even suffering dissent due to differences of some of the old internal political fractions. However, the solidarity and the cooperation offered by the FNV also make it a part of this well succeeded path.



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Revision	<b>Fernanda Sant'Clair</b>
Graphic Project	<b>Tadeu Araujo</b>
Cover	<b>MGiora</b>
Edition	<b>3.000 copies</b>
Printing	<b>AN Gráfica</b>



