Trade Unions and the ICFTU in the Age of Developmentalism in Brazil, 1953-1962*

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The article examines the relations between the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and its local allies in Brazil during the 1950s and early 1960s. Devised as a tool for uniting non-communist trade unions worldwide, and contrary to what happened in Western Europe, the ICFTU saw its influence limited by the U.S. labor policies towards Latin America and the conditions of labor politics in Brazil. The developments on both domestic and international fronts of organized labor had important implications for the political economy of growth and inequality in post-war Brazil.

This article examines a little studied aspect of the U.S. Cold War labor policies towards Latin America, that of the efforts made by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to establish a foothold in Brazil during the golden age of developmentalism in the 1950s and its demise in the early 1960s. The ICFTU was set up in 1949 aiming to bring together the anti-Soviet trade unions which had split from the World Federation of Trade Unions, established in 1945, and soon became the cornerstone of the U.S. led-Cold War labor policies worldwide. From the very beginning, the ICFTU sought to extend its influence beyond the founding European and U.S. trade unions. In 1951, a conference in Mexico City launched the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (or ORIT, *Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores*) as a regional affiliate of the ICFTU. In 1953, the ICFTU/ORIT set up an office in Rio de Janeiro, which should help establish a non-communist cadre of Brazilian trade unionists and a "free trade union movement" in the largest Latin American economy.[1]

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[1] Anthony Carew, "Towards a Free Trade Union Centre: The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (1949-1972)," in *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Bern, Peter Lang, 2000), 187-339; Arnold Steinbach, "Regional Organizations of International Labor," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 310 (1957): 16-17. For Gross Domestic Product levels in Latin America in the 1950s, see Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy, 1820-1992* (Paris, OECD, 1995), 188-89.

U.S. labor policies towards Europe, Japan and – I will argue in this article – Latin America were framed in what Charles Maier and others have called "politics of productivity", that is, the pursuit of productivity growth as a way of suppressing social strife and economic stagnation, as championed by U.S. policy-makers after the Second World War. This approach was a key to the corporatist settlement between labor and capital that helped create the institutional foundations for the golden age of postwar growth in Western Europe and Japan.[2] The politics of productivity was based on two building blocks connected to labor: first, the spread of the "gospel of productivity" among employers and workers of Western Europe in the context of the reconstruction projects funded by the Marshall Plan; second, the isolation of the pro-Soviet, communist trade unionists of the labor movement, which had grown in influence in Western Europe after the war.[3]

Although originally drafted as a blueprint for the recovery of Europe and Japan, the emphasis on productivity was soon extended to the underdeveloped countries. By the end of the 1940s, U.S. foreign policy also ascribed the weakness and instability of underdeveloped countries to low productivity and lack of growth. President Harry Truman's "Point Four Program", launched in January 1949, aimed to "strengthen the free world" by means of technical assistance that would help underdeveloped areas to increase productivity and living conditions. In the following years, the Point Four lost its specific identity and became part of the Mutual Security Program for the whole world. At the same time, the labor movement in underdeveloped countries

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[2] Charles Maier, "The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II," *International Organization* 31 (1977): 607-33; "The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth-Century Western Europe," *American Historical Review* 86 (1981): 327-52; "The Postwar Social Contract," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 50 (1996): 148-50; Anthony Carew, *Labour under the Marshall Plan. The Politics of Productivity and the Marketing of Management Science* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1987);); "The Anglo-American Council on Productivity (1948-52): The Ideological Roots of the Postwar Debate on Productivity," *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991): 49-69.

[3] Anthony Carew, *Labour*; "The Anglo-American Council on Productivity"; "The Politics of Productivity and the Politics of Anti-communism: American and European Labour in the Cold War," in *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-60*, ed. G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam (London, Roultledge, 2004), 73-91; Frederico Romero, *The United States and the European Trade Union Movement, 1944-1951* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Nick Tiratsoo and Jim Tomlinson, "Exporting the 'Gospel of Productivity': United States Technical Assistance and British Industry, 1945-1960," *Business History Review* 71 (1997): 41-81; Marie-Laure Djelic, *Exporting the American model: The Postwar Transformation of European Business* (Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 2001); Bent Boel, *European Productivity Agency and Transatlantic Relations* (Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002).

gradually became an important target for the U.S. foreign policy, as in Western Europe and Japan.[4]

This article shows that the ICFTU strove to promote an influential cadre of labor leaders who shared the view of a "free trade union movement" in Latin America. Perhaps surprisingly, this a little-known episode not only in the U.S.-Latin America relations during the Cold War, but also in the history of labor in Latin American countries. Very few studies have been devoted to the strategy and reception of ICFTU in specific countries of this region during the post-war years. I focus on Brazil and provide a detailed analysis of the relations between the ICFTU/ORIT apparatus, local trade unions and successive governments during the 1950s and early 1960s.[5]

Brazil diversified its economy and achieved high rates of growth in the postwar years. By the 1950s, this country had become the largest industrial economy in Latin America.[6] The annual average growth of Gross Domestic Product and industrial output achieved 7.3 percent and 9.7 percent between 1945 and 1962, respectively. High rates of economic and industrial growth could have established a basis for accommodation between the industrial working-class and employers. Yet wages fell behind productivity and the gap between industrial wages and profits widened even in the heyday of developmentalism in the second half of the 1950s. Average wages in the manufacturing industry grew at an annual rate of 3.6 percent, whereas the annual rate of labor

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[4] Thomas Paterson, "Foreign Aid under Wraps: The Point Four Program," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 56 (1972-1973): 119-26; Robert Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1985), 203-9; U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1949, I, 776-83; 1951, I, 1041-46; Mutual Security Agency, "Report to Congress on the Mutual Security Program for the Six Months Ended December 31, 1953," 2-3.

[5] The major exception of national studies in Latin America is Magaly R. García, *Liberal Workers of the World, Unite? The ICFTU and the Defence of Labour Liberalism in Europe and Latin America, 1949-1969* (Berne, Peter Lang, 2010). García focuses on ICFTU policies in Mexico, Ecuador and Venezuela. Important works dealing with the ICFTU/ORIT in Latin America as a whole are Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, "Introduction," in *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War*, ed. Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992); Jon Kofas, *The Struggle for Legitimacy: Latin American Labor and the United States, 1930-1960* (Tempe, Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State Univ., 1992); Robert Alexander, *International Labor Organizations and Organized Labor in Latin America and the Caribbean. A History* (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2009).

[6] See, for example, Albert Fishlow, "Brazilian Development in Long-Term Perspective," *American Economic Review* 70 (1980): 102-8; Angus Maddison, *The Political Economy of Poverty, Equity, and Growth. Brazil and Mexico* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); Rosemary Thorp, *Progress, Poverty and Exclusion. An Economic History of Latin America in the 20th century* (Baltimore, Inter-American Development Bank, 1998); Werner Baer, *Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development* (Westport: Greenwood, 2001).

productivity growth reached 4.8 percent between 1945 and 1962. The gap between industrial wages and productivity was even wider during the second half of the 1950s: manufacturing wages increased at 1.8 percent per year, against 5.1 percent of labor productivity from 1955 to 1962. The divergent performance of labor productivity and wages reinforced a confrontational pattern of labor relations that continued to develop despite favorable economic conditions in the 1950s.[7]

In this context of conflict, ICFTU and ORIT members faced serious difficulties in their attempt to elicit support from middle-rank trade unionists in Brazil so that, by the end of the 1950s, it became clear that they had failed the task. Our explanation to this failure lies both in the features of the U.S.-led Cold War labor policies in general and in Brazil's political and economic context. I argue, first, that the ICFTU/ORIT followed a strict anti-communist policy that alienated even non-communist trade unionists who had a working relationship with the Communist Party. This anti-communist policy was in a large degree an outcome of the predominance of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) over the ICFTU in Latin America.[8]

Second, I argue that the task of the ICFTU/ORIT members was made more difficult because, since 1945, Brazil saw the growing influence of the Left in labor organizations and there was no Marshall Plan to enhance the position of the ICFTU's local allies.[9] Contrary to a still widely held view of Brazilian labor history, workers' organizations were not contained in the limits of the corporatist system of industrial relations elaborated in the 1930s and 1940s.

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[7] Output data drawn from Brazil, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). *Estatísticas Históricas do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, IBGE, 1990). Labor productivity and wages in the manufacturing industry were estimated from industrial census and surveys published by IBGE. Nominal wages were deflated by a proxy of the producer prices, the *Índice de Preços ao Atacado – Disponibilidade Interna* (IPA-DI), and the labor productivity estimates were obtained by dividing the *valor da transformação industrial* (a measure similar to the industrial value added, also deflated by the IPA-DI) by the monthly average number of production workers. See Renato P. Colistete, "Salários, Produtividade e Lucros na Indústria Brasileira, 1945-1978," *Revista de Economia Política* 29 (2009): 386-405.

[8] Alexander, *International Labor Organizations*, xvii; Nelson Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther: The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (Champaign, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1997), 332-33.

[9] In this article, for "Left" I mean the socialists, communists, sections of the Brazilian Labor Party (*Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* or PTB) and other left-wing groups which sought to have a stake in the labor movement. There was also a group of independent activists in trade unions, with no formal connection with organised groups or the Ministry of Labor, and who often aligned with the Left. Examples of these different groups and trade unionists will be provided later.

Shopfloor and rank-and-file initiatives grew in importance in the post-war years, as has been consistently shown by both classic and revisionist works on Brazilian labor history.[10] Simultaneously, socialists, Labor Party members, independents and other labor groups had a working relationship with the Communist Party and promoted an agenda for improving wages, social rights and welfare that shaped Brazilian politics in the 1950s and the early 1960s. The strict anti-communist policy pursued by the ICFTU/ORIT meant that they had for most of the time to rely on the old-guard trade unionists associated with the repressive years of the *Estado Novo* (New State) dictatorship (between 1937 and 1945) and the Dutra government (1946-1951). More importantly, the ICFTU/ORIT attempted but failed to attract a younger generation of non-communist trade union leaders who, despite their strong differences in practices and strategic aims, worked along with the Communist Party and other left-wing groups in trade unions and mobilizations.

Thus the strategy of splitting up the labor movement between "moderate" and "communist" sections was as forcefully pursued in Brazil as in other parts of the world by the ICFTU, but conditions in Brazil were rather different from those in Western Europe and Japan. I argue in this article that a variant of the politics of productivity was developed that diverged in content and outcome from the national experiences in Western Europe and Japan, and that had important implications for the political economy of growth and inequality in the 1950s and the early 1960s in Brazil.

The analysis starts in 1953 with the establishment of the ICFTU office in Brazil, and ends in 1962, during the Presidency of João Goulart under the parliamentary regime, when the fate of the office was already settled in the midst of a deep political and social crisis. The first section deals with the creation of the ICFTU office in Brazil, the second describes its relations with

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[10] Among the classic works, see Luis W. Vianna, *Liberalismo e Sindicato no Brasil* (2nd ed., Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1978); Ricardo Maranhão, *Sindicatos e Democratização. Brasil, 1945-1950* (São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1979). For the revisionist historiography, see John French, *The Brazilian Workers' ABC. Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1992); Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men. São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Working-Class, 1900-1955* (Durham, Duke Univ. Press, 1993); Hélio Costa, *Em Busca da Memória. Comissão de Fábrica, Partido e Sindicato no Pós-Guerra* (São Paulo, Scritta, 1995); Paulo Fontes, *Trabalhadores e Cidadãos. Nitro Química: A Fábrica e as Lutas Operárias nos Anos 50* (São Paulo, Annablume, 1997); Antonio Negro, *Linhas de Montagem: O Industrialismo Nacional-Desenvolvimentista e a Sindicalização dos Trabalhadores* (São Paulo, Boitempo, 2004).

domestic allies who formed the basis for the ICFTU in Brazil. The third section analyses the relations between ICFTU officials and governments. The fourth section examines how the ICFTU office dealt with left-wing and independent trade unionists. In the end, we draw conclusions about the overall implications of the ICFTU policies in postwar Brazil.

Organizing the ICFTU in Brazil: the ORIT office

In October 1945, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and Soviet unions led the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), as a follow-up to the united front that prevailed during World War II. Soon, however, Cold-War ideological disputes escalated into a split between pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet trade union organizations, which resulted in the establishment of the ICFTU in December 1949.[11] The ICFTU saw the creation of regional structures as a key to increase its international influence. The first regional body was set up in Europe, in November 1950.[12] A few months later, in January 1951, the ORIT was launched in Latin America.[13] The setting up of ORIT was the climax of a series of confrontations and splits which had affected the Latin American trade union movement since 1945, when the united front of the war gave way to open dispute among different sections of national trade union movements.[14] At the regional level, the Confederation of Workers of Latin America (or CTAL, *Confederación de Trabajadores de la America Latina*), set up in 1938 and headed by Lombardo Toledano, a Mexican left-winger, was also beset by conflicts and soon lost several of its affiliates in a process which replicated the national disputes.[15] Apart from being

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[11] Anthony Carew, *Labour*, ch. 5; "A False Dawn: The World Federation of Trade Unions (1945-1949)," in *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Bern, Peter Lang, 2000), 165-84; "Towards", 187-339; Romero, *United States*, 17-21.

[12] Carew, "Towards," 193, 207.

[13] Arnold Steinbach, "Regional Organizations of International Labor," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 310 (1957): 16-17; Robert Alexander, "Labor and Inter-American Relations," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 334 (1961): 41-53; Hobart Spalding Jr, "U.S. and Latin American Labor: The Dynamics of Imperialist Control," *Latin American Perspectives*, 3 (1976): 50-52.

[14] Alexander, *International Labor Organizations*, 110-11; Bethell and Roxborough, "Introduction," 27-8; Andrew Barnard, "Chile," in *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War*, ed. Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 78-79.

[15] Ian Roxborough, "The Urban Working Class and Labour Movement in Latin America since 1930," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), vol. VI, 317-18, 327-30.

rooted in local conditions, the splits in the regional trade union movement were fuelled by the action of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which started to look towards Latin America as a central area of contention even before the end of World War II. The chief issue became the dispute with the pro-Soviet trade unionists who had gained strength during the immediate postwar years in the countries of the region. Pro-Soviet leaders and left-wingers in general occupied major positions of the Confederation of Workers of Latin America and national trade unions. Unlike the other important U.S. organization, the CIO, which maintained friendly relations with the Latin American body from the start, the AFL never accepted the leadership of Confederation of Workers of Latin America.[16]

The AFL shared the views of and collaborated closely with the U.S. Department of State in an offensive to win hearts and minds in the labor movement in Latin America. By the end of the war, Serafino Romualdi, an Italian refugee from fascism, was appointed as the AFL's representative for Latin America and became the chief coordinator of the anti-communist labor policy in the region.[17] Like AFL members in European countries, Romualdi also had ties to the intelligence community; first to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during the war and later to its succeeding organization, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[18] The first postwar organizational initiative to counterbalance communist influence was the setting up of the Inter-American Confederation of Workers (CIT, or *Confederación Interamericana de Trabajadores*), in 1948, consisting of the AFL and of trade unions which had left the Confederation of Workers of Latin America.[19]

Romualdi established several high-level contacts with trade unionists and the Eurico Dutra government (January 1946 – January 1951) in Brazil before and during the brief existence

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[16] Alexander, "Labor," 42-43; Steinbach, "Regional Organizations," 12-13.

[17] Alexander, "Labor", 41; Bethell and Roxborough, "Introduction", 27-8; Spalding, "U.S. and Latin American Labor," 49-50; Serafino Romualdi, *Presidents and Peons. Recollections of a Labor Ambassador in Latin America* (New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1967), 8.

[18] Carew, "American Labor"; Philip Agee, *Dentro da "Companhia": Diário da CIA* (Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1976), 552; Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969* (Kent, Kent State Univ. Press, 1990), 57-58.

[19] Alexander, "Labor," 43-45; Carew, "Towards," 222; Romualdi, *Presidents*, 76-80; Spalding, "U.S. and Latin American Labor," 49-50; Steinbach, "Regional Organizations," 13.

of the Inter-American Confederation of Workers. In June 1946, Romualdi met labor representatives, Ministry of Labor officials and even President Dutra to promote the creation of national and regional trade union bodies which should not be in the hands of the communists.[20] Yet a national labor congress called by the Ministry of Labor in September 1946 showed that trade unionists aligned with the government ─ and who had been in conversations with Romualdi ─ were in a minority when they walked out in protest at an alliance among members of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB, *Partido Comunista do Brasil*), *trabalhistas* belonging to the recently-established Brazilian Labor Party (PTB, *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro*), and independents.[21]

The split in the labor congress of September 1946 led to the creation of two central organizations. The National Confederation of Workers (CNT) was established by the minority sponsored by the Ministry of Labor, and for legal reasons later became the National Confederation of Industrial Workers (CNTI, *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Indústria*), and the National Confederation of Commercial Workers (CNTC, *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores do Comércio*), both officially recognized by the Dutra government. In turn, the trade unionist majority set up the Workers Confederation of Brazil (CTB, *Confederação dos Trabalhadores do Brasil*).[22] The Workers Confederations of Brazil was soon dismantled by the Dutra government's repressive onslaught that from May 1947 hit all trade unions alleged to be under the influence of the communists.[23] Although not successful in

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[20] Romualdi, *Presidents*, 71-2, 273-4; Cliff Welch, "Labor Internationalism: U.S. Involvement in Brazilian Unions, 1945-1965," *Latin American Research Review* 30 (1995): 65-7; Public Records Office, Kew [hereafter PRO], Ministry of Labour and National Service [hereafter LAB] 13/498, Brazil begins to favour the A.F.O.L., 10 Sept. 1947.

[21] Maranhão, *Sindicatos*, 68-9; French, *Brazilian Workers's ABC*, 190-94; Timothy Harding, "The Political History of Organized Labor in Brazil" (PhD diss., Stanford Univ., 1973), 200-6; Jover Telles, *O Movimento Sindical no Brasil* (2nd. ed., São Paulo, Ciências Humanas, 1981), 243-59; Renato P. Colistete, "Productivity, Wages, and Labor Politics in Brazil, 1945-1962," *Journal of Economic History*, 67 (2007): 108.

[22] The state-corporative structure that regulated industrial relations in Brazil – set up during the 1930s and the early 1940s – was based upon a three-tier hierarchy: trade unions (mainly in the cities), federations (in the states) and confederations (at the national level). In exceptional cases, national federations were also allowed. See José Albertino Rodrigues, *Sindicato e Desenvolvimento no Brasil* (São Paulo, Símbolo, 1968), part II.

[23] Harding, "Political History", 221-27; Renato P. Colistete, *Labour Relations and Industrial Performance in Brazil: Greater São Paulo, 1945-1960* (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), ch. 2. During the postwar years the Communist Party enjoyed legal status only from the end of 1945 to March 1947, when it was made illegal by a decision of the Federal Supreme Court.

establishing a pro-government central trade union with the majority of the trade unions, the Dutra government regained the initiative by means of a hard-line policy on labor. In the meantime, Romualdi's efforts were rewarded when the Dutra government decided to send representatives to the congress that set up the Inter-American Confederation of Workers in January 1948. Cliff Welch shows, however, that the Inter-American Confederation of Workers congress disappointed Dutra's associates because of its lack of support for Brazil's economic demands, so that the Brazilian government's involvement with the new body became less than enthusiastic.[24]

ICFTU and U.S. labor representatives continued to hold negotiations with the newly-elected Vargas government (January 1951 – August 1954).[25] Apparently Vargas took a keen interest in the regional organization whose explicit objective was to fight the Left in the Brazilian trade union movement.[26] In August 1951, President Vargas sent a message to Congress authorizing the affiliation of federations and confederations to the ICFTU only ─ therefore excluding the pro-Soviet international trade union organization, the WFTU.[27] The presidential message was a direct outcome of lobbying by ICFTU staff and Brazilian trade unionists associated with the top-level official organizations.[28] The Consolidation of Labor Laws (or CLT) of 1943 established that official trade unions in Brazil could not "take part in international organizations" (CLT, Art. 565). In July 1946, the Dutra government rewrote the article in such a way that Brazil's trade unions could not "affiliate or establish relations with international organizations, except if approved by the National Congress" (Decree No. 9,502 of 23 July 1946). Now, the message submitted by Vargas to Congress intended to again change the CLT, but this

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[24] Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 69-71.

[25] United States, National Archives and Records Administration [hereafter NARA], H.S. Hammond, Quarterly Labor Report – Second Quarter 1951, 24 Jul. 1951, Record Group [hereafter RG] 59, 832.06/7-2451, Enclosure: W.T. Briggs, Labor conditions in the São Paulo Consular District – Second Quarter – 1951; H.S. Hammond, Quarterly Labor Report – Third Quarter 1951, 17 Oct. 1951, RG 59, 832.06/10-1751.

[26] Harding, "Political History", 245.

[27] Robert Alexander, *A History of Organized Labor in Brazil* (Westport, Praeger, 2003), 95.

[28] Netherlands, International Institute of Social History, ICFTU Archives [hereafter ICFTU], South America, General Correspondence, 5319, S. Romualdi to J. H. Oldenbroek, Report on trip to South America, 1 Sept. 1951; Brazil, Correspondence with/on the Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Indústria (CNTI), 5380, Letter from Secretário Geral to Deocleciano Cavalcanti, 9 Jul. 1952; 5380, Telegrama from Deocleciano Cavalcanti to [n.a.], 28 Oct. 1950.

time in favor of the ICFTU. No wonder that the proposal was seen by the U.S. trade unionists and the U.S. embassy as a major step towards a "free trade union movement" and as a way of gaining wide support for ICFTU among local trade unions. The Congress approved and President Vargas sanctioned the new law on 16 July 1952 (Law No. 1,646).[29]

After the approval by Congress of affiliation to ICFTU, the Brazilian allies received a new boost when ORIT decided to organize its second regional conference in Rio de Janeiro. In September 1952, the ICFTU's representative for Latin America, Arturo Jáuregui, met the Minister of Labor, José de Segadas Viana, who promised official support and Cr$ 300,000.00 from the Syndical Social Fund for the ORIT Conference, which took place in December 1952.[30] According to Robert Alexander, the president of the CNTI, Deocleciano Cavalcanti, had a leading role in the meeting. The major impulse to the local allies, however, came just a few months after the regional conference, with the decision to set up an ICFTU/ORIT office in Rio de Janeiro.[31]

In two missions between 1952 and early 1953, Spanish trade-unionist Trifón Gómez visited Latin American countries as special ICFTU representative in charge of making contact with and reinforcing links to local trade unions. In Brazil, Gómez discussed two basic issues: the financial contribution by Brazilian organizations to the ICFTU and the setting up of the ORIT office. Gómez met the members of federations and confederations and was able to settle the issue of their financial contribution. Brazilian trade unionists told Gómez that communist influence was growing in the labor movement, that the setting up of an ORIT office in Brazil should be considered an urgent priority and that the office should be located in Rio de Janeiro.[32] In March 1953, Gómez had already written a draft of the rules which would govern the office in Rio de Janeiro. According to him, the office should be "a liaison body between the ICFTU and affiliated

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[29] ICFTU, ORIT, 5001, 2nd Congress/Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 1952, Report on the ORIT activities since its foundation ─ Jan. 12, 1951 up to Dec. 12, 1952 by Francisco Aguirre.

[30] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5366, General Correspondence, Arturo Jáuregui to Francisco Aguirre, 4 Sept. 1952. The Syndical Social Fund (*Fundo Social Sindical*) was administered by the Ministry of Labor and made up by 20% of the syndical tax levied on all workers employed in the formal labor market.

[31] Alexander, *History*, 117.

[32] ICFTU, South America – General, 5319, General Correspondence, ICFTU – Regional Fund Committee, 4th Meeting, Brussels, 9-11 Feb. 1953 – Second Trip of Trifón Gomez to Latin America.

organizations in Brazil" as well as being "also an instrument of reciprocal information and propaganda" with the cooperation of Brazilian organizations "but always dependent from all points of view upon the ICFTU General Secretary".[33]

The Brazilian ORIT office was set up in April 1953 and located at the CNTI's headquarters in Rio de Janeiro – as called for by the trade unionists who met Gómez. The office employed a full-time trade unionist, Joviano de Araújo, a radiotelegraphist of the Merchant Marine who was then Secretary of the National Federation of Maritime, Riverine and Airway Transport Workers. A consultative council was formed by federations and confederations which were already affiliated with ORIT. In August 1954, the affiliates comprised the confederations of industrial and commercial workers (CNTI and CNTC) and five federations.[34] During the 1950s, only one additional ORIT office was set up in Latin America – in Chile, in 1956.[35] The new Brazilian office did not go unnoticed by local labor groups. Both ICFTU personnel operating in Brazil and local allied trade unionists were harshly criticized by left-wing trade unionists at the time.[36]

From the perspective of the ICFTU and AFL leaders, the ORIT office's main role in Brazil was to help developing a non-communist cadre of trade unionists who would counterbalance the already significant communist influence in trade unions. The notion of "free trade unionism" was central to the perspective adopted by the ICFTU, but within its ranks there were sharp differences concerning the sort of groups that could be regarded as possible allies. In general, for ICFTU, "free trade unions" meant all those which were not aligned with pro-Soviet, communist organizations. Yet divergence arose between the non-conciliatory view of the AFL and one that, despite being anti-communist as well, was flexible enough to tolerate contact and a

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[33] ICFTU, South America – General, 5319, General Correspondence, Trifón Gomez to J.H. Oldenbroek, 18 Mar. 1953.

[34] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5373, Correspondence with/on the Rio Office, Historico [n.d.]; Joviano de Araújo to J.H. Oldenbroek, 16 Aug. 1954.

[35] Steinbach, "Regional Organizations," 17; Kenneth Erickson and Patrick Peppe, "Dependent Capitalist Development, U.S. Foreign Policy, and Repression of the Working Class in Chile and Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives*, 3 (1976): 34.

[36] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5366, General Correspondence, Arturo Jáuregui Hurtado to J.H. Oldenbroek, 13 Sept. 1952.

working relationship with the communists under certain circumstances. For AFL and later AFL-CIO leaders, the latter position was unacceptable and the policy they pursued was one that rejected any contact with both communists themselves and any who were regarded as fellow-travelers.[37]

If, at the level of ICFTU, there were disputes between different approaches to the communists, the official views defended by the ORIT office in Brazil were wholly determined by the notion of "free trade unions" promoted by the AFL. In practice, the AFL advocated that contact with, and assistance, training and financial resources could only be directed at trade unionists who not only were staunchly anti-communist but were also prepared to openly confront the communists and other sections of organized labor allied with them in the trade unions. As was shown in the cases of Italy, France, Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom, the success of ICFTU was largely dependent upon the existence of non-communist labor groups with at least a certain degree of support among the rank and file. For internal reasons, European socialists had also considered the united front with the communists that had prevailed during World War II to be no longer functional nor necessary.[38] If such "moderate" or "free trade union" groups were found in Brazil and Latin America, they could be fostered by the ICFTU's regional body. Otherwise, the task would be a formidable and more complex one: to create, almost from scratch, a cadre of "moderate" trade unionists who could be an alternative to the left-wingers. In this respect, the options available to the ICFTU in Brazil were much more limited than those in Europe, as we will see in the next sections.

ORIT and Brazilian allies

The main supporters of the ICFTU in Brazil were the presidents and members of the official national federations and confederations, which were organized by trade. Most of these trade unionists were known as *pelegos*, a Brazilian term that refers to labor officials with close ties to

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[37] Carew, "Towards," 240-42; Romero, *United States*, 8-13. AFL and CIO merged in December 1955 but former AFL officials such as George Meany and Jay Lovestone set the tone of the policy towards Latin America pursued by the new trade union organization. See Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther*, 332-33.

[38] Carew, *Labour*, chs. 2 and 5; Lutz Niethammer, "Structural Reform and a Compact for Growth: Conditions for a United Labor Union Movement in Western Europe after the Collapse of Fascism", in *The Cold War in Europe. Era of a Divided Continent*, ed. Charles Maier (3rd. edn., Princeton, Markus Wiener, 1996), 271-312.

government and management and who in fact did not promote the interests of the working classes.[39] Many of these *pelegos* took charge of the official trade unions during the *Estado Novo* (New State) dictatorship (November 1937- October 1945). After the Second World War and the end of the dictatorship, these old-guard trade unionists took over the new state and national federations as well as national confederations, "largely as a result of the support of the Ministry of Labor during the Dutra administration", as Robert Alexander pointed out.[40] Three Brazilian representatives to the London conference in November/December 1949 which set up the ICFTU came from the ranks of the old-guard trade unionists: Deocleciano Cavalcanti, José Sanches Duran, and Luiz Menossi. All of them had close contacts with the AFL leaders during the 1950s and even before.[41] The most outstanding old-guard trade unionist was Cavalcanti, who as early as 1946 had been selected as AFL's corresponding secretary in Brazil.[42] Cavalcanti was chosen by the Dutra government to be the first president of the CNTI in 1947, a position he was able to maintain for a long time, even when facing fierce opposition during the 1950s, as we will see later.

Apart from the old-guard trade unionists, the ICFTU/ORIT attempted to attract a new generation of non-communist labor leaders emerging in the 1950s. Both ORIT and the U.S. government's "Point Four" established training schemes for trade unionists who should form a strong "free-trade union movement" and prevent the taking over of labor organizations by the communists and other left-wingers in underdeveloped countries. Labor leaders and potential leaders were chosen to visit the United States and undertake an intensive program in labor-management relations, collective bargaining and political education. As stated by the Mutual Security Agency in 1954, the objective of the exchange program was to provide training and give participants "the opportunity to observe at firsthand United States social and industrial conditions and the functioning of our own free trade unions". The labor program also involved a number of

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[39] Rodrigues, *Sindicato*, 151-54.

[40] Alexander, *History*, 100; Harding, "Political History", 326-27.

[41] Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 77; NARA, H.S. Hammond, Quarterly Labor Report – Second Quarter 1951, 24 Jul. 1951, RG 59, 832.06/7-2451, Enclosure: W.T. Briggs, Labor conditions in the São Paulo consular district – Second Quarter – 1951.

[42] Romualdi, *Presidents*, 274.

U.S. technicians "working either with labor ministries or with productivity centers to raise the efficiency of production methods". Overall the labor program aimed to "strengthening the various countries as a bulwark against communism".[43] ORIT had its own training program, but it was always closely connected with the one administered by the U.S. government under Point Four.[44]

The training of labor leaders conducted by ORIT and U.S. agencies were not very effective at least in Brazil. Several U.S. trainees ended up having a difficult time keeping their positions in local trade unions after returning.[45] Besides, there was no guarantee that the trainees would follow the line established by their sponsors. Perhaps the most noteworthy example of this was Clodesmidt Riani. An electrician from Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, he was one of the new trade union leaders who came to national attention at the end of the 1950s. Riani was a trainee of the Point Four program for labor leaders and spent three months in the United States in early 1960. He was clearly impressed by the courses, visits and contacts there. Several years later, he declared about the training program that "we were very happy to participate, it was something very serious". Riani also agreed with the anti-communist orientation of the courses he had to attend and showed a very positive view of the U.S. trade unions which he and his colleagues visited, including the AFL-CIO. Even so he never supported the ICFTU/ORIT members in Brazil. Rather, as a member of the left-wing section of the Brazilian Labor Party, Riani became the president of CNTI and of the General Workers Command (CGT or *Comando Geral dos Trabalhadores*) in 1962 in an alliance with the Communist Party trade unionists and other groups.[46]

Even the relations between the ORIT office and its allied trade unionists were never smooth. The first issue that strained relations between them was the lack of support that federation and confederation officials had among the rank and file. Their close links with the

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[43] Mutual Security Agency, "Report to Congress on the Mutual Security Program for the Six Months Ended June 30, 1954," 53.

[44] Alexander, "Labor," 48; Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 75.

[45] Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 76-82.

[46] See Hilda Paula and Nilo Campos, eds., *Clodesmidt Riani: Trajetória* (Juiz de Fora, Editora Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, 2005), 163-65, 170-9, 206-68, 260-62.

Estado Novo dictatorship and later with the hard-line labor policy adopted by the Dutra government tended to make the leaders of official federations and confederations quite suspect in the eyes of workers. The lack of grassroots support by their traditional Brazilian allies, and the failure of younger trade unionists sympathetic to ORIT to expand their influence among the rank-and-file, became a serious problem for the ICFTU and its plans to consolidate a representative section of the labor movement. According to a confidential report by an ICFTU envoy to Charles Millard (ICFTU Director of Regional Organization), instead of increasing the number of its affiliates, the ORIT office in Brazil was seeing a decline in the number of organizations which contributed to its daily business. And so it was that by 1957, four years after it had opened, the only members of the ORIT office in Brazil which were still paying their dues regularly were the Confederation of Commercial Workers, the Confederation of Industrial Workers and the Confederation of Land Transport Workers. The office was still located at the CNTI headquarters, but the only trade unionist employed full-time had no secretarial support. There were no propaganda campaigns, and the circulation of the office's only publication, the quite simple *Boletim Sindical*, had been temporarily suspended in November 1956.[47]

The second issue that strained relations between the ORIT office and their allies in Brazil was the question of how to deal with the trade unionists from the Communist Party. From the very beginning, the foreign ICFTU officials in charge of Brazil complained about the soft line taken by the local allies towards the communists. Worse still, the presidents of federations and confederations grew increasingly worried about their position in the labor movement and some of them began to cooperate with the communist Left. Even trade unionists sympathetic to U.S. trade unions and Point Four trainees refused to alienate the communists participating in the trade union movement. Clodesmidt Riani, for example, took part of ICFTU's 7th Congress in Berlin, in 1962, but diverged from the meaning of "free trade unions". According to Riani, "we wanted free trade unions, but not in their [ICFTU] sense, I respected the communists, I am an open person".[48] In

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[47] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5373, Correspondence with/on the Rio Office, Memorandum (Confidential) to C. Millard, 20 Jul. 1957. British labor officials also acknowledged the weakness of the ICFTU office in Brazil: according to the Labour Attaché, the office had no "influence over the constituency syndical organisations". PRO LAB 13/1016, R. Morris, Report on labour and social developments in Brazil for six months ended June 1958, 16 Sept. 1958.

[48] Paula and Campos, *Clodesmidt Riani*, 226-27. See other examples in Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 77-78.

fact, association with the ICFTU and the ORIT office came to be seen as a liability by local allied trade unionists. A report by Herman, an ICFTU envoy to Brazil in 1957, illustrates this point. During his visit Herman found the situation deteriorated and received practically no cooperation from the local trade union officials – except for Syndulpho Pequeno, of the National Federation of Urban Transport Workers. Herman met Rafael Otero Borlaff, representative of ICFTU/ORIT in the South Area, and the latter painted a very pessimistic picture of the allies. According to Herman, "with the exception of Pequeno and his friends, the others seem to be afraid of showing too much sympathy with ORIT and the ICFTU". He went on to say that most allied trade unionists were "more concerned about not stirring-up any criticism or attacks from the communists than about carrying out an organizational program in cooperation with our office".[49]

ICFTU/ORIT local allies felt increasingly threatened by the growing influence of the Left, independents and other political groups. During the Vargas government (January 1951 – August 1954) and, particularly, during the Juscelino Kubitscheck government (March 1956 – March 1961), a non-interventionist labor policy allowed organized workers to gain strength and expand its influence.[50] Different groups competed for hegemony in the trade unions, among them socialists, catholics, communists and independents. Moreover, new politicians struggled to inherit the legacy of Vargas, who committed suicide in August 1954 during a serious political crisis. The best example of this type of politician was João Goulart, who became Minister of Labor during the Vargas government, Vice-President in both Kubitscheck and Jânio Quadros administrations, and finally President in 1961 after Quadros's sudden resignation.[51] Goulart exerted strong influence over a major faction of the Brazilian Labor Party and became a key actor in the Brazilian labor movement in the 1950s and early 1960s. Other politicians from different political parties, such as Jânio Quadros and Adhemar de Barros, who also made headway in the labor

[49] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5367, General Correspondence, Herman to C.H. Millard, 17 Dec. 1957.

[50] Rodrigues, *Sindicato*, 534-36.

[51] President Jânio Quadros, elected at the end of 1960 to succeed Juscelino Kubitscheck and sworn in in January 1961, resigned on 25 August 1961, apparently expecting to be returned to the presidency with wider powers. See Edgar Carone, *A República Liberal. Evolução Política, 1945-1964* (São Paulo, Difel, 1985), 160-90.

movement, competed for the working class votes.[52] The strategy of the different groups was to seek alliances in order to take control of the official trade unions. Moreover, these groups established parallel organizations, the most notable of which was the Inter-Syndical Unity Pact (PUI, *Pacto de Unidade Inter-Sindical*), set up in São Paulo in 1953.[53] These strategies paid off and soon the main positions in both official trade unions and parallel organizations were controlled by the Left. In this context, the old-guard trade unionists and other allies of the ICFTU in Brazil struggled to maintain their entrenched positions in the official federations and confederations, and were not successful in controlling an appreciable number of new trade unions.

The first major challenge to the trade unionists entrenched in the federations and confederations came in June 1953, with the appointment by Vargas of João Goulart to the Ministry of Labor. Goulart soon took steps to purge the old-guard trade unionists and to replace them with loyal officials. Deocleciano Cavalcanti and others reacted by traveling around and seeking direct contact with medium-rank trade unionists.[54] Goulart's attempts to remove the old-guard trade unionists were not immediately successful, but even after his resignation in February 1954 he continued to exert the influence of his Labor Party group in the trade unions.[55] Later in 1957, the CNTI, led by Deocleciano Cavalcanti and Ary Campista, made significant changes in its traditional way of functioning, which had been characterized by unaccountability, lack of transparency and even secretiveness. In what seems to have been a step directly sanctioned by the Uruguayan trade unionist Hermes R. Horne, ICFTU's Chief of Relations with Latin America, the CNTI set up regional consultative councils in which the affiliated trade unions could have a voice in the Confederation's decisions. These regional councils were explicitly designed to broaden the basis for participation in the CNTI in an attempt to confront the challenge from the Left. Confidential instructions were passed to CNTI delegates to use the councils to fight the

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[52] French, *Brazilian Workers's ABC*, ch. 8; Alzira Abreu *et alli,* eds., *Dicionário Histórico-Bibliográfico Brasileiro Pós-1930* (Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 2001), vol. IV, 4819-31; Regina Sampaio, *Adhemar de Barros e o PSP* (São Paulo, Global, 1982).

[53] Colistete, *Labour Relations*, ch. 2; Rodrigues, *Sindicato*, 163-64; *Notícias de Hoje*, 2 Sept. 1954, p. 2.

[54] Alexander, *History*, 98, 112.

[55] *Ibid*., 98.

communists. These guidelines advised delegates to oppose any manifestation beyond strict economic issues and to mount a campaign against inter-union parallel organizations.[56] Yet there is evidence that the plan backfired. According to Djalma Mariano, the trade unionist who replaced Joviano Araújo in the ORIT office in September 1956, the end effect of the CNTI regional consultative councils was to open the door for communist participation in the assemblies.[57]

Under such conditions, it is no wonder that the gap between the ICFTU and the local allies widened during the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s. Djalma Mariano relentlessly complained about the conciliatory stance adopted by the heads of federations and confederations. One of his main targets was Ary Campista, an old-guard CNTI official who was often accused of having the closest ties with the members of the Communist Party.[58] And it seems that the charge was not unfounded. Timothy Harding, for example, pointed out that in May 1955 Campista made a deal with Roberto Morena, the communist labor leader, to work together in the trade unions – though the agreement was short-lived due to pressures from the U.S. Labor Attaché and domestic anti-communist groups. Campista was also president of the Permanent Council of Trade Union Organizations (CPOS), a parallel inter-trade union organization largely controlled by the communist activists, set up in Rio de Janeiro in 1956.[59]

Accusations of cooperation with the Left were leveled at other allies as well, including Deocleciano Cavalcanti, the president of the CNTI. According to Djalma Mariano, nearly all local ICFTU associates, while officially anti-communist, were not in practice, "because their election depended either on agreements with the communists or on the support by Jango [as João Goulart was informally known]".[60] For his part, Rafael Otero Borlaff reported to ICFTU

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[56] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5368, General Correspondence, Hermes R. Horne to Djalma Angelo Mariano [n.d.].

[57] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5368, Correspondence with/on the Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Indústria, Djalma Mariano to J.H. Oldenbroek, 13 Apr. 1957. Araújo resigned after a series of conflicts with Jáuregui and Romualdi.

[58] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5368, General Correspondence, Djalma A. Mariano to Ary Campista, 20 Jun. 1958.

[59] Harding, "Political History", 329-30.

[60] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5380, Correspondence with/on the Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Indústria, Djalma A. Mariano to J.H. Oldenbroek, 13 Apr. 1957.

headquarters that the CNTI was not behaving with "loyalty and responsibility" and that he was convinced that very little progress could be made "with this sort of collaborators". According to Borlaff, the situation created by the CNTI was so disgusting that it made him feel sick.[61] The situation came to a head in 1959, when allied trade unionists began to boycott the ORIT office. For example, CNTI's Executive Council decided to declare Mariano *persona non grata* and to demand his resignation as a condition for the continued affiliation to ICFTU and ORIT. The reason for this was an article published in the ORIT magazine, criticizing the CNTI for "favoring communist elements".[62]

In practice, the ORIT office had already stopped functioning. At the end of 1960 the new president of ICFTU, Omer Becu, warned that the "lack of activities in Brazil has put us in a difficult position" and that there was urgent need to reform the ICFTU in this country.[63] With this end in mind, Becu and Horne for ICFTU and Cavalcanti, Pequeno, Parmigiani and Campista for the confederations met in Washington, D.C., in September 1960 to draw up an emergency plan to rescue ICFTU activities in Brazil. It was decided that one practical measure should be the move of the ORIT office from the CNTI headquarters to more appropriate premises. The reason stated was to protect the office from criticism by the communist trade unionists. Moreover, a central committee was to take charge of the ORIT activities in Brazil, made up of the presidents of national confederations, a special representative of ORIT and the head of the Rio Office. In other words, local trade unionists would finally be in the majority on the executive committee, as they had been urging for some time. Finally, to strengthen ORIT activities, regional sub-committees would be created in the major states: São Paulo, Bahia, Pernambuco, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul.[64]

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[61] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5368, General Correspondence, Rafael Otero Borlaff to Hermes Horne, 20 Jan. 1958.

[62] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5374, Correspondence with/on the Rio Office, Djalma Angelo Mariano to Hermes R. Horne, 2 Oct. 1959.

[63] This situation of the ORIT office in Brazil would be in stark contrast with what happened in Ecuador at about the same time. According to Magaly García, ORIT policies in Ecuador "prompted the development of relatively strong networks that facilitated the establishment of a new labor association" in 1962. García, *Liberal Workers*, 164-5.

[64] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5375, Correspondence with/on the Rio Office, Omer Becu to A.S. Madariaga, 11 Sept. 1960; Hermes Horne to Omer Becu, 23 Sept. 1960.

The organizational restructuring of the ORIT office came too late to save it from redundance. As a matter of fact, it is likely that the main reasons for the minor role of the ORIT office in Brazil were more to do with political orientations and alliances than a lack of resources or organizational failure. Moreover, there was nothing like the Marshall Plan to leverage the position of the ICFTU's Brazilian allies.

ORIT and governments

One point that still has to be clarified is why the ICFTU could not find an appreciable number of reliable representative partners in Brazil, amongst, for example, the middle-rank trade unionists who came to power after the repressive years of the Dutra government. The first reason seems to be related to the ORIT and AFL-CIO view, which placed the struggle against communism above any other consideration when choosing their internal allies. In the context of postwar Brazil, this option meant building up a relationship with conservative groups of politicians and trade unionists, many of whom owed their existence to the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. In their contacts with governments and trade unionists, ICFTU and AFL-CIO members saw no problem in sharing authoritarian views which conspired against the consolidation of representative institutions: in fact, on several occasions, international labor officials and their domestic allies expressed their satisfaction with anti-labor measures devised by the Ministry of Labor. In other instances, ICFTU local associates followed a strategy which clashed with what the AFL-CIO officials advocated as the proper policy for fostering "free trade unions" in Latin America. These issues can be illustrated by examining the relations of the ORIT office with governments and the different groups in the labor movement.

As already pointed out, relations between U.S. trade unionists and the Dutra government were close, though not without conflict. Romualdi, for example, did not consider the repression unleashed from May 1947 by the Dutra government against the labor movement as a step backwards; rather he regarded the demise of the trade unions and the Left as an opportunity to be

seized, and intensified his contacts with the Ministry of Labor to obtain support for the Inter-American Confederation of Workers.[65]

A few years later, José de Segadas Viana became Minister of Labor (September 1951 to June 1953) and this allowed for a new relationship with the international trade unions in the Vargas government. Segadas Viana was a labor lawyer and Brazilian Labor Party politician who had been in contact with the ICFTU. Appointed to the Minister of Labor, Segadas Viana showed a keen interest in the productivity programs carried out in Europe under the Marshall Plan and wanted to bring a similar approach to Brazil. He asked the U.S. Embassy for help in promoting the drive for productivity among employers and workers, and negotiated the establishment of a Joint Brazil-United States Productivity Center. According to the U.S. Labor Attaché, Segadas Viana "expressed the firm belief that Brazil should give serious attention to increase productivity with the advice and guidance of the United States Agencies that have helped to increase productivity in Western Europe".[66] Segadas Viana also regarded the training of labor leaders as an effective way of forming a cadre of trade union leaders who could cooperate with management in raising productivity and be an alternative to the Left. In another interview with Irving Salert, the U.S. Labor Attaché, Segadas Viana pointed out that his Ministry of Labor was engaged in training anti-communist labor leaders. One of the schemes was carried out by an Institute for Social and Cultural Studies, an initiative of the Ministry of Labor funded with resources from the Syndical Social Fund. According to Segadas Viana, the Institute already had 127 trainees from 14 trade unions in Rio de Janeiro and was going to start up a similar program in São Paulo in June 1953, with an enrolment of 100 trade unionists.[67] It was also at this time that the labor exchange program under Point Four began to send Brazilian labor leaders to the United States.[68]

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[65] Erickson and Peppe, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 38; Romualdi, *Presidents*, 272; Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 67, 70-71.

[66] NARA, I. Salert, Conversation with Segadas Viana, 29 May 1952, RG 59, 832.06/5-2952; I. Salert, National production campaign of the Ministry of Labor, Production and Commerce, 5 Mar. 1952, RG 59, 832.06/3-552. For an analysis of the productivity programs implemented by Segadas Viana and others, see Colistete, *Labour Relations*, ch. 6.

[67] NARA, I. Salert, Quarterly Labor Report – First Quarter 1955, 5 Jun. 1953, RG 59, 832.06/6-553.

[68] Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 74-76.

In any case, the favorable situation for the ICFTU within the Brazilian government soon came to an end, when João Goulart, then president of the Brazilian Labor Party, replaced Segadas Viana at the Ministry of Labor. Goulart sought to nominate his associates to government agencies in charge of labor and welfare issues and to promote a trade union group which could establish a strong foothold in the labor movement.[69] There were two main aspects to his strategy: first, to remove the old-guard trade unionists, even though several of them were also affiliated to the Brazilian Labor Party; second, to work out an alliance with the Communist Party members to take over the major trade unions. At the same time, Goulart sought to present himself and his associates as an alternative to the communists' growing influence in the labor movement. By following this line, Goulart was at pains to ensure his allegiance with the "free trade unions" and with the United States' interests in Latin America.[70] Despite his assurances, however, Goulart was never trusted neither by the ICFTU and AFL-CIO trade unionists nor by the U.S. Department of State. His association with the Communist Party for tactical reasons was seen as intolerable and a demonstration that he was not a viable alternative for the consolidation of truly "free" trade unions in Brazil. This attitude was the direct result of the non-conciliatory stance favored by AFL-CIO and which was dominant in Latin America and Brazil at the time.

The ICFTU officials also sought to work with officials inside the Ministry of Labor who were suspicious of or simply opposed Goulart. That was the case of Hugo de Faria who, despite of being appointed Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labor by the former Minister Segadas Viana, was retained in the job by Goulart. Faria's strengthened position was regarded by the U.S. Labor Attaché as representing a victory for the moderate sections in the Vargas government and even for the National Confederation of Industry, the country's official organization of industrialists.[71] Faria regularly met ICFTU officials such as Jacob Potofsky, and the U.S. Labor

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[69] Kenneth Erickson, *Sindicalismo no Processo Político no Brasil* (São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1979), ch. 4; Maria Celina D'Araújo, *Sindicatos, Carisma e Poder: o PTB de 1945-1965* (Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 1996), 91-100.

[70] NARA, I. Salert, Discussion with minister and other officials of the Labor Ministry in conjunction with visit of Gerald Heaney, 21 Jan. 1954, RG 59, 832.06/1-2154.

[71] NARA, I. Salert, Director of National Labor Department to continue in post, 6 Jul. 1953, RG 59, 832.06/7-653.

Attaché in Rio de Janeiro.[72] When Goulart was removed by Vargas after a serious political crisis at the end of February 1954, Faria was appointed as the interim Minister of Labor. One of his first measures was to declare that he would regularly meet with the presidents of federations and confederations, thus ending the disputes that marked Goulart's term of office. In March 1954 the Ministry of Labor issued Ministerial Order (*Portaria*) No. 20, which gave the government power to intervene in labor organizations if they were deemed to be used for subversive activities. As a result, Faria set up panels of Ministry of Labor officials to assess charges of communist activities in trade unions. Trade unionists of the top-level organizations allied to ICFTU immediately lent their support to Faria and his interventionist Ministerial Order.[73] The communists, in turn, protested against the measure and denounced the *Portaria*, claiming that it relied on "supervision by American technicians".[74] It seems, nonetheless, that the new orientation of the Ministry of Labor had no practical effect, not least because of Vargas's suicide in August 1954.

The ICFTU and its local associates also hailed the policies of the new Minister of Labor, Napoleão de Alencastro Guimarães, who was appointed during the interim government of Café Filho (August 1954 – November 1955). Like his predecessor, Guimarães committed himself to expelling the communists and fellow travelers from the official trade unions and soon declared a ban on all inter-union organizations which were not officially recognized by the government – the Inter-Syndical Unity Pact, for example. Guimarães also declared he would work closely both with ICFTU and the officials of federations and confederations, whom he considered to be "honest labor leaders who sincerely [sought] to improve the lot of the working classes".[75] Joviano de Araújo approvingly described the repression initiated by the Café Filho government in a way that became typical of ICFTU officials in Brazil: "the Minister of Labor is acting forcefully against the movements inspired by or carried out by the communists, in the syndical area". As an example, Araújo quoted Ministerial Order No. 20, which in his words outlawed "Inter-syndical

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[72] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5366, General Correspondence, Jacob S. Potofsky to J.H. Oldenbroek, 26 Feb. 1954.

[73] NARA, I. Salert, Ministerial Order No. [n.a.], 7 Apr. 1954, RG 59, 832.06/4-754.

[74] *Notícias de Hoje*, 27 Mar. 1954.

[75] NARA, I. Salert, Visit with Labor, Industry and Commerce Minister Alencastro Guimarães, 7 Apr. 1954, RG 59, 832.06/9-2154; Harding, "Political History", 281-86.

commissions and factory committees set up by the reds, as well as other similar organizations of a clear subversive character".[76] There was no doubt that the recently founded Brazilian ORIT office followed the non-conciliatory line defended by the AFL.

The election of Kubitschek and Goulart in 1955, to the posts of President and Vice-President respectively, halted Guimarães's plans and again put the ICFTU and the top-level trade unionists on the defensive. From his privileged position, Goulart was able to control the Ministry of Labor machinery during the entire Kubitschek administration and beyond.[77] During his term as Vice-President, Goulart attempted to gain the goodwill of the ICFTU and U.S. labor officials. While in Brazil for the inauguration of President Kubitschek, the head of the U.S. delegation, Vice-President Richard Nixon, visited the CNTI headquarters and met with 175 officials of federations and confederations. He also had private talks with Goulart and invited him to visit the United States as a guest of the U.S. government. In his conversations with Nixon, Goulart reaffirmed that he was an anti-communist devoted "to eliminating the communist threat" in Brazil. He remarked that communist influence in Brazilian trade unions was facilitated by the lack of preparation of the labor leaders. In separate talks with William Doherty (AFL-CIO member of the U.S. delegation), Goulart went on to ask assistance from U.S. organizations, ICFTU and ORIT "in developing a stronger and better leadership in Brazil and thus help eliminate the communist threat", as reported by the U.S. Labor Attaché.[78] A few days later, the newly-appointed Minister of Labor, José Parsifal Barroso, also showed his willingness to cooperate with ORIT's education program for labor leaders, "gave complete approval to the program and activities of the ICFTU-ORIT in Brazil and urged that the two above mentioned organizations intensif[ied] their activities in assisting Brazilian labor".[79]

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[76] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5366, General Correspondence, Joviano de Araujo to J.H. Oldenbroek, 30 Sept. 1954.

[77] Maria Victória Benevides, *O PTB e o Trabalhismo. Partido e Sindicato em São Paulo, 1945-1964* (São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1989), 105-6.

[78] NARA, I. Salert, The Quarterly Labor Report – First Quarter 1956, 25 Apr. 1956, RG 59, 832.06/4-2556.

[79] Ibid. Parsifal Barroso's remarks were made to Salert in a private interview.

Despite these reassurances, ICFTU and ORIT officials continued to be at odds with the policy followed by the Ministry of Labor controlled by Goulart. In an analysis of the communist influence on the labor movement in Brazil, an ICFTU report possibly written in 1956 complained about the lack of support from the government in the struggle of the "free trade unions". The rather blunt solution presented in the document was that the government resorted to Law No. 1,802 (5 January 1953) regarding crimes against the State and the Social and Political Order, as a measure to restrict action by Communist Party members in the trade unions.[80] Nevertheless, apart from the strictures presented in reports and letters to its headquarters, the ORIT office could only stand by helplessly, watching the concerted action (and the conflicts) of Goulart's Labor Party faction, the communists and other left-wing groups. Its policy of non-cooperation with the Left meant that the ORIT office was excluded from negotiations among the different sections of the trade union movement.[81]

Having been re-elected Vice-President in the 1960 elections, Goulart served only a few months (from 31 January to 25 August 1961), when President Jânio Quadros abruptly resigned. After a serious political crisis that costed him a term as President in a parliamentary system (from 7 September 1961) that limited the President's right to govern, Goulart won a plebiscite (with a five-to-one margin) and finally became full-fledged President in January 1963 – but his presidency was short-lived, as he was overthrown by a military-coup in April 1964.[82] Throughout this period, Goulart pursued the same line that had raised so much concern among the ICFTU and U.S. labor officials during his period as Minister of Labor: he tried to replace the old-guard officials from the top-level labor organizations; consolidate his alliance with the Left and to present himself as an alternative to the communists in both the labor movement and in politics in general.

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[80] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5367, General Correspondence, O comunismo e o movimento sindical [1956?].

[81] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5368, General Correspondence, Memorandum (Confidential), 1 Apr. 1958.

[82] See Leacock, *Requiem*; Mário Victor, *Cinco Anos que Abalaram o Brasil: de Jânio Quadros ao Marechal Castelo Branco* (Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1965); Argelina Figueiredo, *Democracia ou Reformas? Alternativas Democráticas à Crise Política, 1961-1964* (São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 1993); Caio N. Toledo, *O Governo Goulart e o Golpe de 64* (16th ed., Brasiliense, São Paulo, 1996); Luiz Moniz Bandeira, *O Governo João Goulart. As Lutas Sociais no Brasil, 1961-1964* (2nd ed., Rio de Janeiro, Revan, 2001).

ORIT and the united trade union movement

A further reason why the ICFTU was not able to consolidate an alternative orientation in the Brazilian labor movement was that the majority of the non-communist trade unionists tended to see an alliance with the Communist Party as less harmful to their strategic interests than a close relationship with either the foreign trade unionists of ICFTU or the old-guard officials who were associated with the *Estado Novo* apparatus. Among the non-communist trade unionists there were socialists, Christian-democrats, *trabalhistas* and independents who came from or had been engaged with the grassroots movement; many of them had also been persecuted and expelled from official organizations during the Dutra government. There was no reason why they should not see the communists as allies in their efforts to organize workers in the trade unions, despite their different views on Brazilian society. Moreover, the communists showed themselves to be quite effective in their efforts to attract the rank and file and to influence trade unions by adopting a stance in defense of better working and living conditions, as well as gradual social reforms. Even during the period of harsh repression of labor organizations during the Dutra government, the members of the Communist Party managed to continue their activities in factories and urban centers. With the political liberalization after 1951 – during the Vargas government – the communist trade unionists were able to forge alliances to build up a united trade union movement similar to that of the immediate postwar years.[83]

As has been discussed earlier, when faced with the growing strength of what turned out to be a united Left, even the ICFTU local affiliates began to collaborate with other political groups, including the Communist Party, as soon as they felt their positions at risk.[84] The attempt by local ICFTU associates to forge new alliances can be explained by the fact that the Left was clearly dominant in the Brazilian trade union movement by the end of the 1950s.[85] Alongside Goulart's Labor Party group and the Communist Party, there were trade unionists who belonged to other

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[83] Alexander, *History*, 145; Colistete, *Labour relations*, chs 2, 4; Costa, *Em Busca da Memória*, ch. 3; Marco A. Santana, *Homens Partidos. Comunistas e Sindicatos no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, Boitempo, 2001), 71-87.

[84] ICFTU, South America – Brazil, 5367, General Correspondence, Rafael Otero Borlaff to [n.a.], Información sobre Brasil (Confidential), 8 Nov. 1958.

[85]

political groups, such as the Brazilian Socialist Party and the Christian-Democratic Party, which made gains in the labor movement.[86] Other smaller groups brought together dissidents of the major parties, such as the Trade Union Renewal Movement (*Movimento Renovador Sindical*) which originated from a split in the Communist Party in 1957, and the Independent Socialist League (*Liga Socialista Independente*), formed by ex-communists, socialists and independents in 1956.[87] These groups criticized the practices of the Communist Party in the labor movement and presented themselves as an alternative both to the communist and the old-guard trade unionists. Criticisms were leveled against the alleged manipulation of labor organizations and the support given to the official syndical structure by the Communist Party.[88] Attempts to create organizations not associated with the Communist Party took place as early as 1950. For example, after years of meetings, socialists and independents created the Trade Union Orientation Movement (*Movimento de Orientação Sindical*) in early 1953.[89] Religious activists gathered in the Catholic Workers Circles (*Círculos Católicos Operários*), the Catholic Worker Youth (*Juventude Operária Católica* or JOC) and other similar organizations all over the country with the declared aim of becoming an anti-communist alternative in the trade union movement.[90]

Sometimes, trade union leaders were loosely linked with political parties while maintaining strong connections at grassroots level. These leaders often came to the fore during the years 1945-1947 or in the early 1950s, when they sided with the opposition to the old-guard officials who had taken control of the trade unions during either the *Estado Novo* dictatorship or the anti-labor Dutra administration. When interventions were lifted and there were free elections, the new cadre of trade unionists was able to oust the old-guard officials by successively winning the syndical elections. Two examples of these new trade union leaders were Nelson Rustici, elected president of the São Paulo Textile Workers Trade Union in 1952, and Remo Forli, elected

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[86] Alexander, *History*, 131-32.

[87] Alexander, *History*, chs. 3-4; Harding, "Political History", 330-43; Ronald Chilcote, *O Partido Comunista Brasileiro: Conflito e Integração, 1922-1972* (Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 1982), 118-23.

[88] Harding, "Political History", 339; *Ação Socialista*, Dec. 1958, p. 2.

[89] *Folha Socialista*, 20 Jul. 1953, p. 5; 5 Aug. 1953, p. 7.

[90] Alexander, *History*, 125; Heloísa Martins, *Igreja e Movimento Operário no ABC* (São Paulo, Hucitec, 1994), ch. 2.

president of the São Paulo Metalworkers Trade Union in 1953.[91] Forli, a member of the Brazilian Socialist Party from 1954, was defeated by a slate backed by the Communist Party in the Metalworker Trade Union's elections in 1955. Later, however, Forli was re-elected twice, in 1957 and 1959, with the support of the communist trade unionists. Rustici was affiliated to the Brazilian Labor Party and was part of the "renewal" movement which opposed both the communists and the old-guard trade unionists in the Textile Trade Union, although he was also allied to the Communist Party members on several occasions.[92] Later in the 1950s and in the early 1960s, other trade unionists with the same profile, such as Benedito Cerqueira, Salvador Lossaco, Dante Pellacani and Clodesmidt Riani, ascended to positions of prominence in the Brazilian labor movement.[93] The same happened with Communist Party trade unionists. Alongside well-known trade unionists such as Roberto Morena and Osvaldo Pacheco da Silva, a new cadre of communist labor leaders such as Hércules Correia dos Reis, Raphael Martinelli, Luiz Tenório de Lima and Lyndolpho Silva emerged during the 1950s.[94]

Despite divergences and heated disputes, most of the new non-communist labor leadership followed the strategy of a united trade union movement defended by the Communist Party so that they often joined together for the elections of trade unions, federations and confederations. Throughout the 1950s, the Left was able to win over most of the influential trade unions and parallel inter-syndical organizations, often with significant influence from Communist

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[91] Joel Wolfe, "There Should be Dignity: São Paulo's Women Textile Workers and the 'Strike of 300,000'," in *Workers' Control in Latin America, 1930-1979*, ed. Jonathan Brown (Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1997): 203.

[92] Alexander, *History*, 125; Benevides, *PTB*, p. 117; Harding, "Political History", 340-43; Márcia Almeida, "O Sindicato dos Têxteis de São Paulo: História, 1933-1957" (Master diss., Univ. of São Paulo, 1981), ch. 3; PRO LAB 13/1243, L. Michell, Visit to São Paulo, 17th to 21st Dec., 1956, 7 Jan. 1957.

[93] Benevides, *PTB*, chs. 5-6; Abreu *et alli*, *Dicionário*, IV, 4521-23 (Dante Pellacani); II, 1320-21 (Benedito Cerqueira); Paula and Campos, *Clodesmidt Riani*. Cerqueira, Lossaco and Riani were associated with the Brazilian Labour Party; Pellacani was a former member of the Communist Party who left the party at the end of the 1950s, and became a major supporter of Jânio Quadros in the trade union movement.

[94] Chilcote, *Partido Comunista Brasileiro*, 225-38; Harding, "Political History", 353-54; Moisés Vinhas, *O Partidão. A Luta por um Partido de Massas, 1922-1974* (São Paulo, Hucitec, 1992), 191-92; Cliff Welch, *The Seed was Planted. The São Paulo Roots of Brazil's Rural Labor Movement* (Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Univ. Press 1998). The growing influence of the Communist Party trade unionists in Brazil in the early 1960s suggests that the following conclusion by Magaly García is not correct: "[f]rom this time on [1962] the communist labour leaders ceased to play a significant role in the Latin America trade union movement." García, *Liberal Workers*, 160.

Party activists.[95] At the end of the 1950s the Left turned its attention to the top-level federations and confederations, for example, during the First National Labor Conference on 29-30 March 1958. The Conference was formally called for by the three national confederations affiliated to the ICFTU, but the left-wing leaders, particularly Roberto Morena, emerged as major players at the meeting.[96] The next year, the confederations no longer even attempted to take the lead and the united Left ran the Second National Labor Conference (20-22 November 1959). The best Deocleciano Cavalcanti and Ary Campista could do was to negotiate the withdrawal of a motion that criticized the ICFTU. By this time, Cavalcanti and Campista were openly courting the Left in an attempt to survive. Syndulpho Pequeno and Angelo Parmigiani apparently opposed the strategy followed by the CNTI officials and urged the ICFTU to help them, but nothing could be done.[97]

However, the strategy adopted by the CNTI's old-guard was not enough to avoid their downfall. During the CNTI elections in November 1959, Cavalcanti managed to be re-elected president for another two-year term, but Campista was replaced as vice-president by Clodesmidt Riani.[98] Preparations for the Third Conference in 1960 dealt another blow to the ICFTU allies. Again, Cavalcanti could only negotiate the withdrawal of a proposal that on this occasion aimed to sever the ties between the Brazilian confederations and the ICFTU. Other proposals that interested the Left were maintained, including one that created a new central labor organization which would bring together all trade unions, federations and confederations in Brazil. The U.S. labor officials were dismayed by what they saw as a lack of will and strength of the local ICFTU allies during these episodes. John Fishburn, the U.S. Labor Attaché in Brazil since October 1957, asked plainly: "[w]hat can and is being done to limit the Communist influence? First as far as the

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[95] Alexander, *History*, 101-2, 123-6; The British Labour Attaché estimated that the communists controlled or had influence on one-third of the trade unions and six out of fifteen federations in São Paulo by 1958. PRO LAB 13/1016, R. Morris, Report on labour and social developments in Brazil during the six months ended December 1958, 18 Feb. 1959.

[96] NARA, J. Fishburn, Deterioration in leadership and anti-Communist unity of the three older labor confederations, 30 Jun. 1960, RG 59, 832.062/6-3060. Roberto Morena was one of the three trade unionists in charge of writing up the final report of the First Conference. *Tribuna Sindical*, Mar. 1958, 6, 8.

[97] NARA, J. Fishburn, Deterioration in Leadership and Anti-Communist Unity of the Three Older Labor Confederations, 30 Jun. 1960, RG 59, 832.062/6-3060.

[98] See Paula and Campos, *Clodesmidt Riani*, 163-65.

three ICFTC [sic] – ORIT affiliated Confederations are concerned, very little, and certainly nothing effective by themselves".[99]

In fact, the ICFTU's local allies were opposed to a new central trade union organization, but they could not avoid the inclusion of this item on the Third Conference's agenda. The ICFTU and ORIT sent a cadre of high-level representatives to Brazil to help the mobilization for the Conference, among them J.H. Oldenbroek, Secretary-General of ICFTU; Alfonso Sanchez Madariaga, Executive Secretary of ORIT; Manoel Pavon, Assistant Secretary for political affairs of ORIT; Daniel Benedict, Education Director of ORIT; and Morris Paladino, Special Representative of AFL-CIO (also a CIA official). A special training program for trade unionists was devised by Oldenbroek and Madariaga. The trainees were to travel around Brazil to prepare members of allied labor organizations for a coordinated and concerted action during the Conference. In addition to the political logistics involved, a large sum of money (amount undisclosed) was provided by ORIT for the travel expenses of non-communist delegates.[100] Foreign assistance, however, proved to be of no use. During the Conference in August 1960, the ICFTU allies clashed with the Left on the matter of launching a new central labor organization, and, led by Cavalcanti, 45 of the 2,500 delegates walked out of the meeting in protest.[101] Later, in the CNTI elections of 1961, Cavalcanti was at last beaten by Clodesmidt Riani, ending a fifteen-year term as president of the largest trade union organization in Brazil. In August 1962, the Fourth National Labor Conference unanimously set up the General Workers Command (CGT).[102]

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[99] NARA, J. Fishburn, Third National Labor Congress, 4 Aug. 1960, RG 59, 832.062/8-460.

[100] Ibid.; NARA, J.F. Shea, Obstruction of non-Communist labor participation in national congress, 3 Aug. 1960, RG 59, 832.062/8-360. For Palladino affiliation with CIA, see Agee, *Dentro da "Companhia"*, 207, 550.

[101] Telles, *Movimento*, 103-4; Welch, "Labor Internationalism", 81; Sérgio A. Costa, *O C.G.T. e as Lutas Sindicais Brasileiras, 1960-1964* (São Paulo, Grêmio Politécnico, 1981), 27-32; Lucília Delgado, *O Comando Geral dos Trabalhadores no Brasil, 1961-1964* (Petrópolis, Vozes, 1986), ch. 1; NARA, J.F. Shea, Goulart appears to have headed off split in São Paulo labor movement, RG 59, 832.062/8-3160.

[102] For the CNTI elections in 1962: Paula and Campos, *Clodesmidt Riani*, 206-8; Telles, *Movimento Sindical*, 238-42; Erickson, *Sindicalismo*, 148-49. For the setting up of the General Workers Command, Paula and Campos, *Clodesmitdt Riani*, 260-62; Costa, *CGT*, 43-8. John W.F. Dulles called the election of Riani at CNTI "the most important event of the Brazilian Republic's experiment with the parliamentary system". See John W.F Dulles. *Carlos Lacerda, Brazilian Crusader. The Years 1960-1977* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 79.

In a blunt but realistic 1958 assessment of the U.S. labor policy in Latin America, Ben S. Stephansky, a former U.S. Department Labor Attaché in Mexico City, stated that "[t]he failure of ORIT and ICFTU are the failures of a massive dream of a decade ago, when the free labor movement split away from the WFTU and formed its democratic center". Stephansky went on to point out that "[t]en years and many million dollars worth of expenditure later, the weapon has proved to be a disenchanting failure, particularly in the underdeveloped areas of the world, including Latin America". In particular, "[o]n ORIT alone, the American labor movement has invested well over a million dollars since 1951. In terms of new affiliates and extended influence, the investments have brought little return".[103]

The view that ORIT was a failure or at least seriously limited in its ability to promote the "free trade unions" in Latin America became mainstream among U.S. labor officials by the end of the 1950s. In the early 1960s, the U.S. government regarded the situation in Brazil as dangerous, and the strong influence on labor by the Brazilian Left was often raised as a serious issue by President Kennedy.[104] The conversations between Kennedy and Goulart during the Goulart's visit to the United States in April 1962 illustrate the point. Labor issues were brought into the discussion by Kennedy, who argued "that strong ties between U.S. and Latin American labor organizations [were] essential to the survival of democracy". Kennedy asked Goulart about "the possibility of Clodesmidt Riani and others trying to form a separate Latin American labor organization", to which Goulart responded that this had been attempted "but nothing concrete had happened". Goulart went on to say that he had already recommended to the U.S. Ambassador in Brazil, Lincoln Gordon, that there should be "a greater exchange of labor leaders between the countries", since "the Soviet Bloc countries [were] making a successful effort in wooing Latin American and Brazilian labor leaders". Goulart also complained about the interference of the U.S. Labor Attachés in the "affairs of the Brazilian labor organizations". In the end, Kennedy

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[103] NARA, B.S. Stephansky, The labor problem in Latin America, RG 59, Box 7, 832.062/8-3160.

[104] Stephen Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World. John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1999), 69.

"expressed his concern over the need to strengthen labor relations, so that no break would occur".[105]

Concern over the influence of the Left in trade unions led the U.S. government and the AFL-CIO to take concrete steps to build up an alternative to the discredited ICFTU and ORIT in the form of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). The American Institute for Free Labor Development was officially launched by AFL-CIO in August 1961 as a non-profit corporation in charge of making propaganda and training activists to strengthen non-communist trade unions in Latin America. Funding for the American Institute for Free Labor Development came mainly from government sources, such as the Alliance for Progress initiative started under the Kennedy Administration – 89 per cent between 1962 and 1967. Along with top-level AFL-CIO officials and representatives of business corporations, the American Institute for Free Labor Development was staffed with people with ties to CIA – some of whom were also AFL-CIO officials, such as Serafino Romualdi. Romualdi was president of the new organization until his retirement in 1965, when he was replaced by William Doherty Jr., another labor official with ties to the CIA.[106] At the end of 1962, the American Institute for Free Labor Development set up two centers in Brazil: in São Paulo and Recife. In these centers, there were one-month and three-month courses for trade union leaders, and promising trainees were sent on a further three-month training scheme in the United States. After returning home, the trainees remained on the organization's payroll for a further nine months. In these activities, the American Institute for Free Labor Development maintained close connections with Brazilian businessmen who were also engaged in funding anti-communist labor leaders and attempting to influence the trade union movement.[107]

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[105] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-1963, XX, Memorandum of Conversation.

[106] Carew, "Towards," 294-95; Leacock, *Requiem*, 186-87; Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area*, 69-70; Romualdi, *Presidents*, ch. 24; Spalding, "U.S. and Latin American Labor," 53-6; Robert Cox, "Labor and Hegemony," in *Approaches to World Order*, ed. Robert Cox and Timothy Sinclair (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996): 420-70; Beth Sims, *Workers of the World Undermined: American Labor's Role in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boston, South End Press, 1992), 10-1, 50-2.

[107] Alexander, *History*, 162-63; Leacock, *Requiem*, 187; Romualdi, *Presidents*, 289; Welch, "Labor Internationalism," 82-3; Richard Dreifuss, *1964: A Conquista do Estado* (2nd. ed., Petrópolis, Vozes, 2006), 317-19.

Another significant event was the foundation of the Trade Union Democratic Movement (*Movimento Sindical Democrático*, MSD) in São Paulo, in 1961, by Catholic activists, former ORIT and Point Four trainees, and old-guard trade unionists in liaison with U.S. labor officials. The Trade Union Democratic Movement was a direct answer to the isolation of ICFTU's local allies and it maintained close connections with the industrialists from the powerful Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo and other business groups, as well as conservative politicians such as Adhemar de Barros, Herbert Levy and Carlos Lacerda. The new organization engaged in propaganda and held conferences and courses for trade union leaders. Antonio Pereira Magaldi, the president of São Paulo Federation of Commercial Workers and vice-president of the Confederation of Commercial Workers in the early 1960s, was the main trade union leader associated with the Trade Union Democratic Movement. In Rio de Janeiro, a similar organization (Democratic Resistance of Free Workers, REDETRAL) was set up by Deocleciano Cavalcanti and Ary Campista.[108] After the military coup that overthrew the Goulart government in April 1964, the "first-round" ICFTU allies quickly filled the positions of the trade unions, federations and confederations whereas the elected officials were in jail or being persecuted. For example, Ary Campista was appointed secretary-general of the CNTI immediately after the military coup and became president in 1972. In the meantime, Clodesmidt Riani was expelled from the CNTI, saw his political rights suspended for 10 years and was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment between 1964 and 1971.[109]

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[108] Alexander, *History*, 189; Costa, *CGT*, 32-33; Dreifuss, *1964*, 312-13, 317; Eloy Dutra, *IBAD: Sigla da Corrupção* (Rio de Janeiro, Vozes, 1963); Hans Füchtner, *Os Sindicatos Brasileiros. Organização e Função Política* (Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 1980), 179, 201-2; Candido Vieitez*, Reforma Nacional-Democrática e Contra-Reforma: A Política do PCB no Coração do ABC Paulista, 1956-1964* (Santo André, Fundo de Cultura do Município de Santo André, 1999), 119-37; Barbara Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil. Industrialists and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964* (Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), 316-19.

[109] Abreu *et alli*, *Dicionário*, I, 988-89; II, 1513-17; Paula and Campos, *Clodesmidt Riani*; Romualdi, *Presidents*, 290. Riani was included in the first Institutional Act (AI -1) of the military dictatorship, on 10 April 1964, along with other trade unionists, such as Dante Pellacani, Hércules Correia, Osvaldo Pacheco, Raphael Martinelli, Roberto Morena and Salvador Lossaco. According to a complaint filled by the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Latin American Federation of Christian Trade Unionists and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions with the ILO, "four of the six Confederations, 43 of the 100 workers' federations and 400 of the principal trade unions among the 2,000" were hit by the military government. These trade unions represented more than 70 per cent of the organized workers in Brazil in 1964. ILO, Brazil (Case No. 385), 3 Apr. 1964, Report No. 81, Vol. XLVIII, 1965, No. 2 S, available on ILOLEX – Database on International Labour Standards (http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/). Arturo Jáuregui, then ORIT's General-Secretary, sent a telegram to the new military dictators supporting the new regime just after the coup. Agee, *Dentro da "Companhia"*, 322

The limited impact of the ICFTU and its failure to consolidate Brazilian "free trade unions" in the sense elaborated by AFL officials represented a new development in the international labor movement. In Europe, socialist parties became the chief supporters of ICFTU and adopted an anti-communist line that, if not as strict as that endorsed by AFL, shared with the latter the aim of isolating the pro-Soviet organizations. The massive resources from the Marshall Plan played a role in this bid to attract the allegiance of the non-communist Left in Europe, since, in practice, the large-scale U.S. aid required the isolation of the Communist Parties by the national governments led by the Left. Still, existing conflicts between socialists and communists were probably sufficient to lead to a division in the united trade union movement. Disputes in the European trade union movement had been only temporarily suspended during the Second World War so that during the reconstruction years, the alliance between pro-Soviet and socialist parties was falling apart.[110] In Brazil, the situation was rather different. First, the Marshall Plan was not extended to Latin America despite pleas from industrialists and governments in the region; instead there was only a scheme of technical assistance under the Point Four Program aimed to raise productivity growth and living conditions in Latin America and other underdeveloped regions. Later, the significant resources of the Alliance for Progress inaugurated in 1961 were not sufficient to make an impact on the traditional and highly unequal Latin American societies.[111] Second, socialists, *trabalhistas*, communists and other groups tended to work together in favor of better wages, conditions and social reform, despite their different perspectives on Brazilian society.

The ICFTU and, in particular, U.S. labor officials saw the growth of a united left-wing trade union movement as a dangerous development which posed a real threat to the goals of the anti-communist foreign policy which they shared with the U.S. government. In this respect, these labor officials shared a common view with Brazilian industrialists, who steadfastly opposed the agenda of material gains and social reform led by the trade union movement. Economic conditions were not an obstacle to the increasing role of the working class in Brazilian society. Indeed, as noted before, not only was Brazil's economic growth during the postwar period

[110] Carew, "False dawn"; Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther*, 328.

[111] Rabe, The Most Dangerous Area, ch. 7.

notable by international standards, but also industrial productivity increased at a much higher rate than did wages from the mid-1950s. The major obstacle lay in the particular developments of the trade union movement, political alignments and attitudes of industrialists towards organized labor. Thus both the domestic elite, whose interests were not directly shaped by the Cold War, and U.S. anti-communist foreign policy were equally challenged by an emerging trade union movement which united non-communist and the communist Left. Such a convergence of interests between the Brazilian ruling classes and the U.S. foreign policy was facilitated by the use of Cold War rhetoric by industrialists and other domestic elite groups in their fight against a new role of the working class and social reform in Brazil.

In fact, the establishment of the CGT by the united trade union movement in Brazil was a final blow to the policy pursued by the ICFTU aimed at a "free trade union" movement which could split the labor movement, consolidate a cadre of representative activists and isolate the communists. The outcome – the isolation and demise of the local ICFTU allies – was exactly the opposite of what had been hoped for since the foundation of the Brazilian ORIT office in 1953.

Conclusions

Devised as a tool for uniting non-communist trade unions worldwide, the ICFTU saw its influence limited by the specific way in which labor politics evolved in Brazil after the Second World War. Unlike what happened in Western Europe, the ICFTU was unable to gain significant support among labor leaders and the rank-and-file in Brazil. Since the establishment of the ICFTU office in 1953, the Brazilian allies were drawn from officials associated with the *Estado Novo* dictatorship or with the anti-labor Dutra government, whereas new labor leaders resisted to follow the strict anti-communist line defended by ORIT and U.S. labor officials. ICFTU and ORIT trade unionists controlled the top official labor organizations but had tenuous links with the rank and file – a situation which remained unchanged during the whole of the 1950s. Trainees of the Point Four and ORIT labor exchange programs failed to hold major positions in the trade unions, whereas others just did not follow the line laid down by the sponsors. In the early 1960s, the old-guard trade unionists associated with the ICFTU could not even maintain their positions in the main top-level federations and confederations. The Left – including the Communist Party –

steadily increased its influence in the 1950s and became the strongest force in the Brazilian labor movement in the early 1960s. Thus, key objectives of the politics of productivity such as the formation of representative "free trade unions", the split of labor organizations and the isolation of the communists in the trade union movement were not attained in postwar Brazil.

The task of establishing a cadre of reliable trade unionists who could successfully be an alternative to the Left became more difficult because of the policies favored by U.S. labor officials in Brazil. As the AFL and then AFL-CIO dominated the ICFTU in Latin America, the regional office (ORIT) set up in 1951 followed a strict anti-communist policy derived from a particular notion of "free trade unions" that alienated all sections of the labor movement with a working relationship with the Communist Party. In Europe, such a policy was counterbalanced by a more pragmatic view supported by British, Belgian, Dutch, Scandinavian and other national trade unionists who were at the head of the ICFTU. In Brazil, AFL-CIO's anti-communist policy and its particular concept of "free trade unions" remained unchallenged, even though this concept sometimes clashed with the immediate interests of ICFTU's domestic allies who sought to survive politically by negotiating with left-wingers. With their particular interpretation of the meaning of "free trade unions", both local and foreign ICFTU representatives did not hesitate to welcome or call for repressive government measures against trade unions in order to counteract the growing influence of the Left in Brazil.

The fact that the ICFTU in Brazil did not gain a foothold among the rank and file cannot be seen to be due to a lack of "moderate" trade unionists not affiliated with the Communist Party. From the end of the Second World War, socialists, *trabalhistas*, independents and other labor groups sought to expand their influence among the Brazilian working class. They helped promote demands for better wages and conditions from the shopfloor and organize workers in trade unions, and often did so by means of loose alliances with the communists. Both AFL-CIO and ICFTU favored an improvement in the material achievements of the working classes in Latin America – not least as a way of escaping from destitution and hence from the ideological influence of radical political views. Yet the U.S. labor officials put anti-communism above any other objective and were not prepared to negotiate with labor activists that had links with the Communist Party. Instead, the AFL-CIO and ICFTU chose to strengthen the conservative cadre

of trade unionists linked to the *Estado Novo* dictatorship and the anti-labor Dutra government as a way of fighting potential and existing communist influence in Brazilian trade unions.

The anti-communist policy advocated by AFL-CIO and ICFTU was similar to the view of Brazilian industrialists and conservative political groups in some important aspects and differed in others. One major difference was that, in postwar Brazil, both management and traditional political forces tended to see labor organizations that engaged in improving wages, conditions and welfare generally, as "communists". This was a view not shared by the sort of business trade unionism sponsored by the AFL-CIO, which emphasized material gains for the working class in exchange for dropping anti-capitalist proposals from the agenda of organized labor. Nonetheless, Brazilian employers agreed with the anti-communist stance pursued by U.S. labor officials in Latin America since the 1940s, which saw no room for negotiating with labor groups associated with the communists. In the context of a labor movement just recovering from the harsh repressive measures of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship and the Dutra government, it is certain that the ICFTU strategy of encouraging trade unionists associated with anti-labor regimes and allied with industrialists would not produce a representative, independent and strong trade union movement.

Unsurprisingly, the Left took over the main positions in the labor movement in Brazil as soon as the government refrained from direct intervention in trade unions (such as during the Vargas and Kubitschek governments in the 1950s). First, the communists proved to have a significant ability to organize workers, both on the shopfloor and in trade unions. Contrary to a commonly held view of Brazilian labor history, it seems that the communist trade unionists not only concentrated on top-level negotiations with government officials but also had a major stake among intermediate labor leaders and at grassroots level in Brazil's trade union movement. Second, communist trade unionists were able to establish consistent alliances with other political groups – socialists and members of the Brazilian Labor Party associated with João Goulart, for example. Third, by the mid-1950s it was already clear that a united trade union movement was being formed by bringing together the communists, different left-wing labor groups and independents. They were able to work together despite clearly defined differences in practices and strategic aims. Such a united trade union movement engaged in broad campaigns for

increased wages, improved working conditions and social rights. Overall, the separate sections of the united trade union movement shared a common view that the working class must have a voice in society as a whole and should share in the benefits of Brazil's rapid economic growth after World War II.

In the end, the politics of productivity in Brazil suffered from a lack of support from organized labor. The growing influence of a trade union movement that sought material gains, social rights and a shift in the traditional power relations of Brazilian society tended to be seen by the ruling classes and conservative politicians as a threat to the established order. At the same time, in the context of the Cold War, the rise of a left-wing, and to a large extent pro-Soviet labor movement in Latin America's largest economy, also meant a departure from the path followed by the trade union movement in Western Europe and proved to be a major ideological challenge to U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. Economic and productivity growth favored an increasing role of the working class in Brazilian society, but not under existing institutional conditions. On both domestic and international fronts, a confrontational pattern of labor relations undermined the development of a social compact which could help design economic and social policies for economic growth and social reform in Brazil. Faced with a chronic lack of effectiveness in a highly polarized political juncture, ICFTU members broke with democratic representative institutions, supported the military coup against the Goulart government in April 1964 and finally took over the main positions in the official trade unions – but only under a dictatorship that crushed the emerging trade union movement.