

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

**«NEW UNIONISM» AND UNION POLITICS IN
PERNAMBUCO (BRAZIL) IN THE 1980S**

JOSIMAR JORGE VENTURA DE MORAIS

Thesis submitted as part of the requirements
for the degree of Ph.D. (Sociology)

LONDON - SEPTEMBER 1992

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THESES

LOGIQUE JORGE LENDOV DE NOVAIS

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БЕКИВАВУСО (НАУКИ) ИЛИ ТАГОС
«ИЕМ ПИЦИСМ» АИД ОИОИ ПОПЛИС И

SOCIOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of the emergence and development of «new unionism» in Pernambuco, Brazil (1978-89). The analysis is based on a sample of six trade unions: 1) the Metalworkers' Union; 2) the Bank Workers' Union; 3) the Data Processing Workers' Union; 4) the Urban (Electricity and Water) Workers' Union; 5) the Private Schools Teachers' Union; and 6) the Pernambuco State Schools Teachers' Association.

The principal objective of this thesis is to analyse and discuss a number of issues raised by the «new unionism». These are related to its emphasis on a new kind of relationship between union leaders and the rank-and-file. I analyse the tensions between the radicalism of policies put forward by «new unionist» leaders and their concern for responsiveness towards demands arising from the workplace and strategies aimed at reconciling radical proposals with the true interests of the rank-and-file. I have taken four aspects in order to analyse the development of the «new unionism»: union bureaucracy and militancy; union democracy; demands, internal segmentation of the working class, union policies and militancy; and finally, union strategies, levels of negotiation and the State in Brazil.

Thus, another aspect analysed here is the Michelsian problem, namely whether or not union officials develop interests of their own which are different, and sometimes opposite, to the interests of the rank-and-file. I argue throughout this thesis that this relationship is socially constructed and that such a relationship must be understood in terms of the degree of reporting back to the membership,

and responsiveness towards the demands of the rank-and-file.
Thus, the major subject discussed in the thesis revolves
around the theme of representativeness.

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INTRODUCTION

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: «NEW UNIONISM», DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIVENESS

1. THE PROBLEM

This work is about the emergence of the «new unionism» in the late 1970s and its development in the Brazil of the 1980s. It deals with the re-emergence of trade unions in the political arena as representatives of the workers in what is a neglected region in terms of previous studies of urban trade unionism in Brazil: Pernambuco state. The period analysed here is related to the history of urban trade unionism in Pernambuco in the final part of the «darkest» period of the political history of Brazil and the first years of civilian rule after more than 20 years of military government. Specifically, this work is about the theme of representativeness within the union movement. In other words, it is about the nature of the relationship between «top and bottom», leaders and lay members, in labour organizations.

When the workers and their unions re-appeared in the political arena with the big strikes of 1978-79, many scholars, the press, politicians, and political and union militants began to speak of a «new unionism». Apart from the academic debate on the nature of this «new unionism» and the implications of its political significance for labour action, which will be summarized below, union leaders themselves spoke of a new kind of relationship between the unions and their members. There was not only a criticism of the role imposed

on the unions by the State, but also the advocacy of a new relationship between unions and rank-and-file. In other words, the «old guard» was not only to blame for accepting the role imposed by the State, but also for failing to implement strong ties with the rank-and-file. This means that the implementation of a new relationship between unions and the membership was to be the basis for changes in other spheres of union action. Thus, this thesis explores the theme of this new relationship by trying to answer the following general question: how far have the unions become more representative of the interests arising from the membership in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s in Brazil? At the basis of this question lies a more general question which is related to the very nature of the «new unionism».

I argue throughout this thesis that a new relationship has been developing and shaping new identities both for the radical union officials and militants, and the members themselves. As will be demonstrated, this new relationship is not only related to recognizing the interests of the rank-and-file, but also to creating forms of participation through which union members become involved in the internal affairs of the unions.

I also argue that the fact that new identities have been shaped implies that the political agenda of the «new unionism» is a changing one. With this phrase I wish to suggest that, in spite of their political platform, «new unionist» officials and militants have a commitment towards involving the membership in the process of decision-making.

However, I also show that this new relationship is found in varying degrees. In other words, the unions do not have a

recurrent pattern of behaviour. The cases vary according to the different degrees of commitment of union officials towards improvement in the relationship between «top and bottom».

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN «TOP AND BOTTOM»: THE ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTION ON THE BRAZILIAN «NEW UNIONISM»

In this section I address a general question related to the nature of the «new unionism» in terms of the relationship between unions and workers by providing a discussion of the work of some authors who have, directly or indirectly, written on the emergence of the «new unionism».

The aim of Maroni [1982] is to analyse the meaning of the strikes of May 1978 in the main automobile plants of São Paulo. By looking at these conflicts, she tries to explain how they emerged through strikes. She points to two main causes: factory/workers' committees and factory assemblies. She also analyses the role played by strategic sector workers in the success of the strike movement. According to her, the role of these skilled workers must be put in its proper place since the metalworkers had a high level of organization symbolised by the factory/workers' committees. On the other hand, she also shows that significant movements which followed were propelled by unskilled workers who questioned the capitalist control of the labour process without the leadership of a labour aristocracy.

Her work seems to indicate that the relationship between the unions and the *categorias* was turned upside down by the spontaneous action of the workers. By pointing out the fact that these protests were led by factory/workers' committees,

she implicitly shows, on the one hand, that the unions were not properly representing the workers because some *pelego*¹ union officials even stood against the strikes with arguments similar to the arguments used by the entrepreneurs. On the other hand, her work shows that even in the face of non-representative union officials, the rank-and-file may undertake action not foreseen by union officials or entrepreneurs. In this case, the wishes of the rank-and-file were pursued by workplace organizations which would better express interests arising from the shop-floor.

Sader [1988] analyses what seems to him to be the emergence of a new form of labour organization in Brazil. In order to explain how conflicts emerged in Greater São Paulo in the 1970s, he takes two points: the appearance of new union leaders and the formation of union oppositions.

As an example of new leaders, Sader analyses the case of the Metalworkers' Union of São Bernardo (São Paulo state). Its officials did not constitute an opposition group who won union elections and transformed the union. Indeed, there is a continuity between this group and the group which «inherited» the union from the military after the intervention following the 1964 *coup*, the changes being due to what he calls a «transformation from inside» because of pressure from below.

In other cases, where union officials did not change their conservative attitudes, this produced a strong opposition group supported by several factions within the labour movement.

¹ In Brazilian union jargon *pelego* defines a kind of union official who supports either the government or/and the employers.

For the purposes of this thesis, these elements indicate that in the Brazil of the 1970s the relationship between union officials and rank-and-file was renovated both by official and unofficial leaders and/or groups. In fact, on the one hand, the first case shows that the relationship between «top and bottom» changed because of the action of official leaders, due to pressure from below. On the other hand, where the union officials resisted any changes, not only was there pressure from below, but the rank-and-file also developed forms of organization at shop-floor level in order to pursue their interests.

Antunes [1988] argues that workers, 1978, went spontaneously on strike mainly because of low wages. It seems that the union did not participate in the organization of the strike at the Saab-Scania plant. But, by striking without a formal organization, the Saab-Scania workers were unable to negotiate with the employers. Thus, the union was called in to negotiate the demands put forward by the workers.

Antunes's work shows another interesting case of the relationship between union officials and the rank-and-file. In fact, although he does not say that union officials did not pursue rank-and-file interests, his work shows that even when the unions do not organize the rank-and-file politically, the workers can develop independent action regardless of union policies. However, the rank-and-file had to resort to the union, because it developed spontaneous action without the coordination of any organization at the workplace and was unable to negotiate directly with the employers.

According to Moisés [1982], workers' protests in the 1970s were possible due to the emergence of new leaders who

were able to synthesize demands containing new specific claims related to the modern plant workers and to what he calls «grassroots mobilization», which would be expressed by factory/workers' committees and, in general, by the union oppositions.

These two factors are important as signs of a change in the relationship between unions and rank-and-file, for they point to a change directed from below. In fact, even when Moisés speaks of a new leadership, he does not refer to official leaders but rather to the general term, labour leaders. On the other hand, the fact that he also points to the existence of factory/workers' committees seems to indicate that the interests of the workers, in this context, were pursued by autonomous shop-floor organizations rather than by committed union leaders.

Tavares de Almeida's thesis [1975] is that the development of capitalism in Brazil with its modern factories created new ranks inside the structure of the working class, stimulating the emergence of a «labour aristocracy», whose demands would be differentiated from the rest of the working classes' demands. According to her, these workers would have demands of their own and would constitute a «labour aristocracy» separated from the rest of the working class. Their demands were not able to unite all segments of the Brazilian working class. Thus, the conclusion she reaches is that unionism in Greater São Paulo would be business-orientated trying to avoid party politics.

Tavares de Almeida's work cannot immediately be assessed as an analysis of the relationship between unions and their constituents as, for instance, in the tradition of studies on

union internal politics. However, she offers some general insights into the relationship between some unions (or union leaders) and the workers at large. In fact, when she analysis the political action of the workers of the modern plants in Brazil and reaches the conclusion that their demands could not be extended to Brazil as a whole because of the specific nature of their demands and because of their conservative political attitude, she is implying that there would be a gap between the interests of some workers who could exert leadership in the politico-economic contests and the interests of the majority of the workers. We can extend her conclusions by considering the fact that not all workers represented by a given union would be members of this privileged labour aristocracy. In fact, if we were to accept her basic premise, this would mean that there is a gap between the interests of this privileged group and the interests of those members who are not members of a labour aristocracy. In short, if the union(s) was (were) dominated by a labour aristocracy, this would lead to a pessimistic conclusion on the relationship between union leaders and the rank-and-file.

Contrary to Tavares de Almeida's thesis, Humphrey ([1979b]; [1980]; and [1982]) shows that there is no such «labour aristocracy» in Brazil. Indeed, there is a working class in the automobile industry earning wages higher than the rest of the working class. However, these wages are not high to the point where this new working class is detached from the rest of the working class. Humphrey shows that most of these workers would face problems if they were to find a new job. This means that their position is not secure enough to take industrial action of their own as implied by Tavares de

Almeida. The workers in this sector who are most secure in their jobs are the highly-skilled ones. These are the most likely to take industrial action because of their position in the labour market. In other words, workers have different degrees of control over the labour process and in the labour market, but their grievances are the same as those put forward by their fellow-workers.

Humphrey does not directly analyse the relationship between a given union leadership and the rank-and-file. However, his analysis can lend us some insights in terms of the role of a given union leadership and the workers. Humphrey's analysis leads to another conclusion quite different from what was suggested by Tavares de Almeida. In fact, one might conclude that there is no gap between the interests of both the metalworkers of the *ABC paulista* and workers at large. This means that one must not consider that some *categorias* or groups of workers would isolate themselves from the rest of the working class by pursuing selfish goals regardless of the interests of the workers and without fighting for more radical politico-economic demands. The implication of Humphrey's works is that the leading role played by the *ABC paulista's* working class would be better interpreted as a vanguard role, that is, a group with strong political commitment towards the pursuit of the interests of the workers, whether by not detaching itself from the workers' general interests, or in terms of guidance of the workers in their action in support of claims.

Although none of the authors discussed above proposed an analysis of the relationship between unions and members, union officials and the rank-and-file, union leaders and the

workers, their works bring into play a wider implication for the study of this subject. In fact, by analysing the emergence of the «new unionism» they all had to consider the role played either by the official union leadership or by informal leaders. In doing so, they pointed to the birth of a new relationship between these two poles.

3. DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIVENESS

3.1. The Question of Union Democracy

Michels [1962] posed a general question mark on the issue of democracy inside trade unions by arguing that labour organizations - parties and trade unions - inevitably develop trends towards oligarchy. According to him, there is an inescapable tendency for union officials to develop interests of their own which are not only different from but also opposed to the interests of the union members. Because of its definitive character, Michels's thesis gained the status of a sociological law, which he reinforced himself by calling it an «iron law of oligarchy».

Subsequent studies such as that by Lipset et al. [1977] led to the same conclusion. Indeed, the fact that their findings pointed to the existence of democracy inside the International Typographical Union (ITU) was to be seen as an exception which confirmed the «law» stated by Michels, because of the particular characteristics found in this union.

Edelstein and Warner [1975] challenged the conclusions both of Michels and Lipset et al. They showed, by resorting to an organizational theory of union democracy, that trade

unions might or might not be democratic organizations. Their theory was built around a model which focused on electoral results (closeness of elections), existence of contested elections, existence of organized opposition groups and turnover of incumbent leaders for the assessment of the degree of democracy within a given union.

3.2. The Question of Representativeness

Recent studies on internal union politics have put the spotlight on the dynamics of the relationship between union officials and the membership. These studies have moved away from a strict view on democratic procedures resembling general political systems to pay attention to the channels and procedures through which the participation of the union membership is secured. Thus, these studies have examined issues like the degrees of accountability, i.e., the extent to which the leadership reports back to lay members, and of representativeness, i.e., the extent to which the leadership is committed to pursuing the interests of the rank-and-file.

Fosh and Cohen [1990] carried out research in 5 British labour organizations and showed that there were different degrees of union democracy in these unions when considering the commitment of union officials to both accountability and representativeness. They tested these factors against a number of variables and found that the degree of union democracy has more to do with

"...the interaction between...leaders and members' commitment to collectivism and leadership style with the threats and challenges posed by management...[than] with institutional factors...,the influence of national union and the particular attributes of the membership..." (Fosh

& Cohen [1990:138]).

On the other hand, Heery and Kelly [1990] have also focused their analysis on patterns of collaboration between union officials at various levels and the rank-and-file. They drew their research questions from questions put forward by both the Michelsian tradition and Marxist theorists of union bureaucratization. These two traditions predict that there is an inevitable gap between the union leaders' and members' interests. Moreover, authors working within the Marxist framework have suggested that this gap is due both to the fact that union leaders develop a conservative political culture which allows for and accepts managers' control over the workers and to the essentially progressive nature of the rank-and-file.

Heery and Kelly show that such does not take place, at least in the unions analysed by them. Indeed, they found a widespread pattern of co-operation and interdependence between union officials and members. Moreover, they found that union officials are more likely to propose radical demands than lay members are. In other words, they did not find evidence to support the claim that union officials are conservative and try to decrease the demands of a radical, progressive rank-and-file, according to the wishes of the management.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that union officials impose their radical demands on the rank-and-file. In fact, by showing that there is a chain of co-operation between these two poles, Heery and Kelly demonstrate that there is a two-way relationship between them. In other words, union leaders are committed to reporting back to the members and, at the same time, they try to be responsive to the interests of the

members. Then, Heery and Kelly introduce the concept of «participatory leadership» to explain the fact that although union officials are committed to accountability and representativeness, they keep some discretion when negotiating.

Away from the studies on union democracy and degree of representativeness in trade unions, recent theoretical contributions in political thinking suggest that the concept of representativeness is not necessarily linked to a statistical resemblance between the representative and those represented (Cf. Laclau [1991a] and [1991b]). Indeed, it is not only a relationship through which the representative (in the case of this thesis, the union officials) simply voice the wishes of those represented, but it also expresses the idea that the representative is an active social agent who interprets and shapes the interests of, and constitutes the identity of those represented (Laclau [1990a:12] and [1990b: 15ff]).

4. THE OBJECT OF THE THESIS

The starting point of this thesis, as pointed out above, is the analysis of the relationship between «new unionism» unions and the rank-and-file. The «new unionism» emerged with demands for changes in the relationship between «top and bottom». By doing so, they criticized the «old guard» officials for being attached to power and unwilling to properly represent the workers' interests. In other words, «new unionist» militants and officials pointed to the fact that there would be a gap, in the Michelsian sense, between

the interests of the «old guard» officials and those of the rank-and-file. Thus, a further aspect to be analysed is the classical problem put forward by Michels, namely that there is an inevitable gap between union leaders' and members' interests.

The «old guard» run trade unions were hardly representative of their members or of the *categoria*. More than one author has pointed to the fact that conservative officials were able to run unions irrespective of their level of membership. In fact, the *imposto sindical* (union tax) allowed for the existence of unions which were able to survive regardless of whether they affiliated *N-1* or *N+1* workers. Indeed, many conservative officials preferred a low rate of membership because this would mean weak pressure on the financial resources of the union to be spent on social assistance services.

On the other hand, the repressive military government did not allow for fair conditions for opposition groups to act or for the presence of more militant officials who would actively pursue the interests of the workers.

These facts in combination allowed for the existence of an environment which resembled that anticipated by Michels's «iron law of oligarchy». In fact, it is difficult to trace any signs of democratic rule or representativeness in Brazilian trade unions in the years which followed the 1964 *coup* up to the emergence of the «new unionism».

The «new unionism» emerged with demands for or a political agenda which was directed towards reshaping the role the unions were to play in society by means of reshaping the very nature of their relationship with their members, in

particular, and the *categorias* in general. In fact, «new unionist» officials do not conceive of their posts as a job for life. They are to stay in power as long as they represent the *categorias*' interests (Cf. Mangabeira [1991:42]).

Thus, the aim of this thesis is the analysis of how far «new unionism» unions have achieved the goal they set themselves for a better representation of the workers after a decade of militancy.

Stated as a law as Michels's thesis is, it does not allow much room for manoeuvre. However, instead of considering it as a law, I take his thesis as a starting point for a social investigation which will allow me to question the nature of the relationship between «top and bottom», union officials and members.

Therefore, I shall not consider from the outset that union officials inevitably develop interests of their own which are not only different but sometimes opposite to the interests of the workers. Instead, I shall put forward the idea that this relationship is socially shaped, made, and remade.

This means that in this thesis the existence of democratic unions is not seen as an exception to the rule as stated by Lipset et al. On the other hand, the existence of democracy inside trade unions is not seen here as necessarily resembling political systems or electoral mechanisms, an idea present in Edelstein and Warner's model.

Instead, I shall take the path of more recent evidence in this field by which the mechanisms for participation of, accountability to, and representativeness of the rank-and-file allows for a better understanding of the dynamics of the

relationship between union officials and the rank-and-file.

However, by taking this approach I shall not take the naive step of considering that union officials only represent the rank-and-file as long as they only pursue the interests expressed by the workers. Nor that union officials who impose «true» interests on the rank-and-file, an idea present in the Marxist tradition in which an enlightened vanguard knows what is best for the workers, are more representative than any other officials of any other political persuasion.

This means that I shall take a more complex definition of representativeness. This definition embodies the idea that the relationship between the representative and those represented is a two-way one. In other words, it means that both poles are capable of influencing and shaping the identity of each other. In this way, union officials are representative of the rank-and-file as long as they interpret and pursue the interests of the rank-and-file. A complement to this is the fact that union officials should report back to their constituents, which is expressed by the idea of accountability.

A final point of this definition is related to aspects of this relationship in which union officials take the lead and propose new themes which could be of interest to the rank-and-file. This point combined with the fact that union officials are able to interpret and shape the goals and interests of the rank-and-file are expressed in this thesis by the concept of «participatory leadership», which is borrowed from Heery and Kelly [1990:90, 94].

In order to carry out an analysis of the nature of the relationship between union officials and the rank-and-file

within the realm of the «new unionism», four sensitive areas have been chosen. Two are related to internal aspects of union life, whereas two are related to external aspects. The first area analysed in this thesis is the organizational apparatus of the unions. This is related to the apparatus providing social services for the members, the union finances and the workplace organization. Social services provided by the unions as well as the financial resources available for implementation of union policies are thought to be an area around which considerable disagreement could emerge because of the number of proposals as to how these issues should be handled. The organization at workplace level has been thought of as providing a new channel for wider participation of the rank-and-file in union life.

Secondly, there is analysis of the very mechanism of formal political activity inside the unions. The aim is, on the one hand, the test of the predictions of Michels, Lipset et al., and, on the other, how effective Edelstein and Warner's electoral model is for grasping the dynamics of internal union politics.

Turning to external aspects of union life, there is further analysis of the area related to new demands and how this is handled by the unions. The roles of both union officials and workers are analysed, i.e., the extent to which either side proposes new issues to be negotiated as well as the creation of channels for providing wider participation, in the process of drawing up the lists of demands, of the workers represented.

Lastly, one final area around which there might be some discrepancy in terms of how to deal with it, is related to the

negotiation of these demands expressed in lists of demands. This has to do with the paths to achieve settlement of labour disputes. Thus, the relation between the unions and their members, on the one hand, and between these and employers and the State, on the other, is analysed bearing in mind the fact that the «new unionist» officials had a clear proposal about the role of the State in negotiations. This is checked against the evidence arising from the different patterns of negotiation that the unions of my sample have to undertake.

5. THE CASES UNDER INVESTIGATION

Six trade unions were chosen as objects for this study. They were chosen on the grounds that their particular characteristics would ensure the achievement of the objectives of this thesis. The sample, in spite of its small size, was balanced in order to secure that general characteristics of other unions would be present in the analysis.

I decided to investigate these cases because I opted for a comparative analysis of the particular history of some unions. It was felt from the beginning that, in spite of all the findings that a study of a «representative», though particular, union might provide, a representative sample would ensure that a much fuller analysis could be achieved by comparing different unions representing various *categorias* in a number of economic sectors. In fact, if I had decided to analyse only one union, all findings of the cases displayed and analysed throughout this thesis would be missing.

As mentioned above, the main objective of this thesis is the analysis of the new relationship between «top and bottom»,

union officials and members, brought about by the «new unionism». However, there is not only one «new unionism». The myriad of political persuasions acting within it sometimes accounts for different views, approaches and policies to particular problems faced by the unions. Thus, for instance, anarchists, communists, independent leftists, Stalinists, catholics and so on, all of them acting in «new unionism» unions, may form different alliances and take different paths to implement «new unionist» policies. Because of this, I have decided to study a number of unions which might allow me to make comparisons from their particular history. Moreover, the investigation is on «new unionism» unions, which implies that there is a tacit comparison with unions run by «old guard» officials. Thus, I have also decided to include some unions which were run by conservative officials. At the time of the fieldwork, all unions were run by «new unionist» officials, but at least one of them - the Bank Workers' Union - had been run by conservative officials well into the 1980s. Three were won by «new unionists» in the late 1970s and/or early 1980s. One was run, for some time, by an alliance of conservative and communist officials and the last has been run since its foundation by «new unionist» officials.

This diversity of experiences along with characteristics such as *categorias* represented, economic sectors (secondary or tertiary, public or private) from which workers are unionized, and political affiliations would assure a number of comparisons which might allow for significant conclusions².

² Details of the unions under investigation in this thesis are given in chapter II.

The period here investigated is roughly from 1978-79 up to 1989. The period 1978-79 was that which witnessed the first big strikes in the country after the 1964 *coup* and these have been accepted by different scholars as the beginning of a new era for trade unions in Brazil. The first strikes in the country during this period occurred in São Paulo state, but as early as 1979 the first strikes and other militant action began taking place in Pernambuco state. In fact, as will be shown in chapter II, radical militants of different persuasions had been in action since the mid-1970s, but their actions became more «visible» from 1978-79 onwards. Finally, in 1989 two decades came to a close. Firstly the decade of the 1980s, and the first strikes and other militant action in Pernambuco saw their 10th anniversary, which seems a good date for a balance.

At first all studies on the unionism which emerged from the 1978-79 strikes were based on the São Paulo case. In fact, São Paulo state, being the richest and most developed of the Brazilian states, has unique characteristics in terms of the diversity of its working class. Studies carried out in São Paulo were intended to hold good for Brazil as a whole.

During the 1980s a number of studies without any trace of «regionalism» were carried out in other Brazilian states (Cf. Castro [1990]; and Mangabeira [1991]). These studies were intended to analyse cases outside the São Paulo case and show the wide diversity of paths followed by the «new unionism». This thesis was carried out in Pernambuco state. It does not have the aim of proving the São Paulo case either right or wrong. The simple aim is to enrich the studies on the Brazilian working class by supplying evidence and arriving at

conclusions which could be tested against evidence and conclusions of other studies carried out in other regions or states.

However, in spite of being restricted to a particular state and to some unions, there is no evidence to prove that the characteristics of this state are different from other Brazilian states that one could not generalize the findings of this study to the experience of Brazil as a whole. On the other hand, as mentioned above, the unions present in my sample share with other unions of the country representing the same *categorias* common characteristics which would allow for generalization of the conclusions here arrived at. Moreover, as will be shown throughout this thesis, some unions maintain strong ties with their counterparts in other states, particularly during wage campaigns in cases where these are undertaken nationally. Others which do not experience nationally conducted wage campaigns have sought to share with other unions in the country their experiences under the umbrella of the Workers' United Central (CUT). These facts combined could be taken with confidence as signs that the conclusions arrived at here may be extended to an understanding of the new relationship, brought about by the «new unionism», between unions and their members, in particular, and between unions and the *categorias* in general.

6. THE STUDY QUESTIONS

A number of questions act as a guide to this study in the sense that the data collected will be checked against them. These are related to general aspects of the «new unionism» and

to the cases under investigation in this thesis.

- 1) Are «new unionist» officials more concerned with responsiveness towards the rank-and-file than the conservative officials?;
- 2) Are «new unionist» officials more concerned with accountability, i.e., reporting back to the *categoria*, than conservative officials?;
- 3) Are «new unionism» run unions more representative of their members' interests than conservative run unions?;
- 4) Are «new unionism» unions more democratic than unions run by conservative officials?;
- 5) Are «new unionism» unions more likely to go on strike than conservative unions?;
- 6) Is a large social assistance service apparatus more likely to produce less militant attitudes on the part of the unions or, in turn, would a small social assistance service apparatus be more likely to produce more militant attitudes on the part of the unions?;
- 7) What is the impact of shop-floor organization on the bargaining power of the unions?;
- 8) What is the impact of shop-floor organization on the issues of democracy, accountability, responsiveness and representativeness of the unions?;
- 9) Is the existence of factions, groups, parties and so on likely to produce more democratic unions?;
- 10) What is the impact of repressive measures taken both by employers and the State on the internal politics of the unions?;
- 11) Are the demands put forward by the «new unionism» only related to small segments of the working class?;

- 12) Is there an actual gap between the interests of union officials and those of the rank-and-file when one considers the demands put forward by the «new unionism»?;
- 13) Is the attitude of «new unionism» unions towards the presence of the State in negotiations something stated from the outset?;
- 14) What is the impact of nationally conducted wage negotiations on the role of individual unions in terms of their representativeness?;
- 15) What is the impact of more (or less) concentrated wage negotiations on the profile of the unions?

7. THE THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis has an introduction and seven chapters dealing with different aspects related to problems of democracy and representativeness faced by the «new unionism». In this introduction I have outlined the main problem under investigation by discussing some contributions both in terms of works directly related to Brazilian trade unionism as well as other works which are related to the general theoretical aspect discussed in this thesis. I have also pointed out the main questions which will guide this study.

Chapter I considers three aspects. Firstly, I provide the reader with a description of the main historical moments of the Brazilian labour movement. Secondly, I consider the principal aspects of Brazilian labour legislation and its implications for the labour and union movements. Finally, I provide some insights in the economic environment with particular emphasis on the 1980s. This is intended as a

background to the political fights of the union movement.

Chapter II is a historical analysis of the labour movement in Pernambuco from the beginning of the 20th-century up to the end of the 1980s and a brief description of the unions under investigation in this thesis. This is intended to give the reader a background to the scene from which the «new unionism» emerged in Pernambuco in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The data gathered is displayed and analysed from chapters III to VI. Chapter III concerns a discussion of the relation between union «bureaucracy», social assistance services provided by the unions and patterns of union militancy. I analyse the approach of «new unionist» leaders to these problems and how they were dealt with in the context of concern for democracy and representativeness inside the unions. Chapter IV is directly related to the discussion of union democracy and «new unionism». I discuss some theories of union democracy and proceed to a test of Edelstein and Warner's electoral model by using the data collected in the unions of my sample. Furthermore, I suggest that such a model has a number of shortcomings which do not allow us to properly grasp the problem of the relationship between leaders and the rank-and-file within labour organizations. I also provide an analysis of aspects neglected by such a model and consider the implications of these aspects as regards understanding the internal politics of trade unions.

Chapter V contains a discussion related to the new demands put forward by the «new unionism». Many analysts of the «new unionism» see it as the expression of new demands arising from the workplace. Some even saw it as the expression

of a labour aristocracy. I discuss these aspects and argue, following other authors, that there is no labour aristocracy in Brazil. However, I discuss the data collected by showing that there are some internal divisions in the union movement arising from the privileged position of some workers. Moreover, in the face of high inflation rates during the 1980s in Brazil, I show that some workers were able to get wage increases without the help of their unions. Therefore, I develop an analysis of union policies through which they have attempted to unite different positions within the *categorias*. In other words, I analyse the data bearing in mind the problem of the representativeness of the unions. That is, I consider whether the unions have pursued the interests of the workers or the interests of restricted groups inside the unions. Chapter VI contains a discussion of the relationship between the unions, employers and the Brazilian State in the 1980s in terms of negotiations. The «new unionism» emerged with demands for direct negotiations with employers. In fact, labour disputes were characterized by the presence of the State in the settlement of disputes through a number of mechanisms. Therefore, I analyse the new relationship between unions, employers and the State by taking into consideration aspects like the expectations of the rank-and-file, the policies put forward by the «new unionism» leaders on their own account, the willingness of the employers to talk directly to the unions without the mediation of the State, and the willingness of the State to give up its historical role as an arbitrator of labour disputes in Brazil.

Finally, chapter VII is a conclusion in which I state the main theoretical findings and contributions of this thesis

towards the understanding of the dynamics of democracy within, and the representativeness of, the «new unionism» in Brazil through the analysis of data collected in a Brazilian state which is outside the main economic region of the country. I also provide a discussion of the contribution this thesis lends to a wider understanding of the problem of democracy and representativeness inside labour organizations.

CHAPTER I

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, THE STATE AND ECONOMY IN BRAZIL

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a historical analysis of the Brazilian labour movement in the context of which the labour movement in Pernambuco has developed. To add the proper perspective, on the other hand, I shall also provide a description of the relationship between the State and the labour and union movements by describing the legal corner-stones on which the State has based its presence within union life. Finally, I shall analyse the development of the Brazilian economy from 1964 onwards. This is necessary in order to frame the political, social and economic environment in which the Brazilian labour and union movements have developed.

I shall start by analysing the wider historical context, that is, by providing a brief analysis of the history of Brazilian trade unionism. My analysis emphasizes mainly the period from 1964, the year when a *coup d'état* took place. This is an important turning-point in the history of trade unionism in Brazil as will be shown below.

In order to analyse this history, I will be using the periods into which the 20th-century Brazilian history has been divided. These periods are as follows: 1) the *República Velha*, from 1889 to 1930; 2) the Vargas government, from 1930 to

1945; 3) the populist period, from 1945 to 1964; and 4) the period since 1964. Although the military government ended in 1985, I will not use this as a dividing line. Instead, I will arrange this period into two as follows: 1) from 1964 to 1978; and 2) from 1978 to 1989. The reason for doing so is that from 1978 a wave of strikes started to hit the country. Most Brazilian scholars on trade unionism consider this year to be a watershed in the history of Brazilian trade unionism.

2. A HISTORY OF LABOUR MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL

2.1. From 1889 to 1930

At the beginning of this century the labour movement in Brazil was influenced mainly by the anarcho-syndicalist ideology of Italian immigrants. The anarchists had succeed in establishing the first true labour organization which resembled trade unions. Before the anarchists became hegemonic, workers had established some labour associations in the late 19th-century. However, these associations were only intended for mutual help of the retired, the elderly, health assistance, etc. (Bernardo [1982:32-3]).

During the First Workers' Congress, in 1906, the anarchists condemned the mutual associations because these organizations, with their emphasis upon mutualism, social assistance and cooperativism would shift the true focus of the workers' struggle from the actual fight: that against the capitalists (Bernardo [1982:44]).

The anarchists did not espouse the idea of creating a political party. Instead, they proposed a sort of

revolutionary unionism whose main function was not to fight for better wages and working conditions, but to fight capitalism through strikes, protests, and even violence.

The anarchists were hegemonic until around 1917 when their influence began to decrease. The Russian Revolution of 1917 was an important event influencing the foundation of the Communist Party in Brazil. Unlike the anarchists, the communists tried to politicize the labour movement, in the sense that unions were also to fight capital in day-to-day life, instead of being only unions for resistance in search for the final confrontation - the anarchists' big strike - which would bring about the final demise of capitalism. During the 1920s, the anarchists lost their hegemony, and the communists became hegemonic, at least in this first period (Fausto [1976]; Füchtner [1980:28-34]; Maram [1979]; Sarti [1981]; and Telles [1981]).

However, the opposition of the anarchists towards actions which "would improve capitalism" did not mean that they excluded pursuit of claims for better wages and working conditions. Indeed, there was a general call for the regulation of working conditions. However, the Brazilian State did not recognize labour problems as social problems and dealt with labour protests as a case for the police (Buchanan [1989: 76]; Gomes [1979]; Martins [1979]; J.A. Rodrigues [1968]; Simão [1981]; and Vianna [1978b]).

In this period, workers were subject to 1) working 14 hours a day and had no vacations; 2) the work of children and women was not regulated; and 3) there was not any state sponsored social and medical assistance. For, in Brazil, the social problems related to labour were thought of within the

framework of an old liberalism supported by the Brazilian dominant classes.

Any urging for regulation of labour problems was met with the reasoning that socio-labour relations should be regulated by the market's hidden-hand. Any legislation on this matter would mean an undesirable interference of the State between two free citizens: the employee and the employer (Cf. Gomes [1979]). In the words of Martins [1979:183],

"The structure of the State was a liberal, fiscal and police one, and the unions operated to achieve regulation of urban labour and to transform society".

On the other hand, in this period, unions were not regulated by the State. There were no legal constraints linking them to the State. There was, then, a degree of freedom to organize. And, in addition, union plurality, while the State did not regulate union activities. Indeed, if one can speak about regulation, it was synonymous with violent police repression of workers.

2.2. From 1930 to 1945

In 1930, a *coup d'état* occurred. With this *coup*, known as the *Revolução de 30*, the situation changed because of the new approach of the State towards labour problems (Cf. Almeida & Lowy [1976: 104]; Bernardo [1982:78-122]; and Füchtner [1980:39-68])³. With this political movement, the State began to think of unions as organizations capable of mediating in

³ It must be said that during the first period there were some pieces of labour legislation. However, they only referred to rural associations. The first governmental decree related to urban trade unions was issued in January 1907 by which was guaranteed the right of the workers to organize in unions (Cf. Rands [1990:127-8]).

relations between capital and labour and as a channel for the integration of the State itself and the masses.

"The old unionism of militant minorities, organized by trade and gathering the most skilled workers, was not able to attract newcomers. It was easily replaced by the structure built by the State, through a process in which there was a mixture of violence against groups of organized workers and concession of benefits to the masses" (L.M. Rodrigues [1968:347]).

In 1930, the government created the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Trade, by which the labour movement was to be controlled (Cf. Humphrey [1979c:223]). One of this Ministry's main goals was to elaborate, implement and supervise laws aimed at regulating unions and labour conflicts. Among the laws related to labour matters the most important was the *Lei de Sindicalização* (Unionization Law), issued as early as March 1931. Its main characteristics are: 1) only one union could be legalized by *categoria*; 2) it made the employment of foreign workers difficult in order to thwart the activities of anarchists; 3) it established that the minute of union inauguration with a membership list and a copy of the unions' rules as well as to be sent to the Ministry of Labour; 4) financial control over unions by the Ministry of Labour; and 5) the Ministry of Labour had the power to apply sanctions against the unions (Cf. Alves [1989:40-4]).

The *Lei de Sindicalização* (Unionization Law) also prohibited the unions from participating in any ideological propaganda and established that unions should perform social assistance functions. The overall intention of a law of this nature was to demobilize and depoliticize the unions (Cf. Vianna [1978b:147]).

The alliance of political factions that took over the state apparatus needed the support, but not the participation

of, the urban working classes for its politico-economic projects. Thus, the ideological discourse of this period repeated *ad nauseam* the confluence of interests of capital and labour. For, it was said, contrary to what alien ideologies (a reference to the communists) proclaimed, a national and autonomous development was possible through the harmonious cooperation of capital and labour (Cf. Alves [1989:40]). The unions were, thus, put under a guardian State inspired by Italian fascism (Almeida & Lowy [1976:104]; Alves [1989:41]; Martins [1979:184]; and L.M. Rodrigues [1968:348]).

As it was necessary to promote a controlled integration of the lower classes, the State gave the class organizations social assistance functions. They became a State appendage for carrying out state duties. As, until that period, the masses had been excluded from social benefits, the integration and support of these social ranks to the dominant classes' political projects occurred through the concession of social assistance to be executed by the unions. By this means, the masses were integrated into the dominant classes' political projects along with control of the unions.

Therefore, as from 1930, and especially as from 1937, trade unions became bureaucratic agencies having to administer financial resources aimed at meeting the membership's demands for social assistance services. Consequently, the bureaucratization of trade unions meant allocation of time to manage an agency that tended to become more complex because of its new objectives and reduction of other union activities. (Cf. Bernardo [1982]; Martins [1979:185]; Tavares de Almeida [1975]; and Vianna [1978b]).

The Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT), from 1943, which

was inspired by Mussolini's *Carta del Lavoro* (Cf. Lowy [1987: 456]), marked the high point of state regulation of union life. It was a compilation of all laws which had been enacted since 1930. In article 514 it detailed trade unions' duties as follows:

"1) to collaborate with the government to develop social solidarity; 2) to maintain legal assistance services for the membership; 3) to promote harmony during labour disputes. Paragraph 1: Moreover, the employees' unions must: a) establish credit and consumer cooperatives; and b) establish and maintain schools".

This list of duties linked to article 521, paragraph 1, which states that a trade union's very existence is subject to "the prohibition of any propaganda of doctrines incompatible with the Nation's institutions and interests...", implied the transformation of trade unions into agencies, whose aim was the integration of peripheral population into the process of national capitalist development as a subordinate partner (For details of the Brazilian labour law system, see Alves [1989:41-3]; Erickson [1977]; Füchtner [1980:50-68]; and Humphrey [1979c]).

Elections for the presidency of Brazil were due in 1937. However, President Getúlio Vargas closed the National Congress, promulgated a new Constitution and continued to govern the country. This period of Brazilian history - 1937-45 - is known as the *Estado Novo*. The end of the Vargas dictatorship in 1945 and the new Constitution of 1946 allowed many of the left-wing political forces to emerge.

2.3. The Democratic Period: 1945 to 1964

The integration of urban workers into the political arena was a two-edged weapon. The overthrow of President Getúlio Vargas, in 1945, gave the trade unions a certain autonomy because of the relaxation of some state controls, which provided a room to manoeuvre for the workers to increase their demands and even to go on strike (Cf. Alves [1989:45]; and Humphrey [1979c:226]).

The requirement for an ideological certificate disappeared⁴ and the workers got back their right to strike, which allowed the unions a greater freedom to concern themselves specifically with political and labour demands (Morales Fº [1982]; L.M. Rodrigues [1968]; Rowland [1974]; Tavares de Almeida [1975]; Vianna [1978b]; and Weffort [1978-79] and [1978]). However, the state moved quickly and "in 1947 a new law limiting the right to strike was passed" (Humphrey [1979c:226]).

This means that, on the one hand, the urban workers were integrated into the political process as subordinate partners, and, on the other hand, this integration provided room for gains which could destabilize the existing status quo, as Weffort stated:

"The political emergence of the lower classes meant, to a certain degree, its effective incorporation into the existing politico-institutional framework, that is, it meant lower class pressure inside the existing political regime" (F. Weffort, quoted by L. M. Rodrigues [1968: 355]. Cf. Almeida & Lowy [1976:99]).

⁴ From 1930 to 1951 any worker wishing to be a candidate for union offices had to get a certificate from the police stating that they were «untainted» by any charge of being leftists.

However, this double-sided reality of the union movement was a contradictory one insofar as, on the one hand, there was greater autonomy for demands, while, on the other hand, the unions had no willingness to separate themselves from the State, for their survival depended basically on the benefits given by the State, which meant an ambiguous situation.

During this period, the Communist Party, again an illegal party after it had been legalized for a short period, put forward a strategy based on two points: 1) in the realm of economic development, it sponsored the view that the best policy for the country was to promote its autonomous development (Almeida & Lowy [1976:103]). According to the communists, the main «enemy» of the country was not the capitalists, but the imperialists; and 2) in the unions' province, it supported the creation of parallel organizations such as the Movement for Unification of Workers (MUT) in the 1940s and the Workers' General Command (CGT) at the beginning of the 1960s, which would complement the official structure (Alves [1989:44]; and Keck [1989:256]).

According to Weffort [1978:18], as a result of the communists' strategy, the situation of the unions during this period could be summarized as follows. Firstly, unions were subordinated to the nationalist ideology and supported reforms and collaboration between classes; secondly, the unions acted through a dualist structure because of the official and the parallel structures sponsored by the communists; and thirdly, they were subordinated to the alliances between the left and the *trabalhistas* (labour politicians).

2.4. The Period of the Military Government

In 1964, through a *coup d'état*, the military took power and intervened in many trade unions, where - the military said - a *República Sindicalista* (Union Republic) was being planned. As many writers have pointed out, this happened through interventions in several trade unions⁵, strict enforcement of the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT), cancellation of union leaders' political rights, imprisonments and killings (Cf. Alves [1989:46]; Figueiredo [1978:135]; and Humphrey [1979c: 231]). The military forcibly restrained room for political manoeuvre, which had been won by the unions in the interregnum 1945-64.

In the post-64 period, what one can see is the increasing presence of the State controlling the unions' daily life, thus stressing bureaucratic functions (Martins [1979:184]; and Moisés [1979:55]). From then on, the unions' social assistance functions were aggravated, which made them appendages of the State or mediators in class conflicts. The old ideology of harmony between capital and labour elaborated during the *Estado Novo* was achieved by all means by the existing regime as from 1964. Thus, the unions had their contradictory feature diminished, for they were no longer agencies that put forward workers' demands, but mainly a State collaborator to provide their members with social assistance.

The repression by the authoritarian regime installed in 1964 grew worse in 1968 when the workers came back to the

⁵ According to Figueiredo [1978], between 1964 and 1970, the State intervened in 483 unions, 49 union federations, and 4 union confederations.

first scene of the political arena through the strikes in Contagem (Minas Gerais state) and Osasco (São Paulo state). The authoritarian State countered any action by unions and workers with repressive measures (Almeida & Lowy [1976:110-4]; CEAS [1977:32]; Keck [1989:257]; and Weffort [1972]).

The five-year period that follows is known as the «Brazilian economic miracle» during which the economy grew yearly by 10%, strict wage control playing an important role in this policy. During this period any political movement was viewed as subversive and as an attack against national security.

However, it is possible, at the beginning of the 1970s, to find some facts that tell us that the unions and workers existed politically. Firstly, workers of some plants of Greater São Paulo engaged in isolated action to demand an increase in their wages (Keck [1989:258]). The main action was one taken by metalworkers of the *Indústrias Villares* in December 1973. The workers stopped working from time to time without declaring themselves on strike and promoted an *operação tartaruga* (go slow) (Alves [1989:51] and CEAS [1977:36-7]), which is a tactic in which workers do not stop working, but reduce the speed of the machines. They won an increase in their wages (Almeida & Lowy [1976:116-7]; Antunes [1988]; Moisés [1979]; and Sader [1988]).

Secondly, some union officials tried to promote action that could change the course of Brazilian trade unionism. The best example is the case of the Metalworkers' Union of São Bernardo (São Paulo state). This union's officials learnt that within the political and historical context in which Brazilian trade unions had developed it was impossible to think of

putting an end to the whole bureaucratic structure aimed at providing the rank-and-file with social assistance services.

TABLE 1.1. URBAN STRIKES IN BRAZIL, 1978-87

WORKER	IW	CE	WMC	SSW	OTHERS	TOTAL
YEARS						
1978	84	8	8	13	5	118
1979	77	20	55	50	44	246
1980	43	19	43	21	18	144
1981	41	7	48	20	34	150
1982	73	4	31	25	11	144
1983	189	10	85	47	16	347
1984	317	18	84	62	11	492
1985	246	23	211	125	14	619
1986	534	45	237	187	1	1,004
1987	714	118	787	567	7	2,193

Source: NEPP/UNICAMP [1989:129]
 IW = Industrial Workers
 CE = Civil Engineering
 WMC = Waged Middle Classes
 SSW = Service Sector Workers

However, along with this practice, they started to engage in action to change, to a certain degree, Brazilian trade unions' conservative tendencies. Thus, at the end of 1977, union leaders began to demand a wage increase of 34.1%, for, according to a World Bank report, the rate of inflation had been 26.6%, and not 13.7%, according to Brazilian government figures. The government acknowledged the falsification, but did not show any willingness to give the workers what they had lost. The workers, through their unions, started to campaign for a wage increase in order to recuperate what they regarded as their proper dues (M.H.M. Alves [1984:86-7]; Humphrey

[1979a:78]; Keck [1989:262]; Moisés [1978] and [1979:51]; and Silva [1979:91-2]). As no judicial means succeeded, the metalworkers went on strike in May 1978. The strike initially started in the Saab-Scania plant on May 12th 1978. From there it spread to all auto plants. Although the strike was pronounced illegal by the Regional Labour Court (TRT), the employers' union decided to negotiate directly with the trade unions (Alves [1989:50-1]). In 1979 the strike movement spread from the *ABC paulista* to the whole Southeastern states and from the metalworkers to other workers (M.H.M. Alves [1984:88-9 and 93])⁶.

2.5. The Development After the Strikes of 1978-79

The strikes of 1978 and 1979 were to cause a profound impact on Brazilian labour relations. The new union leaders, militants and activists who emerged during these strikes were to play an important role in the history of the labour and union movement in the 1980s. This new kind of unionism came to be known as «new unionism». However, the expression «new unionism» does not refer solely to those strikes in the late 1970s. It was coined to mean the new political attitudes towards labour problems with an emphasis on a new relationship between the unions and the rank-and-file, a more militant

⁶ According to a report (NEPP/UNICAMP [1988:72-86]), industrial workers were responsible for 84 out of 118 strikes in Brazil as a whole in 1978. In 1979 the movement spread and went as far as 246 strikes in the country. Industrial workers were responsible for 31.3% of these strikes. This number decreased until 1981 when it began to increase again reaching 534 strikes out of 1,004 in 1986 in the country as a whole Useful accounts of the strikes of 1978-80 as well as the reaction of the State are given in Alves [1989]; Antunes [1988]; and Keck [1989].

action regardless of the constraints imposed by the authoritarian state, and demands for a complete revision of the relationship between the State and the unions (Cf. Keck [1989:260]).

The actions of the «new unionism» unions and militants linked to it meant a shift in terms of the relations between the unions and the workplace. The plant became a place of conflict in the sense that the old strategies of the pre-1964 unionism were replaced by new strategies in which the unions were to express grievances and demands arising from the shop-floor (Keck [1989:267-8]; and Tavares de Almeida [1981] and [1983]). On the other hand, «new unionism» has become synonymous with new demands. In fact, along with demands for wage increases, «new unionism» has been focusing attention on new aspects of labour relations, namely the conditions where workers experience the daily reality of their working lives. Finally, since first appearing in the political scene, «new unionism» has been trying to establish a new relationship with the State. According to «new unionism» leaders, workers should be free to negotiate with employers without any interference from the State.

However, this new militancy was not the expression of a unified political, ideological faction. M.H.M. Alves [1984:85] distinguished three factions in the Brazilian union movement after 1978. Firstly, there were those union leaders representing the «old» unionism who did not mobilize the workers, were a «bridge» between the State and the workers, and endorsed the social assistance functions of the unions. In the realm of «new unionism», there were the leaders of the *unidade sindical* (union unity), commonly linked to the

communist parties, who supported the strategy through which the unity of the union movement should be maintained at all costs and frequently engaged themselves in alliances with conservative union officials, and, finally, the faction known as the *autênticos* (authentic unionists) who had a more radical view of labour relations and proposed a "total shift from the past". Keck [1989:273] went further to recognize a fourth faction within the «new unionism»: the *oposições sindicais* (union opposition).

During the 1980s, an increasing dispute between the *unidade sindical* (union unity) and the *autênticos* (authentic unionists) replaced the disputes between the «new unionism» and the conservative, «old» union officials within the unions. The differences between these two factions appeared early. In 1980, the *autênticos* (authentic unionists), left-wing intellectuals, a small number of people linked to Trotskyist groups and activists from many grassroots organizations linked to the Catholic Church founded the Workers' Party (PT) (On the foundation and the role of this party, see Keck [1992]; Lowy [1987]; and Sader [1987]). The existence of another party which intended to represent workers was seen as a negative fact by those supporting unity at all costs. Most of the *unidade sindical* militants were linked to communist parties, which supposedly "truly represented the working class".

The divisions between these two factions went deeper. In August 1981, in Praia Grande (São Paulo state), the First National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) was held as a first step to organize the Workers' United Central (CUT) (Alves [1989:58-9]; and Keck [1984:28-9] and [1989:273-5]). Conflicting views appeared on a number of issues. Firstly,

there was a disagreement on the formation of the national executive of the National Pro-CUT Committee, which would carry on the work and call the next National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) (Keck [1989:275]). Secondly, there were a number of disagreements on the structure of the organization itself. The *autênticos* (authentic unionists) favoured a wider and more democratic basis of representation, while the *unidade sindical* (union unity) favoured a structure based on the official union structure. For instance, should the National Pro-CUT Committee accept union opposition groups? And what about those workers to whom the right to form a union was denied?

Moreover, the II National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) was scheduled for 1982. Also in November 1982 direct elections were due for governors of all states for the first time in 17 years. The *unidade sindical* (union unity) proposed to delay the conference by arguing that these two political events could jeopardize *abertura política* (political liberalization), because the military could become upset by such an overt challenge to the union structure. It seems this was part of the communists' strategy not to put much emphasis on facts which could risk the legalization of their party. Thus, they proposed that the II National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) should be postponed to 1993 (Alves [1989:59]; and Keck [1984:28-9] and [1989:275]).

The final split occurred in 1983. The *autênticos* (authentic unionists) established the Workers' United Central (CUT) in August 1983, and the *unidade sindical* (union unity) argued once again that the *abertura política* (political liberalization) should not be jeopardized. They advocated a

more moderate approach by arguing that the political forces in the country should guarantee a peaceful transition to democracy by negotiating with the military. However, it seems that this was not the central point of disagreement, but control over the union movement because the *unidade sindical* (union unity) held a congress in November 1983 when they established the National Coordination of the Working Classes (CONCLAT). Finally, in 1986, the National Coordination of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) changed its name and became the Workers' General Central (CGT).

3. STATE AND TRADE UNIONS IN BRAZIL: THE CORPORATIST FRAMEWORK

One of the main characteristics of the Brazilian labour relations system has been the presence of the State, regulating not only labour conflicts but also the internal structure of the unions and the role they were allowed to play in these conflicts. As we will see below this changed a little after the 1988 Constitution; however the enduring characteristics have been maintained. In fact, as mentioned above, since 1930 the State began to regulate labour conflicts and union structure.

From 1930 a number of decrees related to labour relations were enacted. In 1931, decree No. 19,770 became law and was aimed at controlling the unions through formal recognition. In other words, unions could not be founded without formal recognition from the Ministry of Labour. The decree also established the conditions under which the unions should be recognized: 1) a minimum of 30 members, all of them of 18 or more years of age; 2) at least 2/3 of the members should have

Brazilian nationality; 3) union constitution, stating the unions' objectives and types of union elections as well as the tasks of the union executive board, should be approved by the Ministry of Labour; 4) the term of each union executive board was to be of one year; and 5) all union members should be registered in files with personal information (See Bernardo [1982:88-9; Füchtner [1980:42-3]; Rands [1990:128]; and Vianna [1978b:146-7]).

Moreover, the decree ascribed a number of functions related to social assistance services which should be performed by the unions and the prohibition of political propaganda.

During the following years, a number of decrees were issued, all of them dealing with union and labour matters. Finally, these were incorporated into a body of laws called Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT). From all decrees issued during this period - 1930-45 - it is possible to infer some of the main characteristics which shaped labour relations in Brazil.

3.1. The *Unicidade Sindical*

Under this principle there must be only one union representing a *categoria* in a given geographical area. A *categoria*, which refers to a group of workers, is determined by the main economic activity of the firm where the workers are employed. If a firm has data processing as its main economic activity, then all its employees will be considered data processing workers and will be represented by the data processing workers' union. Accordingly, those workers whose

skill is data processing but who work for a firm whose principal economic activity is not data processing are not considered data processing workers in terms of union representation. For instance, data processing workers who work in the banking sector are considered *bancários* (bank workers) and are represented by the bank workers' union.

Moreover, the Ministry of Labour also established the geographical region which should be represented by a union. This means that there cannot be, for instance, two bank workers' unions in the same geographical area. The size of the geographical areas varies according to some *categorias*. The most common form is that a union represents one or more *município*. However, in some special cases the Ministry of Labour authorises the existence of a regional or national union.

In addition to this principle, it is important to mention the national union structure. Along with the local unions there are two other levels. The second level is represented by the federations. A federation is formed by at least five unions and usually covers a state, though it may cover the whole of Brazil. The third level is represented by the confederations which must comprise at least three federations. It is worth stressing that, in spite of the foundation of both the Workers' United Central (CUT) and the National Coordination of the Working Classes (CONCLAT), later Workers' General Central (CGT), no horizontal representation was allowed.

3.2. The *Imposto Sindical* (Union Tax)

The *imposto sindical* (union tax) was created in 1940 by decree No. 2,377. This is a tax which is levied on all workers of the occupational *categoria* regardless of the fact whether they are union members or not. It is charged through compulsory pay-roll deduction and is worth one day's wage, being the day March 1st⁷.

However, the unions could only spend this revenue according to what was ascribed to them by the Ministry of Labour as the unions' proper functions. In other words, unions could not spend this income for political purposes such as contributions for political parties' campaigns, to finance strikes or creating a strike fund.

Instead, article 7 of the decree stated all activities on which the unions should spend the revenues from the union tax:

"1) on union employment agencies; 2) on assistance to infants; 3) on medical and odontological assistance; 4) on legal assistance; 5) on primary and pre-vocational schools; 6) on credit and consumer cooperatives; 7) on recreation centres; 8) on libraries; and 9) on sports activities".

However, in spite of the fact that all workers of an

⁷ The union tax is deposited in an account in *Banco do Brasil*. Until the Constitution of 1988, the amount was divided into four parts: 1) 60% for the unions (from which *Banco do Brasil* deducted 6% to cover the costs of services); 2) 15% for the union federations; 3) 5% for the union confederations; and 4) 20% for the Ministry of Labour in a special account called *Emprego e Salário* (Employment and Wage) in the *Banco do Brasil*. When there was not a union federation, its share was transferred to the confederation. And, in extreme cases, when there was not a confederation either, the amount should be transferred to the *Emprego e Salário* account, i.e. the Ministry of Labour could receive as much as 40% of the union tax deducted from a *categoria*.

occupational *categoria* contributed to this fund, it was used to finance social assistance services which were aimed only to union members. Therefore, as many scholars have already noticed (Cf. Füchtner [1980:61]), there was a paradoxical situation. It was not interesting for the unions to affiliate new members because their financial situation was safe regardless of fees paid in by new members and an increase in membership could mean also an increase in the pressure on the use of the social assistance services of the unions and thus on their financial situation.

On the other hand, the institution of the union tax also meant the interference of the State in another sphere of union affairs. In fact, the State also had power to inspect union finances to check whether the unions had been spending their incomes according to the constraints imposed on their budget by the law.

3.3. State Recognition

As mentioned above, a decree stating that a union's existence required State recognition was enacted as early as 1931. Along with the administrative process through which the State analysed and granted the unions the right to exist, State recognition also implied the right of the State to intervene in the unions in a number of ways. Firstly, the State had the right to supervise union finances. Secondly, the State determined that all unions should have the same *estatuto único* (articles of association). This means that the objectives of each union were imposed *a priori* by the State. Finally, the State also controlled union elections and had the

right to veto candidates on a number of grounds. Electoral slates had to be submitted to the Ministry of Labour for approval. However, even after election to office, unionists could be dismissed if they went against what was established by the labour law. For instance, in the case of a strike unions could be open to intervention and their leaders dismissed. Moreover, if dismissals occurred, the State could designate *interventores*, state appointed officials, to look after union affairs pending an election.

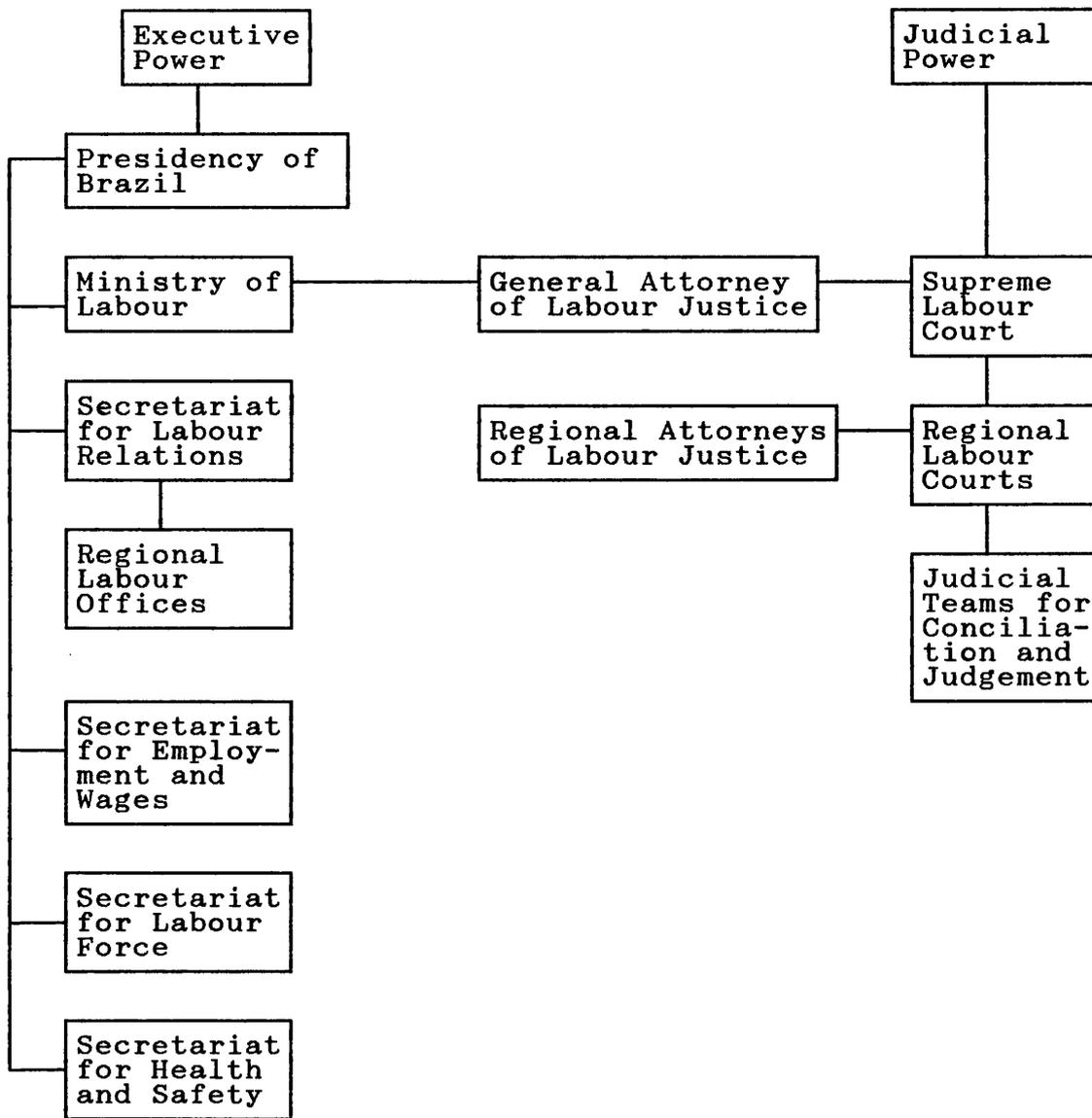
3.4. The Labour Courts

Up to 1988 the labour courts were the judicial branch of State intervention in union matters. They were created to mediate in labour conflicts inside the framework which emphasized social peace and harmony.

The Labour Code established that collective agreements between workers, represented by their union, and employees should be negotiated. The discussions could be intermediated by the Regional Labour Office (DRT), the regional executive branch of the Ministry of Labour, if the process of negotiation appeared to be difficult.

If the negotiations reached stalemate, either party could take the case for judgement in the Regional Labour Court (TRT) whose arbitration would be binding. However, the parties had the right to appeal to the Supreme Labour Court (TST). On the other hand, the labour courts also had the right to interfere as a compulsory arbitrator without being referred to when the parties did not reach an agreement, mainly in cases of strikes in important sectors of the economy.

FIGURE 1.1. STRUCTURE OF STATE APPARATUS ON LABOUR MATTERS



Source: Regional Labour Office (DRT)

The labour courts also had the right to judge whether a strike was legal. This means that not only the outcome of the negotiations but also the very nature of the demands could be dismissed beforehand just because a labour court could judge a strike as illegal. This also affected the profile of the unions in organizing a strike because if a strike was adjudged illegal, the labour court ruled that wages should not be paid.

Apart from a collective agreement which might deal with

wage increases, working conditions and other issues related to labour aspects, the labour courts were also responsible for the settlement of individual grievances. Individual workers could take their cases - which might be related to the breach of the annual agreements on the part of the employers or simply because the employers were not upholding rights granted under the Labour Code - to the labour courts.

This seems to suggest that the normative power of the labour courts was intended to avoid the resolution of labour conflicts through processes which would depend upon the strength of the parties (Rands [1992:6]).

3.5. The Constitution of 1988 and the «Neo-Corporatism»

The hybrid solution proposed by the Constitution of 1988 has been termed «neo-corporatism» by some authors (Souza [1990]) to refer to the present situation in which the State no longer has the right to interfere in union affairs but where the three main pillars of the corporatist system have survived, namely: the *imposto sindical* (union tax), the *unicidade sindical*, and the labour courts. On the other hand, the Constitution also granted the unions the exclusive right of representation of all workers of a *categoria*, regardless of their being unionized.

During the debates on the Constitution the union movement was divided, with different proposals on the *unicidade sindical* and the *imposto sindical* (union tax). On the one hand, one faction argued that the end of the *unicidade sindical* and the *imposto sindical* (union tax) would cause chaos because many unions would disappear and fragmentation

of the union movement would occur. On the other hand, another faction argued that unions could not be independent while their finances and survival depended on the State (Rands [1990]).

The solution finally approved was a hybrid one. In fact, article 8 grants the right to form unions and associations and the right to strike without any adjudication by the labour courts as to whether strikes are illegal. However, paragraph II of this article prohibits the existence of more than one union representing a given *categoria* within the same geographical area, while paragraph IV granted the survival of the *imposto sindical* (union tax). Finally, the structure of the labour courts was maintained through articles 111 to 117.

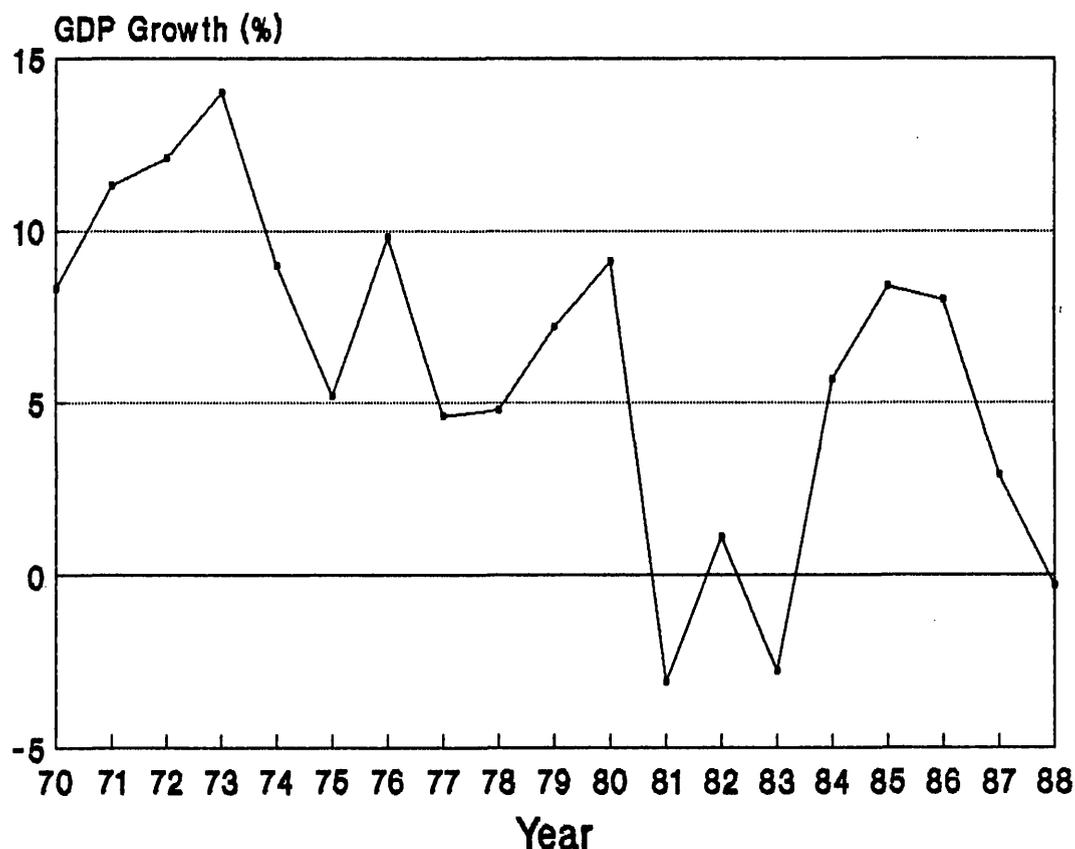
The main changes in union life provoked by the Constitution of 1988 are as follows: 1) the State no longer has power to recognize and/or intervene in unions; 2) a union when created needs only to register in a civil registry; 3) a union's constitution is no longer imposed by the State; 4) unions dispose of their funds of their own accord and may create, for instance, a strike fund; and 5) although the labour courts survived, they no longer have power *sui juris* to arbitrate mandatorily in individual or collective labour disputes. However, the parties - unions and/or employers - may refer to them for arbitration in disputes.

4. THE BRAZILIAN ECONOMY IN THE 1980s

According to Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE) data, since the 1950s the Brazilian economy has undergone many changes. Between 1950 and 1980, for

instance, there was an increase of 10.7% in the number of jobs created; in the same period the percentage of jobs created in the secondary sector was 30.9% and in the tertiary sector 58.4%. The economy itself experienced a number of changes. During the Kubitschek government (1956-61) a wide programme of economic development was implemented. The military who took power in 1964 also implemented an economic policy aimed at accelerating economic growth. After they took power, the GDP grew as follows:

FIGURE 1.2. BRAZILIAN GDP, 1970-88



Source: Conjuntura Econômica (Fundação Getúlio Vargas)

When the military took power a number of decrees regarding wage increases were issued. Unions could not negotiate wage increases which were decreed by the government

and tied to the rate of inflation. At first, the law, issued in 1965, regulating wage increases allowed some discretion to the labour courts in the settlement of wages. However, as Humphrey ([1982:40]. Cf. Marques [1985:375]) points out:

"In 1966 new laws were decreed which reduced the role of the Labour Courts...From this point on the wages policy was strictly subordinated to overall economic policy. Wage settlements, and the figures on which they were based, became subordinate to the needs of the ministries of Finance and Planning, and this led to a systematic misapplication of a wages formula that in theory should have maintained the share of the national income going to wages".

TABLE 1.2. EVOLUTION OF REAL WAGES IN BRAZIL, 1970-79
(Basis 1980 = 100)

YEARS	REAL WAGES*
1970	66.65
1971	n.a.
1972	74.67
1973	75.61
1974	80.32
1975	83.59
1976	90.70
1977	93.63
1978	99.23
1979	103.76

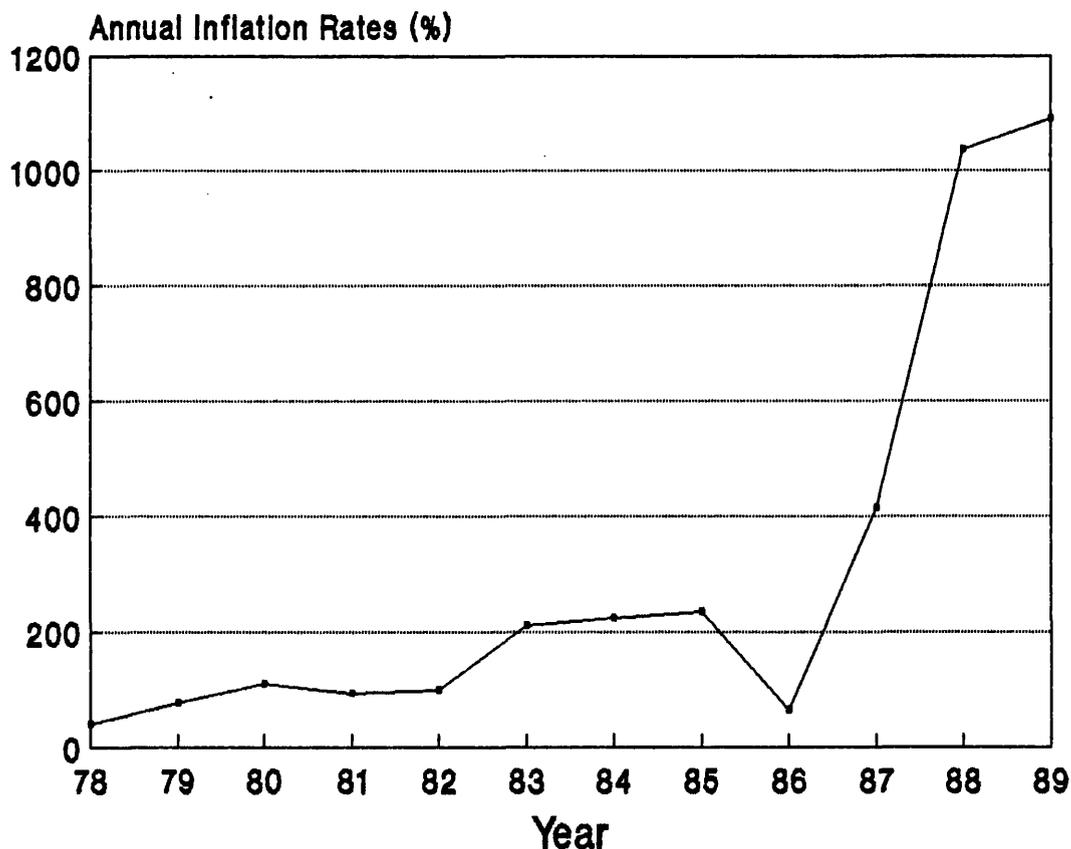
Source: Amadeo & Camargo [1991:18]
(*) Deflated by the IBGE/FGV index

Nevertheless, the inflation rates published were hardly the real ones, as shown by the campaign over the 34.1% mentioned above. Between 1973 and 1983, the military government issued nine separate decrees regulating wage policy. Most of these decrees were aimed at regulating wage increases on the grounds that wage increases were a major factor influencing inflation rates (Cf. Marques [1985:374-79]). According to Inter-Union Office for Statistical and

Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE) data, some workers lost more than 30% after the implementation of the new decrees (Cf. Alves [1989:47]).

In spite of these tight controls on wage settlements, the data available shows that real wages increased during the 1970s. However, this must be detailed. As Taïeb and Barros [1989:29] show, some workers, depending on their skill, earned higher increases, while others suffered losses. For instance, skilled experienced increases in their wages, but unskilled workers experienced decreases particularly in 1977 (Cf. Humphrey [1982:43]).

FIGURE 1.3. INFLATION RATES, 1978-89



Source: Conjuntura Econômica (Fundação Getúlio Vargas)

On the other hand, the rate of inflation, which had gone down after 1967, started increasing again in 1973 to reach its highest peaks during the 1980s⁸. To combat inflation the government resorted to recessive measures which hit the country from 1981 up to 1983. As shown in figure 1.2., the Brazilian GDP fell sharply in this period, which reflected on high unemployment and on the capability of the State to invest in social programs. Moreover, inflation, instead of falling, increased what "erode[d] the fiscal equilibrium of the State" (Feijó & Carvalho [n/d:11]).

Gomes [1987] shows that the economic crisis did not hit badly the economy of the Northeastern region. However, Pernambuco's economy was affected. The rate of economic growth in 1980 was the lowest for many years, being negative in 1981. This reflected on the creation of new jobs. Moreover, it had a negative impact on the average index of jobs available (Cf. Desempenho da Economia de Pernambuco em 1980 [1981:10, 12]); and Desempenho da Economia de Pernambuco em 1981 [1982:11, 13]).

The deteriorating economic situation and the several economic packages hit the Pernambuco economy hard in the 1980s. From mid-1984 up to 1986 there was a significant growth in the Pernambuco economy. However, from 1987

"[Pernambuco] state was more sharply hit than the country as a whole by the national economic crisis as a result of the accelerated growing inflation..., indecision and uncertainties about economic policy" (Desempenho da Economia de Pernambuco em 1988 [1988:179]).

During the 1980s inflation became a chronic problem and

⁸ For a useful analysis of the several factors influencing the increase in inflation rates during the period from 1973 to 1983, see Marques [1985].

the various economic measures taken by the government hit workers' purchasing power hard. Between 1979 and 1984 the government issued nine laws to regulate wage increases. The overall intention of these laws was to compress wages. Lerda ([1986:475]. Cf. Marques [1985:377-8]) shows that the first of these laws only affected wages negatively for those earning more than 15 minimum wages a month. However, the decree of May 1983 provoked heavy losses for almost all workers.

Because of this, the National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) organized in July 1983 the first general strike in the country since 1964. This general strike was organized as a protest against the ineffective governmental policies to reduce inflation (Sandoval [1990]). According to Inter-Union Office for Statistical and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE), the main objectives of this strike were: 1) to protest against the government's economic policy which caused unemployment, low wages and high prices; 2) to protest against the wage policy based on a «tight belt strategy» which provoked widespread misery; 3) to protest against the agreements between the country and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); 4) to demand job stability and better working conditions; 5) to demand that prices of staple products be frozen; and 6) to demand that the government should end intervention in the unions and allow democratically elected union leaders to return to their unions (*Boletim do DIEESE*, Aug. 1983).

Real wages, which had increased in the 1970s for some workers, suffered heavy losses in the 1980s, particularly in the years 1983, 1984 and 1987.

TABLE 1.3. EVOLUTION OF REAL WAGES IN INDUSTRY
AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL, 1980-89*
(Basis 1980 = 100)

YEARS	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	INDUSTRY
1980	106.30	116.08
1981	103.01	120.24
1982	109.70	135.03
1983	91.88	112.77
1984	83.23	109.86
1985	105.81	120.74
1986	123.80	124.36
1987	103.11	106.78
1988	105.46	112.52
1989	89.04	95.00

Source: Chadad [1990:555]
(*) Deflated by the INPC/FIBGE

After the civil government took over power in 1985, a number of economic plans were decreed to deal with inflation. The Sarney government decreed the first of these plans in February 1986, the Cruzado Plan. Amongst the main measures announced were: 1) the creation of a new currency, the *Cruzado*, which was worth Cr\$ 1,000; 2) wage and pension increases should maintain an interval of 12 months; 3) all prices were frozen; and 4) an 8% wage increase was granted to all workers, a 16% increase in the minimum wage and automatic wage increases (the so-called «trigger mechanism») when the Consumer Price Index reached 20% (Cf. Carvalho [1989:205-13]; Feijó & Carvalho [n/d:14-6]; Flynn [1986:1157-8]; Tavares de Almeida [1991:13ff.]; and Zottmann [1986:145-6 and 149-51]).

The reaction from the union centrals was mixed. The president of the National Conference of Working Classes (CONCLAT),

"Joaquim dos S. Andrade, said that, while the Plan hit the workers, it did contain items that helped them, for example, the price freeze and unemployment benefit. By contrast, Jair Meneguelli, president of CUT,...described the changes as «confiscation»,...and Paulo R. Paim, CUT's secretary-general, said that «they have put their hands in our purse». DIEESE...agreed with this, calculating that the conversion of wages from *cruzeiros* to *cruzados*, on the basis of average wages over the last six months, implied an average cut of about 20%, while some workers, especially bank employees, were hit even harder. Their six-month adjustment, based on inflation, which was due in March, would have given a rise of 105%: under the new they obtained only 62%" (Flynn [1986:1172-3]).

In spite of its initial success and popular support, after August 1986 the plan started failing (For an analysis of the factors which contributed to the failure of the Cruzado Plan, see Carvalho [1989]; and Feijó & Carvalho [n/d]). The inflation rates of March and April were -1% and -0.6%. However, it reached 1.4% in October and 2.5% in November. The real average wages, which had increased up to November, fell sharply. In November 1986 the government issued what became known as the Cruzado Plan II, by which the government tried to reduce demand which had experienced a boom with the freezing of prices and was causing problems to the economic stabilization plan (Feijó & Carvalho [n/d:16]). However, prices increased and the inflation rate reached 7.6% in December of 1986 (All data on inflation rates for these months was calculated by Fundação Getúlio Vargas, as quoted by Pereira & Nakano [1991]).

The measures of the Cruzado II caused heavy wage losses. The Workers' United Central (CUT) called for a general strike, being supported by the Workers' General Central (CGT) and all national union confederations. The strike took place on December 12th 1986 and its aims were to protest against the Cruzado Plan II and to demand the recovery of lost wages, and

to protest against payment of foreign debt (*Boletim do DIEESE*, Jan. 1987). According to Sandoval [1990:12], a total of 10 million workers went on strike.

In June 1987 the Sarney government tried to cut inflation, which had reached 15% in March, 20% in April and 27.7% in May, by issuing a new plan known as the Bresser Plan (Cf. Tavares de Almeida [1991:17-9]). It proposed an end to all indexation mechanisms which helped to perpetuate inflation. However,

"Wage indexation was not eliminated but the trigger point mechanism [of the Cruzado Plan] was replaced by a lagged system in which wages were to be adjusted by the average price increase of the three months before each adjustment. If the plan was successful in eliminating inflation the mechanism would be innocuous but if inflation revived it would raise money wages more slowly than inflation" (Feijó & Carvalho [n/d:17-8]).

TABLE 1.4. WAGE LOSSES FROM THE CRUZADO PLAN
UNTIL 1 JULY 1987, BY DATA-BASE

DATA-BASE	DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS BY DATA BASE (%)*	REAL WAGE ON 1 JULY 1987 (%)**	WAGE LOSSES BY 1 JULY 1987
January	11.4	63.14	36.86
February	3.9	61.47	38.53
March	9.1	58.36	41.64
April	4.7	66.77	33.23
May	15.8	67.30	32.70
June	5.5	69.10	30.90
July	5.8	64.12	35.88
August	4.4	64.89	35.11
September	9.3	65.98	34.02
October	13.0	55.92	44.08
November	14.1	56.99	43.01
December	3.0	58.86	41.14

Source: DIEESE [1987:6]

(*) Data from the Ministry of Labour

(**) Deflated by the ICV/DIEESE index

According to the Inter-Union Office for Statistical and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE):

"The [Bresser Plan] endorses the fall of the level of the real average wage and intensifies it by hiding the inflation rate of June" (DIEESE [1987:3]).

The unions envisaged new wage losses in the new plan and a joint protest was called by the Workers' General Central (CGT) and Workers' United Central (CUT). The aims of the this general strike, which, according to Sandoval [1990:12], gathered about 10 million workers, were: 1) a wage increase of 37.74% to recover lost wages; 2) job stability; 3) a 40 hour week; 4) support for land reform with participation of workers; and 5) to protest against payment of foreign debt (*Boletim do DIEESE*, Sept. 1987; and Sandoval [1990:12]).

The Bresser Plan failed and the new Finance Minister, Maílson da Nóbrega, refused to take «heterodox» measures against inflation. The inflation rate was to be kept at about 20% a month. However,

"From the latter month [June 1988] on, inflation began accelerating again, to reach 36.56% in January 1989. The deterioration seemed to have been due to the emergence of unfavourable expectations related to a growing capacity of the labour movement to recover in the Labour Courts past inflationary losses" (Feijó & Carvalho [n/d:19]).

In January 1989, once again, the government resorted to a macroeconomic plan (The Summer Plan) to deal with growing inflation. In relation to wages, the Summer Plan stated that they should be maintained at their average real level of 1988. There were also some measures which meant that the government was trying to cut inflation through recessive policies (Feijó & Carvalho [n/d:19-21]; Maia [1990:4-6]; and Tavares de Almeida [1991:20]). These measures caused the level of employment to fall, the general level of production decreased

as well as real wages.

The workers' centrals called for a new general strike which lasted two days and involved 22 million workers on the first day and 10 million on the second day, according to Sandoval [1990:12]. The strike was called to protest against the implementation of the Summer Plan and demand the recovery of lost wages (*Boletim do DIEESE*, April 1989).

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to set the political and economic scene in which the Brazilian labour movement has been developing. It was shown that the main feature of the history of the Brazilian labour movement has been the presence of the State within it. In fact, since 1930 the State has been responsible for a number of laws aimed at regulating and controlling labour matters in Brazil. Of course, State interference has varied over the years with periods of relaxation and periods of direct and violent intervention. Even with the 1988 Constitution, some of the corporatist mechanisms have been kept alive and the survival of some unions and the outcome of fights for demands still depends to some extent on the state apparatus. On the other hand, the Brazilian economy is characterized by high inflation wages over the years. Indeed, only in 1947, 1948 and 1957 were inflation rates below 10% a year (Marques [1985:343]). The 1980s were characterized by the highest inflation rates in the history of the country and a number of macroeconomic plans were issued in attempting to reduce inflation. Real wages suffered heavy losses in 1980s and the workers reacted by

calls for general strikes, the first having occurred in 1983. In spite of attempts during the Cruzado Plan to redistribute income, the subsequent plans meant wages were to be reduced, which provoked angry reaction from the union centrals which called for general strikes to protest against wage and economic policies and demand increases in wages and other benefits. In short, the analysis developed in this chapter was an attempt to set the economic and political scenes where labour action took place during late 1970s and 1980s.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORY OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN PERNAMBUCO

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is twofold: firstly, it provides a historical analysis of labour conflicts in Pernambuco; secondly, it provides an historical description of the unions which are part of the sample I will be using. This will allow me to describe the political situation in which the activities of the unions I am analysing have developed.

2. THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN PERNAMBUCO

This section is divided into four parts. I will be using the same period covering the description of the Brazilian labour movement to describe the history of organized labour in Pernambuco.

2.1. From the Late 19th-Century to 1930

The process of industrialization started in Pernambuco in the 1820s largely as a result of the initiatives of British entrepreneurs who established some foundries. These plants employed a native labour force, but engineers and raw materials were brought in from Great Britain.

Another industry that developed was the railway, also

supported by British capital. As the tracks were imported from Great Britain, it did not contribute to increase steel production in Pernambuco. Engineers, foremen, and skilled workers were mainly from Great Britain and Belgium. However, because of the fact that these foreign workers demanded high wages, the Great-Western (the railway company) started to employ the native labour force, establishing large metal plants in a number of towns.

Finally, the textile industry was also set up in Pernambuco. This industry was firmly established from the 1870s. According to Melo [1984:7], the textile industry expanded from 1890 when plants were established in several towns.

Since the late 19th-century workers started to establish labour organizations under the influence of anarchists and socialists at first, as occurred in Brazil as a whole (Centro Josué de Castro [1988:9]). They organized labour leagues, resistance societies and unions. In 1890, the Pernambuco workers went on strike for the first time. It happened in a fabric plant and the weavers demanded better wages.

Under the influence of the anarchist Brazilian Labour Confederation (COB), in 1906, workers founded in Pernambuco the Working Class' Federation (FCO), which lasted until 1945. Under this federation the anarchists organized several labour unions comprising around 20,000 urban and rural workers. At that time (1906-08), the anarchists had won the leadership of the labour movement and the utopian socialists had disappeared.

The First World War provoked a sharp crisis. Much of food, fuel, machines and raw material supplies from Europe and

the United States were cut due to the war. There were many strikes during this period due to low wages and the anarchist press became an important means to stimulate strikes (Centro Josué de Castro [1988:10]).

The industrial crisis, high inflation, and unemployment provoked some bitter strikes. In 1919, a general strike in Recife lasted one week. Railwaymen, tramdrivers, dockers, metalworkers and printing workers were in the forefront of this strike (Melo [1986a:8]).

By 1922, the influence of the anarchists had started to decrease. Some anarchists and/or socialists had been converted to Marxism mainly due to the Russian revolution. The Communist Party was founded in 1922 and disputes between these two factions inside the unions grew up. However, the unions suffered a severe crash not from these disputes, but caused by the new governor Sérgio Loreto (1923-31), who closed down most of them.

Nevertheless, even with this repression carried out by the government, in 1929 workers promoted the First Regional Labour Meeting when they founded the Workers' General Union (UGT-Pernambuco), which was influenced by the communists.

2.2. From 1930 to 1945

As described in chapter I, the new government issued the *Lei de Sindicalização* (unionization law) in 1931. In Pernambuco, the Workers' General Union (UGT) stood against such a law. Only 13 out of the 36 trade unions of Pernambuco had applied for registration at the Ministry of Labour by 1934 (Cf. Brayner [1987:165-6]). However, in spite of the tough

controls brought about by the *Lei de Sindicalização* (unionization law), the labour movement did not disappear. In 1931, according to Brayner [1987:167], tramdrivers, railwaymen and weavers went on strike demanding better wages.

In 1932, the number of strike increased. In February, printing workers went on strike at the *Imprensa Industrial* and at the *Imprensa Dreschler* companies. In July, weavers went on strike protesting against decreasing wages and for an eight hour working day. Also, in July, tramdrivers went on strike and there was a total stoppage of buses and trams in Recife (Brayner [1987:169]).

There was no strike in Pernambuco in 1933. However, in 1934, the May Day rally ended with violent clashes between the police and workers. In May, drivers went on strike against a high tax the government had imposed on them and, in July, telegraphists went on a national strike. This was the first time civil servants had been on strike in Pernambuco.

In 1935 the federal government was willing to issue a National Security Law (LSN), which would possibly be used against unionists. There were, as a consequence, numerous strikes against such a law. The government repressed such strikes with violence. In Recife, many workers promoted a one-day strike. Some workers continued the strike beyond one day to demand better wages. In the following months, printing workers, dockers, food industry workers, bakers, civil engineering workers and railwaymen went on strike in support of better wages.

In November 1935, a communist uprising took place. The communists took power in Natal, Rio G. do Norte state's capital city. This uprising was led by the army's communist

officials and sergeants with the support of dozens of workers. In Recife, a battalion rebelled and there was a bloody fight. The government repression was tough and hundreds of people were arrested and tortured. In 1936 and 1937 there were no strikes due to the National Security Law (LSN), and the state of siege and war. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labour started to replace the radical union leaders by conservative officials.

2.3. The Democratic Period: 1945-64

According to Soares [1982:121],

"In Pernambuco, the ease of the Ministry of Labour's control [over the unions after 1945]...permitted intense and open activity for independent and communist unionists..."

Telles [1981:43] tells how the workers' political activities re-emerged at the beginning of the 1950s. According to him, in 1951, there were three important strikes in Pernambuco: weavers, bus drivers and paper industry workers went on strike in support of wage increases.

In 1952, the weavers of Paulista and other towns went on strike again (Lopes [1988]). In May, the weavers started to prepare a campaign to demand a wage increase. They elected a wage committee and elaborated a list of demands, whose main points were economic demands.

In Pernambuco, as in the whole of Brazil, the major political debate was about the path for economic development. According to analyses current at the time, there would be a conservative sector represented by the big landowners, who were opposed to «progress», and a somewhat progressive urban

and industrial bourgeoisie, who should be won to the «full development of capitalism» in Brazil. The labour movement was in the middle of this debate due to the influence of the Communist Party.

In 1955 the Communist Party founded the Congress for the Northeast's Salvation. The aim of this congress was to discuss ideas and plans for regional development. Union leaders and rank-and-file together gathered to discuss not only wage matters, but also to provide support for the congress. In 1958 the communists took over the Workers' Inter-Union Council (CONSINTRA), a union advisory committee to the Pernambuco government (Cf. Soares [1982:122-3]). In that year, the First Pernambuco Workers' Congress took place. Among the main points discussed were those related to national subjects: land reform, industrial development, nationalization of foreign banks and economic policies to reduce inflation (Jaccoud [1990:67]).

Nevertheless, more than one author has pointed out the fragility of trade unionism during this period in Brazil, which is also true of the Pernambuco case. Indeed, there was a unionism of top leaders. There were many intermediate union organizations that were created to co-ordinate the many existent unions. However, these union organizations engaged themselves in political bargaining with the government without the participation of the rank-and-file (Almeida & Lowy [1976: 103 and 106]; Alves [1989:45]; and Keck [1989:253-4]). When the military took power through the 1964 *coup*, these intermediate union organizations called upon the unions to strike. However, there was no answer. In spite of the apparent strength, the unions were weak and they could not react

against powerful weapons.

2.4. The Period of the Military Government

The 1964 *coup* was violent. Many unionists were arrested, tortured, killed or disappeared. In Pernambuco, most of the unions were subject to direct intervention and direct government control. As a result of the weakness of the unions and the gap between leaders and the rank-and-file there was no reaction to face the violent repression. The military took to the simple strategy of arresting union leaders, and the rest of the movement stood paralysed. The only reaction was from rural workers. However, confronting the strength of the military's weaponry, rural leaders preferred to advise the workers to stay indoors (Jaccoud [1990:143]).

Officials of those unions subject to government intervention were replaced by state appointed officials who supported the new government. These union state appointed officials were influenced by sectors of the Catholic Church, by conservative and right-wing agencies, or simply opposed the populist, reformist unionism.

From then on, the unions became, as in the rest of the country, agencies to provide the affiliated workers with social assistance. There was no room for political manoeuvre due to strict government control. The only union activities related to labour problems referred to denunciations resulting from lack of enforcement of the Labour Code.

According to Jaccoud [1990:147], in spite of the violent repression, the labour movement had not been finished off. The union leaders who had managed to escape imprisonment started

to participate once again in union life. Those unionists who were lucky enough to continue in their unions behaved strictly inside the legal framework because it was very dangerous to make demands as they had before the *coup*.

At the beginning of the 1970s an independent labour movement started to appear amongst youth groups formed by the Catholic Church, which gradually began to criticize the government. In Pernambuco, most of the union leaders of the 1980s gained experience inside movements linked to the Church.

Around 1978 a group of printing workers, shop assistants, metalworkers and weavers started to meet frequently. Their aim was to begin to participate in those unions managed by the *pelegos*, because in these there were still many workers. This could allow them to promote militant activism amongst their fellow workers. On the other hand, as the *pelegos* were not interested in developing campaigns of unionization or discussions about labour problems, these young militants began to operate inside plants. Their strategy was to discuss issues that could make workers think about the role of the unions (Centro Josué de Castro [1988:39]; and interview No. 8⁹).

Sometimes there were denunciations about the workers situation. These denunciations were not only about low wages, but also about employment opportunities. In 1979, the Catholic Labour Action (ACO) revealed that many factories were closing down. Other ones were simply dismissing employees without replacing them. For this reason, this organization called upon workers to take up a more decisive position to face such problems concerning the working class (*Jornal do Comércio*, 10

⁹ Full details of each interview are given in appendix I.

April 1979).

The 1978 May Day was commemorated by a number of militants linked to the Catholic Labour Action (ACO). They decided to expand the celebrations by inviting other workers. However, there was no room for union officials, as they were seen as supporting the State. This event was a root for the formation of the Union Opposition Group, as those militants invited were already trying to form groups to confront conservative union officials.

However, in 1978, the general picture was still one of fear and terror *vis-à-vis* the authoritarian and repressive state. Some of the basic rights were denied to workers. Only a handful of union officials complained about the breaking of labour laws by the employers, bad working conditions and low wages. If these complaints meant any demand for a wage increase, this was envisaged inside the legal framework of the economic policy established by the government and demands were aimed at the State, seen as a neutral entity above society, which could solve workers' problems.

On the other hand, the news about trade unions shows a picture in which they were only dealing with social assistance services. The Bank Workers' Union, for instance, was starting to give bank workers' widows medical assistance (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 3 June 1978).

During the first few days of 1979, there was a threat of strike action in Recife. Five hundred taxi-drivers threatened to go on strike to demand a taxi tariff increase (*Jornal do Comércio*, 6 Jan. 1979).

At the same time, some *categorias* started to undertake political action. Pernambuco state schools' teachers began to

rebel against the officials of their association. These teachers attended a public meeting to discuss their demands which should later have been sent to the governor. During the meeting some teachers disagreed with the association president's management. Some teachers said that the president of their association represented the state rather than the teachers because he refused the formation of a committee to deliver the list of demands to the state governor (*Jornal do Comércio*, 12 April 1979). At the end, he had to accept the formation of such a committee. A letter was then written with 21 points related to economic demands, better working conditions, and control over working time.

At the same time, a public gathering was held by the Teachers' Union to discuss a list of demands. Some teachers criticized the way the board of directors called the meeting. They declared that, it seemed, the officials did not intend to have a true assembly. At this meeting some of the radical militants who took over this union in the 1980s managed to have their proposals, which referred to wage increases and job stability, approved (*Jornal do Comércio*, 25 and 26 April 1979).

As the disputes grew worse, both the union and the association established a time limit to have their demands met, otherwise they would strike. What followed, then, was the organization of the strikes. The government was still trying to delay any discussion, and the private schools' owners did not believe, it seemed, in any strike during that period. The teachers' strategy in order to legitimize their strikes before public opinion was to link the fight for better wages with improved teaching quality. They often said they could not

teach properly as they earned such low wages.

As the options about the means to fight in order to secure wage increases began to become clearer, so did the political positions of some union officials. The presidents of the Watchmen's and of the Private School Teachers' Unions (the latter pushed by the militancy of the teachers) disagreed with the Minister of Labour about threats against strikers. However, the president of the Bank Workers' Union declared he supported the Minister by saying that the union had accepted only a 20% wage increase, as a vote of confidence in the Figueiredo government, which provoked angry reactions from an opposition group of bank workers who were willing to challenge the union's president during the coming union elections in (*Jornal do Comércio*, 13 May 1979).

Meanwhile, the organization of the strike of the state school teachers continued. The governmental position was a mixture of calls for negotiation and threats. The head of the Regional Labour Office (DRT) also threatened the teachers (*Jornal do Comércio*, 17 and 19 May 1979).

As the possibility of a state school teachers' strike became nearer, the association's president managed to disassociate himself from the movement. As a meeting was scheduled to be held at the association's headquarters, he simply locked the doors and disappeared. According to most of the teachers who attended the meeting, he was afraid of losing his privileges at the association as he used the association's properties as his own (*Jornal do Comércio*, 27 May 1979).

Finally, at the end of May, the private schools' teachers and the state schools' teachers both went on strike. All attempts to negotiate had failed. The participation of the

private schools' teachers was high and a few pickets avoided those who went to work. However, the participation of the state schools' teachers was not too high in Pernambuco as a whole. In towns far from the capital city there was no strike. Strikers were concentrated in Greater Recife.

After seven days, the strike of the private schools' teachers ended and they won partial job stability, permission to attend the union's meetings during working time without losing wages, a 58% wage increase, and permission to fix a board for union news in any teachers' rooms (*Jornal do Comércio*, 6 June 1979; and Mendonça & Medeiros [1989:10]). However, the strike of the state schools' teachers was hardening as neither parties were willing to give up their positions. The government hardened and the threats to dismiss all strikers increased. In order to force the government to meet their demands, they even surrounded the State Education Office building by camping on its footpath. Finally, the teachers decided to call the strike off after one month as there was no negotiation.

Through the description of these strikes I intend to show the pattern of such political action in Pernambuco. I pointed out above the main characteristics of the «new unionism» that emerged in Brazil at the end of the 1970s. These strikes in Pernambuco I have just described show that those patterns were not present everywhere in Brazil. Indeed, there was a re-emergence of labour militancy in Pernambuco, but its characteristics were different from the labour militancy in the Southeast Region.

These strikes in Pernambuco show, at least, three features: 1) they did not happen in the modern sectors of the

economy; 2) none of them happened in the traditional factory, that is, the workers who took part in the strikes were not the traditional working class; and 3) they were led by informal leaders outside the circle of official union leaders, as a result of the disbelief of the workers in the union officials. When union officials participated in the strike, as in the case of the Teachers' Union, they did so because they were «pushed» into the movement. In the case of the president of the Teachers' Association, he was dismissed by a teachers' assembly and a new board of directors, who were chosen from amongst the informal leaders who had directed the organization of the strike, was elected. In the São Paulo case, there were some union officials who had promoted a «transformation from inside» and led the big strikes of 1978-80, or there were a number of factory committees that organized and led such strikes. However, in Pernambuco the process was somehow different. There were no union officials who promoted a «transformation from inside». Indeed, unofficial leaders, that is, lay members of the unions, took over the leadership of the movement and led the strikes. On the other hand, there were no factory committees at the workplace to organize such strikes. Indeed, the only factory committee that existed in Pernambuco, during this period, was founded in the mid-1980s after a number of strikes had occurred. This committee, however, disappeared after management dismissed all its members. On the other hand, another organization at the workplace level was set up by bank workers. In this case, it was a gain achieved by the employees of the state-owned *Banco do Brasil* without union help.

Finally, scholars who studied the São Paulo case pointed

out that one of these labour movement's characteristics was to aim their demands at the employers and not at the State. The Pernambuco case shows that, at least at the beginning, there was not a strong case for direct negotiations.

In June 1979, there was another important political activity in Recife, which strengthens this point about the nature of the sectors where the «new unionism» emerged in Pernambuco. As I pointed out above, a number of workers, at this time, demanded a wage increase due to governmental falsifications on the inflation rate. A number of workers in Pernambuco also demanded such a wage increase. The electricity workers of the federal state-owned *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) and the Pernambuco-owned *Companhia de Eletrificação de Pernambuco* (CELPE) campaigned to get this wage increase. A group of informal leaders put pressure on union officials to lead a campaign to put forward such a demand, which was successful. It was followed by the 1979 wage campaign and the new leaders were active in leading it. A committee for negotiation was set up and the group of informal leaders managed to have some of its members in this committee. In practice, the union officials had to give up the leadership of this movement (Cf. interview No. 33). A strike that hit both firms followed. There were threats to dismiss employees who were on strike, as these were key plants for the functioning of the economy and the military treated the electricity sector as a matter of national security.

2.5. The Development in the 1980s

In general, those groups of militants of different sectors who were in opposition to conservative union officials carried on meeting regularly by founding a union opposition group. They promoted a number of joint events and organized lists of demands in which they asked for better working conditions and wage increases. Their first large demonstration took place in 1980, when they demonstrated against «unemployment». This opposition group was also a kind of mixture as it was formed by radical people who had won elections in their unions, as in the case of the urban (electricity and water) workers and by people who were still in the opposition, as in the case of the bank workers.

In 1981, workers in Brazil were planning to hold a national meeting called First National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT). In Pernambuco, the Urban Workers' Union and the Rural Workers' Union Federation (FETAPE), together with some opposition groups organized the local meeting, which was required to precede the national meeting (Mendonça & Medeiros [1989:14-5]).

However, as the labour movement became stronger, divergences amongst the many political persuasions started to emerge by the time the II National Conference of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) took place in 1982. There were two main factions. The first one, called «combative block», which supported the idea that the meeting should take place as scheduled, and the second one, called «union unity», which

supported the idea that it should be postponed¹⁰. The split between these two factions took place in Brazil as a whole and included Pernambuco. In this state, the first group was supported by the Metalworkers', which had been taken over by unionists linked to the «combative block», by the Insurance Workers', and by the Watchmen's Unions and by the Teachers' Association. The Teachers' Union was divided into two groups because its officials were divided into tendencies which supported both factions. On the other hand, the «union unity» group was mainly supported by the Urban Workers' Union and by the Rural Workers' Union Federation (FETAPE). Finally, this movement split when the Workers' United Central (CUT) was founded. Later, the «union unity» faction supported the foundation of another union central called National Coordination of the Working Classes (CONCLAT).

2.4.1. Summary

In short, this description of the history of labour conflicts in Pernambuco points to a number of conclusions. Over time, strikes and demonstrations shifted from some *categorias* to others. From the early 20th-century to the mid-1960s, weavers, dockers, railwaymen and tramdrivers were the main political actors in strikes, rallies or demonstrations when demanding better wages and working conditions. After the 1964 *coup*, the labour movement that emerged was a changed one.

¹⁰ Another main aspect causing divergence among these unionists was related to political conceptions on union structure. The «combative block» favoured union plurality while the «union unity» favoured only one union for each economic sector.

The importance of the textile industry had declined and weavers were no longer in the forefront of the labour movement in Pernambuco. It emerged through a new working class based not on the old factory system, but on other economic sectors. This does not mean, of course, that the traditional working class did not go on strike. On the contrary, they went on strike and sometimes were in the forefront of disputes. However, what I intended to show was that they did not effectively lead the labour movement any longer. Other workers such as teachers and public servants were leading, both in organizational terms and in the number of strikes.

However, as the «new unionism» movement spread from the Southeast region to other regions and from the modern, private sector to others, the Pernambuco case is a clear example that the re-emergence of trade unionism in this state was not based on modern, large factories or on private sectors' employees. Indeed, from the very beginning, strikes hit the public sector or sectors other than the modern one. Moreover, as the unions' strength increases, the picture becomes clearer. The power of Pernambuco trade unions is based on the public sector. In the early 1980s, there were a number of strikes in the metal sector, but soon strikes in the public sector outnumbered these. According to Koury [1989:20-1], civil servants were responsible for most of the strikes in Pernambuco in 1987-88. Finally, one cannot see, retrospectively, a firm call for the State to give up its role as mediator in labour disputes. Of course, again there were some individual voices that called for free negotiations between employees and employers. However, this did not become a feature of the Pernambuco trade unions before the mid-1980s. Indeed, until more or less the

mid-1980s, most union officials supported the view that the State should be a permanent mediator in any labour disputes.

TABLE 2.1. URBAN STRIKES IN PERNAMBUCO, 1983-89

YEAR	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	TO-TAL
MON.								
JAN	1	-	1	4	2	3	5	16
FEB	-	-	-	-	10	8	8	26
MAR	-	1	2	1	19	12	25	60
APR	-	-	-	3	4	9	13	29
MAY	1	1	4	8	8	3	8	33
JUNE	-	1	10	5	10	1	9	36
JULY	1	1	1	4	7	6	9	29
AUG	-	2	3	13	8	17	17	60
SEPT	-	-	4	9	16	11	17	57
OCT	1	1	5	6	13	19	24	69
NOV	-	-	5	5	21	7	17	55
DEC	1	1	2	8	13	10	9	44
TO-TAL	5	8	37	66	131	106	161	514

Source: *Boletim do DIEESE, Jornal do Comércio, Informe Sindical, Diário de Pernambuco, Folha Sindical*, and Reports of the Regional Labour Office (DRT).

3. THE UNIONS: AN ACCOUNT OF THE SAMPLE

This section provides information on the unions I intend to analyse in terms of history, membership, places and firms where workers are unionized and internal organization of the six unions that are included in my sample.

These unions are the following: 1) the Teachers' Association; 2) the Bank Workers' Union; 3) the Urban Workers' Union; 4) the Metalworkers' Union; 5) the Data Processing

Workers' Union; and 6) the Teachers' Union.

Four of these union were founded before the 1964 *coup*: the Bank Workers' in 1931; the Urban Workers' in 1953; the Metalworkers' in 1935; and the Teachers' Union in 1941. On the other hand, two unions were founded in the post-1964: the Teachers' Association in 1967 and the Data Processing Workers' Union in 1985 which replaced an association which existed to organize data processing professionals. In 1990 the Teachers' Association ceased to exist as it was replaced by a union, which was then formed from three different associations that represented all workers of the state educational sector.

All union founded before 1964 were subject to intervention by the military in the months following the 1964 *coup*. In the post-1964, these unions, apart from the Data Processing Workers', were run by conservative officials closely identified with the military. These conservative unionists alternated the top posts between themselves until the late 1970s and early 1980s when most of the unions were won by radical militants.

«New unionist» leaders took over the Teachers' Associations in 1979, the Bank Workers' in 1988, the Urban Workers' in 1980 and the Metalworkers' in 1981. The Teachers' Union has a different history. As from 1982 this union was run by an alliance of conservative and communist officials and as from 1985 it has been run by an alliance of left-wing officials led by the Trotskyists. Finally, the Data Processing Workers' Union has been run by «new unionist» officials since its inception.

These unions represent workers from a number of economic sectors. The geographical area represented by them is the

whole of Pernambuco, with the exception of the Bank Workers' Union which represents workers from all Pernambuco towns but Garanhuns and Caruaru, which are represented by the other two bank workers' unions in the state. During the period analysed in this thesis the Teachers' Association organized teachers from state schools and from some town halls. The three major employers were, in 1986, Pernambuco state and the Caruaru and Garanhuns town halls. The Bank Workers' Union is the third largest bank workers' union in the country and represents employees from federally- and state- owned banks and employees from private banks. The main banks where it attracts its members are *Banco do Estado de Pernambuco*, *Banco do Brasil*, and *Banco Nacional do Norte*. The Urban Workers' Union represents employees from three state owned firms. These firms are: the *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) which produces and distributes power for regional electricity firms and some large plants in the Northeastern area; the Pernambuco owned *Companhia de Eletrificação de Pernambuco* (CELPE) which distributes power for individual and some collective consumers in Pernambuco, takes care of maintenance of electrical cables and power stations, and sends the monthly bills to customers; and the *Companhia de Saneamento do Estado de Pernambuco* (COMPESA) which has the responsibility for the maintenance of water stations, water supply, and sanitation.

The Metalworkers' Union organizes workers from the steel and metal industry and its membership is wide ranging. There are as many as 500 plants in the municipalities of Recife's metropolitan region. The main companies where it attracts its members are as follows: *COSINOR*, *NORAÇO*, *MICROLITE*, *Máquinas Piratininga* and *CODISTIL*. The Data Processing Workers' Union

represents a wide range of different professionals who work for data processing firms of Pernambuco. The largest firms which employ a great number of workers are: the federally owned *SERPRO*, the Pernambuco state-owned *FISEPE-CETEPE*, and the Recife town hall owned *EMPREL*. These are also the firms in which this union is best organized with a great number of unionized workers. Finally, the Teachers' Union represents teachers of private schools in the whole of Pernambuco State.

TABLE 2.2. THE NUMBER OF UNION MEMBERS, 1978-89

UNIONS	Teachs' Assoc.	Bank Works' Union	Urban Works' Union	Metal Works' Union	Data Proc. W. Union	Teachs' Union
YEARS						
1978	2,500	10,024	-	-	-	3,883
1979	2,604	8,914	-	5,763	-	4,166
1980	300	-	-	-	-	4,332
1982	-	12,240	-	6,200	-	5,134
1983	-	14,006	-	4,200	-	5,599
1985	-	-	-	5,500	824	6,588
1986	5,419	15,596	9,396	-	1,286	6,933
1987	7,689	-	9,597	7,006	1,740	7,222
1988	9,001	15,900	11,500	-	2,051	8,077
1989	10,656	-	-	-	2,597	9,763

Sources: FISEPE-CETEPE, Regional Labour Office (DRT), CEAS-Recife, Data Processing Workers' Union, and Teachers' Union

In terms of ideological and/or party. Most of these unions are linked to the Workers' Party (PT) and to the Workers' United Central (CUT). The exception is the Urban Workers' Union whose officials are linked to the former Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and during the 1980s they did not affiliate but supported the National Coordination of the Working Classes (CONCLAT). Finally, it is worth noting that

the Teachers' Union was linked to the National Coordination of the Working Classes (CONCLAT) during the period when it was run by the conservative-communist alliance. The alliance led by the Trotskyists after taking power managed to affiliate it to the Workers' United Central (CUT).

There have been a number of strikes in these sectors. In the educational sector strikes organized either by the Teachers' Association or by the Teachers' Union involve teachers from different schools in a single action. On the other hand, strikes in the other sectors have been happening on a plant by plant basis. In other words, strikes in these sectors do not involve all workers from the same sector in a single action such as in the educational sector. These unions concentrate their action when organizing strikes in the largest and/or most strategically important firms. In the case of the Bank Workers' Union, strikes occurred mainly in the *Banco do Brasil* because this bank has played a strategic role in the Brazilian financial system. Finally, it is worth stressing that there have been a number of strikes in several private data processing firms although these have not been recorded by the agencies which collect data on strike in Brazil. However, there have been a number of strikes in the private data processing firms. These strikes do not last for more than a few hours and seem to go undetected by the agencies that compile data on strikes, either because of the strikes' short duration or because of their definition of «strike».

TABLE 2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIONS OF THE SAMPLE

CHARACTER. UNIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	STATE SECTOR			LINKS WITH PARTIES (WHICH)	LINKS WITH PO- LITICAL PERSUA- SIONS IN- SIDE BRA- ZILIAN UNIONISM
		Fed.	Stat	Mun.		
Urban Workers' Union	No	Yes	Yes	No	PCB/ PMDB	CGT
Priv. Sch. Teachers' Union	Yes	No	No	No	PCB	CGT
					PT	CUT
Bank Work. Union	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	PT/ PCdoB from 1988	CGT
						CUT
Metalwork. Union	Yes	Yes	No	No	PT	CUT
Publ. Sch. Teachers' Associat.	No	No	Yes	No	PT	CUT
Data Processing Workers' Union	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	PT	CUT

Source: Morais

Legends:

CGT - Workers' General Central

CUT - Workers' United Central

PCB - Brazilian Communist Party

PCdoB - Communist Party of Brazil

PMDB - Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement

PT - Workers' Party

In short, these unions just described above allow a number of comparisons. First, they belong to different economic sectors and their individual experiences are useful to understand and explain how labour militancy and protest emerged in Pernambuco from late 1970s onwards. Apart from the Teachers' Association and the Union, which represent workers from the same economic sector, all unions represent workers

who are employed in important and different productive sectors. Thus, I will be able throughout this study to set up major comparisons stressing experiences from five economic sectors.

These unions represent a wide spectrum. They represent both blue- and white-collar workers: 1) one includes workers exclusively from the private sector; 2) two include workers exclusively from the public sector; 3) three unions represent employees from both public and private sectors; 4) the three Brazilian political-administrative levels are represented; and 5) these unions also represent some important economic sectors: power and sanitation, education, data processing, metallurgy, steel and electric-electronic industries, and the financial sector. Moreover, they represent the main political persuasions that exist within the Brazilian union movement.

The industrial action they took during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s is very illustrative of the paths they chose in order to put forward their demands. Their individual stories show that new labour leaders exerted a strong influence on the way the unions developed their industrial action. Apart from the Data Processing Workers' Union, in all unions new, radical labour leaders led campaigns and challenged the power of conservative officials. Those workers who went on strike, whose unions which were run by conservative unionists, did so outside their unions, sometimes against the union officials' will.

Another conclusion is that, in the late 1970s and during the 1980s, the pattern of strikes in Pernambuco has been that in which strikes happen in individual firms. In other words, strikes which do not necessarily involve all workers of the

same *categoria*. Not even all workers represented by the same union. The case of the Urban Workers' Union is illustrative of this fact. None of the strikes that took place in this sector involved in a single action employees of the three firms in which the Urban Workers' Union organizes workers. The counterpart of this pattern is the teachers. Both the union and the association have been able to organize most of their strikes involving teachers of a number of schools and towns. On the other hand, in those unions that represent workers both from private and public sectors, public sector employees have been striking more than the former have.

Finally, the unions have been utilizing a number of different strategies in their fight to deliver goods to their members because of the nature of the sectors from which they unionize. The diversity shown by this sample will allow me to make an important number of comparisons which can help to understand the «new unionism» unions' policies in the 1980s.

CHAPTER III

UNION «BUREAUCRACY» AND LABOUR CONFLICTS

1. INTRODUCTION

After 1930 the Brazilian state started regulating trade union activities. One of the main aspects of the legislation ruling on union activities was related to the regulation of service of social assistance that the unions should provide for their membership.

The role of the unions as organizations aiming to provide their membership with social assistance was reinforced by the military who took power in 1964. Thus, when the «new unionism» emerged, one of its main criticisms of the role of the unions and of the conservative officials was that the unions were «bureaucratic» organizations¹¹. Eduardo Luczinski, president of the Textile Workers' Union of São Paulo in 1978 stated it clearly:

"If the unions are welfare orientated, this is so because

¹¹ It is worth stressing that the use of terms like bureaucracy and bureaucratization in the Brazilian union movement is not exactly related to their classical definition in the sociology of Max Weber and in the subsequent sociology of organizations. It is rather meant to highlight the process by which unions built their apparatus to run social services. In this case, even when unions do not have huge bureaucratic apparatuses in the classical sense, the term has been used by unionists and scholars studying the Brazilian trade unionism alike to signify that process as well as the attachment of conservative union officials to this role as the only one to be performed by the unions. I will be using both terms and related ones in the sense that they have been used in the context of the Brazilian labour movement.

the [conservative] union officials have been making them agencies for social assistance services instead of a wage demanding role" (*Escrita Ensaio* [1978:28])¹².

Lula, the main leader of the strikes of 1978 and 1979, also remarked that:

"I think that the union's job is to show the working class the truth, to show them that the union is there to assist¹³, but that the union cannot do shit for the working class, except in individual cases. But in the group sense we can do very little for the worker...It's to have guts to say that the union is tied, is castrated, and that it's the workers who will resolve the problems" (Silva [1979:95]).

On the other hand, after 1978 the «new unionism» unionists have also been trying to expand the size of the unions' organizational apparatus towards other directions. In fact, their criticism of the welfare orientation of the «old» unionism was that, in spite of its organizational apparatus, it did not provide for the strengthening of the ties between the union and the membership, i.e., the absence of the union of the workplace (Cf. Keck [1989:256]). In other words, the problem seems to lie not in the size of the «bureaucracy»

¹² The same point was stressed by other unionists and legal advisers during these discussions sponsored by the journal *Escrita Ensaio*. See particularly the contributions of Lázaro A. Cruz, vice-president of the Metalworkers' Union Federation of São Paulo; Valdecírio T. Veras, lawyer of the Metalworkers' Unions of São Bernardo and Santo André, São Paulo state; and Hugo Perez, president of the Urban Workers' Union Federation of São Paulo. In Pernambuco, in 1977, a group of workers from the metropolitan region of Recife released a pamphlet in which they say:

"We want to denounce the farce and emptiness of our unions nowadays. They have become agencies for social assistance and for the retired, acting as the national health service" (Pamphlet issued on 20 Nov. 1977 by a group of workers of Recife and its metropolitan region).

¹³ I am quoting from the English translation of an interview Lula gave to the journal *Cara a Cara* in 1978. In the original version, Lula refers explicitly to the fact that "o sindicato é assistencialista" (The union is welfare orientated).

itself, but in the way it had been used by the conservative unionists. Therefore, the «new unionism» unionists have even had, sometimes, to increase the number of officials in order to meet the new needs in terms of links with the workplace.

As Keck [1989:272] puts it in relation to developments likely to happen in «new unionism» policies:

"[A] development [which] seem[s] likely as result of a shift in emphasis to plant-level bargaining, shop floor activism, and concern with working conditions...is a change in the functions of the union leadership, away from bureaucratic tasks related to the administration of social assistance programs and towards the coordination of shop floor demands and activities, and the development of bargaining strategies..."

Thus, the general aim of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the development of unions' organizational structure after the emergence of the «new unionism». This will be done, firstly, through the analysis of the unions in terms of social services and «bureaucracy», and the relationship between these aspects of union life and the tendency of the unions to be more or less militant. In other words, I analyse the impact of «bureaucratic» tendencies on the policy making of the unions in Pernambuco in the 1980s. Secondly, I analyse the development in the unions' structure towards the establishment of links between themselves and the workplace.

2. THE «BUREAUCRATIZATION» OF TRADE UNIONS IN BRAZIL

It must be stressed that the «bureaucratization» of trade unions in Brazil is a post-1930 phenomenon. Simão [1981: chapter IV] has shown, by analysing the São Paulo case, that during the first three decades of this century trade unions had not established any formal «bureaucracy» at all. This was

not only due to the small size of services or lack of financial resources, but mainly due to ideological principles. The anarchists refused to accept the role of trade unions as organizations providing the workers with social services. They believed that such a move would have a negative impact on the mind of the working class. If a structure for social services was to be established, instead of seeing trade unions as a means to fight the capitalist system, workers would use it to have access to social services that were denied by the State.

Only with the labour laws of 1931 and 1934 (Simão [1981: 171]), which were incorporated into the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT), did the unions start building their «bureaucracies». Before 1930 the work of trade unions was done by volunteers. Under the new system established by the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT) trade unions were able to employ permanent paid staff to run their daily businesses. They had to do so in order to meet the increasing quantity of work ascribed to them by the State. As I showed in chapter I, article 514 of the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT) provides a list of duties to be carried out by the unions, which refers to social services to be provided for the membership. This means that unions had to build «bureaucracies» not only to run internal businesses, but also to meet the demands of the rank-and-file in terms of access to social assistance. Simão shows that this was possible thanks to the creation of the *imposto sindical* (union tax) (Cf. Costa [1986:148-63]).

On the other hand, the military government, which took power in 1964, put stress on this side of union life. According to Martins ([1979:115-6]. Cf. M.H.M. Alves [1984:81] and [1989:43]; and Moisés [1979:55]), along with the already

traditional functions of giving the rank-and-file medical, hospital and pharmaceutical assistance, the military added new functions which stressed the «bureaucratic» character of trade unions and the managerial role of their officials (Keck [1989: 256-7]; and Lowy [1987:461]).

As Martins [1979:163] shows, in Brazil

"The union bureaucratization was not a result of the trade unions willing to organize themselves in terms of complex administrative processes to deal with demands arising from the rank-and-file".

Neither was it the need to

"Employ paid staff to do the work of organizing, discovering information, planning strategy, etc..." (Crouch [1982:162]),

nor the need to have a technically competent bureaucracy to face the dominant class (Michels [1962]), or even to supervise collective bargaining agreements (Clegg [1976]). Indeed, the main reason was the dominant role of the Brazilian State as regulator of each aspect of the unions' life as well as the growing number of tasks they had to meet in terms of social assistance services.

Many of the Pernambuco trade unions have been building an infrastructure over the years to provide social assistance for their membership, for social welfare services that should be provided by the State were transferred to the unions. Outside the urban realm, many of the rural trade unions also have as their principal activity the task of providing their membership with social and medical assistance. In another work (Morais [1988]) I showed that the only activity maintained by the union I was then analysing was, roughly speaking, to organize a timetable for its members to see physicians and/or dentists.

Even for trade unions run by radical unionists it has been difficult to avoid such a profile. It seems that the poor quality of the Brazilian health service, and the labour law until 1988, have been forcing union officials to run such services. On the other hand, even those «new unionism» officials who emerged during and after the 1978 strikes have been unable to put an end to such services. Sader ([1988:280-2]. Cf. Humphrey [1979a:77]) shows that officials of the Metalworkers' Union of São Bernardo, who came to be known as the pillar of the «new unionism» in Brazil from 1978, realized the importance of maintaining such services. In the union's newspaper officials showed that they were proud of the new laboratory for clinical analysis, the new ambulance, the new infirmary, the drugstore, etc.

Thus, union officials have to spend a lot of time in management of the union apparatus as well as the coordination of the «bureaucracy» employed to run these activities (Keck [1989:257]). I will be looking at how the unions of Pernambuco have been dealing with this aspect during the decade following the re-emergence of labour protests of 1978-79. It has been argued that union officials whose unions have a huge «bureaucratic» apparatus would spend much of their time dealing with managerial issues rather than organizing the workers politically, and I will look at the evidence provided by the experience of trade unions in Pernambuco to evaluate whether the latter gives this hypothesis support. I will also analyse the organization of the unions at the workplace in order to understand how these facts influence the unions' approach to labour problems.

3. THE UNIONS' SOCIAL SERVICES

Most of the unions I am investigating either employ or maintain agreements with certain professionals to provide their membership with social, legal, and medical assistance. The infrastructure to achieve this aim has been built up over the years. As I pointed out in chapter II, some of them were won by young and left-wing officials at the beginning of the 1980s. These officials found out in some cases that they had just inherited a large apparatus for social services. Thus, though wishing to stress the role of the union as something else other than a legal or medical office, they have been unable to avoid such an image because of the scale of the apparatus to provide the membership access to social assistance services.

So far what these officials have been able to do is to manage in order to give the unions a radical attitude while keeping the social services running. They understand that after almost fifty years it is difficult to finish such services. According to some data available to the unions, it seems that most of the workers join their unions in order to have the right to see the unions' physicians, lawyers, and dentists. For, apart from the Data Processing Workers' Union, for reasons explained below, in all unions the requirement for medical care is among the three main reasons why their members go to their headquarters (CEAS/FUNDAJ [1989]).

TABLE 3.1. REASONS GIVEN BY UNION OFFICIALS WHY THE MEMBERSHIP GOES TO UNION HEADQUARTERS - 1986

UNIONS	Teachers' Union	Teachers' Association	Urban Workers' Union	Metal-workers' Union	Bank Workers' Union	Data Processing Workers' Union
REASONS						
Medical-Odontological Assistance	1st Reason	3rd Reason	2nd Reason	1st Reason	1st Reason	
Legal Assistance	2nd Reason		3rd Reason	3rd Reason	2nd Reason	1st Reason
To Participate in Meetings		2nd Reason				
To Participate in Assemblies		1st Reason				
To Participate in Parties/Games						
To Participate in Courses						
Complaints About Conditions at the Workplace			1st Reason	2nd Reason	3rd Reason	2nd Reason

Source: CEAS/FUNDAJ (Questionnaire data [1986])

This point is stressed by a union official. In 1985, the Metalworkers' Union was facing difficulties because of the amount of money put into social assistance services. The union officials decided, for this reason, to carry out a survey to find out whether the membership would support any cut in the amount of social services available.

"We carried out a survey and unfortunately the results showed that more than 90% [of the membership] were against any changes in policies in this area. Indeed, they wanted increases in social assistance. Faced with such a situation - 90% is a huge figure, isn't it? - you couldn't, at any point in time, dismiss such a result.

There was no way to dismiss it. Even considering the proposals of the union movement which is to finish social assistance services, we realised that the moment for this is distant. We have no means to terminate the provision of such services. If we wanted to kill the [union] movement I should only terminate these services, because we wouldn't have members any longer, no money for anything else. So, why terminate them if it could damage the union?" (Interview No. 9).

The spectrum of union officials' attitudes towards the importance of this apparatus varies according to their ideology, that is, it depends on their view of what a union is for (Cf. M.H.M. Alves [1984:85]). Radical unionists tend to be critical of such a role played by trade unions. They think that trade unions should only play the role of a representative of the workers during collective bargaining, demonstrations, and strikes and as a means to organize the workers politically (Cf. Keck [1984:28]). On the other hand, conservative unionists stress that the role of the unions is to provide their membership with social and medical assistance and, as ordered by the labour law, to be a mediator between employers and employees during labour disputes.

The scale of the socio-medical services of the unions I am investigating is varied. Some have a large apparatus with dozens of professionals. Others have as few as two employees and a tiny medical and/or legal staff. These are extreme positions that are related mainly to the sort of activities the union should perform, according to its ruling board, as suggested above.

TABLE 3.2. UNIONS' SOCIAL AND MEDICAL STAFF

EMPLOYEES	BUREAUCRATIC STAFF	OTHER PROFESSIONALS						
		Physicians	Dentists	Lawyers	Teachers	Nurses	Barbers	Biochemist
Teachers' Union	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Metal-Workers' Union	34	12	4	4	-	1	-	-
Urban Workers' Union	39	4	6	4	-	-	2	1
Bank Workers' Union	68	19	18	7	8	-	-	-
Teachers' Union	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Data Processing Workers' Union	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: CEAS/FUNDAJ (Questionnaire data [1986])

One must be careful with the interpretation of the table above. At first, one might think that there are only two cases, i.e., one with those unions that favour social assistance and maintain a large staff, and another with the unions that oppose any kind of social assistance. However, taking into consideration the sort of ideological divisions in terms of approaches among union officials towards the existence of social services inside the unions as suggested above and by M.H.M. Alves [1984:85], I would suggest that there are four cases, which will be analysed as follows: 1)

that represented by the Bank Workers' Union; 2) that represented by the Metalworkers' and the Urban Workers' Unions; 3) that represented by both the Teachers' Union and Association; and finally, 4) that represented by the Data Processing Workers' Union.

The Bank Workers' Union was founded long before the 1964 *coup*. In 1964, it was subject to state intervention and its board of directors replaced by unionists loyal to the military. The exclusion of militant left-wing unionists meant that the then officials implemented the military's plans for the trade unions. In other words, they were able to strengthen the functions of social assistance in the union.

From then on, this group emphasized the role of the union as an organization to give workers social and medical assistance. These unionists were able to build the largest union infrastructure for social and medical assistance in Pernambuco. Thus, through the union's social services, unionized bank workers could get much of what is not supplied by the state regarding health. They also built a large recreation club in the countryside. In short, until 1988, most of the union's activities were related to social services. The data available shows that, during this period from 1964 until 1988, most of the news in the union's newspaper referred to social assistance matters.

In 1986, the union's assistance services consisted of 19 physicians, 18 dentists, 7 lawyers, and 8 teachers. Moreover, the union maintained a number of other agreements with medical laboratories, schools, opticians, and several hospitals for the membership, forming a powerful network of social assistance services (CEAS/FUNDAJ [1989]).

In 1986, in order to manage this apparatus the union employed some 68 workers. With such an apparatus its officials had to spend a long time dealing with managerial issues. In other words, they had to spend more time as managers in order to administer the union than they spent as unionists, in the sense of officials who are supposed to organize the rank-and-file and who deal with grievances arising at the workplace. As the union did not have a professional administrator to manage it, the officials themselves had to be in charge (On the role of the union official as a manager, see Martins [1979:163-81]).

From 1964 to 1988, this union acted, almost exclusively, as an organization to give bank workers a variety of social assistance, which ranged from a school to a country club. Indeed, the speeches of its officials during this time show that they stressed this union's façade¹⁴. During election campaigns they used to emphasize achievements such as the provision of new medical offices and other social facilities (*Jornal do Comércio*, 28 June 1979). As I quoted above, in 1979, some of the declarations of the union's president were

¹⁴ For instance, in 1981, during the bank workers' national day, the union's president issued a message to all bank workers in which he stressed that the union had no links with any political group or party, "for our sole objective is to improve workers' life conditions", and that the union officials were working hard to improve the quality of socio-medical services (Cf. *O Defensor*, Aug. 1981). For a similar experience, see the case of the Sugarmill Workers' Union of Pernambuco reported by *Informe Sindical*, 24 Feb.-2 March 1986. This newspaper reports that this union, in 1986, had one of the best and largest union infrastructures for medico-dontological and legal assistance in Pernambuco. It also owned a large hospital and restaurant for those coming to Recife to see doctors. However, according to this newspaper, it had never organized the sugarmill workers for any wage campaign, but maintained excellent relations with employers and Pernambuco state government.

even contrary to the working class' demands regarding wage increases.

If one looks at the content of some issues of this union's newspaper, he or she will find that a great emphasis was put on socio-medical services offered by the union. Headlines stressed achievements of the union in terms of new services available for the membership¹⁵. In 1981, this union was 50 years old and a number of short articles were published in every issue of its newspaper in that year to celebrate the event. As one could expect from the description above, what was then celebrated in terms of main achievements over 50 years was the socio-medical services the union had been providing. According to one article (*O Defensor*, Sept. 1981)¹⁶, the odontological service of the union had been founded as early as 1941. The article concludes by saying that, in 1981, hundreds of bank workers and their husbands/wives and children had been using such services.

Along with the medical services, the legal assistance service provided by this union was presented as the most important in the union's structure. The union did not restrict, of course, its activities in providing workers with social assistance. One can find some denunciations about some

¹⁵ This analysis refers to issues published in the period between 1980 to 1988. There used to be a full page informing its members about each service available, in terms of physicians with expertise in several fields.

¹⁶ See also interview with the union official for social and medical services published in this same issue. He says that the major importance of such services is because bank workers have a straight access to good medical services in a country where the quality of the national health service is poor and the services of private hospitals are too expensive to be afforded by workers who earn low wages (Cf. interview of the union's president about the same issue in *Diário de Pernambuco*, 5 Aug. 1981).

banks breaching the law for not paying overtime or news about new wage agreements. However, these officials used to place stress on legal means in dealing with such problems. There was not any attempt to organize workers for strikes or any other industrial action in order to protest against the conditions imposed by bankers on their staff. The means to combat law breakers was to denounce them through the union's newspaper and/or letters to the Regional Labour Office (DRT). In this case, the union's lawyers played a major role in dealing with several bank workers' complaints about the non-enforcement of the labour law. On the other hand, disputes about wage increases were dealt with solely as a legal matter. Disputes arising from the renewal of annual collective agreements were taken to the labour court without any mobilization of the rank-and-file (See *O Defensor*, May; June; July; Aug.; and Sept. 1981; and chapter VI).

An opposition group appeared in 1979 in this union and in 1982 its most important conservative official gave up union politics due to pressure from other less conservative officials. The conservative officials who remained in power pushed for a more militant role by taking cases of non-enforcement of the labour law to the labour courts and by publicizing the wage campaigns and corresponding processes in the labour courts. However, in spite of all changes that may well have occurred in the approach of the conservative union officials towards labour conflicts, the evidence provided by this union shows that the case of unions turning to labour courts instead of appealing to the government as a «neutral» mediator does not necessarily signify a militant role. In this case, the union officials managed to increasingly use legal

channels without modifying their relationship towards the rank-and-file.

The political position described above reveals a specific view on the role the unions should play. That is, that of avoiding labour conflicts by acting as a mediator between employers and employees and providing workers with social assistance. Thus, it is no surprise at all to see the content of these officials' speeches emphasizing such a role for their union and refusing to take militant action.

In 1986, the medical staff of this union was even greater than that of small towns in Pernambuco state. Or one could say that its staff was greater than most of the branch staff of some banks. When radical unionists took over this union in 1988 what they inherited was a huge apparatus requiring management. Since 1979 they had been criticizing conservative unionists by pointing out what the functions of the unions should be: to organize the workers politically, the fight for better wages and working conditions, to be representative of the workers, instead of being a mediator during labour conflicts. However, this case illustrates that it has been difficult to manage to terminate such services.

As a union delegate puts it:

"When we took over the union [in 1988] we found a structure for social assistance services larger than in any other union. However, we cannot suddenly finish with such a structure, we still have to maintain it and it is a thing which absorbs almost 100% of the union's financial resources. When one invests in social assistance, one no longer has the resources for greater investment in the organization of the workers, such as, for example, a more frequently published union newspaper" (Interview No. 44).

Thus, the only means available to these «new unionism» unionists has been that of continuing such services and, at

the same time, implementing more militant courses of action.

The cases of the Metalworkers' and of the Urban Workers' Unions illustrates another path. These cases look like that of the Bank Workers' Union since 1988 when it was taken over by radical militants. However, as they have been managed by «new unionism» unionists since the beginning of the 1980s, it is worth looking at them to reveal what their experiences have been.

Both unions had been run by conservative unionists after 1964. They built large social and medical services and employed a number of people in this area. In the case of the Metalworkers' Union this apparatus was built aiming at a labour force who has had access only to the state health services. Traditionally, in Brazil the metal and steel industries do not give their employees further facilities in terms of health services, and wages seem to be low, which does not enable metalworkers to afford private medical services. Thus, in 1986, for instance, the Metalworkers' Union had 34 employees. There were 12 physicians¹⁷, 4 dentists, 4 lawyers, and 1 nurse. The rest were employed to run the union «bureaucracy» (CEAS/FUNDAJ, questionnaire data [1986]). Moreover, it had agreements with an optician and a medical laboratory. According to a union official (CEAS/FUNDAJ, questionnaire data [1986]), this apparatus was needed because of the poor level of assistance provided by the Brazilian

¹⁷ According to union data, some about 35,000 people saw the physicians in 1985 (CEAS/FUNDAJ [1989]). This figure is confirmed by a union official:

"Our clinic served 35,000 people in 1985; in 1986, it served over 36,000, i.e., an increase of 1,085 people; and in 1987, in only 6 months we served exactly 21,875 people" (Interview No. 9).

health service (Cf. Keck [1989:283-4]). In the case of the Urban Workers' Union, also a large social and medical services apparatus was built in spite of numerous agreements maintained mainly by the *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF), the biggest of the plants in this sector.

The officials elected in both unions in 1980 (the Urban Workers') and 1981 (the Metalworkers') had a clear political project. The unions were to avoid a conservative profile. They often criticized the «old» unionism officials for their submissive posture before the State and/or employers. According to them, «old» officials had followed the labour code strictly by transforming the union into a social and medical assistance office. However, as in the case of the Bank Workers' Union after 1988, they have been unable to end social and medical services (Cf. Souza [1981]). According to them, it would be difficult to increase or even maintain the number of members if such services were terminated (On this same point on Brazil as a whole, see Gonçalves [1984:30]). For them it would be difficult to convince workers of the functions of unions when they are not facing labour disputes. In other words, the unions have to do something in the meantime. Thus, they continue to maintain social services.

However, I would suggest that their attitudes in keeping social assistance services running have a meaning which is not restricted to a purely political calculus. By pure political calculus, I mean the strategy by which these radical unionists would keep such services solely for fear of losing their membership. I do not deny that this is also implied, as is clear from the reasoning of some officials. Nevertheless I suggest further that this also reveals that «new unionism»

unionists have been trying to be responsive to the demands of the membership, even when they do not agree with such demands. This is clear from the evidence arising from the case of the Metalworkers' Union. In 1981, when the radical militants were campaigning for the union election of that year, they carried out an informal survey among a large number of workers from several plants to get to ascertain what they wished to see as a «true» programme for the union. Medical services and clinics were almost at the top of the list.

TABLE 3.3. WHAT IS TO BE DONE BY THE UNION

POLICIES	% ¹⁸
To Fight for Better Wages	80.5
To Maintain a Good Clinic	45.8
To Give the <i>Categoria</i> the Opportunity to Get Together and Discuss Problem and Find Solutions	41.9
To Represent the Workers at the Workplace	39.4
To Promote Professional Courses	31.0
To Have Good Lawyers	23.8
To Promote Courses on Union Matters	21.2
To Build a Country Club	11.2
To Create a Department for Leisure and Sports	9.5

Source: Zé Ferrugem Especial, 1981.

The radical militants have opposed the role of unions as agencies for social services (Cf. *Zé Ferrugem Especial*, 1981; and *Resoluções do Congresso dos Metalúrgicos de Pernambuco*,

¹⁸ The interviewees were asked to nominate three choices.

1985, resolution No. 30). Nevertheless, they integrated the social services into their electoral manifesto (Cf. Electoral pamphlet *Saiu a Chapa Zé Ferrugem*, 1981). As will be shown in relation to other aspects of union life which will be analysed in the following chapters, «new unionism» unionists have a radical view of society and of labour relations. However, their radical view of labour relations embodies the idea of a new relationship between the union and the *categoria* in general and the membership in particular. This relationship means that the union has to properly represent the membership and that it has to take into account what the rank-and-file demands. Therefore, I would suggest that the difference in relation to «old» union officials is that what radical unionists stress is no longer this façade, i.e., social assistance services, but that of the union as a radical representative of the workers. What they have been able to do is to try and combine militancy with social assistance, for commonly the unions offer better services than those offered by the Brazilian health service. This means probably that most of the workers would be against such changes, most especially those who cannot afford private medical and legal services (*O Metalúrgico*, no month, 1984).

An analysis of the newspaper of the Metalworkers' Union shows that its officials emphasized other aspects of the labour world in comparison with the case of the Bank Workers' Union. A research carried out by the Centro Josué de Castro [1988] on this union's newspaper shows that there is little stress on social services. Most of the news is about new forms of organization inside the factories, wage disputes, strikes, federal government policies, and unemployment. Indeed, there

is just one issue of the newspaper stressing the social services available over the years. In 1984, when campaigning for the elections due in July of that year, the union officials published a special issue of the union's newspaper in which they presented their main achievements. There was one news item about legal assistance and one item about the medical and odontological services provided by the union. However, the main aspects that they highlighted were related to political disputes which the union had undertaken (*O Metalúrgico*, no month, 1984).

Differently from experience of the Bank Workers' Union until 1988, labour disputes were not dealt with solely as a legal matter. One learns over several issues that there is over the years a stress on the political organization of workers in order to fight for better wage agreements and/or working conditions.

Likewise there is little stress on social assistance matters in the newspaper of the Urban Workers' Union. Indeed, the union officials have been placing stress on the organization of the workers in order to fight for wage increases. In other words, they have been emphasizing the militant role that the union plus the workers are to play. As I pointed out above, by analysing its newspaper one realizes that this union continued to maintain some kinds of social assistance. Some short courses for its members and their families as well as scholarships for the members' children were maintained (Cf. *O Eletricitário*, Feb. 1981), and medical and legal assistance services were improved. This seems to give further evidence to support my suggestion that, in spite of their radicalism, «new unionism» officials have been trying

to be responsive to the interests of the membership. Evidence from a report (CEAS [1986:15 and 43]) suggests that most of the union's membership, both in Recife and in the interior of Pernambuco, go to its headquarters because of the need for some sort of medical and/or odontological assistance, which gives support to the findings of another study on this union's officials (CEAS/FUNDAJ, questionnaire data [1986]). When asked about the main reasons why the membership goes to the union's headquarters, the need for medico-odontological services was ranked second (See table 3.1).

This kind of evidence alone does not, of course, show that socio-medical assistance services are the most important reason why workers join the unions. However, it seems to indicate that they carry a great weight in their decision to do so. If we take these indicators regarding the main reasons why union members go to the unions' headquarters, coupled with the evidence given by officials, plus, more importantly, the concrete fact that, after more than a decade of «new unionism», the unions have been unable to cease providing such services, it seems reasonable to say that socio-medical services play a major role in giving further incentive to workers to join the unions, as suggested by the experience of all unions, with the exception of the Data Processing Workers' Union.

According to a report (CEAS/FUNDAJ, questionnaire data [1986]), in 1986 the Urban Workers' Union had 39 employees. There were 4 physicians, 6 dentists, 4 lawyers, 2 barbers, and 1 biochemist, the rest being employed to run the union «bureaucracy». Some agreements were signed for the rank-and-file to have access to more options (*O Eletricitário*, June

1981)¹⁹ and they even rebuilt the interior of the union headquarters in order to provide the rank-and-file with better services as demand was increasing and facilities were inadequate to serve everyone willing to use such services (*O Eletricitário*, March 1986).

The third case is illustrated by both the Teachers' Association and Union. While the association was won by radical militants in 1979, the union has been run by various alliances of differing political persuasions since 1979. Firstly, by the conservative officials; then by a coalition formed by the «old» officials and communist militants. In 1985, the communists alone took power, but were ousted later in that year by the Trotskyists. Later, the communists returned to joint power with other factions in an alliance led by the Trotskyists. Differently from the two cases above, the «old» officials of these two organizations did not build large social services. In both cases, one might suppose that financial difficulties were the main obstacles. Thus, the new radical unionists of both unions did not inherit a large union apparatus.

Supposedly the new officials of both the Teachers' Union and Association are opposed to the role of the unions as merely an agency for social services. In fact, over the years they have been considered as radical and militant unionists. As I pointed out above, since 1979 they have been organizing strikes almost every year. However, they have also been

¹⁹ In this issue there is a small note in which, after some complaints from some members, the officials acknowledge that the medical services were not so good. They explained that this was due to the union's bad financial situation and the physical situation of the union's headquarters.

maintaining social services. In spite of the tiny size of their socio-medical services, they have been unable to abandon such services altogether.

This point is corroborated by an analysis on the association's newspaper. Although they have been emphasizing the militant role the association is to play, one can find some news about agreements established by it in order to provide social assistance for its members (*Boletim Informativo APENOPE*, Jan.-March; and July-Sept. 1986). This association faced hard times in the late 1970s and early 1980s when it had to face Pernambuco state governments willing to fight its militant role (*Boletim Informativo APENOPE*, Aug.; and Nov. 1981). The state government policies towards the association caused many members to leave it. Besides, as it was not a union in terms of the labour law, it had no rights at all to receive a share of the *imposto sindical* (union tax). Thus, this association was unable to provide suitable social assistance. On the other hand, the association's newspaper shows that its officials have been emphasizing militancy in terms of demanding better wages and working conditions. There has been then a continuous fight to avoid the effects of high inflation on wages. Another major theme that has been present in lists of demands put forward by the association is the quality of education provided by the federal and state governments.

The several newspapers published by the different political groups linked to the Teachers' Union also reveal a commitment towards a more militant role. One of these groups (Cf. *Desatrejar*, Nov. 1979), still as an opposition group, in analysing the role the unions should perform in society, says

that they should fight against the *imposto sindical* (union tax) because it meant the unions being controlled directly by the Ministry of Labour and that

"We believe in unions as organizations dedicated to fight [for their members] and not to be philanthropic societies. We must demand that the INPS²⁰ renders medical and odontological assistance. With the extinction of the *imposto sindical* and of its structure, we will be undermining the bases of populism, *empreguismo*²¹ and *peleguismo*²²".

Later on, this group, already running the union, elaborated a proposal for the union to become independent in terms of finances because, until 1988, the Ministry of Labour regulated the use of the *imposto sindical* (union tax) and this union could not spend this income as it liked (Cf. *Quadro e Giz*, Sept. 1988). However, in the meantime, one can find that the union had a number of agreements with physicians, dentists and pharmacies to give its members social assistance which shows that avoiding such a task is very difficult (Cf. *Boletim Sindical*, May 1981; and *A Classe*, Aug. 1983). In 1986, in order to perform its tasks, the Teachers' Union employed 11 people to look after its «bureaucracy». It did not maintain a medical service of its own as did many other unions. However, it maintained an agreement with a physician and a dentist for them to see the union's members (CEAS/FUNDAJ, questionnaire data [1986]).

Finally, the Data Processing Workers' Union represents

²⁰ The Brazilian national health service (my note).

²¹ This word derives from *emprego* (job) and means in the Brazilian political jargon the practice of employing lots of peoples in order to bargain favours, that is, the practice of patronage.

²² This word derives from *pelego* (See footnote 1) and means its systematic practice.

an extreme case in which there are no social and medical services at all. This union, unlike other unions, was founded in 1985 when the military government had come to an end. The group that has run the union is linked to the Workers' Party (PT) and to the Workers' United Central (CUT). As might be expected they refuse to accept the role of the unions as providers of social and medical assistance. Thus, it has sought to exert only functions that imply the organization of workers for demanding, collective bargaining, wage campaigns and agreements, and strikes.

TABLE 3.4. AGREEMENTS MAINTAINED BY THE UNIONS

AGREEM.	MEDICAL	DENTAL	LEGAL ADVICE	EDUCA- TIONAL	LABORA- TORY FOR MEDICAL ANALYSIS
UNIONS					
Tea- chers' Union	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Metal. Union	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Urban W. Union	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Bank W. Union	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Tea- chers' Associa.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Data Process. Workers' Union	No	No	Yes	No	No

Source: CEAS/FUNDAJ (Questionnaire data [1986])

The only social service maintained by this union is legal assistance. However, this sector deals only with labour matters. In other unions, it is very common for their lawyers

to deal with any legal questions ranging from labour matters to divorces, and civil and criminal offences committed by unions' members. This union's officials opted for maintaining only a legal service to deal with problems arising from the workplace or related to collective bargaining and wage agreements (*Boletim APPD-PE*, 17 May 1982; and interview No. 35).

TABLE 3.5. OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY TO THE REGIONAL LABOUR OFFICE (DRT)

YEAR	1986	1987	1988	1989
UNIONS				
Metalw.Union	21	46	39	19
Bank W. Union*	0	0	9	3
Dt.Proc.W. Union**	0	5	2	0
Urban W. Union	4	7	5	2
Teachers' Union	3	6	3	0
Teachers' Association***	0	0	0	0

Source: Regional Labour Office (DRT)/Department of Health and Safety

- (*) This union does not present official complaints, but timetables for joint supervision with the Department of Health and Safety.
- (**) This union does not present official complaints, but timetables for joint supervision with the Department of Health and Safety.
- (***) The association was not formally entitled to denounce labour law breakers to the Department of Health and Safety or to ask for an inspection on several aspects related to teachers' health and safety at schools because of its juridical status (See chapter II).

An official says:

"In some [Brazilian] states the unions of data processing workers maintain some agreements for medical assistance. However, we don't maintain any kind of medical assistance. We have some lawyers who deal strictly with labour matters and demands, and we work jointly with health experts to detect some occupational diseases" (Interview No. 24).

This means that they have been trying to avoid the image of a union as a legal and medical office. On the other hand, this does not mean that they have held a strict legal viewpoint on labour problems as the «old» officials of the Bank Workers' Union did. On the contrary, this service is thought to be one of the means to fight the employers because they have been undertaking a number of other industrial actions in order to get their demands.

They have been successful in implementing a model of unionism in which the unions exert only the function of organizing employees at the workplace. However, this does not mean that these unionists are not concerned with the data processing workers' health. Indeed, they have promoted many seminars on occupational diseases affecting such workers. Moreover, they have been working, along with other data processing workers' unions in the country, in order to detect new occupational diseases affecting workers in the data processing industry²³. Nevertheless, contrary to the common

²³ Data processing workers from all over the country have been promoting national meetings to discuss specifically occupational diseases in their trade. According to a union official (Interview No. 28), the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommends that each worker should not perform more than 8,000 keystrokes per hour. However, many employers insist on 16,000 keystrokes per hour, which provokes several diseases affecting the tendons of their hands (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, 28 Sept.-11 Oct. 1987). On the other hand, in an inspection carried out by the Department of Health and Safety of the Regional Labour Office (DRT) jointly with

practice, they have been campaigning for the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to recognize such diseases as caused by the labour process. This means that the State is to be responsible for the health of the workers and not the union, which is to fight for better wages and working conditions.

Thus, the expenditure of this union is mainly related to communication (newspaper, pamphlets, bulletins, etc.) and education. However, for them education means the existence of short courses related to history of trade unionism and on workplace problems in order to prepare the workforce for any labour disputes. They have also been promoting seminars to discuss health injuries caused in the labour process as referred to above. These officials recognize that this has been possible thanks to the relatively high wages earned by professionals in this industry. Therefore, data processing workers are less dependent on socio-medical assistance from their union (Interview No. 24).

officials of the Data Processing Workers' Union in 16 data processing companies of varied sizes, the following problems regarding health and safety were found: 1) non-adjustable chairs (13 firms); 2) exposed wiring (9 firms); 3) no archives (8 firms); 4) no stool for feet (7 firms); 5) no periodic checks against occupational risks (7 firms); 6) non-adjustable tables (7 firms); 7) more than 8,000 keystrokes per hour (6 firms); 8) no medical examination (5 firms); 9) irregular working breaks (5 firms); 10) unreliable fire extinguisher (3 firms); 11) assessment of performance by number of keystrokes (3 firms); 12) toilets without separation by sex (2 firms); 13) temperature below permitted limit (2 firms); 14) no drinking fountain (1 firm); 15) no fire extinguisher (1 firm); and 16) no Internal Committee for the Prevention of Accidents (CIPA) (1 firm) (Source: *Relatório Técnico de Programa de Fiscalização*, 31 Aug. 1990).

4. UNIONS' FINANCIAL SITUATION

In Brazil the labour code reads that every worker, union member or not, in the country must contribute one-day wage to the unions every year. This is called *imposto sindical* (union tax)²⁴. Along with this tax, which is distributed amongst all unions and union federations and confederations of the country, every worker who is a union member must pay the fees set up by his/her union. Finally, as wage increases negotiated by the unions are applied to all workers, members and non-members of the unions, most of the unions have set up clauses, which read that all workers including non members must pay something to cover the costs of the campaign and also to share out costs more fairly amongst all the beneficiaries, including non members who are indeed free-riders receiving full entitlement to wage increases "without doing anything" (Martins [1979:130]).

In most of these cases, the quality and size of social and medical services maintained by the unions indicates their financial situation. Apart from the Data Processing Workers' Union, all unions in the present study provide their members

²⁴ Details on the *imposto sindical* (union tax) are given in the following works: Almeida & Lowy [1976:104]; Alves [1989:42-3]; Costa [1986:148-63]; Ferrante [1978:43]; Füchtner [1980:60-2]; Humphrey [1979a:72]; and Keck [1984:27] and [1989:253]. Summaries of the positions of the different union, political persuasions on this tax are given in *Resoluções do Congresso dos Metalúrgicos de Pernambuco*, 1985 (The position of militants linked to the Workers' Party [PT]) and in an article by James Beltrão, president of the Teachers' Union of Pernambuco (1985), published in *Informe Sindical*, 8-14 July 1985 (The position of militants linked to the Brazilian Communist Party [PCB]). The former wanted to finish the union tax at once, while the latter favoured a gradual elimination. For a summary of the position of some Pernambuco urban unions on the impact of such a tax on union life, see Soares [1984: 97-8].

with some sort of medical assistance. Thus, the cases of the Metalworkers', of the Urban Workers', and of the Bank Workers' Unions seem to show that they have maintained a reasonable financial situation. On the other hand, both the Teachers' Union and Association have had a weaker financial situation. One might think that the quality of their social services is due only to their officials' ideologies. However, it may well be due to the financial situation of these two organizations since they did not terminate such services. One learns that these two labour organizations have had difficulties over the years in publishing newspapers due to scarcity of funds. According to union officials (CEAS/FUNDAJ [1989]), this is one of the main problems the unions face. It affects not only the social and medical services, but also the organization of wage campaigns and the membership at the workplace.

On the other hand, until 1988, the labour law prohibited the use of union tax income or any sort of union income for the purposes of forming a strike fund (Cf. M.H.M. Alves [1984: 90]). This means that unions could not use their income to enable workers to go on strike for a long time. However, they can spend it on bulletins, leaflets, posters and so on.

How have the unions managed to support strikes and other activities? First of all, it must be said that employers do not automatically stop paying wages during strikes. Until 1988, this was set by the labour courts. The legality of strikes had to be judged by these courts. Being considered legal a jurisprudence was formed that wages should be paid during strikes. On the other hand, when collective agreements were settled through direct negotiation between employers and unions, a clause related to this matter was commonly agreed.

Since the Constitution of 1988, the labour courts no longer have the power to judge whether strikes are legal. However, agreements have been developing in almost the same way. When the labour courts are asked by either employers or unions or both to arbitrate a dispute, a clause regarding this matter has been put forward, and the same happens in direct negotiations between the parties involved in the dispute (Cf. interview No. 54).

Because the union finances were strictly controlled by the Ministry of Labour the unions had to provide a detailed budget about their expenditures (Cf. Alves [1989:43]; and Humphrey [1979c:225]). Thus, the unions could not spend much money on strike propaganda or on food for strikers when their employers cut payments (Alves [1989:43]). Two cases illustrate how unions managed to get this problem resolved. During the 1979 strike I described in chapter II, teachers, from state and private schools alike, found themselves in a stalemate as they could not afford their strikes going any further. As I said above, these two unions have faced financial crises over the years. Then, they promoted a kind of toll. In other words, they formed groups of teachers who stood in the main streets of Recife collecting contributions from drivers and, at the same time, explaining the causes of the strikes (*Jornal do Comércio*, 31 May and 1 June 1979). On the other hand, the Metalworkers' Union adopted a different tactic. Its officials created a strike fund and invited all metalworkers to contribute to be used if any strike broke out in the metal and steel industries (*Informe Sindical*, 3-9 June 1985). Thus, they could afford the costs of maintaining strikes without the control of the Ministry of Labour.

TABLE 3.6. THE BUDGET OF THE URBAN WORKERS' UNION - 1981/82
(In *Cruzeiros* of 1981)

INCOME	
Tax Income.....	4,988,632.80
Social Income.....	8,505,710.40
Extra Income.....	5,349,902.40
TOTAL.....	18,844,245.60
EXPENDITURES	
General Administration.....	6,949,038.32
Social Assistance.....	8,626,689.60
Other Social Services.....	615,261.60
Surplus.....	2,653,256.08
TOTAL.....	18,844,245.60

Source: O Eletricitário, April-May, 1981

It is difficult to give full details about union finances in Brazil because most of them do not keep good records, in spite of the tough controls of the Ministry of Labour, and when they do they are not willing to give outsiders full information on this subject. In the case of conservative union officials, there is a widespread belief that most of them use(d) union money for themselves and that there was (is) a strong chain of corruption, although it is mere speculation for the researcher to write about that²⁵.

²⁵ For similar problems concerning Latin America, see Roxborough [1981:86]; on the Mexican case see Roxborough [1984:109-19]; and on the Argentine case see James [1988:161-86]. James writes that:

"...These sums [of money] provided the basis for a whole range of social services offered by the unions to their members and also, given the concentrated centralism of most union structures, put an immense source of patronage and pressure at the disposal of the central leaders" (p.169).

Cf. also Clegg [1976:44] on the American case. For denunciations of corruption and misuse of union funds in Pernambuco, see *Jornal do Comércio*, 27 and 29 May 1979 (Corruption in the Teachers' Association); *Jornal do Comércio*,

However, the table above can give us some idea about how unions spend their money. It is a budget provided by the Urban Workers' Union. As described above, this union has tried to be militant while maintaining social assistance services. Although this table refers to an early period when this union had just been won by militant unionists, it gives us a realistic idea about union expenditures. If we do not consider the amount referred to as surplus, we realize that more than 50% of the expenditures were spent on social assistance services. Moreover, there are only expenditures with social services and the union's management.

5. INTERNAL GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION AT THE WORKPLACE

For a long time unions in Brazil had very small boards of directors. These boards were made up of a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. This reflected the amount of tasks the unions performed. As many of them only performed tasks related to social assistance services, there was no pressure for a large body of unionists devoted exclusively to union work. The data available for Pernambuco over a period of more than 40 years shows that the unions have followed this pattern. The unions had, of course, some deputies, but they did not take part in the unions' administration after being

12 and 20 June 1979, and 11 Nov. 1987 (Corruption in the Dockers' Union); *O Eletricitário*, Feb. 1981 (Corruption in the Urban Workers' Union); *Folha Sindical*, July 1984 (Corruption in the Fishermen's Union Federation); *Zé Ferrugem Metalúrgico*, no month, 1984 (Corruption in the Metalworkers' Union); *Jornal do Comércio*, 13 Nov. 1985 (Corruption in the Construction Workers' Union); and *Jornal dos Bancários*, Jan. 1989 and *Jornal do Comércio*, 1 and 2 June 1989 (Corruption in the Bank Workers' Union).

elected. The unions also have a body called *Conselho Fiscal* (Fiscal Council) which supervises union finances, but just as in the case of the deputies, they were not active in union life. Thus, the real power in Brazilian trade unions has remained within this «nucleus of power» (Cf. Soares [1984]; and Morais [1988]) formed by the posts mentioned above.

Only during the 1980s, when most of the unions began to experience changes in their internal affairs, did their boards of directors start to enlarge. Other roles in addition to social services began to be performed and other posts were created. In the case of the Urban Workers' Union, the board of directors only increased in size after the first term of the militant unionists in power. Until 1983, this union was run by 3 directors. In that year, this number increased to 7 directors reflecting the expansion of the union's role. The Metalworkers' Union increased in size slightly in 1978 with 5 directors which was consolidated after radical unionists took over the union in 1981. The same is true for both the Teachers' Union and Association and the Bank Workers' Union. Finally, the Data Processing Workers' Union established 7 posts when was founded in 1985 (Data from the unions' individual files in the Regional Labour Office [DRT]).

Some of these unionists are full-time officials whose wages are paid either by their employers or by their unions depending on what is agreed during the renewal of annual contracts. The table below shows the distribution of union officials. The most striking feature of this table is that, until 1986, both the Teachers' Union and Association had been unable to negotiate employment of any of their directors as either full- or part-time officials. On the other hand, most

of the officials who are freed from the workplace in order to perform union duties have their wages paid by their employers.

TABLE 3.7. UNION OFFICIALS - SITUATION TO PERFORM UNION TASKS

SITUATION	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME
UNIONS		
Teachers' Union	None	None
Metalworkers' Union	4(U)* 2(E)**	1(E)
Urban Workers' Union	7(E)	None
Bank Workers' Union	11(E)	None
Teachers' Association	None	None
Data Processing Workers' Union	4(E)	None

Source: CEAS/FUNDAJ (Questionnaire data [1986])

(*) Officials' wages are paid by the union

(**) Officials' wages are paid by the employer

Finally, the organization of these unions at the workplace remains to be analysed. There is no strong tradition of union organization at the workplace level in Brazil. This is due largely to the labour legislation which prohibited direct and close connections between trade unions and the workplace. The first true attempts to establish such organizational links occurred from the mid-1970s, as I pointed out in chapter I. Sometimes the organization of factory committees took place without any links with the unions and in some cases it took place as a strategy of certain political factions within the labour movement in order to oppose conservative unionists (For an early statement of a «new unionism» official on the links between the unions and these committees, see Silva [1979:94-5]).

The same is true for Pernambuco. I have already described the case of the Metalworkers' Union in which workers formed a clandestine factory committee in the 1970s. During the 1980s many unions tried to establish or, at least, to stimulate the creation of such organizations in spite of the resistance of employers to accept them. Such committees have been viewed by employers as excessive union power inside the factories which could worsen labour conflicts. On the other hand, radical militants and unionists think of it as a means to increase union power.

The data available shows that such committees do not have necessarily organizational links with the unions. In the case of the metalworkers in the 1970s, the workers who created the factory committee were even opposed to the union officials. The next experience of such a committee in Pernambuco was also in the metal industry. In 1984, the metalworkers formed their first factory committee, which was the first one in the whole of the Northeast region.

Between 1981-84, 86 plants in this sector were closed down in Pernambuco with the loss of hundreds of jobs²⁶. In 1984, the then state-owned *COSINOR* was also to be closed down. However, its employees fought the measure and won. At the end, as a result of the negotiations, they also won the right to form a factory committee with 11 members plus 11 deputies (Centro Josué de Castro [1988:49-50]; and interview No. 7).

²⁶ According to data provided by Inter-Union Office for Statistical and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE), in 1984 the rate of unemployment in Pernambuco in this sector was as follows: 33% in the mechanical sector, 13.7% in metallurgy, and 22.2% in the electric-electronic sector. In 1983-84 two out of ten workers from these sectors were dismissed in Pernambuco (*Folha Sindical*, March 1985).

In the final agreement signed by employees and the management these 22 workers were granted job stability while their term in office lasted. However, after some months almost all of its members were dismissed and this committee was wound up when management, regardless of delegates' right to job tenure established in the agreement, dismissed them. Thus, this first experience of a factory committee in Pernambuco finished (For a similar case in the Ford plant in São Paulo, see Alves [1989:63-4]. This factory committee was the first to be accepted by the management in Brazil, as agreed through a formal agreement between the parties in July 1981. However, all of its members were later dismissed).

However, it must be stressed, this committee was not a part of the union's organizational structure. Indeed, it was independent of the union though they worked closely because its creation had been stimulated by the union and delegates were sympathetic to union officials' ideological beliefs.

Along with this type of organization, the union has sought to organize workers at the workplace through some committees granted by the labour legislation. Thus, it takes advantage of the existence of the Internal Committees for the Prevention of Accidents (CIPAs) in order to expand its organization amongst workers (For a similar case, see Mangabeira [1991]. On the role of CIPAs in the Brazilian labour relations, see Paiva [1986]). As the members of such a committee are elected and are granted job stability by law, the union officials seek to campaign for workers who have close links with the union. Thus, they have been able to expand the union organization inside plants (Interview No. 12).

A much commoner experience has been that of delegates in each plant who do not form a committee²⁷. Many of them are not necessarily union delegates, but workers' delegates. It means that sometimes conflicts occur between delegates and union officials. These delegates have been elected in some sectors. In the power and water sectors, the Urban Workers' Union has organized and stimulated the existence of this form of representation. In this case, delegates are elected one for every 50 workers and they are subject to certain union rules, that is, they are part of the union organizational structure. The same is not true for the Bank Workers' and the Data Processing Workers' Unions. In the banking sector the existence of delegates was well established long before radical unionists took over the union in 1988. At the beginning such delegates started to be elected in the federal state-owned *Banco do Brasil*. They formed the original group of militants who began to systematically oppose the conservative officials who ran the union until 1988. Such organizational forms of representation started to spread in the mid-1980s and workers from other banks elected their own representatives. However, it must be said, these delegates have only been elected in state-owned banks²⁸. Nowadays, the relationship between the union officials and delegates is much closer because of common ideological and party militancy. Nevertheless, the delegates remain proud of their independence towards the union expressing this feeling by saying that they

²⁷ For an European experience in which delegates played a major role, see Regalia et al. [1978].

²⁸ Along with *Banco do Brasil*, there are delegates in *Caixa Econômica Federal* and *Banco do Estado de Pernambuco*.

are not union delegates but workers' delegates (Interviews Nos. 44 and 45).

In the data processing sector as well the workers of the five state companies established in Recife have been electing delegates. The union has been using these delegates to form new union leaders and, at the same time, represent the union at the workplace. So far the only workers' committee in the private sector was formed in 1989 by employees of *PROCENGE*, which was created as a part of the collective agreement signed between employees and the management (*Informe Sindical*, Aug. 1989). Just as in the case of the Urban Workers' Union this form of representation has been stimulated by the union, although the delegates remain independent of it. However, differently from the case just described above these delegates act more like plant committees.

There are the extreme cases of both the Teachers' Union and Association which do not have any delegates or anything resembling a school committee. In the case of the former, it seems to be due to strong opposition of the private school owners to allowing such a form of representation inside the schools. There are plenty of complaints in the union's newspaper about schools' owners who do not permit even union officials to go into schools to deliver newspapers, bulletins or leaflets to teachers (Cf. *Quadro e Giz*, Aug. 1987). In this case, this union has not yet achieved, as pointed out above, the right to have at least part-time officials. Thus, it is difficult to envisage how they could win the right to have delegates or committees if they have not even won the right to have either part- or full-time officials. However, it is not clear why the Teachers' Association does not have

representation at school level. One clue could be the tough policies of several governments towards the association. As pointed out above, this contributed to weaken the association during early 1980s. Its policy has been one of stimulating the creation of branches throughout the state rather than establishing school committees. One must remember that schools are spread over the state while other sectors, possibly with the exceptions of power and water industries and banking, are not.

TABLE 3.8. MEANS USED BY THE UNIONS TO CONTACT THEIR MEMBERS - 1986

MEANS	FIRST MEANS	SECOND MEANS	THIRD MEANS
UNIONS			
Teachers' Union	Visits to the Workplace	Assemblies	Telephone/ Local Press
Metalworkers' Union	Visits to the Workplace	Union Newspaper/ Bulletins	<i>Diretores de Base</i>
Urban Workers' Union	Union Newspaper/ Bulletins	Visits to the Workplace	Car With Speakers
Bank Workers' Union	Union Newspaper/ Bulletins	Local Press/ Car With Speakers	Assemblies
Teachers' Association	Through Other Association Members	Union Newspaper/ Bulletins	Visits to the Workplace
Data Processing Workers' Union	Direct Contact Through Officials	Union Newspaper/ Bulletin	Visits to the Workplace

Source: CEAS/FUNDAJ (Questionnaire data [1986])

There are other less important forms of organization at the company level. The Metalworkers' Union maintains some other forms of representation. They maintain a wage committee, and an agreement supervisors committee. While the latter

supervises annual agreements in order to denounce managers who breach them, the former surveys the main demands arising from the workplace in order to put forward a common and broad list of demands. On the other hand, the Data Processing Workers' Union maintains a health committee which has been working on occupational diseases arising from the excessive exposure of workers to computer screens and other diseases affecting nerves and ligaments of the fingers specific to this industry.

Finally, I would suggest that there is a relationship between the increase in the number of officials in the unions after 1978-79 and the unions' relative failure, in Pernambuco, to establish a firm network of factory committees. Because the law grants job tenure to anyone holding a union post, «new unionism» unionists have been trying to combat the opposition of employers towards forms of organization at the workplace by increasing the number of officials while keeping them at the workplace. These officials are called *diretores de base* and act as *de facto* union delegates by performing tasks which are aimed at increasing the «presence» of the union at the workplace, and, at the same time, at providing means for a better communication line between the union and the shop floor.

According to Humphrey [1979a:77],

"...These *diretores de base*...[are] encouraged to act as union organizers in the plants, giving out union membership forms, advising workers of meetings, representing workers in disputes with management, etc."

6. DISCUSSION

Having set up the data, now I can move on to discuss the effects (if any) of the process of «bureaucratization» and the union organization at the workplace level on the role played by trade unions in Pernambuco from the late 1970s.

First of all, the data presented does not clearly support the hypothesis that the larger the union «bureaucracy», the more conservative the union. Although the cases of the Data Processing Workers' and of the Bank Workers' Unions, and both of the Teachers' Union and Association support such a hypothesis, the cases of the Metalworkers' and of the Urban Workers' Unions do not. I would suggest that the level of militancy is much more related to union officials' ideological beliefs than to the size of the union «bureaucracy», being the result of these beliefs and not the contrary²⁹. Gonçalves [1984:29-30], for instance, makes a similar point when he suggests that, although the scale of medical and legal services may be a good indicator of conservative practice, it cannot be regarded in absolute terms as synonymous with conservative unionism, since many militant unions have been trying to combine radical policies with social assistance services.

The Bank Workers' Union's conservative officials did not build a large «bureaucracy» first and then became conservative. Indeed, they constructed such a large

²⁹ Here I am not forgetting the role of the Brazilian state in imposing the scale and shape of union «bureaucracies». I am only trying to isolate the different variables in order to clarify the relationship among them. Thus, I am suggesting that an emphasis on the negative impact of the union «bureaucracy» upon militancy may be misleading.

«bureaucracy» because this was their commitment concerning the main aim of a union. The analysis of the union's newspaper shows that they believed that the principal role a union had to play was to provide the rank-and-file with socio-medical assistance. Both the cases of the Metalworkers' and of the Urban Workers' Unions show that union officials who espouse radical ideologies managed to make their unions become militant organizations while keeping and even increasing socio-medical services. They have been running their unions for more than a decade and they could well have discontinued such services. Apart from political wisdom and responsiveness to the membership's interests, as one remembers the demands of the rank-and-file for better and larger social assistance, they have been able to combine these two opposite faces of the union life, their unions being better known for their militant role than for their social services. On the other hand, one might speculate that if the Data Processing Workers' Union and both the Teachers' Union and Association were won by conservative unionists, whether such unionists would become radical because of the small scale of these unions' «bureaucracies». Certainly this is not the case. One would expect that it would be more likely that such unions would increase their social services, depending, of course, on their financial situation.

Roxborough [1984:113] has found, by analysing the case of the automobile workers in Mexico, that:

"The existence of a number of union officials who are able to devote their full working week to union business clearly strengthens the union *vis-à-vis* management".

However, this is not true for the case of Pernambuco. For opposite reasons, the cases of the Bank Workers' Union and

both of the Teachers' Union and Association show that there is not a direct relationship between the number of either full- or part-time union officials and the tendency for the unions to be more or less militant. Firstly, the Bank Workers' Union has the largest number of full-time officials completely freed from their workplaces in order to deal solely with the union's businesses. However, as has been shown throughout these chapters, the conservative officials did not use this to strengthen their position when confronting management. Secondly, on the opposite side there are the cases of the Teachers' Association and Union. They do not even have part-time officials. All their officials are able to do is to spend their free time dealing with union matters. When organizing their timetables for the weekdays at the unions these officials have to take into account their own timetables at the schools at which they work or they have to hold their meetings in the evenings. In spite of these limitations they have been able to keep their unions relatively strong when facing management.

Finally, the cases of the Metalworkers', of the Urban Workers', and of the Data Processing Workers' Unions, all of which have a medium number of full- and part-time officials, do not contribute to demonstrate a clear link between the number of union officials completely devoted to union businesses and the strength of the union before management. They have been as militant as the Teachers' Union and Association in spite of the differences between them in terms of their relative numbers of full- and part-time officials. On the other hand, these three unions were, until 1988, more militant than the Bank Workers' Union though this union had,

at the time, more full-time officials than any of them.

Once more the explanation seems to lie on ideological grounds. The number of full- and part-time officials does not matter as much as their ideological principles do. Now, if we consider all unions together the only explanation which unites their individual political experiences is one related to the ideological commitments of their officials. In the case of the Bank Workers' Union, the conservative full-time officials used their time to manage and improve the socio-medical services the union offered, which constituted its main activity until 1988. The Teachers' Union's and Association's officials have been using their time for other purposes than solely the management of socio-medical services. The officials of the other three unions who are full-time have been using their time for several purposes, the management of medical services being the least important. This allocation of time seems to be related to the ideological beliefs of these unionists, that is, they have been using their time and strength (or lack of it) according to what they believe to be the most important feature(s) of union life.

Now I turn to the impact of the union organization at the workplace level on the policies put forward by the unions. It seems that there is a direct relationship between organization at the workplace and the level of militancy. Apart from the school sector, there have been the experiences of factory committees or delegates, which have helped to strengthen the unions or radical groups when facing management. In spite of the lack of a clear link between the unions and delegates and/or factory committees, these forms of organization have been playing an important role in labour relations mainly since the

early 1980s. The Metalworkers', the Urban Workers' and the Data Processing Workers' Unions have been stimulating such forms of organization as a means to strengthen themselves before management. This has clearly happened in the data processing industry in which bargaining power has been greater in the state-owned companies, the ones where workers have elected delegates. A similar process can be found at the banking sector. Bank workers of certain, once again, state-owned banks won the right to elect their delegates to represent them before management. In the case of the *Banco do Brasil*, the management even preferred to negotiate with them, in spite of their radical party and ideological connections (Interview No. 51), rather than with the conservative union officials. The workers of this bank are responsible for most of the strikes in this sector. The data available shows that most of the strikes in this sector were not organized by the union officials. Indeed, they were a result of the organization of workers at the workplace level.

The Metalworkers' Union illustrates this case very well. One remembers that the beginning of the opposition group, which took over the union in 1981, happened around a clandestine factory committee. Also one of the most militant plants in this sector - the *COSINOR* plant - established its factory committee during the 1980s (Cf. Lima [1991:17]).

These workers' committees play the role of making the contacts between the unions and workers much closer. They are also responsible for supervising agreements as well as denouncing managers who breach the labour law. They have been a means to survey what workers wish to set in the lists of demands during renewals of annual contracts. Finally, the

delegates usually participate in the wage committees elected by workers to negotiate wage increases and other demands that they wish to win.

What this chapter has shown is that the impact of the internal apparatus, «bureaucracy» and several forms of organization at the workplace on the policies put forward by unions in Pernambuco during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s depended very much on the ideologies and party commitments of their officials. Whether a union was more or less conservative or radical depended much on their officials' viewpoint on the role of unions in society. Therefore, the impact of big or small union apparatuses on union politics should not be viewed *a priori* as bringing about a conservative role (in the case of a big union apparatus) or a radical role (in the case of a small union apparatus).

This chapter also shows that the emergence of young, radical union officials and militants contributed to changing the unions' profile. When, at the beginning of the 1980s, they started to take over some unions it was realized that they could not, in most cases, abandon social assistance services at all. However, as they thought of unions within a radical tradition, they have been managing to make unions perform a more militant role, which means that there is not, at least in this case, a determinist relationship between the size of union «bureaucracy» and union politics. In other words, the young union officials who emerged in the wake of the «new unionism» in Pernambuco put forward new policies that meant a strong change in the practices of the unions towards labour problems and conflicts. These changes were not only related to how to run the unions or which role the unions are to play

in society, but also to the relationship between the unions and their organization at the workplace.

Finally, it also shows that the new practices put forward by trade unions in São Paulo during the 1970s spread to other regions of the country. On the other hand, the experience of a «new unionism» which started in the private and modern sectors of the economy also spread to the public sector as well as to the traditional and tertiary sectors. This means that in the decade following the 1978-79 strikes of the metalworkers in São Paulo, the «new unionism» acquired a new dimension. In other words, the experience represented by the trade unions in São Paulo of a new practice of unionism has found firm grounds in other regions of the country and in other sectors of the economy.

CHAPTER IV

TRADE UNIONS AND INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the nature of internal politics in the unions of Pernambuco from 1979. In other words, I discuss the degree of democracy existent within the unions I am investigating. If we look back to the period just after the 1964 *coup* it is difficult to speak about internal democracy in Brazilian trade unions. In fact, it was very difficult for left-wing militants to participate in unions' affairs or to dispute elections. The data available for this period shows that from 1964 up to the mid-1970s the groups loyal to the military ruled over the unions unchallenged. The emergence of new groups of militant unionists provoked calls not only for changes in the role unions were to play in national politics, but also for changes in the internal politics of the trade unions. It was then believed that the necessary changes in the role of the trade unions would only occur if the different political persuasions and factions inside the unions had the opportunity to spell out their opinions, demands, and projects, and more importantly, a chance to implement them. Moreover, the continuous presence of unchallenged and undemocratic leaders was assigned as the main factor behind the poor performance of the unions in terms of political fights for getting, for instance, better wages and working conditions. Thus, early

statements by militants called for increasing participation in union life through the presence of union members at their general meetings. As early as 1978 a group of militant workers of Greater Recife issued a document in which they declared:

"We know that nowadays the unions are tied and ruled by *pelegos*. However, unions are ours, and we, the workers, must rule them ourselves. For this, we have to be present in the unions; we have to demand more meetings; we have to voice, during the meetings, our real problems; we have to press union officials to demand labour law's enforcement; we have to launch candidates that represent the true interests of the working class"³⁰.

Such calls continued to be voiced throughout the 1980s in labour general meetings by different political persuasions that acted inside union life. Therefore, I intend to analyse to what extent democracy has existed and the conditions under which it has worked within the unions I am investigating since 1978. A number of qualitative and quantitative data will be used to achieve such aims.

To begin with, I analyse the main theories of union democracy, namely those of Michels, Lipset et al., and Edelstein and Warner. Of these, the most influential has been that of Edelstein and Warner who have developed an electoral model to analyse the degree of democracy in trade unions. I will move on to present some theoretical critiques of such a model. I will also describe historically the dynamics of internal politics in the unions of my sample with special emphasis upon the period from 1979 until 1989. This will allow me to set up the data for an empirical test of the electoral

³⁰ Pamphlet issued on 30 April 1978 by a group of weavers, metalworkers, construction workers and joiners to commemorate the May Day of 1978. See also contribution of Almir Pazzionotto to the round-table discussion in the journal *Escrita Ensaio* [1978:30], in which he expresses the same view about democracy in Brazilian trade unions.

model. Having been used to some extent by different scholars, I will be using the data from the Pernambuco unions in order to clarify whether this model actually allow us to grasp this phenomenon. Finally, a number of variables, which have not been taken into account by the electoral model, are considered in order to broaden our understanding of what union democracy may mean.

2. THEORIES OF UNION DEMOCRACY

2.1. Michels, Lipset, and Edelstein and Warner on Union Democracy

Union democracy has not only been a major political aspect of discussions amongst militants calling for internal changes in their unions, but also an important subject discussed by sociologists since Michels announced his famous «Iron Law of Oligarchy» in his *Political Parties* [1962]. In this book he analysed the exercise and maintenance of power within the parties and unions which he regarded as democratic, that is, the socialist ones. His central thesis can be identified as follows: an oligarchic group always appears in formal democratic organizations, which sets serious obstacles to the maintenance of democracy in such organizations (See Wippler [1986]. For a different and fascinating approach, see May [1965]).

Michels did not refuse *a priori* the idea of the existence of a formal democracy. On the contrary, his presupposition was that, at the level of formal organizations in modern societies, there would exist room enough for the exercise of

democratic power. However, he stressed that trends towards a progressive oligarchization of the groups that hold power would inevitably arise. Socialist organizations - parties and unions - had emerged within the political democracies of modern societies as a way through which workers could defend their rights and face the bourgeoisie. However, the necessity for fast and secure decisions provoked the appearance of a bureaucratic, specialized and centralized body for making decisions (Hemingway [1978:4]; Hill [1981:133-4]; and Przeworski [1985:14]).

On the other hand, to face systematic conservative attacks, socialist bosses would have to reinforce their organizations to protect themselves against such attacks, even if it were necessary to transform radical ideas into moderate ones, which could be accepted by the conservative establishment. Hill has coined the term goal displacement to mean this "process whereby union members' goals are subordinated to other interests" [1981:133].

Thus, these former democratic bosses became conservative, attached to power, and unwilling to face elections (For a graphic scheme of the origins of oligarchy according to Michels, see Hartmann [1979:72]). However, this conservatism did not arise only through institutional imposition - increase of the number of the rank-and-file, progressive differentiation of tasks, and so on - but also through the private interests of certain bosses. Michels paid particular attention to socialist leaders of proletarian extraction as those who would be more attached to their jobs either because of lack of personal wealth or because they lost the habit of working (Cf. Martin [1978:101]). The following quotation is

clear on this aspect:

"It is especially in the ex-manual worker that the love of power manifests itself with the greatest intensity. Having just succeeded in throwing off the chains he wore as a wage-labourer and a vassal of capital, he is least of all disposed to endue new chains which will bind him as a slave of the masses" (Michels [1962:302]).

This trend toward oligarchy would be eased by the renunciation of the electorate and the incompetence of the masses in truly exercising power. Thus, the bosses would be elected to deal with everyone's interests, liberating the masses of further obligations. Through this apathetic and passive game the two parties would take care of each other's inner wishes: the leaders could maintain their power without inopportune questions and the masses could maintain their apathy before power. The masses would only be woken up from their apathy when the bosses felt threatened by the emergence of new leaders willing to voice criticisms about those holding power. The old leaders would then try to call the masses to legitimate themselves against the opposition. At the same time, they would try to gain the new leaders for their side. In this way, it seems, Michels believed that there exists an inevitable trend towards a gap between leaders and rank-and-file, and that any renewal of the leaders would occur primarily through the selection and co-option of external leaders than through democratic means by which the membership would actively choose its leaders.

Moreover, Michels pointed out another factor that also contributes to the gradual conservatism of a political party: its relationship with the State. According to Michels, the State is a centralizing power. Thus, it was necessary to create a revolutionary party which would be able to oppose it.

However, to reach this aim the revolutionary party had to use the very bases upon which the State is founded: authority and discipline. In the daily fight against state power spontaneity is a negative feature. The fight against the State needs bureaucratic, disciplined organizations and leaders. Thus, the core of these organizations turns into what they fight against, this being summarized by Michels's belief that a revolutionary party is a state within the State.

Another important work about this subject is *Union Democracy* (Lipset et al. [1977]). In this book the authors discussed Michels's iron law of oligarchy through a systematic study on power structure in the International Typographical Union (ITU).

The authors generally accept Michels's thesis (Cf. Lipset et al. [1977:393-418]; Roxborough [1981:94] and [1984:133]; and Martin [1978:102]). Thus, the fact that the International Typographical Union (ITU) was a democratic union should be seen as an exception - or a «deviant case» as Martin calls it - to the iron law of oligarchy, and not as a negation of such a thesis. Therefore, when studying the International Typographical Union (ITU), they point out the importance of the existence of a two-party system which would maintain the internal democracy in this union (Cf. Hill [1981:135]). Clearly, they take their model from the American party system in which two parties fight for places in the National Congress and/or for the top post in the White House. That is, their definition of democracy emerges from the existence of a formal system of choice between two factions during electoral periods (Cf. Hemingway [1978:7]). As they point out:

"...We have equated democracy in the ITU with the fact

that the membership of the unions has the right to choose between two parties representing opposing approaches to trade-union action" (Lipset et al. [1977:53]).

Thus, the possibility given to the rank-and-file to choose between opposing factions and the existence of a permanent opposition are tantamount to a warranty of the maintenance of the democracy within the International Typographical Union (ITU), which avoids its degeneration into an oligarchy.

However, this system was historically built. The authors point out a number of social causes which contributed to the formation of the two-party system. At the beginning of its history, the International Typographical Union (ITU) was governed by a small group. Progressively the existence of secret societies, which acted within this union, started establishing this type of system against the possible manoeuvres of leaders with oligarchic tendencies. Moreover, the existence of informal groups that help to maintain communication and contact between leaders and the membership plays an important role in preventing a possible gap opening between the former and the latter. These informal groups are intermediaries which narrow the gap between leaders and the rank-and-file, for through them individuals participate more actively in the International Typographical Union (ITU)'s affairs. By doing so, the rank-and-file becomes aware of the importance of their participation, which becomes clear through their responsibility to exercise frequent censure through referendum on policies put forward by the leaders. As the rank-and-file is frequently called to decide, through referendum, on important aspects regarding the union's life, this has contributed to the avoidance of oligarchic

tendencies.

As an outcome from this former point, another factor that causes oligarchic degeneration - bureaucratic and centralized administration - would be neutralized by the active participation of the membership on decisions within the union.

The authors also point out another factor that contributed to building the democratic system of the International Typographical Union (ITU): local autonomy. That is, the several unions that form the International Typographical Union (ITU) are autonomous to an important degree, which refers to the possibility of making decisions and taking actions without the interference of the central power. Thus, since these regional unions, which are part of the International Typographical Union (ITU), maintain their autonomy, they play an important role in maintaining democracy and avoiding manoeuvres towards a more centralized administration.

Finally, another important factor analysed by the authors is the constitutional warranty of the existence of opposition groups. Although one simple constitutional warranty does not mean the existence of an opposition, it avoids authoritarian and oligarchic means in the bosses' hands to limit or suppress opposing groups, for the end of the opposition could mean the end of democracy within the union or even the very end of the union.

A third important contribution to the analysis of union democracy is the book by Edelstein and Warner [1975]. Contrary to the conclusion of Lipset et al., who generally give support to Michels's thesis, these authors do not accept the idea of an inevitable slide towards oligarchy. They start by showing

that there is a continuity between democracy and oligarchy and that, in some moments, it is almost impossible to define precisely what each is. Thus, it is better to speak about degrees of democracy or oligarchy. However, democracy could be defined as follows:

"Democracy in a large organisation or a society is a decision-making system in which the membership actively participates, directly and indirectly through its representatives, in the making and implementation of policy and in the selection of officials, for all levels, on the basis of political equality and majority rule. Furthermore, the system operates on the basis of the accountability of officials, the legitimacy of opposition, and a due process for the protection of the rights of individuals and minorities. Each aspect of democracy can be achieved to a different degree and there is probably no way to characterise the overall degree of democracy except on the basis of crude judgment. However, these aspects of democracy are probably to some extent mutually interdependent and supporting" (Edelstein & Warner [1975:30]).

On the other hand, oligarchy means that,

"Given democratic norms and an absence of organizational obstacles, attempts to displace the top leaders will certainly be made. If there is indeed a structured way to compete for top posts, e.g., electoral machinery, this is in fact used. Thus, the absence of regular use of such machinery (and, of course, its absence) is a sign of control over the organisation by a limited number of individuals on a non-competitive basis: in other words, of control by the few, with perhaps a disproportionate weight given to a single individual among them" (Edelstein & Warner [1975:33]).

The organizational theory of union democracy built by Edelstein and Warner has a number of conditions which allow them to assess the degree of democracy in a given union. First of all, the effectiveness of the opposition is a clear condition arising from their definition of democracy (Edelstein & Warner [1975:65]). On the other hand, such effectiveness is represented by the existence of disputed elections, this being a second condition for democracy. Moreover, as a third condition, the opposition must have fair

conditions to defeat the incumbent(s) (Martin [1978:103]). Therefore, this condition could be spelt out as the ability of the opposition to receive a fair share of the votes. This means that the closer the elections the more democratic the union (Edelstein & Warner [1975:66-68]. Cf. Undy & Martin [1984:190]). Finally, if the opposition is strong enough to win elections, the turnover of leaders is an important factor in measuring the degree of democracy existent in a given union³¹.

The study by Edelstein and Warner, by focusing "upon the role of elections in maintaining union democracy" (Martin [1978:103]; and Undy & Martin [1984:190-1]), is aimed to construct a theory capable of making a diagnosis of the actual situation of a given formal organization - unions in this case - in terms of the degree of democracy/oligarchy. On the other hand, it is also possible to conclude, with the help of their model, that democracy within formal organizations will be preserved if there are mechanisms to prevent power concentration either in a small group's or in one person's hands.

2.2. A Critique of the Electoral Model

As pointed out above, Edelstein and Warner's electoral model has been enjoying a great deal of influence on studies on union democracy. However, it is by no means an

³¹ These same indicators were also synthesized by Roxborough and used to assess the degree of democracy in Mexican trade unions (Cf. Roxborough [1984:chapter 7]; and Thompson & Roxborough [1982]). In a recent work on union democracy in Brazil, Mangabeira [1991] uses these same indicators coupled with two others of her own.

uncontroversial model.

Some scholars have criticized it on a number of points, namely its inadequacies to assess fully such a phenomenon. Hill [1981:135], for instance, points out that Edelstein and Warner's conception of a democratic structure is very restricted, because findings of close elections, for instance, could be interpreted as implying incompetence and unpopularity of union officials as well as democracy. Moreover, he also points out, specifically in relation to Britain, that most union officials are appointed instead of being elected.

Martin [1978:103] also points to the same problem when he says that the focus of this model on elections is "too narrow because politics is about power, not simply elections...". Moreover, he criticizes the electoral model by saying that:

"Overwhelming leadership victories may be due to effectiveness in carrying out the wishes of the majority of union members, not to the lack of union democracy. Close election results and a high turnover in union officials are as likely to indicate incompetence as internal democracy" (Martin [1987:228]).

A number of other criticisms can be put forward. By focusing exclusively on elections this model does not allow us to understand the processes through which politics actually happens inside the unions. In fact, if the data reveals the persistence of close elections, it tells us nothing about how the groups deal with each other. In other words, closeness of elections says nothing about tolerance towards opposition groups and how they are treated, i.e., there is no way to assess phenomena such as violence, threats, false accusations, etc., let alone external factors which exert important influences on the profile of different groups, i.e., on

unions' internal politics. In fact, the existence of a permanent and organized opposition does not depend solely upon the wishes of officials and/or of the opposition. In the political context of Brazil of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the existence and survival of radical officials and opposition groups depended to some extent on the government's and employers' approaches towards labour militancy. Therefore, a narrow focus on elections and the existence of organized opposition groups is misleading since it hardly takes such aspects of union life into consideration.

Moreover, Martin's remarks that close elections may indicate incompetence seem to be related to some cases current in Pernambuco, as we will see. From 1964 until the late 1970s unions were run by conservative officials detached from the rank-and-file. These officials were only concerned with the policy of providing union members with social services. In fact, matters like campaigns for wage increases or better working conditions did not exist. In this case, their disappearance from union politics in the cases where they were defeated by the new radical militants does not necessarily mean intolerance of the new officials nor that democracy does not exist in these unions.

The electoral model does not provide any insight into the process of real politics either. By real politics I mean the processes through which daily politics happens, elections being only one moment within a whole set of complex phenomena. Therefore, the very process of «making» politics which involves calculations of one's own political and organizational assets as well as those of the other sides, negotiations, and alliances goes undetected. As we will see,

alliances may cause changes in the ruling groups which are not revealed by the electoral model. They may also be the result of complex negotiations which in turn result in uncontested elections. Therefore, in this case, the existence of uncontested elections does not necessarily mean lack of democracy within the unions, but a great deal of negotiations in which there may reside a great degree of tolerance towards different political persuasions.

Finally, a narrow focus on elections does not allow us to assess an important political phenomenon, i.e., representativeness and responsiveness of the unions to the membership. Although some unions may have a poor record of contested elections, this tells us nothing about channels through which unions may establish a network of communications with the rank-and-file in order to get to know what demands arise from the shop-floor and how to meet them.

The emergence of the «new unionism» in Brazil has meant the establishment of a number of channels which have helped to close the gap between the membership and the leaders. The existence of workers' committees and several committees aimed to deal with matters such as negotiations of wage increases, and health and safety at the workplace seem to indicate that «new unionism» unions have been trying to be responsive to the workplace. On the other hand, the enforcement by «new unionism» officials of the unions' constitutional obligations, for instance, that wage agreements are to be ratified by a general assembly, means that they have been trying not only to be responsive to the unions' members, but also that the rank-and-file can exert control on leaders' policies. Recent evidence suggests that union democracy is linked to

"representativeness [what means] the extent to which... leaders' policies and perspectives mirror and demonstrate a commitment to the interests of the membership. The interests of the members to be taken into account are their expressed interests, rather than any latent or implicit interests as perceived by the...leaders [and to]...accountability, the extent of consultation of and reporting back to the membership as well as adherence to membership decisions" (Fosh & Cohen [1990:107-8]; Cf. Heery & Kelly [1990:75-106]).

The same point is stressed by Hill [1981:137-9]. According to him, important aspects of union democracy such as the impossibility for unions to coerce their members, the fact that the discretion of labour force to use its collective power of labour is not necessarily tied to the unions, and the significance, in the British context, of direct negotiations between the membership and the employers are not often taken into consideration in analyses of such a phenomenon.

Therefore, a restricted focus on electoral results may be misleading because, as stressed above, union politics has a meaning which is larger than shown by closeness of elections, existence of contested elections, or existence of a permanent and organized opposition and turnover of leaders. As the evidence seems to suggest, some unions may have provided frequent contested elections, but have a poor profile of responsiveness towards the membership, and vice versa.

In the following sections this discussion is deepened through a historical analysis of union politics in Pernambuco, an empirical test of the electoral model, and finally the analysis of the phenomena mentioned above which are not grasped by the electoral model.

3. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTERNAL UNION POLITICS IN PERNAMBUCO

Now I can move on to analyse the nature of internal politics in trade unions of Pernambuco since 1978. Although no major specific study on this subject has been undertaken in Brazil, a research carried out in 1981-82 on the structure of union representation has found that there was a moderate tendency for officials to be re-elected in unions with leaders of "great [political] influence" and in unions which represent "workers of important economic sectors". In unions which represent "workers of small industries" there was a high ratio (0.93) of re-election (Cf. Gonçalves [1984:30-1]; and Silva [1984]).

On the other hand, the existence of several political persuasions inside the union movement since the mid-1970s justifies the analysis of the conditions under which democracy (or lack of it) works in Pernambuco. In fact, the split of the labour movement in the early 1980s into two major factions means that many unions have been facing disputes through the political fights undertaken by such factions (Cf. Keck [1989: 277]). Besides, even some of those unions dominated by one single major faction have been facing political and electoral disputes because of challenges from small factions which are part of larger alliances within these major factions. To put it clearly, while the Workers' United Central (CUT) and Workers' General Central (CGT) form the two major union centrals within the Brazilian labour movement, these same centrals are formed by a myriad of political persuasions that, sometimes, find themselves in political and electoral disputes

against each other.

Although my analysis refers to the period from 1979, it is important to set up a historical description of how internal politics has been working inside the unions I am investigating. The data available for most of the unions does not allow me to undertake a deeper analysis of this phenomenon in a historical perspective, but a few words can be said about the individual cases.

The data available for the period before 1964 refers mainly to the constitution of the board of directors of each union. Therefore, I can merely speculate about the turnover of the leaders during this period.

As elections were, by law, due every two or three years, such officials were not appointed, but elected. During this period the rank-and-file was called to vote for a slate on which the presidency was the only definite post. Commonly, a group of unionists would present themselves as candidates forming a slate. Once elected the president would then distribute the members of the slate to the several posts which constituted the union's administration.

3.1. The Bank Workers' Union

The data on the Bank Workers' Union for the period between 1942 and 1964 shows a high turnover of officials from election to election. Elections were then held every two years, and the data shows that in each election, with the exception of the 1944 election, this union faced a total renewal of its officials up to 1964. Its first board was elected in 1942, having been re-elected in 1944. In 1946 these

officials resigned, for unspecified reasons, just before the due election. This union was then ruled by several committees until 1948, when an election took place and a new board was elected. From then on up to 1964 no official survived the next election³², although there is no evidence at all to explain such a phenomenon, be it in terms of the union's constitution through which some sort of obligation would exist in order for the union to renew its officials, or be it in terms of internal political mechanisms through which heir-apparent candidates were elected.

In April 1964, this union was subject to intervention by the military and a three-men board was appointed to run the union's affairs. A major change, affecting not only this union, but also other unions in the country in the post-1964 is that all union posts became definite before the elections. Many unions introduced a change by which the rank-and-file would no longer vote for a slate in which the president once elected would distribute the posts to the other members of his slate. In other words, during this period the membership started voting for a slate knowing beforehand who would be responsible for each aspect of the union's administration.

An election took place in October 1965 and the new elected group maintained power up to 1988. The changes that occurred from term to term during this period were due to a number of factors which had nothing to do with votes and elections. These changes were in fact due either to political alliances or to individual decisions not to stand for the next election. This seems to confirm the findings of another

³² This data was collected from the individual union's file in the archive of the Regional Labour Office (DRT).

research carried out in Pernambuco and Paraíba states. In fact, Soares [1984] carried out a large research on rural and urban trade unions in these states and he found that in most of the unions the officials used just to change through rotation the main posts, while replacing some officials who were in charge of non-important posts in the unions' hierarchy (Cf. Centro Josué de Castro/CEDEC [1983]).

In the 1967 election 5 out of 7 directors did not stand for re-election, and the same is true for the 1970 election. Among the new officials elected in 1967 was the man who was to dominate the union's life until 1982 when he gave up union life: Júlio C. de F. Cavalcanti. Firstly, as deputy secretary, and successively as its general secretary, vice-president, and president he dominated the union's life and imposed his own view on how the union should act and on what it should and should not do. This official and his group espoused a conservative view on the role the union was to play. He often declared his support to the military government's wage and economic policies, even when other conservative unionists disapproved of them.

In each of the elections held in 1973 and 1974³³ 3 out of 7 officials did not stand for the next election. The union's president decided not to stand for the next election due in 1976 and his deputy was, then, elected once again without contest and 2 new names appeared on the board of directors.

³³ There are records in the individual file of this union in the archive of the Regional Labour Office (DRT) that an election was held on 29 October 1974, that is, just one year after the 1973 election. There is no information about why it occurred.

This group was to face its first electoral challenge in the election of August 1979. In April the first signs of the formation of an opposition appeared (Interviews Nos. 23 and 45). Also a newspaper reported that "about 60 bank workers [had] gathered to form a slate to dispute the election" (*Jornal do Comércio*, 13 May 1979). Most of its members were employees of the state-owned *Banco do Brasil*. They used to discuss the economic situation of the country, political issues, and matters concerning wage problems and the role played by the union. As early as their second meeting they learned that elections for renewing the union's board of directors was due in the coming August. Thus, there followed a lengthy discussion on whether or not to participate and challenge the then ruling group. According to the union's rules, they had only 15 days to register their slate of 18 candidates. This was a very short time to organize and form a slate in order to compete for the union's offices. Moreover, the number of people the union rules demanded to form a slate outnumbered the number of people who had begun to meet. On the other hand, even some of the people in the opposition group could not take part in the elections, for they had been in their job for too short a period of time. Therefore, they were not qualified for the next union elections either as voters or as candidates. As the group decided it should compete in these elections, it had to form a very diffuse slate. It had to call for the participation of some bank workers who simply accepted that they would compete without further commitments to this opposition group (Interviews Nos. 23, 44, 45 and 47). On May 13th, this opposition group registered their slate (*Jornal do Comércio*, 16 May and 19 June 1979). Accusations of

fraud followed the election (Interviews Nos. 23 and 45) and a federal judge suspended it and ordered a new one to take place (*Jornal do Comércio*, 4 Sept. 1979). According to members of the opposition group, it was not possible any longer to fairly dispute the new election at that time, for the group had run out of physical strength, and financial and organizational assets.

After the election a «witch-hunt» followed. All employees of private banks who had participated were dismissed and the opposition group had to start work from scratch. The opposition survived the process through a small number of militants who worked for the state-owned *Banco do Brasil* (Cf. *O Eletricitário*, April-May 1981; and interviews Nos. 23, 44, 45 and 47). However, the impact of the 1979 election and the dismissals that followed it on the composition of this opposing group did not allow it to stand for the next election due in 1982. Another factor was its lack of ability to mobilize sectors of the rank-and-file who were discontent with the way the union officials had conducted the latest wage campaign. The membership complained that the union was run by a group of traitors. Instead of supporting an opposing group, many members preferred to disaffiliate (Cf. interview No. 45. On the relationship between member [dis]satisfaction and participation in unions, see Glick et al. [1977]). After some meetings the opposition group decided that it would not be in a position to contest the coming election³⁴.

³⁴ According to the ruling group, the fact that there would be only one slate

"Is an undeniable proof of all bank workers' confidence in us, who have been fighting against injustices practised by the bankers" (Cf. *O Defensor*, July 1982).

The opposition militancy continued, however, and spread to other state-owned banks and even to some private banks. These militants of the opposition opened a current account to receive contributions from bank workers. They also received contributions from other bank workers' unions in the country, which were run by «progressive» officials. Thus, they were able to meet the costs of electoral and wage campaigns. Other unions in Pernambuco also gave them support, as they met frequently in the Metalworkers', the Data Processing Workers', and the Telecommunications Workers' Unions' headquarters.

On the other hand, following pressures from other union officials, the president decided not to stand for the next election due in 1982. Also some of the officials were not satisfied with the way the president had conducted the 1982 wage campaign and negotiations, and put pressure on him to retire. Even before the election his deputy - the leader of the rebellion³⁵ - acted as *de facto* president (Cf. *O Defensor*, Sept. 1982).

An election was held in September and the slate named *Conciliação* (Conciliation) won it having as its president the former deputy-president, or vice-president (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 1 Oct. 1982; and *O Defensor*, Nov. 1982).

The next election was held in 1985. During the campaign for the union's election there was a wage campaign. While the union officials called for meetings at the union's assembly

³⁵ Cf. his open letter to the rank-and-file, *O Defensor*, Nov. 1981, annexe; and *O Defensor Especial* No. 3, Aug. 1985, where it said that:

"Thanks to Severino Hélio [the leader of the rebellion], the vicious circle, which permitted Mr. Júlio César to stay as the boss of the union since 1964, was broken down".

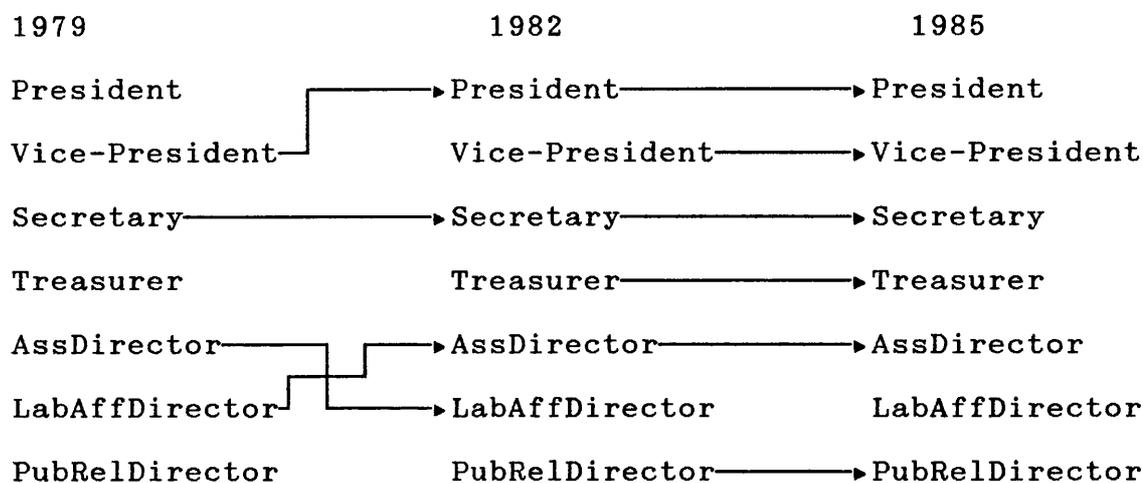
hall, the opposition group promoted rallies and protest marches as a weapon to win the bank workers' demands (*Informe Sindical*, 30 Sept.-6 Oct. 1985)³⁶. For the union's election, while the ruling group registered a slate with only one change (*O Defensor*, Aug. 1985), the opposition group tried to widen their support by forming a slate with employees from the federal *Banco do Brasil* and *Banco do Nordeste do Brasil*, from the Pernambuco owned *Banco do Estado de Pernambuco*, and from some private banks. Its campaign was developed as a street campaign through distribution of pamphlets, posters, and rallies (Interviews Nos. 23 and 45; Cf. *Informe Sindical*, 30 Sept.-6 Oct. 1985; and *Folha Sindical*, Sept. 1985). However, as the work of militants in private banks was quasi-clandestine, it lacked a deeper support from the majority of these banks' employees. Thus, it happened that the opposition group won in the public banks, but was defeated in the private banks. This led to them being beaten in the elections, as the bank workers in the private sector outnumbered those employed in the public sector. The majority of the ruling group was as few as 784 votes (*Informe Sindical*, 30 Sept.-6 Oct. 1985).

Before the 1985 election there was a split in the opposition. A group decided to try an alliance with the ruling group and to oppose it «from inside», while another one decided that it should continue as an opposition group fighting the ruling group through the organization of the

³⁶ Meanwhile, through the union newspaper, the union officials accused the opposition group of being bankers' agents provocateurs (See *O Defensor*, June 1985).

grassroots (Interviews Nos. 23 and 47)³⁷.

FIGURE 4.1. BANK WORKERS' UNION - ROTATION OF OFFICIALS



Source: Morais

In an election whose features were violence and accusations of fraud against the ruling group, the opposition finally defeated, in 1988, the group that had been ruling the union since 1965. It was necessary to hold a second ballot because the opposition did not have a clear majority in the first poll. The opposition group's slate was based mainly on state-owned banks because of the reasons already mentioned, that is, the attitudes of private banks employers towards their employees willing to take part in an opposition slate. Twenty-one out of the new 24 officials are state owned banks' employees. The union's executive is formed by seven officials. Only one official out of these seven unionists is a private bank employee.

³⁷ The split of opposition groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s because of disagreements on strategies to take over the unions seems to have been a wider phenomenon in Brazil. See M.H.M. Alves [1984:82] for details.

3.2. The Private Schools Teachers' Union

The data on the Private Schools Teachers' Union shows that, in the period before 1964, there was a group which maintained power without many changes. There is no data available for the boards of directors in the 1940s. This data is only available from 1951. This first group was reelected in 1953, but not in 1955. Unfortunately I do not have data indicating precisely either if it was defeated in a contested election or if it did not stand for the election. The same is true for the 1957 election when a new group took over power and ran the union up to April 1964. A superficial analysis of boards of directors during this time shows that, as in case of the Bank Workers' Union, only small changes occurred. However, once again these changes seem to have been due to factors others than elections. In each election held between 1957 and 1964 - a total of 4 - only one official decided not to stand for the next election. During this time the union was run by a very simple board with as few as three people: a president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

From the 1957 election on a group seems to have established control over the union and dominated it until 1964. This rule was finished on April 13th 1964 when the military intervened in the union and appointed a *junta* to run the union's affairs. This board was formed by the treasurer of the board that had been dismissed (Joaquim Caldas), acting as secretary; the secretary of the union during the terms from 1957 up to 1961 (Alcindo T. de Oliveira), acting as president; plus the appointment of an official as caretaker of the union's finances (Alto Nadler). It seems that the intervention

was a measure aimed chiefly against the union's president.

None of the appointed directors disputed the election which was held on October 23rd 1965. The new officials then elected did not dispute the elections of 1967 and a new group took over the union. This group also won the 1970 and 1973 elections without any dispute. At that time, the union still kept to the very simple organizational structure of the 1940-50s.

On September 19th 1974, this union was once again subject to intervention by the government for reasons of financial corruption. The new board of directors appointed by the government completed the term due to finish in 1976 and oversaw a new election on March 12th 1976. The official appointed as secretary during the second intervention stood for this election contesting the post of secretary. His slate won what was an undisputed election. The «new» officials were not different from the «old» ones in terms of ideological beliefs. They ran over the union in the same way the «old» officials had done, that is, as a union that was supposed to give its rank-and-file social and medical assistance. There was no discussion about wage agreements as these officials (had to) accept(ed) the role of the government in establishing such increases.

There was no challenge for the election held in 1979. However, some signs of dissatisfaction among some militants started to appear. This began when the union officials called for an assembly for teachers to discuss the 1979 wage increase (Cf. Union minutes, 10 June 1980; and 13 Jan. 1981). Since 1978 some teachers had been meeting to discuss the union situation and were willing to oppose its officials (Mendonça

& Medeiros [1989:8-10]). This group was not a single one in ideological terms. It was formed by militants of different political persuasions: there were Marxists and Trotskyists alike (Interviews Nos. 38 and 52). They had thought of disputing the union elections of 1979, but they were not able to register their slate due to some specific aspects of the labour legislation they did not know.

After the 1979 election campaign, this group split, dividing into basically two factions in 1980. It seems this was due to still unresolved discussions on the Stalinist inheritance of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) (Interview No. 52).

For the 1982 union's elections the opposition group was definitely split due to disagreements about how to win the union (Interviews Nos. 38, 40 and 52). As had occurred in the case of the Bank Workers' Union, some militants³⁸ believed the best strategy to be an alliance with the ruling group in order to take over the union «from inside». According to them, if they succeeded, before the 1985 election they would manage to throw the *pelegos* out and integrate other opposing, left-wing factions. On the other hand, another faction, mainly formed by Trotskyists, thought that "it was necessary to immediately cut all links with the «old» unionism to build a new, democratic unionism".

Moreover, the union's president was also willing to compromise. The communists were then able to set up an alliance with the ruling officials and launched a slate on

³⁸ These militants were communists linked to the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), and the Revolutionary Movement 8th October (MR-8).

which the key post of president was to be retained by the «old guard», while the posts of vice-president and secretary were to be held by the communists. Meanwhile, the Trotskyists launched their own slate. Even before the results were known, the Trotskyists denounced what they called «electoral manoeuvres». According to the labour law No. 3,437 of December 1974, articles 22 and 85, the union's president should have informed the Regional Labour Office (DRT), before the election, the route of itinerant ballot-boxes, which he did not. The labour office accepted the denunciation and the election was invalidated. Finally, the slate of the communists and the «old guard» managed to win the second round (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 1, 8 and 9 Feb. 1982). The former opposition group was then in an unusual situation: part of it was running the union, while the rest was opposing it.

The strategy put forward by the communists was only partially successful. In fact, before the 1985 election they managed to leave the «old guard» outside their slate, but did not succeed in establishing an alliance with the Trotskyists. The «old guard» was unable to form a slate of their own and the left-wing factions once again went divided to the ballot, the Trotskyists being defeated.

In spite of all efforts, the internal dispute between these factions continued. By October 1985 the officials linked to the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and the Revolutionary Movement 8th October (MR-8) conceived a plan through which all union officials would resign from their posts. According to the union's constitution, if this happened it would mean a «collective resignation». Therefore, new elections would have to take place. The strategy of these officials would then be

to form only one slate integrating militants of all political persuasions (*Informe Sindical*, 11-17 Nov. 1985). In fact, they resigned, but the officials linked to the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) did not, which did not characterize a «collective resignation» (*Informe Sindical*, 28 Oct.-3 Nov. 1985; Interviews Nos. 38 and 52). In this case, the union's constitution ordered only a general assembly of the membership to take place and the vacant posts to be completed through appointment during the meeting by a show of hands. The Trotskyist militants managed to get appointed during the meeting and the union was then to be ruled by an alliance of this persuasion together with the militants of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB). Finally, these factions managed to reintegrate the militants of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) for the 1988 election, which resulted in an uncontested election. Since then the union has been ruled by an alliance formed by the Trotskyists, and militants of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) and Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), in which the former have a majority.

3.3. The Metalworkers' Union

The process of internal politics in the Metalworkers' Union is somehow clearer. The first president was appointed by a union general assembly in 1937 (Union minute, 15 Aug. 1937). Then, he himself appointed the first board of directors, which was sanctioned by the general assembly. The president resigned in 1940 due to health problems and his deputy completed this first term. This group did not stand for the next election, which was held in 1941. An uncontested

election took place on December 11th in a general assembly (Union minutes, 9 and 11 Dec. 1941. Cf. Centro Josué de Castro [n/d:20-1] and [1988:19-20]).

In 1943, a member of the union's fiscal council, José Viana, started accusing the executive board of financial corruption and demanded, with the support of seventy members (Union minute, 26 Sept. 1943), a general assembly to take place in order to dismiss the board of directors. The assembly took place with the presence of a number of members of the political police (Union minute, 27 Oct. 1943)³⁹ and ended in a street-fight. One month later, José Viana agreed to withdraw his accusations in order to take back his posts in the union (Union minute, 19 Nov. 1943). As a result of the agreement, another member, who had been responsible for collecting signatures among his fellow-workers for the petition to call the assembly, was expelled from the union (Union minute, 19 Nov. 1943).

In 1945, José Viana was himself elected as president through an uncontested election (Union minute, 29 Nov. 1945). He remained as president until 1950 when, for reasons of financial corruption, he was dismissed by the Regional Labour Office (DRT) (Union's file at the Regional Labour Office [DRT], card No. 37; and Union minute, 20 Oct. 1950). When facing the charges he tried to persuade the assembly to ignore them, but the Regional Labour Office (DRT) did not consider his case and appointed João X. da Silva as *interventor*. José

³⁹ According to union documents, it seems that José Viana had been a Political Police's informer (Cf. Centro Josué de Castro [1988:21]). However, according to an official of his group, he was expelled from the union in 1964 by the military because of his close contacts with the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) (Cf. interview No. 6).

Viana continued to participate in the union's life and managed to escape a criminal charge against him. The intervention ended on July 31st 1952 and an election was held in September (Union's file at the Regional Labour Office [DRT], card No. 31/1). The *interventor* was elected as president and José Viana as secretary. On this board there was also an official who was to control the union for the next two and a half decades: José Calixto Ramos. From 1954 up to 1964 José Viana managed to be re-elected every two years as president of the union with small changes in the composition of the executive board. During this period, the only contested election took place in 1954, but Viana was elected with 58% of the votes (Union minute, 2 Aug. 1954).

In April 1964 the union was intervened in by the military and José Viana was expelled from it (Ministry of Labour, decree No. 83, 13 April 1964). He was not allowed to stand for the next election held in 1965. Instead, one official of his group - José Calixto Ramos (Union minute, 12 Aug. 1965; Centro Josué de Castro [1988:36]; and interview No. 6) - was elected and dominated the union up to 1981. José Viana never returned to the union's life. During this period no contested election existed in this union and the changes that occurred in the union's governing body were due to personal reasons or rotation of leaders.

In 1974, Calixto Ramos was elected vice-president of the National Confederation of Industrial Workers (CNTI) and had to leave for Brasília. In the 1975 union election he stood for secretary in order to continue performing his duties in Brasília. He stood only for a minor post in the 1978 election. However, he himself appointed the members of his group's slate

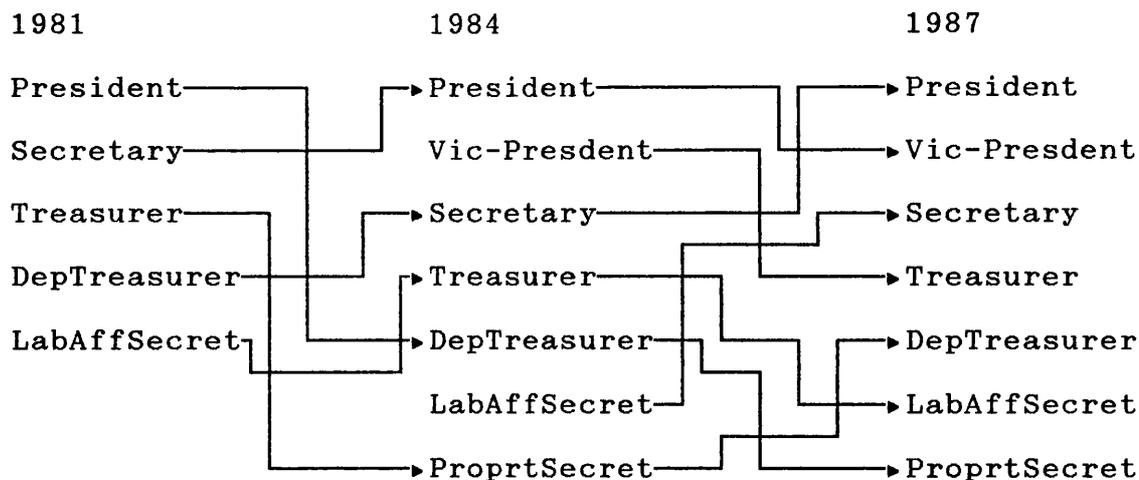
(Interview No. 6).

However, a group of young metalworkers linked to the Catholic Church began to meet regularly. These militants formed an opposition group, which in 1981 won the union's elections. At the beginning they did not constitute an opposition group to the officials of the Metalworkers' Union, for they used only to meet other fellow workers from other economic sectors in order to discuss common problems.

In 1974, they created a clandestine group at the steel plant *SOCIC* (For a similar case in the *ABC paulista* region, see Alves [1989:49-50]). They used to discuss labour problems and even formed a small library with books about workers' fights and the labour movement (Cf. interview No. 7). They also organized a small strike without the union's support at a time when organized labour resistance still faced hard repression.

Only in 1978 did they appear as a more organized group. In this year they began to attend the union's meetings, but were unable to form a slate to compete in the union's elections. In 1979, they created a newspaper called *Zé Ferrugem* through which they were able to criticize the union officials' high wages, for instance. At the same time, they were involved in the formation of an inter-union organization to promote demonstrations, rallies, and to fight those unionists known as *pelegos*. Finally, in 1981 they won the union's election, with a majority of 506 votes (Centro Josué de Castro [1988:39-45]; Union minute, 23 April 1981; *O Eletricitário*, June 1981; and interviews Nos. 5, 8, 11 and 12).

FIGURE 4.2. METALWORKERS' UNION - ROTATION OF OFFICIALS



Source: Morais

These two groups clashed again in 1984 and Calixto Ramos's group was once again defeated. The radical officials won 80% of the votes, with a majority of 2,250 votes (Union minute, 5 April 1984; interview No. 6; *Zé Ferrugem Metalúrgico*, no month, 1984; Centro Josué de Castro [1988:53]; and *Folha Sindical*, July 1984 and May 1985). It is worth noting that however isolated this fact may be, it seems to lend support to Hill's and Martin's remarks about the significance of closeness of elections. In fact, although the radical unionists won 80% of the votes, this seems to indicate the incompetence of the «old» unionists rather than the establishment of an oligarchy. As stressed above, the «old» unionists represented that sort of unionism non-responsive to the workplace. Therefore, it is difficult to see how the membership might have voted differently.

Another election was held in 1987, but without contest. The changes that have occurred since 1981 have been due to

internal political processes in which some officials stood down, according to them, "to renew the leadership".

3.4. The Urban Workers' Union

The data about the Urban Workers' Union shows a very low turnover of leaders. Apart from the 1980 election, other changes were caused either by external factors (state interventions) or by rotation of posts, or individual decisions not to stand. In fact, the first election was held in 1955, but the officials did not contest the next election in 1957. Instead, a new group was elected and dominated the union until 1964. Four elections were held between 1957 and 1964 and the changes that occurred were due to the factors just mentioned above. Indeed, apart from the union's president, the other officials moved from office to office without real changes. The new officials who appeared in the board of directors during these years were few in number.

As with many other unions in the country, this union was subject to intervention by the military in 1964. Fernando G. de Melo was appointed to run the union's affairs until November 1964, when the military appointed a three-men *junta* to run the union's affairs until June 1965, when they oversaw an election. The members of this *junta* stood for this election, which went uncontested. They did not stand for the 1967 election and a new group took over the union, without contest once again. This group was re-elected in 1969, but now they faced another group. However, in November 1970 the government intervened in the union again. An inquiry into the electoral process showed that the ruling group had rigged the

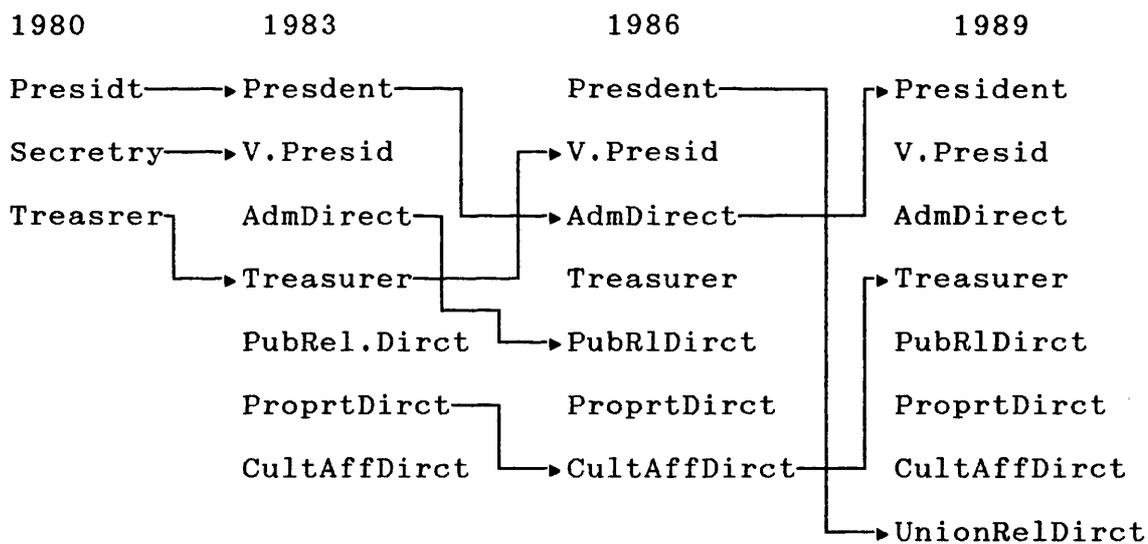
election. The group was dismissed and an *interventor* - Antônio B. de Souza - was appointed. He run the union until 1974, when an election was held. The *interventor* formed a slate of his own and won an uncontested election. However, he did not stand for the 1977 election and his deputy was then elected as president.

A new election was due in 1980. Nevertheless, the ruling group started facing growing opposition from mid-1979. A group of radical militants, many of them linked to the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), managed to be elected as members of the wage committee, from which they opposed the ruling group (Cf. Union minutes, 21 and 26 Sept.; and 18 Oct. 1979; *Jornal do Comércio*, 15 Sept. 1979; and interview No. 33). Three groups contested this election (Union minute, 19 Sept. 1980), in which the radical militants were elected (*O Eletricitário*, Feb. 1981). Ever since then this group has been re-elected.

The «old guard» disappeared, but this new group has been facing growing opposition of militants of a political faction linked to the Workers' Party (PT) (Interview No. 46). They clashed for the first time in the 1986 election (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 3 Oct. 1986; *O Eletricitário*, Oct. 1986; and *Informe Sindical*, 29 Sept.-5 Oct. 1986) and again in 1989 (*Informe Sindical*, Aug.; Oct.; and Nov. 1989). The 1989 election also witnessed a split in the ruling group. The union's vice-president for the 1986-89 term was a member of a minor political faction, which decided to pull out from the coalition and contest the election with a slate of their own (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, Nov. 1989; and their electoral manifesto *Movimento Unidade & Compromisso*, 1989).

This new group accused both the union officials and the opposition group linked to the Workers' Party (PT) of wishing to transform the union into a party appendage. According to them, the union officials had subordinated the union's interests to the interests of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). On the other hand, they said that the militants of the Workers' Party (PT) were willing to impose their party view on the union regardless of the workers' plurality of views and beliefs⁴⁰. However, many of its own members were linked to the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) and to the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB).

FIGURE 4.3. URBAN WORKERS' UNION - ROTATION OF OFFICIALS



Source: Morais

⁴⁰ Several union electoral pamphlets. Interestingly enough, this third group's slate was called *Unidade e Compromisso* (Unity and Promise). Some of its members had been participating in the union's board of directors since 1980. However, as I said above, they disagreed with the group linked to the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). On the other hand, their group's name suggests that they shared, to some extent, the communist officials' view on the issue about unity versus pluralism in union structure.

There had to be a run off between the slate of the ruling group and the slate formed by the third group. The former won this 1989 election (*Informe Sindical*, Nov. 1989).

3.5. The Pernambuco State Schools Teachers' Association

The data on the Pernambuco State Schools Teachers' Association also shows a very low turnover of leaders. Its first president, Adegilson Cavalcanti, was elected in 1967 and re-elected in 1969. He did not stand for the 1971 election and his deputy was elected as president (APENOPE [1974:1]). The nucleus of power in this association - the president, the secretary, and the treasurer - run it until 1979 and the changes that occurred during this period were due to rotations among the officials themselves (APENOPE [n/d:1]).

A major change occurred in 1979. As described in chapter II, during the wage campaign of that year, the association's president - Leônidas F. de Lima - was accused by some teachers of not pursuing the rank-and-file's proper interests. Instead, according to them, he tried to satisfy the state government's aims when he seized the keys of the union's headquarters in order to avoid a meeting at which a wage increase would be discussed (*Jornal do Comércio*, 27 and 29 May 1979).

These facts coincided with the election of that year. However, before the election the president was dismissed by an assembly after being accused of financial corruption (*Jornal do Comércio*, 17 June 1979; and interview No. 22)⁴¹.

⁴¹ The same fact happened in the Telecommunications Workers' Union, in 1983, when its president was also accused by the opposition of seizing the keys of the union's headquarters to avoid a general assembly in which wage demands

The leaders of the rebellion were then elected, without contest, to run the association. Leônidas F. de Lima's group disappeared as a political faction inside the association, which has ever since been run by the same group which took power in 1979. The only real change affecting the political structure of the association occurred in 1980 when the Secretary for Education of Pernambuco state dismissed its president from his job as a state school teacher (Interview No. 27; *Boletim Informativo APENOPE*, Nov. 1981; APENOPE [n/d: 1]; and *Diário de Pernambuco*, 1 Dec. 1981). Although the association continued to challenge the government's decision up to 1985 by allowing him to be a member of the union's executive board, this meant that without any longer having a job in this trade, he could not continue to be the association's president or even a member of it. After that, no major changes occurred during this period, in which 6 elections took place. Only 2 of these elections were contested - in 1987 and 1989 (*Boletim Informativo APENOPE*, Oct. 1982; July-Sept. 1986; and July-Aug. 1987; *Boletim da CUT*, July 1985; and Oct. 1985; and *Folha Sindical*, Sept. 1985).

The group that has ruled over the union is linked to the Workers' Party (PT) and has been facing the opposition of a faction formed by anarchists and communists. This faction is also linked to the Workers' Party (PT) and major disagreements between them seem to be about how to run the union, for, as expected, the anarchists and communists have been demanding a collegiate government, and a major role to be played by the rank-and-file in the decisions taken by the board of directors

would be discussed. Later the assembly dismissed him (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 2 and 19 July 1983).

(*Informe Sindical*, July and Aug. 1989; and interview No. 27).

According to them, the association should be run by a collegiate of officials without a formal president. It has also criticized the ruling group for preferring negotiation to mobilization of the rank-and-file. However, this group has been unable to win any election in the association. In the 1989 elections they were able to win 34.6% of the votes (*Informe Sindical*, Aug. 1989). Even when this association merged with two other associations representing state school staff in order to form a union in 1990 its officials were able to win the votes of the majority of educational workers and took over the most of the offices in the new union.

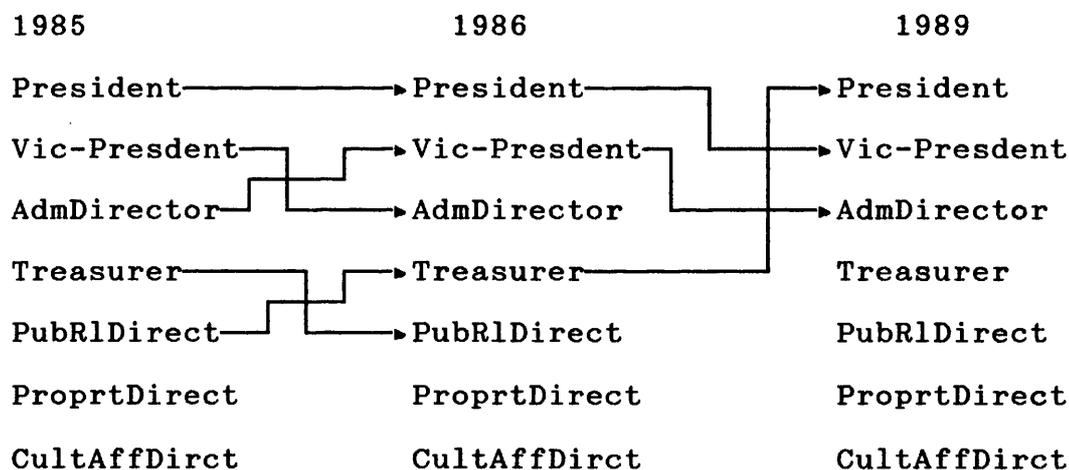
3.6. The Data Processing Workers' Union

The Data Processing Workers' Union is the most recently formed of the unions in my sample. It was founded in 1985 (Union minute, 2 Oct. 1985) and since then only 3 elections have taken place, having been held in 1985, 1986 and 1989. However, in order to have a better understanding of the internal political process in this union I have decided to look back from 1979 when some militants decided to create a professional association which later became the union.

Some left-wing militants started meeting regularly in order to create an association to defend their rights before their employers (Cf. interviews Nos. 28 and 35). This association evolved and in 1985 it was transformed into a union. During the period from 1979 to 1985 the association was run by the same political group which had founded it. When the union was founded some changes occurred in its structure. The

government's decree which allowed the creation of this union defined it as representative of workers in the data processing industry. This was a specificity which did not allow all data processing workers to join the union. In other words, those data processing workers employed by firms whose main economic activity was not data processing services could not join the union. Therefore, some workers who were officials of the association and did not fit such a condition were not able to be members of this union. Thus, when the union was founded the same group that had run the association continued to run it without many changes (*Informe Sindical*, July 1989). Since 1979 this labour organization - either as an association or as a union - has never faced a contested election (Cf. interview No. 24).

FIGURE 4.4. DATA PROCESSING WORKERS' UNION - ROTATION OF OFFICIALS



Source: Morais

The changes that occurred were: 1) those arising from the specificity of the law; 2) those due to rotation of the officials through the posts; 3) those due to individual

decisions not to stand for the next election; 4) those due to constitutional demands for the renewal of officials; and 5) those due to a pre-election process of selection of candidates. This last form of change is stressed in an electoral pamphlet of 1989:

"The *UNIDADE NA LUTA* (Unity through Struggle) slate was formed during a democratic process in which union members discussed and chose the members of the slate and its electoral program. This slate represents a renovation of 2/3, for only eight officials are candidates to re-election" (Electoral pamphlet *Chapa 1: Unidade na Luta* [1989]).

A union official adds:

"In 1989, we opted for renewing the board of directors by replacing as many officials as we could. So, in the board elected in 1989 only 8 out of 24 were members of the former board, what means a renewal of 2/3 in the board of directors" (Interview No. 35).

4. INDICATORS OF UNION DEMOCRACY

I will not enter into a theoretical and philosophical discussion about a precise definition of democracy. Instead, in this section, I will use the indicators outlined in section 2 taken from Lipset et al. [1977] and Edelstein & Warner [1975] and utilized elsewhere (Cf. footnote 46. See also Anderson [1978]) to test the electoral model in order to broaden our understanding of how far it actually allows us to assess the degree of democracy in trade unions.

The analysis carried out here to test the electoral model differs from the analysis of Mexican trade unions undertaken by Roxborough. In fact, he used data related only to elections for the post of general secretary in those unions, for

"This is the most important post, and if this post does not change hands, it is unlikely that other changes in

the composition of the Executive Committee will be of great relevance" (Roxborough [1984:134]).

As there are no elections for individual posts in Brazilian trade unions, my data refers to elections in which all posts are contested by a slate or slates constituted by a number of union members. Some posts of course are politically more important than others. For instance, the posts of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer are the most important in the unions' structure and which control their political, administrative, physical, and financial resources. However, these posts are not contested one by one. Instead, a group (or groups) constitute a slate to contest all posts. This also means that the indicator «turnover of leaders» is, in this analysis, replaced by «turnover of the incumbent group». Data on rotation of union officials has been supplied in section 3 of this chapter.

Although I have proceeded a historical analysis of the unions' internal politics for a period of over forty years, the statistical data used below refers only to the period between 1978 and 1989. This is so for two reasons: firstly, the objective of the work in general and of the chapter in particular is to assess the changes that have been occurring in union politics since 1978; and secondly, the data referred to the period pre-1978 is marked by great discontinuity, which does not enable me to make a comparative analysis of different periods.

From 1978 up to 1989 26 elections were held in the unions I am investigating. Twelve out of these elections were contested, what means a ratio of 0.46. As described above no contested elections were held in these unions from 1964 up to

1978, with an exception in the case of the Urban Workers' Union in 1970. If we compare these two periods using only this indicator, then we can say that these unions have become more democratic. This might also mean that the emergence of the militant groups calling for changes in the unions' internal politics provoked some signs of a rebirth of union democracy.

Nevertheless, if the emergence of new militants provoked an increase in the number of contested elections, the data shows that more than 50% of all elections went uncontested. Perhaps this means, for most of the unions, that while the left-wing leaders took them over and consolidated their power, the «old guard» disappeared as a political faction. Besides, even on the left, new groups do not appear to have consolidated themselves as opposing groups in most of the unions.

On the other hand, in only 3 out of 12 contested ballots the opposition was able to win the elections. This means that the ratio of turnover of incumbent groups due to electoral defeat is 0.25. However, this phenomenon must be detailed. Firstly, in all 3 cases left-wing groups won the elections, which means that once these groups have taken power they have been unbeaten. Secondly, the way the opposition took power in both the Teachers' Union and Association is not represented in these cases. In fact, the cases only refer to winning power through contested elections. As referred to above, in the Teachers' Union the opposition was able to take power, first, through an alliance, and then through appointment during a general assembly. In the case of the Teachers' Association, the «old guard» was dismissed by a general assembly before the opposition took it over. On the other hand, the Data

Processing Workers' Union was founded and has been run by left-wing militants which means that this union, too, must be considered outside those cases of left-wing groups taking over unions through contested elections.

TABLE 4.1. UNION ELECTIONS, 1978-89⁴²

Union	No. of Elections	No. of Contested Elections	Ratio of Contested /Non-Contested Elections	Incumbent Groups Stands & is Defeated (Frequency)	Incumbent Group is Re-elected (Frequency)	Re-election as a Ratio of all Elections	Accusation of Electoral Fraud (Frequency)
Teachers' Union	4	2	0.50	0	4*	1	1
Data Processing Workers' Union**	5	0	0	0	5	1	0
Teachers' Association	5	2	0.40	0	4	0.80	0
Metalworkers' Union	4	2	0.50	1	3	0.75	0
Urban Workers' Union	4	3	0.75	1	3	0.75	0
Bank workers' Union	4	3	0.75	1	3	0.75	3

Source: Morais

(*) In the 1982 election the ruling group formed an alliance with an opposing group.

(**) The number of elections also refers to those held between 1979 and 1985 in the Data Processing Workers' Association. From 1979 to 1989 there were several elections, but I left two out because they occurred through a show of hands during general meetings and the boards then elected had a temporary character.

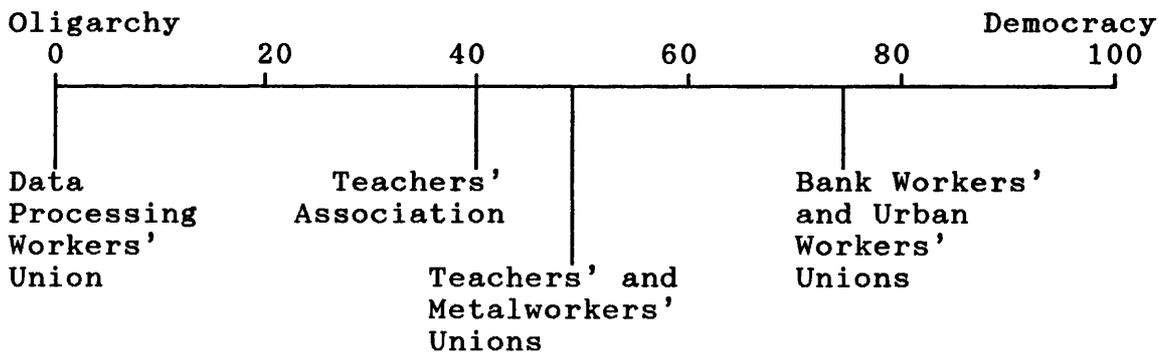
This data also shows that though the degree of democracy

⁴² The model for this table and the next one was set up by Roxborough [1984:134 and 139] and Thompson & Roxborough [1982:206 and 208].

has increased inside unions in Pernambuco, at least a formal democracy has not been fully established in union life.

According to the electoral model I am testing, the first indicator of democracy - the existence of contested elections - shows that the Urban Workers' and the Bank Workers' Unions are the most democratic with a high ratio of contested elections. The Teachers' and Metalworkers' Unions are an intermediary case with half the elections having been contested. The Data Processing Workers' Union could be labelled as oligarchic, for no contested elections have ever been held there. The case of the Teachers' Association is unclear. Although it is not as oligarchic as the Data Processing Workers' Union, it cannot be labelled a democratic union in the same way as the Urban Workers' and the Bank Workers' Unions. Nor is it an intermediary case in the way both the Teachers' and Metalworkers' Unions are. These cases could be represented graphically as follows:

FIGURE 4.5. CONTESTED ELECTIONS (%)



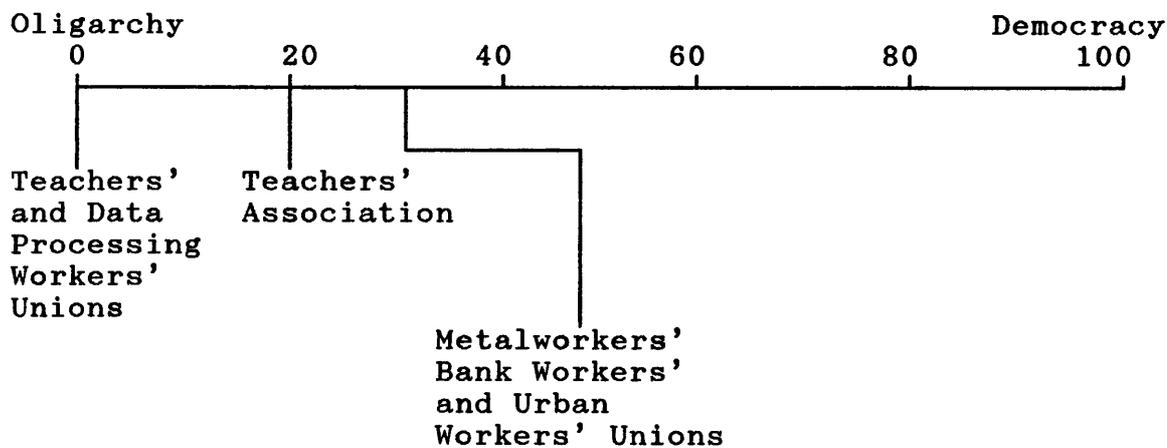
Although the data on the turnover of incumbent groups - the second indicator of democracy - does not indicate a great deal of democracy, it is to some extent consistent with the

first indicator. First of all, the ratio of turnover is the highest for the cases of the Urban Workers', the Bank Workers', and the Metalworkers' Unions (see column 7 above). This is consistent for both the cases of the Urban Workers' and the Bank Workers' Unions and to some extent for the case of the Metalworkers' Union. They can be said to be the less oligarchic unions of the sample. Secondly, the data is also consistent for the case of the Data Processing Workers' Union. As no contested elections have ever been held in this union and the incumbent group has been re-elected since its inception, the two indicators are in perfect correlation. On the other hand, to some extent, the data is also consistent with the case of the Teachers' Association considered by itself. The Teachers Association's case is unclear, according to the first indicator, and its ratio of re-election is halfway between the extreme case of the Data Processing Workers' Union and the cases of the Urban Workers' and the Bank Workers' Unions. So far, these two indicators do not give us a clear idea of the degree of democracy, though the second indicator seems to point to the existence of an oligarchy.

On the other hand, this second indicator is not fully consistent in the case of the Teachers' Union. This is truer when we compare it with the Teachers' Association. The first indicator shows that the Teachers' Union, together with the Metalworkers' Union, constitutes an intermediary case with a ratio of contested elections higher than the Teachers' Association's ratio of contested elections. However, the second indicator shows that the ratio of re-election in relation to all elections held in the period for this union is 1.0, which means that opposing groups have never been able

to win contested elections. In other words, this characterizes an oligarchy. The explanation for this apparent contradiction might well be that, in this union, the «old guard» was removed from office, not directly through elections, but through a complex web of alliances between the various factions acting inside this union. Therefore, the changes that occurred in the union's leadership cannot be detected through the electoral model⁴³. Thus, although the statistical indicator does not reveal it, changes, which occurred in the leadership of the Metalworkers', the Bank Workers' and the Urban Workers' Unions, also occurred in the structure of power of the Teachers' Union.

FIGURE 4.6. TURNOVER OF INCUMBENT GROUPS (%)



The third indicator of union democracy is the closeness of elections. According to the electoral model, if the opposition is strong enough to influence a union's policies and strategies this probably means that there is a good deal of democracy within the union. The closeness of elections

⁴³ I will analyse other changes in union leadership and aspects of union democracy that cannot be assessed through this model in the next section of this chapter.

would, therefore, indicate how successful the opposition is when addressing important issues by receiving a given amount of support, i.e., votes, from the rank-and-file during elections.

Although a group may well win several elections over a given period either because it has no opposition or through a large majority without being characterized as an oligarchy, for example in the case of highly popular leaders, according to the electoral model, this can be seen as an extreme example which does not constitute the rule nor invalidate the use of closeness of elections as an indicator of democracy.

TABLE 4.2. CLOSENESS OF ELECTIONS

UNIONS	Average Winning Vote (%)	No. of Elections Considered
Teachers' Union	62.8	2
Teachers' Assoc.	81.0	3
Metalwork. Union	67.9	2
Urban Work.Union ⁴⁴	56.0	2
Bank Work. Union	52.9	2
Dta Proc.W.Union	94.2	3

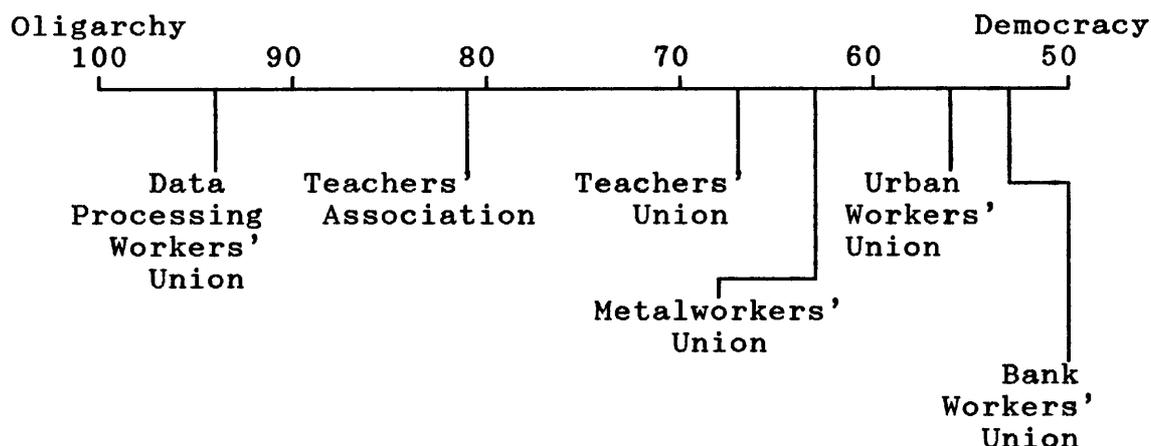
Source: Morais

The statistical data in this table gives support to the two indicators I have tested so far. According to these

⁴⁴ Two ballots took place during the 1989 election. First, three slates contested it and the results in terms of votes were as follows: Slate 1, 37.9%; Slate 2, 30.5%; and Slate 3, 30.9%. As none of them was able to win a clear majority of 50% plus one vote, there was then a second ballot with slates 1 and 3. For my calculations I have used only the result of the second ballot. I did the same in relation to the Bank Workers' Union which faced two ballots in 1988 for the same reasons.

previous indicators, the Bank Workers' and the Urban Workers' Unions are the most democratic unions in this sample, which is consistent with the results set up in the table above. They indicate, in these 2 unions, that when an opposition group contested an election they were able to address basic issues of the union's life to the rank-and-file. On the other hand, the data is fully consistent with what the indicators demonstrate in relation to the case of the Data Processing Workers' Union. The average winning vote in this union shows no sign of any opposition as demonstrated by the two former indicators. Finally, the range of average winning votes in each of these unions can be displayed in a way in which the most democratic unions - the Bank Workers' and the Urban Workers' - occupy an extreme near 50%, while the most oligarchic union - the Data Processing Workers' - occupies another extreme near 100%, with the Metalworkers' and Teachers' Unions constituting an intermediary case with the Teachers' Association a still unclear case. In short, this indicator is fully consistent with the findings arising from the test of the first indicator - existence of contested elections.

FIGURE 4.7. CLOSENESS OF ELECTIONS (%)



The fourth indicator of union democracy refers to the existence of a permanent opposition. I have already pointed out some features of internal politics in section 3 of this chapter. The only union with a permanent opposition from 1978 up to 1988 was the Bank Workers'. In fact, the left-wing opposition formed in 1978-79 has disputed every election since then, apart from the 1982 election. Moreover, it acted over these years as an organized opposition calling for meetings and assemblies, organizing strikes and demonstrations, and participating in negotiations and collective agreements. As this opposition group won the 1988 election, the role of the «old guard» is somehow unclear in the period post-1988. I have no evidence so far whether they have been able to constitute an opposition group against the new left-wing officials⁴⁵.

The case of the Urban Workers' Union is different. The left-wing opposition was able to defeat the «old guard» as

⁴⁵ One of the leading «old guard» officials was elected in 1990 as a Pernambuco state deputy and is unlikely to go back to the internal disputes of the union. Furthermore, the union's president between 1982 and 1988 told me, in a personal communication, that he was due to retire in 1991 and was no longer willing to be involved in union politics.

early as 1980. The conservative group disappeared as a political faction following its defeat and was not replaced by any other faction. Following the split of the Brazilian labour movement into 2 opposing factions, militants linked to the Workers' Party (PT) and Workers' United Central (CUT) established themselves as an opposition and disputed the 1986 and 1989 elections and have been acting since then as an organized faction in the union. Finally, in 1989 the ruling group also split into 2 factions. Four union officials decided to leave and formed another slate to dispute the 1989 election. However, in spite of their success in that election, when they were runner-up and contested a second ballot, there is no evidence to say that they will constitute an organized opposition in the way that the militants of the Workers' United Central (CUT) do.

Although the case of the Teachers' Association is unclear under the 3 indicators used so far, its situation under the fourth indicator is close to the Urban Workers' Union. In 1979, the conservative president was forced out of the association and replaced by left-wing militants. There was then a gap from this year up to 1987 without any contested election or signs of an opposition. In 1987, some anarchists and communists formed a slate to dispute the election, which they did again in 1989. However, there is no evidence either that they have been acting as an organized faction in the same way as the opposition groups of the Urban Workers' and the Bank Workers' (before 1988) Unions, or that they have been able to influence the association's strategies and policies as in the case of the Bank Workers' Union.

The case of the Metalworkers' Union illustrates another

path. It is unique in the way that the «old guard» was able to survive their first defeat to the left-wing opposition. In fact, in most of the unions conservative unionists disappeared as a political faction after being defeated by left-wing militants. However, in this union the «old guard» was able to keep itself organized and contested the 1984 election. After that they disappeared and no opposing groups have emerged in this union.

Left-wing militants were also able to take over the Teachers' Union. Nevertheless, as I have already pointed out, this happened through a number of alliances, coups and counter-coups. Left-wing militants were already able to influence the discussion about wage demands as early as 1979. Following this wage campaign they split into two factions, as already described. The militants linked to the Workers' Party (PT) and Workers' United Central (CUT) continued to be an opposition group up to 1985 when they managed to gain appointments to some posts of the union. Signs of groups acting as an organized opposition disappeared in 1987 when all factions merged into a single alliance, which has run the union since then.

The Data Processing Workers' Union represents an extreme case where no opposition has ever emerged. Since 1979 when militants founded an association, which was transformed into a union in 1984, all left-wing factions have been able to maintain an alliance to run the union. This does not, of course, signify a smooth process without internal divisions. During the discussions on transforming the association into a union, a faction

"wanted it to be a *pelego* union, a middle-class biased

union. However, these people were defeated during the discussions by CUT's militants and pulled out of the union" (Interview No. 24. Cf. interview No. 35).

However, this does not affect the findings displayed so far about the dynamics of internal politics in this union, according to the electoral model.

5. THE ENVIRONMENT FOR UNION DEMOCRACY

As pointed out above, there are some criticisms of the electoral model. I myself pointed out some theoretical aspects of internal union politics which are not taken into consideration by the electoral model.

I will take the general meaning of these criticisms as a starting point for analysis of other aspects of internal politics in the unions that I am investigating. The indicators used so far in section 4 give us a clear picture of the state of internal union politics in terms of the strength of different political factions only when they contest elections. However, in spite of the internal consistency these indicators may show, they do not allow us to understand the dynamics of «submerged» politics translated, for instance, into pacts and alliances which cannot be detected by the electoral model; nor do they allow us to analyse the actual conditions (for instance, violence, threats, insults, accusations, dismissals, etc.) under which opposing groups exist and act. Finally, they do not allow us to understand the very process through which the groups receive support, i.e., the process of policy making and delivery of goods.

Therefore, in this section, I intend to analyse other aspects of internal politics in order to draw a more balanced

view of internal politics in these unions. This section is divided into four subsections as follows:

5.1. Attitudes Towards Opposing Groups

Patterns of democracy do not evolve only from the performances of the different political factions in elections, but also from the extent to which ruling groups are willing to tolerate opposition. Martin [1987:229] says that:

"The political culture - the complex of values, beliefs and emotional attitudes surrounding political institutions - acts as a constraint upon union leaders directly and indirectly through its influence upon membership beliefs about the legitimacy of particular political practices".

This means that sometimes ruling groups, unwilling to see their policies and strategies contested in assemblies or be defeated in elections, may take a tough approach to opposition groups, violence being an extreme case. In other cases, opposition groups are constitutionally allowed to use the union's premises to discuss plans and to organize themselves. Thus, this subsection is mainly related to internal processes by which democracy actually works, as in cases of violence and accusations involving different groups acting inside the unions, and to cases where opposition groups are entitled to use the union's headquarters as a place to meet.

Not all unions have faced problems of violence and/or exchange of serious accusations, or have constitutional clauses obliging ruling groups to accept opposition groups. Therefore, my analysis is based on events which do not involve all unions subject of this investigation. However, these events should not be seen as particularities of some unions'

internal politics, for as political phenomena they can happen in any political organization.

So far the most extreme means of intimidation against opposition groups is the use of various forms of violence. Although the Bank Workers' Union is the most democratic union under the indicators of the electoral model, it has faced an uneasy history of violence since 1979. The opposition was able to challenge the ruling group throughout the 1980s, although this happened through a process in which the opposing and the ruling groups exchanged serious accusations and sometimes had to fight each other physically. As I mentioned above, since 1978 some militants started criticizing the union's president by saying that he was a *pelego* and was not interested in organizing the rank-and-file. The opposition was organized in 1979 and was always an active voice during wage campaigns and collective agreements in the period until 1988. In November 1979 there was a disagreement between the banks and the union about an increase of 22% due to governmental decree No. 6,708/79. The opposition once again accused the union's president of not pursuing the rank-and-file's interests. It put pressure on the union officials during some meetings held to discuss strategies of negotiation. Such meetings were finished when fighting took place amongst members of these two factions during a meeting held in the headquarters of the Weavers' Union (Interviews Nos. 23 and 45).

Violence broke out again during the 1984 wage campaign. A general assembly was held on September 14th in order to choose the members of the wage committee. During the discussions, disagreements developed regarding the role the *Banco do Brasil* employees were to play in this committee. This

was, of course, a disagreement about the participation of opposition militants, for most of them were employees of this bank. Once again violent fighting erupted between the two factions, ending with seven wounded in hospital and most of the others at the nearest police station (Cf. *O Defensor*, July 1985; and *Boletim da CUT*, July 1985)⁴⁶.

The 1986 wage campaign witnessed a union official being attacked by a Workers' United Central (CUT) militant. The ruling and the opposition groups were promoting a demonstration in the city centre when an opposition militant, who was distributing pamphlets, spat in the face of the union's president and attacked him. In turn, another union official attacked the militant. The police had to come in and both were arrested (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 5 April 1986).

The next round of violence took place in the 1988 election⁴⁷. According to one of the radical militants:

"The opposition had to employ some men as a bodyguard to guarantee their physical security" (Interview No. 47).

On the other hand, a newspaper reported that:

"In spite of being a union of middle-class employees, the Bank Workers' Union has been marked by violent electoral and wage campaigns...[Thus], another violent occurrence

⁴⁶ The *O Defensor* issue also published the official document written by the public prosecutor about the nature of corporal injuries produced during the fight. During the 1985 wage campaign an opposition member still reminded the rank-and-file in a rally of the fact that they had been beaten up inside the union's headquarters (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 22 June 1985).

⁴⁷ Denunciations of violence toward opposing groups during elections are also found in other unions which are not being analysed here. During the campaign for the 1986 election in the Construction Workers' Union, for instance, the opposition had to ask the Pernambuco state's Secretary for Public Security for protection. According to the leader of the opposition, members of the ruling group had beaten him and stoned his car (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, 14-29 Oct. 1985; and *Jornal do Comércio*, 13 Nov. 1985).

took place yesterday, this time being against Luiz Sinval, a union's official, who was attacked by off duty policemen" (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 8 Oct. 1988. Cf. *Folha de Pernambuco*, 6 Oct. 1988)⁴⁸.

On the other hand, during processes when ruling groups have to deal with an opposition, be it in electoral campaigns, be it in wage negotiations, severe accusations are published trying to demonstrate either that the opposition is supported by the employers; or that it is formed by corrupt people; or that it is formed by militants with «hidden» objectives.

This last resource was particularly used in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the military were still in power, in order to link the opposition with the «red peril», i.e., the communists. During the 1981 electoral campaign in the Metalworkers' Union the ruling group issued some pamphlets which suggested that the opposition had been trained and was being financed by «external forces». Thus, the opposition,

"Perhaps taken by a feeling of revolt when facing the difficulties due to international and national situations ...has been easily influenced by politicians, ideologists and specialized catechists, who are experts in preaching hate, revolt and discord, and thinks that only through threats and force is that social peace is achieved" (Union pamphlet *Chapa 1 Une os Metalúrgicos* [1981:1]).

Accordingly, the opposition was also portrayed as saying that

"Our group's money comes from another country. We must only direct the workers to strike; to arm themselves for the struggle; to violence and bloodshed. We want struggle, not peace. This is the union opposition" (Union pamphlet *Atenção, Companheiros: Veja o Evangelho da Oposição Sindical* [1981]).

In spite of their efforts, the conservative group was

⁴⁸ The *Folha de Pernambuco* says that a director of the regional Workers' United Central (CUT), plus its own journalist and photographer reporting about this election were beaten up by members of the incumbent group.

defeated. In 1984, these two groups clashed again. Now, during the campaign, the left-wing officials published documents trying to incriminate the conservative candidate for the union's presidency as a corrupt man. The new officials accused him of having sold a Volkswagen Kombi owned by the union for a cheap price, without consulting anybody and without a public auction (Cf. *Zé Ferrugem Metalúrgico*, June 1984). Interestingly enough, the radical officials knew of these facts before the election campaign, but kept them and only released them during the campaign.

The 1985 wage campaign of the Bank Workers' Union was one of the bitterest during the 1980s in terms of exchange of accusations between the ruling group and the opposition. During the campaign the ruling group accused the opposition of being on the employers' side several times. Accordingly, the opposition had signed a «dirty pact» with conservative officials of the Bank Workers' Union Federation to benefit the bankers (Cf. *O Defensor, Edição Extra*, July 1985; *O Defensor, "Editorial"*, July 1985). It was also to blame for trying to split the bank workers, for

"during a wage campaign, trying to do so is to play the bosses' game...All bank workers were amazed by the move of some people who...tried to help the bankers" (*O Defensor: Boletim Especial*, No. 3, Aug. 1985)...[Indeed], "the so-called union opposition is trying to defeat the wage campaign of 30,000 men and women in order to use it as a demagogic electoral platform against the union and the bank workers" (*O Defensor: Boletim Especial*, No. 9, Sept. 1985. Cf. *O Defensor: Boletim Especial*, Nos. 13 and 15, Sept. 1985).

While the Data Processing Workers' Union is oligarchic under the four indicators used above, it is the only union whose constitution guarantees any opposition group the right to use its headquarters for holding its meetings. According

to it,

"The constitution emphasizes the rights of individuals and minorities. They have the right: 1) to see any document produced by the union and/or kept in its archive; 2) to publish in the union's newspaper opinions in disagreement with directors' acts and decisions; 3) to use the union's headquarters to prepare slates for elections, to organize electoral campaigns; 4) to write news for the union's newspapers; 5) to call for any general assembly, even to dismiss union officials; and 6) to attend any meeting of the union's general council" (*Boletim Informativo APPD*, March 1979).

This constitution was written for the Data Processing Workers' Association in 1979 and was adopted by the union with minor alterations in 1985. Although these points do not guarantee the emergence of an opposition, they have been used as a guarantee by different persuasions inside the union to voice their opinions and to hold meetings of their own.

5.2. Union Structure⁴⁹ and Means of Participation:

Committees, Assemblies, and Delegates

In this subsection I provide a description of different levels and channels of participation inside the unions. In some unions such different channels have been established at the workplace not only as a means to strengthen the unions' structure, but also as a means to strengthen union democracy by providing channels of communication through which workers could voice their opinions and demands.

⁴⁹ See Martin [1987:236]. He says:

"The main determinants of the extent to which the formal structure facilitates or hinders the articulation of disagreement are the degree of substructural autonomy and conversely of centralization, the position of full-time vis-à-vis lay officials and the electoral system itself".

Apart from the administrative structure in running union affairs, there are a number of committees to deal with problems arising from the day-to-day. Some of them are permanent as in the case of the health committee of the Data Processing Workers' Union, others are temporary such as the wage committees of most of the unions.

These committees have provided a channel which has been used by different groups to voice their opinions and try to implement their policies. In late 1970s and early 1980s opposing groups used the wage committees to channel what they saw as the true demands of the rank-and-file and to challenge the ruling groups. The opposition in the Metalworkers' Union first appeared as an organized group during the 1979 wage campaign (On the same phenomenon in São Paulo state, see Alves [1989:52-3]). As they put it:

"In 1979 we directed all assemblies during the wage campaign. Even with *pelegos* officials running the union, we were the heads of the process of negotiation" (Interview No. 12)⁵⁰.

During the 1980s the left-wing officials of several unions continued to form wage committees with lay members to participate in the negotiations (Cf., for instance, *Informe Sindical*, 12-18 Aug. 1985). The same holds for most of the cases I am discussing.

The left-wing militants who took over the Urban Workers' Union in 1980 were active members of the wage committee in

⁵⁰ The president of the metal industry employers' union in an interview to the *Jornal do Comércio* (13 Sept. 1979) also pointed out this fact by saying that:

"In that occasion [a general assembly of metalworkers] we realized the existence of a leadership contrary to the union's directors".

1979. In most of the meetings the union's president had to give up conducting the assemblies and the main leader of the opposition directed them (Cf. Union minutes, 3 Aug.; 21 and 28 Sept.; and 18 Oct. 1979). According to a union official:

"We had the initiative of all actions and negotiations. We called and promoted the assemblies, and he [the president] had to accept our actions. He was only there to sign papers" (Interview No. 33).

This allowed some militants to voice their criticisms of the union's president because of his strategy to negotiate with the management during the assemblies held to discuss the negotiations (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 15 and 30 Sept. 1979).

The union minute of August 24th 1979 reads:

"Mr. Paulo Pacheco [a lay member] directed harsh words toward the union's president, Mr. Saturnino J. da Silva, by naming him a *pelego*. He said that the assembly and the [wage] committee could never achieve anything with the president working against the rank-and-file and denouncing workers to the management".

The same strategy was used by left-wing militants in both the Teachers' Union and Association and in the Bank Workers' Union.

"He [the president of the Bank Workers' Union] said that the wage committee elected by the general assembly is formed by members of the opposition who happen to have hidden objectives. They are not interested in signing a wage agreement, for what they want is to promote a strike" (*Jornal do Comércio*, 20 Sept. 1979).

However, as pointed out above, these committees are temporary and usually formed once a year during wage campaigns. During the 1980s most of the unions tried, with different levels of success, to establish workers' committees at the workplace. These committees were not to be branches of the union at the workplace, but representatives of the workers whose main task was to channel demands and complaints arising from the rank-and-file to the union. The distinction is not

only a semantic one, but means that the committees would have a great degree of autonomy in relation to the union. Where unions succeeded in establishing them, the members of such committees were not appointed, but elected. Contrary to the process of electing union officials, militants would stand as individuals and not as members of a slate. In this case, many militants of opposition groups or members with different political beliefs could be elected along with supporters of the union's ruling group, providing a healthy degree of internal democracy (Interview No. 35).

The most extreme case of a committee's autonomy toward the union is that of the Bank Workers' Union. It was created by opposition militants working mainly in the *Banco do Brasil*. This provided the opposition with an organized means to contest the union leadership and to voice different proposals arising from the workplace because

"It was created when we faced the immediate need to organize the workers through bank branches and increase the relationship between employees of different branches; between employees and the union; and between employees and the national leadership of the labour movement" (Interview No. 45).

This also provided a basis for the opposition to participate in the negotiations during wage campaigns (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 12 July 1984) and national meetings of bank workers (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, July 1988). The participation of opposition members in temporary wage committees was made possible through such committees because

"...We were able to make the assembly elect democratic wage committees to discuss with the bankers, for the rank-and-file did not trust the union's officials" (Interview No. 45. Cf. interview No. 47; and *Informe Sindical*, 26 Aug.-1 Sept. 1985).

Both the Data Processing Workers' and the Urban Workers' Unions have succeeded in establishing workers' committees. The former has a network of delegates which provide the basis for the communication between the union and the rank-and-file. After the 1989 wage campaign, for instance, the union praised the existence of such committees as the basis for their success in achieving their demands:

"The workers' committees played an important role, along with the union, in pursuing the best strategy and the organization of the workers" (*Informe Sindical*, July 1989)⁵¹.

On the other hand, when the slate to contest the 1989 election was formed and the unionists had to comply with the union's constitutional obligation to renew, at least, 1/3 of the officials, these committees provided a good source of new and experienced militants to become union officials (See Alves [1989:56-7]; and Humphrey [1979a:78] on the same phenomenon in São Paulo state).

The Urban Workers' Union also has a network of delegates and committees in the three firms where it unionizes its rank-and file. The first delegates were elected in August 1985. Workers were called to elect 24 delegates in the 3 firms (Cf. *O Eletricitário*, Sept.; Oct.; and Nov.-Dec. 1985; and *Informe Sindical*, 26 Aug.-1 Sept. 1985). However, these delegates did not, at first, constitute a workers' committee. Instead, they acted individually representing groups of workers of certain

⁵¹ See also *Informe Sindical*, Aug. 1989, where an official of the Data Processing Workers' Union says that:

"The workers' committees are the best way to organize the workers. Even before we founded the union, we were already structuring and supporting such committees. Now, we support the autonomy of the committees in relation to the union".

sectors of the firms. However, in 1988, a union's general assembly approved of creating the workers' committees (Cf. *Boletim Urbanitário*, 8 Aug. 1988; *Informe Sindical*, July; and Sept. 1988). The assembly decided once again that the committees were to have autonomy in relation to the union, though the union would be a co-ordinator of the committees' actions. Many of the militants of the Workers' Party (PT) who opposed and clashed with the ruling group in the 1986 and 1989 elections are also members of these committees (Cf. Union pamphlet *Oposição Urbanitária 2* [1989]).

Finally, the Metalworkers' Union has not been fully successful in implementing such committees. Although they founded the first workers' committee in the North/Northeast region of the country, it was afterwards disbanded by the management. Also neither the Teachers' Union and Association have been successful in establishing these committees. They have met with tough restrictions and tough answers from the schools' owners and the state government.

5.3. Political/Union Factions and Union Democracy

The image of union democracy drawn by the electoral model is a homogeneous one. If, on the one hand, the union is dominated by an oligarchic group, one is unable to characterize its internal divisions in terms of political/union factions which build up the ruling group. On the other hand, the same holds for the case in which two opposing groups always clash giving the union a democratic life. The two or more groups are depicted as uniform entities without internal divisions. However, as must be clear by now, it has not always

been so. The data used so far has shown that ruling as well as opposition groups are constituted by a number of factions, and that these groups, from time to time, face internal disputes. These internal disputes influence the composition of the groups who contest the union leadership, even in those unions ruled by unopposed groups.

The composition of the national leadership of the Workers' United Central (CUT) has been analysed by Rodrigues. According to him (Rodrigues [1990:21]), the national executive of the Workers' United Central (CUT) elected during its 3rd National Congress in 1988 was formed by 6 factions⁵². The number of members of each faction in the executive body depends on its share of the votes in the election held during the congress. This national picture is reflected, with minor changes, at the regional level and at the level of different unions which are members of the Workers' United Central (CUT)⁵³. This means that both ruling and opposing groups whose unions are affiliated to the Workers' United Central (CUT) face almost the same divisions seen in terms of different groups struggling for hegemony.

⁵² The national executive of the Workers' United Central (CUT) elected in 1988 had 20 members divided as follows: 1) *Articulação* group, 10 members; 2) *Força Socialista* group, 2 members; 3) *Democracia e Luta* group, 1 member; 4) *Unir a Cidade e o Campo* group, 1 member; 5) *Construir a CUT Classista e pela Base* group, 1 member; and 6) *CUT pela Base* group, 5 members. The weekly *Istoé Senhor* (No. 1147, 18 Sept. 1991) reported that during the IV National Congress of the Workers' United Central (CUT) there were 26 political factions fighting for power inside this labour organization. On the mechanism based on proportional share of votes to form the executive of this Central, see Alves [1989:60-2].

⁵³ For instance, during the 4th Regional Congress of the Workers' United Central (CUT) in Pernambuco (26-28 Aug. 1988), four slates contested the election to renew its board of directors. Its composition was decided on the share of votes of each slate (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, Sept. 1988, Annexe).

Nevertheless, the existence of different political factions does not lead necessarily to contested elections. For instance, the ruling group of the Data Processing Workers' Union is formed by some political factions (Interview No. 35). As mentioned above, this union has never faced a contested election. Although this may well mean intolerance toward conservative groups, the same is not true for left-wing minorities. Even so, it does not seem that this union has been intolerant toward conservative members. There is evidence that, though the conservatives do not form an organized opposition, they have a stronghold in the *EMPREL* where they have a majority in the workers' committee in that firm. As it is guaranteed by the union's constitution, the different political persuasions use the union's headquarters to hold their meetings. Besides, all through the years they have been able to stand united with only one slate for each election. However, the formation of such slates consists of a complex network of negotiations. Unionists have to deal with the constitutional obligation to renew, at least, 1/3 of the officials and, at the same time, to maintain the representativeness of all political factions.

The Metalworkers' Union has also faced such a phenomenon. Although the left-wing militants, who won the union in 1981, helped to create the Workers' Party (PT) and the Workers' United Central (CUT) in Pernambuco, they do not constitute a homogeneous body. An official says:

"Before taking over the union, what defined the participation of the militants in the opposition was their praxis in front of the factories' gates, their dedication...After we won the union the affiliation of the militant to one or other group was what determined his/her participation. So, there were a number of comrades who were not well prepared for the job, but were

elected due to the support of their groups...Moreover, greater divergencies have arisen from the fact that some militants want the union to be a simple appendage of the party" (Interview No. 11).

In other cases this has produced a different picture. The Teachers' Association faced contested elections in 1987 and 1989. Nevertheless, both the ruling and the opposing groups are affiliated to the Workers' United Central (CUT) and the Workers' Party (PT) (Interview No. 27). Moreover, the opposition is formed by a rare alliance of anarchists and «independent» communists (*Informe Sindical*, July; and Aug. 1989).

Divisions in the opposition's ranks have also happened when it split over political conceptions about how to take over the union. Both the opposition groups of the Bank Workers' and the Teachers' Unions faced this experience, as mentioned above. This did not affect the strength of the opposition in the case of the Bank Workers' Union. The group that intended to establish an alliance with the ruling group to win the union «from inside» did not achieve its aim because it was left outside by the union's officials.

However, it produced a complex web of alliances and clashes in the political history of the Teachers' Union during the 1980s. In this case the narrow focus on elections reveals that in 1982 two slates contested the election. However, it does not show that the conservative group, which was able to maintain power, did so through an alliance with an opposition group, and that these groups traded votes and posts. The exclusive use of the electoral model also does not reveal the «submerged» process underlying the 1985 election. The ruling group faced the opposition once again. However, the ruling

group was not the same any longer. Its composition had changed, for the left-wing officials managed to expel the conservative officials from the alliance. The latter were not able to form a slate of their own and the election was contested by two left-wing slates. This led to the process of changes already described above when all political factions were integrated into a ruling group in the post-1985 period. Nowadays, the "board of directors..., considering their ideological commitments, is extremely ample" (Interview No. 38; Cf. interviews Nos. 40 and 41), for it is formed by several factions as unlike as they could be: there are Trotskyists as well as their eternal rivals, the Stalinists; there are socialists, communists and anarchists; there are members of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), and of the Workers' Party (PT); and there are members of many factions which are affiliated to the Workers' United Central (CUT). Thus, the network of alliances and interests present in the history of the internal politics of this union reveals a considerable degree of negotiation and tolerance of each faction toward their partners. However, it must be said that the degree of tolerance varies from case to case. For instance, at the end of the IV National Congress (4-8 Sept. 1991) of the Workers' United Central (CUT), a violent fight exploded amongst the several factions just after a «unity» executive had been formed. Members of the *Articulação* group were commemorating the re-election of Jair Meneguelli (a member of *Articulação*) for Workers' United Central (CUT) presidency. Then, they started shouting that a *Convergência Socialista*'s member (an ex-president of the Bank Workers' Union of Rio de Janeiro) was

a thief for having supposedly stolen money from that union. It seems that the *Articulação* has been facing growing opposition from Stalinists and Trotskyists. Thus, some *Articulação* members took advantage of the occasion to accuse a member of those groups, which provoked the fight (Cf. weekly *Istoé Senhor*, No. 1147, 18 Sept. 1991). This seems to indicate that the use of violent methods is not restricted to disputes between conservative and left-wing factions, as in the case of the Bank Workers' Union described above (Cf. Roxborough [1981:86]).

5.4. The State, Management, and Union Democracy

A final point remains to be analysed. This refers to pressures exerted from the outside both by the State and the management and their influence on union democracy.

There is evidence that the existence (or not) of a union opposition or radical officials depended, during the period I am analysing, to some extent on the attitudes of the State and management toward trade unionism. However, the influence of the former has diminished throughout the 1980s.

In fact, when the first radical militants started emerging in the late 1970s, their profile either as an opposition or as union officials depended not only on recruitment of new militants and successes in union election, but also on the extent to which both the State and management were willing to tolerate radical militants participating in the unions' affairs (Cf. Alves [1989:53]).

There was then a wide range of measures which both of them could take in order to repress radical militancy inside

the unions. This ranged from threats to dismiss opposition members⁵⁴ to threats to intervene in unions run by radical militants.

In the late 1970s when signs of an opposition started appearing in the Bank Workers' Union the government's answer was rapid. The head of the Regional Labour Office (DRT) threatened its leaders. Besides, most of the bank workers who held jobs in the private sector and participated in the opposition's slate were dismissed after the union election of 1979⁵⁵. The opposition had to be continued almost solely by militants who worked for the state-owned *Banco do Brasil*. This was to have a serious impact on the opposition's composition and its capacity to contest the next election. After a number of meetings they decided that they had no chance at all of winning the union election. In fact, the opposition was unable to present a slate in 1982 due to a lack of militants to carry out the job of organizing the grassroots.

Such measures, on a minor scale, were used throughout the 1980s and had a long term impact on the opposition. This reflected, for instance, on the poor performance of the opposition in the private banks during the 1985 election and on the composition of the opposition slate standing for the 1988 election. In fact, only three militants out of twenty-four members of the opposition slate for this election held

⁵⁴ An extreme case happened when the secretary of the Teachers' Union was shot by a school watchman while distributing pamphlets about a wage campaign in front of the school *Academia Santa Gertrudes* (Cf. *Boletim da CUT*, 12 June 1985).

⁵⁵ Yet, in 1981, a employee of the Pernambuco state-owned *Banco do Estado de Pernambuco* and leading militant of the opposition was dismissed (Cf. *O Eletricitário*, April-May 1981).

their job in private banks.

Similarly, after radical militants took over the Teachers' Association in 1979⁵⁶, the state government acted by dismissing its president in 1980 on the grounds that he was not a good professional, for after taking over the association's presidency he had missed, according to Pernambuco state's Secretary for Education, a lot of classes (*Boletim Informativo APENOPE*, Nov. 1981; and interviews Nos. 22 and 32). Moreover, the government prohibited teachers from paying the association's fees via direct debit from the wages roll. Both the measures caused a deep impact on the association's performance up to 1985 (Cf. *Boletim da CUT*, July 1985). In fact, membership fell drastically affecting the association's financial situation. In turn, this clearly affected its capacity to organize the rank-and-file or extend the association's structure to other Pernambuco towns.

The radical militants of the Metalworkers' Union also faced threats of intervention from the government and tough action from the management. In 1979, when still an opposition, they were told by the head of the Regional Labour Office (DRT) that the government would not tolerate their actions. In 1983, already as the union's ruling group, the government threatened to intervene in the union because of their leading participation in a general strike in that year in which five officials and two militants of the union were arrested (Cf.

⁵⁶ I described above how these unionists took over the association during the process of a strike. During the organization and development of it, the head of the Regional Labour Office (DRT) threatened to prosecute the teachers under the National Security Law (LSN) because article 566 of the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT) prohibited civil servants from going on strike (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 19 May 1979).

Diário de Pernambuco, 22 July 1983. See also the police document - *Inquérito Policial No. 05/83, Denúncia No. 36/84*, 23 April 1984 - sent to the *Procuradoria da República no Estado de Pernambuco*). On the other hand, they also faced repressive measures taken by the management. Following this general strike, employers dismissed a number of workers who had played a leading role in organizing it (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 26 July 1983. On other cases of management repression on workers taking part in strikes outside Pernambuco, see Alves [1989]; and Humphrey [1979a:81-3]). Earlier, in 1982, a number of union militants was also dismissed because of their participation in a strike (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 3 Oct. 1982. For a similar case see also *Jornal do Comércio*, 5 Sept. 1985). The employers also intended to organize a petition asking the Minister of Labour to intervene in the union and dismiss its officials (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 11 Feb. 1982. For an analysis of this political attitude among the Pernambuco entrepreneurs towards labour relations, see Abramo [1986:274]). Finally, as mentioned above, this union was able to establish the first workers' committee in the North/Northeast region of the country. However, the management counterattacked by gradually firing all members of this committee (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, June 1985; interview No. 12; and *Jornal da Comissão de Fábrica COSINOR*, May 1986). The union's document *Dossiê dos Metalúrgicos-1988* says that:

"We are 24 officials. Eight of us have been struggling against unfair and illegal dismissals..."

Both the Urban Workers' and the Data Processing Workers' Unions faced restrictions from the government. Both

electricity and data processing were viewed as a matter of national security (Interview No. 24). Therefore, the government was unwilling to allow radical militancy in these areas. In the first case, many militants were dismissed after the strikes of 1979, 1981 and 1982 (Cf. Union minutes, 12-13 Nov. 1979; and *Informe Sindical*, 13-19 Jan. 1986), and others were threatened with prosecution under the National Security Law (LSN) (Interview No. 33). In the second case, the government did not even allow a union to be formed before 1985.

Thus, the pressure both from the government and management has three aspects affecting union democracy: 1) repressive measures aimed at the opposition; 2) repressive measures toward radical union officials; and 3) repressive measures aimed at cutting channels of communication between union officials and rank-and-file.

It is unlikely that a repressive approach from external forces toward union oppositions would produce fair conditions for internal democracy in the unions. Although the electoral model showed that there was a considerable degree of union democracy in the Bank Workers' Union since 1979 onwards, a look at the management approach to radical militancy shows that it had an important impact on the performance and composition of the opposition. On the other hand, it is also unlikely that repressive measures on union officials and union organization would produce a healthy ground for democracy inside the unions (Cf. Friedlander [1975]). When facing the tough approach of the state government towards the Teachers' Association, it was unlikely that any opposition would emerge, at least in the left-wing realm. When an opposition emerged

again in this labour organization, the association had been more or less accepted by the state government as a representative organization of the state schools' teachers and had been engaged in rebuilding itself since 1985 when the government allowed the teachers once again to pay the association's fees via direct debit.

However, this factor should not be exaggerated, for if both the Urban Workers' and the Data Processing Workers' Union faced threats and repressive action from the government, in the long term they have undertaken different paths. Whereas the former has experienced the emergence of opposing groups, the latter has not.

6. CONCLUSION

Finally, if "politics is about power, not simply elections", then the processes described above show that union democracy and the mechanisms (elections, alliances, pacts, share of power, etc.) underlying the means through which democracy actually works are a complex set of phenomena.

The «new unionism» emerged with demands for and promises of internal democracy and responsiveness to the shop-floor. The data discussed here shows that undoubtedly signs of democracy have appeared in Pernambuco unions since 1979. However, it also shows that one should not exaggerate the extent of this phenomenon. Compared with the period between 1964 and 1978, the unions have faced a significant number of contested elections (for instance, the Bank Workers' and Urban Workers' Unions) and different groups have appeared, although not always as organized factions. Nevertheless, there is the

extreme case of the Data Processing Workers' Union and the mid-way cases of the Teachers' Association and the Metalworkers' Union with a low profile in terms of organized oppositions and contested elections.

However, it is worth mentioning that although some unions do not seem to be democratic under Edelstein and Warner's model, the evidence available shows that most of them have been trying to be responsive to the membership, either through strengthening of channels between themselves and the rank-and-file or by submitting agreements to the general assembly. Therefore, they seem to be meeting the conditions of representativeness and accountability put forward by Fosh and Cohen [1990] as a sign of democracy.

Thus, I have also taken into account more informal factors of union life which affect internal union politics. Therefore, the data related to these aspects shows that 1) the internal political culture (degree of tolerance toward opposing groups); 2) the channels of participation for the rank-and-file and lay activists as well as means of communication between the leadership and the rank-and-file; 3) the political and union affiliations; and 4) the external factors, all have a varied degree of effect on the dynamics of union democracy and reveal a complex result. Firstly, while there was a quasi-intolerance toward opposition in, according to the electoral model, the most democratic union (the Bank Workers'), the most oligarchic union (once again, according to the electoral model) - the Data Processing Workers' - has a constitutional clause obliging the renewal of the union's leadership as well as clause assuring the rights of minorities to use the union's headquarters for their meetings. Secondly,

apart from the Bank Workers' Union before 1988, the unions' officials have been trying to strengthen their organization at the workplace, which has allowed them to increase the degree of communication between top and bottom and the degree of responsiveness toward demands arising from the workplace. Thirdly, the myriad of political and union groups at the national level has been reflected inside the unions. Nonetheless, this has produced two opposite effects. On the one hand, these factions have been able to secure «unity» around a single slate which expresses a common program in the cases of the Teachers' Union from 1985 and more particularly from 1987; of the Data Processing Workers' and of the Metalworkers' Unions. On the other, these factions have split and formed factions which act as an organized opposition (the Urban Workers' Union) and contest elections (the Urban Workers' Union and the Teachers' Association).

Finally, it was also shown that the external factors exerted some influence on the internal political processes of the unions. Radical militants and union officials faced a varied degree of repression either from the State or from the management and this affected radical groups' profiles as well the size, composition and performance of opposing groups; the unions' organization at the workplace; and the number of contested elections.

CHAPTER V

SOURCES OF UNION MILITANCY: DEMANDS, INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN CATEGORIAS AND ORGANIZATION AT THE WORKPLACE

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to assess the sources of union militancy in Pernambuco from 1978 in terms of the fight for «new» demands. It has been argued that one of the main characteristics of the «new unionism» is the kind of demands that the «new unionism» unions have been putting forward. While the «old» unionism demanded only wage increases⁵⁷, the «new unionism» has also been putting forward lists of demands with new topics which are not solely related to wage issues. Therefore, these new demands would constitute a departure from the sort of demands around which the «old» unionism was organized (For an analysis of dichotomous models applied to Latin American labour movements, see Roxborough [1981]).

Thus, Tavares de Almeida [1981:179] says:

"[The «new unionism»] has pointed out the existence of new subjects which could be included in the list of demands to be negotiated. They are related to actual day-to-day problems of working conditions and labour organizations at the workplace" (See also NEPP/UNICAMP [1989:109-149]; Moisés [1979:59]; Rodrigues [1979]; Sarti & Barbosa Fº [1983]; Tavares de Almeida [1983]; and Tavares de Almeida et al. [1986:339]).

⁵⁷ It must be said that before the strikes of 1978-79 the «old» unionism did not even demand wage increases because the government established them through decrees.

On the other hand, it was argued that these new demands were the expression of higher ranks inside the working class and that these ranks would constitute a labour aristocracy (Tavares de Almeida [1975]. Cf. Rodrigues [1979]). These new demands would, then, be related to the needs of the upper ranks of the working class.

Finally, it has been argued that these new demands grew from autonomous labour organization at the workplace. According to Maroni [1982], most of the strikes of May 1978 were led by informal leaders of workers' committees, not linked to the unions, who acted as representatives to negotiate these demands arising from the workplace.

Thus, the aim of this chapter is to analyse four related problems:

- 1) to what extent have the demands of the «new unionism» actually been new ones?;
- 2) to what extent, in an economy with a high inflation rate, have the unions been able to put forward and secure new demands and fight for them? In other words, how could the unions maintain the fight for demands other than economic ones in the face of pressure for improved gains to match the constant increase in the cost of living?;
- 3) what role (if any) have the internal divisions of the working class played in the fight for these new demands?;
- 4) what role has union organization at the workplace played in putting forward and securing these new demands?

2. THE NEW UNIONISM AND NEW DEMANDS

A number of authors have argued that the union militancy that emerged in Brazil mainly from the mid-1970s is a «new» kind of unionism if compared with the kind of unionism of the pre-1964 period, in terms of the quality and quantity of demands put forward. Thus, «new unionism» has been synonymous with new demands. In fact, new aspects of labour life have been taken into account during negotiations between unions and employers (Cf. Castro [1990:131]).

As early as 1978, the opposition group in the Metalworkers' Union of Pernambuco had already asked for demands, suggested by radical militants, which were not present in the list of demands negotiated by the «old guard».

"[In 1978] the union officials were only interested in calculating the cost of living in order to demand a wage increase to compensate for any increase. We, instead, demanded wage increases beyond the increase in the cost of living. We also demanded the right to participate in professional courses for acquiring higher skills and a double wage during vacations" (Interview No. 7. Cf. Keck [1989:256] on São Paulo case).

These new demands have also been present in the list of demands of other unions:

"In the data processing sector, the level of wage demands is the same as that of the general labour movement. However, there is a difference between us and the general union movement because we have a list of demands and agreements revolving around social rights issues which are very considerable in the face of the diseases arising from the labour process in our profession" (Interview No. 24).

2.1. The Bank Workers' Union and the Evolution of Demands

Data presented below shows that there has been an increase in the number of demands put forward by this union

over the years. In fact, the data is first available for 1978 onwards and shows that in that year the demands of this union were focused around three issues: 1) wage increase; 2) time in service allowance; and 3) limit for working day. It must be said that the wage increase demand was linked to the wage policy established by the government. In other words, it was not strictly a demand because the wage increase was determined by the government. Therefore, what the union did was to negotiate a formal agreement in which the increase allowed by the government was established.

Although the list of demands of 1979 was still a short one, it already reflects the emergence of the new radical militants within the union. This was the year in which the conservative unionists faced their first electoral challenge. As the annual wage agreement was also scheduled for August, the opposition group tried to link the wage campaign with the electoral campaign. This was the first time since 1964 that bank workers in Pernambuco had heard of a wage campaign. Former wage agreements had just been signed without any campaign, for the military government established wage increases through decrees which were accepted by the conservative officials without discussion. In spite of the fact that the opposition group was defeated, it was able, through participation in wage campaign meetings, to put forward a demand for a professional minimum wage for this sector. The aim of this demand was to avoid the fact that bankers dismissed many employees after the agreements were signed and employed others at lower wages (On a similar case in São Paulo state, see Moisés [1979:64]).

TABLE 5.1. LISTS OF DEMANDS - BANK WORKERS' UNION

YEAR	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
DEMANDS												
1. WAGES												
1.1 An Across the Board Wage Increase	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2 Wage Increase (Wage Margins)				X								
1.3 Advance Payment		X						X				X
1.4 Professional Minimum Wage		X*	X	X*								
1.5 Substitute Employee's Wage												X
1.6 New Employee's Wage												X
1.7. Change in Data-Base				X								
2. ALLOWANCES												
2.1 Productivity Increase				X	X	X	X	X	X*	X	X	X
2.2 Meal Allowance					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.3 Travel Allowance					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.4 Overtime Rate					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.5 Shift Allowance									X	X	X	X
2.6 Time of Service Allowance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.7 Supplement for Pensions					X							X
3. PROFESSIONAL SITUATION												
3.1 Job Definition					X			X	X		X	
3.2 System for Promotion					X			X				
3.3 Job Stability for Pregnant Women					X	X	X	X	X		X	X
3.4 Job Stability for Injured Persons					X	X	X				X	X
3.5 Release for Students Missing Working Hours					X	X	X	X			X	X
4. WORKING CONDITIONS (No Monetary Benefits)												
4.1 Uniform					X	X	X		X		X	X
4.2 Working Time Limit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3 Crèche				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
5. UNION POWER												
5.1 Assistance Contribution					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.2 Acceptance by Banks of Union Medical Certificates					X							X
5.3 Union Bulletin Board in Banks												
5.4 Access for Union Officials to Banks					X							X
5.5 Free Time for Officials to Perform Union Duties					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Morais

(*) Professional Minimum Wage according to skill

The 1981 list of demands had 7 points in comparison with 3 in 1978 and 5 in 1979 and 4 in 1980. However, the real increase in the number of demands was in 1982. One remembers that in 1982 there were elections in this union. The conservative unionists were to face a new challenge. There was also an internal split between the officials about the way an extra wage campaign had been conducted by the union president. It seems that the 1982 list of demands reflects both phenomena. The union officials were not satisfied with the role played by the union president during this extra campaign negotiations. Then, it is possible that they tried to frame a long list of demands in order to steal the opposition's thunder during that electoral year. There is strong evidence that although they did not present themselves as an opposition group as the radical opposition did, they tried to present themselves as the ones who had broken the continuity of conservative officials in the union since 1964.

The number of demands in 1982 (20 demands) was three times the number of demands in 1981 and there was an increase in the number of demands concentrated around indirect wages. Moreover, for the first time, demands related to aspects other than the economic ones were raised. In fact, in that year the union negotiated demands on issues related to professional situation and working conditions. These aspects were then integrated into the lists of demands put forward in the following years, apart from 1987 when no demands related to professional situation were presented. However, the number of demands decreased in 1983 and 1984 (15 demands each). Interestingly enough, elections were due in 1985 and the list of demands increased marginally to 16 demands. It decreased

in 1986 (15 demands) and 1987 (12 demands). In 1988, an electoral year, the list of demands returned to the level of 1985. The first year that the opposition led a wage campaign was in 1989. This is also the year in which the list of demands increased to the highest level during these years with demands related to a number of labour issue aspects. Altogether, the membership voted for a list of around 21 demands to be negotiated with the bank employers⁵⁸.

2.2. The Urban Workers' Union and the Evolution of Demands

In 1978 this union presented a list of demands with 5 points which were related to wage increases and other monetary benefits. The opposition group first participated in a wage campaign in 1979. The list of demands was as short as that presented in the previous year, with another 5 points. However, it is worth noting that the opposition presented the idea that the workers should not accept the wage increase limits allowed by the government. Thus, in that year the membership demanded a wage increase higher than that put forward by the government through its wage policy. On the other hand, it was a proposal of the opposition group to demand a professional minimum wage. Although there has not been a high turnover in this sector it seems that the employees of the Pernambuco water company earned lower wages than the employees of both the federal and state electricity

⁵⁸ The data was gathered from each final list of demands approved by the general assembly and presented every year from 1978 to be negotiated with the employers. Data about the list of demands has been published yearly by the union's newspaper in one of its July issues.

companies. Therefore, as a decrease in the nominal value of wages is not allowed, this professional minimum wage should be based on the lowest wages of the electricity companies. This meant that wages in the water company should increase to meet the conditions established in an agreement.

Although still not in power during the wage campaign of 1980 the opposition conducted it (See Interview No. 33). From 5 points in 1979 the list of demands increased to 10 points in 1980 and for the first time issues related to professional situation and working conditions appeared in it. The number of demands increased in 1981 to 11 points. It must be noted that the lists of 1980 and 1981 included transitional demands for cancelling the dismissals which took place after the 1979 strike. On the other hand, the 1981 list of demands included a new one which was related to control over the duration of the working day for certain workers who held jobs in areas of extreme responsibility. In 1982 the number of demands decreased to 9 points and stood at the same level in 1983. From then on up to 1987 the list of demands increased, reaching a total of 21 in that year. However, it decreased in 1988 to 17 points, but increased again in 1989 to 21 points.

TABLE 5.2. LISTS OF DEMANDS - URBAN WORKERS' UNION

YEAR	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
DEMANDS												
1. WAGES												
1.1 An Across the Board Wage Increase			X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
1.2 Wage Increase (Wage Margins)	X	X				X					X	
1.3 Advance Payment								X	X	X		X
1.4 Professional Minimum Wage		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.5 New Employee's Wage	X	X							X			
1.6 Change in Data-Base	X									X	X	
2. ALLOWANCES												
2.1 Productivity Increase			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2 Meal Allowance			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.3 Cooperative										X		
2.4 Travel Allowance			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.5 Overtime Rate										X	X	X
2.6 Shift Allowance							X		X			
2.7 Time of Service Allowance	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
2.8 Holiday Rate	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
2.9 Supplement for Pensions						X				X	X	X
2.10 Supplement for Medical Assistance							X	X	X	X	X	X
3. PROFESSIONAL SITUATION												
3.1 Criteria for Hiring											X	X
3.2 Criteria for Dismissals			X	X								
3.3 Job Definition			X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
3.4 System for Promotion								X	X	X	X	X
3.5 Information on Wages, Taxes and Deductions										X		
3.6 Job Stability for Pregnant Women							X					X
3.7 Release for Students Missing Working Hours										X		
4. WORKING CONDITIONS (No Monetary Benefits)												
4.1 Uniform									X			X
4.2 Safety Equipment												X
4.3 Working Time Limit				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
4.4 Medical Assistance								X	X	X	X	X
4.5 Crèche			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
5. UNION POWER												
5.1 Assistance Contribution										X	X	X
5.2 Free Time for Officials to Perform Union Duties								X				X
5.3 Election of Manager (Administrative or Personnel)								X	X	X	X	X

Source: Morais

There is no evidence at all that the emergence of an opposition group in 1986 linked to the Workers' Party (PT) provoked any sort of impact on the list of demands. Although there was an increase in the number of demands in that year, it seems that this had to do with internal processes of discussion with the rank-and-file. Indeed, the disagreements between the two factions were about strategies for negotiation and how to run the union. Moreover, in 1989, when three slates contested the elections in this union, the number of demands decreased, which seems to indicate that the emergence of opposition groups in this union did not provoke the sort of impact that it did in the case of the Bank Workers' Union.

2.3. The Data Processing Workers' Union and the Evolution of Demands

Data on demands for this union is available from 1985, when it was founded. As an association it did not present any list of demands. In the case of federally owned companies, wage increases and other matters related to labour relations were based on the government's wage policies. The same holds for state- and municipal-owned companies. In the case of private companies, employees were represented by the Trade Workers' National Confederation (CNTC). Although the data processing workers' associations of many states tried to influence the list of demands that was to be discussed, they were not very successful and did not take part in the process of negotiation (Cf. interview No. 24).

TABLE 5.3. LISTS OF DEMANDS - DATA PROCESSING WORKERS' UNION

YEAR	85	86	87	88	89
DEMANDS					
1. WAGES					
1.1 An Across the Board Wage Increase	X	X	X	X	
1.2 Wage Increase (Wage Margins)					X
1.3 Advance Payment	X		X	X	X
1.4 Professional Minimum Wage	X	X*	X*	X*	X*
1.5 Substitute Employee's Wage				X	
1.6 New Employee's Wage				X	
1.7 Change in Data Base		X	X		
2. ALLOWANCES					
2.1 Productivity Increase	X	X	X	X	X
2.2 Meal Allowance	X	X	X	X	X
2.3 Travel Allowance		X	X	X	X
2.4 Overtime Rate	X	X	X	X	
2.5 Shift Allowance			X	X	X
2.6 Time of Service Allowance	X	X	X	X	X
2.7 Holiday Rate		X	X	X	X
2.8 Supplement for Pensions				X	
2.9 Supplement for Medical Assistance	X	X		X	
3. PROFESSIONAL SITUATION					
3.1 Criteria for Hiring	X				X
3.2 Job Definition	X		X	X	X
3.3 System for Promotion	X		X	X	X
3.4 Job Stability for Pregnant Women		X	X	X	
3.5 Release for Students Missing Working Hours			X	X	X
4. WORKING CONDITIONS (No Monetary Benefits)					
4.1 Working Time Limit	X	X	X	X	X
4.2 Crèche	X	X	X	X	X
4.3 Working Hour (50x10)	X	X	X	X	X
5. UNION POWER					
5.1 Assistance Contribution			X	X	X
5.2 Access by Union Officials to Firms				X	X
5.3 Free Time for Officials to Perform Union Duties			X	X	

Source: Morais

(*) Minimum professional wage according to skill

The data available for 5 years shows that the number of

demands increased over the period, except for 1989. Thus, in the first year in which this union took part in a process of negotiation, a list of 14 demands was presented, which was repeated in 1986. The list increased to 20 in 1987, 24 in 1988, decreasing to 18 in 1989. However, it is worth noting that this insignificant decrease did not mean a qualitative change in the demands presented, as will be discussed later.

One point raised throughout the years is the demand for the regulation of the working hour. One remembers that a major concern within this union is on the discrepancy between the number of keystrokes recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and what most employers insist on. The union has been trying to have the matter regulated through an agreement on the working hour, i.e., the amount of minutes actually worked which would be 50 minutes while the workers would rest for 10 minutes.

2.4. The Metalworkers' Union and the Evolution of Demands

Following the pattern of unions run by conservative officials, the Metalworkers' Union used to present few demands. As quoted above, the opposition group tried to influence the list of demands by trying to bring in demands related to matters other than the wage increase alone. In terms of wages it seems that the conservative officials presented a very poor list of demands which was related to a wage increase based on the government's wage policy.

"There was no campaign during that time. Nobody knew what a *dissídio* was and the union did not come to factory gates. The union president and his mates simply went to the workplace to say: «the wage increase is so much, and that is that»" (Interview No. 8).

This was challenged by the opposition group, which suggested a wage increase higher than that allowed by the government (Lima [1991:16]). For the case of the Metalworkers' Union of São Bernardo, São Paulo state, see Humphrey [1979a: 84]). By 1979 the opposition group had become stronger and influenced the list of demands which increased to 9 items. In 1980 the union presented a list with 15 points which increased further to 18 points in 1981 when elections were held. The opposition having taken power in 1981, the list decreased to 9 points constituting the 1982 core demands. This core of demands decreased to 7 points in 1983 and 8 points in 1984. The number of demands increased again to 12 points in 1985 and to 13 points in 1986. The list increased further in 1987 to 14 points, but decreased in 1988 to 12 points. There was a slight increase in 1989 to 13 points.

In spite of this wide variation in the number of demands presented each year, it seems that this union has kept an average number of demands related to crucial aspects of labour problems. The peaks in the number of demands seem to be linked to temporary problems which the union has tried to get resolved through the annual negotiations. On the other hand, the only contested election this radical group faced was in 1984. There is evidence that the conservative group that challenged it did not have much support at the workplace. The conservative group was also unable to influence the list of demands whether in terms of number of demands, or in terms of the kind of demands presented. Though elections were held in 1984 the number of demands was around the same level of the two previous years.

TABLE 5.4. LISTS OF DEMANDS - METALWORKERS' UNION

YEAR	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
DEMANDS												
1. WAGES												
1.1 An Across the Board Wage Increase	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2 Advance Payment	X							X		X		
1.3 Professional Minimum Wage		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	X	X	X
1.4 Substitute Employee's Wage		X		X					X	X		
1.5 Change in Data-Base			X									
2. ALLOWANCES												
2.1 Productivity Increase			X	X	X	X*	X*	X	X	X	X	X
2.2 Meal Allowance			X					X	X	X	X	X
2.3 Travel Allowance				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.4 Overtime Rate			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.5 Shift Allowance			X	X					X			
2.6 Time of Service Allowance				X				X				
2.7 Holiday Rate	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X
2.8 Supplement for Medical Assistance								X				
3. PROFESSIONAL SITUATION												
3.1 Criteria for Hiring				X								
3.2 Criteria for Dismissals				X								
3.3 Information on Wages, Taxes and Deductions		X	X	X								
3.4 Job Stability for Pregnant Women		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.5 Release for Students Missing Working Hours		X	X	X	X							
4. WORKING CONDITIONS (No Monetary Benefits)												
4.1 Uniform		X	X	X						X	X	X
4.2 Safety Equipment			X									X
4.3 Working Time Limit				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
5. UNION POWER												
5.1 Assistance Contribution			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.2 Acceptance by Firms of Union Medical Certificates		X	X	X					X	X	X	X

Source: Morais

(*) Professional Minimum Wage according to skill

The data available for this union shows that its demands are strongly concentrated around indirect monetary benefits. It seems there has been a major concern with the regulation

of overtime in this sector either by trying to limit working time or by demanding higher wages for work performed during overtime. In fact, the union movement has been denouncing over the years the fact that management prefers to insist on increasing output through overtime instead of hiring new employees because it is cheaper to make use of existing staff. Therefore, the union has been trying to increase the price of labour during overtime as a means of inhibiting employers from insisting on overtime. Finally, in terms of professional situation, a major concern in this sector has been the demand for job stability during pregnancy and in the months following birth. It seems that though pregnant women are protected by the labour law against dismissals, there is a great turnover rate due to pregnancy.

2.5. The Teachers' Association and the Evolution of Demands

This association presented lists with few demands over the years. It seems that state school teachers' demands are strongly related to wage increases and the wage and job structures. Even so, it is possible to detect the impact of the emergence of the opposition group in 1979. In 1978, the association had presented three demands related to the two aspects referred to above. When the opposition emerged during the discussion for framing the 1979 list of demands, new points were raised and integrated into it. The opposition suggested a wage increase higher than that allowed by the government. Teachers are paid for the number of classes they teach. A percentage is added to their basic wages to cover activities conducted outside classes: to prepare classes and

exams, to correct exams, and so on. The opposition suggested a change in this percentage to allow greater time for research and reading.

TABLE 5.5. LISTS OF DEMANDS - TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

YEAR	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
DEMANDS												
1. WAGES												
1.1 An Across the Board Wage Increase	X					X	X			X	X	X
1.2 Wage Increase (Wage Margins)		X						X	X			
1.3 Advance Payment										X		
1.4 Professional Minimum Wage						X	X	X	X*	X*	X	X
1.5 Change in Data-Base												X
2. ALLOWANCES												
2.1 Travel Allowance												X
3. PROFESSIONAL SITUATION												
3.1 Criteria for Hiring								X	X	X		
3.2 Job Definition	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.3 System of Promotion	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X
4. WORKING CONDITIONS (No Monetary Benefits)												
4.1 Working Time Limit								X			X	X
5. UNION POWER												
5.1 Free Time for Officials to Perform Union Duties									X	X	X	

Source: Morais

(*) Professional Minimum Wage according to skill

The opposition gained control just after the 1979 wage campaign and the government counteracted by cutting the payment of the association's fees, which teachers paid through direct debit, and by firing its president. These facts had a highly negative impact on the association's profile. This is clear from the fact that from 1980 up to 1983 the association was unable to present any list of demands. The level of membership dropped sharply and without money the association

was unable to get the membership together because many of its communication networks were cut. Lack of financial resources prevented officials from travelling around Pernambuco state or even to print enough newspapers to get support for a wage campaign. They could just try to keep the association alive.

It was able to present a list of demands from 1983 when 4 points were put forward and the same is true for 1984. The return of the direct debit for payment of the association's fees had a clear impact on its capacity to present new demands. The 1985 list of demands increased to 6 points. Insofar as the association has been able to become stronger, it has been able to consolidate its lists of demands to be negotiated from then around at 6 or 7 points.

However, it must be added that though the lists of demands put forward by the association seem to be much shorter in comparison with other unions' lists, many of the points on which they have been campaigning are guaranteed at the state level to all civil servants. Thus, the state guarantees, for instance, time of service allowance and has its own health service, which seems to provide better health care than the national health service. The state also guarantees stability during pregnancy and gives full information on wages, taxes and deductions, which are printed on the pay slip. Therefore, the association's lists of demands are strongly concentrated around wage increases and other monetary issues.

2.6. The Teachers' Union and the Evolution of Demands

The evolution of demands in this union follows the same pattern described above. In 1978, without any opposition group

taking part in the process, this union presented as few as three demands, one of them being the assistance contribution, a transfer of income from union members to the union to cover the costs of the wage campaign. With the emergence of the opposition in 1979 the list increased to 4 demands. The list of demands increased to 10 points in 1980 and 11 in 1981. From 1982 up to 1985, the number of demands increased from year to year reaching a peak of 16 demands in this last year. Although the number of demands has dropped in some years from then on, the union has continued to present an average level of 14-16 demands in each year up to 1989.

Although the impact of the emergence of an opposition group on the list of demands in 1979 is clear, this impact is less clear during the years following. The internal political process in this union is somewhat complex because of the number of alliances established amongst the different political persuasions inside this union. However, it can be said that the alliance between communists and the «old guard», in 1982, may have caused a slight increase in the number of demands which were to be negotiated. On the other hand, in 1985 the communists managed to drive the conservatives out of their slate. This meant that they had full control over the union political machine and this was reflected in the level of demands presented, for the list of demands had an increase of about 1/3 from 1984 to 1985.

TABLE 5.6. LISTS OF DEMANDS - TEACHERS' UNION

YEAR	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
DEMANDS												
1. WAGES												
1.1 An Across the Board Wage Increase	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2 Advance Payment										X		
1.3 Professional Minimum Wage		X*	X*	X*	X*	X*	X	X	X	X*	X*	X
1.4 New Employee's Wage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
1.5 Change in Data-Base											X	
2. ALLOWANCES												
2.1 Productivity Increase			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
2.2 Meal Allowance											X	X
2.3 Travel Allowance								X		X	X	X
2.4 Overtime Rate			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.5 Shift Allowance								X				
2.6 Time of Service Allowance								X	X	X	X	X
2.7 Holiday Rate											X	
3. PROFESSIONAL SITUATION												
3.1 Job Definition												X
3.2 System for Promotion												X
3.3 Information on Wages, Taxes and Deductions			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.4 Job Stability for Pregnant Women				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. WORKING CONDITIONS (No Monetary Benefits)												
4.1 Uniform				X	X	X		X	X		X	
4.2 Working Time Limit			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3 Crèche			X							X	X	X
5. UNION POWER												
5.1 Assistance Contribution	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.2 Union Bulletin Board in Firms			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.3 Access by Union Officials to Firms							X	X				
5.4 Financial Contribution From Firms to Union					X	X	X	X				

Source: Morais

(*) Professional Minimum Wage according to skill

The fact that the Trotskyist opposition took power in 1985 when the communists abdicated does not seem to indicate any impact on the level of the number of demands presented in 1986. Indeed, the number of demands decreased in that year,

although it increased slightly in the following years.

3. THE NATURE OF THE DEMANDS: A COMPARISON AMONG THE UNIONS

Demands presented by the unions have been grouped in 5 sections as suggested by Tavares de Almeida ([1981:181-3]; and [1983:289-90]. Cf. NEPP/UNICAMP [1988] and [1989]; and Souza [1985:30-2]): 1) Wages - referring mainly to demands for general wage increases, professional minimum wage, and wage increase for new employees; 2) Allowances - referring mainly to productivity increase, meal and travel allowances, time of service allowance and overtime rate; 3) Professional situation - referring mainly to aspects related to job stability for pregnant women and conscripts, criteria for dismissals, information on wage structure, and promotion systems; 4) Working conditions - referring mainly to the conditions linked to individual safety at the workplace, such as uniform, limits for overtime, limits for working day and medical assistance provided by firms; and 5) Union power - referring mainly to union matters such as free time for union officials to perform their union duties and access by union officials to the workplace.

Apart from the case of the Teachers' Association, the demands of all unions that negotiated agreements in the last two years of the 1970s referred almost exclusively to wage matters. Roughly speaking, from 1980 onwards it is only that the unions started presenting a more complex list of demands.

In the case of the Bank Workers' Union, from 1978 to 1981 the demands were mainly related to monetary aspects of the labour relations. In fact, the negotiations were centred on

discussion of the annual wage increase, a minimum professional wage (suggested by the opposition) and a time of service allowance. The only demand not directly related to wage matters was the demand for a limit to the duration of the working day. The Urban Workers' Union was in the same situation, although it also presented demands related to the establishment of a system introducing job and wage structure and crèches. On the other hand, the Metalworkers' Union started presenting demands related to matters other than only wage increases in 1979. Coupled with the demand for wage increase and other benefits in cash, demands related to professional situation, working conditions and union power were also presented by this union.

It was during the 1980s that the unions started presenting longer lists of demands due to the fact that opposition groups either took over the unions or simply tried to influence the content of these lists by participating in the discussion process during wage campaigns in unions controlled by conservative unionists. On the one hand, demands for wage increases no longer relied on the indexes established by the government. Instead, there was strong pressure for negotiating better wage increases related to inflation rates calculated by non-governmental agencies like the Inter-Union Office for Statistical and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE). At the same time, the unions tried to secure other monetary benefits which might help workers to cope with high inflation rates. Undoubtedly there was an increase in the number of demands related to points like productivity increases, meal and travel allowances, allowances for those who had held their jobs for a given time, medical assistance provided by firms,

and a double wage during vacations.

In addition, claims related to the professional situation itself and to working conditions began to appear in the lists of demands. The most important demands related to the professional situation were those which referred to calls for a clear jobs and wages structure as well as criteria for dismissals and hiring. There has also been concern about provisional job stability for those most targeted during dismissals, that is, students, conscripts, injured employees and pregnant women. At the same time, preoccupation with the working conditions has been on the increase.

These demands are, however, linked not only to better physical conditions at the workplace, but also to conditions which would allow the workers to continue to perform their jobs well. For example, this is clear from the renewal of demands for the enforcement of the limits to the working day. These demands were related mainly to the private sector where employers seem to be much less concerned to uphold the labour law. To take the case of the banking sector as an illustration, there have over the years been denunciations of long working days for the employees of private banks. A look at the kind of issues raised by the newspaper of the Bank Workers' Union reveals that this is a recurrent theme in private banks, although it is hard to find any such denunciation in the state-owned banks. On the other hand, when the Urban Workers' Union demanded a limitation to the working day, it was doing so in relation to special jobs requiring heavy responsibility.

In the case of the Metalworkers' and Urban Workers' Unions, demands have also been raised about safety at work.

By their very nature, the performance of some jobs in the metallurgy and electricity sectors implies considerable risk to the lives of the workers. The same does not occur in the banking sector. In this case, the most dangerous job is that held by cashiers under threat of robbery, when their lives would be at risk. The Bank Workers' Union has demanded an increase in the wages of such employees through insurance.

Unions have also raised demands which are aimed at gaining some discretion in the tasks they must perform. This is clear both from the Teachers' Union and Association and from the Data Processing Workers' Union. In the first case, there have been complaints that teachers have had little time for reading, to prepare better classes and carry out research which could aid development of the classes they teach. They argue that they earn low wages and are obliged to teach for long hours without any time for other activities related to teaching (*Resoluções do 4º Encontro Estadual do Ensino Oficial de Pernambuco*, 1986, Resolution No. 46; *Resoluções do 1º Congresso Estadual dos Professores do Ensino Oficial de Pernambuco*, 23-26 Oct. 1987, Resolution No. 4/3; and letter No. 01/88, 22 Feb. 1988, sent to the Pernambuco state Secretary for Education). Both the union and the association have been campaigning to increase the number of paid hours which would be directed to these activities. This would allow them, it is argued, to stay longer in their school without having to «run» from school to school in order to teach as many classes as they can in order to increase their incomes. At the same time, this would promote better classes and an improvement in the general level of teaching and learning.

In the case of the Data Processing Workers' Union, a

major concern is about the job performed by those who have the task of typing data into the computers. As these workers are required (obliged) to perform a higher number of keystrokes than those advised by the International Labour Organization (ILO), there has been a high rate of occupational diseases affecting the bones of the hands and leading workers thus affected to become useless for such a job.

"Nowadays, the working time in this job is what we call 50 by 10. That is, for each hour the employee works 50 and rests 10 minutes. This is so because people need to rest their hand muscles by doing other kinds of physical movement. They need to have their muscles relaxed to continue the job. This is a terrible disease because there is no cure for it. There are people affected by it who cannot strike a match or hold a cup of coffee" (Interview No. 28).

Along with the demands for regulation of this matter during wage campaigns, there is wide concern about the health of data processing workers, indicated by the number of discussions and seminars promoted by this union. In fact, since the data processing workers formed their association in Pernambuco, they have promoted seminars on the workers' health in this sector. For instance, although the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT) stated that people working with typing and similar machines would have the right to rest for 10 minutes in every 90-minute period, this was not upheld by employers (*Boletim da APPD-PE*, May 1980; *APPD-PE Informativo*, 26 May 1983; and *Jornal APPD-PE*, Sept. 1983).

As Tavares de Almeida [1981:179] writes on the emergence of new matters related to labour issues arising from the shop-floor:

"Contrary to the unionism of the populist period, the «new unionism» has emphasized socio-professional demands arising from the workplace".

This is clear from the description above and is also

confirmed by an employer who declared:

"What the [Data Processing] Workers' Union has sought is to augment the number of [workers'] social rights. We have discussed this a lot because, in Brazil, the labour market with the highest rate of increase is this one, the data processing sector" (Interview No. 53).

With the help of the legal advisers, the unions have tried to innovate in terms of new social rights previously unknown to the labour movement dominated by conservative unionists. Thus, many of the rights which were integrated into the new Constitution of 1988 emerged as demands put forward by the unions through legal initiatives to guarantee what was not yet contained in jurisprudence. Once pronounced upon and recognized by the labour court they were integrated into the law and many of these rights were integrated into the Constitution of 1988.

"For example, payment for overtime: before [the 1988 Constitution] each hour of overtime was paid as an allowance of 25%, now as 50%. Why? Because we started demanding during wage campaigns and collective agreements a higher percentage for overtime as a means of curtailing excessive working days. If the employer was to pay just an increment of 25% it was cheaper for him/her to oblige the workers to stay longer hours at the workplace instead of employing other workers. Nowadays, after the new Constitution, we already have jurisprudence for an allowance of 100%" (Interview No. 26. Cf. article 7, paragraph XVI, of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988).

One of the main problems the unions have faced is trying to stop the huge number of dismissals in the private sector following signature of agreements about wage increases and other aspects of labour life (Cf. M.H.M. Alves [1984:90]; and Tavares de Almeida et al. [1986:339]. On the legislation regulating dismissals in the post-64 period, see Ferrante [1978:43-50]. Cf. Humphrey [1979c:232-5]; and Keck [1989:257]). In fact, after signing agreements, many employers simply fire a number of workers and replace them with new

employees simply anxious to get a job (Cf., for instance, *Informe Sindical*, 2-8 Sept. 1985. On the national case, see Alves [1989:47]). However, it is worth noting on this point that Humphrey ([1979b:102]. Cf. [1979a:75-6]) says that:

"There is certainly a high turnover rate...However, the workers fired are mainly those whose wages are low. The reduction in the wage levels might be a result of the turnover but the main cause seems to lie elsewhere".

Nevertheless, it seems to be more than mere coincidence that, over the years, a great number of dismissals occurs just after the signature of annual agreements. This is a recurrent and characteristic phenomenon of the private sector, mainly in banking, metallurgy and education. This has not occurred in the power and water sector, and the banking, metallurgy and education sectors where the state is the entrepreneur, because of a tacit or legal right to job stability (Macedo [1985:51-3]; and NEPP/UNICAMP [1989:119]). In the data processing sector, this phenomenon did not occur until the labour market became saturated, and mainly in those lower paid jobs. These dismissals have been occurring once again in the private sector (Cf. interviews Nos. 24, 28 and 45).

On this aspect Keck [1989:268] says:

"Job security...had always been an issue in the metalworking sector in particular, as employers used a high turnover rate as a way of keeping wages down".

This is clearer in the banking sector. For instance, at the beginning of 1981, the conservative officials were complaining about the high number of dismissals that took place in 1980 following settlement of the annual agreement (*O Defensor*, Jan. 1981. See also *O Defensor*, June and July 1981 on dismissals in 1981, and *O Defensor*, Nov. 1982 on this phenomenon in 1982. The *O Defensor* of Nov. of 1985 reprints

the letter No. 72/85 which was sent by the union to the Bankers' Union of Pernambuco protesting against the high number of dismissals which followed the agreement of that year. Cf. interview No. 36 on the overall issue). The union has developed a strategy through which it promotes a number of small strikes, called *greves pipocas* (popcorn strikes), to protest against such dismissals. Each day the union would promote a *blitz* strike in a branch of a bank which had dismissed a large number of employees during the previous week.

In 1979, Rodrigues [1979:48] said about this problem:

"...The autonomy of the workers' movement and the development of aggressive unionism have to face a national labour market which is favourable to the employers because the labour force supply is higher than the demand".

The unions have been trying to stop this phenomenon by demanding that employers should stop dismissing the labour force. However, it is unlikely that they would be successful merely by complaining about it or demanding job stability for the labour force when employers could easily find hundreds of workers in the labour market simply trying to get a job without much caring about wages (See Hill [1981:128]; and Roxborough [1981:84]).

Those unions most affected by this problem faced it by trying to introduce clauses in their agreements aimed at blocking employers' room for manoeuvre. This was done mainly through the proposal of three clauses: 1) the demand for a professional minimum wage; 2) demands to establish the wages of new employees; and 3) demands for regulating the payout on dismissal.

As mentioned above, a professional minimum wage would

prevent employers from hiring any employee for a lower wage than that established in the agreement. However, this could not stop employers dismissing a senior worker and hiring a junior worker. This would mean that employers could pay lower wages because allowances and supplements attached to senior workers' wages would not need to be paid. The second demand has the same shortcoming of the first one because employers are not obliged to pay allowances and supplements for junior workers.

The Teachers' Union has been the most successful in trying to stop dismissals following signature of annual agreements. It has been able to introduce a clause which regulates the price of the dismissals. Thus, at first, in 1979, an agreement was demanded - and reached - by which employers were obliged to pay 55% of the wages due to a fired teacher up to the end of the annual agreement (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 25 April 1979). Moreover, all teachers are entitled to job stability for 90 days after the agreement's signature and employers have to give the teacher(s) who is (are) to be fired two months prior notice of dismissal. As a union official says:

"This makes dismissals very expensive in this sector. While wages are low, dismissals are dear because if an employer fires a teacher, for example, in May, he or she has to pay the rest of the wages. In other words, to make dismissals expensive is a strategy we have found to safeguard our jobs" (Interview No. 52).

Another important feature of union disputes is that related to the increase in union power. Some of the demands related to this aspect of union life are: 1) demands for the union officials to have access to the workplace; 2) more time allowed for union duties; and 3) boards for union news at the

workplace.

4. RADICALISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PURSUIT OF NEW DEMANDS

Apart from those demands mentioned above regarding the increase in union power, unions have tried to extend their power and organizational structure through general demands which appear in their newspapers and are related to the right to elect union delegates at the workplace as well as the right to elect all representatives of the Internal Committee for the Prevention of Accidents (CIPA) (For a useful analysis of the role played by the CIPA in a Metalworkers' Union, see Mangabeira [1991]. Also see Keck [1989:269]; and Paiva [1986]).

Two labour organizations went further by demanding to elect people for key posts. In the case of the Teachers' Association, it has been demanding over the years the right to elect headteachers and their deputies in schools. This has not been pursued during wage campaigns but through general campaigns. In fact the association has promoted campaigns whose only aim is to publicize the need for elected headteachers on two grounds: 1) that the election of headteachers would allow for greater control by parents, teachers and the community in general over schools; and 2) that elected headteachers would signify an end to the practice of patronage on the part of the government which uses these posts to trade for political support (See, for example, *Informativo APENOPE*, Jan.-March 1986; Association pamphlet *Carta ao Professor*, Aug. 1986; Association pamphlet *Aos Alunos*

e Pais, Sept. 1986; Association pamphlet *Diretas Já, Para Diretor Escolar*, March 1987; and letter No. 23/88 sent to governor Miguel Arraes, 13 April 1988). In the case of the Urban Workers' Union, specifically in relation to *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF), it has been pressing for the right to elect either the general administrative or the personnel manager.

However, in spite of the fact that the novelty of the demands put forward by the «new unionism» has been widely emphasized, one must take into account the reality of the political and economic situation in which this has been happening. Although the data available to compare the lists of demands with the lists of what the unions really have got from the negotiations is scarce and does not allow me to undertake a more complete analysis, a few words can be said about it.

Brazilian society has been hit by high and persistent rates of inflation. Many of the strikes of 1978-79 from which the «new unionism» emerged happened because of disputes over inflation rates. It is true that other demands have been pursued by the unions. However, how far have they been able to go on pushing for new rights in the face of high inflation rates? How has the rank-and-file played a part in demanding non-economic demands or even monetary benefits which are not reflected directly on the total earned as wages?

A number of economic indicators were supplied in section 4 of chapter I. Data shows that Brazilian inflation in the 1980s, apart from 1981 and 1986, has always been on the increase. Moreover, it shows rates of inflation which are very high by any standards. In this economic context, one supposes

that the unions have had to fight hard in order at least to keep up with the pace of inflation. This means that, apart from the likely strikes before the signature of annual agreements, the unions have had to promote extra campaigns to restore workers' wages (Cf. interview No. 47). This also means that most of the strikes have happened for economic reasons. However, I will restrict myself to analysis of the processes involved in the disputes during annual wage campaigns.

There is evidence that although unions have tried to promote better gains for the membership through demands related to other aspects of working life by "linking [them to] the classic themes of wage increases..." (Moisés [1979:61]) as referred to above, what seems to matter during the fight to renew annual agreements is the economic demands, mainly those directly related to wage increases.

It seems that while the union leaders have tried to attach new demands related to professional and political aspects, the membership has been forced by the urgency of the pace of inflation to accept wage increases, leaving other demands out⁵⁹. Thus, one has to look at the emergence of new

⁵⁹ It should be stressed here that such a political attitude on the part of these union leaders seems to be the reverse of the behaviour predicted both by Michels's «iron law of oligarchy», which was discussed in chapter IV, and by the Marxist theory of trade union bureaucracy:

"according to which trade union leaderships will tend to restrain rank-and-file militancy because of its threat to their own privileges and to industrial relations order" (Kelly [1988:77]).

Golden ([1988:248]. See also Heery & Kelly [1990:96]) reaches the same conclusion in relation to the meaning of Michels's work. She has found:

"that trade unions may be more radical than the employees they seek to represent. Such a situation goes against the grain of much thinking about modern trade unionism that

demands very carefully in order to form a more realistic view of the attainments of the «new unionism».

The Urban Workers' Union has been considered as one of the most militant unions in Pernambuco (Cf. Mendonça & Medeiros [1989]). However, the leadership thinks that the union has been held back from greater gains because of the continuous fight to match high inflation.

"Nowadays, what has been dominating the union fight is the fact that inflation has been lowering the wages. This has weakened Brazilian unionism and has driven it towards a terrible economism and to a great *grevismo*⁶⁰ which is not good for us" (Interview No. 46).

"During these last 10 years we have had economic disputes. Unfortunately or fortunately, it depends on how you see it, we have had difficulty in political fights, in obtaining greater room for manoeuvre, because government economic policies have been strongly against the workers, there has been a constant *arrocho salarial* (wage squeeze)..." (Interview No. 33).

In other words, although it is clear that the «new unionism» has contributed to broaden the quality and quantity of demands presented and negotiated by the union movement since 1978-79, the scale of the gains has been not so large as suggested by a look at the annual lists of demands. Of course, this does not mean that the union movement has not achieved a wider range of social rights previously unknown to the labour and union movements. However, what is here suggested is that most of these rights have been put forward by the radical leaders of the «new unionism».

...tends to conceive of unions as inherently conservative institutions and, often by implication, of workers as instinctively radical".

⁶⁰ The phenomenon of successive strikes in the same sector. Union leaders use this word when they want to mean the promotion of strikes even for minor problems which could be resolved through negotiation. It is also what they call "to go on strike for striking's own sake".

"What has fundamentally mobilized the rank-and-file is the fight for wages. If the bosses offer an increase similar to what we are demanding, the *categoria* stops the strike. It is the union leaders who try to keep the *categoria* striking in order to get other demands...If the *categoria* is obliged to choose between a wage increase and to continue the fight for the presence of the union at the workplace, it will vote for the wages" (Interview No. 52)⁶¹.

Lenin suggested that unions tend to be reformist instead of revolutionary organizations because they would pursue aims which could easily be met within capitalism and would persuade their members to accept capitalism (Cf. Anderson [1967]; Hill [1981:128 and 152]; and Martin [1989:43-7]. For a diverse interpretation of Lenin's work, see Kelly [1988:26-34]). This is summarized by the division of union goals into "short and long-term aims" (Allen [1967:242-4]).

Mann [1981:20] has also suggested an analytical division of union goals in terms of "the economic and job control spheres". According to him,

"If workers possessed full class consciousness they would seek among their other goals worker control of industry and society. Such a form of control would in theory enable them to attain both material and moral fulfilment, economic sufficiency and freedom of self-expression".

However, it is worth noting that Hill ([1981:128]. See

⁶¹ This is also confirmed by the following quotations:

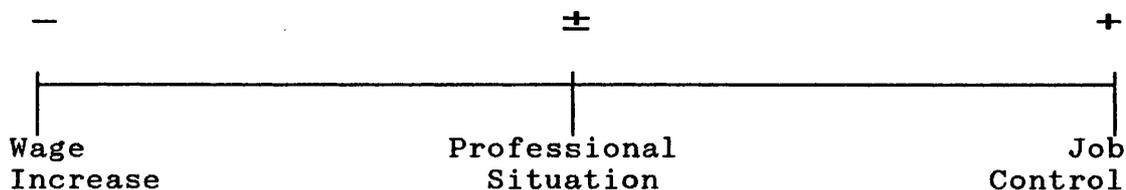
"If we look at the clauses in the agreements, the ones most emphasized by the unions are not those related to the workers' gains in terms of a better environment at the workplace, but those directly related to the workers' pockets" (Interview No. 36).

"The demands arising from the rank-and-file, what they suggest the union should fight for, are fundamentally economic demands. The preoccupation of these comrades about social and working conditions, union organization at the workplace, even about social benefits, is very little. Commonly, it is wages, wage increases, minimum wage...We have sent questionnaires to find out what the *categoria* wants demanded but the answers are very poor" (Interview No. 42).

also Kelly [1988:101]) states that in certain circumstances even demands for wage increases, i.e., reformism, could be harmful to the system, while demands for job control are always harmful.

Following Hill's remarks, I would suggest that instead of a dividing line between short and long term goals, there would be a continuous line running from less to more radical aims.

FIGURE 5.1. DEMANDS AND DEGREE OF RADICALISM



This allows us a better understanding of the fight for demands in a situation of high inflation just as in the Brazil of the 1980s. The economic scenario of Brazil in the 1980s was marked by high inflation rates and this seemed to affect the fight of the unions in terms of the pursuit of demands other than economic ones. The description of the several wage policies and macroeconomic plans to deal with inflation provided in chapter I showed that workers suffered heavy losses in terms of wages. The array of data available on strikes and wage campaigns shows that the unions have tried to match the effects of the inflation on wages. However, because of the pace of inflation rate it seems that they are always «one step behind». That is, there have been no real gains in economic terms. Therefore, this is not a situation

where economic demands are harmful to the system⁶². However, this is not a situation either where the unions or their members pursue economic demands because they are reformist. To contrast economic versus job control goals in terms of reformist versus revolutionary aims in this context seems to be meaningless since union and employer power is uneven. The power of the unions depends for example, as suggested above, on the labour market and on the economic situation (Cf. Hill [1981:128]). Therefore, the concentration of labour action in the Brazil of the 1980s around economic demands seems to indicate the effect of constraints of the economic situation on labour action rather than a *a priori* social construction by which unions pursue reformist goals instead of revolutionary aims.

On the other hand, a dividing line between economic and job control demands does not allow us to understand labour action in the Brazil of the 1980s because some unions have been putting forward demands for wage increase, professional situation and job control at the same level. In fact, in spite of the economic situation restricting the pursuit of more radical goals, the Data Processing Workers' Union has been demanding the regulation of working conditions particularly in relation to the number of keystrokes performed hourly and diseases provoked by exposure to computer screens. Clearly, tight regulation on these matters can harm employers' profits.

⁶² It must be said that in this situation perhaps economic demands may be harmful to small/medium size firms which cannot cope with the costs of labour, raw materials and other factors of production, but big companies seem to go «untouched» by the inflation rate. However, this does not seem to harm the system as a whole. In case of the banks, in spite of all economic policies and plans to reduce inflation, they have been reporting huge profits throughout the years.

On the other hand, radical demands for the right to elect a manager (in the case of the Urban Workers' Union) or headteachers (in the case of the Teachers' Association) can be harmful not only to management discretion but also to the political system because of the impact it would cause on the habit of trading political support for posts in the state apparatus.

5. DEMANDS AND THE INTERNAL DIVISIONS OF THE *CATEGORIAS*

Tavares de Almeida ([1975]. Cf. Moisés [1979:61]; and Rodrigues [1979:52]) argued that the unionism which was emerging in Brazil was a business-oriented one, like American unionism. Thus, for her it was a kind of «a-politicized» unionism. Moreover, it was led by militants who held jobs in the most dynamic sectors of the economy and earned high wages. They would then constitute a sort of labour aristocracy.

Humphrey ([1979a]; [1979b]; [1980] and [1982]. Cf. M.H.M. Alves [1984:90]; Castro [1990:131]; Keck [1989:265-6]; and Vianna [1991:22]) has dismissed such a thesis by showing that there has not been that kind of labour aristocracy. That kind of labour aristocracy identified by Engels and Lenin, whose characteristics were analysed by Hobsbawm [1984] and [1986], was not to be found in modern Brazilian capitalism. Moreover, the labour aristocracy as a classical phenomenon of the labour movement was restricted to a period roughly defined between 1850 up to 1914 of British capitalism.

Alves says that many Brazilian social scientists were in a hurry to identify the increasing differentiation within the working class structure in terms of dynamic and traditional

industries with the particular situation of Great Britain.

However, according to her:

"This differentiation is meaningless in terms of the labour movement and class political actions...It is that would-be conservative working sector that has been in prominence in terms of fights, resistance and militancy" (V.B.A. Alves [1984:140]).

In other words, there is a higher rank within the Brazilian working class, but it does not constitute a labour aristocracy with demands of their own (For a critique of such a thesis in relation to Latin American countries, see Jelin & Torre [1982])⁶³.

I do not argue that there is anything like a labour aristocracy. Indeed, I agree with Humphrey and Alves that there is no such phenomenon in Brazil. However, I will argue that most of the union leaders were (are) from ranks which are better off and this has influenced the outcome of the disputes.

Nevertheless, this influence is not necessarily a negative one. An analysis of the main labour leaders shows that they were (are) part of a higher rank either in terms of skill/formal education or in terms of wages. Moreover, many strikes have been led by workers whose jobs are either in strategic geographical areas or in strategic areas of production. It seems that the more workers feel secure in their jobs, the more they feel secure to strike. These workers are mainly those whose job requires high levels of training and who are paid relative higher wages. They are also those

⁶³ See also Roxborough [1981:85] where he analyses

"the reification of the supposed dichotomy of the economy into a marginal pole and a dynamic manufacturing sector...".

who hold jobs in key plants (this is related to the size of the productive units). They have been termed «core workers» because of their strategic importance (Cf. Mangabeira [1991]) and, in many industries, they have been in the forefront of labour action and have been playing strategic roles in such action.

In the years following Humphrey's criticisms on the labour aristocracy thesis, many analysts of the Brazilian union and labour movement have adopted his position without going further in deepening his analysis. He showed that the labour aristocracy thesis lacked empirical support, but he did not say that there were no divisions in the Brazilian working class. He showed that the demands of the higher ranks were no different from what was demanded by other workers, but he did not say that every *categoria* or every group of workers have to behave in the same way as seems to be implied by many analysts. I therefore argue that one has to deepen the analysis and look at the strategies put forward by the radical leaders to link in a single collective action the different positions (in terms of power and control on the labour market) arising from the rank-and-file, since the internal differences in terms of being better off or not were exploited by employers to try to divide labour action.

Data shows that in many cases employers offered proposals to meet labour demands whose content was aimed to explore these internal divisions in the labour movement. Their strategy was to offer higher wage increases to the better off, seen as the backbone of a given movement. By doing so they tried to provoke divisions within the labour movement because if the better off were to finish the strike or to accept

agreements with such differentials they would return to work, leaving the lower ranks without support. The employers' strategy had varied effects. Indeed, because of the fact that, firstly, not all workers or groups of workers belonging to the same *categoria* exert the same level of control over the labour market; secondly, because not all workers are part of an enlightened political vanguard; and thirdly, because workers' political behaviour may vary - the employers' proposals met with different reactions from the workers targeted.

During the 1982 wage campaign of the Urban Workers' Union at the *Companhia de Eletrificação de Pernambuco* (CELPE), the management tried to divide the workers by offering a proposal which would benefit the better off. However, the union kept up its pressure on the negotiations for the company to accept the union's proposal by which workers with the lowest wages were to receive higher wage increases, which was backed by the union's general assembly (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 1 Oct. 1982; *Boletim da CUT*, July 1985; *Informe Sindical*, 13-19 Jan. 1986; and *O Eletricitário e Compesianos*, Sept. 1985).

On the other hand, the fact that workers with higher skills have been at the forefront of union action was used, in this same sector, by the government to promote selective repression in order to isolate the movement. During the campaign referred to above, 25 engineers (6 of them being regarded as of the highest skill levels) were dismissed because of their role in the campaign (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 24 June 1986)⁶⁴. The government did so to repress the

⁶⁴ On this day (June 24th 1986), after almost 4 years from their dismissals, the engineers were formally returned to their jobs due to the pressure of the union through a nationwide campaign. See Simões [1989] on the political role

movement as a whole. However, it is interesting to note that it was aimed at those who played a major role in events. These two events, on the one hand, give support to Humphrey's and Alves's view that the thesis of the labour aristocracy lacks empirical support (Cf. Castro [1990:151]). On the other hand, they show that the fact that the movement has been led by, and sometimes depended on, skilled workers, is of major importance both in the strategy put forward by management when dealing with the union movement and on the dilemmas faced by the unions when having to unite interests and demands of different sectors of the same *categoria* in a single action to face management strategies.

In 1985, just after the Metalworkers' Union had signed the annual agreement, unskilled workers went on strike because most of the employers were not respecting the agreement in relation to the professional minimum wage. Employers seemed to count on the fact that such workers would not be strong enough to contest this move by going on strike because of the fact that these were the only workers affected by the breach of the agreement. In other words, the fact that employers did not enforce the professional minimum wage did not affect «core workers» and it was expected that they would not get involved in supporting any disputes which were not theirs. However, contrary to the employers' expectations, unskilled workers went on strike to demand that the agreement should be respected. Moreover, the union articulated the participation of «core workers» in the strike and their role proved to be

played by Brazilian engineers as well as their role in trade unions.

important in forcing employers to respect the agreement⁶⁵.

According to a union official:

"The solidarity of the skilled lads was great. They had more to lose than to benefit from their participation, but they took the workers' part and went on strike, everybody stopped..." (Interview No. 9).

Moreover, there are three important facts in the history of the «new unionism» in Pernambuco which illustrate clearly the kind of problems the unions have faced when negotiating their demands, and the moves by the employers to try to divide the labour movement by offering differentiated levels of wage increases.

Firstly, the Teachers' Union has over the years faced the fact that employers have been trying to take some «core teachers» out of the movement by offering higher wage increases before negotiations start. In this sector schools compete for some teachers who are recognised as the «stars» in their field because students wishing to get a place at a university will choose those schools which employ these «stars». Thus, at the beginning of each academic year, the schools will advertise based on the quality of their teachers in order to attract these students because their share of the market depends on the quality of their staff.

Because of their unique situation in the labour market these teachers would be in a strong position to negotiate their wages independently of the union. What commonly seems to happen is that employers have been trying to negotiate the wage of these teachers before the annual agreements. This is

⁶⁵ See M.H.M. Alves [1984:90]; Humphrey [1979a:75]; and Mangabeira [1991], on similar cases in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro states. See also Engelstein [1982], on a similar phenomenon in Moscow in 1905.

so because of the central role these teachers are able to play in the negotiations.

Many of the militants who started participating in the union from 1979 onwards belonged to this privileged rank. According to some accounts, these teachers are more sensitive to political issues and concerned about political militancy. In this case they would combine a privileged position in the labour market with a great sense of their professional value and political consciousness. This has been used by the union to overcome employers' strategies to divide the *categoria* during negotiations and to enhance the union's strength *vis-à-vis* employers (Cf. interview No. 38).

"These teachers, in general, are highly committed militants and they use their power in the labour market as an weapon...When the *categoria* goes on strike they support it by threatening to resign if other teachers are dismissed. For example, if Mr. R.P. resigns from his post at the *Colégio C.* a great number of students will follow him to another school because he is considered the best teacher of physics in Recife. Now he uses this power to help the organization of the *categoria*. These teachers have a good relationship with the union. Indeed, most of them are members of the political forces that rule the union...They give us strength to put pressure on the employers. If they stop, the schools offer better proposals" (Interview No. 52).

Secondly, in 1986 the Pernambuco state government tried to divide a state schools teachers' strike by offering a higher wage increase for those teachers who already earned better wages. Since 1984 the Teachers' Association had been campaigning for a professional minimum wage for the teachers of primary classes which was to be worth three times the national minimum wages (Cf. *Informativo APENOPE*, Jan.-March 1986). In October 1985 the Teachers' Association won twice the national minimum wage as the professional minimum wage to be earned by teachers of primary classes and an agreement that

this and the professional minimum wage for other teachers would increase soon (Cf. Pamphlet *Colega Professor(a)*, May 1986; and *Informativo APENOPE*, July-Sept. 1986)⁶⁶. However, by May 1986 the government had not increased the professional minimum wage for all teachers and was also trying to divide the movement by offering a lower increase for all teachers, apart from the teachers of primary classes, to whom it offered nothing (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 24 May 1986)⁶⁷.

"In its recent decree sent to the Legislative Assembly the government has forgotten the teachers of primary classes. We ask students' parents: is it fair for a teacher of primary classes, the basis of education, to earn Cz\$ 1,700.00 as the *cesta básica* established by the government itself costs Cz\$ 3,740.00? (Pamphlet *Carta aos Pais e Alunos*, June 1986)...[Moreover], it does not establish a professional minimum wage for anybody" (Pamphlet *Companheiro Servidor*, Aug. 1986).

However, the strategy of the government to divide the movement was clear to the association, which declared:

"The government has ignored the teacher of primary classes in its decree just sent to the Legislative Assembly. By proposing only to increase the wages of teachers with a college degree, the government tries to divide the *categoria*. However, this political tactic has been detected and repudiated by us. The fight must be undertaken by everybody and from the base - the teacher of primary classes. By offering an increase only to teachers with a college degree, the government is thinking of the *categoria* segment which is best mobilized. But we must realise that primary class teachers number about 12,000 people" (Pamphlet *A Professora de 1ª à 4ª Séries*, Aug. 1986).

The association faced this problem by the massive use of

⁶⁶ On the chronology of negotiations between the association and the government from 1984 to 1986, see *APENOPE Boletim Especial*, May 1986. On the agreement on the part of the government that it would concede the demands of the association, see *Diário Oficial*, 23 Oct. 1985.

⁶⁷ On the content of the government's proposal, see the letter No. 18/86, 3 July 1986, which the association sent to the Secretary for Education of Pernambuco. This letter reprints the main points of such proposal.

pamphlets and extra newspapers to support its view on the government's manoeuvres, for "as a form of collective activity they [strikes] require the development of a degree of unity among those involved..." (Batstone et al. [1978:1]). It was argued that if the government's proposals were to be accepted this would divide the movement and that this would cause major problems to the *categoria* in a long term perspective (See Hill [1981:147] on a similar argument). What the government actually intended, according to the association's officials, was to face a weak movement and nobody would benefit from it, except the government itself (See Hill [1981:130]). It was also argued that the main aim of the association and the teachers was to raise the standard of teaching in Pernambuco. By doing so, the association intended to show that no educational system could be good enough if the first base of education - the primary class teachers - were to earn low wages (Cf. *Comando de Greve - Boletim* No. 5, Sept. 1986)⁶⁸.

"The main support of education is primary teaching. One cannot think of changing the educational system without first taking into consideration the role of the primary class teachers" (*Informativo APENOPE*, Oct. 1986).

On the other hand, the association's proposals linked together the economic interests of the different levels within this *categoria*. The association did not propose a wage increase in terms of pure percentages to match inflation. Instead, it proposed a minimum wage for each rank of the

⁶⁸ On this point, in a British context, Batstone et al. [1978:3] say that:

"two related elements appear...to be of crucial importance in strike action: first, patterns of influence among the workers concerned, and, second, a range of vocabularies or systems of arguments which can be employed in relation to collective action".

categoria with a gap of 15% between each of them. This had two aims: firstly, an increase based on a minimum wage would not suffer from the shortcomings of an increase based on pure percentage because the federal government decrees periodical increases in the national minimum wage. Thus, any increase in the national minimum wage would cause the teachers' wages to increase. Secondly, by linking the levels of wages by a difference of 15% between each of them, the association intended to impede the government's attempts to reduce some wages while increasing others. In other words, any increase for a given rank of the *categoria* would mean a general increase for everybody. Thus, by linking together the wages of these different ranks the association tried to avoid defections of any of these ranks when negotiating wage increases.

It seems that this general strategy was successful, for in the end the government had to accept the demands of the association, which was able to declare that:

"The great symbol of this movement is the strong unity that has been built within the *categoria* around the same objectives by teachers at all levels of teaching" (*Comando de Greve - Boletim* No. 4, Aug. 1986).

On the other hand, defections were minimal and did not comprise any sizeable batch of teachers able to get their wage increases by their solitary action⁶⁹. Moreover, there is

⁶⁹ This is clearly an example of a union having to deal with the problem of free-riding. Olson [1982] inaugurated a debate in rational choice theory by arguing that

"the larger the group, the more likely its individual members will feel that their not joining collective actions to secure public goods would have little impact on the group's activity as a whole. Thus there is no rational reason for an individual to expend energy, time and other costs in contributing to attain a good which would be available anyway" (Barbalet [1991-92]. Cf.

evidence that these defections were due to threats by the government to dismiss those not teaching after thirty days on strike and not to release teachers' payment (Cf. *Comando de Greve - Boletim* No. 3, Aug. 1986; and *Diário de Pernambuco*, 7 Aug. 1986).

Another fact which can be accounted for in the analysis of this problem, but with a different outcome, is the process of internal divisions during the wage campaign of the bank workers in 1986.

The Bank Workers' Union represents workers from both private and state-owned banks. Over the years the evolution of the organization of workers has led to a single list of demands drawn up in regional assemblies and to attempts for a unified national wage campaign (Cf. interview No. 47). This does not mean that the process of negotiation with employers is unified. As will be shown in chapter VI, there are different levels of negotiation in this sector. This means that workers try to maintain the negotiations based on a single strategy although with different negotiators. For instance, workers of federal state-owned banks like the *Banco do Brasil's* employees have been negotiating directly with governmental negotiators whereas employees of private banks have been negotiating minor points at regional level and major points at national level with employers' unions (See chapter VI on this point).

On the other hand, the *Banco do Brasil's* employees have

Crouch [1982]; Friedman [1983]; and Muller & Opp [1986]).

A critique inside the rational choice framework of Olson's work can be found in Hardin [1982]. Other critiques are also found in Booth [1978] and Johnson [1988].

played a major role in negotiations because of the central role of this bank in the Brazilian financial system. This bank holds the exclusiveness of being responsible for the *Câmara de Compensação* (cheque clearing house), which functions legally as a place where banks exchange each other's cheques. By being able to halt all banks, private or state-owned, when closing down the *Câmara de Compensação* (cheque clearing house), the employees of this bank have played an important role in negotiations because they have been able to back private banks' employees.

"When the union is able to close the [*Câmara de Compensação*] it halts the financial institutions because it stops financial accounting. When it blockades the [*Câmara de Compensação*] it halts all banks, the whole of the financial community as well as other companies" (Interview No. 51).

"The movement in this sector has been dependent on the role of the *Banco do Brasil*'s employees because when the *Banco do Brasil* goes on strike and closes the [*Câmara de Compensação*] it guarantees the success of the fight in the private sector. Now less than earlier. But there is still a great expectation because the *Banco do Brasil* is a strategic bank in terms of power to damage bankers' profits. If the bankers profit, they can face a long strike but they will negotiate and discuss the *categoria*'s demands if their profits are affected" (Interview No. 47. Cf. interview No. 23).

Moreover, in the case of Pernambuco, the *Banco do Brasil* is also the point of emergence of the «new unionism» militancy which opposed the conservative officials running the Bank Workers' Union since 1965 (Cf. interview No. 23). In this case, the bank represented both a strategic and a political stronghold in terms of its employees opposing employers as well as being the fountainhead of radical militancy. This means that radical militants secured unity of action in terms of forcing employers to negotiate by holding back the end of strikes in the *Banco do Brasil*.

However, this unity was broken down by the refusal of most of *Banco do Brasil's* employees to go on strike in 1986 when they were offered a satisfactory proposal.

"The *Banco do Brasil's* employees weakened the movement politically by refusing to go on strike. At that moment the private banks' employees were forced to stop the strike because of lack of political strength and did not get a good result from negotiations with the bankers" (Interview No. 45).

Moreover, the *Câmara de Compensação* (cheque clearing house) carried on functioning, which did not cause much trouble to the financial system. This was seen by the conservative officials and radical militants alike as the cause of the failure of a first strike which took place between 23 March and 2 April 1986 (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 8 May 1986). The result was that the movement weakened because private banks' employees could no longer rely on being backed by their counterparts in the public sector. On the other hand, employers were able to exploit the internal divisions of the movement and to propose lower wage increases.

"The labour leaders at the *Banco do Brasil* did not persuade their colleagues to go on strike, which gave employers strong motives to exploit the divisions in our fight" (*O Defensor*, Dec. 1986).

Although private banks' employees were able to carry on their strike for some time, they were less able to gain what they had been demanding, at least at the levels they were asking for (Cf. *Boletim dos Bancários de Pernambuco*, Sept. 1986; *O Defensor: Boletim Especial*, Oct. 1986; *O Defensor*, Dec. 1986; and *Boletim dos Bancários de Pernambuco*, Sept. 1987).

This, of course, provoked bitter divisions within the movement. Many private banks' employees became angry with the

Banco do Brasil's employees, calling them «traitors of the *categoria*». According to radical militants, they had to rebuild the fabric of the union movement in this sector. It seems that after this event private banks' employees have become less dependent in terms of expectations on the role to be played by the *Banco do Brasil*. This has led to some differentiation in terms of what employees of different banks have got from their negotiations with employers (Cf. interview No. 54). However, the radical militants have been trying, mainly after they took over the union in 1988, to build unity around these differences (Cf. interview No. 47). Their strategy has been to draw up lists of demands which incorporate what has already been won by some ranks of the *categoria*. In other words, if employees of the *Banco do Brasil* have won a given demand which is important for the movement as a whole, the union campaigns around this and other issues for the whole *categoria*. This has been so in order to overcome some feeling within the movement that the *Banco do Brasil*'s employees are the «aristocrats» because of the level of their wages and the strategic importance of the bank. The union has been able to rebuild the unity of the movement by arguing that the *categoria* has to fight to win what the *Banco do Brasil*'s employees have already got, and not the other way around.

6. THE ROLE OF THE WORKERS' COMMITTEES AND THE NEW DEMANDS

Some authors have argued that the «new unionism» emerged through the existence of workers' committees. According to Maroni [1982], the main characteristic of the strikes of May 1978 in São Paulo was the role played by such committees.

These strikes were not organized by the unions. Instead, they were organized by the workers' committees, which were not formally linked to union structure. Militants had been organizing committees to strengthen the position of the workers *vis-à-vis* the employers. Thus, these committees were established as a means of organizing the workers at their workplace and helping them to channel their demands. This was made possible because such committees were in touch with demands arising from the workplace. When strikes occurred and the unions were called in, the workers refused to let them play any role. Instead, they elected their own committees to negotiate with the employers.

Humphrey also viewed this as an important point for strengthening the power of the unions in negotiations. As he points out:

"...[A] problem that faces the unions is the question of trade-union organization in the workplace. In 1978 and 1979, many firms responded to the strike movements by firing those workers considered to be the organizers, and as a result of this policy, the unions were weaker by mid-1979 than they had been a year earlier" [1979a:82].

In this section I shall analyse the role the workers' committees played in the emergence of new demands in Pernambuco. My argument is that such committees played a minor role (For a similar point, see Keck [1989:266ff.]). Left-wing militants took over most of the unions without the previous existence of factory/workers' committees. The only experience of such a committee was that of the metalworkers. In other cases the committees were established after left-wing militants took over the unions. In other words, committees did not contribute, at least in Pernambuco, towards the emergence of the «new unionism» and new demands. Instead, the unions

have played an important role in establishing them.

What seems to have happened was that during the process of wage campaigns, radical militants put pressure on the conservative union officials to form wage committees, which would then negotiate on behalf of the workers. Therefore, they did not play the role attributed to the workers' committees by Maroni for the case of São Paulo. According to her, such committees existed before formal wage campaigns took place and they played an important role in organizing the rank-and-file to strike and win their demands.

Mangabeira [1991] has shown that there is a link between the «new unionism» and disputes arising from the shop-floor. However, she also shows that the «new unionism» union she analysed was able to incorporate new demands in spite of the difficulties in implementing factory committees.

In Pernambuco, committees arising from the workplace did not exist prior to the emergence of the «new unionism», apart from the case of the Metalworkers' Union. In fact, a clandestine committee existed in one factory in the metal sector. Many of the radical militants who took over the Metalworkers' Union in 1981 were members of this committee and, as seen above, they influenced the list of demands in 1978. However, they did not do so as a factory committee, but as members of a wider group who opposed the conservative officials.

When these radical unionists took over the union in 1981 the establishment of factory committees continued to be pursued without much success. These unionists were finally able to establish one committee in the *COSINOR* in the mid-1980s, which did not survive long in the face of fierce

repression undertaken by the management. However, in spite of these facts, this union has been successful in presenting new demands. A look at the kind of demands presented by this union shows that although factory committees have not been established the union has presented demands arising from the shop-floor, which are directly linked to the workplace environment.

Also the Bank Workers' Union did not have workers' committees up to the mid-1980s. Moreover, contrary to the experience of the Metalworkers' Union, when a committee was established in this sector it was not linked to the union. Indeed, the members of this committee were also members of the opposition group.

This committee has played a minor role in the whole movement in this sector because its influence is restricted to the *Banco do Brasil*. Therefore, other employees have not, in this sector, counted on it to express their demands. However, new demands have been added to the lists of demands presented each year in spite of the fact that such committees were not widespread throughout the whole sector and that the conservative officials did nothing in order to have them established.

Both the Teachers' Association and Union have never succeeded in winning the right to establish teachers' committees. However, since 1979 these labour organizations have been in the forefront of the labour movement in Pernambuco. In fact, in the case of the Teachers' Union, the different political factions within the union managed to present new demands which were related to problems faced by the rank-and-file. Although part of this opposition had to

share power with the «old guard», since 1979 communists and Trotskyists alike started putting forward new demands not only related to new aspects of labour relations to be regulated but also in relation to new indexes related to wage increases. This happened in spite of the fact that the radicalism of the new unionists was not strong enough to break the resistance of school owners in order to establish workers' committees. On the other hand, when the Teachers' Association was not able to present any demands at all this happened because of government pressure on this organization. But as soon as the association was able to recover, it once again started putting forward demands related to both economic, political and professional aspects of working life.

Both the Urban Workers' and the Data Processing Workers' Unions are perhaps the most successful labour organizations in this sample to establish workers' committees. The former started establishing them from 1985 and has won the right to establish these committees in the three companies where it unionizes workers. The latter has been establishing such committees in the state-owned companies since 1988. However, when these unions started presenting new demands which were different from the «old» unionism in qualitative and quantitative terms they did so without being helped by such committees. What seems to have happened is that these committees have been established as an expansion of union power. In fact, the former started presenting new demands from 1979 when the radical opposition group was able to influence the list of demands and continued to do so after it took over the union in 1980. The latter was founded in 1985 and since then had been presenting demands related to many aspects of

working life.

What seems a much more common experience is the election of different committees which are temporary. In fact, since 1979 when the first signs of a «new unionism» emerged in Pernambuco, a very common experience has been that of wage committees (See M.H.M. Alves [1984:91] and [1989:54]). This constitutes a common factor for all these unions. This was a strategy of radical unionists to participate in union affairs and influence the demands which were to be negotiated. The role to be played by these committees has been to write down the demands suggested by a given *categoria* and negotiate them together with union officials. These committees have a short lifespan circumscribed by periods of wage campaigns. Of course, they have the right to job stability for some time after wage campaigns in order to avoid managerial pressures but they have not played a major role in union structure in terms of being a permanent «bridge» between the unions and the shop-floor.

The emergence of «new» demands seems to be due to the new kind of relationship between radical militants and/or union officials, and the rank-and-file. In fact, one remembers that the «old guard» did not care much about the membership having a say on the lists of demands (Cf., for example, interviews Nos. 4, 7 and 8). They used to present a very short list of demands which were mainly linked to wage increases and which reproduced the indexes decreed by the government. The rank-and-file had only the right to know that their wages had been increased. The emergence of the «new unionism» means that this relationship has changed. Radical militants asked for assemblies in which the rank-and-file could express their

demands. They also started going to factory gates in order to find out what the membership's demands are. A third means of doing so has been the increasing use of questionnaires which are distributed by these militants in order to ascertain what the membership wishes to demand and its main problems.

Therefore, according to data presented here, factory or workers' committees have not played a major role at all, at least in Pernambuco, in putting forward new demands. These new demands have arisen from the new kind of relationship between militants and/or officials, and the membership through which the latter started playing an important role in the framing of lists of demands to be discussed during the negotiations for renewal of annual agreements. When these committees were established, they were simply used as a means by which the unions could reinforce their presence at the workplace.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter was to discuss four related aspects of the emergence of the so-called «new» demands. Firstly, there was analysis of the evolution of these «new» demands and the extent to which they were new demands. Moreover, there was analysis of the extent to which the rank-and-file has been willing to pursue these «new» demands in face of the high inflation rates that have been hitting the country. Thirdly, there was analysis of the internal divisions of the *categorias* and how this affected the efforts of the «new unionism» to win demands. Finally, came analysis of the role of factory/workers' committees in the emergence of «new» demands.

It was shown that undoubtedly the emergence of radical militants and their participation in union affairs affected the quality and quantity of demands the unions have been putting forward to be negotiated. These groups have influenced union life by pointing out the need for new demands to be negotiated. These «new» demands are related to issues ranging from wage increases to professional aspects of the labour world. However, these «new» demands have been put forward in a context of high inflation rates. There is evidence that this has limited both the range of effort and the rank-and-file's willingness to carry out strikes and other forms of industrial action for demands other than economic ones when offered a reasonable wage increase.

Most of the *categorias* have been led by militants of higher ranks. On the other hand, «core workers» who earn better wages and occupy strategic sectors have played a major role in disputes throughout the 1980s (See Hill [1981:143]). It was also shown that the divisions within the *categorias* were exploited by employers in order to weaken labour action. Thus, this has presented the unions with additional problems in order to unify the rank-and-file around a single strategy. When employers were successful, this affected the outcome of benefits, both in terms of quality and quantity, won by the unions, as in the case of the 1986 wage campaign in the banking sector. Thus, it was shown that strategic workers have power to influence the outcome of disputes.

Finally, it was also shown that although there is a close link between the new demands and shop-floor politics, factory/workers' committees played a minor role in the emergence of these «new» demands. Indeed, «new» demands emerged from the

new kind of relationship between radical militants and/or union officials, and the rank-and-file by the use of some means by which they have been able to ascertain what the membership seeks to demand.

CHAPTER VI

SOURCES OF UNION MILITANCY II: UNIONS, LEVELS OF NEGOTIATION AND STRIKES

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is the analysis of how the unions have faced negotiations over wages and other labour disputes. One of the main characteristics of the «new unionism» has been its general demand for direct negotiation with employers, without the presence of the State (Alves [1989:52]; Humphrey [1979a:71, 77 and 84]; Keck [1989:254]; Moisés [1979:59-60]; Sarti & Barbosa Fº [1983:318]; Souza & Lamounier [1981:145]; and Tavares de Almeida [1981:161]). According to radical militants, employers and employees should be freed from the constraints imposed on them by the State when negotiating (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 25 July 1978)⁷⁰. Therefore, it was said, these constraints were one of the main reasons why unions could not improve their gains (Cf. Humphrey [1979a:85-6]). Moreover, in a democratic society (or in transition to

⁷⁰ This newspaper reports that on July 24th a group of radical militants had released a document during the V National Congress of Industrial Workers in which they criticized the fact that workers could not negotiate directly with employers. In an interview, Lula declared about this point that:

"It was necessary to show that even if we called a meeting about the wage level, it did not matter if 500 or 20,000 workers came since everything would remain the same, because it was the government that decreed the new salary index" (Silva [1979:92]).

democracy), the government should stop dictating what employers and employees could or could not negotiate. In fact, the strikes of 1978-79 in the *ABC paulista* were characterized by face to face negotiations between employers and employees.

Another characteristic of the «new unionism» has been its insistence on the role the shop-floor has to play in the process of presenting demands and participating in negotiations through workplace committees (Moisés [1979:63]). This has been represented by the efforts of the «new unionism» in establishing factory/worker's committees which could channel workers' grievances to the unions as well as represent workers' immediate interests in minor negotiations with employers. Even where unions have not been successful in establishing such committees, they have relied on the role militant workers could play in organizing other workers without the constant presence of the union at the workplace.

Although the division of the economy in public and private sectors is not an important one, as implicitly emphasized by Tavares de Almeida [1975] and Rodrigues [1979], in attempting to characterize the «new unionism», it is the argument of this chapter that in some cases unions cannot avoid the presence of the government during negotiations when the unions represent both private and public sectors' employees. Therefore, it is not the case that unions should or should not avoid the presence of the government. Moreover, in some cases, even when the government is present only as an employer, some unions have demanded that it also be present as a political actor.

Another aspect of this question is that the autonomy of the workers at the workplace has produced some problems of

representation for the unions during negotiations. The increasing organization of the workers at the workplace⁷¹ has led to cases where the unions are barely needed. In these cases, which are related to public sector employees, unions have secured their participation in the negotiations because of the exclusiveness of representation guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution (Cf. Brazilian Constitution, article 8, paragraph VI. For a very good analysis of the monopoly of representation guaranteed to the unions by the 1988 Constitution, see Souza [1990]. See also Tavares de Almeida [1989:162-67]).

Thus, the aim of this chapter is twofold: 1) to discuss how far the unions have been able to avoid the presence of the State in negotiations throughout the 1980s; and 2) to discuss the role unions have played in negotiations which, depending on the workers' status (in terms of public or private sector), are characterized by different levels of bargaining.

2. THE UNIONS, SECTORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS AND LEVELS OF NEGOTIATION

This section is related to an analysis which outlines, on the one hand, the relation between the distribution of the

⁷¹ It is worth noting once again that the power of the workers at the workplace is not reflected solely on them being successful or not in establishing factory committees. The fact that unions have stressed the role workers and militants are to play in their own organization have enhanced this power. As seen throughout the former chapters, unions have not been very successful in establishing such committees in Pernambuco. However, unions have had a great deal of success in securing the participation of the workers in the wage campaigns and strikes. This has been so because of other links established by the unions with the workers at the workplace.

workers in terms of public and private sectors and the presence of the State in the processes of negotiation. On the other hand, it analyses the different levels of negotiation depending on the status of the workers represented by the union.

The unions of my sample are of three kinds: 1) one which represents only private sector employees; 2) three which represent both private and public sector employees; and 3) two which represent only public sector employees.

A wage campaign in these unions, as in other unions in the country, starts with preceding talks between union officials and militants at the workplace, except in the case of the Bank Workers' Union up to 1988 as described in chapters IV and V. These talks are aimed at outlining a preliminary list of demands to be put forward for future discussions with the general assembly.

The next step is to promote several local meetings (Cf. Alves [1989:54]; and Humphrey [1979a:77]). These meetings are held according to geographical areas or by sectors or both. The aim of such meetings is to get to know what both general and specific demands of each area and/or sector are. Also during these meetings the unions try to have some local representatives elected. These workers, representing different sectors or geographical areas, will constitute, together with union officials, a committee for negotiation. On the other hand, if the union already has a structure of union delegates or workers' committees, as in the cases of both the Data Processing Workers' and the Urban Workers' Unions, it will rely mainly on this structure to build up the list of demands.

Next is the job of synthesizing the several outcomes of

these small meetings into a single list of demands which will be presented to the general assembly to be amended and ratified.

Then the union will communicate to the employers, mainly through the Regional Labour Office (DRT), that negotiations should start (On the role of the Regional Labour Office [DRT] in collective negotiations, see Souza [1985]). Once notified, the employers will answer by trying to establish a date and a venue for the first talks. The number of meetings between union officials and employers will depend on the willingness of both sides to agree on the nature and extension of demands. If no compromise is reached during the negotiations and they get nowhere, the process will be taken to the Regional Labour Court (TRT) (Cf. Humphrey [1979c:224]; and interviews Nos. 25, 26, 36 and 54).

During the negotiations, the unions will use a number of different tactics to achieve an agreement with the employers. These tactics will depend on the nature of the industry, the strength of the main companies and on the unions' estimation on how divided employers are.

2.1. The Teachers' Union

This union represents only workers from private schools in Pernambuco. It has been demanding to have negotiations held directly with the employers since first experiencing the presence of radical militants in discussions during the 1979 wage campaign. Breaking with the pattern of wage settlements followed by this union, which was to accept the government's wage policies without discussion, radical militants urged the

conservative officials to negotiate higher wage increases with employers.

"The president of the [Teachers'] Union said that the teachers will opt for direct negotiations with the employers and will give them a time limit for the demands to be analysed and answered" (*Jornal do Comércio*, 24 April 1979).

On that occasion a committee for negotiation was proposed by the radical militants and approved by the assembly to talk directly with the employers (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 4 May 1979). The schools' owners did not accept the teachers' demands and they went on strike. Eventually, the State became involved through the Regional Labour Office (DRT) to mediate the dispute with a proposal of an average wage increase intended to satisfy both the employers and employees (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 31 May 1979). No settlement was reached and the union took the dispute for judgement by the Regional Labour Court (TRT) (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 2 and 6 June 1979).

This pattern of negotiation has been followed over the years by this union. In spite of its efforts to undertake direct negotiations with the employers, the State, of necessity, continues to be invited as ultimate arbitrator in the settlement of wage disputes, although this is no longer a legal requirement. This has been so because of an almost recurrent zero-sum game⁷² in which neither party is able to convince the other about the fairness of its proposal or even

⁷² I am not employing this term as defined by rational choice theorists (Cf., for example, Hardin [1982:141]). It is just used here to express the puzzle faced by parties in disputes on wage negotiations when each one is unable to force one another to accept its own proposal.

to force the other to accept such a proposal⁷³. What this union has been able to do is to undertake direct negotiation around minor demands which are settled without the participation of the governmental agencies. In general, the process of negotiation starts about two months before the date on which the annual wage agreement is due to be signed.

"The [employers] accept our invitation to negotiate. They attend the meetings, but they waste time by just delaying the main discussion. It takes hours and hours of discussions and, at the end, when we are about to discuss wages, they hold back. Then, we go on strike" (Interview No. 52; Cf. interviews No. 38 and 41).

This means that either the Regional Labour Office (DRT) or the Regional Labour Court (TRT) have to intervene in the dispute. The former has no power to oblige the disputing parties to accept its proposal but plays a major role in presenting and securing a proposal to be accepted by all parties (Cf. interview No. 36). The latter had, until 1988, power to judge and arbitrate a final settlement which was to be accepted by employers and employees alike (Interviews Nos. 26, 34 and 37; Alves [1989:43]; and Humphrey [1979c:224 and 231]).

There is only one level of negotiation at this union. In fact, as it represents only private schools' teachers, this means that it does not have to deal with different employers in the sense of private and public sectors. On the other hand, private schools are not branches of national companies. In

⁷³ On the entrepreneurs' views on negotiations on labour disputes, see Abramo [1986]. This author uses data from the research named "Estrutura e Representação Sindical no Brasil" carried out in 5 Brazilian states: São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Rio G. do Sul and Pernambuco. See also Humphrey [1979c:238-9]. For a more recent analysis of the view of both workers and employers on the relation between capital and labour, see Amadeo & Camargo [1990].

other words, they are owned by local entrepreneurs without legal ties with other schools in other Brazilian states. It is worth noting that the largest schools are owned by different orders of the Catholic Church. Even so they are largely independent from other catholic schools spread over the country.

This means that this union has not faced problems in splitting the process of negotiation. The general pattern of negotiation is that described above and this union has only to deal with the Private Schools' Union of Pernambuco which represents schools' owners. In other words, a characteristic process of negotiation for annual agreements in this sector is a unified one.

Although the union represents teachers of all private schools in Pernambuco, its stronghold is the metropolitan region of Recife. Moreover, it is the large schools in this geographical area that matter.

"If we stop all schools in the outskirts of Recife and the largest ones continue to remain open, we get nothing because the small schools have no importance in society ...We have to stop the *Academia Santa Gertrudes, Marista, Nóbrega, Salesiano, Boa Viagem, Contato, Atual, São Bento, Dom Bosco*...These are the fundamental schools" (Interview No. 52. Cf. interview No. 43).

"The large schools of the town centre concentrate the majority of the students. These are schools with from 2,000 up to 5,000 students and if we close them we will cause the majority of the students to forego classes. This is how we analyse a strike. So that when we go on strike our aim is not to close small schools, our aim is to close the large ones for the strike to be successful. If we close 20 small schools with 50-200 students this represents nothing" (Interview No. 40. Cf. interview No. 38).

Thus, the union makes a great effort to mobilize the largest schools which are situated in the town centre. These are mainly the catholic schools and a number of lay schools

whose main teaching is aimed for those willing to get a place at the universities. It is also in these schools where the union has its greatest concentration of activists (Interviews Nos. 38 and 43). In order to secure a good deal during negotiations through a strike, it has to close these schools. Then, its activists drawn from the large schools will picket other medium-size schools. The small schools do not play any role in this process.

Such action also allows the union to publicize the campaign's aims through closing the large schools. These factors have to be taken into consideration for a successful deal with the schools' owners because of the newsworthiness of thousands of students missing classes in these schools and because of the influence the large schools have on the schools' owners' union.

2.2. The Bank Workers' Union

This union represents employees from both private and state-owned banks. Most of the private bank employees are hired by branches of banks whose headquarters are in other states. Only two of the banks that have branches in Pernambuco have their headquarters in this state. On the other hand, state-owned banks employees are from federal state banks and banks owned by different Brazilian states.

Contrary to the experience of the Teachers' Union, this union does not follow a unified campaign. Although a single national list of demands has been the aim of the bank workers' union movement in the country (Keck [1989:272]), the fact that the union represents workers from different legal ownerships

and administrative levels means that it has to negotiate with different bodies at a number of levels. On the one hand, when representing private banks' employees, this union has to talk with private employers and follows the same pattern of negotiations as the Teachers' Union. On the other hand, when representing state-owned banks' employees this union has to face the State as a mediator and as an employer as well. In this case, while the Teachers' Union has to face the presence of the State as a mediator, an «outsider», the Bank Workers' Union has to face it both as a mediator and as an employer.

As seen in chapters IV and V, the opposition group emerged in this union in late 1970s. It put forward demands for the union to negotiate directly with the employers. Although there were direct talks between the union's president and the employers at that time, these did not correspond to what the «new unionism» understands by direct negotiations. The union's president used to ask the general assembly for formal authorization to negotiate with employers. However, this did not involve the participation of the rank-and-file and/or militants through committees for negotiation nor its participation in the making of the list of demands (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 10 Sept. 1978).

There are three levels of talks within this sector during the wage campaigns: 1) talks with private employees; 2) talks with the Pernambuco state-owned bank; and 3) talks with the federal state-owned banks.

At the first level, the employers' strategy has been similar to the strategy of the schools' owners. Commonly, minor demands will be negotiated while wage settlements will be delayed and finally taken to the labour court.

The Bank Workers' Union represents workers from a number of private banks. Banks exist through a national network of branches in several states and towns. Therefore, the several Bank Workers' Unions in the country have been trying to establish a national list of demands as referred to above. However, this does not mean that there are no talks at the regional level. Indeed, a number of talks takes place between the Bank Workers' Union of Pernambuco and the Union of Banks of Pernambuco, which represents the employers. This is so because there are specific demands in each state and because the agreement to be signed between the two parties is to be ratified within the jurisdiction of Pernambuco State. It must be said, however, that up to 1988, the period during which this union was ruled by conservative unionists, these talks were formal ones because the agreement reached between the bank workers' national committee for negotiation and the bankers' federation was taken as valid by the parties for Pernambuco and a regional agreement was shortly to be settled and ratified by the Regional Labour Court (TRT).

However, there is evidence that the opposition group tried to influence the process by pressing for talks not only on the supervision of the agreement's enforcement but also for settlement of local issues not covered by the national agreement. As explained in chapter IV, the opposition played a central role in wage campaigns and strikes in this sector (For a description of the typical tasks performed by the opposition during negotiations and strikes, see *Informe Sindical*, 26 Aug.-1 Sept. 1985). Thus, in spite of the conservative officials' approach to the negotiation, the opposition's pressure meant that talks had to be held for

settlement of local issues (Cf. interview No. 47). This has become increasingly apparent after the radical unionists took over the union.

Two of the private banks - *Banco Nacional do Norte* and *Banco Mercantil de Pernambuco* - have their central headquarters in Pernambuco. This means that they carry a great weight in talks partly due to their importance in the economy of the state and also due to the large number of their branches in the state. On the other hand, great national banks with a large number of branches in Pernambuco, mainly *BRADERCO* and *Banco ITAU*, have also played a major role in the negotiation. Therefore, pre 1988 the union often resorted to the use of stoppages at the branches of these banks to secure any results because they constitute a strategic stronghold in the banking sector and in the economy.

In this sector, the union tended to use the labour court to validate national agreements for Pernambuco. This was a common practice undertaken by the conservative unionists. On the other hand, although radical unionists have tried to avoid the use of the labour courts, at least in the settlement of wage disputes, the employers' position towards workers' demands is also important. Thus, if negotiations are in a stalemate, the union is forced by this and by the rank-and-file to use the labour courts as a means to get the dispute resolved.

"During this year's campaign [1990] this became clear. At the national level, the bank workers reached an agreement with the bankers without the presence of the labour court. However, in Pernambuco, the *categoria* refused to accept this agreement because it did not guarantee a temporary job stability. We had to maintain the strike for another week because the *categoria* expected to win it at the labour court. This further week expressed the willingness to fight, the workers' strengthen. But, at

the same time, it also represented a political retreat because the *categorica* refused the result of a direct agreement with the employers because it was counting on the interference of the labour court" (Interview No. 45).

On the other hand, the union has also had to negotiate with both federal state-owned and state-owned banks. This means that if the negotiations get nowhere because of state and federal governments' wage policy, the union has to appeal to the labour courts. In the first of these cases, the government will be involved not only as a mediator or as employer but as both.

The second level of negotiations is that at which the union has to talk with the Pernambuco state-owned bank's management. This is so because this state bank is not represented by the bankers' union and the state government has its own wage policy. During the period in which conservative officials run the union the negotiations were held by an informal committee formed by militants of the Workers' Party (PT). The management tried to make it difficult by demanding the presence of union officials. According to some accounts, these officials did not play an important role in these negotiations (Cf. interviews Nos. 23 and 47). After the conservatives were defeated in 1988, the radical officials began to participate more actively in these discussions. Although a formal structure of autonomous representation of employees does not exist in this bank, a more or less informal committee, elected by the employees, still exists and plays the main role in drawing the list of demands to be negotiated with the management.

At this level of negotiation the bank's management does not necessarily represent a "presence of the state in the

labour relations" because the negotiations are likely to be held without the presence of higher ranks of political representation. Thus, the presence of the state at this level occurs if negotiations get nowhere and higher political ranks are called in to negotiate. On the other hand, if the dispute becomes bitter the parties are likely to take it to the labour court which implies the presence of the state in the negotiations.

Finally, another aspect of this question is related to the problem of representativeness. Although there is not a permanent and autonomous workers' committee at the Pernambuco state-owned bank, the temporary committee elected to elaborate a list of demands and negotiate with the management plays the main role in the process of settlement of wage agreements. The union has had a firmer and more constant presence during negotiations as from 1988. However, its role has been defined as a supportive one through which material support and the union's organizational assets are used to help the militants to conduct the wage campaign. As the union stimulates autonomy at the workplace, this may well mean that its role is reduced to being a supportive partner which entails exclusive representativeness through the Brazilian Constitution.

The third level of talks in this sector is related to negotiations with the federal government. As explained above, although a single list of demands is drawn to guide a national campaign, in practice the talks take place at three levels. This third level concerns the employees of federal state-owned banks. In this analysis I use the case of the *Banco do Brasil*'s employees as a paradigm because it provides a clearer illustration than the negotiations in other federal state-

owned banks and will help to clarify the discussion.

The negotiation of these workers with this bank happens at the federal level for at least three major reasons: 1) the federal government is not a member of the bankers' union; 2) the federal government has its own wage policy for the public sector; and 3) the bank's wage and personnel policies are also centralized in Brasília.

"Everything is centralized by the bank's general management in Brasília. What we do in the branches is to execute policies. My task is to supervise these policies, and the development of specific training programmes for this branch by trying to adapt it to the bank's programme and the relationship with this branch's staff. The negotiation of wages happens at the national level through employees' and the bank's representatives and they decide everything. Here we just try to define a common framework for everybody's behaviour during a strike but we do not negotiate values nor sit down to settle an agreement because this happens at the national level" (Interview No. 51).

The national committee for negotiation is formed by workers' delegates (part of the formal structure of representation at the workplace) and representatives elected especially for it (part of a temporary structure of representation) plus officials of some Bank Workers' Unions in the country. The role of the union seems to be the coordination of political support for this negotiation as well as providing a «bridge» between this level and the other levels described above in order to link together negotiations on several fronts. The union also participates for two political reasons: 1) the Brazilian Constitution guarantees the right of exclusive representation to the union. Therefore, there cannot be a settlement of wage agreement without the signature of the union. If the *Banco do Brasil's* employees, for example, go on strike, it is the union's right (or duty), within the framework of the law, to organize the strike and

notify the bank's management. Finally, if the bank's employees want to take the dispute to the labour court it is the duty (or right) of the union to do so; and 2) because of the weakness of the delegates and representatives position without wider grassroots political support. According to a union official:

"Look at the *Banco do Brasil*, for instance. There is a National Association of *Banco do Brasil*'s Staff. However, it is directed by the management, it is the bank that elects the association's officials. This association is *pelega*. The same would happen to the organization of the delegates without the support of the union. The employees need us" (Interview No. 47).

At this level the presence of the union is needed because of the exclusiveness of representation and the political support it provides for the participants of the national committee for negotiation. However, in the long term this poses a problem of representativeness. If *Banco do Brasil*'s employees are capable of developing a firm structure for negotiation strong enough to withstand the management's manoeuvres aiming to control it, it is possible that the role played by the union will decrease to the point where the agreement is signed only because of its constitutional right (duty) to do so.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this is not likely to happen in a scenario where there is a tough governmental approach to labour relations and particularly towards the autonomous organization of employees in the public sector. Therefore, being the union an organization which exists independently from the government's willingness to accept it or not, it is likely to continue to perform a fundamental role in labour relations and settlements of annual agreements.

On the other hand, labour relations at this level are

characterized by the presence of the state both as an employer and as a «mediator». When the negotiating parties find themselves in a stalemate the dispute has to be taken to the Supreme Labour Court (TST) which is part of the state apparatus.

2.3. The Metalworkers' Union

As seen in chapters II and V, the way the conservative leadership of this union behaved towards the rank-and-file during annual wage campaigns was not different from the experience of other unions ruled by «old guard» unionists. The process of wage settlement was like an annual ritual in which the union and employers merely signed an agreement which established the increases allowed by the government (See Humphrey [1979a:78]; and Moisés [1979:55]).

This union represents workers from a number of private companies and the federal state-owned *COSINOR*. However, unlike the federal state-owned banks, the *COSINOR* enjoys far more administrative autonomy and the process of negotiation for wage settlements follows the pattern of that for private companies⁷⁴.

The data available shows that the «new unionism» militants have tried to diminish the presence of the State in direct talks with the employers. The process of negotiation for wage settlements involves a series of preliminary discussions with the rank-and-file about a list of demands to

⁷⁴ See Mangabeira [1991] for an analysis of negotiations in a similar company - the CSN - in Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil.

be negotiated. During this preliminary process a committee for negotiation is elected to participate in talks with employers.

Once again, if no agreement is reached during these talks, as frequently occurs, the disputes are taken to be judged by the Regional Labour Court (TRT).

In the case of the federal state-owned *COSINOR*, in Pernambuco the negotiations take place between union officials and management. Although wage policy for this company is to some extent dictated by the wage policy of the government, it has more autonomy in terms of direct negotiation with the union. One could say that labour relations and negotiations in this company resembles that which occurs in the private sector. On the other hand, it is worth saying that, contrary to the experience of the *Banco do Brasil* in the banking sector, this company is not a branch of a national company nor plays the same strategic role as the *Banco do Brasil*. Thus, wage and other labour disputes settlements are likely to occur in Pernambuco without any interference from the federal government. This means that the Metalworkers' Union has been able to develop a more unified campaign in which it has to face only one level of talks.

The negotiations for the renewal of annual agreements in this union resemble the pattern followed by the Teachers' Union. It has sought to undertake direct talks with employers. However, when negotiations reach a deadlock, the negotiating parties are likely to take their case to the labour court.

2.4. The Data Processing Workers' Union

The structure of representation of this union resembles that of the Bank Workers' Union. It unionizes data processing workers from private and municipal-, state- and federal state-owned companies.

This union was founded by radical unionists who embrace the idea that negotiations between unions and employers should be free from state intervention. However, in practice, this has proved difficult either due to intransigent employers being unwilling to negotiate or to political strategies by which the union tries to improve its position in the negotiations by involving the government as a political actor.

The first of these cases may occur when the union and private employers face a stalemate and get nowhere because each party is unable to convince the other into acceptance of its proposal. On the other hand, this is also likely to happen in negotiations where the union represents federal employees.

The second case happens frequently in the negotiations between this union and the Pernambuco state and Recife municipal governments. The Pernambuco government owns the *FISEPE-CETEPE*, and Recife municipal government owns the *EMPREL*.

In both cases the initial steps in the process of negotiation resemble those of the negotiation in the private and federal spheres. It is also likely to follow that pattern if the parties reach an agreement and go to the Regional Labour Court (TRT) solely in order to ratify it. However, this is not always so. When the union and the management do not reach an agreement, the union has instituted the strategy of

calling in higher hierarchical ranks of the government to get the disputes resolved.

As in the case of the Bank Workers' Union, the wage campaign of the Data Processing Workers' Union is characterized by a national structure for negotiation. However, this is aimed at the negotiations with the federal state-owned companies as will be explained later. The campaign within the private companies, contrary to the experience analysed above, develops solely in Pernambuco because most of the firms are owned by local business people.

The strength of the union is based on the large companies⁷⁵. Although the union has no precise data on the number of companies in this sector in Pernambuco, it estimates that there are about 120 data processing firms in the state (Cf. interviews Nos. 24, 35, 42 and 45).

"If we want to be successful we must put pressure on the areas where the employers will feel most affected. So, we concentrate on the four largest firms because we are likely to force the bosses to negotiate" (Interview No. 42).

"The agreement we settle with the largest companies will be a reference for the rest of the firms. We settle an

⁷⁵ Humphrey [1979a:75-6] points out the effect of the size of the units on the labour relations in the auto industry. In spite of the obvious differences in size units between São Paulo and Pernambuco states, his analysis may be extended to this case. He says:

"A...factor which influences labour relations in the auto industry is the rapid growth of the industry itself. This has two distinct effects. On the one hand, the growth of industry and the development of large factories employing thousands of workers breaks down paternalistic industrial relations and makes the division between capital and labour more apparent. In smaller plants workers are under the direct supervision of the top management and the owners, and their union and organizing activities are more subject to pressure...On the other hand, the growth of the dynamic sectors gave the trade union an expanding base on which to develop its organization and an easy target for allegations of high profits and low wages".

agreement with these companies and we do not campaign in the small ones. We just ask the labour court to validate the agreement for all companies. If we go to campaign at the small firms they will say that they cannot afford the wage increases and so on. In general, they are very small, they are mainly *softhouses* [software houses] with 4 or 5 employees" (Interview No. 28. Cf. interview No. 24).

There have not been stoppages involving a large number of private firms in this sector. This is so because of another tactic developed by the union. It is thought that general strikes in the sector would give rise to greater solidarity amongst the employers. The union has developed a culture of *greves pipocas* (popcorn strikes), small stoppages lasting 1 or 2 hours in a given firm to cause some trouble in data processing⁷⁶. The negotiation starts with a number of firms. Then, the union promotes a *greve pipoca* (popcorn strike) in one or two firms which abandon the negotiation to sign a separate agreement. Therefore, the union tries to validate this agreement for the other firms.

"A stoppage lasting 1 or 2 hours in a private firm has a very large, negative impact because we are able to damage the whole productive process. The data processing sector works with information. If the firms do not deliver the results on time, they are likely to lose their customers" (Interview No. 24).

This means that this union has not relied heavily on the use of the labour court for settlement of wage disputes. When it has taken the step of using the labour court this has been done in order to extend an advantageous agreement to other firms where the organization is very weak to provide the workers a better bargaining position (Cf. interview No. 53), a point which is emphasized by Tavares de Almeida et al.

⁷⁶ See Alves [1989:51]. Cf. Batstone et al. [1978:27] for an analysis of disruptive power of workers concerning technical organization.

[1986:340] in their assessment of labour relations in Brazil as a whole:

"...It is certain that the system of industrial relations itself contains some procedures through which the achievements of ranks that have greater negotiating clout are extended to weaker ranks through the labour court".

The second level of talks in this union during negotiations for the renewal of annual agreement is related to the relationship both with Pernambuco state's government which owns the *FISEPE-CETEPE* and Recife's local government which owns the *EMPREL*. Although these are two distinct negotiations, they develop in the same way.

Both of them are strategic companies for these two levels of government. All information vital to the administration of the state and of the city is processed in these two companies. Moreover, all governmental accounts are processed by these companies. Therefore, they constitute a crucial sector to these two levels of government. A common union practice is to issue a threat to go on strike around the time when governmental employees' wages are about to be paid. This has been used as a political weapon in order to focus attention on their own demands. Wages, unsurprisingly, seem to be a very sensitive area. If they are not paid because of a strike which disrupts the data processing it is expected that the government will become isolated and under pressure to meet the union's demands.

The next move is to try to involve higher political ranks inside the negotiations. If the management is strong enough to face a strike without advancing the negotiations, the union is likely to threaten to take the negotiation to a higher level, which means that it will no longer be a «professional»

or «neutral» negotiation but will be transformed into a «political» negotiation⁷⁷. In other words, the union will, depending at what level it is negotiating, threaten to take the negotiation directly to either the Pernambuco state's or Recife's local government's secretary for labour. The main reason for such a move is that the management will be forced to negotiate to defend themselves against possible charges of lack of administrative autonomy or political weakness in dealing with the union. On the other hand, this procedure is also used by the union as a means to publicize its campaign by calling in a political interlocutor. Although, in this case, the government is an employer, one can say that, at this level, the union has relied on the state as an arbitrator. Higher political ranks are not called in as part of a professional management team to deal with labour matters but within their role as political actors likely to influence the outcome of the process of negotiation.

The third level of negotiations occur between the union and the federal government. It is aimed to settle an annual agreement for the three federal state-owned companies. This level of negotiation resembles that of the Bank Workers' Union. The federal state companies are branches of larger companies and play a vital role in the federal administration.

⁷⁷ Cf. interview No. 42. On the notion of politicized negotiations as a result of state interference in labour disputes, see Rodrigues [1979:51]. See also Hill [1981:163-4] for a similar formulation regarding Western European countries, where he refers to the case of public ownership. He argues that, at least in the case of the social democracies of Western Europe, the problem of distribution of surplus

"moved from the economic to the political realm, because in the final analysis it is the politicians rather than managers who make decisions about investment, return on capital, and the share of wages in the product".

For instance, the *SERPRO*, the largest one of the three federal state companies in Recife, with about 1,200 employees, processes data for the federal government related not only to Pernambuco but also to other neighbouring Northeastern states.

Therefore, negotiations happen in Brasília through a national structure in which the individual data processing workers' unions of the country play a minor role. The process is the same as in the banking sector. However, there is a minor difference between these two cases. While at the banking sector a national list of demands is negotiated for all employees of the *Banco do Brasil*, at the data processing sector there is a regional list of demands covering aspects to be negotiated at the state level. These regional lists of demands consist of aspects related mainly to secondary aspects not covered by the national agreement (Cf. interview No. 42).

Negotiations at this level have relied heavily on the autonomous structure of representation inside the union apparatus. Even when the union had not yet established workers' committees, it would encourage the participation of lay activists and militants closely linked to the union to participate in the national talks.

2.5. The Urban Workers' Union

This union represents workers from three public owned companies. This is a union which cannot avoid the presence of the State in the process of negotiation because of the state ownership of the three companies. The union has to deal with the government at least as an employer.

However, there is another face of this relationship which

shows that, in spite of the rhetoric of «new unionism» unions speaking against the presence of the government in settlement of agreements on labour disputes, there are grounds for imaginative use of the labour courts as a political weapon (For a similar case in Rio de Janeiro state, see Mangabeira [1991:specially chapter 8]).

In December 1983 the government issued decree No. 2,100 cutting the *participação nos lucros* (profit sharing), an extra that the electricity workers had been earning by then for 16 years at the end of each fiscal year, on the grounds that the profits of the federal state-owned electricity companies had only been an accountancy result of their properties (Cf. *O Eletricitário e Compesianos*, Dec. 1984). The Pernambuco state-owned *Companhia de Eletrificação de Pernambuco* (CELPE) took advantage of the fact and transformed the *participação nos lucros* (profit sharing) in a fixed part of workers' wages worth three national minimum wages and continued to pay it, but the federal state-owned *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) refused to pay it, following central government policy.

Workers understood it to be an «acquired» right and that the government could not refuse to pay it solely on accountancy grounds. Thus, the union promoted a number of meetings and advised workers to take the government to the labour court (For a similar case in the *ABC paulista* in 1977, see Keck [1989:262]; and Moisés [1979:58]).

Even with the transformation of the *participação nos lucros* (profit sharing) into a fixed part of the wages, workers would suffer a loss of income, according to the

union's calculations.

TABLE 6.1. ELECTRICITY WORKERS' WAGES LOSSES AS A RESULT OF THE INCORPORATION OF THE *PARTICIPAÇÃO NOS LUCROS* (PROFIT SHARING) INTO THE WAGES (BASIS 1984)

TIME	IN 3 YEARS (%)	IN 4 YEARS (%)
WAGES		
3 HMW	0.0	0.90
4 HMW	12.66	17.10
6 HMW	10.98	14.22
8 HMW	8.46	11.10
10 HMW	6.90	9.06
14 HMW	30.70	39.17
24 HMW	55.31	61.55
30 HMW	63.90	72.41

Source: Urban Workers' Union
HMW - Highest Minimum Wage

Due to these losses, the policy put forward by the union was to fight against the cut of the 1983 *participação nos lucros* (profit sharing). By July 1984, when electricity workers of all Northeastern states met in Recife to outline a common strategy to face the problem, 1,512 electricity workers of Pernambuco had already taken the government to the Regional Labour Court (TRT) (Cf. *Folha Sindical*, July 1984. On workers' reaction in other states, see Keck [1984:31]).

The union even demanded that the *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) should pay the *participação nos lucros* (profit sharing) during the 1985 Wage Campaign. This was the main point of dispute between the union and the management, which argued that it could not negotiate such an item because of the constraints established by the federal government's decree (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, 7-13 Oct.; and 28

Oct.-3 Nov. 1985).

The number of cases was so high that the Regional Labour Court (TRT) had to distribute the processes between several judicial teams. The number of workers represented through the various lawsuits also varied. Lawsuit No. 2,796, for instance, represented 1,505 workers, while one sent to the 7th judicial team in April 1986 represented 200 workers. The total number of workers who took the government to the Regional Labour Court (TRT) was around 5,000 in January 1986 (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, 30 Dec. 1985-5 Jan. 1986). By April 1986, the results in the Regional Labour Court (TRT) were varied. While some lawsuits had been deferred, others had not (Cf. Union document *Quadro Demonstrativo da Posição da «PL/83» Junto a Justiça do Trabalho*, 16 April 1986).

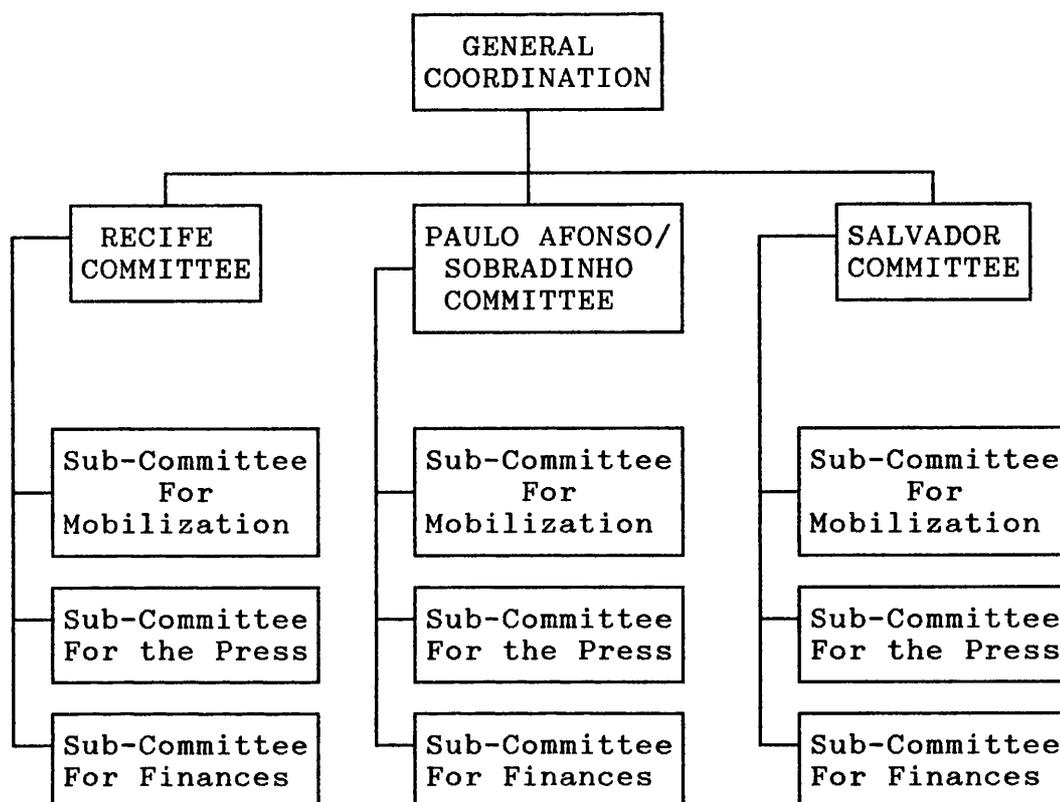
By July 1986, the results were generally not very favourable to the workers and the union had referred the lawsuits to the Supreme Labour Court (TST) in Brasília. It seemed that the workers' morale was not high and the union promoted a number of meetings to draw up a strategy aimed at the intensification of contacts with other unions in the country facing the same problem (Cf. Union document *PL/83*, 17 July 1986). Finally, by the end of 1986, the Supreme Labour Court (TST) had ruled against the first workers' lawsuits (Cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, 20 Dec. 1986) and by the end of October 1987 all lawsuits had been ruled out (Cf. *Jornal Urbanitário*, Sept.-Oct.; and Nov.-Dec. 1987; and interview No. 54).

In relation to the levels of negotiation, the union has followed 3 different campaigns at two levels. In other words, it faces a negotiation at the federal government level and two at the state level.

Employees of the federal state-owned *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) are organized by this union. In administrative terms this company is largely autonomous and is not a branch of a national company. However, it is defined as a company owned by a holding, *ELETRORÁS*. On the other hand, electricity is certainly conceived of as having strategic importance by the government. This means that negotiations tend to be developed at a highly concentrated level directly with the federal government. Because of this aspect the union has tried to develop a single list of demands with other electricity workers' unions within the country. Thus, at this level the union does not, unlike other single unions, play an important role because it relies mainly on the structure of a national team of negotiators.

On the other hand, when negotiations become difficult in the sense that the parties do not reach an agreement, the government pre 1985 used to intervene by using force (Cf. Alves [1989:53-4]; Humphrey [1979a:81]; Keck [1989:267]; and Mangabeira [1991]). This was a common practice up to the mid-1980s. The first strike in a federal state company to hit the country after 1964 happened in the *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) in 1979. The army occupied the plants of this company in Recife and Paulo Afonso (Bahia state) and union officials were prosecuted by the federal police (Cf. interviews Nos. 33, 46 and 49. See also Mendonça & Medeiros [1989:5]) because electricity as a fundamental resource to maintain the economy as a whole was considered a matter of national security.

FIGURE 6.1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE 1982 WAGE CAMPAIGN AT CHESF



Source: Urban Workers' Union, Boletim No. 2, "CHESF: Campanha Salarial Unificada de 1982", 17 Aug. 1982

Another major strike happened in 1982 when the headquarters of the *Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco* (CHESF) in Recife were surrounded by the military police armed with heavy weaponry, while the army was prepared to occupy the plant in Paulo Afonso (Cf. *Estado de São Paulo*, 28 Oct. 1982; and *Folha de São Paulo*, 29 Oct. 1982. Reprinted in CEDI [n/d: 197]).

However, in spite of the political presence of the State in the labour relations within this sector, the union has not relied on it as arbitrator to reach agreements precisely because of the union's strong negotiating power owing to the very nature of electricity as an essential service. This union

has sought to implement direct talks with management in order to settle accords and has not used the state as a «mediator». Instead, the state has politicized the labour disputes by utilizing its repressive apparatus.

A second level of talks is related to negotiations with Pernambuco state's government when the union deals with matters concerned with employees of the *Companhia de Eletrificação de Pernambuco* (CELPE) and *Companhia de Saneamento do Estado de Pernambuco* (COMPESA). Although both of them are owned by Pernambuco state, the union follows two separate negotiations because of the different nature of these two companies and their different *datas-bases*. The former distributes electricity, while the latter distributes water and treats sewage. Also at this level the union has reached a high degree of autonomy in relation to the state's presence, as a «mediator», in the settlement of labour disputes.

What characterizes negotiations for the renewal of annual agreements in this union is that the campaign is split into three different areas. This is firstly because of the different administrative levels (federal and state government), in the electricity sector; secondly, because of the different sectors (electricity and water) represented in the same union; and thirdly, because of the differences in their *datas-bases*.

"We organize three companies and we work, in most aspects, as if we were three unions in one...We have not gone on strike in one company for reasons of solidarity with another one. When we go on strike in *CHESF* and *CELPE* this does not happen because of a unified campaign but because their campaigns are coincidental. *COMPESA's* employees, for instance, never went on strike together with the other two companies" (Interview No. 46).

This poses a problem not only of political strength

before the state as an employer but also a problem of corporatism in the sense that workers of the different companies do not envisage the fights within a common strategy. This has led to a complete separation of the union officials in terms of their dedication to wage campaigns because of their corporatist attitude. This has also led to problems of representation. The point is that when the union splits to pursue a settlement of labour disputes, the rank-and-file in one given company does not perceive the campaigns of workers in the other two companies as part of a whole campaign, nor do officials think that they are representatives of the whole membership.

"People from *CHESF* only organize *CHESF*, people from *CELPE* are only dedicated to *CELPE* and so on. This has provoked corporatism. There are few of us who have been able to break these three unions which exist in our union. Our discourse is aimed at a common fight, a common strike but we have been failing" (Interview No. 46).

2.6. The Teachers' Association

This association only represents teachers of Pernambuco state's schools. Therefore, negotiations for wage settlement have been happening only at one level. This organization has been the most successful of the unions in this sample to confront the government as an employer during wage campaigns. In fact, this association and Pernambuco state's government have always signed agreements without the participation of the labour court or the Regional Labour Office (DRT). Even during the bitterest disputes, they have managed to set up settlements of their own without any external participation or arbitration. This may be explained in part as a result of

the juridical status of the association which could not legally represent the teachers before the labour court during wages disputes. However, the Teachers' Union, if asked by the Teachers' Association, could act as its attorney if settlements were to be judged by the labour court. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the association has ever asked the union to act as its attorney.

The association was unable to face any wage campaign between 1980 and 1982 because of the tough approach the government had taken. Wage campaigns were resumed in 1983. In 1989 the association and Pernambuco state's government found themselves in deadlock. The state government suggested that the solution would be a *dissídio* to be judged by the labour court. If this was to happen, the association should ask the Teachers' Union to represent it in the judgement. The matter was taken to the general assembly. In spite of the speeches given by two officials of the Teachers' Union explaining how it could represent the Teachers' Association the proposal was rejected by the general assembly (Cf. General assembly minutes, 13 and 20 Nov. 1989).

However, the association used the labour court to act against the state government in other matters. Just after the 1979 wage campaign during which radical militants took over the association, 169 teachers alleged that the state government was not enforcing the federal government's decree No. 67,322/70. It was explained in chapter V that the teachers' wages are related to the number of classes they teach. Thus, they are paid on the basis of what is called *hora-aula* (class-wage). The decree referred to above read that those teachers with a college degree should earn an *hora-aula*

(class-wage) worth 3.5% of the regional minimum wage. However, according to these teachers, the state government had never enforced such a law (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 17 July 1979). The teachers, therefore, through the association, took the case to the labour court. Nevertheless, the results were varied. In September 1979, for instance, a labour judge ruled against the claims of two teachers but others had had their plea deferred earlier (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 22 Sept. 1979). By the end of this month, there were 178 teachers, through the association, claiming payment of their losses in the labour court. The state government contested those decisions favourable to the teachers by questioning three aspects: 1) that the lawsuits of 55 teachers could not be judged by the labour court because of the kind of labour contract linking them to the state government; 2) that 26 of these teachers were still students and were not entitled to earn such a wage; and 3) that the federal government had revoked this decree what meant that it was unconstitutional (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 27 Sept. 1979).

As a result, the association took the lawsuits to the Supreme Labour Court (TST) in Brasília. Nevertheless, in 1984, this court decided that the state government's action in not paying such a wage was correct because there was jurisprudence on such a case ruling that the decree was unconstitutional (Cf. *Jornal do Comércio*, 23 Sept. 1984; and *Informativo APENOPE*, Jan.-March 1986).

The association also took the state government to the labour court because the state secretary for education had rescinded the labour contracts of some teachers and had not paid due compensation. The court eventually ruled in favour

of the teachers by deciding that the state government should pay compensation (Cf. *Informe Sindical*, 22-28 July 1985; and *Informativo APENOPE*, Jan.-March 1986).

Another interesting case is that of the dismissal of the association's president in December 1980. The government alleged that the dismissal of this official was based on the grounds of his work record. It was said that he had missed a lot of classes and this reflected negatively on his pupils' learning. Once again the association took the case to the Regional Labour Court (TRT) arguing that this official could not have been fired on these grounds because in fact he had a very good work record. Therefore, it was argued, unless the government intended to dismiss him for political reasons, there was not a justifiable motive for firing him (Cf. *Boletim Informativo APENOPE*, Nov. 1981; and *Diário de Pernambuco*, 1 Dec. 1981).

Both the cases of the Urban Workers' Union and the Teachers' Association show that radical labour organizations have been using the state apparatus in an imaginative way to pursue some of their goals. In both cases, when the workers' organizations took the government or its companies to the labour court, they did so not to get a wage dispute resolved but to demand enforcement of particular laws. It is interesting to look at these cases because the military government and its supporters at state level argued that they were a government of order and law enforcement. However, even when the labour organizations were defeated in their legal actions in the labour courts, they tried symbolically to show that the government was a law breaker by not enforcing one of its own laws.

3. THE UNIONS AND LEVELS OF NEGOTIATION

The processes and the different levels of negotiation, and the role played by the unions in the settlement of annual wage agreements were analysed. From what has been analysed it is possible to infer five types of processes of negotiation in which unions are involved. These types are not related to any particular union or industry. Indeed, they depend on the administrative levels where they unionize workers and, at the case of state owned companies, the strategic importance of the particular sector for the economy as a whole.

It must once again be stated that commonly the unions do not start separate wage campaigns for each of the plants or companies where they unionize nor separate campaigns for private and public sectors' employees. On the contrary, where possible, they launch their campaigns in a unified way. However, the development of the campaign leads to independent channels and levels depending on the nature of the sector (public or private) whose employees are being represented.

The first type is represented by the Bank Workers', the Data Processing Workers', the Teachers' and the Metalworkers' Unions. This level of negotiations has developed either in private companies or the public sector where the rank-and-file is not employed by a branch of a national company nor by a strategically important firm. This level of talks is characterized by negotiations between unions and management and the parties use the labour court as a «mediator» when they are unable to reach a satisfactory agreement.

A second type, which refers to the Metalworkers' Union when representing *COSINOR*'s employees and to the Teachers'

Association, illustrates a case in the public sector in which negotiations develop at the local level because neither represents a strategic sector nor are they branches of national companies. In fact, the State as a «mediator» is unlikely to intervene in disputes arising in these two sectors, as far as factual evidence is concerned. However, it must be added that in this second type the Metalworkers' Union shares with the first case the fact that in the case of the *COSINOR* the union is also likely to use the labour court in some cases of stalemates in the process of wage settlement, while the association has never taken such a decision.

A third type is that which occurs in industries like the electricity and water sectors. The companies in this sector also have a great deal of administrative autonomy and negotiations tend to be decentralized at the state level in terms of minor matters related to certain demands in the realm of professional situation (for instance, job instability for pregnant women) working conditions (for instance, safety equipment) and union power (for instance, assistance contribution). On the other hand, negotiations are centralized in terms of settlement of demands and disputes related to crucial aspects like those affecting control of labour process. Thus, the government is likely to be more involved in the negotiations because of the greater strategic importance of energy in relation to metallurgy, for example. Therefore, union leaders have been unable to deal solely with management. This does not mean that a union in this case has sought to negotiate under the protection of the state as a mediator. Instead, the state has interfered as a political actor due to the crucial importance of electricity and water

for society.

A fourth type is that developed in sectors where state-owned units are branches of larger national companies as in the bank and data processing industries. In these industries negotiations are more centralized because of a unified state policy for the sector. The individual unions have tried to define a single list of demands for the whole of the sector but have played, individually, a minor role in the negotiations. On the other hand, the local management is able to deal only with minor cases and likewise do not play an important role in negotiations. If the case is to be taken to court the Regional Labour Courts (TRTs) do not play any role at all. Instead, the case is taken to the Supreme Labour Court (TST). In the case of the *Banco do Brasil* employees the single unions in the country play a role in signing the agreements because of the exclusiveness of representation granted by the law. However, the internal labour organizations of *Banco do Brasil*'s employees play the most important role in negotiating and securing their demands face to face with general management in Brasília and advisors from the Ministry of Economy.

Banco do Brasil and state-owned data processing companies, however, share with electricity and water sectors the fact that both are strategic to society. The former plays a strategic role in the Brazilian financial system, while the latter deals with vital information needed for federal, state and municipal administrations. Although the government is likely to intervene in the negotiations in these three sectors because of their strategic importance, the difference among the electricity, on the one hand, and the banking and data

processing sectors, on the other, is related to the national administrative structure of the these industries.

A fifth type has developed in sectors where the productive units are regional state-owned companies. What characterizes this case is that unions have sought to involve the government as a political actor in direct talks because of the fact that strikes are a political sensitive issue and this level of government is nearer to the population than the central government in Brasilia.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter was to describe the levels and processes of negotiations in the unions of my sample by trying to relate them to two characteristics of the «new unionism», namely its calls for direct negotiations without the presence of the state as a «mediator» and for autonomous organization of the workers, which, in turn, is related to the aspect of representation.

Clearly, the opportunities for the «new unionists» to take part in direct talks with employers depends, at least, on four variables: 1) the extent to which the «new unionists» themselves are willing to avoid the presence of the state (Cf. Humphrey [1979a:82]); 2) the expectations of the workers on the role the labour courts play as an arbitrator perceived to be fair and neutral and seen to be above society; 3) the state's willingness not to interfere in the negotiations; and 4) the employers' willingness to take part in direct talks with unions and other forms of workers' representation.

Although some authors stress that "the mediation of

labour relations by the state placed workers in a straitjacket..." (Keck [1989:286]), it was shown that not all steps towards bringing the state in are conceived of as an interference by a «mediator». In the case of the public sector, when this happens it is seen as a political weapon the unions possess to reach and deliver their goals as in the case of the Data Processing Workers' Union. On the other hand, it was seen that, during the military government, the recourse to the labour courts was also a very symbolic way through which the alleged illegality of some governmental acts was challenged through legal channels, as illustrated by both the Urban Workers' Union and the Teachers' Association.

The unions have to take into consideration the expectations of the workers they represent as well. These expectations tend to grow when workers win a very favourable dispute through the labour courts in relation to what was being offered by employers. Thus, it is difficult for the unions to convince the workers of the need for direct negotiations with employers because the rank-and-file will tend to expect that it will, after all, win large concessions from the labour court.

"We have sought to show the need for settlements of collective agreements through direct negotiation without the presence of the labour court. However, [some time ago] we had an important victory through the labour court in terms of provisory job stability and this had serious consequences for the *categoria* by making them attribute to the labour court a very important role in terms of favourable expectation to the disputes' outcomes" (Interview No. 45).

In some sectors the unions cannot avoid the presence of the state because of the strategic importance of the economic sectors in which they unionize workers. Thus, they do not have a choice in dealing with the government both as an employer

and as a political actor. This point seems to support the theoretical model outlined by Roxborough [1981:90-1] for the analysis of labour movements in Latin America where he deals with the role of the state in industrial relations. According to him,

"the state is likely to intervene in the settlement of labour disputes in those industries where it has interests...".

Finally, a negotiation for settlement of labour disputes is a phenomenon in which at least two parties participate: employees through their unions and employers. The willingness of the «new unionists» not to use the labour courts as a resource for settlement of disputes has also to be considered in relation to the employers' own strategies and willingness (See Diesing [1961] on relationships between unions and management during collective bargaining). In fact, when employers do not wish to agree with the union on the extent of the demands, they have been using the strategy of delaying the settlement of the annual agreements in order to wait for a decision from the labour court. This means that the unions have also to rely on employers' willingness to participate in full talks without the use of the labour courts (Cf. Abramo [1986:262-3 and 279]).

Another aspect of the «new unionism» in relation to negotiations is that of its representation of the workers during the talks. In fact, the «new unionism» has called for and tried to implement new forms of representation at the workplace. This has meant that even when the unions are unable to institute bodies like a workers' committee, workers have been able to elect their representatives for negotiations. These representatives participate in a body called the

committee for negotiations. At the local level, this does not pose any problem because the unions and these representatives have been able to work closely together. However, when negotiations are to take place in Brasília through a national structure of negotiation, the individual unions of each state have played minor roles which lays open to question their proper role in this process.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: «NEW UNIONISM», MILITANCY AND UNION DEMOCRACY

1. INTRODUCTION

This conclusion is intended to be a theoretical reflection upon the findings of this study and its contribution to the sociology of trade unionism as well as to the understanding of Brazilian trade unionism.

Although this study is restricted to a small geographical area in relation to Brazil as a whole and to a small sample, it provides us with a number of findings which can be further analysed in terms of its theoretical implications.

A major theme underlining this study is the problem of representativeness of the «new unionism». In fact, while the radical changes brought about in the late 1970s and the 1980s by the «new unionism» were germinating, there were demands for more representative unions. The testimony of many militants, who later became «new unionism» officials, and that available of many workers in documents issued in the late 1970s shows that there was a feeling spread among the workers that the "unions exist but are not ours, because they do not represent us". In fact, as was shown throughout this study, the «old» unionism scarcely represented its members, in particular, and the *categoria*, in general. "They do not represent us" signified that there was a gap between the interests of the rank-and-file and those of the «old guard» officials in the

Michelsian sense.

This was clearly expressed in 1977 when a group of workers of Greater Recife issued a pamphlet in which they say:

"We want to denounce the farce and emptiness of our unions...We want to denounce the fact that our unions are tied to and directed by the [Regional] Labour Office... So, we demand that unions be independent, run by us and with power for real discussion with the «bosses»...We demand that renovated unions participate in national life as the voice of the working classes...The way to a new union lies ahead. The unions will be ours, they will be class organizations, depending on our action" (Pamphlet issued on 20 Nov. 1977) "...[because] we can no longer tolerate union officials who are not for our actual struggle...we demand free and independent unions" (Pamphlet issued on 1 May 1979).

Therefore, one of the major themes concerning workers and militants in the Brazil of the 1970s was about the representativeness of their unions, this being understood not as a quantitative relation⁷⁸ between leaders and the membership, but as a political attitude through which the unions should act for and in the interests of their members. This means that the unions were to be "ours" again. In other words, that the relationship between union officials and the members was to be radically changed.

2. TRADE UNIONS, DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIVENESS

Workers and militants in the Brazil of the late 1970s and the 1980s were expressing a general problem which has been under investigation for a long time by social scientists interested in the impact of formal organizations on the political action of the workers. Thus, a general implication

⁷⁸ Representativeness as a quantitative relation is intended to express the idea of similarity and resemblance between the representative(s) and represented (Cf. Sartori [1968:465]).

of this study is related to the discussion of the relationship between leaders and the membership in formal union organizations, in general, and between «new unionist» leaders and workers, in particular. In fact, since Michels's *Political Parties* [1962] was published, social scientists concerned with the problem of democracy in trade unions have tried to answer the question whether the relationship between union leaders and the membership has to be marked by oligarchic tendencies as predicted by Michels.

Michels's «iron law of oligarchy» predicts that there is inevitably a tendency towards oligarchization within formal labour organizations, which was echoed by subsequent studies on union democracy. Studies such as that of Lipset et al. [1977], in spite of their findings differing from Michels's findings, suggested that union democracy, where it existed, merely signified a "deviant case". Edelstein and Warner [1975], and a number of scholars who have adopted their electoral model (Cf., for instance, Roxborough [1984]; and Thompson & Roxborough [1982]), have arrived at different conclusions which suggest that unions may or may not be oligarchic, that is, that there is room for democracy within formal labour organizations.

On the other hand, Marxist authors concerned with such a problem have also been trying to show that there is a gap between the practices of the union officials, seen as «managers of discontent», and the «true» impulses and demands arising from the shop-floor. This is expressed by Hyman [1989] when he suggests that unions would be interested in keeping the «peace obligation» thus allowing control by managers over the workers. For him, the very existence of

"established union-employer relations may serve, indeed, to transmute the very character of employee grievances, by defining issues within a narrow focus which shapes the parameters for potential resolution; for if fundamental questions of principle are suppressed, the task of achieving compromise may be greatly eased" (Hyman [1989: 40]).

In this case, workplace organizations would express the interests arising from the shop-floor better than the bureaucratized unions because those would not be subject nor committed to regulatory rules present in the institutionalized relations between union officials and managers.

Another variant of studies in this field is related to the question of representativeness in terms of some socio-economic and political variables. Thus, Handelman [1977] tries to analyse the problem of union representativeness by considering possible gaps and/or similarities between leaders and rank-and-file through variables such as age, income, level of education, percent above 50 years old, percent of urban-born and others related to "class and industrial consciousness". In fact, Handelman found that there was a gap between rank-and-file and leaders when considering these variables and that this could mean a divergence of interests between union leaders and members.

On the other hand, Fosh and Cohen [1990] suggest that the analysis of the relationship between leaders and members in formal labour organizations has to consider a definition of union democracy as comprising the ideas of representativeness and accountability. For them, representativeness is understood as the policies of the union officials mirroring the "expressed interests" of the members, while accountability is the practice of "consultation and reporting back to the membership". This would account for a definition of union

democracy which would embody the idea of participative democracy.

Finally, Heery and Kelly [1990] suggest that, contrary to the claims of Michels and Hyman and other theorists of trade union bureaucratization, there is a widespread "pattern of co-operation and interdependence between full-time officials and shop-stewards". Moreover, instead of being conservative as predicted by Michels and Hyman, full-time officials are more likely to propose more radical objectives. Heery and Kelly [1990:88] also show that, contrary to what would be expected by both variants of critics of trade union organization, full-time officials stimulated shop-stewards' independence in dealing with the management.

3. «NEW UNIONISM», DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIVENESS

The four central aspects discussed in this thesis, namely unions and «bureaucracy», union democracy, new demands, and negotiations, the nature of the employers and the State, show a common feature: the attempts by the «new unionism» to establish a new kind of relationship with the rank-and-file.

In fact, the «new unionism» emerged with a political agenda for changes in the nature of Brazilian trade unionism. Roughly speaking, the «new unionism» put forward an agenda for changes in the role the unions were to play in society as a whole, in labour relations and in the relationship between the unions and the rank-and-file. The «new unionism» has achieved varied degrees of changes and this has been the result of a constant making of new social relations within the realm of labour relations. In spite of the obvious meaning of the

former phrase, most scholars commenting on the «new unionism» have taken it for granted that the unionism which emerged in Brazil from the late 1970s had a kind of social identity constructed *a priori*. In other words, the political agenda put forward by the «new unionism» has been considered as already shaped from the beginning. However, the data quoted throughout this thesis shows that this social identity has been shaped within the development of the «new unionism» itself.

What is the meaning of this phenomenon? It means that the «new unionism» political agenda had to be constructed and adapted according to the political circumstances currently prevailing. In spite of such an obvious statement, this aspect of reality has not been considered by scholars commenting on the «new unionism». In other words, the fact that the whole of the social and labour relations involved in the changes proposed by the «new unionism» have been evolving throughout the years is not frequently taken into account.

However, we must take into consideration a general feature which has characterized the «new unionism» in order to understand the constant development through which the «new unionism» has gone. I would suggest, from the data quoted throughout this thesis, that a general feature characterizing the «new unionism» is a close relationship between union leaders and the rank-and-file. In other words, there have been attempts to consult and report back to the rank-and-file. This characteristic alone has brought about a number of changes with implications for other spheres of union life.

Moreover, the data available shows that union leaders have tried to combine their own radical demands with the interests of the membership. In other words, the data suggests

that in most cases union leaders have put forward proposals which are more radical than those of the rank-and-file. This further suggests that the kind of behaviour predicted both by Michels and the Marxist theory of trade union bureaucracy, namely that union officials are conservative while the rank-and-file is progressive, finds no grounds in reality, at least in Brazil⁷⁹. In fact, the data shows that many «new» demands put forward by the «new unionism» unions have been the result of union officials' and/or militants' proposals, instead of proposals of ordinary union members.

Thus, we arrive at a point where we must bring back an early statement about the evolution of the «new unionism», that is, that the social characteristics of the «new unionism» have been constructed, adapted and remade. The broad agenda of the «new unionism» contained a number of proposals which have not been fully achieved. I suggest that this is so because of the new relationship implemented by radical officials and/or militants with the rank-and-file. In fact, by trying to be responsive towards the interests of the membership, the «new unionism» leaders have sometimes held back certain radical proposals regarding 1) the end of the provision of social, medical and legal assistance by the unions, 2) proposals for new, radical demands, and 3) the end of the historical and coercive role the State has played in labour relations, namely the settlement of labour disputes in Brazil.

As shown in chapter III, there were (are) a number of

⁷⁹ As noted in chapter V of this study, Golden [1988] arrived at a similar conclusion by analysing the Italian union movement.

measures related to organizational aspects of the trade unions which the «new unionist» officials wish(ed) to take. Firstly, there were (are) the problems of socio-medical assistance provided by the unions and of the apparatus itself which the unions have to manage in order to provide such services to their members. According to data provided, many union officials want(ed) to finish off these services and to redirect the resources to other aspects of union life.

However, apart from the Data Processing Workers' Union, the unions have continued to provide such services. Both the Teachers' Union and Association, in spite of the small scale of their services, continue to provide them. On the other hand, the Urban Workers' and the Bank Workers' Unions (after 1988) not only did not finish them but indeed have increased and improved these services. Of the unions in my sample, the Metalworkers' Union was the only one which overtly proposed to finish off all socio-medical assistance.

This fact seems to suggest that socio-medical services are important for the rank-and-file. In this case, contrary to what one might think, i.e., that the «new unionism» is betraying its agenda, this further suggests that the «new unionism» unions have been trying to meet the interests of the membership. If not, one might ask what is the point in maintaining such services? The case of the Metalworkers' Union provides clear evidence for my suggestion. Its union officials think that the provision of health care for the workers is a matter for the Brazilian health service. They also realized that such services absorb significant financial resources which could be used more effectively to organize the workers politically. But they did not impose their view. Instead, they

decided to find out what the membership thought of such an important change. They surveyed the rank-and-file and the response was overwhelming. Ninety per cent stood against any move which might result in ending the provision of socio-medical services. This decision was accepted by the union officials and social assistance continues to be provided to union members.

The data displayed throughout this thesis also shows that the Pernambuco trade unions have had varied success in implementing factory/workers' committees. However, where they have been implemented, they have been used as «bridges» to link the unions to the workers. Moreover, there is evidence that they are used by union officials to get to know what the membership and the *categoria* in general wishes. This seems to indicate that «new unionism» officials are not disregarding the interests of the workers or imposing decisions without consulting those interested. Of course, this relation between unions and members varies from union to union. There are union officials such as those of the Urban Workers' Union who think of these committees as appendages to the unions, or as a direct presence of the unions at the workplace, which means that there may be room for attempts at tight control of the committees. However, there are the cases of the Metalworkers', Bank workers' and the Data Processing Workers' Unions in which the committees had or have a good deal of autonomy, which means that the prediction made by the theorists of the trade union bureaucratization finds no grounds in the practice of the «new unionism».

Furthermore, it was shown that the «new unionist» officials have been trying to establish new forms for lay

members to participate in the negotiations which lead to the settlement of wage agreements. In fact, there are a number of provisional committees which are intended to bridge possible gaps between the leadership and members during negotiations. A committee such as the wage committee is not appointed by the union officials, but is elected by the rank-and-file. This means that union officials cannot negotiate only at their discretion, for these committees have provided wider participation for the membership since the beginning of the wage campaign. As described in chapter VI, a wage campaign is a process which begins at least two months before any settlement is reached because the unions have been trying to involve the workers at all levels of the campaign. Therefore, instead of thinking for the workers or «guiding» the workers to their «true» interests, there have been attempts to get to know what these interests and demands are. That is why most of the unions have implemented geographical and/or sectorial meetings before wage campaigns. These provide the workers with the opportunity to voice their views, interests and demands.

However, this evidence does not allow us to conclude that the «new unionism» officials are mere "agents or delegates who carry out the instructions received from the electors" (Sartori [1968:468]). Indeed, the data available shows that «new unionism» officials and militants have been proposing new items for a broader agenda.

In fact, as I have shown throughout this thesis, the «old guard» officials scarcely tried to mobilize the membership for any action, let alone for wage campaigns. On the one hand, there was a passive acceptance of the government's wage policies and, on the other, a lack of belief in and/or

disregard of practices such as consulting and reporting back to the membership. Therefore, few demands appeared in the lists of demands put forward by the trade unions run by conservative officials.

In turn, «new unionism» officials have been proposing new items previously unknown to the labour movement in general, and to the union movement in particular. These items are not only linked to new rates for wage increases, but also on items regarding social and political aspects of labour relations.

However, the novelty of the «new unionism» is not related solely to these new demands, but also to the very process of negotiation and dispute settlement. In fact, apart from the attempts to involve the membership in the drawing up of the lists of demands, as stressed above, the «new unionism» emerged with proposals for direct negotiation between unions, representing the workers, and employers without having to resort to the power of the State as an arbitrator. However, this is not viewed as a matter of principle which must be followed whatever the consequences for the workers are. Two cases can illustrate this point because of their different outcomes. Firstly, the «new unionism» officials of the Bank Workers' Union support the idea of direct negotiation between the two parties involved in the dispute. Nevertheless, because of their commitment to consulting the membership, they had, some time ago, to take the dispute to the labour court as a result of the vote of the general assembly which approved pursuit of the case in the state sphere.

The second case took place in the Teachers' Association. During a wage campaign the association and the Pernambuco government found themselves in deadlock and the labour dispute

was paralysed. The government then proposed that the dispute be arbitrated by the labour court as a means of breaking the stalemate. The proposal was unacceptable to the «new unionism» officials. However, instead of refusing it from the outset, they put it to the vote by the teachers, who refused such a proposal.

Another aspect of the wage campaign being under the control of the *categoria* is the final agreement itself. In fact, apart from the participation of the workers in the making of the list of demands and their participation in negotiations through the wage committees, they have the final say on the settlement of wage agreements, because these have to be voted on and ratified by the general assembly before being signed.

In general terms, considering the theories of union democracy presented above, this thesis shares with Edelstein and Warner's study the conclusion that there are different degrees of democracy and/or oligarchy within trade unions and that such phenomena are not determined *a priori*. That is, the data suggests that there is not an inevitable tendency towards oligarchy within trade unions. However, this study departs from the study of Edelstein and Warner by showing that their exaggerated emphasis on electoral contests is misleading, since there are other aspects of democracy which are not necessarily embodied in union elections.

Moreover, this thesis suggests, following remarks by Fosh and Cohen [1990], Heery and Kelly [1990], and Hill [1981], that a more significant aspect of the relationship between union leaders and the rank-and-file seems to be the degree of representativeness and responsiveness towards the interests

of the union members, and accountability, notions which are not present in the electoral model of Edelstein and Warner. In the case of the Brazilian «new unionism» trade unions, this has been widened further by moves towards ascertaining not only the union members' interests but also what the *categorias* wishes and how to meet these interests, as mentioned above.

The evidence displayed so far allows us to go further in exploring the contribution of this study to a theory of union democracy in terms of union representativeness. In fact, this thesis shows that the relationship between leaders and rank-and-file in labour organizations can be better understood by resorting to the notion of representativeness as an indicator of union democracy instead of a focus on electoral results.

However, this contribution must be qualified even in the face of other studies using the notion of representativeness as an indicator of union democracy. Handelman [1977], by using socio-economic and political variables, found that there was a gap between officials and members of the two Mexican unions he analysed. But this hardly allows us to understand the relationship between «new unionist» officials and the rank-and-file. In fact, as shown throughout this thesis, there seems to be a gap between many proposals by officials and those of the rank-and-file. However, what Handelman's study misses are the notions of responsiveness, that is, reporting back, and accountability, i.e., the fact that officials may propose new items, but these have to be presented to, voted on and sanctioned by the membership before full implementation.

Secondly, a more useful approach is that of Fosh and Cohen [1990]. However, their definition of representativeness

as being the mirror of the "expressed interests" of the members also does not allow us to understand the cases in which the officials propose new items or policies. Indeed, they recognize that:

"We are not advocating here a simplistic model of participative democracy where local leaders merely mouth members' aspirations, however unrealistic. A commitment to collectivism intrinsically embodies the concept of leadership. An interactive process between local leaders and members takes place whereby local leaders to a significant extent mould members' demands, sometimes moderating them and sometimes increasing their scope..." (Fosh & Cohen [1990:138]).

Their conception of union democracy actually allows us to understand the relationship between leaders and the membership within the realm of the «new unionism». However, there is a problem in identifying such a relationship as mirroring the "expressed interests" of the membership.

In fact, a major contribution of this thesis to the understanding of union democracy as an expression of the representativeness of the unions to their members is to show that, to be truly representative, union officials do not necessarily have to mirror the socio-economic characteristics of their constituents nor to mirror the "expressed interests" of the members.

This thesis shows that this is so for two reasons. Firstly, in spite of some gaps between officials and members in terms of their short- and long-term policies and interests, evidence was provided to show that «new unionist» officials submitted their most radical proposals to the rank-and-file. In fact, as mentioned above, when the officials of the Metalworkers' Union had it in mind to finish off the socio-medical services provided by the union to its members, they resorted to the use of a questionnaire in order to get to know

what the membership wished.

Secondly, the definition of representativeness as mirroring the "expressed interests" of the members misses the full meaning of representativeness. In fact, to be representative does not mean that one has to fully mirror the "expressed interests" of the constituents, for as suggested by Fosh and Cohen themselves, at the very moment when union officials propose new items and/or interpret the interests of the members, the idea of mirroring the "expressed interests" of the members is missing. As suggested by some theorists, the concept of representativeness also entails the idea of some discretion for the representative (Cf. Laclau [1991a] and [1991b]; Pitkin [1969]; and Sartori [1968]). In other words, the role of the representative, instead of being understood as a passive one, must be seen as entailing the idea that he or she can propose new items or shape ideas and demands arising from his or her constituents.

Thus, this study lends further support to the findings of Heery and Kelly [1990]. They showed that the leadership plays a positive role in putting forward new demands which are not necessarily expressed by the members, but are later endorsed by them.

Thus, the evidence provided throughout this thesis shows that to define representativeness as the mirror of the "expressed interests" of the members is to miss another aspect of this relation, which is: that the representative also shapes the identity of the represented (Laclau [1991a:12]).

In fact, it is difficult to affirm that all themes and demands of the different *categorias* were already present from the beginning or indeed were proposed by them during the 1970s

and 1980s. A more realistic view is to say that demands are proposed by members and officials. Moreover, it is possible to say that radical demands have been put forward more frequently by the union officials than by the membership (See Heery & Kelly [1990:92 and 102-3] on this point in a British context).

The study also shows that even if the leadership promoted only those "expressed interests" of the members there is still room for the leaders to shape the identity of the rank-and-file. Let us consider the simple example of professional diseases in some industries. The fact that the workers feel the effects of these diseases does not necessarily mean that they will be able to express articulated demands regarding health and safety at the workplace. Thus, the leaders of the Data Processing Workers' Union have been expressing concern for the health of the data processing workers in a number of ways hardly thought up by the membership. This can also be illustrated by the case of the Bank Workers' Union. I showed that after a strike in which the employees of private banks did not enjoy the support of the employees of the state-owned *Banco do Brasil*, there was a feeling amongst the former that the latter were the «aristocrats», the ones who had «high» wages, in short, a feeling of competition rather than of cooperation. Had the leadership mirrored the "expressed interests" of the majority of the membership rather than implementing a policy of "political education" in order to better the relationship between the two parties, probably the losses for the membership in general, in terms of other interests, would have been greater than a mirror of the "expressed interests" of the majority of the members.

Therefore, a major contribution of this study is to provide support for a theory of union democracy in which the notion of representativeness plays a central role. However, representativeness must be understood as a two-way relation through which members and leaders have their identity shaped by each other. In other words, central to the existence of union democracy is the fact that leaders represent (not mirror) the interests of the members and be responsive and accountable to the membership. This definition of representativeness allows us to explain what has been taking place in Brazilian unionism from the late 1970s. That is, the existence of a union leadership which tries to be responsive to the demands of the members, proposes (not imposes) new items and demands, and tries to be accountable to the members through a number of means, without failing the responsibilities embodied in the role of the leadership (See Heery & Kelly [1990:86]).

4. DEMOCRACY, REPRESENTATIVENESS AND THE FUTURE OF THE «NEW UNIONISM»

This leads us to a final and more particular point which is: what is the future of the «new unionism»? The data quoted in previous chapters seems to indicate that a tendency which has been developing is related to a more moderate approach towards labour disputes and negotiations. However, it is worth noting that this does not mean that the «new unionism» is becoming conservative or taking the path proposed by more conservative trends within the Brazilian labour movement. It means indeed that a more realistic approach is being taken in

the face of the political and economic scenarios, on the one hand, and in face of the collective action the membership and the different *categorias* as a whole are willing to undertake, on the other hand.

In fact, the radical agenda of the «new unionism» proposed at the beginning of the movement has been shaped throughout the years. This means, firstly, that the unions are likely to continue to perform a dual role both as a provider of socio-medical assistance to their members and as a representative of the *categoria* in labour disputes. Insofar as the Brazilian State continues to provide a low standard health service, there will be pressure from the rank-and-file to have access to socio-medical services provided by the unions, particularly in those unions which represent *categorias* whose workers earn low wages and where firms do not provide further medical assistance. The evidence arising from the data quoted shows that the only unions which can afford to terminate socio-medical assistance are those representing *categorias* which are relatively better off both in terms of wages and/or in terms of further medical assistance provided by the employers.

In relation to the role of the unions as representatives of the *categorias* in labour disputes, it seems that the unions will continue to play an important role both in putting forward «new» demands and in negotiating agreements, with the involvement of the workers at various levels, on behalf of the *categorias* they seek to represent.

Although the 1988 Constitution guaranteed a number of social rights, it is not mere speculation to point out that in Brazil many social rights granted by law become dead

letters and that the unions will have plenty of room to try to bargain over these rights. In spite of all regulations brought about by the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT), there have throughout the years been complaints about employers not upholding basic rights guaranteed in the labour code. For instance, the labour law granted job stability during pregnancy for a certain period of time including some months before and after women give birth. However, this has not inhibited employers from continuing with unlawful and unfair dismissals of pregnant women as illustrated by the lists of demands put forward by «new unionism» unions.

This means that it is likely that social rights present in the Constitution will continue to be subject to ordinary settlement via negotiation between employers and unions. In an interview with the *Jornal do Brasil* (18 Oct. 1987) when the National Congress was discussing the new Constitution, Amaury de Souza, a social scientist with expertise in labour problems, warned against a certain euphoria which could «contaminate» the union movement in the face of the new social rights which were to be incorporated into the Constitution. This lends further support to the remarks made up to now in relation to this aspect. Therefore, instead of appealing for respect towards what is guaranteed by the Constitution, it is likely that the unions will continue negotiating the regulation of disputes regarding such labour problems during their annual wage campaigns.

On the other hand, the role that unions are likely to play in the settlement of labour disputes may lead to two different paths. Firstly, if the unions succeed in implementing strong factory/workers' committees and if these

committees become strong enough to play a central role in negotiations as illustrated by the case of the *Banco do Brasil*, perhaps the unions will become organizations which participate in negotiations with employers because they hold the exclusive right guaranteed by the Constitution to represent the *categoria*. Secondly, if the unions succeed in implementing such committees but the committees face strong opposition from the employers or if the committees keep strong organic links with the unions, it is likely that the unions will continue to play an important role in the settlement of wage agreements not only as a negotiator on behalf of the *categoria* as in all cases discussed in chapter V, but also as a «bridge» between the several fronts of negotiation, as illustrated by the cases of those unions which face national negotiations.

The data concerning the six Pernambuco unions analysed in this thesis shows that «new unionism» unions have undertaken a flexible approach towards the presence of the State in labour disputes. Because of the end of the military government and the promulgation of a new Constitution granting further rights of existence to the unions away from the old controls, it is likely that the State will not interfere in labour disputes, at least in the manner it used to, even after the civil government took power when the army invaded the CSN plant in Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro state (Cf. Mangabeira [1991]). However, a more subtle interference may be expected in the face of strikes in key sectors of the economy. On the other hand, contrary to what has been forecast by many scholars and radical militants, the data shows that the unions will continue to use the state apparatus to get disputes

resolved, because of the fact that the choice of means to settle a given labour dispute does not depend, since there are attempts to be responsive towards the rank-and-file, solely on the wishes of the leadership. It has also to do with the expectations of the rank-and-file. In other words, if the leadership wishes to continue to take into consideration what the membership wants, it has sometimes to consider the use of the labour courts. This means that in the face of advantageous agreements achieved through the labour courts, it is likely that the rank-and-file will press, in certain cases, for settlements to be achieved by this means.

Another aspect of the same problem is related to the relative strength of the unions at the workplace. The data shows that this power is uneven. In other words, the power of a given union varies from place to place. The implication of this is that the unions will continue to resort to the labour courts to extend advantageous agreements to segments of the *categoria* which are not strong enough to negotiate on their own terms, insofar as the unions do not achieve a strong and unified strategy for negotiation.

Finally, a labour dispute is a game for at least two players: employers and unions. Many authors have shown that the unions are relatively weaker in relation to the power of employers. Therefore, situations in which the unions are able to oblige employers to negotiate on their own terms seem to be relatively rare. That is, employers also have power to decide whether they will undertake direct negotiations without the presence of the State as an arbitrator or whatever. Thus this fact, combined with the wishes of the membership and the varied strength of the unions at the workplace, means that the

presence of the State in the settlement of labour disputes will continue, however weakened, at least in the years to come.

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2. NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- 2.1 Jornal do Comércio - January 1978/December 1989
- 2.2 Diário de Pernambuco - January 1978/December 1989
- 2.3 Folha de Pernambuco - January 1989/December 1989
- 2.4 Informe Sindical - June 1985/December 1989
- 2.5 Folha Sindical - June 1984/July-August 1986
- 2.6 Boletim da CUT - 1985
- 2.7 Istoé/Senhor
- 2.8 Veja

3. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 3.1 Boletim do DIEESE - January 1983/December 1989
- 3.2 Perfil das Indústrias do Estado de Pernambuco - 1978/1988
(Annual Reports of the Federação das Indústrias do Estado de Pernambuco)
- 3.3 Desempenho da Economia de Pernambuco - 1979/1989 (Annual reports of the Instituto de Desenvolvimento de Pernambuco/CONDEPE)

APPENDIX I
LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED, WITH
POSTS AND/OR JOBS AND DATE OF EACH
INTERVIEW⁸⁰

1. Mr. José Leôncio da Silva, a shop-floor militant metalworker - 17 May 1986
2. Mr. Genésio Siqueira, a shop-floor militant metalworker - 19 May 1986
3. Mr. Severino Campos de Siqueira, a former Metalworkers' Union treasurer (1956-1960) - 19 May 1986
4. Mr. Marcos Pereira da Silva, president (1981-4), deputy finance secretary (1984-7) and property secretary (1987-90) of the Metalworkers' Union - 4 Sept. 1986
5. Mr. Henri Cossart, a shop-floor militant metalworker - 12 Sept. 1986
6. Mr. José Calixto Ramos, secretary general (1958-60/1975-8) and president (1965-72) of the Metalworkers' Union. He is the current president of the National Confederation of Industrial Workers (CNTI) - 25 Sept. 1986
7. Mr. João Paulo Lima e Silva, secretary general (1981-4), president (1984-7) and vice-president (1987-90) of the Metalworkers' Union. He is also a Workers' Party (PT) Councillor in Recife Council (1988-90) and was elected as an Assemblyman for Pernambuco State Assembly in October 1990 - 22 May 1987

⁸⁰ The number before each interview corresponds to the number given throughout the text when the interview was quoted.

8. Mr. Jorge César Bezerra dos Santos, deputy finance secretary (1981-4), secretary general (1984-7) and president (1987-90) of the Metalworkers' Union - 29 May 1987
9. Mr. Severino Antônio de Lima, labour and social security secretary (1984-7) and secretary general (1987-90) of the Metalworkers' Union - 16 Oct. 1987
10. Jorge César Bezerra dos Santos (See No. 8 above) - 21 Oct 1987
11. João Paulo Lima e Silva (See No. 7 above) - 25 July 1990
12. Severino Antônio de Lima (See No. 9 above) - 2 Aug. 1990
13. Marcos Pereira da Silva (See No. 4 above) - 5 Aug. 1990
14. Mr. Alberto Alves Bezerra, a manager at Retífica 2000 - 5 Aug. 1990
15. João Paulo Lima e Silva (See No. 7 above) - 6 Aug. 1990
16. Jorge César Bezerra dos Santos (See No. 8 above) - 8 Aug. 1990
17. Mrs. Enaide Teixeira, public relations secretary (from 1988) of the Bank Workers' Union - 11 Aug. 1990
18. Mr. Salomão de Freitas, secretary general (from 1988) of the Bank Workers' Union - 13 Aug. 1990
19. Mr. José Alves de Siqueira, finance secretary (1981-4), property secretary (1984-7) and deputy finance secretary (1987-90) of the Metalworkers' Union - 14 Aug. 1990
20. Mr. Inaldo Francisco de Oliveira, vice-president (1984-7) and treasurer (1987-90) of the Metalworkers' Union - 17 Aug. 1990
21. Mr. José Roberto Amorim Leandro, vice-president (from 1988) of the Bank Workers' Union - 18 Aug. 1990
22. Mr. Paulo Fernando Valença, former president of the

Pernambuco State's Schools Teachers' Association. He is also a former president and the current vice-president of the regional Workers' United Central (CUT) in Pernambuco - 22 Aug. 1990

23. Mr. José Francisco de Moraes Santos, a Bank Workers' Union representative in the Federation of the Bank Workers' Unions - 23 Aug. 1990

24. Mr. Cláudio Soares de Oliveira Ferreira, public relations secretary (1985-6); finance secretary (1986-9) and president (from 1989) of the Data Processing Workers' Unions. He is also the current finance secretary of the regional Workers' United Central (CUT) - 24 Aug. 1990

25. Mrs. Patrícia Ferreira, a lawyer and Ministry of Labour official (*Fiscal do Trabalho* [Labour Inspector]) - 25 Aug. 1990

26. Mr. Maurício Rands, a labour lawyer - 25 Aug. 1990

27. Mr. Horácio Reis, an official of the Pernambuco State's Schools Teachers' Association - 27 Aug. 1990

28. Mr. José Jairo Ferreira Cabral, president (1985-9) and vice-president (from 1989) of the Data Processing Workers' Union. He is also the current president of the regional United Workers' Central (CUT) in Pernambuco - 28 Aug. 1990

29. Mr. Reginaldo Muniz, an economist and director of the Inter-Union Office for Statistical and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE) - 1 Sept. 1990

30. Father Adilson Simões, director of the Colégio Cardeal Arcoverde (owned by the Catholic Church) - 5 Sept. 1990

31. Mr. José Roberto Mendonça, a personnel manager at Metalúrgica Recifense - 10 Sept. 1990

32. Mr. Paulo Fernando Valença (See No. 22 above) - 11 Sept. 1990
33. Mr. Ivaldevan de Araújo Calheiros, president (1986-9) and inter-union relations secretary (from 1989) of the Urban Workers' Union - 24 Sept. 1990
34. Mr. José Gondim Filho, a labour judge at the Regional Labour Court (TRT) - 26 Sept. 1990
35. Mr. Manoel Messias Nascimento Melo, secretary general (1985-6 and from 1989) and vice-president (1986-9) of the Data Processing Workers' Union - 27 Sept. 1990
36. Mrs. Vera Lúcia Jatobá, a lawyer and Ministry of Labour official (*Fiscal do Trabalho* [Labour Inspector]) - 4 Oct. 1990
37. Mr. Everaldo Gaspar, the Regional Labour Attorney in Pernambuco - 6 Oct. 1990
38. Mr. Janildo Chaves de Albuquerque, the Private Schools Teachers' Union representative to the Teaching Interstate Federation (FIE) - 10 Oct. 1990
39. Ms. Florentina Francisca Cabral, an official of the Pernambuco State's Schools Teachers' Association - 11 Oct. 1990
40. Mr. Severino Oliveira da Silva, secretary general (1985-8) and treasurer (from 1988) of the Private Schools' Teachers Union - 11 Oct. 1990
41. Mr. Marcus Tullius Bandeira de Menezes, president (from 1988) of the Private Schools Teachers' Union - 14 Oct. 1990
42. Mr. Manoel Messias Nascimento Melo (See No. 35 above) - 15 Oct. 1990
43. Mr. Jesualdo de Albuquerque, property secretary (from

1988) of the Private Schools Teachers' Union - 17 Oct.
1990

44. Mr. Paulo Roberto Vieira de Oliveira, a Bank Workers' Union's shop steward at *Banco do Brasil* (Av. Rio Branco Branch) - 22 Oct. 1990
45. Mr. Jorge Pedro Perez, a Bank Workers' Union's shop-steward at *Banco do Brasil* (Av. Rio Branco Branch) - 24 Oct. 1990
46. Mr. Cícero Fernandes Aquino, property secretary (1983-6), culture and sport secretary (1986-9) and finance secretary (from 1989) of the Urban Workers' Union - 29 Oct. 1990
47. Mr. Marcos Antônio Pereira da Silva, president (from 1988) of the Bank Workers' Union - 31 Oct. 1990
48. Mr. Edson Marcionilo da Silva, culture secretary (from 1989) of the Data Processing Workers' Union - 3 Nov. 1990
49. Mr. Edvaldo Gomes de Souza, president (1980-6 and from 1989) and secretary general (1986-9) of the Urban Workers' Union. He is also the current culture secretary of the Urban Workers' National Federation - 5 Nov. 1990
50. Mr. Celso Ferreira de Souza, secretary general (from 1989) of the Urban Workers' Union - 6 Nov. 1990
51. Mr. Rivaldo Melo Barbosa, a personnel manager of *Banco do Brasil* (Av. Rio Branco Branch) - 8 Nov. 1990
52. Ms. Vera Lúcia Ferreira Gomes, treasurer (1982-5) and a current official of the Private Schools Teachers' Union - 12 Nov. 1990
53. Mr. Antônio de Pascoal Camargo, an entrepreneur in the Data Processing industry. He is a general manager of *Elógica* which produces data processing services and

computers. He is also the current president of the Data Processing Employers' Union - 22 Nov. 1990

54. Mr. Maurício Rands (See No. 26 above) - 16 Feb. 1992

I have also obtained some speeches delivered at a seminar on the Workers' United Central (CUT) in Pernambuco held by the Centro Josué de Castro. These speeches were delivered by the following unionists:

55. Ms. Vera Lúcia Ferreira Gomes (see No. 40 above) - June 1983

56. Mr. Paulo Rubem Santiago, former president of the Pernambuco State Schools Teachers' Association - June 1983

57. Mr. José Alves de Siqueira (see No. 12 above) - June 1983

58. Mr. Edvaldo Gomes de Souza (see No. 37 above) - June 1983

APPENDIX II

ARCHIVES AND THE DATA GATHERED

1. The Pernambuco State Schools' Teachers' Association Archive: 1) General documents; 2) Documents on the association history; 3) Documents on strikes; 4) Letters to the Pernambuco State Educational Authority; 5) Association minutes; and 6) The association's newspapers.
2. The Private Schools Teachers' Union Archive: 1) Documents on the union's history; (2) Documents on lists of demands; 3) Union minutes; and 4) The union's newspapers.
3. The Bank Workers' Union Archive: 1) The union's newspapers.
4. The Data Processing Workers' Union Archive: 1) General documents; 2) Union minutes; and 3) The union's bulletins and newspapers.
5. The Metalworkers' Union Archive: 1) Interviews carried out by the Centro Josué de Castro; 2) General documents; 3) Documents on the union's history; 4) Documents on strikes and lists of demands; 5) The union's minutes and news on the metalworkers of Pernambuco in the local press; and 6) The union's newspapers.
6. The Urban Workers' Union Archive: 1) The union's minutes; 2) Documents on the union's history; 3) The union's newspaper; 4) General documents; and 5) Documents on lists of demands and strikes.
7. The Pernambuco State Public Library: Data collected from the following newspapers: 1) *Diário de Pernambuco*; 2) *Jornal do Comércio*; and 3) *Folha de Pernambuco*.
8. The Regional Labour Office (DRT): 1) Data on the formation

of the unions; 2) Data on the unions' boards of officials; 3) Data on union membership figures; 4) Data on strikes in Pernambuco; and 5) Data on complaints from the unions on safety at work.

9. The Pernambuco State Manufacturing Industry Federation (FIEP): 1) Data on the number of workers by plant each individual year and its geographical location.

10. The Agency for the Pernambuco State Development (CONDEPE) Library: 1) Socio-economic data on Pernambuco state.

11. Pernambuco State Office for Education Department of Statistics: 1) Figures on teachers of private and state schools on a town to town basis.

12. The Centre for Studies and Social Action (CEAS): 1) Data on union organization by economic sectors, their geographical location, the number of members and officials; 2) Data on level of member participation; 3) Data on inter-union relations; 4) Data on major union problems; 5) Data on unions and major national problems; 6) Data on unions and women; 7) Data on date of foundation of each union; 8) Data on workers represented and their industry; 9) Data on main geographical area of action; 10) Data on the total number of workers which are supposed to be potential members; and 11) Data on the major plants where the unions have unionized or could unionize workers.

13. The Inter-Union Office for Statistical and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE): 1) Data on strikes with the following information: a) *Categorias* on strike; b) Town(s) or geographical area plus states where the strike is going on; c) plant(s) affected by the strike; d) duration; e)

number of strikers; f) causes of strikes; and g) Solutions.

14. The Centro Josué de Castro: 1) Issues of the newspaper *Jornal do DIAP*; and 2) Data on the Metalworkers' Union.
15. The *Equipe de Comunicação Sindical* (ECOS): 1) Issues of the newspaper *Informe Sindical-ECOS*; and 2) Issues of the newspaper *Folha Sindical*.
16. The Workers' United Central (CUT): 1) Papers delivered at workers' general meetings in Pernambuco; and 2) The Central's newspaper.