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John Neagle

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Brazilian Labor Confederations Announce General Strike

by John Neagle

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On Feb. 13, Brazil's principal labor confederations announced plans to launch a 48-hour general strike to protest the an anti-inflation program implemented on Jan. 15. The strike was scheduled for March 14-15, under an agreement by the General Workers Confederation (Confederacao Geral de Trabalhadores-CGT), and the Workers Central (Central Unico de Trabalhadores-CUT). Both are headquartered in Sao Paulo, Brazil's major industrial city. The program, known as the "Plano Verao" (Summer Plan), consists of price and wage freezes, and draconian cuts in public spending. The Congress proposed an amendment to the plan that would limit real wage reductions caused by the freeze. Labor leaders were not satisfied with the congressional "solution," arguing that workers had already lost up to 45% of purchasing power since the plan went into effect. According to confederation statements, the protest will serve as a protest and to apply pressure toward negotiating another means of responding to real wage erosion. The Plano Verao is the third anti-inflation program implemented in as many years. Previous plans eventually led to shortages, surreptitious surcharges, and increased black market speculation in dollars and other hard currencies. (Basic data from AP, AFP, 02/13/89)

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