



BIOGRAPHIES

A Driving Force

In 1923, with the police crackdown hot on his heels, Domingos Passos stepped down from the UOCC Executive Commission and turned his attention to propaganda and union organizing, travelling twice to Paraná to assist the local organisations. Like the intellectuals José Oiticica, Carlos Dias and Fabio Luz, Passos was frequently invited to give talks at union locals. He was also actively involved with workers' festivals, acting in plays, giving poetry-readings and talks on social themes. Such events certainly accounted for some of the few moments of pleasure that Passos enjoyed during his life as a laborer and political activist.

During the first half of 1923 he was one of the driving forces behind the relaunching of the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ), the rival FTRJ organisation having been set up under communist control. When the FORJ resurfaced on 19 August 1923, Passos was elected on to its Federal Committee. Refloated by 6 unions (civil construction, the shoemakers, the coopers, the ships' carpenters, the 'gastronomics' and the Marechal Hermes General Trades Union) by mid-1924 the FORJ had recruited a further 5 significant trades: foundry-workers, brick-workers, ironworkers, steelworkers and stone-workers. In spite of state repression and underhanded communist tricks, revolutionary syndicalism grew in strength under the auspices of the FORJ which was at that time working on the organisation of an inter-union conference in Rio and planning the 4th Brazilian Workers' Congress. In July 1924, all of this organisation effort was wiped out by the crackdown following a junior officers' revolt, in São Paulo this time. Union locals were attacked and shut down, and hundreds of anarchists were jailed. Domingos Passos was one of the first to be arrested and after 20 days of suffering at Police Headquarters he was held in the prison ship 'Campos' in Guanabara Bay. The months that he served on board were characterised by severe privation and restrictions. With other anarchists and hundreds of 'outlaws', he was to be moved to the 'Green Hell' of Oiapoque, the 'Siberia of the Tropics,' where ill-treatment and disease claimed over a thousand lives. Passos managed to escape to Saint-Georges in French Guyana. Meanwhile, fever drove him to seek medical treatment in Cayenne where he received a warm welcome from a Creole who helped him regain his strength. From Guyana he moved on to Belém where he remained for a time as a guest of the organised proletariat in the city.

São Paulo and Imprisonment

Domingos Passos was one of those who returned to the Federal District after the state of siege enforced by the Artur Bernardes government for nearly four full years (1922–1926). On reaching Rio de Janeiro at the start of 1927, he returned to union activity, but he was dogged by the after-effects of malaria. That year he moved to São Paulo, where he helped reorganize the local Workers' Federation

