

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK
DISPUTE IN TÉLAM**

Chronology of the conflict

Tuesday June 26th. Around 8 AM, the first **dismissals** began to arrive. At 10.50 AM the bussiness directory sent e-mails to those employees who hadn't been dismissed. These mails stated the following: “You're part of the new Télam. We trust in you for the construction of a professional, pluralist, democratic and federal news agency.” At 11.30 AM, the Media and Public Information Minister, Hernán Lombardi, announces in journalistic statements to Radio Mitre, the dismissal of 354 Télam workers from the journalistic, advertising and administrative areas, which represents around 40% of the staff and adds up to three prior dismissals (two in May 2018 and another one in June 2017).

At the same time he wrote on his Facebook page: “Today the journalism has won and citizens have won”.

At 14 PM, the workers made an assembly where they decided to peacefully occupy both of the news agency's buildings in the city of Buenos Aires, and full strike of activities until the laid off worker's reincorporation.

The situation of Télam's workers can be divided in three categories: Dismissed (those who have received the dismissals), Remain in Télam (those who have received the e-mail from the board that ensures their continuity in the company) and a category known as workers as “Limbo” (an elevated number of workers who haven't received any communication at all: nor dismissal or e-mail). There is no dismissed worker's list, and there are no authorities in the new agency's buildings to be held accountable for the situation.

Wednesday 27th. An act is held at the gates of Av. Belgrano 347, one of the buildings of the news agency, alongside other workers from the press union and social organizations, once the act ended, there's a protest to the Centro Cultural Kirchner (CCK), headquarters of the System of the Media and Public Information. The delegates of Télam unsuccessfully try to be received by Hernán Lombardi or some relevant authority. More dismissals arrive, but over a hundred employees remain in “Limbo” situation.

Thursday 28th. The Buenos Aires legislature votes on the day a declaration to reject the dismissals in Télam.

Meeting with deputies of the Freedom of Expression and Work Legislation of the National Congress. They promise to promote a bill (elaborated by workers of Télam) to control from the Congress the news agency Télam and announce the summons to Hernán Lombardi for next Tuesday July 3rd in order to explain the situation in the news agency and the reasons for the dismissals.

Meeting with the Directive Board of the General Labour Confederation (CGT), they expressed their solidarity with the situation of the dismissed workers and promises to carry out demarches with the

Executive Power and to intercede in front of the Ministry of Labour to revert back the situation. More dismissals arrive, over a hundred employees remain in “Limbo” situation.

Friday 29th. The company deposits the dismissal compensation to the fired workers and “Limbos”, who became dismissed without any official communication that confirms such condition.

A judicial shelter for the dismissals is presented to the Buenos Aires City Justice.

Legislatives of a wide arc of parliamentarian blocs present a bill in the National Congress tending to transform the news and advertising agency Télam in a public service company under parliamentary regime.

The workers union representatives gather with the assistant secretary of the Truckers' union, Pablo Moyano.

In an interview with Radio Berlín reproduced by the newspaper Perfil, the president of Télam, Rodolfo Pousá, refers to the 357 dismissals and declares that “our objective was to professionalize the news agency, but there was a hard core that wouldn't adapt to this and decided to remain with a very ideological profile”.

Saturday 30th. Workers of Télam cast in a big screen at the gates of the Belgrano building the match where Argentina played against France for the World Cup. There were about 2000 people watching it.

Press workers intervene -because of the invitation of some disertants- in the Night of the Philosophy at the CCK and, later on, perform “We don't give nor the night or the philosophy” (“No les regalamos ni la noche ni la filosofía”). Horacio Verbitsky, Horacio González, Liliana Herrero y María Pía López, among others were participating there.

Some hard data about the dismissals in Télam

Even though the Federal System of Media and Public Information and the Board of Télam ensured that the dismissal of 357 press workers was due to the overdimensioning of the news agency, and it aimed to build a “professional, pluralist, democratic and federal news agency”, the situation unleashed is as follows:

- 6 offices in the inner-country were closed: Catamarca, Formosa, Chaco, Misiones, Chubut y the city of Viedma, which makes that five provinces suspend the production of news for the rest of the country through the public news system. In other 10 offices in the provinces only one employee remain, Mar del Plata, Bariloche y Jujuy among them, reducing to the minimum their operativity. This way the structure and project of a national and federal news agency is destroyed.
- Complete sections disappeared and fundamental sections for the full and efficient operativity of Télam as a news and advertising budget controller of the State agency were reduced to its minimum expression. Among them: Infography from 12 to 1 professional; Society from 21 journalists to 11, firing journalists specialized in gender subjects; en Periodistic File from 22 to 2 employees (onlye the bosses remain), in Sports of 31 journalists only 17 remain; in Sales Administration -key area in for the advertising budget control- the full staff was laid off -except those who had union privileges, the delegates-; in Periodistic Coordination -key area to organize the media coverage- there's only one employee left, in the Political area the only worker in charge of Human Rights news was dismissed.
- The full staff of Télam at the moment of the dismissal was 878 employees. International agencies suchs as EFE from Spain has a staff of 1500 press workers, BBC in the UK has around 21000.
- The Board says that the staff of the agency grew exponentially in the last few years, but actually in the year 2000 Télam had 700 employees exclusively for photography, graphic editorial office, administration and advertising tasks. In 2001, after a process of Voluntary Retirements the staff fell to 450 workers. In 2016 staff was 916, thanks to the apparition and use of new areas and technological platforms, a direct effect of the digitalization and technological improvement, the new employees of the last decade increased the graphical editorial office in order to obtain a stronger information service, but also they were hired due to the creation of new areas, such as Audiovisual (it produces television contents, streaming transmissions and special contents), a news digital gateway, a special radio service and the digitalization of the periodistic and photographic historical files.

Parliamentary Project:

Télam, a company under parliamentary control

Legislatives of a broad parliamentary bloc presented on Friday June 29th a bill to transfer the news and advertising agency Télam from Executive to Legislative control.

The bill, admitted under the File 3961-D-2018, has the signatures of Leopoldo Moreau, Gabriela Cerrutti, Rodrigo Rodríguez Martín, Hugo Yasky, José Luis Gioja, Araceli Ferreira, José Pablo Carro, Josefina González, Daniela Castro, Agustín Rossi y José Pablo Carro (Frente para la Victoria-PJ); Felipe Solá y Carlos Selva (Bloque Federal-Unidos por Una Nueva Argentina); Silvia Horne (Peronismo para la Victoria); Nicolás Del Caño y Nathalia González (FIT); Andrés Vallone (Unidad Justicialista de San Luis); y Luis Contigiani (Partido Socialista).

The bill states, among other specifications, that:

* The Board of Télam will be elected by a Permanent Bicameral Commission of the National Congress, comprised proportionally according to the Parliamentary majorities and minorities. Currently the Board is appointed by the Executive Power.

* The Permanent Bicameral Commission of the National Congress will appoint the members of the Board, who will be designed from within a pre-approved list of an Evaluation Committee comprised by specialists in communication, public universities, labor unions, etc. Nowadays the members of the Board don't need to hold any prerequisite to be appointed in their charges.

*The Board must present annually the communicational plan of the following year, and it must be approved by the Bicameral Commission.

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*The bill consolidates the role of Télam as an advertising agency of the Argentine State.

*It establishes mechanisms of transparency and access to the information for the citizenship and for the administration of the agency Télam and the numbers of the official advertising budget.