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Brazos Cruçados, Maquinas Paradas (Arms Crossed, Machines Stopped)

Brazil 1979. Dir: Roberto Gervitz and Sergio Segal.

This film is enormously important, marking the emergence of a use of documentary which is probably unprecedented in Brazil. It deals with the first of the two massive strikes by metal workers in the industrial belts of São Paulo in 1978 and 1979 which gave the military government its greatest buffeting since the 1964 military coup, and established the industrial working class as a major independent social and political force for the first time in Brazilian history. The role of the union leader Lula and the formation of the Workers Party were just two aspects of the development. This documentary, its directors' first film, was made with the workers' movement, not as a commentary on it, but as an expression of it and a tool for its self-understanding.