

The

Special Supplement

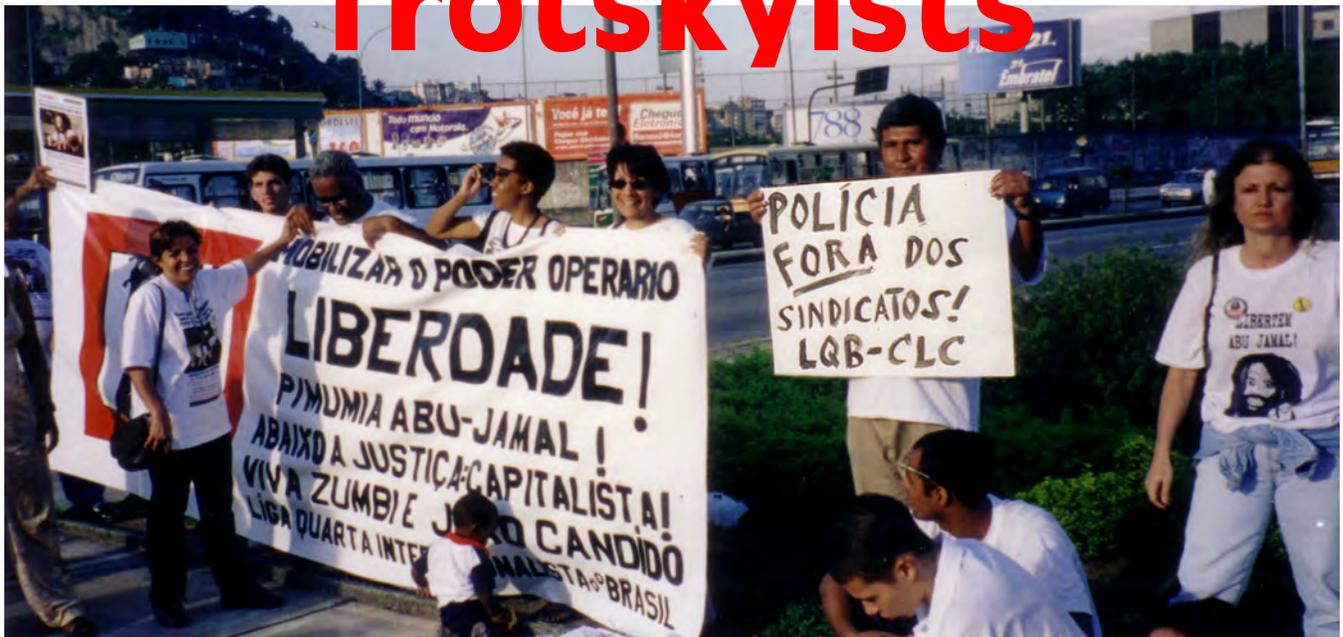
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Internationalist



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Responses to ICL Smear Campaign Against Brazilian Trotskyists



Vanguarda Operária

An Internationalist Group pamphlet

May 2010

Introduction

For three months in early 2010, the Spartacist League supported U.S. imperialism's invasion of Haiti following the January 12 earthquake, shamelessly repeating Democratic Obama administration's lie that this was a mission to deliver relief supplies to the victims. The SL accused the Internationalist Group in particular of fomenting mass death by starvation because we demanded that all U.S. and United Nations forces get out of Haiti. While the SL and ICL were portraying the 82nd Airborne Division as indispensable aid workers, the League for the Fourth International, of which the IG is the U.S. section, published several articles, put out special supplements in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and helped organize demonstrations denouncing Washington's "humanitarian" invasion. Then suddenly, in an April 27 statement, the ICL leadership made an about-face and declared that the position they had so loudly defended was a betrayal of fundamental Marxist principle, just as we had insisted all along.

This has put the SL in quite a pickle politically, especially since it admits that the Internationalist Group took the correct position and it even agreed with the IG's characterization of the SL line as "social-imperialist." So following its denunciation of its own ignominious apology for the U.S. takeover of Haiti (now admitted to be an invasion), and its admission that the SL newspaper *Workers Vanguard* lied about the Pentagon's actions and about its own positions, the SL/ICL have been desperately seeking any stick they can find to polemically beat the IG. They have sought refuge in recycling their smears against the IG and the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), the Brazilian section of the LFI, going back to 1996-98.

The SL/ICL accusations are brazen lies, accusing the LQB of "suing the union" in Brazil when the exact opposite was the case: the LQB *never* sued the union, and in fact LQB militants were the duly elected leadership of the Municipal Workers Union of Volta Redonda (SFPMVR) who were

hauled into court and ousted from their union leadership positions by the bourgeois "justice" system. Their supposed "crime" was to remove municipal police from the union. As a result of this, the LQB comrades were hit with no less than nine separate court suits promoted by pro-cop elements in the SFPMVR and by the employer, the city government. In the face of this repression by a popular front government including Stalinists (PCdoB), social democrats (PTB) and bourgeois populists (PSB), as we sought (successfully) to build international support, the SL/ICL sought to *sabotage* their defense by retailing the lies about the Brazilian Trotskyists spread by those who actually did drag the union into the courts.

In response to this new offensive of slander and distortion by the SL/ICL, we are issuing a pamphlet bringing together the statements we issued at the time refuting these vile smears. As we showed then, this mudslinging was part of a bureaucratic purge of leading cadres in the ICL. The barrage of lies was intended to cover up the ICL's own criminal desertion from the struggle to oust the police from the union out of fear that the cop reaction could hit it. For a complete picture of the events recounted here, this collection of documents should be read together with the bulletin put out by the purged SL cadres, titled *From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle* (July 1996), as well as the IG Dossier on *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil* (February 1997), which details the first set of court suits against the Brazilian comrades.

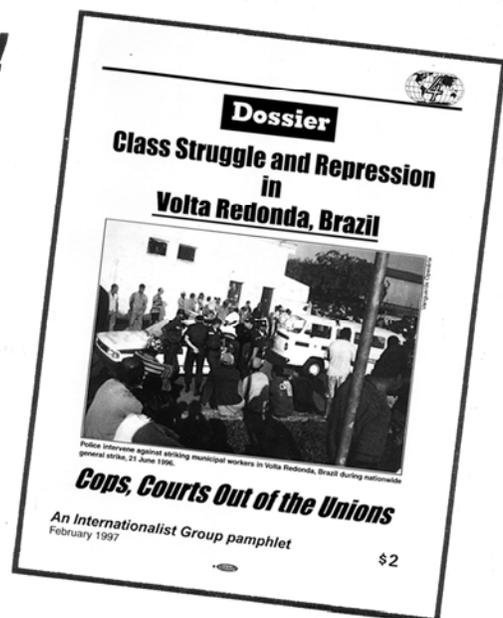
Cover: Contingent of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil and Comitê de Luta Classista during 22 November 1999 general strike in Rio de Janeiro whose demands (due to LQB/CLC initiative) included freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sign says: "Police Out of the Unions."

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The ICL Leaders' Cover Story: Smokescreen for a Betrayal

The following statement is taken from *The Internationalist No. 1 (January-February 1997)*. It was issued by the *Internationalist Group* as a leaflet on 13 September 1996.

It's hard to miss that something is seriously wrong with the official story the International Communist League's leadership has put out to justify its purge of long-time cadres this past June, followed almost immediately by its break of fraternal relations with the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil/Luta Metalúrgica (LQB/LM). First came a publicly distributed, 149-page bulletin of internal ICL materials, which was filled with documents against the expelled comrades, and complained that Norden and Stamberg alone had produced "at least 392 pages" of documents in a year-long internal struggle, but reproduced only one of those documents, their "Response to a Frame-Up 'Trial'." Any serious reader trying to figure out what the fight was about was left wondering what we had to say.

Then *Workers Vanguard* (No. 648, 5 July 1996) published a "polemic" which even sympathetically inclined readers found remarkably short on concretes, specifics or serious political argumentation. The expelled comrades, who have now formed the Internationalist Group, published an extensive bulletin (*After Spartacist League Purges Leading Cadres, ICL Flees from Class Battle in Brazil: From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle*, July 1996) that provides point-by-point answers to the ICL leadership's distortions and outright falsifications, carefully documents what really happened in Brazil and explains the political meaning of these events.

After a month and a half of silence, the ICL has now published a cursory "answer" to us (*WV* No. 651, 13 September 1996). But, as will be immediately clear to anyone who has read our bulletin, *WV's* "polemic" answers *none* of the documented facts and political arguments we put forward. This exercise in blatant *political evasion* accompanies an edited version of the August 1 New York Spartacist forum where ICL speaker Jon Brule rehashed, often word for word, the *WV* 648 articles on our expulsion and the break with the Brazilian LQB/LM.

From "Little" Distortions...

Our bulletin pointed out:

"A notable aspect of the recent fights and sharp turn to the right by the ICL has been its systematic use of distortion and outright lies, in flagrant contradiction to the proud tradition of the Spartacist tendency."

In little things as in big, the ICL's "answer" piles on more evidence that it has adopted wholesale dishonesty as a

method of political combat.

Take the statement in the article's very first sentence that our bulletin was "published without a union 'bug' (label)." The implication is that our bulletin was printed in a scab shop. But the fact is that we did every bit of work on the bulletin ourselves. This was stated clearly on the front cover of the bulletin, which says "Labor donated" – a fact *WV* neglects to mention. Numerous Spartacist League leaflets and documents have stated that they were produced with "labor donated." Volunteer labor was how the Spartacist League originally printed and reproduced its *Marxist Bulletin* series for years (up to and including *MB* No. 9, Basic Documents of the SL).

WV's baiting is a clumsy attempt at a smear job aimed at obscuring real political debate. Like the repeated claims in Brule's speech that we "split" and "left" the party – when in fact we were bureaucratically *expelled* – this gives a measure of the dishonesty of *WV's* account.

...To a Full-Scale Cover-Up on Brazil

A significant part of our bulletin was devoted to documenting how, after the ICL correctly encouraged the Brazilian LQB's struggle to remove police from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union (SFPMVR), the "new I.S." (International Secretariat) fled from this crucial class battle.

We quoted the June 5 I.S. motion saying that "given the sinister provocations and threats of state repression," association of the ICL with the LQB's union work "presents unacceptable risks to the vanguard." We reprinted the LQB's powerful response to the ICL's disloyal break of fraternal relations, in which the Brazilian militants stress that "as the ICL representatives were fully aware, the day you cut off relations was *one day before the union assembly called to separate the municipal guardas [police] from the municipal union!*" We cited one leaflet and newspaper article after another from Volta Redonda on the record of the Brazilian comrades' fight to remove the cops from the union and the repression they have faced in carrying out this struggle.

Yet with supreme arrogance, the *WV* No. 651 "polemic" pretends this doesn't exist, saying:

"The Nordenites' cover story for our supposed 'centrist turn' is that we 'deserted the class struggle' by breaking fraternal relations with the Brazilian Luta Metalúrgica (LM) group, allegedly as their MEL [Municipal Workers in Struggle] supporters in the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda were about to raise a motion to kick the cops out of the union at a June 19 union meeting."

“Allegedly”?! What nauseating cynicism! Every Volta Redonda union activist knows this is what happened and would dismiss *WV*’s sneer with disgust. As the MEL paper (July 28) reported, the police intervened to shut down the June 19 union meeting where union president Geraldo Ribeiro “read the resolutions of the 1st Seminar [of the union], among the main points of which is: To disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* from the SFPMVR, because they are not part of the working class.” In fact it was just at this point that the police dissolved the meeting.

Eight days after the June 19 meeting, Ribeiro was suspended by the courts, at the “request” of pro-cop provocateur Artur Fernandes, who was appointed by the bosses’ courts to be their puppet union “president.” The bourgeois press reported the pro-police faction’s motives: “they state they are against the proposal to disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* from the union,” whereas “disaffiliation is called for by suspended union president Geraldo Ribeiro” (*Diário do Vale* [Volta Redonda], 20-21 July 1996).

Since Ribeiro refused to abandon this struggle, the popular front city government escalated its vendetta, charging him with “slandering” the city because of the campaign he has led against the racist firing of a black woman, Regina Célia. This charge, based on a draconian law inherited from the military dictatorship, can bring up to four years in jail.

But as far as *WV* is concerned, it is just “allegedly” and according to us that all this has to do with the fight waged for cops out of the union before and during the June 19 union meeting. Yet the ICL leadership knows full well that this is the case. Contempt for the truth is the mark of cynics, not revolutionists. Not only is the I.S. in possession of the leaflets and multiple articles from the bourgeois press (many of which it hid from the ICL membership), but at a June 16 meeting with the Brazilian comrades, the I.S. representatives *argued against* the LQB’s plans to vote the removal of the cops at the June 19 meeting. We quoted a few of these ICL reps’ repeated demands that the Brazilian comrades abandon this fight because it was too dangerous. This was summed up in the egregious call to “pull our hands out of the boiling water.” One day after the LQB refused to commit such a flagrant betrayal, the I.S. wrote its letter breaking relations with them. This entire course of events is laid out in detail in a series of written statements sent to the ICL by the LQB militants directly involved in these struggles.¹

Next item: The *WV* article says the ICL broke with the Brazilian group “on the fundamental premise that the main task in Brazil was to construct a revolutionary party based on the program of Trotskyism, and to put out a party press reflecting that program.” From reading *WV*, nobody would have a clue that less than a month after the ICL broke with them, the LQB comrades *published that party press!* Its name is *Vanguarda Operária*. Pretty strange for a group that supposedly didn’t want to publish a party newspaper. Moreover, the article is silent about the fact that at the time of the ICL’s break, over half the paper was laid out, despite the weeks-long delay because the ICL rep had the computer

¹ See *From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle* (July 1996), pp. 42, 82-89.



codes (“attributes”) without which the LQB comrades couldn’t open the files.

In addition to selling hundreds of copies of its paper to steel workers, municipal workers, university students in São Paulo and Rio, protesters against repression of landless peasants and many others, the LQB has published its own pamphlet of Trotsky’s crucial work “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” which explains that a successful struggle to free the workers movement from bourgeois state intervention can be waged only by building the revolutionary, Fourth Internationalist party of the proletarian vanguard. But the line of the ICL leadership is: if we pretend not to notice, then it doesn’t exist. Not for nothing did the LQB characterize this method as “illusionism.”

Falsification to Hide Flight from Class Struggle

The *WV* 651 [article] deepens the falsifications and slanders raised to justify the bureaucratic purge of leading members and the ICL leadership’s flight from class struggle in Brazil. After dishonestly claiming that the LQB “refused” to “construct a revolutionary party” and “put out a party press,” the article claims that “LM refused to break with a course of trade-union opportunism and rotten-bloc maneuvers.” What is the proof offered to back up this sweeping statement? *None whatsoever*. Just for example, whom are they supposedly engaged in “rotten-bloc maneuvers” with? *WV* is silent. Brule’s August 1 forum presentation claims the Brazilian comrades believe “any unprincipled shortcut or deal is possible. And that’s what LM did – and kept on doing – at the top of this municipal workers union, until the police themselves broke the deal....” *What “deal” with the cops?* This is a filthy smear!

What has occurred is the “bloc” of the bourgeois police and courts, pro-cop provocateurs in the SFPMVR, the popular-front mayor and most of the Brazilian fake left in a relentless attempt to smash the LQB militants. And as this truly rotten bloc, an unholy anti-communist alliance of the class enemy and the opportunists, spewed out one slander after another, *the ICL leadership grotesquely took up some of those lies and repeated them*, first internally and now in its public press! That the LQB comrades have pursued the struggle for class independence in the face of these odds,

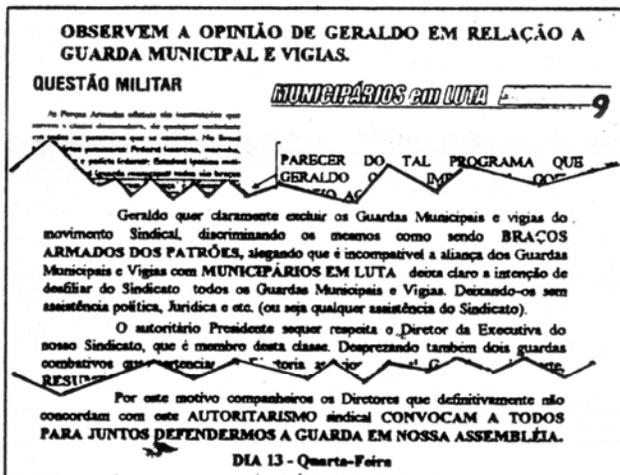
and despite the ICL leadership's abandonment and backstabbing defamation of them, speaks highly of their determination to fight for the cause of the workers and oppressed.

The WV 651 articles claim it was "only when compelled by a police provocation" that the LQB/LM took up the question of cops in the labor movement! Once again, this is false. The Municipal Workers in Struggle program, while failing to call explicitly for removal of the cops from the SFPMMVR (an error the LQB has explicitly recognized), included a section on "The Military Question" stating: "The official armed forces are institutions which serve the ruling class.... In Brazil there are various levels: federal (army, navy, air force and federal police); state (military police); municipal (municipal *guarda*) – all are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie." The MEL program adds that any "alliance" with the police is incompatible with class independence, "since they bring men armed and trained by the bourgeois state into the unions."

SFPMMVR president Ribeiro sent the ICL a statement noting that shortly after taking office he carried out negotiations "for the disaffiliation of the *guarda* from the union" even before the discussion of this question that occurred when an LQB representative attended the ICL's International Executive Committee meeting in January. And it wasn't as if this position went unnoticed. The pro-police faction in the SFPMMVR, led by Artur Fernandes, issued a leaflet reproducing the MEL program's denunciation of the municipal cops and calling the March 13 [1996] union assembly to "defend the *guardas*." The Artur faction's leaflet began:

"Geraldo clearly wants to exclude the Municipal *Guardas* and watchmen from the union movement, stigmatizing them as **ARMED FISTS OF THE BOSSES**, claiming that an alliance with the Municipal *Guardas* and Watchmen is incompatible with **MUNICIPÁRIOS EM LUTA**, making clear the intention to disaffiliate all the Municipal *Guardas* and Watchmen from the Union."

The facts are clear: the pro-police provocateur – echoed by the bourgeois press and the municipal *guardas*' commander (as detailed in our bulletin) – went after Ribeiro and the LQB for seeking the disaffiliation of the cops from the union.



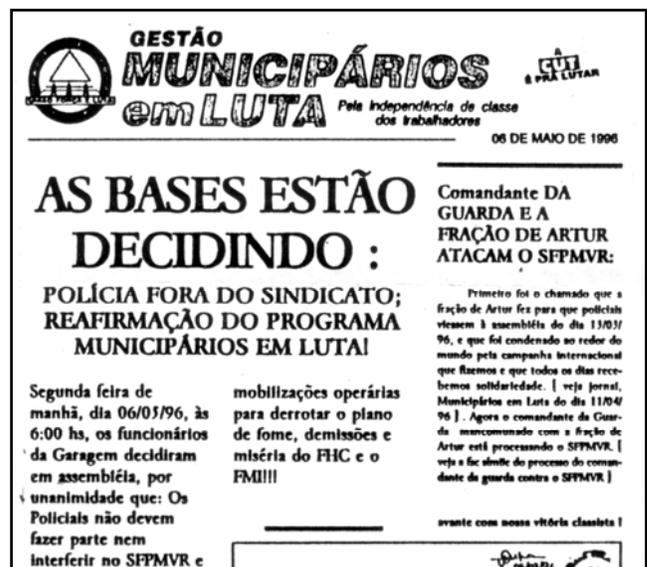
Excerpt from leaflet by pro-police provocateur in the SFPMMVR, titled "Look at Geraldo's Views About the Municipal Police."

When workers turned out to support Geraldo against the pro-cop provocation, the Artur faction called the Military Police against the March 13 union meeting – this is what led the ICL to launch the international campaign for police hands off the SFPMMVR. The fact that the union printed 10,000 copies of the April 11 SFPMMVR paper with Mumia Abu-Jamal's article "Police: Part of, or Enemies of, Labor?" (see page 8) was the pretext used by the bourgeois court to suspend Ribeiro from his elected post as union president.

Then we come to WV's statement that "the June 19 union meeting was *not* advertised as the showdown with the cops the Nordenites would have us believe" and Brule's August 1 statement that "Not only do you make up a bogus issue here, but then you lie about that too." Let's be clear: those the ICL leadership claims are lying about this are not just the so-called "Norden group" but the Volta Redonda militants the WV article grudgingly admits carried out a "difficult and principled struggle against the police presence in the union." But let us see who is telling the truth.

The article's talk of "advertising" a "showdown" is revoltingly cynical given that *the ICL correctly recommended that LQB supporters make it clear they did not seek a confrontation with the cops*. A February 26 letter by comrade Robertson to LQB leader Cerezo noted that "while recognizing with increasing clarity that police within the workers' unions is a fundamentally unprincipled practice, the timing and means of their removal and exclusion needs to be applied thoughtfully, with an eye to the other elements in the immediate situation."

The fact remains that the June 19 union meeting was to be the culmination of a campaign to separate the cops from



the union. The ICL's International Secretariat translated, but *did not circulate*, the May 6 MEL bulletin (see graphic, below) that began "The Ranks Are Deciding: Police Out of the Union" and reported on the garage workers' assembly that voted that "The police must not be part of the SFPMMVR and the labor movement in general, since they are the instrument and armed fist of the bourgeoisie." On the inside of this bulletin is a headline calling to intensify the campaign interna-

tionally and among the ranks and “do as the garage brothers did” and elect representatives against the “police slate of the Artur faction” in delegate elections by work group (the schedule for which is printed in the same bulletin) to a union conference scheduled for June 13. The bulletin ends with the slogans: “Forward with Our Campaign! Police Out of the Union! Workers of the World, Unite!”

The *WV* article cynically claims that the June 7 MEL paper referring to the June 19 meeting said the meeting was about a wage campaign. That was only *one* of the points on the agenda. Point 7 of the agenda for the June 13 delegated union conference (*seminário*) held to prepare for the June 19 assembly was on the Municipal *Guarda*. The June 17 MEL paper reproduces this on its front page, while the back begins in huge letters: “The Campaign for ‘Cops Hands Off the SFPMMVR’ Is Growing.”

CRESCER A CAMPANHA **“Polícia tire as mãos do SFPMMVR”**

—from MEL bulletin, 17 June 1996

The June 18 MEL paper reproduces the main conference resolution, which states that “the affiliation of *guardas* and police to workers’ unions is incompatible with a class program.”

...unados com o comandante da Guarda Municipal, que está processando o Sindicato e instigando a guarda contra o mesmo. É por isso que o nosso programa, “Municipários em Luta”, insiste que filiação de guardas e policiais aos sindicatos operários é incompatível com um programa classista.

The June 19 meeting was indeed intended to be the culmination of the campaign for police out of the union. As the June 28 MEL paper reported, the cops and courts shut down the June 19 union meeting where “Geraldo read the resolutions from the First *Seminário*, among the main points of which is: To disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* from the SFPMMVR, because they are not part of the working class.” Showing the arrest of LQB supporter Marcello Carega for leading 150 workers blocking a gate as part of the June 21 nation-wide general strike, it notes “for the ‘blind people’ who do not want to see, this is one more lesson: police (any kind of police) are not part of the workers movement” and thus the June 13 conference called for “excluding the Municipal *Guardas* from the SFPMMVR.”

As the LQB noted in its July 4 response to the ICL, thousands of these bulletins were distributed, not only within the SFPMMVR but elsewhere, including university campuses in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and the V.R. region. Subsequent leaflets (as well as the bourgeois press) reported support to the campaign by the mother of Ernane da Silva Lúcio, a black child murdered in October 1995 by a municipal cop, and the issue continued to polarize the city. While pro-cop provocateur Artur Fernandes drew less than a dozen

workers to the “assembly” he held after the courts appointed him puppet union “president,” on July 25 an assembly of 150 SFPMMVR members voted, after a minute of silence in memory of Ernane, to reaffirm Ribeiro as president and to expel the police from the union (see display, top of page 7).

Yet *WV* pretends none of this exists. And what of the demands by ICL representatives at their June 16 meeting with the LQB? Our bulletin cited their calls on the Brazilian comrades to “pull our hands out of the boiling water”; to “formally leave the most prominent issue” the bourgeoisie sought to use against them, their “leadership of the union”; and their denunciation of the LQB’s “intransigent defense of work in a union which at this time poses fundamental risks” to the LQB and the ICL, etc. Yet this is just a small sample of their panicked warnings that “the power of the bourgeois state” was about to lead to a bloody clash in the union and their calls to pull out because the LQB “cannot stand up to this whole offensive of bourgeois reaction, which is trying to destroy the union and which is trying to wait for the best moment to destroy our organization in Brazil.” These quotations can be multiplied at will. Does the ICL leadership dare to claim they are false? Try it – we have the tape of the meeting, and so do they!

WV’s evasions, omissions and flat-out lies give the measure of a whole series of associated fabrications—among them the truly repugnant allegation that Norden and Negrete sought to “blunt” political discussions, “excusing weaknesses on the part of LM by claiming they were only ‘cultural differences’” in line with a position that “comrades from the semi-colonial countries would be second-class members”! We challenge the ICL leadership to substantiate this disgusting smear. In fact, the headlong flight from the class struggle in Brazil carries more than a whiff of Second International-style “socialism” on the colonial question, not unrelated to the new I.S.’ U.S.-centric view of the world. As we noted in our bulletin, the I.S.’ actions in Brazil are a typically centrist clash between words and deeds.

Finally there is the claim that despite breaking fraternal relations, the ICL continues to defend the Brazilian militants against repression. We ask: other than a small, pro-forma box in *WV* No. 650, has the ICL done anything whatsoever since the break to obtain solidarity statements or mobilize international defense for these comrades? To our knowledge, the answer is no. We would be happy to learn otherwise. While *WV* boasts “we are proud of this split” with the LQB, the flight from Brazil was a shameful act which the ICL leadership seeks – in vain – to cover up with lies....

[Section of article on Germany is omitted]

Against the Turn to Centrist – Fight for Trotskyism!

Perhaps the most pathetic aspect of recent polemics is the recurrent claim by the ICL leadership that they were duped and deceived by the devious Nordenites—which in *WV* 651 takes the form of stating that “when the party took control of [Brazil] work away from Norden and Negrete, we discovered that LM and the ICL had been toys in Norden’s game of smoke and mirrors.” So now the ICL leadership says “Toys α Us”?

"A Historic Decision" – Union Ranks Vote Cops Out



On July 25, Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union assembly voted to remove police from the union membership. Far left: union bulletin hails meeting. Left: Volta Redonda newspaper reports, "Another decision of the assembly was to approve the disaffiliation of the Municipal Guard."

What would it mean if the picture the I.S. presents of itself were really true? It claims that for months it was *suckered* by Norden over what was going on in Germany. As for Mexico, the ICL's fastest growing section, while it had just been officially reported that the Grupo Espartaquista de México functioned like "a good old-fashioned Spartacist League local," it suddenly "came out" (to justify the purge of Socorro and Negrete from the GEM leadership) that the I.S. had supposedly been *deceived* there as well. And then there is the claim that the ICL leadership was *duped* for *two years* by the Declaration of Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica, as they wail: We were only a toy in their game.

If this were true, the ICL leadership would have condemned itself as so irresponsible, ill-informed and willfully blind that no serious revolutionist would follow it for a minute. "Dupes" don't lead revolutions. But of course this claim to have been triply duped and deceived is laughable nonsense. The "new I.S." is simply rewriting the party's history in the service of a turn to the right.

The harm to the ICL is being done by the current leadership. If it wished to reverse some of that damage it would rescind the bureaucratic expulsions and the display split with the LQB, retract its unprincipled slanders and open up a wide-ranging party discussion on the source of the recent disastrous course. Instead it digs in deeper. This is not just an episodic "blip." The process is far from over, and many zigzags may lie ahead, but powerful political motivations and pressures are at work here, cutting against the fight for the Trotskyist program.

The ICL leadership screams that it was defrauded over Brazil because, it claims, a group of proletarian militants like the LQB couldn't really agree with the Trotskyist program. This speaks to a real loss of confidence by the ICL leaders in the power and relevance of that program today. More broadly, Pabloite revisionism was motivated in large part by a despairing loss of confidence in the capacity of the proletariat, led by its independent revolutionary vanguard, to carry out revolutionary struggle. It is striking that the repeated theme of ICL polemics against us is that we supposedly *underestimate* just how bad the current period is and *overestimate* the potential for

revolutionary struggles – in other words, that we are cockeyed optimists out of tune with the times.

While the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR was a major defeat for the world proletariat, revolutionists must reject the *defeatist* conclusions pushed by the ICL leadership, an echo of the bourgeois "death of communism" campaign. The "post-Soviet period" demands more than ever that we carry the Trotskyist program into the class struggle and reforge the world party of socialist revolution: the Fourth International.

Internationalist Group



Union newspaper featuring article by Mumia Abu-Jamal, "Police: Part of, or Enemies of, Labor?"

Protest Brazilian Police Assault on Volta Redonda Union

From Death Row,
This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Police: Part of, or Enemies of, Labor?



—Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 643, 12
April 1996

“Authority is never without hate.”
—Euripides

In the large nation-state of Brazil, the lion’s share of South America, the question of the function of the police is at the heart of the labor struggle for the power to better the life of working people.

In Volta Redonda, an industrial center near Rio de Janeiro, that question has emerged as a central one in the middle of an internal power struggle among leading municipal workers.

On March 13, 1996, a meeting of the Municipal Workers Union was invaded by the globally infamous and murderous Military Police, who, heavily armed, attempted to “settle” a workers dispute with shotguns. People at the scene reported their surprise response came only moments after a premeditated physical assault on MWU president Geraldo Ribeiro, a militant trade unionist, by MWU secretary Arthur Bonizetti Fernandes’ key operative, known as “Motorzinho.”

What is dangerous and unprecedented here, is the calling of the cops: Who did it?; and why?

What is clear, from all reports, is union president Ribeiro didn’t call them, and upon their arrival informed them that everything was under control. Later, some workers heard plainclothes police say Artur (union secretary) owed them 10 reals (\$11 U.S.) apiece, but feared they might not be paid, as they were “late” (late for what, one wonders?).

At any rate, the invitation of police, and more ominously, *this* police force, into the heart of an internal union dispute, is a truly dire development. *This* force, the Military Police, is known as a death squad, who have practiced their murderous expertise on the black, brown and poor slum children of the *favelas* and streets of Rio. They (like the Philadelphia police) are experts in babykilling.

Central to the Luta Metalúrgica (LM – Metalworkers Struggle) and Municipal workers Union con-

flict is a question that now has global implications – what is the role of the police? Are they simply workers, like glass blowers, garbage collectors, or clerks? Or are they agents of the wealthy and propertied classes – those who rule?

Throughout history, police have protected the *status quo*, even when that “status” has been evil and repressive. During the civil rights era, it was the police who beat bloodied and arrested those who fought – peacefully! – for civil rights. Federal police followed, phone-tapped, sabotaged and, in the words of the FBI, “neutralized” those who today are honored veterans of that struggle, like Reverend Martin Luther King (Jr. & Sr.), nationalist Malcolm X, and Black Panther founder Dr. Huey P. Newton. Police aided white supremacists in many of their racist campaigns.

Similarly, police in Brazil have been engineers of repression, from the crushing of popular and labor unions in the past, to the ruthless, shopkeeper-contracted slaughter of Brazilian street children. If the *status quo* is unjust, inequitable and repressive, how can anyone protect it?

It is in this context that one must truly “see” the introduction of the nefarious Military Police into the affairs of a union for the bad omen that it is, and once seeing this, condemn and protest it forcefully.

Presidente Ribeiro and his Luta Metalúrgica (Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil) ally, Alexandre Honorato “Cerezo,” are calling for protests against police presence and provocations in union affairs.

Protests should be directed to: Marcello Alencar, Governor, Rio de Janeiro State, Palácio Guanabara, Rua Pinherio Machado s/n, Laranjeiras, CEP 22238-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. Fax No. (55-21) 553-6090.

Solidarity statements can be sent to: Geraldo Ribeiro, Rua União No. 147, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil.

The central principle: police hands off the unions!
31 March 1996.



Brazil: Context of a Betrayal

The following article is reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997.

The attack on the first issue of *The Internationalist* published in *Workers Vanguard* No. 663 (7 March 1997) provides the latest version of the International Communist League leadership's official story on its flight from Brazil.

Our first issue reprinted a 13 September 1996 statement by the Internationalist Group, "The ICL Leaders' Cover Story: Smokescreen for a Betrayal." That statement spelled out how, after correctly encouraging the struggle of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB) to remove police from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union (SFPMVR), the ICL leadership fled from this key class battle, cutting fraternal relations with the LQB one day before a crucial union meeting where the cops were to be ousted.

Despite the ICL leadership's backstabbing, and in the face of a repressive vendetta by the courts, cops and local authorities, the LQB carried out this battle, culminating in a 25 July 1996 union meeting which voted the expulsion of the cops from the SFPMVR. This fight is documented in the dossier published by the Internationalist Group in collaboration with our fraternal comrades of the LQB, *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil – Cops, Courts Out of the Unions* (February 1997).

Our September 1996 statement denounced the fact that in his presentation at a 1 August 1996 Spartacist forum in New York (reprinted in *WV* No. 651, 13 September 1996), ICL speaker Jon Brule claimed the Brazilian comrades believe "any unprincipled shortcut or deal is possible. And that's what LM did – and kept on doing – at the top of this municipal workers union, until the police themselves broke the deal." We wrote: "What 'deal' with the cops? This is a filthy smear!"

After *WV* published Brule's allegation, the LQB wrote a 17 October 1996 letter to the ICL (which they requested be published in *Workers Vanguard*) stating: "There was no 'deal' with the police, and this dirty slander is an attempt to hide the reality of our class-struggle fight to disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* [police] from the SFPMVR. This attempt to make reality disappear will not succeed!" Their letter defied the ICL leadership: "We demand and we challenge you to show the proof of what you say and publish." No proofs were forthcoming. Their letter was not printed in *WV* or answered by the ICL.

Meanwhile, two members of the Mexican section of the ICL formally asked for an explanation of the charge of a "deal" with the cops. When their request was met with stony silence from the ICL leadership, they undertook their own intensive investigation of documents. This led them to the conclusion that not only was the "deal" allegation a smear,

but the break with the LQB "was an unprincipled act which goes against internationalism" (Buenaventura and Teodoro, "Letter to ICL Comrades," 16 October 1996). Denouncing the abandonment of the class battle in Brazil and the purge of leading ICL members last summer, these comrades solidarized with the Internationalist Group (IG) and were expelled three days after submitting their document.

Six months later, the ICL leadership has still not responded to the demand to substantiate or withdraw its slander about a "deal" with the cops. Instead they engage in more mud-slinging. At a February 28 New York Spartacist League forum, SL spokesman Alison Spencer repeated the smear, while characterizing our dossier on the struggle in Volta Redonda as "slime" – adding, "next time you should print it on puke." This gives an idea of the level of "argument" by ICL leaders as they attempt to justify their unprincipled course by heaping filth on the LQB.

WV 663 attempts to trivialize the import of the ICL leaders' actions in Brazil by claiming we have engaged in "chicken baiting." On the contrary, what we charge the International Secretariat (I.S.) of the ICL with is worse than cowardice: the I.S. committed a *betrayal* by abandoning a fight that it had encouraged, leaving the Brazilian comrades to take the heat.

In encouraging the fight to oust the cops, the ICL leadership *took on responsibilities in the class struggle*. Anyone who does not understand what this means has no business in revolutionary politics. The ICL fled from those responsibilities at the high point of the struggle, and then it tried to cover its tracks with *fabrications and slanders* against those who refused to join in this betrayal.

WV: Now vs. Then

The *WV* No. 663 article attacks LQB leader Cerezo as having been "an unelected 'adviser'" to the SFPMVR. In fact, this was one of the themes in a witchhunt against the LQB and union president Geraldo Ribeiro because of Ribeiro's election on a program against the popular front. This anti-red campaign was fanned by the bourgeois press over a year ago, and then escalated by one Artur Fernandes, a pro-police provocateur in Volta Redonda. Among many other smears, Fernandes claimed that Cerezo had sought to receive a union salary equal to ten times the minimum wage. At the 28 February 1997 New York forum, SL spokesman Spencer went even further and called him a "paid adviser" to the union. Yet as the ICL leadership knows full well, published affidavits by the union treasurer and president state that Cerezo never sought, let alone received, any payment from the union!

This kind of smear campaign against "outside reds" is not new – the same sort of charges were hurled at U.S. Trot-

skyist leader James P. Cannon when he was “advising” his comrades in the leadership of the Minneapolis Teamsters in the 1930s. What is most striking here is how the ICL leadership has picked up these anti-communist themes for its own purposes. These are, after all, the same charges which *Workers Vanguard* emphatically denounced a year ago. When this McCarthyite campaign began, *WV* published an “ICL Statement of Solidarity with Luta Metalúrgica” (LM) that denounced the “unholy alliance” that is “frantically seeking to drive revolutionaries out of the union” (*WV* No. 639, 16 February 1996). We urge ICL members and sympathizers to reread that statement, which denounced attempts to brand LQB/LM spokesman Cerezo an outsider.

The *WV* 633 polemic refers to discussions at the January 1996 ICL International Executive Committee meeting on the need for LM to transform itself into a Trotskyist vanguard nucleus, including the publication of a newspaper. It presents the false picture that the LQB refused to carry out concrete steps to do this. We have already noted how LM adopted the name Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil to show its determination to build a Trotskyist party. They were already well underway in the publication of their paper, *Vanguarda Operária*, when the ICL broke off fraternal relations, and the first issue was published less than a month after the break. Significantly, *WV* has never referred to the LQB’s newspaper, because its very existence gives the lie to their whole construct.

Now the ICL’s International Secretariat has published an *International Bulletin* (No. 41, April 1997) under the title, “The Fight for a Trotskyist Party in Brazil,” a compilation of the correspondence between the ICL and the LQB from January 1996 through the ICL’s break in fraternal relations with the Brazilian comrades in late June. The thick bulletin conveniently omits the LQB’s 4 July 1996 letter to the I.S. protesting the ICL’s unprincipled break. As in the case of the LQB’s October 1996 letter to *WV*, this letter was never answered.

The introduction to the ICL’s new bulletin notes that immediately following the January 1996 IEC meeting, the I.S. sent a representative to Brazil for several months. However, it laments:

“As soon as we got a representative in place in Brazil, the reality of Luta Metalúrgica’s ingrained trade-union opportunism and opposition to the tasks necessary to forge a Trotskyist vanguard party were uncovered. After an attempt to fight out our differences, as documented in these letters, we broke off fraternal relations because we did not, in fact, have agreement on a revolutionary Marxist perspective.”

In fact, the correspondence in the bulletin *disproves* the ICL leadership’s version of the events preceding its flight from Brazil.

In a 3 April 1996 letter, LQB leader Cerezo put forward a series of proposals, including to “put out a national journal,” extend political work to Brazil’s most important industrial centers, continue work for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, defend the Municipal Workers Union against the witchhunt, and seek to recruit contacts made at leading Brazilian univer-

sities. Here is what the ICL leadership wrote then, in a 7 April response by Parks for the International Secretariat:

“Our comrades strongly concur with your proposals. Your projections are fully in accordance with discussions at the London IEC meeting and with proposals raised by the ICL in written correspondence with LM/LQB to move fraternal relations forward.

“The campaign waged by Luta Metalúrgica and the ICL against the police provocation in the Volta Redonda municipal workers union has drawn our organizations closer together in struggle, and helped clarify agreement on the fundamental question of the state. Surely there is no organized political tendency apart from the ICL that fights against the presence of cops in the labor movement and in Brazil, it has been you comrades who have withstood the pressures and dangers by waging a hard and principled fight on this question.”

While noting the need for “further discussion, education and debate” on areas of ambiguity or disagreement, the letter stated: “We hope to culminate a period of common work such as you have outlined...in a fusion between our organizations.”

A subsequent letter, dated 25 April 1996, quoted an IEC motion that referred in part to: “recent forward advancement of fraternal relations as evidenced in the collaboration between our organizations in the campaign against the incursion of the capitalist state in the union movement, as well as in the perspectives advanced to us by comrade Cerezo for party propaganda, cadre education, and extending the organization to a major metropolitan center....” These two letters were written *two months and two and a half months after the ICL representative was sent to Brazil*. So where was the “ingrained trade-union opportunism” on the part of the LQB and its alleged “opposition to the tasks necessary to forge a Trotskyist vanguard party” that he supposedly immediately uncovered?

The I.S.’ own selective documentation reveals that its claims are a fraud.

“Context”

Unfortunately for the “new I.S.,” documentation exists of what actually happened. The *WV* 633 polemic against the Internationalist Group states that we criticize the ICL leadership “for supposedly ‘claiming that association with the LQB/LM in this work posed ‘unacceptable risks for the vanguard’.” In response, *WV* uses sleight of hand, quoting a 17 June 1996 letter to the LQB. Any reader would draw the conclusion that the ICL used the cited phrase only “supposedly” – but not in reality. Yet on 5 June 1996 the International Secretariat passed a motion stating:

“Due to ominous provocations and threats of state repression, prominent public association of the ICL with LM’s *only* present public work – the leadership of the municipal workers union – poses unacceptable risks to the vanguard, to our fraternal comrades and indeed to the union as a whole.”

As we have pointed out, it was the Brazilian comrades who were directly under attack by the bourgeoisie’s repressive forces, and they could not abandon the struggle they had started without forever condemning themselves as unserious

elements. They held fast while the ICL “leadership” pulled out, thereby condemning itself.

Repeatedly, the I.S. has tried to *blame the LQB* for the bourgeois repression unleashed against it. Thus an 11 June 1996 I.S. letter, partially cited in *WV* No. 663, smears the Brazilian comrades as “subordinating the question of principle to the quotidian struggle for influence in the union’s leadership [which] can only lead to continued provocations by the police, the political forces who run the police and the ‘leftists’ who do their bidding...” The 17 June 1996 I.S. letter breaking relations arrogantly denounces the LQB for “fatuous light-mindedness toward the bourgeois state,” adding: “Indeed, the provocations have continued and have now escalated to a campaign of dirty tricks and violence which threaten not only the perspectives for a Trotskyist vanguard, but the physical safety, possible arrest, and imprisonment (or worse) of LM/LQB comrades, as well as ICL representatives, and also threaten the very existence of the union itself.”

But who has actually been physically threatened or arrested over the struggle in Brazil? The LQB comrades have – *and the ICL leadership outrageously blames the victims for the repression!*

Exposing *WV*’s cover-up story about breaking relations with the LQB over supposed “trade-union opportunism,” in our July 1996 bulletin, *From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle*, we quoted an ICL representative at meetings with the LQB on 15 and 16 June 1996. The ICL envoy said there that the LQB, with its forces, “cannot, at this time, stand up to this whole offensive of bourgeois reaction, which is trying to destroy the union and which is trying to wait for the best moment to destroy our organization in Brazil.... We are telling you: let’s pull our hands out of that boiling water and dedicate our attention and time to building a revolutionary party.” We commented: “What a grotesque perversion of Leninism – ‘building a revolutionary party’ by pulling one’s hands out of the boiling water of the class struggle!” In response, *WV* 663 charges us with “quoting half-sentences out of context, which when quoted in full are the opposite” of what we claim.

Context? We’ve got plenty of context. As *WV* notes, we have a tape of the 16 June 1996 meeting and “know what was actually said.” We also have written reports of the I.S. secretary on those meetings, so we know as well what the I.S. told the rest of the ICL leadership. So let’s see what was said as the I.S. was preparing to break relations and leave Brazil. The reader can judge who has told the truth.

To begin with, *WV* quotes from the above statement:

“The bourgeois state, Artur [Fernandes], the LBI [Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista, in league with Fernandes] and all these organizations want to put us in a cauldron of boiling water. That is the situation now...and we are telling you, let’s take our hands out of this boiling water and dedicate our attention, our time to building a revolutionary party!”

This *confirms* the accuracy of what we cited.

WV then continues the quote from the ICL representative, proposing that “we work toward a conscious transfor-

mation of the Brazilian organization into a Trotskyist party,” including giving priority to the publication of a newspaper, recruiting young workers, doing work in an industrial city and getting in touch with youth. This is presented as if it were contrary to the intentions of the LQB. However, the Brazilian comrades all stressed that they agreed with those points; they did not agree with abandoning the struggle to oust the cops.

Subsequent to the break in fraternal relations, the LQB immediately put out its newspaper, it has recruited among young workers and students, and has moved some comrades to Rio de Janeiro. As Engels was fond of saying, in a basic statement of materialism, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

But let us return to the call to “pull our hands out of the boiling water.” The ICL representatives made numerous statements in this vein in the 15/16 June 1996 discussions with the LQB. For example, here is what a second ICL spokesman said:

“There was a struggle to throw the police out of the union. But the reality is that right now the police are using all their power to smash you and the municipal workers union.... Perhaps it is very demoralizing for the ranks of the municipal workers union to endure the activities in the union as they are now. But the reality is that it would be even more demoralizing for them to see one of their leaders dead in the street. That is the point. The point has to do directly with the power of the bourgeois state.”

In his final summary, the main ICL speaker stated that “what we want is to get rid of the most prominent question of this situation of danger.... So what we are stating to you is that in this question in particular of the leadership of the union, we have to formally leave the most prominent issue where the bourgeoisie is identifying us at this time, and use our forces to build the party.”

That is what was said, over and over, and the ICL leadership knows it full well. In a June 15 report on these discussions based on phone calls from Brazil, I.S. Secretary Parks wrote that at the meeting with the LQB that day, an ICL representative had “presented our view that they should publically disassociate themselves from the municipal workers union leadership” and “also raised the idea of getting out of town now” before there was more repression, which was described in graphic terms. Moreover, Parks reported on June 16 *not* that the LQB was refusing to put out a newspaper, but quite the contrary: “Cerezo, J. and R. are planning on returning to work with the delegation on the newspaper on Monday afternoon.... Well, it’s not going to be our paper or even one we are fraternally allied with.” So all the talk about the Brazilians refusing to give priority to a newspaper was a smokescreen. Parks’ reports prove once again the I.S. is lying.

These materials make clear that the ICL’s real concern was not “ingrained trade-union opportunism” or “unprincipled trade-union maneuvers,” but that in the I.S.’ view “the power of the bourgeois state” was making the *principled* struggle to remove cops from the unions too hot to handle. It is necessary always for revolutionaries to gauge seriously

the intentions and capacity of repression by the class enemy. But those who lose confidence in the revolutionary capacity and power of the proletariat often justify an opportunist orientation of seeking to elude the class struggle with references to an all-powerful bourgeois state. In this case, the references were intended to excuse desertion when the struggle had reached the boiling point.

As part of the context for the statements we have quoted from the ICL representatives, let's also hear some of what the LQB said in response. At the June 16 meeting, comrade I. said:

“Together with the ICL, we touched off an international campaign against cops in the unions. This is where the controversy comes in. If we launch an international campaign against cops in the union, and the campaign is becoming a success from the standpoint of the world Trotskyist program as well as in terms of the work within the union, what reason is there for us to leave the union at this time? ... Now we are on brink of expelling the police from the union, an objective of both the ICL and the LQB....”

In a later report on the talks (which was sent to the ICL), LQB spokesman Cerezo wrote that at the June 15 meeting:

“I stated that I was personally opposed to abandoning the union; there was going to be a meeting on the 19th which would be a decisive meeting and that after fighting so much together with the union comrades and urging them to throw the cops out of the SFPMVR, to abandon them at the moment when they called a meeting would be to abandon the workers and I was personally against this. I thought that the position of maintaining support to the union, throwing out the *guardas*, putting out the newspaper, continuing with fraternal relations, going to the big cities, building the party were tasks that went together and were not counterposed.”

“We Want the Unity of Words and Deeds”

The WV article then quotes the ICL representative delivering what is supposed to be the knock-out blow, saying “Lenin decided to leave Russia in his youth, go to England and from England put out a newspaper, *Iskra*....” The operational word here is *leave*, which – as Parks reported – was just what the ICL was urging the LQB to do. One can imagine Lenin's response to the statement that he just “decided to leave Russia”! In 1896 he was put in prison (where he wrote the classic “On Strikes”). In 1898 he was exiled to the remote Yenissei province in Siberia, 300 miles from the nearest railway station. On his release after three years in Siberian exile, he was forbidden to live in any large city, industrial center or university town, and was soon rearrested. After this, he managed to get to West Europe. Lenin left since he had no choice then but to direct revolutionary struggles inside Russia from exile. And he certainly did not direct his party to pick up and leave. The idea that Lenin's exile was like the I.S. telling the LQB to “get out of town,” to publicly dissociate itself from the union and “pull our

hands out of the boiling water” in the middle of a key battle, is as ludicrous as it is grotesque.

The ICL leadership has sought to brush away members' questions by writing that the idea the “the ICL ran away from the final conflict with the cops in the municipal workers union” is a “fiction” and an “absurd invention.” An I.S. member wrote in a letter to an ICL member that the issue “was only raised after the fact as a red herring.” Not at all. The issue of the fight to oust the police from the union was discussed *extensively* in the meetings between ICL representatives and the LQB on June 15 and 16. Just prior to this, on June 13, a union conference voted a resolution to remove the police from the SFPMVR. On June 17 and June 18, LQB supporters in the SFPMVR published bulletins building for the June 19 union assembly at which this was on the agenda to be voted by the membership.

Because the LQB refused to drop this fight, “disassociate” themselves from the union leadership and even “get out of town,” the I.S. broke fraternal relations with the LQB on June 18, handing them a letter in a sealed envelope and departing without a word of discussion or explanation. The next day the Volta Redonda mayor sent police to carry out a court order banning the key union meeting, surrounding it and shutting it down. The day after that, as LQB member and SFPMVR activist Maria do Carmo wrote in a report sent to the ICL, *one of the ICL representatives called her to ask what had happened with the cops at the union meeting*. So much for the phony claim that the ICL did not know what was going on.

Despite the repressive vendetta and the ICL leadership's backstabbing, the LQB went on to carry through the struggle to throw the cops out of the municipal workers union. They do not suffer from “fatuous light-mindedness toward the bourgeois state,” as the ICL arrogantly claimed, nor have they been “smashed,” as the ICL predicted. Instead, they are making strides forward in propaganda, recruitment and extension of the LQB in the fight to build the nucleus of a genuine Trotskyist party.

The WV No. 663 polemic against the Internationalist Group and LQB correctly notes that “fraternal relations are a testing process.” Yes they are, and not just for the Brazilian comrades. The tragedy is that by abandoning this key struggle which the ICL initially encouraged, the ICL leadership *failed* this test. As the LQB said in its 4 July 1996 letter to the I.S. protesting the breaking of relations: “We want the unity of words and deeds. But in reality, you comrades are saying one thing and doing another.”

The course signaled by the ICL leadership's betrayal there, and by the unprincipled purge in the ICL, is contrary to the struggle for a genuine world party of socialist revolution. Those who want to fight for the program of Trotskyism must face this reality squarely, and face up to its implications, in order to go forward. This is essential in the struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International on the basis of the crucial programmatic conquests defended for three decades by the Spartacist tendency. ■

VANGUARDA OPERÁRIA

Statement of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

ONCE AGAIN ON THE ICL'S CAMPAIGN OF DEFAMATION AGAINST THE LQB AND THE ANTI-RACIST UNIONISTS OF VOLTA REDONDA

[translation]

The leadership of the ICL decided there were "unacceptable risks to the vanguard" and fled from the class battle in Brazil. Trying to cover this up, it launches one slander after another against those who rejected this betrayal.

Volta Redonda
24 June 1997

To the ICL:

We have read a translation of the 30 May 1997 *Workers Vanguard* article against the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), the anti-racist trade unionists of Volta Redonda and our fraternal comrades of the Internationalist Group. The article talks about the need to raise the consciousness of the working class so it will understand its historic tasks. However, what you are doing is deliberately introducing confusion instead of clarity, and this can only *lower* the consciousness of the workers and particularly that of the ICL's own members. The attitudes you are encouraging go against the struggle for proletarian socialism. You are basing your campaign on *lies and slanders* against revolutionary workers picked up from enemies of the proletariat, in particular the pro-police clique of Artur Fernandes, his advisers—the bigoted centrists of the "Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista" (LBI)—and his friends in the local bourgeois press.

Thus, while you pretend that you "discovered" the new slander—that Geraldo Ribeiro is supposedly "suing the union"—we all know that you found this lie in the newspaper of the LBI, which reproduces whatever comes out of the mouth of Artur. The accusation that we are suing the union is a lie. We have not brought suit against the union or the pro-police provocateur Artur Fernandes.

Moreover, months ago, when one of Artur's lying court suits collapsed, the court asked us if we wanted it to rule in favor of the validity of the union meeting of 25 July 1996 that reaffirmed Geraldo as the union's legitimate president. We rejected this "offer" because it would be against our principles, as we declared publicly and as Geraldo and Marcello wrote in their letter of 31 December 1996. We have emphasized that the workers must reject any interference by the bosses' "justice" system in the labor movement, and we have done this while facing the pro-police elements who really do launch one court suit after another and are the source of the slanders that you spread.

It is obvious that in your campaign of defamation you are prepared to do anything, and that you are shameless. What is also clear is the reason for this base behavior: the leadership of the ICL will not forgive the LQB for refusing to follow its flight from the struggle to throw the municipal *guardas* (cops) out of the Volta Redonda municipal workers union (SFPMVR). The leadership of the ICL will not forgive the fact that when they stabbed us in the back, abandoning the struggle at the crucial moment, we called this by its right name: a betrayal. And since the ICL leadership is afraid it will face political problems because of these facts, it tries to "protect" itself

by covering us with dirt.

Several weeks ago you declared that we and everything we do is a "Potemkin Village," in other words something that does not exist. Now you declare that we and everything we do is a "fraud" and a "paper dragon" manipulated with "rotten strings"; that our newspaper, of which almost 1,300 copies have been sold in various cities, is just an "adornment"; when we recruit militants from the unions and the youth you say, with petty-bourgeois haughtiness, that this is just a maneuver; that nobody knows about us here in Brazil and that it's all just for "international consumption." This logic of quantities and popularity is the same argument used by the reformists, centrists and other enemies of Trotskyism.

Our struggles are not "unknown" to the armed police who shut down the union meeting of 19 June 1996 and arrested comrade Marcello (a revolutionary black worker and student we recruited from the union) during the general strike of 21 June [1996], during the same week the ICL fled from the class struggle in Brazil. Nor to the authors of the multiple prosecutions against us in the bourgeois courts. (The most recent interrogation of Geraldo at the police station occurred on 20 May [1997] in the SEVENTH legal action against us. But this does not interest you.)

Unknown? Not to the hundreds of workers who signed the petition for the union meeting of 25 July 1996 and the 150 who attended and voted the disaffiliation of the municipal guards, in spite of the repression and the occupation of the union hall by the courts' puppet Artur. Yet when your representatives made a recent lightning visit to Volta Redonda in the attempt to get "dirt" on us, they did not speak to the workers at the municipal garage, the SMO [dispatch hall for road repair and other public works] or other places where city workers are to be found. They could have informed you of the reality of this struggle.

Would you dare to say all this to Regina Célia, whose defense against racism was answered by the Popular Front city government with a court case against Geraldo that could bring four years in prison? Or to the mother of Ernane da Silva Lúcio (a black child murdered by the police), who supported the campaign you call a fabrication; or to the residents of her neighborhood, Vila Americana, who followed and supported our efforts? In the face of the defense campaign for the anti-racist unionists who have faced police and court repression, you scream that it's all a "fraud." Only the enemies of the proletariat can benefit from this defamatory campaign.

In your article you quote letters from the ICL to the LQB. But you never published or even answered our letters to the ICL; for example, our 4 July 1996 letter protesting the disloyal break of relations in the midst of

the struggle to remove the cops and answering the false justifications given for that break. Nor our letter of 17 October 1996 refuting the slander that we supposedly made a "deal" with the cops. Or is this new slanderous article supposed to be the answer? You quote selectively from your letter of 26 October 1996, without mentioning that it began with more grotesque slanders against the Internationalist Group, and you pretend that it just requested "proof" of the repression against us. In our answer (30 December 1996), we wrote:

"You pretend we made a 'deal' with the police, when the truth is the exact opposite: we have fought for the disaffiliation of the police from the union, and the courts and cops did everything to throw us out and repress us. So now, when you have been unmasked and your lies have been revealed, now you demand 'proofs'! At the same time you launch new slanders. How ironic! The slanderers demand 'proofs'! But the proofs are not and will not be to your taste! We have documented and will continue to document not only the anti-communist repression against class-struggle trade unionists and the LQB; but also the disgraceful role of the current leadership of the ICL, which acts against that organization's honorable traditions and program."

It is incredible that you pretend that we refused to provide documentation and proof. Way back in July 1996 we faxed the ICL many pages of documents, leaflets, articles from the press, and also written accounts by comrades Geraldo, Ildefonso, Cerezo, Marcello, R and MC, all of it describing the campaign to remove the cops and the repression against us. You did not respond, but you never mention these materials publicly, and we think you probably never even translated them for the ICL's own members. We know directly that other materials which *were* translated, such as the 6 May 1996 leaflet (which begins "The Rank and File Is Deciding: Police Out of the Union"), were not distributed to the ICL's membership.

Later, when the Internationalist Group, in collaboration with the LQB, published a dossier showing graphics and documents on six court cases against us, you disregard this, call it a "fraud," pretend the meetings never happened, etc.

You use similar methods in your new article. For example, the article includes various supposed quotations from comrade Cerezo of the LQB. First, according to you, Cerezo said the head of the *guardas*' association was "killed" by a *guarda*. He did not and could not have said this, because that individual, although he was shot, continues to be very much alive.

Then you state that Cerezo said Artur controls the union. But the fact, which Cerezo explained, is that Artur controls the *union hall* because he was installed there by the intervention of the bourgeois courts, with repeated in-

terventions by the cops and Military Police, "invited" by Artur, to oust Geraldo! Your supposed spectacular revelation is nothing more than what is known in Brazil as "raining where it's already wet." And you try to use this as "proof" that the *members* of the union did not vote the disaffiliation of the cops. Shame! This only reveals that you accept that "reality" is defined by the class enemy.

Nevertheless, the workers voted democratically to reaffirm that Geraldo is the legitimate president. As stated in the 31 December 1996 letter from Geraldo and Marcello on their defense:

"...what decides is the organized will of the workers. This will was expressed in the election of Geraldo in November 1995 with 62 percent of the votes. It was reaffirmed in the 25 July [1996] union meeting, which affirmed that Geraldo is the legitimate president of the SFPMVR. The mobilization of the ranks will impose the democratic decision that the workers have repeatedly expressed."

—"*Anti-union lawsuits.*" This is supposed to be the main dish offered by your article. Shamelessly, the authors of the article *do not mention* Cerezo's answer when the ICL representatives asked him if we are suing the union, because he clearly stated that *this is a lie and a slander from Artur Fernandes spread by the bourgeois press and the LBI.* Artur and the LBI do this in order to *cover up the fact that it is the pro-police clique which "invited" the "justice" system to intervene against the class-struggle-anti-racist leaders.* The LQB categorically rejects any use of the capitalist courts in the workers movement. This is also one of the principles of the Comitê de Luta Classista (Class-Struggle Caucus) founded by our comrades. But you twist facts in order to slander us.

Your article cites the same 31 December 1996 letter by Geraldo and Marcello where they declare that we reject any interference by the bourgeois "justice" system in the SFPMVR and the workers movement as a whole. You attack the defense letter for this, saying "these people lie to the world," a false accusation which can only harm our defense. But you suppress the first part of the same sentence, which showed this was not just a general statement but something with a very concrete content. Referring to the fact that in early December 1996, the Artur grouping had to desist from one of its court suits against Geraldo since it could not prove its accusations, the complete sentence in the letter states:

"When Artur withdrew from the legal case, the courts asked if Geraldo wanted the courts to rule on the validity of the July 25 union meeting, but this is against our principles: we reject any interference of the bosses' 'justice' system in the workers movement in general and the SFPMVR in particular."

In other words, the courts offered to intervene "in favor of" Geraldo and he *refused* this offer of "aid" from the bourgeois state. This matter of public record dates from

December of last year. You know this, but you do not mention it because it refutes your accusation that our words were empty. The LQB and comrade Geraldo have said exactly the same thing to the workers in Volta Redonda and the organizations which defended us, as well as to the capitalist courts themselves.

In your article you refer to "evidence" from the *Diário do Vale* claiming that Geraldo used the "justice" system against the union, and you dramatically ask: "*If this were not so, where then is the necessary refutation by the LQB or the IG?*" The incredible thing is that *you never asked us this question before publishing your article.* If you had had the elementary honesty to ask, we would have told you: When the *Diário do Vale* claimed this, Geraldo *immediately*, on 26 July 1996, sent them a letter refuting this accusation. When this newspaper of the CSN [National Steel Company] bosses refused to publish the letter, Geraldo did an interview with *Opção* newspaper (9 August 1996), denouncing the "justice" system's intervention in the union, stating the justice system is "bourgeois" and comes from the military dictatorship. Then, when the accusation was repeated by the pro-police faction, Geraldo published a "Declaration" (31 January 1997), which was widely distributed to the workers, refuting this slander once again and citing his 26 July 1996 letter to the *Diário do Vale.* *Workers Vanguard* says nothing of all this, and in reality your theatrical question, like your entire defamatory campaign, is a condemnation of yourselves.

It is very curious that when you write about "lawsuits [which] are a matter of public record," you fail to mention that months ago the *Diário Oficial* (official daily gazette) of the State of Rio de Janeiro recorded that the cases you enumerate were stopped, and this was at Geraldo's insistence. In July 1996, Artur's pro-police grouping got the courts to oust Geraldo as president of the SFPMVR. Geraldo's then lawyers asked for two injunctions to block the implementation of the summary decisions which the court decreed even before holding a hearing in which Geraldo could present his defense in the face of this judicial coup against the union. In December 1996, the Artur grouping had to withdraw from its main suit against Geraldo because they had no evidence. When Geraldo went to the union hall, the Artur group organized another physical attack against him, went to the police to press new charges against Geraldo (case number 327456), and in order to cover this, accused him of suing the union. Geraldo refuted this in a public statement and reaffirmed his principled opposition to any intervention by the courts in the labor movement. When Geraldo asked the lawyers about the cases mentioned by Artur, they informed him that instead of

being directed only against the decisions of the court itself, the two requests for injunctions were registered as actions with the union as “defendant,” something which he, as president of the union, would never have permitted, since his fight has been to defend the SFPMVR against the “justice” system’s attacks. So Geraldo *immediately* insisted on the complete withdrawal and nullification of these actions. On February 17, the lawyers turned in the formal withdrawal—in other words, more than four months ago, long before the *WV* article and its real source, the article by the LBI advisers to the pro-cop clique of Artur Fernandes.

Artur’s lawyer asked that Geraldo declare that the actions would not be revived over the following years, and this was accepted by Geraldo, who also made an official declaration to the court refusing to have anything to do with any lawsuit against the union and explaining that we reject *any* intervention by the “justice” system in the unions.

Our defense of this principle produced an open break with the lawyers, who did not understand it and only because of our insistence agreed to nullify the actions which were erroneously filed. Despite running the risk of having no lawyers at all at a time when even more *new* charges were pressed against us by the gangsters of the pro-police grouping, we continued to defend the principle of “Courts out of the unions.” You claim that we sued the union. The truth is the opposite of what the ICL says: We have been the target of repression by the bourgeois state’s “justice” system and police. The LQB and Geraldo have not sued the union or even the pro-cop grouping installed by the courts, and we insisted on the nullification of the suits which *WV* accuses us of carrying out.

In addition to this smear taken from the mouth of the king of the union-suers, Artur Fernandes, there is a veritable cornucopia of falsehoods and distortions.

—*Dishonest game regarding dates.* *Workers Vanguard* tries to confuse its readers by citing various dates having to do with the disaffiliation of the *guardas* and asking sarcastically: “June 13? June 19? July 25?” This is really grotesque. The ICL’s newspaper tries to present the situation as if the Internationalist Group had invented different dates for the same event. However, as the ICL is fully aware and as anyone can see in the dossier, what is involved here is a series of events in the disaffiliation campaign. In early May [1996], as part of preparing the ranks and increasing their consciousness, delegates were elected by work sector to the union *seminário* (conference), and one of the points was “Police out of the union.” The *seminário* was held on 13 June [1996] and the delegates voted in favor of disaffiliating the *guardas*, as preparation for a union membership meeting with decisive power.

This union meeting was called for 19 June 1996, as the ICL’s representatives knew perfectly well. The workers attended, Geraldo was reading the resolutions of the *seminário*, but *the Popular Front mayor sent the police with a court order to dissolve the meeting and begin the process of ousting Geraldo from his post as president.* It is grotesque that the ICL tries to make a joke out of it in order to “disappear” this fact.

In the face of the judicial/police coup against the union, we organized meetings in the work sectors. A petition from hundreds of workers and an official notice called the 25 July [1996] union meeting, which voted the disaffiliation of the *guardas*. Artur did not want to recognize this official decision of the ranks, but the *guardas* began the formation of their own “association.” What is scandalous is that the ICL too does not accept that this was the democratic decision of the workers. You use the fact that the court-installed coup-maker Artur has support from the cops in order to deny the convulsive struggle of the last year and a half in Volta Redonda. Basing yourselves on the “facts” created by the bourgeois state, you seek to deny the reality of the class struggle.

The claim that what we did was “slip in” the disaffiliation of the *guardas* “at the end of a long meeting centered on an economist wage campaign” is a *total invention*. The disaffiliation campaign was the subject of preparatory meetings, many leaflets (at least twelve items had print runs of 1,000 to 3,000 copies each), and even articles in the local press. At the 25 July 1996 meeting, this point was moved from number six on the agenda to Point 2 on the agenda (as shown by the minutes from that meeting which you had in your hands because they were sent to you), long before the wage campaign point, and it was introduced by a minute of silence in homage of Ernane as a symbol of the victims of racist police terror.

—*“Deal with the cops.”* Ten months after making this slander (at a forum in New York after the break), now for the first time the ICL tries to justify it publicly. The supposed “proof” is that the MEL (Municípios em Luta—Municipal Workers in Struggle) slate in the November 1996 union elections included “the pro-cop agent Artur Fernandes.” The idea you seek to put forward is that Fernandes was already known as such when he was included in the slate. But this is false, and the truth is that the same ICL representative cited as the supposed “discoverer” of our “opportunism” had political discussions (a contact session) on Eastern Europe with Fernandes in August 1995, which is something one doesn’t do with pro-police agents. Fernandes turned out to be an opportunist element who, when he saw after the union elections that the MEL program was going to be put into practice, aligned himself with the cops and the Popular Front.

As you know, Geraldo began negotiations for the disaffiliation of the *guardas* in December 1995, immediately after taking office as president of the union. Artur proposed that [the union] take 10 percent of *guarda* association's dues, and Geraldo immediately refused. Fernandes' attack underlines the fact that Geraldo sought to disaffiliate the *guardas*. Fernandes published a leaflet (13 March 1996) citing the part of the MEL program which called the *guardas* and other police the "armed fist of the bourgeoisie." Fernandes' leaflet said "Geraldo clearly wants to exclude the Municipal Guards and watchmen from the union movement" and sought a provocation, calling on "everyone to defend the *guardas*" at a union meeting.

The ICL's slander about a supposed deal with the cops in November 1995 was only invented nine months later, in order to deny the LQB's struggle against the presence of cops in the union and justify the International Secretariat's abandonment of this struggle. The ICL's letters (for example from April 1996) recognized the "hard and principled fight" for the disaffiliation of the cops, a fight which "has drawn our organizations closer together." But after breaking relations, the I.S. cynically "discovered" this fictitious deal with the cops.

It is absurd to accuse us of a "deal" with the cops on the basis of an MEL program which denounced any "alliance" with any kind of police (explicitly including the *guardas*) "since they bring men armed and trained by the bourgeois state into the unions." We have critically analyzed that period, but as we wrote in our 4 July 1996 letter to the ICL: "It is not logical to make (correct) criticisms about the way the MEL slate was put together and to say (correctly) that, while the MEL program originally talked about the question of the police in general, it did not explicitly call for the disaffiliation of the *guardas* and then run away from the struggle when we try to improve the MEL program and put the program of Trotsky and the ICL on this question into practice." Today we would add that you are trying to bury the historical truth of this fight under a pile of falsehoods.

- "Hasty" recruitment as a maneuver. The WV article claims that we brought Geraldo and other SFPMVR activists into LQB membership as part of a fraudulent maneuver to justify "control" of the union. You talk about these comrades as if they were ignorant people who are not interested in Marxism. Yet despite the attitude of petty-bourgeois contempt which you express, the truth is that these comrades had worked with us for a long time (for example during the demonstration in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal in August 1995), and they were won to the LQB through study and struggle, in particular the struggle to throw out the cops.

These comrades joined the LQB in a period when our organization was the target of a campaign of hatred and repression directed against us by the bourgeoisie, its agents and the popular front. It was obvious that they could not attain any "privileges" by becoming members of our small Trotskyist organization. But you launch the dirty statement that we "covet" and protect "posts." Far from coveting posts, privileges and influence in the union bureaucracy, we have fought for the Marxist program. You speak indecently when you know perfectly well that our comrades live in poverty because they decided to become revolutionaries. The bourgeoisie has put LQB comrades on its "blacklist," including in the racist sense of this term, after firing them for fighting for the workers' interests, and many remained unemployed for years. And when the popular-frontist members of the "CUT [labor federation] Opposition" let themselves be corrupted by CSN, forming their "CUT Independent Investment Club," Luta Metalúrgica (as we were called at that time) was known for refusing to buy privatization stocks and rejecting this corruption.

And in the face of the LQB's fight for Marxist principles, the response of the bourgeoisie, with direct or indirect support from the various popular-frontist bureaucrats, has been to use the cops, courts, thugs and the bourgeois press in order to expose our comrades to beatings, arrests, court suits and slanders.

We continue to recruit young comrades and on 17 June 1997, thirty students participated in the demonstration that the LQB organized at the university where comrades M. and S. study, against a fascist from the University of Juiz de Fora (in Minas Gerais) who went on the Internet to call for the extermination of blacks and homosexuals.

- "Nobody" knows about the LQB. You say everything is a fraud for "international consumption" and the LQB has no support "in Brazil." This accusation could be taken straight from the mouths of the anti-communists and the local bourgeoisie, who always say the same kind of thing.

Supposedly the ICL "knows" this among other things because it talked with the regional CUT. But the regional CUT is led by union bureaucrats who are part of the popular front which tries to smash us because of our proletarian opposition to this class collaboration and which is the boss exploiting the municipal workers. Moreover, the regional CUT which the ICL visited to request information is the very one which had so much hatred for our struggles that it closed its doors when our positions won 40 percent at the seventh regional [CUT] congress in late 1993.

What you do not mention is that during the "Police Hands Off the SFPMVR" campaign we received the support and reproduced solidarity statements from the

oil workers, Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro municipal workers and CUT and others, particularly sectors which have had conflicts with the popular front.

Another absurd "proof" in the *WV* article is that on May Day in São Paulo, supposedly nobody knew that "the LM/LQB even continued to exist after the ICL broke fraternal relations!" In other words, when we had fraternal relations with the ICL these people knew we existed, but later they forgot? What incredible arrogance! You carried out a kind of "lightning opinion poll" there, but your sample was taken from the run-of-the-mill practitioners of class collaboration: CUT leaders, fake-left groups, etc., and you came up with the "discovery" that we are not popular or "known" among them. At bottom this is an anti-communist method.

You know, because we informed your representatives who carried out their 20-minute interview with us, that on May Day we were at the rally in the city of Rio de Janeiro. At that demonstration, our comrade Ildefonso (known in the Brazilian workers movement as one of the organizers of metal workers strikes starting with the illegal mass strike against CSN in 1984) was a speaker in the name of the LQB, and he spoke about the counter-revolution in the USSR and East Europe and its impact in the privatizations and mass layoffs in Latin America.

But the ICL leadership keeps on slandering, saying that we did not inform the workers of the struggle against the *guardas*. At a public meeting in Mexico, you screamed that we had no propaganda on the attacks by the São Paulo police and that nobody knows of our existence. False. At the same Rio de Janeiro demonstration we distributed our declaration against the government's repression of the Santos dockers, which also talked about the "attacks and murders carried out by the Military Police in the slums of Diadema (state of São Paulo) and Cidade de Deus (state of Rio de Janeiro), which are part of the constant police attacks against workers, the poor, blacks, homosexuals, the oppressed and exploited in general" and talked about the example of the struggle to disaffiliate the *guardas* in Volta Redonda.

The ICL leadership does not forgive the fact that the LQB did not disappear after the ICL's betrayal of breaking fraternal relations with us one day before the union meeting which was to vote the disaffiliation of the *guardas*; that we publish a Trotskyist propaganda newspaper; that we carry out work among the university youth, recruiting young people (two of whom were recently elected delegates to a national student congress fighting on our program against the popular-frontists); that we established a local of the LQB in the city of Rio de Janeiro but did not accept the position of abandoning Volta

Redonda, the city with the largest steel plant in Latin America, and not to "set foot" here again (as put forward in an ICL document); that we did not accept the position of hiding our international links and that we continue to fight, together with the Internationalist Group, to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International.

We add today, given that we were originally drawn to the ICL in good part because of its opposition to the popular front, that we reject the revision of historic conceptions which the ICL leadership is carrying out now with its "discovery" that no popular front even exists in Mexico.

What the ICL leadership did in Brazil was a betrayal, as any worker who ever participated in a difficult struggle would understand. First it correctly encouraged us to organize a struggle to separate the *guardas* from the union. But when the struggle heated up, especially after Artur Fernandes invented the fake "armed attack" on himself, you decided that the struggle posed "unacceptable risks to the vanguard." You said we had to abandon the struggle, which also meant abandoning the workers involved in this fight, and leave town. We did not agree to commit this betrayal. So you cut relations and abandoned the struggle. To cover this up, you repeat any lie that comes out of the mouths of Artur and the LBI and the pages of the bourgeois press.

Having committed this dirty act, you have tried to justify yourselves by covering us with slanders, hoping that our voice will be suffocated under the weight of so much dirt. You try to blame us for the repression directed against us. Now you try to declare us pariahs in order to silence any doubt or question about the path you are taking. We have always sought the unity of words and deeds, even at great cost. Now you heedlessly spew words in order to sow confusion. We learned from you the question from the American miners' song: "Which side are you on?" This question applies to your behavior towards the bitter struggle in Brazil. And it has profound implications for your future course.

In defense of communist principles, for the revolutionary independence of the working class,

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

The Internationalist Group is fraternally related to the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil. To contact the LQB, write to: Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-970, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil; or to Caixa Postal 009026, CEP 20072-970, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. The cost of a subscription to the newspaper of the LQB, *Vanguardia Operária*, is R\$4.00 for four issues.



June 1997

ICL Leaders Escalate Smear Campaign Against Brazilian Militants

For the past year, the press of the International Communist League (ICL) has displayed a remarkable fixation on the Internationalist Group and our fraternal comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil. *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., has published major pieces on the IG and the LQB in issues No. 648, 651, 652, 653, 657, 663 and 669. The ICL has also brought out four public bulletins totaling hundreds of pages on us. Yet at the same time they repeatedly refer to the "small" LQB and the "handful" of members of the IG. What explains this striking disproportion? If we are so insignificant, why all the attention?

From the very first article, the ICL leaders sought to bury us with invective and discredit us with slander and willful distortion because they couldn't answer our political arguments—which they have barely addressed—and *because they were desperate to blot out the fact that they committed a genuine betrayal in Brazil*. The dramatic expulsion of leading cadres of the ICL in June 1996 was the immediate prelude to the breaking of fraternal relations with the LQB when the Brazilian comrades refused to abandon the struggle to remove police from the municipal workers union of Volta Redonda, Brazil's "steel city." This was a fight over the key issue of the capitalist state—a fight, moreover, which was initially encouraged by the ICL. Yet when it reached the boiling point, the ICL abruptly abandoned the LQB in the midst of this fight as it was under the fire of bourgeois repression. This *desertion* from the class struggle was in sharp contradiction to the Trotskyist program defended by the Spartacist tendency for over three decades.

The ICL's latest diatribe ("IG's Brazil Fraud Exposed," *WV* No. 669, 30 May 1997) is intended to take the place of an answer to our recent publications on Brazil. In February, the Internationalist Group in collaboration with the LQB published a carefully documented dossier titled *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda—Cops, Courts Out of the Unions* (February 1997). In the last issue of *The Internationalist*, in addition to a lengthy article refuting the ICL's myriad accusations against the IG, we demonstrated in detail how the ICL leaders have engaged in repeated fabrications in the attempt to defend their indefensible actions in Brazil.

We cited the ICL's own documents and speeches to refute the smear that the Brazilian comrades "refused" to publish a newspaper or take other key steps towards building a Trotskyist party, the revolting slander that they had a "deal" with the cops, and the ICL's attempt to pretend it did not

know about the union meeting, scheduled for the very next day after it cut relations, where the disaffiliation of the *guardas* (municipal cops) was to be voted. We proved that the ICL repeatedly recognized that the LQB had waged a *principled* struggle to throw out the cops, but decided that "the power of the bourgeois state" had made the fight too hot to handle, calling on the LQB to "disassociate" itself from its supporters in the union leadership and even "get out of town" (see "Brazil: Context of a Betrayal," *The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997).

The ICL leadership does not even attempt to answer this—because it cannot. Instead, feeling damaged and exposed, it has lashed out with yet another lying smear, which is supposed to put an end to all discussion and place the LQB and IG beyond the pale. Thus, *WV* states that ICL representatives were recently sent to Brazil, where they "discovered firsthand" that everything we have written about the struggle in Brazil is supposedly a "fraud." The centerpiece of the new accusation is that there was a "*class betrayal* carried out by the LQB in Volta Redonda": that the Brazilian comrades and Geraldo Ribeiro, an LQB member and elected president of the Volta Redonda municipal workers union (SFPMVVR), are allegedly guilty of "*appeal[ing] to the capitalist state to decide who should lead the municipal union*" and of "filing anti-union lawsuits."

It is *Workers Vanguard's* charges against the Brazilian comrades that are a fraud. The LQB and union president Ribeiro have not sued the union. On the contrary, they have repeatedly stated that they oppose on principle all court intervention in union affairs. Moreover, the slanderous charges against the LQB are taken from the very forces who have, repeatedly, called down repression by the capitalist state against the elected class-struggle leadership of the SFPMVVR. The source of *WV's* charges is one Artur Fernandes, who openly brags that he is "oriented by the police," and who has over and over called in armed cops and the courts in an anti-communist witchhunt against comrade Ribeiro and the LQB. *WV* picked the smears up from the newspaper of the Brazilian Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI), which acts as advisers for Fernandes. And *WV* "confirms" them by citing the paper of the steel bosses who have for many years waged a vendetta against the LQB and its predecessor, Luta Metalúrgica (LM—Metal Workers Struggle).

For the most unprincipled factional reasons and to cover its own tracks, the ICL leadership has become a willing accomplice of a very dirty operation. It is giving a "left" ve-

neer to the campaign by the capitalist rulers of Volta Redonda against the nucleus of Trotskyist workers, black and white, who have been fighting tooth and nail for working-class independence from the bourgeoisie. In the 1980s, the LM militants played a leading role in a series of militant steel and municipal workers strikes. In the 1994 Brazilian elections, Luta Metalúrgica was the only political tendency that opposed *on principle* voting for *any* candidates of the Frente Brasil Popular headed by the PT (Workers Party) of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. Over the last year and a half, the LM/LQB has waged a hard fight to expel the cops from the Municipal Workers Union headed by LQB member Ribeiro. In doing so, they have faced an unholy alliance extending from the longtime head of the National Steel Company (CSN) and the military police chief to the “progressive” Popular Front mayor, a pro-cop clique in the union and its pseudo-Trotskyist advisers (see the 24 June letter from the LQB to the ICL responding to the latest *WV* attack).

This class-collaborationist coalition has gone after the LQB with provocation, gangster violence, police force and court suits. Having failed in their attempt to destroy this nucleus of the Trotskyist vanguard as it has steadily developed, they then tried to defame and discredit them. While the ICL earlier denounced this sinister lash-up, it is now acting as its megaphone, broadcasting internationally *some of the very same anti-communist charges WV exposed only 15 months ago*. In doing so, it relies on *WV* readers’ distance from the scene of the battle. Nobody in Volta Redonda even pretends today that the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista is suing the union—in the first place because they aren’t, and secondly because (contrary to *WV*) the LQB’s fight against intervention by the bourgeois state in the workers movement is widely known. The pro-police provocateur Fernandes tried to float this smear earlier this year, in order to cover up his own thug attacks and court suits, but dropped it in the face of Ribeiro’s clear stand against court intervention. Nevertheless, the failed slander has an extended half-life in the pages of *Workers Vanguard*.

Attentive readers should consider the following telling fact: in the 3,800 words of the *WV* 669 article, nowhere is the barrage of state repression against Ribeiro and the LQB mentioned. The only reference to defense efforts is insinuating demands for “evidence” and claims that they are based on “lying.” Readers of the *WV* article would have no inkling that the Brazilian Trotskyist militants have faced *seven* different court actions, as well as arrest for leading strike pickets, repeated bureaucratic thug attacks, and attempted intimidation by shotgun-wielding military police. Why is this not mentioned in *Workers Vanguard*? Because *WV* is pushing the cover story of the very forces who unleashed this repression.

Cops, Courts Out of the Unions!

So let’s examine the linchpin of the *WV* article’s “case” against the LQB and the Internationalist Group—the charge of suing the union. First, the context:

Since late 1995, when Geraldo Ribeiro was elected presi-

dent of the SFPMVR on a program against the popular front, Ribeiro and the LQB have been hit with: a suit accusing Ribeiro of defaming the police; a case charging him with defaming the city because he led a campaign against the blatantly racist firing of a black woman; an injunction to shut down the 19 June 1996 union meeting with police force, in an attempt to stop the disaffiliation of the municipal *guardas*; the court-ordered suspension of Ribeiro as union president and imposition of “jurisdictional receivership” over the SFPMVR, using as a pretext the union’s publication of an article by black American death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal explaining that police are enemies of labor; the arrest of union activist and LQB member Marcello Carega on the charge of “disobedience” when he led 150 workers in shutting down the municipal garage during a nationwide general strike. Most recently, Geraldo Ribeiro was called into the police station on 20 May 1997 to be interrogated in yet another legal action against him by the Fernandes clique.

The initiators of these prosecutions have been the commander of the municipal *guardas*; the Popular Front city government, led by a bourgeois “Socialist” mayor, which correctly sees the LQB as its most intransigent opponent; and particularly the pro-police grouping led by Artur Fernandes, who was installed by court order as the city bosses’ puppet in the SFPMVR. Who is it that “appeals to the capitalist state to decide who should lead the municipal union”? Fernandes vows that “the return of Geraldo to the presidency of the union is impossible,” according to an article in the Volta Redonda weekly *Opção* (17-23 January), which quoted Fernandes as saying: “We will only accept him back with a judicial action saying he is president of the body.” While Fernandes states that the capitalist courts dictate who will lead the union, and acts as their agent, Ribeiro emphatically stated in a January 30 “Declaration”: “We reject any interference by the bosses’ ‘justice’ system in the labor movement. The union belongs to the workers, not the bosses! They are the ones who decide!”

In December 1996, when some of the Fernandes group’s suits against Ribeiro collapsed because they could not prove a single one of their false accusations, the courts told Ribeiro that this gave him the right to request a court ruling in his favor on the basis of the union meeting last July that had voted to reaffirm him as union president and to disaffiliate the municipal cops. Ribeiro refused this “right.” A 31 December 1996 letter by Ribeiro and Carega on their defense campaign explained:

“When Artur withdrew from the legal case, the courts asked if Geraldo wanted the courts to rule on the validity of the July 25 union meeting, but this is against our principles: we reject any interference of the bosses’ ‘justice’ system in the workers movement in general and the SFPMVR in particular. The union belongs to the workers, not the bosses!”

WV half-quotes this statement, leaving out the fact that Ribeiro refused a court invitation to rule in his favor, and then pretends that “these people lie to the world.” The full quotation demonstrates the *opposite* of *WV*’s smear that

Ribeiro "appealed to the capitalist state to decide who should lead the municipal union."

On 20 January 1997, Geraldo Ribeiro went to the SFPMVR hall and was physically attacked by the Fernandes clique, who thereupon filed new charges of assault against him with the police. The next morning, the bosses' press reported Fernandes' cover-up claim that Ribeiro was suing the union. Ribeiro issued a leaflet with a statement refuting this charge and stressing:

"The workers must condemn and reject gangsterism and the use of the bourgeois courts in the labor movement. These methods violate workers democracy and only serve the bosses. They are the continuation of Artur's campaign to enslave the union to the 'justice' system, military police and *guardas*."

Ribeiro went to the lawyers, provided him by a local civil rights group, to inquire about the court cases that Fernandes alleged Ribeiro had filed against the union. They told Ribeiro that the cases referred to were requests for injunctions to block implementation of the court actions launched against him last July. Without his knowledge, they had been filed with the union listed as the defendant, something Ribeiro never would have permitted. When he learned of this, Ribeiro immediately gave instructions that these cases be withdrawn, which they were, despite the vociferous objections of the lawyers, who do not share the LQB's views. This was more than four months ago, and the notice of the dropping of the cases was published in the *Diário Oficial* of the state of Rio de Janeiro. But that didn't faze the authors of *WV*'s hatchet job.

Moreover, when Fernandes' attorney then demanded that Ribeiro also renounce any "right" to future court action, not only did Ribeiro do so (which led to a break with the lawyers), but he appended the following statement to the record:

"I, Geraldo Ribeiro, legitimate president of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR), have been the target of continual attack by the Volta Redonda city government and the repressive forces of the police. This was their response to the campaigns I initiated with the support of the ranks of the SFPMVR, first and foremost for the disaffiliation of police (municipal *guardas*) from the union. The pro-police faction led by Artur Fernandes requested court intervention to suspend me from the post to which I was elected by the workers in November 1995 with 62 percent of the votes and which was reaffirmed in the meeting of the union's ranks on 25 July 1996. After six court cases against me, in which they were unable to prove a single one of their accusations, the coup faction had to 'desist.' Since I was guilty of nothing, I attempted to reassume my post in the union. However, in January of this year, the coup faction formally launched a new legal case to stop this in the 93rd District in Volta Redonda, and that case is continuing.

"Despite all of this, even when obliged to defend myself and the union on the hostile terrain of the bosses' courts, I have repeatedly affirmed in public statements that the workers must place their confidence in their own class power and not in the capitalist 'justice' system. We categorically reject the intervention of the bosses' courts in the workers movement. This is the opposite of the policy of the pro-police coup faction, which

thereby attacks the class independence of the workers. I emphasize that I do not participate in any case of that kind. More than five months ago, we explained that this is our position: immediately after the pro-police faction of Artur Fernandes and Sebastião Passos ('Motorzinho') desisted from court suits they had waged against me, the court asked if I wanted the courts to decide the case in my favor, and I declared that this would be against our class-struggle principles.

"When I found out the nature of two requests for injunctions that were erroneously introduced as a defense in my name, in response to the attempt to remove me by court action from the post to which I was democratically elected by the union ranks, I immediately gave instructions to my then lawyers to declare my desistence from those legal actions, and this was done.

"I reaffirm here once again that the attempts at usurpation by the pro-police, thug and gangster elements who have brought the capitalist courts into the union with the objective of subverting the will of the ranks will not be fought by asking for intervention by the judicial system. To respond to these attacks requires that the working class impose its class power, independent of the bourgeoisie. The workers must clean their own house. The union belongs to the workers, not to the bosses' 'justice' system. These are the principles which I defend against those who have no principles. We fight for the class independence of the workers."

This is the real story of legal actions 30.831/96 and 30.833/96, which *Workers Vanguard* refers to as "a matter of public record." The public record shows that Ribeiro and the LQB have insisted on the principle "cops and courts out of the unions," while they have been the *targets* of cop and court repression backed up by a barrage of slander. Far from seeking to have the courts decide who will control the union, they have insistently rejected this and fought for the class independence of the workers. Far from committing a "class betrayal," they have *defended class principles*, at great cost to themselves.

LQB: "What Decides Is the Organized Will of the Workers"

In tandem with its charge that the LQB engaged in anti-union lawsuits, *WV* pumps out a series of other accusations which boil down to the claim that the LQB has no support in Brazil. Haven't we heard this taunt before? It's the classic reformist claim that revolutionaries are an "irrelevant," tiny minority. More generally, it's the jibe, "If you're so smart, why aren't you rich?"

WV 669 announces with great fanfare that comrade Geraldo Ribeiro does not "control" the union, and says that the cops are still in the SFPMVR under Artur Fernandes. The fact that Fernandes is in league with the police has been at the heart of the struggle in Volta Redonda, and he was placed in control of the union hall through court intervention last July to suspend and then remove Ribeiro. The events were extensively documented in our dossier, *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil—Cops, Courts Out of the Unions*" (February 1997). In a 31 December 1996 letter reprinted in that bulletin, Ribeiro and Marcello Carega reported exactly what the current situation was:

"As vengeance against [the] class-struggle campaign, the bosses' 'justice' system intervened in the union, as in the years of the military dictatorship, seeking to obstruct the organized will of the rank and file, who decided that the *guardas* are not part of the union, because they are not part of the working class. The courts maintained their puppet Artur Fernandes, head of the pro-police faction, in the union hall. But even under those conditions, the mobilization of the ranks and the pressure and international extension of the campaign made the municipal guards begin to withdraw from the structure dominated by the puppet Artur Fernandes, and they created their own association in November."

So much for *WV*'s phony revelation! In this letter of thanks to international supporters of their struggle against capitalist repression, LQB members Ribeiro and Carega stated that the union hall was occupied by the court-installed Fernandes. They added that the dropping of some of the prosecutions against the class-struggle militants were only "*partial victories*" which "do not mean the end of the repression against us." They stressed: "As we have declared repeatedly, what decides is the organized will of the workers.... The mobilization of the ranks will impose the democratic decision that the workers have repeatedly expressed." But for the ICL leadership, what counts is who controls the office and who the bosses' press treats as head of the union. In *WV*'s account what decides is not the will of the workers but the dictates of the bourgeoisie.

Moreover, as they undergo intensive on-the-job training in purveying disinformation, the *WV* editors assume that in making a "case" against us, they can determine what facts and "facts" will be communicated. Take, for example, the front-page headline from *Diário do Vale* used as a centerpiece illustration in the *WV* 669 article. Relying on readers' lack of knowledge of the Portuguese language, *WV* says it states that Ribeiro "was ousted as union president" while omitting the rest of the headline, which says that he was "assaulted." And if you look closely, you will see that the *Diário* subtitle says that the so-called "assembly" that approved Ribeiro's "ouster" consisted merely of "about 25 municipal workers." While the pro-cop provocateur Artur Fernandes managed to scrape together a few flunkies to "approve" a red purge carried out by the bourgeois courts, four days before that 150 municipal workers met in a union meeting convoked by a petition signed by hundreds of union members, and voted to reaffirm Ribeiro as their legitimate president and to disaffiliate the municipal *guardas*.

But *Workers Vanguard* haughtily decrees the non-existence of the 25 July 1996 vote to throw out the cops, declaring that the disaffiliation of the cops "*never happened*!" Not only did it happen, even the *Diário do Vale* (26 July 1996) reported on the union meeting of the previous day, noting: "Another decision of the assembly was to approve the disaffiliation of the Municipal Guard. The proposal has been discussed for several months." As Ribeiro and Carega note in their 31 December 1996 letter, under the impact of this vote *guardas* began handing in their resignations at the union hall occupied by the court-installed Fernandes clique. An association of municipal

police was formed in November, but little has been heard of it after its leader was wounded by another cop (not killed, as *WV* misquotes LQB leader Cerezo as saying). Even so, of the approximately 100 *guardas* originally in the SFPMVR (out of a union membership of 1,400), less than two dozen of Fernandes' cop cronies are reportedly left in his court-rigged outfit. For *WV*, once again taking the same line as Fernandes, this renders non-existent the *union ranks' decision to disaffiliate the cops*. On the contrary, for revolutionaries this means that the struggle continues against state intervention in the union, which is aimed precisely at *blocking* the will of the ranks.

The ICL leaders' argument has an extremely rightist thrust. In the *WV* article, in talks with sympathizers and in exchanges with IG supporters, they put forward as the key issue that "Artur Fernandes controls the union." We have pointed out that Fernandes' "control" of the union offices is the result of court action, police force and gangsterism. But beyond this, what *WV* presents is a rather strange criterion for self-proclaimed revolutionaries. We seek to build a communist pole in the unions, in the struggle to root the revolutionary party in the working class.

LQB supporters recently launched the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC—Class-Struggle Caucus) on the basis of a revolutionary program which begins with the call for "complete and unconditional independence of the unions from the capitalist state," demanding a "class-struggle fight against racist oppression and the oppression of women," a break from the popular front and "a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers and peasants government." A meeting introducing the CLC held on June 18 was attended by municipal workers, metal workers, educational workers and students from the Volta Redonda area, and received a message of solidarity from the Rio de Janeiro oil workers.

***WV* Then and Now**

The depths reached in the ICL leaders' vendetta are shown by the use of smears that *Workers Vanguard* itself refuted before the break in fraternal relations. An example is the repeated charge that LQB spokesman Cerezo held an "unelected post" in the union, that he was an "unelected adviser" to the union, that the LQB comrades were only "coveting their unelected positions," and that the whole fight to remove the cops was nothing but a vulgar "power struggle." As reported by *WV* (No. 639, 16 February 1996) before the ICL broke fraternal relations, Luta Metalúrgica (which shortly thereafter formed the LQB) was invited to advise the November 1995 campaign by the *Municípios em Luta* slate headed by Geraldo Ribeiro "precisely because LM was the only group which fought for the independence of the working class, refusing to vote for any candidates of a popular front tying the workers to sectors of the bourgeoisie." Following the MEL's victory, Cerezo was briefly an unpaid advisor to the union. This was ended already by *February 1996*, as was publicized by the Fernandes clique in a leaflet.

The McCarthyite hue and cry against Cerezo as an "out-

side" agitator and interloper in the municipal workers union was first whipped up in late January 1996 by Causa Operária (C.O.)—a fake-Trotskyist group that votes for the popular front—and then picked up by the LBI braintrusts for the pro-police camarilla of Artur Fernandes. In February 1996, an "ICL Statement of Solidarity with Luta Metalúrgica" denounced the "unholy alliance stretching from the bosses' press and company-union officials to opportunist left parties" that was "frantically seeking to drive revolutionaries out of the union." The statement noted that the popular-front mayor and pro-government labor leaders sought to stop Geraldo Ribeiro and the MEL from taking office, and when that ploy failed, the bosses' press began "trumpeting vile accusations" from a phantom outfit "appearing out of nowhere to demand that Cerezo be excluded from union meetings." The ICL declaration continued:

"To portray this veteran class-struggle militant—fired by the steel bosses for defending the workers' interests, and slandered by [the pro-company labor federation] Força Sindical and the class-collaborationist left alike—as an 'outsider' in Steel City is an abomination propagated by those who are at home in the antechambers of Popular Front mayor Baltazar and Lula's Frente Brasil Popular, if not in the front offices of the CSN [National Steel Company] itself....

"The history of the class struggle is replete with examples of such orchestrated attempts at defamation and repression of militant workers leaders, often with the connivance of the reformists, in order to destroy the capacity for resistance of the workers movement....

"The opportunists traffic in accusations of corruption and scandalmongering in imitation of the social mores of their bourgeois masters.... When their popular-front politics are unpopular, they resort to smears to divert attention from the fundamental questions at issue and to discredit those who do defend the workers' interests."

Workers Vanguard returned to the question of the Volta Redonda municipal workers when the Artur Fernandes group called military police and municipal *guardas* against a 13 March 1996 SFPMVR meeting. *WV* No. 642 (29 March 1996) printed a "Call for International Labor Solidarity" from the LQB, which noted:

"The timing of the police assault is particularly ominous, given that in recent weeks Geraldo [Ribeiro] has been working to separate the municipal police from the union, because the police are not part of the workers movement."

Anyone reading what *WV* printed *then* can see for themselves that it is entirely incompatible with the smears spewed out now. Just read *WV*'s condemnation of the role of C.O. and the LBI in February 1996 and compare it with the actions of the ICL today.

Bosses' Press vs. Class-Struggle Militants

Workers Vanguard's "case" against the LQB and the IG is supposedly clinched by "supporting evidence" from the Volta Redonda newspaper *Diário do Vale*. *WV* admits that "*Diário do Vale* is a bourgeois newspaper in a company town" which is "hostile to any leftist opposition in the local unions."

Yet *WV* cites articles published by that newspaper in July and August of 1996 alleging that Geraldo Ribeiro sought to have the courts decide who controlled the SFPMVR, and then asks in bold italic print: "*If this were not so, where then is the necessary refutation by the LQB or the IG?*" It is telling that *WV* did not have the Marxist honesty or simple journalistic integrity to ask the LQB or IG whether such refutations had been made before printing its smear.

The answer to *WV*'s question is very simple: the "necessary refutation" was made at the time, not once but repeatedly! On 26 July 1996 Geraldo Ribeiro wrote a letter to the *Diário do Vale* to set straight its "incorrect reporting," stating:

"Those who resort to court intervention in the union are not us, the legitimate leaders and activists of the SFPMVR. The workers must 'clean their own house' and we categorically reject intervention by the bosses' courts in the workers movement. On the contrary, it is Artur Fernandes' pro-police coup group which attacks the elementary principles of workers class independence in this way. By placing the union under government intervention, as in the days of the dictatorship, they attack the democratic and trade-union rights of all the workers. The union belongs to the workers, not to the government or the bosses."

Yet *Diário do Vale* refused to print Ribeiro's letter, nor did it print any of his 30 January 1997 declaration. This is hardly a unique experience for any left-wing group, as the ICL knows well.

The steel barons' house organ, which *WV* elevates to the exalted status of "local paper of record," not only refused to allow Ribeiro to set the record straight, its reporters kept asking what legal steps he was taking against the court action to remove him as union president. When Ribeiro insisted that he was looking to the union ranks, they garbled his words and complained that he was "avoiding any comment, however, on what is being done to assure his regaining the presidency" (*Diário do Vale*, 2 August 1996). Faced with the systematic misrepresentation of his remarks, Geraldo gave an interview to the other Volta Redonda paper, *Opção*, which reported his denunciation of court intervention in the unions. After noting that Ribeiro denounced the mass layoffs carried out by the former president of the National Steel Company (CSN)—Roberto Procópio Lima Neto, the force behind *Diário do Vale*—with the complicity of the union bureaucracy, the article in *Opção* (9 August 1996) continued:

"The Volta Redonda justice system does not escape Geraldo's rebelliousness either. He says that the Municipal Workers Union is under court intervention, but this will not stop him from fighting for the members. In his own words, the city's justice system is bourgeois and so he does not believe in it. 'Today's justice system comes from the era of the military dictatorship and it will not work at all in favor of the workers,' he claims."

The ICL's sources are the very forces that have brought court and police repression down on the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union and its class-struggle leaders. This continues a pattern going back more than a year now: whenever the bourgeois press or the Brazilian fake left launch a

slander against the LQB because of its fight for class independence, the "new I.S." of the ICL picks it up. This came to the fore immediately before the expulsions from the ICL, when Fernandes lyingly accused LQB leader Cerezo of seeking a salary from the union equivalent to ten times the minimum wage. In a 22 May 1996 draft letter to the LQB, ICL International Secretary Parks repeated this dirty smear. When Jan Norden, then still a member of the International Secretariat, was asked for his comments on this letter, he wrote that rather than accepting as good coin a charge coming from a notorious police mouthpiece, the I.S. should first find out the facts. For this, comrade Norden was grotesquely accused of "cop-baiting" the party, removed from all leading positions in the ICL, suspended from the Spartacist League two days later and then expelled.

In fact, Fernandes' charge was a lie, as attested by formal depositions from the union treasurer (who was not part of the MEL slate) as well as union president Ribeiro, stating that Cerezo never sought, let alone received, payment from the union. Yet at a 28 February 1997 New York forum, a leading Spartacist spokesman took the slanderous charge one step further and called Cerezo a "paid adviser" to the union. The technique is familiar: just keep escalating the lie and slinging the mud, calculating that eventually something will stick.

Today, *Workers Vanguard* refers to *Diário do Vale* as the "local paper of record." But as noted by *WV* No. 639 (16 February 1996), this paper is "notorious as a mouthpiece for the privatized CSN steel company bosses, [which] gave prominent coverage to attacks on LM spokesman Alexandre Honorato (Cerezo) both by the CSN-sponsored 'union' Força Sindical and by the pseudo-Trotskyist group Causa Operária (C.O)." *Diário do Vale* was set up to support the privatization of the CSN (National Steel Company) and was formed with the backing of notorious right-wing politician and former CSN boss Lima Neto, who imposed 10,000 layoffs. The steel company directly finances this paper, to the tune of \$250,000 a month (\$3 million a year) until recently. Lima Neto is a federal deputy of the right-wing PFL party, known as the mouthpiece of the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie, notably big landowners. During the 1995 oil workers strike, he whipped up strikebreaking sentiment.

In the struggle against the privatization and layoffs, Luta Metalúrgica repeatedly crossed swords with Lima Neto. During the 1990 steel workers strike, he denounced comrade Cerezo in the company bulletin for using the strike "for political ends," to which Luta Metalúrgica replied: "Yes, our strike is political.... It is against your politics of privatization and draining CSN to pay off the foreign debt. Our strike is against *your politics* and that of the government you represent" (*Luta Metalúrgica*, August 1990). Two years later, Lima Neto's house organ *Diário do Vale* (27 June 1992) devoted its editorial page to denouncing LM as "Luta Medieval" (medieval struggle), a "fragment of the Berlin Wall fallen into Volta Redonda" that seeks "a repetition of the 1917 Russian Revolution." As documented in our **Brazil**

dossier, *Diário do Vale* led the red-baiting chorus against Ribeiro and the LQB/LM during and after the municipal workers union election.

It is hardly surprising that this paper refused to print Ribeiro's refutations of the accusations against him. It is damning of *WV* that it treats *Diário do Vale* as an authority for "evidence" against Marxist militants, and assumes that if this house organ of the steel bosses didn't print these refutations, therefore they don't exist. One can easily imagine *WV*'s justified indignation if political opponents quoted the *Wall Street Journal* as a "paper of record" for accusations against the Spartacist League. Yet today *WV* presents a collection of "evidence" selected from the pages of this steel company paper in a steel company town, a paper that has waged a vendetta against Luta Metalúrgica for years. For the ICL leaders, anything goes for the purpose of smearing the LQB and the IG.

Defend the Brazilian Class-Struggle Militants!

WV 669 derides the statement that the LQB waged a "principled fight" to remove the police from the municipal workers union. At the same time it advertises a new bulletin of correspondence between the ICL and the LQB from January 1996 through the ICL's breaking of fraternal relations in June 1996 (carefully omitting prior correspondence, as well as the LQB's reply to the break in relations). In the future the Internationalist Group will publish materials from the discussion on Brazil *inside* the ICL which shed additional light on the expulsions and the ICL's flight from the class battle in Volta Redonda.

For example, *WV* 669 cites a 29 January 1996 letter to Luta Metalúrgica in order to imply that LM upheld a position in favor of using the courts in the union movement when it was slandered by the candidate of the company union Força Sindical. However, at the ICL's January 1996 International Executive Committee meeting, LM leader Cerezo stated: "After discussing with comrade Negrete, Luta Metalúrgica has reconsidered this. We decided not to go to the bourgeois courts, and instead to call a commission of workers." As for police in the union, not only did the LM-backed slate (MEL) declare in its program that police are "the armed fist of the bourgeoisie" and say that no alliance with them is possible "since they bring men armed and trained by the bourgeois state into the unions," LM *agreed with* the ICL's urgings to undertake efforts to oust the cops from the union. According to the ICL's own reports on the initial discussion with comrade Cerezo on this question, he stated that they were determined to remove the police from the union and that this was a question of principle. In fact, newly elected union president Geraldo Ribeiro had *already* taken steps to do so before the ICL raised the issue, and Ribeiro with the backing of the LQB continued that fight through to the end while the ICL abandoned the struggle as it reached the critical stage.

Yet even the ICL's own selective bulletin provides anyone who reads it with plenty of proof that *Workers Vanguard's* cover story is a fabrication. Where *WV* 669 charges the Brazilian comrades with "persistent refusal to take the necessary steps to constitute themselves as the nucleus of a Trotskyist party in Brazil," the bulletin prints a 3 April 1996 letter from the LQB outlining a series of concrete proposals for these key steps, and a 7 April 1996 letter back from the International Secretariat, saying that the comrades of the International Executive Committee "strongly concur with your proposals." This same letter from the I.S. states that "it has been you comrades who have withstood the pressures and dangers by waging a hard and principled fight" against "the presence of cops in the labor movement," and stresses: "Pursuing fraternal relations with Luta Metalúrgica in Brazil is a choice we made at our IEC meeting and we are generally pleased with the direction things have been moving in since then" (see pages 105-107 of the bulletin).

Subsequent correspondence in the bulletin includes an I.S. motion (25 April) reiterating "recent forward advancement of fraternal relations as evidenced in the collaboration between our organizations in the campaign against the incursion of the capitalist state in the union movement, as well as in the perspectives advanced to us by comrade Cerezo for party propaganda, cadre education, and extending the organization to a major metropolitan center" (page 119); and it features specifics on the work that was underway on producing the Brazilian group's newspaper (pp. 115-116, 122-123), which *WV* later claimed the LQB did not want to produce and now derides as an "adornment." The claim that the LQB persistently refused to take steps to constitute the nucleus of a revolutionary party in Brazil is a *pure invention* to cover the ICL leaders' betrayal.

And once again, *WV* tries to obfuscate the issues by crudely misusing a historical analogy. The fight to remove the cops, initially encouraged by the ICL and repeatedly characterized as a principled struggle, is now compared by *WV* 669 to Stalin's 1927 "Canton Soviet"—in other words, an irresponsible adventure. The "Canton Soviet" was a foolhardy attempt at insurrection without adequate preparation, carried out following the devastating defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927. It was intended to cover up Stalin's line of political subordination to Chiang Kai-shek's bourgeois Kuomintang, a betrayal that was directly derived from the reactionary dogma of "socialism in one country" and which led to that massacre. *WV's* comparison is positively ludicrous, not only in terms of scale. The fight to remove the cops from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union was systematically built with sectoral meetings, the election of delegates to a union *seminário* and then a membership assembly (19 June 1996). When that was shut down by court order and police force, the class-struggle union leaders came back with a petition, leaflets, a support statement from the mother of Ernane da Silva Lúcio (the black youth murdered by a municipal cop), and finally another union assembly (25 July 1996),

attended by over 150 members, which voted the disaffiliation of the cops. Some "Canton Soviet"!

The real purpose of the ICL leaders' absurdly false analogy is to attempt to justify their own desertion from the struggle.

The comrades of the LQB have fought and are fighting for communist principles in the face of tremendous obstacles. Where there have been insufficiencies in this fight they have corrected them. Facing bourgeois state repression, they appealed for and received solidarity both internationally and within Brazil. *WV* declares that Geraldo Ribeiro has no support locally, basing themselves on hostile popular-frontist union bureaucrats. They should have spoken with those sectors who have run afoul of the popular front, such as the oil workers, whose 1995 strike was broken by army occupation of the refineries while Lula's PT (Workers Party) refused to mobilize in their support. The oil workers union, like the SFPMVR, was placed under judicial intervention following the strike as the government seeks to sell off the state petroleum company Petrobrás. And Brazilian oil workers have repeatedly declared their support for the struggle against police and judicial repression in Volta Redonda.

Further escalating its slanders, *WV* 669 obscenely accuses the Internationalist Group of having "damaged the tradition of internationalist, non-sectarian class-struggle defense." What cynicism! *WV's* latest diatribe is a flagrant assault on the tradition of internationalist, non-sectarian class-struggle defense. Driven by factional frenzy, the ICL leaders viciously attack the Brazilian comrades' defense statement, accusing them of "lying to the world" while the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil has faced an onslaught from the repressive organs of the capitalist state, in league with the popular front and pro-police provocateurs.

With all its talk of "unelected union advisors," its positively gleeful proclamation that the union is supposedly "controlled" by the pro-cop faction of Fernandes, its cynical claim that the fight to remove the cops was an irresponsible adventure (at the same time it pretends that it "never happened"!) and its dirty attack on the defense of the Brazilian class-struggle union militants targeted by the capitalist state, *WV* is trafficking in the vilest anti-communism.

The despicable smear-and-slander job in *WV* 669 poses point-blank the question: *Where is the ICL going?* What is one to say of an ostensibly revolutionary organization that will stop at nothing in its vendetta to defame and destroy this nucleus of the revolutionary party in Brazil which has fought to actually carry out the Trotskyist program of revolutionary working-class independence that the ICL claims to stand for?

Far from being simultaneously adventurers and bureaucrats, as *WV* claims, it is precisely because the Brazilian comrades have fought to carry out this program in practice that they have been the target of concerted repression. After abandoning the struggle, the ICL leadership now blames the victims of this repression, crowing that "every danger we warned of came to pass." The very real dangers the Brazilian comrades face in

waging the struggle have existed from the beginning, and they have taken them into account in systematically building support for this fight for working-class independence. The ICL's "warnings," about "pull[ing] our hands out of the boiling water" because of the power of the bourgeois state, came not when the ICL initially encouraged this struggle but as it prepared its treacherous desertion. Now *WV* illustrates the dangers by citing the *London Review of Books* about the number of street children killed by police death squads in Brazil. The Brazilian comrades know those dangers first-hand, and that did not lead them to betray this crucial class fight.

The party question is indeed the heart of the matter. A revolutionary party can only be built through intervention to bring the communist program into the class struggle, and by standing by this program in deed as well as word. The ICL correctly encouraged the difficult and necessarily convulsive struggle to remove the cops from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union, then withdrew at the last minute, covering its flight with smears against those it stabbed in the back. In the classic ploy of those who are unable to defend their politics, the ICL leaders resort to lies and defamation. At the same time they try to stifle what the LQB says in its own defense and smears the International Group as being "for sale."

At a May 18 public class in Mexico City, a local Spartacist spokesman blurted out what the ICL leadership seeks to accomplish with the new escalation of its slander campaign: "It's over. The discussion is finished." Some "discussion"! Internally, the ICL leadership responded with motions to limit circulation of documents, summary removal of leaders, trials, suspensions, expulsions—and always with the lies, slander and character assassination that lubricate the machinery of bureaucratic suppression. Following the purge, having been unable to refute the documented proof of what

really happened in Brazil, their purpose in launching this new smear is to declare the Internationalist Group and Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil beyond the bounds of discussion. But the ICL will not be able to elude the discussion, and its members have the responsibility as Marxists to come to grips with the issues, carefully read all the documents and form their own opinion. For what is at stake is the course of their party, which is in flagrant contradiction with the historic Spartacist program.

From the beginning, we have systematically answered the ICL leadership's smears, because these methods are alien to Marxism and are an obstacle to a genuine struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International. As the LQB points out, in seeking to bury the Brazilian comrades under a mountain of smears retailed by the bourgeois press, the bosses' labor lieutenants and their pseudo-socialist advisers, the ICL leadership condemns itself. For those who seek to advance the program of Trotskyism, upheld by the Spartacist tendency for more than 30 years, the struggle in Brazil has become a real litmus test. For the ICL leaders, the truth is an obstacle to be trampled underfoot in their flight from the struggle. Yet those who fight to reforge the Fourth International must be guided by the rules upon which it was founded:

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International."

—Leon Trotsky, Transitional Program

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do **COMITÉ DE LUTA CLASSISTA - CLC**, na pessoa de seu
Representante legal, situado, à Rua Lorival de Freitas, nº 96 sala
401, Bairro Alarrado, Volta Redonda - RJ (em cima da Casa
Gomes) e de **GERALDO RIBEIRO NEVES**, brasileiro, casado,

Eighth court action against class-struggle unionists in Volta Redonda, Brazil in the last two years. This case (No. 183/97) calls for the "search and seizure" of leaflet issued by the Class Struggle Caucus.

The following is a translation of Bulletin No. 3 (September 1997) of the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC—Class Struggle Caucus, initiated by the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil), calling for solidarity with the Brazilian comrades in the face of the latest repression against them. On September 5, a Volta Redonda court ordered the seizure of the CLC's previous bulletin, exposing the attempt to loot workers' pension funds and the role of the pro-police group of Artur Fernandes, who was the instrument of a judicial coup last year against the elected leadership of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union. The court order against the CLC was issued at the request of a lawyer employed by the Fernandes clique, Vanise Alves de Carvalho. This is the *eighth* legal action against LQB supporters in the last two years.

ALERT!

To the workers
To the unions.

To all opponents of repression

The Bourgeois Courts of Volta Redonda Attack the Workers' Democratic Rights

Down with the witchhunt against the Comitê de Luta Classista
for denouncing the theft of public workers' pension funds
by the federal government, the popular front and the
judicial mafia instigated by Artur's pro-police clique

Yet another attack against the class-struggle unionists who fight for the class independence of the unions from the bourgeois government and the bosses! On Friday, September 5, the Fifth Civil Court (Volta Redonda district) of the Rio de Janeiro state judiciary issued a court order for the "seizure" of bulletin No. 2 of the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC), by means of "police force" if necessary. It personally names Geraldo Ribeiro Neves, the legitimate president of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SPPMVR). It threatens to seize the belongings of the CLC and

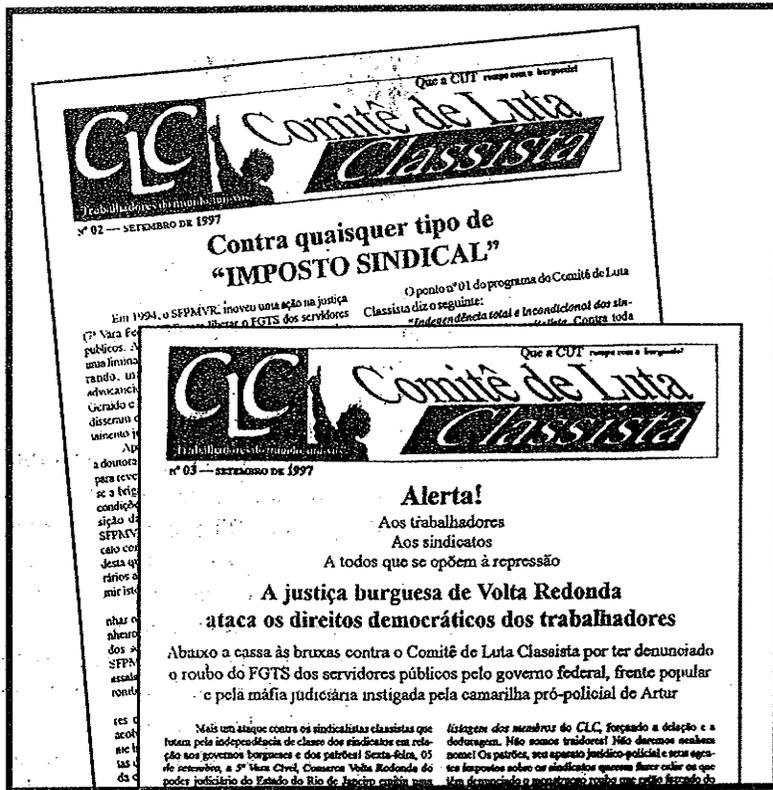
This repression is coming from the popular front city government of Volta Redonda. The demand for an injunction was filed on Alves de Carvalho's behalf by one João Silvério Neto, a management-level city official who was chief of staff of the former mayor and Secretary of Public Services at the time of the previous barrage of repression against Geraldo Ribeiro, the elected president of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union. Ribeiro, a supporter of the LQB, was the only person named in the suit against the CLC. Evidently deciding that this was too obvious a connection to the local authorities, now a new lawyer has been substituted. And in a November 14 filing, the individual targeted has been switched to Jorge Oliveira, a retired black steel worker.

At the same time, indicating the escalating threat, the authors of the court action against the class-struggle unionists ominously describe the CLC as "one of those clandestine factions which hiding under the cover of anonymity seek to flee from confronting the law for the consequences of their acts." In addition to calling for "search and seizure" of the CLC leaflet, these flunkys for the popular-front regime demand a list of the names of the members of the Class Struggle Caucus! We demand: *Hands off the CLC!*

comrade Geraldo. The original call for the injunction (which the judge has not yet fully approved) also demands the names of the CLC's members.

This witchhunt attempts to shut the workers' mouths using laws from the Getúlio Vargas "New State" dictatorship (Civil Code 1940) and the era of the *military dictatorship!* They want to suppress militant workers' right of expression, demanding the "search and apprehension" of leaflets as if these were "public enemies." Will the pro-police gang also ask the courts to use police force to go to every city worker's house to carry out the "search and apprehension" of CLC bulletin No. 2, which each city worker received and which simply tells the truth?

The clique of pro-police intriguers around Artur Fernandes uses the hand of the bourgeois state to grab the workers' money. This is trampling on the principles of the working class. Artur, as a union "leader" for the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista, even signed the "theses" the LBI presented at the Sixth Congress of the CUT (labor federation), as a "so-



The leaflets they want to suppress by court action. Top: CLC Bulletin No. 2, headlines "No to Any Kind of 'Union Tax!'" opposing looting of pension funds and state control of union finances. Bottom: CLC Bulletin No. 3 alerts against the new judicial witchhunt.

cialist alternative" for the workers movement. This is the height of cynicism! The LBI thus stands behind a figure who constantly deals with differences in the workers movement by using gangsterism and treating them as "police cases." Defending the rights of the CLC means defending the rights of all the workers and oppressed!

They want to attack the right of assembly by demanding that the CLC name names and finger people by providing a *list of the members* of the CLC. We are not traitors! We will not provide a single name! The bosses, their judicial-police apparatus and their agents imposed on the unions want to silence those who have denounced the monstrous theft being carried out against Volta Redonda city workers' pension funds. For several years the Popular Front city government refused to deposit money in the pension funds. When even the courts ruled that now the city has to pay, a ridiculous maneuver is arranged so that the lawyers will rake off 15 percent of the total.

The national CUT told the workers: "you do not need to pay" for this rip-off. But when the CLC warns the workers in Volta Redonda that their pension funds are being robbed, fierce repression is unleashed against us. Why is this?

This is not the first time the comrades of the Comitê de Luta Classista have been the targets of judicial-police repression. This is the eighth judicial action against us since Geraldo Ribeiro took office as the legitimately elected president of the SFPMMVR.

They attack the CLC because we defend the independence of the unions from control by the capitalist state, whether by

the courts, government or police, and we oppose the unions' bureaucratization by sell-out leaders. Last year the commander of the Municipal Guard sued comrade Geraldo when, as class-struggle leader of the SFPMMVR, Geraldo carried out a campaign to separate the *guardas* (municipal cops) from the union.

For the same reason, they repeatedly sent police to intimidate the workers who were holding union meetings where the disaffiliation of the *guardas* was discussed. On 19 June 1996, the courts issued an injunction, requested by the pro-police clique, to shut down the union meeting where the disaffiliation of the *guardas* from the SFPMMVR was going to be voted. The injunction also called for the judicial ouster of Geraldo Ribeiro, the union's legitimate president, under the pretext of an investigation into misuse of union funds by Geraldo. Without a shred of evidence, this inquiry has gone nowhere, while under the Fernandes clique 8,032 reais [one real is roughly equivalent to a U.S. dollar] disappeared from the SFPMMVR's savings and the union's van and telephone were lost.

They use the bosses' courts against the CLC because we fight racism. Another court suit was launched against comrade Geraldo on the charge that he "defamed" the city by defending Regina Célia, a black woman who was the victim of a racist firing.

With the union under judicial intervention, they imposed the pro-cop front man Artur Fernandes, who is going to court once again, this time using the lawyer

Vanise Alves de Carvalho, employed by the SFPMMVR, to try to suppress the protest against the theft of the pension funds.

But this could backfire, because it will not be enough to try—unsuccessfully—to silence the CLC. They will have to attempt to shut the mouths of all the members of the SFPMMVR who want to defend themselves and are fighting against this attack. And they will fail in their attempt, just as they failed when they tried to stop the ranks of the SFPMMVR from voting on 25 July 1996 to reaffirm Geraldo as president and disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* from the union. *Courts and cops hands off the union!*

Make no mistake: this attack is directed against *all* those who fight to defend the workers' interests. This time they want to "search for and apprehend" CLC bulletin No. 2 against the theft of the pension funds. Next time, will they want to "apprehend" Geraldo's declarations No. 1 and 2, which talked about the need for a massive struggle against the layoffs of city workers, CSN (National Steel Company) workers and others?

Remember: an attack against one is an attack against all. If they succeed in outlawing protests by Volta Redonda city workers, tomorrow they will launch new attacks against the oil workers, the dockers, the landless peasants, the homeless and others. *Everyone* must join the struggle to demand that all charges be dropped against Geraldo Ribeiro and the Comitê de Luta Classista.

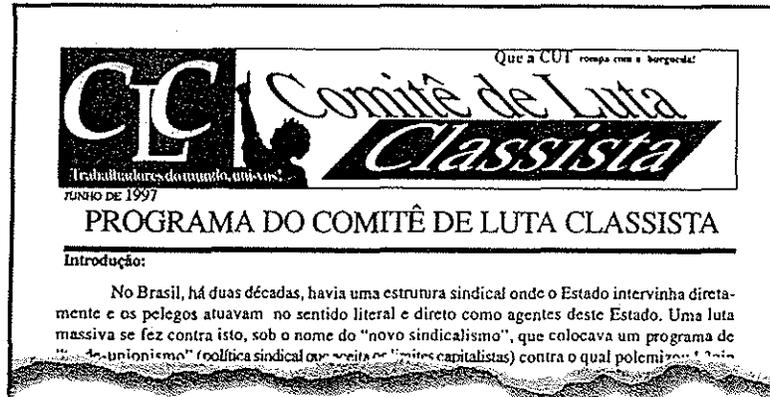
The Comitê de Luta Classista fights for the complete and unconditional independence of the unions from the capitalist

continued on page 32

Brazil

Program of the Class Struggle Caucus

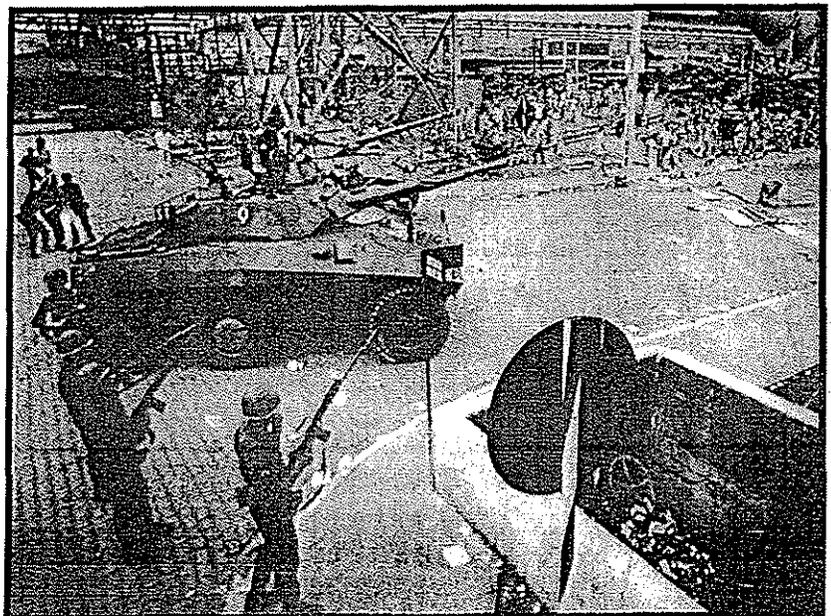
The following program of the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC)—the Class Struggle Caucus initiated by our fraternal comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil) was printed as a leaflet in June 1997 and reprinted in the LQB's newspaper Vanguarda Operária No. 2 (August-October 1997).



tion that we face arise from the capitalist system. Determined to fight against this system, we seek to make our union an instrument in this struggle, together with the exploited and oppressed of the entire world. After the decline of bourgeois "laborism" [*tabalhismo*, a reference to the followers of veteran capitalist politician Leonel Brizola's "Democratic Labor

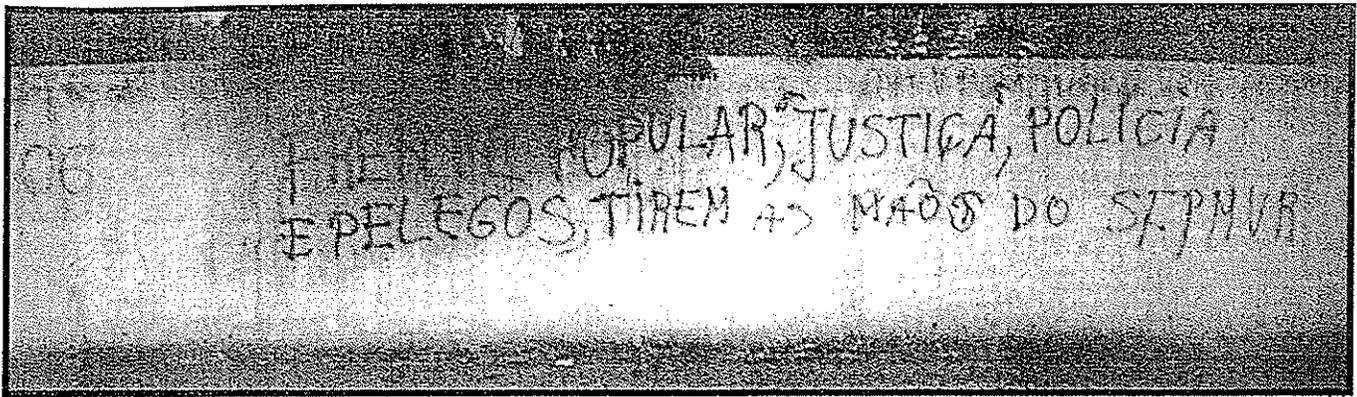
Introduction: Two decades ago Brazil had a trade-union structure in which the state intervened directly and the *pelegos* (government-aligned bureaucrats) acted literally and directly as agents of the state. A massive struggle was carried out against this under the name of the "new unionism," which put forward a program of *trade-unionism* (union politics which accept the limits of capitalism), which Lenin polemicized against and which can be classified politically as social-democratic. This "new unionism" under the umbrella of the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT—United Workers Federation) is dominant today, revealing its own bankruptcy as it seeks to discipline the workers in the service of the popular front, an alliance which subordinates the workers to a sector of the bosses. Thus, the various enemies we are facing, from the puppet provocateur Artur Fernandes, chief of the pro-police faction against the workers of the SPPMVR (Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union) and shareholder in CSN (the National Steel Company), who is advised by the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista, to the fake-leftists of the PSTU [the Morenoite United Socialist Workers Party], Causa Operária and Dodora's Força Socialista, which have supported the gangsterism and thugery used by the pro-police clique against the SPPMVR, all act as what Trotsky called the "fifth wheel" of the popular front. The CLC's central policy is for the defeat of the tendencies which tie the workers to capitalism.

Who we are: The Comitê de Luta Classista is a group of workers, founded by public employees and open to workers from all other sectors, who understand that all the forms of oppres-



Volta Redonda 1988 steel strike: army occupies the plant.

Tasso Marcelo



Vanguarda Operária

Slogans on wall in main avenue of Volta Redonda protesting repression against municipal workers union, July 1996.

carry out the class-struggle program. The key is to forge a revolutionary leadership.

What we stand for:

1. Complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state. Against any intervention or interference by the bourgeois “justice” system in the union. We repudiate any and all control by the government (ministries, “justice” system, parliament, police, etc.) over the workers movement. It is the workers who decide. Union dues must be freed from the dues check-off controlled by the state and the bosses and be paid directly to the union, so the workers will control the union’s money. Against the “union tax,” “labor federation tax,” etc. We condemn the traitors who “invite” the bourgeois courts into the unions.

2. The union belongs to the working class, not to the bosses and their agents. The union meeting of 25 July 1996 disaffiliated the municipal *guardas* (cops) from the SFPMVR, because police (of all kinds) are not part of the working class; they are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie.

Remember Ernane da Silva Lúcio, a black youth murdered by a municipal *guarda*. Remember the repression against the oil workers and the massacres of Candelária, Carandirú, Rondônia, Eldorado, Favela Naval in Diadema (state of São Paulo) and Cidade de Deus (state of Rio de Janeiro). This means that the municipal workers’ historic decision must be extended throughout the union movement by expelling police, *guardas*, prison guards and watchmen from the unions and the CUT.

3. Union democracy. Election of delegates from each sector to represent and mobilize their sectors and keep them informed. All union directors and leaders must be subject to recall by the ranks. The right to form caucuses within the union. Down with the union bureaucrats’ witchhunts against class-struggle militants. Mobilize the ranks to defeat all the union bureaucrats, who serve the bosses and the bourgeois state. Maintain a genuine strike fund. Free union programs to teach literacy, technical training and workers education. Seek to establish union radio programs.

The independence of the unions from the bourgeois state, together with union democracy, can be achieved only with a revolutionary leadership. The current union bureaucracies (both the *pelegos* of Força Sindical [pro-company labor federation], etc., and the popular-frontists leading the CUT) act to subordinate the working class to the bosses and their state. These anti-working-class politics were highlighted when Artur Fernandes “invited” the intervention of the bourgeois courts in the SFPMVR against the struggle to disaffiliate the *guardas*.

4. CUT should mean struggle. We defend the SFPMVR’s affiliation to the CUT, against company-union federations like Força Sindical and the CGT. No to “partnership” and all forms of class collaboration. The workers’ interests are completely counterposed to those of the capitalists. The CUT must withdraw from all joint boards and committees with the bosses and the bourgeois government. We condemn the “CUT Investment Clubs” such as those created by the Volta Redonda metal workers union and in other state-owned companies that are being privatized. We fight to defeat the *pelega* and *neo-pelega* (sell-out) bureau-



Zulmair Rocha

Volta Redonda 1988 steel strike: workers killed by army.



Why They Lie

WV's Frenzied Slanders Can't Hide ICL Leaders' Brazil Betrayal

Following the pattern they have set over the last year, the misleaders of the International Communist League have responded to our exposure of their latest lying smear against the Internationalist Group and the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil) by shoveling out still more lies. *Workers Vanguard* substitutes mudslinging for Marxist political debate, resorting to slander and wholesale falsification, because they are frantically seeking to cover up their desertion from a key class battle in Brazil. Having been caught in a shameful betrayal, they accuse those who stood and fought of themselves committing a betrayal. The *WV* editors' cynical calculation is transparent: they figure that many readers will throw up their hands and conclude that it's a dirty business all around. But serious Marxists will not be deterred by such obfuscating tactics. Anyone who honestly studies the facts will see who is defending the revolutionary program in struggle and who is flinching before the pressure of the bourgeoisie.

The ICL leaders' recourse to falsification and frame-up is nothing new in the history of the degeneration of revolutionary organizations. Rather, it is a recurring historical pattern. As Trotsky wrote in 1929 in introducing the newspaper of the French Left Oppositionists, *La Vérité* (The Truth):

"The reformists deliberately lie to their readers in order to preserve the bourgeois system. The centrists employ lies to cloak their vacillations, their uncertainty, their capitulation, and their adventures."

Those who resort to such anti-Marxist methods figure they can crush the voice of authentic communism under the weight of a mountain of lies. *WV* certainly has a much greater circulation to spread its filth than *The Internationalist* does for refuting it—as we have done with every single one of their attacks while they just duck and dodge. But the ICL is no organizational juggernaut. In following this disastrous course, it is gutting the most precious capital of the Spartacist tendency, its fidelity over more than three decades to the Trotskyist program.

Let's recapitulate how this "discussion" came about. In June of last year, the Spartacist League/U.S. expelled several long-time leading cadres in a bureaucratic political purge that flagrantly violated

the SL's own organizational norms of Leninist democratic centralism. The significance of this "cleansing" was underlined ten days later when the ICL leadership broke relations with the Brazilian LQB and ostentatiously exited from the struggle to remove the police from the ranks of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR), headed by a supporter of the LQB. The ICL leaders' treacherous flight from a struggle they had at first encouraged occurred the very day before a union membership assembly that was scheduled to vote on the disaffiliation of the cops. That meeting was banned by court order and shut down by armed police, but the Brazilian comrades took the fight forward, leading to a historic vote by the union ranks on 25 July 1996 to oust the cops. Today they continue their struggle to become the nucleus of the Trotskyist party in Brazil, joining with the Internationalist Group in the cause of reorganizing the Fourth International.

The ICL has spent the last year spinning out one lie after another against the LQB and the IG in attempting to justify its



Vanguarda Operária

Volta Redonda demonstration calls to stop threatened execution of U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, 9 August 1995. Luta Metalúrgica sign on left says: "Break with the Popular Front! For a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party!"



AS BASES ESTÃO DECIDINDO :

POLÍCIA FORA DO SINDICATO; REAFIRMAÇÃO DO PROGRAMA MUNICIPALÁRIOS EM LUTA!

Segunda feira de manhã, dia 06/05/96, às 6:00 hs, os funcionários da Garagem decidiram em assembleia, por unanimidade que: Os Policiais não devem fazer parte nem interferir no SFPMVR e no movimento operário em geral. Pols são instrumentos e braço

mobilizações operárias para derrotar o plano de fome, demissões e miséria do FHC e o FMI!!!

Comandante DA GUARDA E A FRAÇÃO DE ARTUR ATACAM O SFPMVR:

Primeiro foi o chamado que a fração de Artur fez para que policiais fossem à assembleia do dia 13/03/96, e que foi condenado ao redor do mundo pela campanha internacional que fizemos e que todos os dias recebemos solidariedade. [veja jornal, Municipários em Luta do dia 11/04/96]. Agora o comandante da Guarda mancomunado com a fração de Artur está processando o SFPMVR. [veja a seguinte do processo do comandante da guarda contra o SFPMVR]

avante com nossa vitória classista!

Prof. Dr. Jua de Oliveira da ... Vera Cristina de Oliveira de Volta Redonda

Union bulletin (6 May 1996) reports on garage workers' vote, "The Rank and File Is Deciding: Police Out of the Union." The bulletin closes with the slogans (below): "Forward with our campaign! Police out of the union! Workers of the world unite!"

ignominious flight. The ICL leadership's catalogue of smears and slanders includes:

- The lie that the LQB had "refused" to undertake party-building tasks, such as putting out a newspaper and extending to a major metropolitan center, and instead was wedded to "trade-union opportunism." This fiction was the ICL's central pretext for breaking fraternal relations, yet within a month the LQB published the first issue of Vanguarda Operária (Workers Vanguard), and it now has a nucleus in Rio de Janeiro.
- The lie that LQB leader Cerezo was refusing to give up a post as an "unelected adviser" of the union. Even the LQB's enemies in Volta Redonda stated months beforehand that he was not an advisor to the union.
- The lie that the LQB supposedly had a "deal" with the cops in the SFPMVR. Yet the program of the Municipários em Luta (MEL--Municipal Workers in Struggle) slate supported by the LQB stated that the cops, at all levels, like the armed forces, are part of "the armed fist of the bourgeoisie" and thus "no alliance with them is possible." As union president Geraldo Ribeiro moved to disaffiliate the police from the union, the cops have relentlessly gone after the class-struggle leaders of the SFPMVR.
- The lie that the ICL did not know about the 19 June 1996 union meeting. When we quoted internal ICL documents showing that they knew of the meeting, they switched stories to claim

AVANTE COM NOSSA CAMPANHA!

POLÍCIA FORA DO SINDICATO!

OPERÁRIOS DO MUNDO UNÍ-VOS!

that they didn't know that the question of the police was to be voted there. We have reproduced union leaflets and newspaper articles in the ICL's possession which state that this issue was to be decided by the union membership assembly. ICL representatives were also informed of this beforehand by the LQB.

- The lie that the union ranks' vote to disaffiliate the police "never happened." We have reproduced union minutes, MEL leaflets and articles from Workers Vanguard's favorite source, the steel bosses' mouthpiece Diário do Vale, reporting on the fact that the 25 July 1996 union assembly voted the cops out.
- The lie that the LQB never publicized this "great victory" in the Brazilian labor movement, when in fact the LQB has said that "partial victories" had been won and underscored the importance of the union ranks' historic vote in numerous leaflets and statements.
- The lie that the IG supposedly tried to hide that the court-appointed pro-cop clique around Artur Fernandes "controls the union." The dossier, Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil, published last February by the Internationalist Group, reproduces a letter from Geraldo Ribeiro and Marcello Carega stating that the Fernandes clique was occupying the union hall, and that the "mobilization of the ranks will impose the democratic decision that the workers have repeatedly expressed" in reaffirming Ribeiro as SFPMVR president.

- The lie that the LQB refused to provide information or documentation on the struggle against the cops and the repression against its militants. Yet the LQB sent the International Secretariat of the ICL dozens of pages of leaflets and reports on this, followed by the extensive documentation in the dossier published by the IG.

The latest from the ICL leaders' in their frenzied vendetta is the fraudulent claim in *Workers Vanguard* No. 669 (30 May) that Liga Quarta-Internacionalista member Geraldo Ribeiro supposedly sued the very union of which he is the elected president, and that the Internationalist Group is supposed to have covered this up. In statements by the LQB (24 June) and the IG (29 June), we refuted this frame-up, taking apart their whole lying construct and demonstrating its falsity point by point. In the face of a barrage of repression by the capitalist state, including no less than seven judicial actions against LQB supporters, Ribeiro has steadfastly opposed all court intervention in the unions, both in repeated public statements, in statements to the courts and in his actions. We showed that what's actually going on here is that the ICL is repeating the lies spread by pro-cop elements, the company press and the popular-front left in opposing the LQB's campaign for police out of the unions and justifying the onslaught of cop and court repression against the Brazilian Trotskyists.

This is no idle academic debate. Over the last two weeks Brazil has witnessed several armed confrontations between the military police and the army. The cops who are infamous for massacring street children, slum dwellers and peasants are "striking" to demand higher pay to enforce the bourgeoisie's bloody rule. And now the leaders of the CUT labor federation and the PT (Workers Party) are *joining together with the cops*. This poses the greatest danger to the workers. CUT leader Vicentinho recently appeared on the same platform with a notorious killer from

the ROTA police commandos in São Paulo. MST landless peasant leaders have praised the murderous military police whose troops gunned down their comrades at Eldorado dos Carajás last year. The main leader of the military police in the state of Alagoas is a member of O Trabalho, the tendency in the PT that follows the French pseudo-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert! With virtually the entire Brazilian left openly or in a barely veiled manner supporting the bonapartist police mobilization, this underscores the vital importance of the struggle waged by the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista to remove cops from the unions. The LQB alone is fighting to drive home the lesson that the police are not "public servants" or allies of the workers but the armed fist of the bourgeoisie, the enemies of the exploited and oppressed.

ICL's Vendetta Escalates

Following our exposure of their role as a trumpet for the campaign of lies emanating from the bourgeoisie, the ICL leaders have responded with a new escalation. *WV* No. 671 claims of Ribeiro and the LQB that "Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union." No, they do not. What they show is that *the ICL is falsely accusing Ribeiro—the target of the anti-union court suits—of doing what was in fact done by those who went to the bourgeois "justice" system to remove him as union president.* Like the articles that have preceded it in the ICL's smear campaign, the whole article is shot through with one fabrication and falsification after another, once again beginning with the graphic they use to illustrate the article. In *WV* 669, they claimed that a headline from *Diário do Vale*, the mouthpiece of the steel bosses in this steel company town, proved that Ribeiro had been removed as president of the union. Yet the subtitle said this was done by a meeting of 25 people—only four days after a union assembly of over 150 reaffirmed him as president and expelled the police. This time around *WV* shows a clipping from the *Diário do Vale* of the SFPMMVR announcement of the 19 June 1996 union assembly which was to vote the exclusion of the cops, purporting to show that the agenda had "Nothing about cops!" This is a cynical lie.

As the graphic printed in *WV* itself shows, the first point on the agenda of the June 19 meeting is "Report of the resolutions of the 1st *seminário* [conference] of the SFPMMVR" held on June 13. The resolutions passed at that *seminário* called for removal of the police. The agenda for that meeting, including point 7 on the "Municipal Guard," was published in a union brochure distributed to the membership beforehand. It was reproduced on the front page of a June 17 union broadsheet building for the June 19 meeting. The other side of the tabloid-size sheet is headlined, "Campaign is Growing for 'Cops Hands off the SFPMMVR.'" And the next day, June 18, a four-page union tabloid printed the



GESTÃO MUNICIPALÁRIOS em LUTA

Pela Independência da classe dos trabalhadores



18 DE JUNHO DE 1996

Resolução aprovada no 1º Seminário dos servidores municipais de Volta Redonda, sobre a fração de Artur

EXPOSIÇÃO DE MOTIVOS

Desde janeiro de 1996, uma onda de provocações tem procurado cabalar o SFPMMVR e a gestão Municipais em Luta, sob a liderança de Geraldo Ribeiro procurando destruir os mesmos, como ponto de referência e trincheira de lutas dos servidores do movimento operário. Estas provocações aumentaram a partir das eleições sindicais da categoria dos servidores municipais, em novembro de 1995.

Nestas eleições, os dirigentes do SFPMMVR Sérgio Montenegro e Luiz Puello, pela primeira vez na história do SFPMMVR, articularam uma chapa da Força Sindical e desceram a bandeira nos braços do famoso frente popularista de Dalizar em busca de "parceria". Mas na verdade o que conseguiram foi acobertar um aumento salarial de 34% para os secretários em troca de misérrimo 5% para os servidores e a possibilidade de tolerarem 3 mil demissões entre os servidores ante a possibilidade da quebra da estabilidade em emprego cujo objetivo tem sido tentado sistematicamente pelo governo federal, estadual e municipal.

vergências aparentemente discutíveis antes das eleições sindicais, foram levadas a um completo antagonismo depois da posse.

Artur Bonilite Fernandes passou a organizar uma fração contra o programa Municipais em Luta com o pretexto que mesmo fora elaborado longe das massas. Ora, as massas enquanto tal são incapazes de elaborar um programa. O programa é uma herança das reivindicações históricas da classe operária e baseia-se nos quatro primeiros congressos da Tercera Internacional, o programa de Transição da IV Internacional e outros documentos importantes do movimento operário elaborados cientificamente pelas pessoas mais avançadas deste. Um programa classista não pode ser elaborado pelas "bases" com apêlidos eleitoralistas.

É demagogia afirmar que as massas cansadas pela repressão e exploração do jugo do capital podem elaborar um programa. O que se precisa é a necessidade de fusão do programa classista em consciência das massas sob a liderança de avançados e obtinidos do operário revolucionário.

A política de colaboração de classes da Frente Igualar cooptou e converteu uma camada muito grande de ativistas sindicalistas e dirigentes operários. Estes "dirigentes" traficam a ideologia da burguesia para o interior do movimento operário. Artur é produto e parte deste ambiente e busca exemplos em Filomena, Arnaldo, Vagner Barcellos, Luizinho etc... Artur e sua fração burocrática e alinhada às derrotas da classe operária em um ambiente de ataques permanentes, com escaramoças no envite para os seminaristas:

"OFENSIVA CAPITALISTA E A CRISE DE DIREÇÃO

A aplicação da "globalização" da economia no Brasil, por FICFMI e seus aliados, depende de um conjunto de reformas.

Um claro elogio a estes carreiristas e oportunistas que eles tentam imitar. Também tentam desfiliar o SFPMMVR da CUT e estão mancomunados com o comandante da Guarda Municipal, que está processando o Sindicato e instigando a luta contra o mesmo. E por isso, em nosso programa, "Municipais em Luta", insiste que filiação de guardas e policiais aos sindicatos operários é incompatível com um programa classista.

Uma reunião convocada por Geraldo e seus aliados deliberou por assembleias setoriais de base onde todas essas denúncias foram levadas e onde a fração de Artur não conseguiu eleger um delegado sequer dos que foram

convencidos com esta fração incompatível com o programa Municipais em Luta com o qual fomos eleitos e tem como um dos pontos principais a independência completa do movimento operário e portanto dos sindicatos, do estado burguês e seus aparatos estatais.

18 June 1996 bulletin prints main resolution from 13 June union conference, stating: "the affiliation of guardas and police to workers' unions is incompatible with a class program." Resolution stressed need for "complete independence of the workers movement, and therefore of the unions, from the bourgeois state and its state apparatus."

text of the main resolution of the *seminário*, which stated that "the affiliation of *guardas* and police to workers' unions is incompatible with a class program."

The class-struggle union leadership waged this struggle *politically*. The June 17 union bulletin included an editorial on "The Capitalist Offensive and the Crisis of Leadership," which states: "In addition, there is an increase in racism and male chauvinism in the context of a general offensive against the working class. But this capitalist offensive, which the fake-leftists call 'neo-liberal policy,' is in reality the ongoing crisis of capitalism, further exacerbated following the capitalist counterrevolution in the planned and collectivized economies of the USSR and East Europe. "At the same time, despite the innumerable manifestations of its struggles, the proletariat is being defeated by the politics of popular-front class collaboration and because it does not have a revolutionary leadership which fights for the end of capitalism and for socialism, a task which is only possible if the working class has its revolutionary workers party." Remember that this is in a union bulletin produced by militants that the ICL labels "trade-union opportunists"!

All of this material is available to the public. Reproductions of those union bulletins are to be found on pages 11 and 12 of our dossier *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil*, and the ICL has the full text. Now consider the statement in *WV* 671 that “here is the public advertisement for that union meeting: there is **no mention** of removing the cops from the union. Workers were not publicly mobilized for that purpose, and in fact it didn’t happen.” You don’t have to travel to Brazil to find out the truth about this—all a reader has to do is look at the material published by the ICL and at the material published by the IG to see for yourself that *WV*’s claim is a flat lie.

And what about *WV*’s statement, that “in fact it didn’t happen.” The ICL leadership knows full well, as we underlined in our recent statements, that the 19 June 1996 meeting was banned by court order. Armed police moved in to shut it down just as Ribeiro was reading the resolution that called for removal of the *guardas* from the SFPMVR. The vote was not held on June 19 but a month later, *because of the action of the capitalist state*. Yet in its sneering account, *Workers Vanguard* never mentions this fundamental fact. The ICL deliberately hides the bourgeois repression against the class-struggle unionists from its readers.

Incredibly, the ICL continues to play three-card monte with the date of the vote by the union ranks to disaffiliate the cops. “June 13? June 19? July 25?” they sarcastically asked last time, claiming, as they do again, that “it didn’t happen.” But it did happen. In addition to the responses from the IG and the LQB, we have circulated a letter from LQB member and SFPMVR union activist Marcello Carega describing the 25 July 1996 meeting that voted the removal of the police and how it was prepared.

In its previous smear, *WV* sought to hoodwink readers into believing that Geraldo and the LQB had never answered the claims in the bourgeois press that he was taking the union to court. We pointed out that Ribeiro had immediately written to *Diário do Vale*, on 26 July 1996, stating unequivocally that he opposed appealing to the courts and that in fact it was the usurper Fernandes who had brought the bosses’ “justice” system into union affairs. Now *WV* gives it another try with the same technique, alleging that Ribeiro’s letter is a fraud (“Neither the IG nor the LQB has ever published [the] letter to *Diário do Vale*,” it pretends) and that “neither had the LQB issued any propaganda directed at the working class in Volta Redonda” on these claims. Not so. The IG response to *WV* No. 669 noted that faced with the systematic distortion of his views in *Diário do Vale*, Ribeiro gave an interview to the other local paper, *Opção* (9 August 1996), which reports that he says “the city’s justice system is bourgeois and he does not believe in it.” And we noted that on 30 January 1997, Geraldo issued a declaration quoting his letter from last July that the *Diário do Vale* refused to print. This declaration was issued as a leaflet and

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Minutes of 25 July 1996 union meeting state: “We proceeded to the motion to disaffiliate the municipal guards from the union. The proposal was accepted by a majority vote of those present.”

widely distributed to workers in Volta Redonda.

This issue was also addressed in a recent (26 June 1997) leaflet by Ribeiro calling for united workers action against layoffs by the local Popular Front government. The leaflet points out that the elected SFPMVR leadership had called for “no vote for any candidate of the Popular Front,” and that he had warned that the new mayor planned mass layoffs. It also stressed the importance of the disaffiliation of the *guardas* voted by the union ranks last July, noting that the layoffs have been facilitated by the attacks of the pro-cop Fernandes clique, “which maintains itself by force in the union under the protection of the ‘justice’ system and the police.” He adds: “My lawyers wanted to resolve the question in the bourgeois courts, but even though this could have benefited me, I opposed this, since it is against our principles. We fight for class independence and it is the workers who must resolve their own problems.” Meanwhile, the response to the slanders of the ICL takes up four pages of the second issue of the LQB’s paper, *Vanguarda Operária*. This is how the LQB supposedly hasn’t issued “any propaganda directed at the working class in Volta Redonda” on these questions. Not only does *WV* simply lie about and suppress facts we have reported, it simply invents “facts” out of thin air.

***WV*’s “Irrefutable Evidence” Refuted**

This brings us to the latest of *WV*’s supposed “proofs” that Geraldo Ribeiro supposedly brought in the bourgeois courts against the union of which he was the elected president. In justifying a thug attack against Ribeiro in January, the court-installed puppet Fernandes accused Ribeiro of suing the union. As we explained in the IG answer to *WV*’s lying smear, when Geraldo inquired of his lawyers what the cases cited by Fernandes were about:

“They told Ribeiro that the cases referred to were requests for injunctions to block implementation of the court actions launched against him last July. Without his knowledge, they had been filed with the union listed as the defendant, something Ribeiro never would have permitted. When he learned

of this, Ribeiro immediately gave instructions that these cases be withdrawn, which they were, despite the vociferous objections of the lawyers, who do not share the LQB's views. This was more than four months ago, and the notice of the dropping of the cases was published in the *Diário Oficial* of the state of Rio de Janeiro. But that didn't faze the authors of *WV*'s hatchet job."

Now *WV* is forced to admit the fact that Ribeiro indeed ordered these suits to be withdrawn, yet in the next breath it claims that the appeals by the LQB and the Internationalist Group for solidarity to demand that the cops and courts keep their hands off the SFPMVR and its president were "an international diversion." Our campaign was supposedly nothing but "camouflage" to hide the fact that "*they had sued the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda in the capitalist courts.*" This is a lie, and a very dirty lie in the service of the popular front, intended to undercut solidarity in the face of the barrage of state repression against the SFPMVR and Ribeiro.

While admitting that Ribeiro had the suits withdrawn long before their article claiming that he was suing the union, the *WV* editors do not even mention his statement to the court explaining that these legal actions "were erroneously introduced as a defense in my name," and emphasizing that "I have repeatedly affirmed in public statements that the workers must place their confidence in their own class power and not in the capitalist 'justice' system. We categorically reject the intervention of the bosses' courts in the workers movement." Ribeiro stated there that "I do not participate in any case of that kind" and pointed out as well that five months previously he opposed the courts ruling even to confirm him as president of the SFPMVR. That was at the beginning of last December, and there is no mention of that important fact in the *WV* article either, even though Geraldo explained his principled stand in a letter to international supporters and in a leaflet to Volta Redonda workers.

Since *Workers Vanguard* claims to base themselves on court papers and the public record, *why is it silent about these facts?* And if the "real" purpose of the IG and LQB was to sue the union, and appeals for solidarity against repression were only a "diversion" and "camouflage," then why did Ribeiro repeatedly, both in public statements and in responses to the courts, insist on his opposition to *all* court intervention in the unions, *not only in word but also in his deeds?*

To bolster its fraud, *WV* now claims that "files in the courthouse prove the IG and LQB are lying," that Ribeiro had to know what his lawyers were doing. First, the article claims, there are "power of attorney" documents signed by Geraldo. These documents only state that the lawyers "can represent him in any trial, jurisdiction or government office, in the entire national territory," saying nothing about

these cases. Secondly, the article charges Ribeiro with "concealing" a third case. How is he supposed to have concealed this? Artur Fernandes referred to two cases, *WV* referred to the same two cases. The "third case" was a continuation of the second, and when Ribeiro instructed his lawyers to withdraw all such cases, it was withdrawn.

Then comes *WV*'s supposed KO punch, claiming: "In order to back up Ribeiro's claim that the capitalist state should recognize him as the legitimate leader of the municipal workers union, *he submitted union bank statements, account books, statutes and minutes of union meetings to the bourgeois court as 'evidence'!*" This, too, is a lie, and a very telling one, because here *WV* is *accusing Ribeiro of actions that were in fact the result of the court suits by Artur Fernandes & Co. to oust Ribeiro as president of the union.*

The *WV* article purports to provide "irrefutable evidence that the LQB dragged the SFPMVR union through the bourgeois courts," when in fact it was the pro-cop element Fernandes (the original source of many of *WV*'s lies) and his camarilla who appealed to the bourgeois courts to remove Ribeiro from his elected position and to shut down the union meeting that was to disaffiliate the police. In the entire *WV* article, there is no mention of these fundamental facts. The article asks rhetorically: "how could his lawyers get their hands on the union's financial records and other sensitive internal material and append them to Ribeiro's lawsuits unless he himself turned them over to the lawyers?" The answer is simple: *these materials were demanded in the court suits by Fernandes' flunkey Sebastião de Fátima Batista Passos which carried out the judicial coup against Ribeiro.*

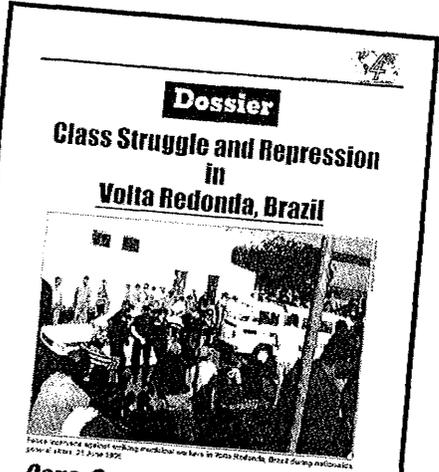
The first of those suits (detailed in our Brazil dossier), case no. 30.421, accused Ribeiro of violating the union statutes by calling the 19 June 1996 union assembly, and initiated court proceedings to remove him as union president. The second suit, case no. 30.545, introduced on 18 July 1996, estab-

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Cops, Courts Out of the Unions

An Internationalist Group pamphlet
February 1997

\$2

lished a "jurisdictional receivership" by the courts over the union, with Fernandes acting as the administrator, and ordered the removal of Ribeiro as president of the SFPMVR. The suits press charges against Geraldo related to the payment for union bulletins, including the 11 April 1996 bulletin reprinting the statement by Mumia Abu-Jamal, "Police: Part of, or Enemies of, Labor?" As part of his defense against this frame-up, Ribeiro provided his lawyers with copies of bills showing that the suit against him used crudely falsified bills as "evidence." The suits against Ribeiro called on the court to rule on the union statutes, which were quoted extensively. As for the SFPMVR financial records, bank accounts, etc., Ribeiro never had these. In fact they were demanded in the first Fernandes/Passos suit which sought (and got) a court order to seize the union's books, calling for "granting a preliminary order for a financial investigation of the books of the Union Body which are in the possession of the accountant Vera Lúcia Nunes Ferreira."

Here *WV* is falsely accusing Ribeiro of turning over union records that in fact came from Fernandes & Co. or which were demanded in the court suits these pro-cop elements introduced to suspend and then remove Ribeiro as president of the SFPMVR, the suits that *WV* never talks about! It was Fernandes, not Ribeiro, who "invited the class enemy to scrutinize the SFPMVR's internal documents" and "appealed to the capitalist state to determine who should be the legitimate representative of the municipal workers." And like Fernandes, *the ICL accepts the verdict of the capitalist state*, declaring with great bombast and even glee that this pro-cop usurper "controls the union." Perhaps they would like to tell this to union militants angry over how Fernandes abandoned workers who participated in a recent work action. This court-installed puppet is still in the union hall because of the diktats of the bourgeoisie, not the will of the union membership. In every respect, the ICL's "irrefutable evidence" shows precisely the opposite of what it pretends.

In sneering at "the IG's lame claim that Ribeiro didn't know what his lawyers were doing," *WV* acts as if lawyers always and only do what their clients want. This is hardly the experience of communists historically. For those who do not have access to party lawyers, and even for those who do, Lenin's injunction (in a January 1905 letter to imprisoned Bolsheviks in Moscow) applies: "it is better to be wary of lawyers and not to trust them." Lenin emphasized that even when liberal lawyers were defending and praising their clients, they did not understand their revolutionary convictions and thus were liable to misrepresent them.

Let us return to Ribeiro's action in December 1996, after

DECLARAÇÃO

Declaro, que quando da publicação do DIÁRIO OFICIAL DO DIA 03/12/1996, que dizia o seguinte:

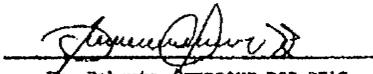
"MGA e autor e réu face a desistência homologada nos autos 30545/96, ainda pretende postular e dar seguimento ao presente feito. Prazo: 05 dias, o silêncio implicará em concordância com a desistência".

Na ocasião durante o período de 05 (cinco) dias, sendo um dos advogados de GERALDO RIBEIRO, insisti com o mesmo que face a decisão de Sebastião de Fátima Passos (processo nº 30545) que pedia a cassação de Geraldo da Presidência do SFPMVR, depois de anulá-lo, seria a grande chance de Geraldo processá-lo por omissão e difamação e reaver a Presidência do SFPMVR por meio de uma sentença judicial.

Por Geraldo Ribeiro foi intransigente e disse que era contra quaisquer intervenção da Justiça para resolver divergências entre trabalhadores.

Sendo assim, desisti de ser seu advogado.

Barra Mansa, 19 de julho de 1997.


Dr. Roberto HENRIQUE DOS REIS

Letter from former lawyer of Geraldo Ribeiro, Roberto Henrique dos Reis, stating that Ribeiro refused offer of court to rule on validity of union assembly that confirmed him as president of Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR). Ribeiro insisted "that he was against any intervention by the justice system to resolve differences among workers." Because of Ribeiro's principled opposition to court intervention, the lawyer resigned as his representative.

Fernandes & Co. were forced to drop their case no. 30.545 for lack of any evidence for their trumped-up charges. Ribeiro refused the court's offer to rule on the validity of the July 25 union assembly that reaffirmed him as president of the SFPMVR and voted the disaffiliation of the police from the union. Again, if Ribeiro was "appeal[ing] to the capitalist state to determine who should be the legitimate representative of the municipal workers," as *WV* claims, why didn't he accept this offer? The ICL leaders can't explain that, which is why they must vigilantly disappear this fact. In order to do so, they doctor quotes from Ribeiro by chopping a sentence in half, cutting out the reference to this *action*, not just "fine words," in a 31 December 1996 letter by him and SFPMVR activist Marcello Carega to unionists and others who have defended them internationally (the letter is reproduced in our dossier on *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil*).

Ribeiro's action in December demolishes the ICL leaders' elaborate lying construct. But you don't have to take our word for it—here is what Ribeiro's then lawyer has written:

"I declare that at the time of the publication in the *Diário Oficial* [Official Gazette] of 3 December 1996, which stated the following:

'In view of the approved withdrawal of case no. 30.545/96, the plaintiff and defendant must each state whether he continues to lay claim and pursue the present lawsuit. Deadline: five days, silence indicating agreement with the withdrawal.'

"On that occasion, during the period of 05 (five) days, being one of the lawyers of Geraldo Ribeiro, I insisted to him that in view of the withdrawal by Sebastião de Fátima Passos (case no. 30.545) which called for the removal of Geraldo from the presidency of the SFPMVR after slandering him, that this was the big chance for Geraldo to sue him for slander and defamation and to retake the presidency of the SFPMVR by means of a judicial sentence.

"But Geraldo Ribeiro was intransigent and said that he was against any intervention of the judicial system to resolve differences among workers.

"This being the case, I withdrew as his lawyer."

[signed] Roberto Henrique dos Reis, 19 July 1997

ICL Leaders' Tissue of Lies and Smears

The ICL leaders stick together their patchwork of distortions and fabrications with a whole lot of smears, slanders and mud. Thus they have several times now referred to Ribeiro as an "ex-cop." Once again, this comes from Artur Fernandes, who accused Geraldo of "demagogy" for leading a campaign to disaffiliate the police from the union when he was a former cop. The fact is that Geraldo was for a short period in the early 1980s a municipal *guarda*. For the last dozen years he has been a printer and a leader of the Municipal Workers Union since its inception. He has led the union in six strikes. In a 1988 general strike Ribeiro was subjected to a vicious beating with riot sticks by the military police while he was defending a strike barricade on the picket line. And he has led a campaign to remove the cops from the union in order to defend the class independence of the workers movement, the fight that the ICL leaders fled from.

If Ribeiro's background would disqualify him, perhaps ICL leaders would care to comment on the fact that Marshal Tukhachevsky, who rose to become commander of the Red Army and deputy Soviet minister of defense before being murdered in Stalin's purges, was a lieutenant in the tsarist army in World War I. In the past *WV* rightly published articles hailing Marshal Tukhachevsky, but now...?

Then there is the following gem, a classic in the genre of dirty innuendo and mudslinging. *WV* writes that since Norden and Negrete were "quite exclusively in control of our contact with the LQB prior to January 1996, the question must be asked, *did they know about the cops* [in the municipal workers union] *and keep that secret from the party.*" Previously they had similarly "asked" if Norden and Negrete perhaps secretly wrote the MEL program; they also voiced "hefty suspicions" (in the charges against Norden and Stamberg in their frame-up expulsion "trial") of "political collaboration with non-members" and even an "outside source of political funding." The idea that Brazil was an exclusive preserve is pure fiction; it is belied by the fact that Brazil together with South Africa was repeatedly singled out as one of the ICL's top priorities in the period of 1994 to 1996. There were numerous extensive reports by Norden and Negrete to the rest of the ICL leadership on discussions with LM. These are cited in the "Brazil Report for the IEC" by Negrete (21 December 1995), as well as in "On Relations with Luta Metalúrgica (Brazil)" and "Once Again on Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica," by Jan Norden

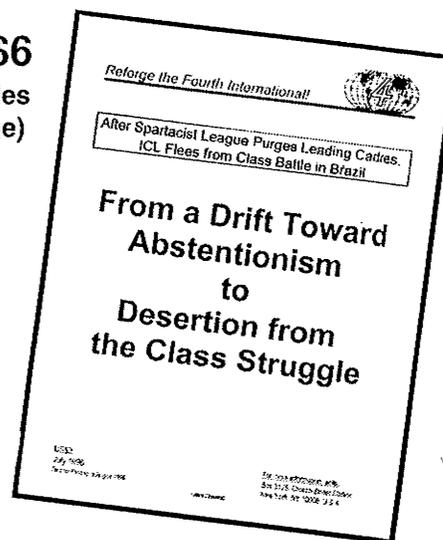
(17 April and 5 May 1996). For that matter, the supposed discoverer of the LM/LQB's alleged "trade-union opportunism" in 1996 had made an extensive visit to Brazil in 1995, together with Negrete, a trip from which there were dozens of pages of reports, all duly circulated to the IEC.

As for supposedly knowing about the presence of cops in the SFPMVR and keeping this a secret from the party, not only is this a paranoid fantasy, it was *Negrete* who first learned about the cops at the January 1996 IEC meeting, and immediately initiated a discussion about this question with Luta Metalúrgica representative Cerezo (who said that LM was committed to removing the *guardas* from the union). This is attested to in 25 January 1995 reports on the conversation by both Negrete and John B. What's next? Will the ICL leadership now "discover" that the party leadership had been harboring "nests of spies and traitors" who for years were allegedly secretly plotting against the party in alliance with imperialism (or in this case the cops)? Their whole scenario has a distinct quality of "déjà vu all over again," in the immortal words of Yogi Berra.

This brings us to the charge of running a "wrecking operation," and an inside-outside job at that. *WV* writes: "Norden & Co. ran a wrecking operation inside the party, engineered their

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own expulsions and now run a wrecking operation against us from outside the party." "Trotskyite splitters and wreckers," anyone? How exactly did we carry out such a "wrecking operation inside the party" and engineer our own expulsions? By "declining the opportunity to form a faction" to "change the party's program and perspectives," *WV* says. No, what we did was calmly answer the frenzied smears and bureaucratic sanctions against us, refusing to be cowed by them. We have consistently defended the historic Spartacist program and fought to implement those perspectives, while the new ICL leadership abandoned that program in practice at a key moment.

As for running a wrecking operation against the ICL from the outside, and rushing to form "an anti-Spartacist bloc" with the LQB (as claimed in *WV* 669), nothing of the sort is true. We have repeatedly defended the ICL against anti-Spartacist slanderers such as the picket-line crossers of the Bolshevik Tendency and others of their ilk. What we did was continue the fraternal relations with the LQB and continue to support the struggle for cops out of the unions, a key element of the Trotskyist program for working-class independence from the capitalist state. It is the ICL leaders who are wrecking the party with their escalating vendetta, miseducating the membership in the anti-Marxist methods of cynicism and lies. It is they who are beginning to revise the program on key issues such as the Russian question, abandoning in practice the Trotskyist understanding of the contradictory character of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and on the popular front.

We pointed out in a May 5 Internationalist Group leaflet in Mexico that the Grupo Espartaquista de México is now denying there is a *popular front* around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Not only has this been a position of the ICL since 1988, before the GEM was formed, this question has come to the fore in the recent Mexican elections in which the PRD emerged as the main opposition party and Cárdenas himself was elected mayor of Mexico City. In the 1994 Mexican elections, the GEM put out a supplement warning working people and opponents of imperialism not to be hoodwinked by the Cardenista popular front. However, for this vote, in which there has been a popular-frontist upsurge as never before in Mexico, neither the GEM nor *Workers Vanguard* put out any propaganda on the issue. Instead, they issued an *Espartaco* supplement denouncing...the Internationalist Group and the LQB. As the ICL's perspectives become increasingly narrowed to pursuing its dirty vendetta, it is progressively abandoning the tasks of any tendency



Fernando Maia/O Globo
Landless peasants demonstrating in Brasilia display list of their comrades murdered by the Military Police at Eldorado dos Carajás, February 1996.

in the courts as a club against the class-struggle militants. And in this battle, the ICL leaders declare all sides equally "squalid." This is their response to the question in the LQB's 24 June letter to the ICL: "Which side are you on?"

Neutrality in such a fight is itself a betrayal, but the ICL's "neutrality" is phony, for in practice they dish out the lies from the pro-police elements, the popular-front government and the bourgeois press. Who benefits from such actions? Only the class enemy.

In addition, the ICL leaders have reached a new low in blaming the victims for repression. The latest *WV* article claims that *the LQB and the Internationalist Group* "helped make" Fernandes' operation a court-rigged outfit, when in fact Geraldo Ribeiro and the LQB have been the target of a concerted campaign of police and judicial repression, as well as thug attacks. At the same time, *WV* describes the LQB and IG as "unscrupulous and dangerous hustlers." Readers of *WV* and *The Internationalist* will recall the ICL leaders' earlier claim that the IG is "for sale" and its comparison of the fight for cops out of the Volta Redonda union with the Stalinist adventure of the 1927 Canton Commune. As the ICL now repeats the lies spewed out by the popular front, the steel bosses and their agents in Volta Redonda, who have long sought to destroy the communists of the LM/LQB, they are trying to isolate these Trotskyist comrades and stop people from defending them against continuing repression and assault.

The precedents for this kind of dirty operation are well-known, from the Healyites acting in concert with the bour-

geois media against British miners leader Scargill to the BT's smear campaign against the Spartacist League calling the SL violent gangsters at a time when we were suing the FBI over its description of the SL as terrorist. Since the ICL leaders have traveled so far down this well-travelled road, one has to ask: what is their next step?

The claim of the ICL leaders that they are defending Marxist principle is manifestly false. Their vicious vendetta is driven by factional frenzy, and a desperate search for an after-the-fact alibi to salvage their badly damaged reputations. They believe that they are accountable to no one, that they can lie and spread smears without being exposed. They think they can urge a difficult and dangerous struggle on comrades and then abandon it and them when the stakes are rising, and it will have no political consequences. But they are wrong. A communist party true to the program of the Lenin and Trotsky is answerable to the revolutionary interests of the working class. It wins its role as leader of the exploited and oppressed through its intervention in the class struggle, where Bolshevik cadres are tested and steeled. In fleeing from a key class battle, alleging that the danger to the vanguard was too great, and then justifying that betrayal with a welter of lies, the ICL leadership is undermining the struggle to forge that leadership, the vanguard party of the proletariat that is the key to world socialist revolution.

What we are seeing is the political degeneration of the tendency which for more than three decades upheld the banner of revolutionary Trotskyism. It reflects the pressure of the capitalist offensive, buying into the lies of bourgeois triumphalism and seeking to find a protected niche in the "new world order." The ICL leadership's recent actions would gut the historic Spartacist program, turning it into empty paper. They increasingly treat the principles and rules of the Fourth International with cynical disregard. This political degeneration is what is behind *WV's* substitution of mudslinging, character assassination and lies for Marxist political debate. This is behind the ICL's growing revisions on the key issues of the Russian question and the popular front, and its shameful actions as purveyors of the lies of the popular front and its agents against the Trotskyists. The smears and slanders are the handmaidens of a deeply unprincipled course, which can only be fought by building an authentically Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard in struggle against all those who drag the principles and program of the Fourth International into the swamp of class collaboration.

Internationalist Group
25 July 1997

Postscript...

continued from page 44

cause of Ribeiro's refusal on principle to sue the union that he resigned as Geraldo's lawyer.

Geraldo Ribeiro has stated repeatedly, from the beginning, that he is opposed to all court intervention in the unions. He has done so in leaflets, on the radio, in statements to the courts, as well as to international supporters. If Geraldo Ribeiro

GUARDA MUNICIPAL
NO 1º SEMINÁRIO DOS TRABALHADORES FUNCIONÁRIOS
PÚBLICOS DO MUNICÍPIO DE U.R.
DECIDIU QUE:
ESTA DE ACORDO COM O PROGRAMA MUNICIPAL
EM LUTA QUANDO ESTE AFIRMA QUE:
(LE O PROLETARIADO)
PORANTO TOMOU A SEGUNTA DECISÃO:
PRIMEIRO SERÁ REALIZADA UMA CESTA AS TODAS
AS GUARDAS MUNICIPAIS SINDICALIZADAS
QUE OS MESMOS NAS MÃOS PERTENCERÃO
AO QUADRO DE ASSOCIADOS DO S.F.M.V.R.
O GRUPO VOTOU POR UNANIMIDADE
(1 A VOTO CONTRA) APROVADO

ICL claims that 13 June 1996 *seminário* (conference) of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR) did not vote for removing *guardas* (police) from the union. The ICL lies. Above, excerpt from minutes of that union *seminário*: "A letter will be sent to all the unionized municipal guards informing them that they no longer belong to the membership of the SFPMVR." Passed with one vote against.

wanted to sue the union, as the ICL dishonestly claims, then why would he have made the lawyers withdraw the requests for injunctions? Why did he refuse the court's offer last December to rule in his favor?

WV says that if Geraldo signed power of attorney papers, he must have known what his lawyers were doing. *WV* claims that the fact that Ribeiro didn't know about these legal actions for seven months is "Not possible." But it is true, so why isn't it possible? Underlying *WV's* claim is the idea that lawyers usually do what their clients want them to do, which is very far from the case when the clients are working-class and poor people, let alone revolutionaries. Lawyers are agents of the courts, and behind *WV's* haughty remarks is a form of confidence in the bourgeois state.

* * *

What is going on here is that the ICL leadership committed a betrayal in Brazil, which they are now brazenly trying to cover up. The ICL correctly encouraged the LQB to undertake a fight to remove the police from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union, and then when the struggle reached the boiling point, the ICL leaders told the LQB to "pull our hands out of the boiling water," pull out of the union leadership and even pull out of town. When the LQB refused this shameful request and continued the fight to remove cops from the union, the ICL broke off fraternal relations and pulled out. While waxing ironic about our "passion" for defending the Brazilian comrades, the ICL leaders are out of control in a real frenzy to defame the Brazilian militants *in order to alibi the documented fact that the ICL stabbed them in the back and deserted this key class battle.*

Much as they have tried, the ICL leaders have not been able to blot out the fact that they abandoned the struggle in Volta Redonda in the midst of the fight to remove the cops from the SFPMVR, so now they try to pretend that it never

happened. In answer to *WV* 671's claim that the call for the 19 June 1996 meeting--the day after they broke relations with the LQB--had "nothing about cops," we pointed out that the first agenda point was "Report of the resolutions of the 1st *seminário* [conference] of the SFPMPVR" and that "the resolutions passed at that *seminário* called for removal of the police." Now *WV* 672 shrieks "No they didn't!" and repeats that "workers were not mobilized for that purpose, and in fact it didn't happen." In fact, the workers were publicly mobilized for that purpose, and in fact it did happen.

The ICL leaders have become so blinded in their frenzied vendetta that they believe they can simply decree an alternate reality. Unfortunately for them, the public record shows what really happened. In the first place, there was a whole campaign by the union leadership to mobilize the ranks for the disaffiliation of the police. One of the reasons the ICL leaders hate our February 1997 Brazil dossier (*Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil*) is that it reproduces materials they sought to suppress. Thus, on page 10 of the dossier we show a union bulletin of 6 May 1996, which the ICL leadership translated but did not distribute to the mem-

bership. This bulletin is headlined "The Rank and File Is Deciding: Police Out of the Union" and reports: "A meeting of the [municipal] garage workers voted unanimously: The police should not be part of, and should not interfere with, the SFPMPVR or the workers movement in general. Because they are the instrument and armed fist of the bourgeoisie."

That bulletin published a schedule for elections of workplace delegates to the union *seminário*. Even *WV*'s favorite source, the steel bosses' paper *Diário do Vale* (17 May 1996), reported that in early June, "the union will hold a conference where it will discuss the removal of the *guardas* from its membership, Geraldo Ribeiro said yesterday." And it did. The main resolution from the *seminário* declared that "the affiliation of *guardas* and police to workers' unions is incompatible with a class program." *WV* rants that this was from the "preamble" and came in the midst of "more than a dozen paragraphs of economist verbiage." It is bizarre and grossly dishonest that they call "economist" a highly political text that, among other things, refers to "the Transitional Program of the Fourth International" and the "counterrevolution in the planned and collectivized economies of the USSR and East Europe," and calls for "a revolutionary workers party which

fights for the end of capitalism and for socialism" while stressing that "this party must be internationalist with a multiracial composition of men, women and youth."

The main resolution, quoted above, provided the overall political motivation for the motions passed during the ten agenda points. The question of the municipal *guardas* was point 7 on the *seminário* agenda. And as we reported in our dossier, "a motion was overwhelmingly passed calling for the ouster of the *guardas*." That motion, as recorded in the *seminário* minutes, voted that "a letter will be sent to all the unionized municipal *guardas* explaining that they will no longer be part of the membership of the SFPMPVR." The motion was passed with one vote against. Will *WV* claim this didn't happen as well? We are reproducing this point from the minutes of the June 13 SFPMPVR *seminário* so that readers can see for themselves.

And what of the 19 June 1996 union membership assembly? We have already cited the 28 June union bulletin which reported that, in defiance of a court order, as the cops moved in to shut down that meeting, "Geraldo read the resolutions of the 1st *seminário*, and among the main points is: To disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* from the SFPMPVR, because they are not part of the working class...." The front page of this bulletin is reproduced in our Brazil dossier. But *WV* still pretends that this didn't happen either. So we will cite a source their reporter had in his hands (because it is part of the court papers he "personally examined" in Volta Redonda). The court suit by Fernandes's flunkey Sebastião Passos includes the minutes of the meeting of Fernandes' court-rigged "executive board" held on 27 June 1996. In a bill of particulars against union president Ribeiro, the minutes state:



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dos poderes executivo, legislativo, administração direta, indireta,
autarquias, fundações e empresa de economia mista. (S.F.P.M.V.R.)
CQC: 31.847.734/0001-34 - Tel. (0243) 43.3280 - Fundado em 26 de dezembro de 1988

Volta Redonda, 08 de Setembro de 1997.

DECLARAÇÃO

Eu Marcelo Lázaro Bendia, diretor do SFPMPVR eleito para o quadriênio de Novembro de 1995 a Novembro de 1998, participante do 1º Seminário do SFPMPVR, realizado em Quatis, (RJ) no dia 13/06/96.

No Seminário foi discutida uma pauta que foi apresentada num boletim - convocação de Delegados. No item Guarda Municipal, fui o único dos delegados presentes no Seminário que votei contra a exclusão das Guardas Municipais - como núcleo do SFPMPVR, embora hoje estou refletindo sobre isso.

Inclusive fui demitido ilegalmente no dia 11/07/97, não sei se foi como punição ou não.

Sem Mais


 Marcelo Lázaro Bendia

The 13 June 1996 SFPMPVR seminário didn't vote for removal of the police from union, according to ICL? Wrong. Above, letter from the one union director who voted against:

"I, Marcelo Lázaro Bendia, director of the SFPMPVR elected for the period of November 1995 to November 1998, participated in the 1st *seminário* of the SFPMPVR which was held in Quatis (Rio de Janeiro), on 13 June 1996.

"In the *seminário*, an agenda was discussed which had been presented in a bulletin convoking the delegates. On the agenda point concerning the Municipal Guards, I was the only one of the delegates present in the *seminário* who voted against excluding the Municipal Guards as members of the SFPMPVR. However, today I am reconsidering this.

"In addition, I was illegally fired on 11 July 1997, I'm not sure if this was as a punishment or not."

"It was also public knowledge that the general assembly called by the union president on 19 June 1996, at the Municipal Hall, despite being canceled judicially, decided to disobey judicial orders and at the beginning of the assembly presented the following proposals: To disaffiliate the municipal *guarda*, disobeying 'Article 6' of the statute...."

This supposed violation of the union rule that membership is open to all city workers (the Fernandes clique calls cops "workers") was then cited as one of the reasons for the "suspension" of union president Geraldo Ribeiro, originally decreed by the court on 19 June 1996. Will the ICL leaders continue the lie that "it never happened" to cover their shameful desertion the day before the June 19 meeting?

We have shown that *WV*'s claim that at the 13 June 1996 union *seminário* "the Ribeiro/LQB faction did *not* call to remove the cops" is false. We have shown that *WV*'s claims that the agenda for the 19 June 1996 meeting did not deal with the question of removing the cops from the union and that "workers were not publicly mobilized for that purpose, and in fact it didn't happen" are also false. Now *WV* 672 pretends that there was no vote at the 25 July 1996 union assembly to remove the cops. This, too, is demonstrably false.

After the 19 June 1996 meeting was dissolved by armed police, the LQB comrades used leaflets, workplace gatherings and a petition signed by hundreds of workers to mobilize for the union meeting of 25 July 1996, held despite police intimidation, as the Brazilian comrades have powerfully described in letters published in *The Internationalist* No. 3. At that meeting a motion was passed to disaffiliate the police from the SFPMVR. An excerpt of the minutes of that meeting is printed on page 14 of our Brazil dossier, stating: "We proceeded to the motion to disaffiliate the municipal guards from the union. The proposal was accepted by a majority vote of those present."

We want to call attention to a particular aspect of this slander published by *Workers Vanguard*. We are not dealing here with a reckless disregard for the truth, but a conscious, deliberate lie. When *WV*'s editors wrote their latest fabrication they had in their possession the minutes of the 25 July 1996 meeting showing in black and white that this vote was held. How do we know?

Because an ICL spokesman requested them, and we sent them to him, even before our Brazil dossier was published.

* * *

A side point, but a telling one as to the cynicism of the ICL leadership: The leaflet that the ICL distributed to the CUT labor congress says "labor donated" at the bottom. Those who have closely followed *WV*'s campaign of defamation will recall the vicious smear a year ago when they implied that our bulletin on the ICL's purge of leading cadres and its desertion from the struggle in Brazil was printed by scab labor, when in fact our bulletin said it was labor donated! But consistency is no concern of the ICL leaders.

* * *

In an article on Mexico in issue No. 672 (devoted to a polemic against the IG), *WV* repeats the smear that the Brazilian comrades are trade-union opportunists and that "the LQB went on to drag this union [the SFPMVR] through the capitalist courts." Wait a minute. Who was dragged through the courts? Who was repeatedly beaten, including in one instance while Artur Fernandes' right-hand man held a gun on him? It was Geraldo Ribeiro. Who was dragged in handcuffs to the police station after military police fired a shotgun in the air? Marcello Carega. Who was "booted out" of the union hall by court order after the popular front mayor sent cops to shut down a union meeting? The LQB comrades.

The ICL leaders not only try to obscure this but are running a smear operation denouncing as a "fraud" and a "diversion" the international effort to defend the LQB and anti-racist unionists in Volta Redonda against this repression. Words have meaning--the ICL leadership is actively *opposing* defense of the Brazilian militants. Make no mistake: the ICL leaders' drive to isolate and destroy the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil and the Internationalist Group weighs in the balance of the class struggle--on the bosses' side. Those who seek to advance the proletarian struggle for socialist revolution must reject and expose this dirty smear campaign.

Internationalist Group
1 September 1997

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A Postscript to the July 25 Internationalist Group Statement

ICL Takes Slander Campaign to Brazilian Labor Congress

The national congress of the Brazilian Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT--United Workers Federation) labor federation was held in São Paulo this August in the aftermath of "strikes" by the murderous Military Police across Brazil. The MPs were demanding more money for carrying out the bourgeoisie's dirty work of repressing workers, blacks and landless peasants. From CUT leader Vicentinho, linked to the reformist Workers Party (PT), through virtually all of the "far left," the tendencies at the labor congress had supported the bonapartist cop revolt. One particularly cynical outfit, the "Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista" (LBI), called for "red unions" of the Military Police! At the same time, it presented theses co-signed by one of its leaders and Artur Fernandes, the pro-police stooge who has been point man for repression by the capitalist cops and courts against class-struggle unionists in Volta Redonda.

In sharp opposition to the betrayal of the reformist and centrist left, a team of militants from the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil was outside the CUT congress selling the new issue of the LQB's newspaper *Vanguarda Operária*. Its lead article calls for revolutionary opposition to the cop "strikes," labels the police "the armed fist of the bourgeoisie," and demands the expulsion of cops of all kinds from the unions. The LQB is the *only* tendency in the Brazilian left to uphold this crucial position, which is key to the fight for workers' class independence and against racist, anti-labor police terror. Their tenacious and principled fight for this fundamental principle has earned them the enmity of the popular front and a barrage of judicial actions against them.

Two representatives of the International Communist League showed up at the CUT congress on August 17. They came to distribute a leaflet in Portuguese that says not a word on the burning issue of opposing the CUT's support for cop "strikes," nor against the popular-frontist left which ties the workers and oppressed to the bourgeoisie, nor against the LBI advisors for the pro-cop provocateur Artur Fernandes. Instead, the leaflet smeared the LQB and comrade Geraldo Ribeiro as engaging in a "squalid struggle for control" of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR), charging the LQB and the Internationalist Group with "class betrayals" and sneering about a phony "union 'struggle'" in Volta Redonda. The leaflet was a translation of the latest smear attack on the Internationalist Group and the LQB in *Workers Vanguard* No. 672 (8 August 1997).

The previous issue of *WV* (No. 671, 11 July 1997) claimed that "the Ribeiro faction in the union was every bit as squalid as the pro-cop faction led by Artur Fernandes." On one side is Fernandes, his armed cop cohorts and the bourgeois courts who installed him. On the other side are the revolutionary

workers of the LQB and the class-struggle unionists, led by the legitimately elected union leader Ribeiro, who fought to remove cops from the union. Because of that fight they have been the object of repeated acts of cop repression, gangster violence and no less than seven court actions against them, including by the police commander and the Popular Front city government. In the face of all this, they defied the courts and cops in voting to oust the *guardas* (police) from the SFPMVR.

Yet *WV* says both sides are the same. *This is a betrayal and a cover-up for the class enemy*. And as we have pointed out, the neutrality is phony: the ICL leaders have retailed one smear after another against the LQB from the mouth of Fernandes and the bourgeois press.

At the CUT congress, as if to display their tacit bloc with the LBI against the Brazilian Trotskyists, the ICL representatives hung around the LBI's literature table for many hours of amicable discussion. This table was quite openly the command post for the LBI's dirty operation inside the congress based on the "theses" co-signed by Artur Fernandes.

* * *

So, once again, let's take a look at the latest smears from *WV*'s slander mill of supposed spectacular "revelations" against the IG and LQB.

First of all, readers should note that while *Workers Vanguard* obscenely gloats that Geraldo Ribeiro was "booted out" of the union hall, it has sought to disappear the fact that this was carried out by the jackboot of police repression. *One article after another failed to mention that armed police shut down the 19 June 1996 union meeting, imposing a court order that initiated a judicial coup to oust Ribeiro from his elected position*. This means that anyone reading *Workers Vanguard* would have no idea of the real course of the struggle in Volta Redonda.

WV first claimed that the LQB was suing the union, on the basis of claims by Fernandes and the LBI. Not only did Ribeiro *not* sue the union, when he learned of the requests for injunctions his then lawyers had filed, he immediately instructed the lawyers to withdraw them, which was done, as *WV* is now forced to admit. *WV* doesn't mention: 1) that this occurred months before their phony exposé; nor do they mention 2) his statement to the court explaining that those legal actions had been erroneously introduced in his name and that he was categorically opposed to bringing the courts into the unions; nor do they mention, 3) that last December, when the court offered to rule on the validity of the union membership assembly that reaffirmed Geraldo Ribeiro as union president, he refused the court's offer; nor that 4) his ex-lawyer confirms in a signed statement that this is what happened, and it was be-

continued on page 41

International Outcry Against Brazil Witchhunt

Unionists and defenders of workers' rights from five continents have reacted with outrage to a Brazilian court's order for "search and seizure," including the use of "police force," of a leaflet by the Class Struggle Caucus (CLC - Comitê de Luta Classista). The CLC was initiated by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil and includes members of several trade unions in the city of Volta Redonda, site of Latin America's largest steel mill. The program of the Caucus is printed on page 29 of this pamphlet

The injunction against the CLC also specifically named Geraldo Ribeiro, who since being elected president of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR) in late 1995 has been the object of a vendetta by the capitalist courts and cops. The reason: Ribeiro and other class-struggle activists led a fight to remove police from the unions, resulting in the union meeting of 25 July 1996 voting to disaffiliate "municipal guards" from the SFPMVR. Ribeiro was also prosecuted by the Popular Front city government for leading a campaign against the racist firing of a black woman worker.

The latest repression is an attempt to stop the CLC from denouncing the looting of workers' pension funds by a "legal mafia" in a country where wages and retirement benefits are at starvation level for huge parts of the working class, including municipal workers. When the court injunction issued in early September lapsed, the lawyers who launched the attack on the class-struggle unionists obtained another "search and seizure" court order against the CLC, and are now threatening criminal action as well as a civil suit.

This juridical assault on class-struggle unionists has been met with an outcry of protest from Brazil to South Africa, El Salvador and the U.S. In Volta Redonda itself, the hotel and restaurant workers union noted "the deliberate intention of infringing on workers' organization as occurred for several years under the Military Dictatorship."

P.1



International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union

Local 10 400 NORTH POINT, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94133 • 776-8100

Dale Kelly
SECRETARY-Treasurer

PRESIDENT
Lawrence Thibeaux

VICE PRESIDENT
Tony Winstead

November 6, 1997

Mr. Geraldo Ribeiro
Luta Metalurgica/SFPMVR
Av. Lucas Evangelista No. 418, Sala 308
Bairro Aterrado - CEP 27 295-320
Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

Dear Brother Ribeiro:

We are greatly concerned that government repression in Brazil is continuing against you and activists in your union, the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union. After a visit this summer by stevedore union representatives for the port of Santos, it became apparent to us in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union that workers who dare to defend their unions and social conditions are being targeted by the Brazilian government.

Last year we wrote a letter to governor Alencar protesting the government's intervention to remove you as president, even though you were democratically elected by your membership. Why? Because you played a central role in carrying out the will of your membership to disaffiliate the guardas (police) from your union. As we stated then and reiterate now, we support your principled struggle. Police have been banned from membership in our union since they killed workers in the 1934 Maritime Strike. And today, the brutal killings of street children in Brazil by police don't go unnoticed here.

Witchhunt, using laws from the 1940 Class Struggle

VIA FAX:

November 14, 1997

To: Geraldo Ribeiro and the CLC

SEIU Local 399, representing 16,000 workers, sends its solidarity against the new state repression directed against you. A year ago we declared our solidarity with your fight for a union independent of the state, and pointed out that we have had our members attacked by the police at union protests and know the police are not neutral in these issues. We also joined in your struggle against racism, which our union, largely composed of immigrant workers, has also experienced first hand.

Now you are under attack once again in the eighth legal action against you. This is an attempt to use laws from the military dictatorship to censor and silence the voice of union activists, including the legitimate elected president of the Volta Redonda municipal workers union who has been the victim of court intervention, armed police shutting down union meetings and repeated acts of repression because of the struggles he has led.

We protest the court order to seize your leaflets, which is a clear attack on the rights of all workers. We further protest the treat to seize your belongings and the outrageous threat to demand the names of all the activist who exercised their rights by publishing leaflets to inform the workers and defend their interests. All workers must stand together against such attempts to intimidate and silence those who fight for the rights of labor.

We join in demanding: No to anti-union repression! Unconditionally drop all charges against the CLC and Geraldo Ribeiro! Courts hands off the workers' rights!





SACCAWU

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMERCIAL CATERING AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION

HEAD OFFICE
1542 Cavell
A. Centre Bld
Johannesburg
P.O. Box 2001
Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 337-1109
Tel: (011) 337-2400
E-Mail: saccawu@ia.net



ASOCIACION SALVADOREÑA DE TRABAJADORES DE TELECOMUNICACIONES

EL PODER DE LA ASOCIACION RESIDE EN LA UNIDAD DE LOS TRABAJADORES

SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR, C.A. 09 de octubre de 1997

Grupo Internacionalista
Presente

Reciben un solidario y fraternal saludo de todos y cada uno de los trabajadores de las Telecomunicaciones de El Salvador,

Como clase trabajadora en el Area de las Telecomunicaciones hemos recibido su atención con gran sorpresa y preocupación en el sentido que pareciera que algunos Gobiernos nacionales y municipales continúan ignorando y violando los derechos humanos más elementales, como es el derecho que todo trabajador tiene a organizarse, tanto en El Salvador, como en los Estados Unidos y Brasil.

Por lo tanto, condenamos toda esa nueva escalada de...

30 October, 1997

**GERALDO RIBEIRO
CLC - COMITE
DO THE INTER
NEW YORK**

FAX:
Dear Cde Ribeiro

It is with g
organisation

These attac
suffered

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS



7 Rileah Street
Car. Frederik
Johannesburg
2000

HEAD OFFICE

URGENT!!!

P.O. Box 2424
Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 833-7012/6
(011) 833-7084/6

Centro Independiente de Trabajadores Agricolas

Independent Farmworkers Center

P.O. Box 78, Florida, New York, 10621
Phone/Fax: (914) 651-5570

To: Abram Negrete, for Volta Redonda municipal workers

South African Municipal Worker's Union

HEAD OFFICE



Tel: 021 897-1151
Fax: 021 696-9172

SAMWU
Private Bldg 2/9
Arlene
7114
Cape Town

Dear Comrades,

Warm and militant greetings from the 120 000 members of the South African Municipal Workers Union to the anti-racist union militants of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union!

SAMWU salutes your struggle against Brazil's bourgeois government and the fascist bosses. Not only are you waging a courageous war against racism, you are also fighting for your right to publish information vital to workers of Brazil particularly, and the world in general!

For many years, as municipal workers we fought, with others, a brutal racist regime here in South Africa. This apartheid regime was only overcome after many years of vigilant struggle, and the labour movement has suffered many losses at the hands of the brutal police and state machinery. Now your struggle against the same forces of evil will become our struggle as workers of the world.

embro 6, 1997

do Ribeiro
Comite de Luta Classista, Brazil
The Internationalist Group
York, NY

os Colegas,

Uma cordial saudação do Centro Independente de Trabalhadores Agricolas (CITA),
amos nossa solidariedade por sua luta sindical, e nos juntamos com outras organizações no nível
que não este a favor da repressão policial, e apóes judiciais formuladas em...



October 30, 1997

VIA FAX and Regular Mail

Gerardo Ribeiro and the CLC
do Internationalist Group
P.O. Box 3321
Church Street Station
New York, NY 10008

Dear Comrades:

Although we are angered to hear of the attacks against the CLC, we are heartened to know of one more group that ardently fights against racism, classism, police brutality, in short, against capitalism. Immigrant workers in New York City and across the nation are also under attack. Consequently, we understand only too well the brutal methods utilized by the police and the state when their interests are threatened. This is why our community in New York City wishes you all the strength and tenacity needed to succeed in the struggle against the tyranny of capitalism.

We very much believe in the power of international solidarity, so please keep us posted on any new events as well any ways we can be of further assistance.

We, the Latino workers of New York City:

- Condemn the brutally repressive actions of the Popular Front government against the CLC and the working class!
- Demand the complete and unconditional independence of unions from the capitalist government!
- Demand that ALL charges against the CLC and comrade Ribeiro be dropped right away!!!



NATIONAL UNION OF METALWORKERS OF SOUTH AFRICA

8th / 9th Floor
York House
46 Kerk Street
Johannesburg 2001
E-mail: numsa001@pixie.co.za

P.O. Box 280483
Excoom 2023
Tel: 011-8322030/9
Fax: 011-8336408
011-8336330

The President
Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union
Caixa Postal No. 84027
CEP 27260740
Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

Attention : Comrade Gerardo Ribeiro 15/10/97

Dear Comrade

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa wish to add its voice in condemning the

Their statement says "the day will come when nobody can succeed in silencing the roaring voice of the streets" and ends with the demand "Down with intervention!" A solidarity statement from the Volta Redonda Domestic Workers Union denounced "repression, intervention and any other violent means preventing the workers from freely expressing their political thought in their union organizations," while the construction workers union added its voice denouncing "dictatorial methods" against the working class and demanding the "withdrawal of the court action" against Ribeiro and the CLC.

Brazilian workers are facing a brutal austerity plan ordered by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso at the instiga-

tion of the International Monetary Fund and Wall Street bankers in response to the crisis sweeping world financial markets at the end of 1997. Cardoso's plan to fire tens of thousands of government workers has provoked plans for nationwide strike action in December. The capitalists can rely on Cardoso to step up anti-labor repression to impose this starvation plan; after all, it was the former "anti-imperialist" Cardoso who sent tanks and troops to crush a national oil strike two years ago.

The one refinery the army did not occupy in 1995 was the plant at Duque de Caxias (in Rio de Janeiro state), because of Caxias workers' reputation for organized and militant resistance. However, the labor court "intervened" the local and seized con-



Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias da Construção Civil, de Ladrilhos Hidráulicos, Produtos de Cimento, de Mármores e Granitos, de Montagens Industriais, da Construção de Estradas, Pavimentação e Obras de Terraplanagem em Geral e do Mobiliário de Volta Redonda, Barra Mansa, Resende, Itaízia, Rio Claro, Quatis e Poço Real.

Moção de repúdio à intervenção do estado no direito de organização dos trabalhadores

Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Domésticos de Volta Redonda

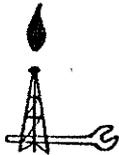
MOÇÃO DE REPÚDIO À INTERVENÇÃO DO ESTADO NO DIREITO DE ORGANIZAÇÃO DOS TRABALHADORES

A direção

SINDICATO DOS EMPREGADOS EM HOTÉIS, BARES, RESTAURANTES, COZINHAS INDUSTRIAIS E SIMILARES DE VOLTA REDONDA E REGIÃO SUL FLUMINENSE

SEDE: Rua Joffre Parafalho do Moraes, 53 - Sala 7/9 - Atorado - CEP 27293-210 - Volta Redonda - RJ - CGC(MF) 31.847.106/0001-69 - TEL/FAX: (024) 347-4182
SUB SEDE: Av. João Ferreira Pinto, 89 - Sala 105 - Centro - CEP 27510-070 - Resende - RJ - CGC(MF) 31.847.106/0002-30 - TEL.: (024) 354-7013
BASE TERRITORIAL: VOLTA REDONDA, BARRA MANSA, BARRA DO PIRAI, PIRAI, VAZOURAS, VALENÇA, RESENDE E ITAÍZIA.

Moção de repúdio à intervenção do estado no direito de organização dos trabalhadores.



Sindicato dos Trabalhadores na Indústria de Destilação e Refinação de Petróleo de Duque de Caxias

C.O.C. 89.392.897/0001-80
RECONHECIDO EM 14 DE MARÇO DE 1982
SEDE PRÓPRIA: RUA JOSÉ DE ALVARENGA, 659 - TEL. 771-2951
DUQUE DE CAXIAS - RIO DE JANEIRO
CEP. 25.000.

Moção de repúdio à intervenção do estado no direito de organização dos trabalhadores

A direção do Sindicato dos Petroleiros de Duque de Caxias (Sindipetro-Caxias) repudia veementemente a intervenção do estado na liberdade de organização dos trabalhadores. Referimo-nos à decisão judicial de recolher o boletim do Comitê de Luta Classista, que externava opiniões críticas à atual direção do sindicato dos servidores municipais de Volta Redonda.

O direito à livre organização e à liberdade de expressão não deve em hipótese alguma ser violado. Entendemos ainda ser uma postura anti-democrática a deposição e a cassação dos direitos do presidente eleito do sindicato. Tais fatos despertam uma grande preocupação, já que a perseguição a lideranças e a intervenção, de várias formas, em sindicatos combativos têm sido uma constante nos últimos anos, especialmente no governo Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Tais fatos representam, a nossa ver, a inaceitável e deliberada intenção de atingir a organização dos trabalhadores. Abaixo a intervenção!

Nilson Viana Cesário

P/direção do Sindipetro-Caxias

trol of its bank account. Protesting the new repression against Geraldo Ribeiro and the CLC, the Caxias oil workers union issued a statement "vehemently repudiating state intervention against the workers' freedom of organization," denouncing the "suspension of the rights of the union's elected president" and stressing that "persecution of leaders and various forms of intervention in combative unions has been a constant in recent years, particularly under the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso."

As was the case during a previous round of repression (see "Solidarity with Anti-Racist Unionists in Brazil," *The Internationalist* No. 1, January-February 1997), some of the most powerful protest statements came from South Africa. An 8 October 1997 statement from the 120,000-strong South Africa Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) notes that "For many years, as municipal workers we fought, with others, a brutal racist regime here in South Africa," where "the labour movement... suffered many losses at the hands of the brutal police and state machinery." SAMWU saluted the CLC's "courageous war on racism" and its fight for the "right to publish information vital to workers of Brazil particularly, and the world in general," demanding: "Down with the charges against Cde Geraldo Ribeiro and the CLC."

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and National Union of Miners (NUM) also sent vigorous protests against the new repression in Brazil. The South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) denounced "the latest attack...by the combined dark forces of capital and state machinery" and called on those responsible to stop anti-union repression, "lest they burn themselves in the fire they shall encounter in return."

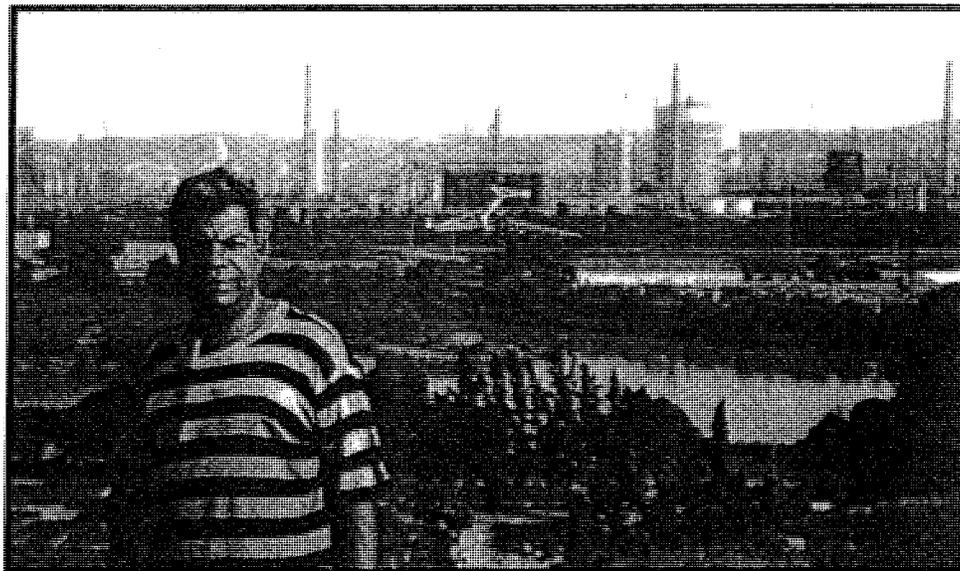
Stressing that "International Solidarity knows no borders," the Salvadoran telephone workers union (ASTTEL) wrote to "condemn this whole new escalation of repression against the unionists of Volta Redonda, Brazil, and specifically against brother Geraldo Ribeiro and the

Comitê de Luta Classista.” Also from El Salvador, the FEASIES labor federation issued a statement defending Ribeiro and the CLC against the repression. When spokesmen for ASTTEL and FEASIES were denounced on TV by the president of El Salvador as “traitors” and “inhuman” for denouncing the notorious abuse of workers in sweatshops there, Ribeiro and the Brazilian militants came to their defense as well.

From across the Pacific, the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees in the Philippines wrote that “we join against racist employers who are in cahoots with the repressive government in sowing terror among municipal workers,” pointing out: “Your struggle is not far from ours. We also [face] racial discrimination against the Cordillera peoples and the Muslim Moros of the South.” The Filipino workers group called for facing “this disorderly new world order” through “collective action and international solidarity.” In New Zealand, both national labor federations protested the repression against the Comitê de Luta Classista. The acting secretary of the New Zealand Trade Union Federation sent a statement to the Brazilian minister of internal affairs, while the secretary of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions also signed a statement protesting the attacks in Volta Redonda.

In the United States, a solidarity statement to Ribeiro and the CLC from Service Employees International Union Local 399 (representing militant janitors and hospital workers in Los Angeles) noted that this is “the eighth legal action against you. This is an attempt to use laws from the military dictatorship to censor and silence the voice of union activists, including the legitimate elected president of the Volta Redonda municipal workers union who has been the victim of court intervention, armed police shutting down union meetings and repeated acts of repression because of the struggles he has led.” The statement also denounced the threat “to seize your belongings and the outrageous threat to demand the names of all the activist[s] who exercised their rights by publishing leaflets to inform the workers and defend their interests.”

In the San Francisco Bay area, ILWU longshoremen’s Local 10 denounced “the vicious witchhunt” following earlier repression aimed at Ribeiro “because you played a central role in carrying out the will of your membership to disaffiliate the guardas (police) from your union.” Citing an earlier protest by Local 10, it underlined: “As we stated then and reiterate now, we support your principled struggle. Police have been banned from membership in our union since they killed workers in the 1934 Maritime Strike. And today, the brutal killings of street children in Brazil by police don’t go unnoticed here.” The protest also referred to state repression of last spring’s dockers’



Vanguarda Operária

Bosses’ courts of Brazil’s “Steel City” are now targeting LQB and Class Struggle Caucus militant Jorge de Oliveira, retired after 25 years working at Latin America’s largest steel plant (in background).

strike in Santos, Brazil.

On the East Coast, a solidarity statement in Spanish and Portuguese from the Independent Farmworkers Center noted: “Farm workers here are predominantly Latino immigrants, and we have suffered repression and intimidation in our countries of origin. This kind of repression continues when we arrive in the United States. We believe the struggle you are carrying out is a great example for other countries and popular movements internationally.” An eloquent statement from the Latino Workers Center of New York said “we understand only too well the brutal methods utilized by the police and the state when their interests are threatened” and ended: “Demand that ALL charges against the CLC and comrade Ribeiro be dropped right away!!!”

In addition, statements have been received from the International Bolshevik Tendency, from the Freedom Socialist Party and radical historian Howard Zinn in the U.S., the Communist Workers Party (PCT) in Brazil and LabourNet in Britain. On behalf of the Comitê de Luta Classista and the Internationalist Group, we wish to express our thanks for all those who have come to the defense of the CLC against the unrelenting state repression.

* * *

The judicial repression from the Volta Redonda court continues to hang over the CLC, and may escalate. Solidarity statements may be sent to Geraldo Ribeiro and the CLC care of:

Internationalist Group
Box 3321, Church Street Station
New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.
Fax: (212) 614-8711
E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Letters can be sent to the CLC and LQB in Brazil by addressing them to:

Caixa Postal 084027
CEP 27251-970
Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil



30 January 1998

After Courts Order "Search and Seizure" of Militants' Leaflets

ICL Seeks to Sabotage Defense of Brazilian Trotskyist Workers

3- De se manter, outrossim, na solidariedade passiva, o outro sêr, aprincialmente indicado, "COMITÊ DE LUTA CLASSISTA", como se auto denomina, em que pese se desumir tratar-se daquelas facções clandestinas que, acobertadas sob o manto do anonimato, buscam fugir ao enfretamento da lei por consequencia de seus atos, como no presente caso concreto;

Suit refiled last November ominously slanders CLC as "one of those clandestine factions which hiding under the cover of anonymity seek to flee from confronting the law for the consequences of their acts."

Last September a court in Volta Redonda, Brazil ordered the seizure of a bulletin produced by the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC—Class Struggle Caucus, initiated by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil). The CLC leaflet exposed the role of the pro-police group of Artur Fernandes in attempting to loot workers' pension funds, an explosive issue locally and nationally in Brazil. Fernandes was the instrument of a judicial coup in 1996 against the elected president of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR), Geraldo Ribeiro, aimed at stopping the campaign to oust municipal *guardas* (cops) from the union. The latest court order against the CLC (case no. 183/97 in the fifth civil division)—the eighth legal action against LQB supporters in the last two years—was issued at the request of the lawyer of Fernandes' clique, Vanise Alves de Carvalho. The demand for an injunction was originally filed on Alves de Carvalho's behalf by a high official of the city's Popular Front government (see "New Repression Against Brazilian Trotskyists" and "International Outcry Against Brazil Witchhunt," *The Internationalist* No. 4, January-February 1998).

The CLC issued an "Alert!" warning that "The Bourgeois Courts of Volta Redonda Attack the Workers' Democratic Rights" (CLC Bulletin No. 3, September 1997). It noted that the draconian censorship law dated from the "New State" dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas, a law that was heavily used under the 21-year military dictatorship (1964-85) to silence leftist and labor militants; that the court ordered the seizure of all copies of the previous CLC bulletin, as well as threatening to seize the belongings of the CLC and Geraldo Ribeiro; and that the request for the injunction demanded a list of members of the CLC. The alert concluded: "this attack is directed against *all* those who fight to defend the workers' interests.... Remember: an attack against one is an attack against all." Understanding this clear and elementary fact, labor organizations from around the world—from Brazil, El Salvador and the U.S. to South Africa and the Philippines—sent protest statements in solidarity with the victims of this latest repression.

But the leadership of the International Communist League (ICL) had a very different response.

For three months the ICL showed absolutely *no interest* in this case. No statement, no inquiries, dead silence. Then, on December 20, *Workers Vanguard* (newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.) made simultaneous phone calls, evidently synchronized to the minute, to Internationalist Group members Jan Norden and Abram Negrete. The *WV* "reporters" had a list of increasingly sinister insinuations about the CLC defense case, peppered with speculation about plans for fusion of the IG and LQB, and ending up with *WV*'s litany of lies against the Brazilian comrades. A few days later *WV* No. 681 (2 January 1998) printed a new smear job against the IG/LQB, rehashing its rantings and complaining of "The Silence of the IGs." Since we had circulated an international solidarity appeal (receiving considerable support), this was a rather bizarre charge. Many *WV* readers wondered what it was all about.

What was going on here was a blatant attempt to denigrate the defense of proletarian fighters under attack by the bourgeois state, for the most cynical factional reasons. It was certainly no accident that the strange calls from *WV* came exactly *one day* after the Permanent Revolution Faction of the ICL handed in a document in Paris announcing its political solidarity with the IG and its defense of the LQB against the vicious vendetta by the ICL leadership. Clearly, a main purpose of the new attack was internally directed—to harden up any wavering members by dumping a bucket of mud on those who dared to expose the leadership's lies. The *WV* 681 article marks a new low in the ICL leaders' obsessive frenzy against the IG/LQB and the PRF. Going beyond character assassination, the ICL has undertaken a sinister campaign to *undermine international solidarity* with the class-struggle Brazilian militants.

WV recycles the lies—which we have already proven to be false—that come from the same pro-police elements and Popular Front city government of Volta Redonda that launched the repression. Meanwhile, the *WV* article says *not one word in*

defense of the victims. It shows not the slightest indignation or concern over the blatant use of capitalist state repression to *ban leaflets* put out by leftist trade unionists in Brazil. Instead, sneering about our “‘urgent’ call” for defense against the repression, and that the IG has “‘appealed for ‘international solidarity’ on the basis that their Brazilian allies are ‘class war’ heroes,” *WV* dismisses the victims as a “‘phony” union formation, implies that the repression is only “‘according to the IG,” and *denounces* our defense campaign as a “‘cynical sham.”

What *WV* quite deliberately chose *not* to report, from their “‘interview” with comrade Norden, is that he informed them that the repression is continuing, that on November 14, the court suit against the CLC was re-registered and the individual specifically targeted is now Jorge Oliveira, a retired black steel worker. Moreover, the suit’s authors are now threatening a criminal prosecution. But this is of no concern to the editors of *WV*.

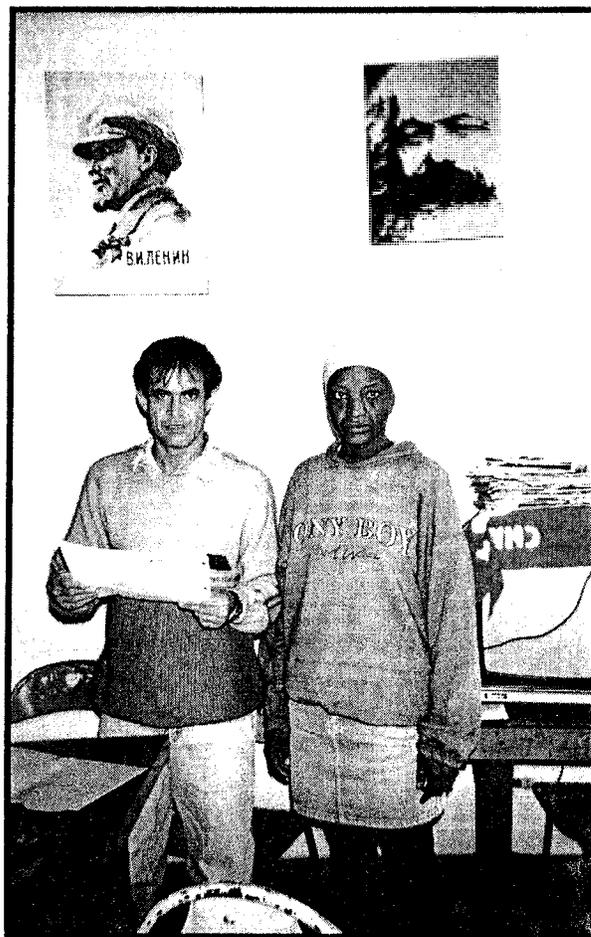
Indeed, the *WV* article *vilely attacks the targets of this repression as “dangerous hustlers.”* This filth is hurled at a largely black group of working-class militants with decades of struggle, many of whom were fired and blacklisted and who have been hit by endless state repression for fighting against class collaboration and racist oppression.

WV’s vituperation is intended to cover up the fact that the ICL leadership *deserted* from the struggle to remove the cops from the SFPMVR at the moment of greatest danger. Alleging “‘unacceptable risks to the vanguard,” ICL representatives called on the LQB to help “‘pull our hands out of the boiling water.” When the Brazilian comrades refused this ignominious ultimatum, the ICL broke relations with them on 18 June 1996, the day before cops and courts shut down a union meeting called to oust the police. At first pretending to defend Ribeiro against the court suits aimed at removing him as president of the union, while simultaneously denouncing the LQB as “‘trade-union opportunists,” ICL leaders are now broadcasting loud and clear that they are in fact *on the other side* of the continuing class battle in Volta Redonda.

Fleeing from the vanguard to the rearguard, refusing to defend from state repression the class-struggle militants who continued the fight for cops out of the unions, repeating the lies spewed out by the popular-front government and pro-police elements who launched the repression, and now denouncing the international solidarity campaign with the Brazilian comrades under fire from the state as a “‘sham,” the ICL leadership is acting as an external adjunct of the popular front.

ICL’s Factional Frenzy Out of Control

Workers Vanguard continues to put an equal sign between the pro-police provocateurs installed by a judicial coup against the union ranks, and the militants victimized by state repression for their fight to throw cops out of the labor movement. Previous *WV* articles said the two sides are “‘equally sordid.” Now *WV* 681 calls them “‘equally unprincipled” while dismissing as a “‘sordid squabble” the struggle between the anti-racist unionists and the self-proclaimed defender of the *guardas*, Artur Fernandes, whom *WV* itself correctly characterizes as a “‘pro-cop thug.” Where in a series of publications the ICL previously found itself obliged to recognize that the LQB’s fight



Geraldo Ribeiro with Regina Célia, woman worker fired by Popular Front. City government sued Ribeiro, threatening four years imprisonment, for leading campaign against this racist firing.

to expel cops from the union was a “‘principled” and difficult struggle, *WV* now rants that the Brazilian comrades tried to use the campaign to expel cops from the union as “‘a factional club against their rivals for union leadership.” As we have previously noted, when *WV* says both sides in this struggle are the same, *this is a betrayal and a cover-up for the class enemy.* And the posture of neutrality is fake: the ICL leaders have retailed one smear after another against the LQB from the mouth of Artur Fernandes and the bourgeois press.

Once again *WV* covers for Fernandes with the lie that it was the *LQB* which has been “‘dragging the SFPMVR union through the bosses’ courts”! In fact, it is *Fernandes* who, in tandem with the Popular Front government and the courts that imposed this stooge against the expressed will of the union ranks, has launched one court action after another against Ribeiro and other comrades of the LQB/CLC. *WV* 681 again rehashes Fernandes’ smear that comrade Geraldo Ribeiro is supposed to have sued the very union of which he is the elected president. Yet the *WV* article studiously avoids the documented proof we presented in our replies refuting this and their previous round of frenzied lies and distortions (see *The Internationalist*, Nos. 3 and 4, as well as the earlier IG dossier on *Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil: Cops, Courts Out of the Unions*).

Nowhere does *WV* even mention the letter from Geraldo Ribeiro's ex-lawyer stating that Ribeiro refused the court's offer to rule in his favor in December 1996, that Ribeiro insisted "that he was against any intervention by the justice system to resolve differences among workers," and that because of this principled opposition to court intervention, the lawyer resigned as his representative. *WV* seeks to suppress this because it is a devastating refutation of its slanders.

Meanwhile, in yet another back-handed alibi for Artur Fernandes & Co., *WV* claims the pro-cop clique has taken "a page from the LQB's book" and "repudiated their own lawyer's action." What are the facts? Geraldo Ribeiro's former lawyers—provided by a local civil rights group to defend him against the court and cop onslaught—erroneously filed legal papers which, while seeking to block summary court action in the barrage of cases against him, listed the union as defendant, something which Ribeiro, as elected SFPMVR president, never would have allowed. Contrary to *WV* 681, Ribeiro did not passively "only let them 'expire'"—he insisted these actions be *withdrawn*. Moreover, this was at a time when the pro-cop clique had launched yet another suit against Ribeiro after assaulting him at the union hall in January 1997—another fact that *WV* seeks to obscure. In a statement to the court Ribeiro explained his categorical opposition to court intervention. In fact, a previous *WV* article (No. 671, 11 July 1997) admitted "the court records show that Ribeiro did indeed file a withdrawal of all three" requests for injunctions his lawyers had submitted. But *WV* appears unconcerned about its inability to keep its own story straight. The ICL leaders' *modus operandi* is to just keep slinging more mud, hoping some will stick.

Throughout, Ribeiro has stressed his opposition to intervention in the workers movement by the capitalist courts and cops, and has acted consistently. Insisting on this fundamental class principle, Ribeiro ordered the withdrawal of the court actions, producing a split with the lawyers who filed them. What of Fernandes? *WV* 681 refers to a "note of clarification" by the pro-police stooge on the latest suit against the Brazilian comrades. This statement was in response to the considerable outcry against this suit in the labor movement, in Brazil and internationally, as a result of the defense campaign that the ICL calls a "sham." Yet far from rejecting appeals to the bourgeois courts on principle or breaking from their lawyer, Fernandes & Co. declare "we recognize the professional value" of the lawyer, Vanise Alves de Carvalho, only seeking a bit of distance from what they call her "unfortunate technical conduct." Meanwhile, it smears the CLC as dangerous gangsters, seeking to provoke more cop repression against them. And a



Municipal union leader Geraldo Ribeiro addresses 4 July 1996 SFPMVR rally.

couple of weeks later, the lawyer, who continues to be employed by Fernandes, *refiled* the suit and threatened to escalate it into a criminal prosecution!

The rampant dishonesty of the new *WV* is stunning. It historically presents the pseudo-revelation that comrade Norden said we "found out about" the court actions filed by Geraldo's lawyers long before the ICL's phony exposés; it doesn't report that Norden told the *WV* "reporters" that as soon as Geraldo found out about the requests for injunctions in January 1997 (not July 1996, as *WV* dishonestly pretends), he immediately ordered their withdrawal, *months* before *WV* published its first article on this question in May 1997. Similarly dishonest is *WV*'s attempt to pretend that the LQB failed to publicize Ribeiro's July 1996 letter to the local *Diário do Vale* newspaper stating his principled opposition to court intervention, or is somehow hiding this letter. Not only did the other local paper publish an interview with Ribeiro shortly thereafter, in which he denounced the bourgeois court system, his July 1996 letter was extensively quoted in his January 1997 leaflet, several thousand copies of which were distributed to Volta Redonda workers.

A key part of their new smear job consists of insinuations about the CLC bulletin that Volta Redonda courts ordered seized. After mockingly citing the Brazilian comrades' appeal that "proclaimed: 'The bosses' courts want to silence the voice that tells the truth'," *WV* 681 states:

"What gives? In a telephone interview with IG *supremo* Jan Norden on December 20, a *Workers Vanguard* reporter asked why, 'if the point was to silence the voice that tells the truth,' the IG hadn't circulated the issue of the CLC newsletter suppressed by the courts. Replied Norden, 'We're not basically pushing for that.' Norden and his IG certainly haven't pushed for the truth."

What comrade Norden told them was that we were waging a *defense campaign* against state repression. Recall that the courts in Volta Redonda ordered the *search and seizure* of every copy of this newsletter. A court officer was dispatched to the LQB's

office, where he was advised that no copies of the leaflet were left, nor did he find any. This left the court in a quandary because they couldn't produce the *corpus delicti* (the body of evidence of a crime). Now *WV* demands that we should have circulated the evidence that the state couldn't come up with!

While the ICL pretends that this is all just a "sham," let us remind readers that the Brazilian comrades are facing serious repression. The suit against them threatened to seize their belongings and to hit them with thousands of dollars in fines, as well as demanding a list of the members of the CLC. In fact, the copy of the leaflet submitted to the court included a number of names of putative CLCers scrawled on it by the authors of the suit. Ominously describing the CLC as "one of those clandestine factions which hiding under the cover of anonymity seek to flee from confronting the law for the consequences of their acts," the suit that was resubmitted in mid-November threatens criminal prosecution of the class-struggle unionists. Any serious militant can understand why responsible defenders of labor and the left were not pushing to circulate the CLC's bulletin at that time. But blinded by factional fury, *WV* doesn't see or care about this.

Instead, they hurl vile insinuations aimed at damaging solidarity efforts. To counter this unprincipled attack on the defense campaign, and as the case is still continuing more than four months later, we have decided to print here a translation of CLC bulletin No. 2. We also append a translation of the CLC's most recent bulletin (No. 4), on the defense campaign.

The Guilty Silence of the ICL

In what has now become its standard operating procedure, *WV* quietly abandons other accusations that it once insisted on, without referring to our detailed refutation of these claims. Previous *WV* articles attempted to deny that the 19 June 1996 union meeting—one day after the ICL cut relations with the LQB after failing to convince them to "leave town" and abandon the struggle—was scheduled to vote the disaffiliation of the municipal *guardas*. While seeking to disappear the fact that this meeting was shut down by armed police, *WV* nauseatingly claimed that the vote to disaffiliate the cops "never happened," despite the fact that this vote was held at the 25 July 1996 union meeting organized in the face of the repression. In response, we reproduced declarations and minutes from both organizers and opponents of the campaign to expel police from the union, as well as material from *WV*'s favorite source, the steel bosses' newspaper *Diário do Vale*, that systematically demolished each of *WV*'s successive attempts to main-

tain these lies. So now *WV* is silent about all this.

Instead, it follows the classic pattern: it launches a *new lie*, this time that "the LQB dropped its party press after only two issues." This is a total fabrication. First *WV* claimed the LQB had refused to put out a party press, a falsification that is amply disproved by the correspondence the ICL itself has published. When the first issue of the Brazilian comrades' *Vanguarda Operária* came out shortly after the ICL broke relations, the ICL tried to pretend it would be the last issue. After the second issue came out, they now make up the claim that the party press has been dropped. In fact the frequency of *Vanguarda Operária* compares not unfavorably to that of the press of several sections and

groups of the ICL, as well as the journal *Spartacist* in its first years. Meanwhile, the LQB has published the first issue of a theoretical journal and is publishing a pamphlet reprinting its 1995 Portuguese translation of James P. Cannon's classic essay "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement."

Similarly with the ICL's various claims about the Internationalist Group, *WV*'s pretense that we have avoided polemics against the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI), Artur Fernandes' mentors, is absurd. Not only have we polemicized against the LBI in every issue of *The Internationalist*, but the first issue of the LQB's *Vanguarda Operária* had a lengthy article devoted entirely to unmask-

ing this cynical outfit, while the second featured an extensive article denouncing the line of the LBI as well as the rest of the opportunist left on the bonapartist police "strikes" that swept Brazil last July (in addition to an article on the Congo polemicizing against the LBI's initial support to Kabila). As for *WV*'s ravings about the IG and LQB as "Brides of Christ" who are "Never to Wed" (*WV* No. 678, 14 November 1997), this piece would be pathetic if it weren't so deranged. The ICL will find out about our upcoming fusion with the LQB in the same way as the rest of the world, when it is announced in our press.

But while *WV*'s pitiful excuses for polemics against the IG and LQB go from the patently dishonest to the downright ludicrous, the ICL's actions are anything but laughable. It is obvious that the ICL leaders don't give a damn about the truth or the real stakes in the class battle in Brazil. This can easily be verified by anyone who takes the trouble to keep track of the welter of contradictions, lies and fabrications published in *Workers Vanguard* over the past period. But we're not only referring to *WV*'s increasingly reckless disregard for the truth. In seeking to scrape together smears against the Bra-

DECLARAÇÃO

De Geraldo Ribeiro, presidente do SFPMVR
(Sindicato do Funcionalismo Público Municipal de Volta Redonda)
À CUT, aos servidores e ao movimento operário

Sobre os acontecimentos no SFPMVR no dia 20-01-1997 e na última semana tenho a declarar o seguinte:

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Desmentimos a calúnia que a fração de Artur fez à imprensa de que eu (Geraldo) teria usado a "justiça" contra o sindicato. Como já escrevi numa carta de 26 de julho de 1996 ao *Diário do Vale* que o jornal não publicou:

"Os que recorrem a intervenção da 'justiça' no sindicato não somos nós, dirigentes legítimos e ativistas do SFPMVR. Os trabalhadores devem limpar sua própria casa, nós rejeitamos categoricamente a intervenção dos tribunais patronais no movimento operário. Ao contrário, é o grupo golpista e pró-policial de Artur Fernandes que ataca assim os princípios elementares da independência de classe dos trabalhadores. Ao colocar o sindicato sobre intervenção governamental, como nas aulas da ditadura, se ataca os direitos democráticos e sindicais de todos os trabalhadores. O sindicato é dos trabalhadores, não do governo e nem das patrões."

30 January declaration by Ribeiro quoting from his 26 July 1996 letter to *Diário do Vale*: "Those who resort to court intervention in the union are not us, the legitimate leaders and activists of the SFPMVR. The workers must 'clean their own house' and we categorically reject intervention by the bosses' courts in the workers movement." Steel bosses' paper (*WV*'s favorite source) refused to publish letter.

zilian comrades in order to cover its own *betrayal* of the struggle to throw the cops out of the unions, the ICL leadership has been hobnobbing with some very dubious characters in Volta Redonda.

Over the past period they have had a de facto division of labor with Fernandes' mentors in the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista to seek to isolate and defame the LQB/IG. When representatives of the ICL showed up at last August's congress of the Brazilian CUT labor federation in São Paulo with a leaflet smearing the LQB, they spent hours upon hours in discussion with the LBI. The ICL spokesmen demonstratively hung around the LBI's literature table for much of this time, including for lengthy periods when Artur Fernandes, the man *WV* rightly calls a "pro-cop thug," was sitting at it—a fact confirmed twice by one of the "interviewers" for *WV*'s latest hack job. This literature table was quite openly the command post for the operation carried out inside the congress by the LBI and the *pro-police provocateur* Fernandes, who is part of the LBI's trade-union grouping.

It's not just a matter of strange political bedfellows. In addition to having extended chummy chats with this pro-cop clot, in the presence of the very person who called in military and municipal police against union meetings in Volta Redonda and who has launched endless court actions against the Trotskyists of the LQB, in its frenzy to dig up dirt against our comrades the ICL has engaged in grossly irresponsible behavior. Thus there were at least two calls last May-June seeking to speak with authoritative spokesmen in the civil court in Volta Redonda, and on at least one occasion someone spoke with a judge. What did they talk about? In addition, Fernandes' lawyer says she received "several" calls from "journalists" for a U.S. paper during the same period asking for information about cases involving Geraldo Ribeiro. This is the same lawyer who has now launched the ominous court suit against the CLC, which the ICL refuses to defend and whose defense it denounces as a "sham." What was said in *those* conversa-

tions? The lawyer said she told her callers to speak with Geraldo himself. But the ICL never talked to Ribeiro.

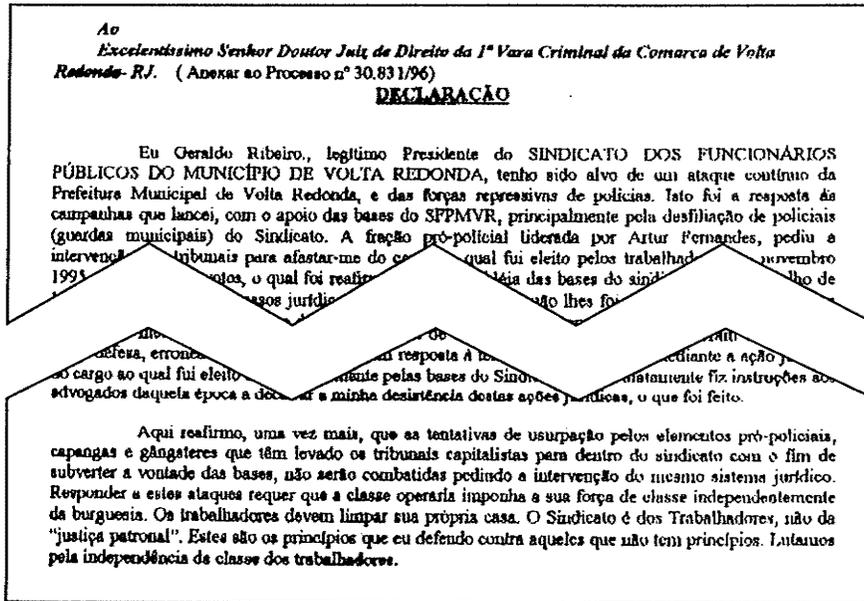
At the CUT conference, the two ICL representatives engaged in a discussion with comrades of the LQB. During this exchange, one of the ICLers said that maybe the *guardas* had left the union, but they were returning (to Fernandes' outfit, that is). Challenged as to how he would know such a "fact," which is untrue in any case, the ICLer responded that he had received this information directly from the Department of Personnel of the City of Volta Redonda. When comrade Marcello demanded to know how that could be, when even the elected president and directors of the Municipal Workers Union had been refused such

information, the ICL representative said that anyone could get it. So after the CUT conference, Geraldo Ribeiro and SPPMVR director Maria do Carmo Paes went to the Department of Personnel asking for the same information. They were told that any information about union affiliation would only be given out with the permission of the Secretary for Administration of the City of Volta Redonda. So what was the ICLers' source for this pseudo-information?

Was this all just harmless "fact-finding"? Did it ever occur to the ICL that such indiscriminate and reckless intervention with hostile intent, approaching

judges and lawyers who have launched endless suits against the class-struggle militants in the midst of a situation of repression against them, as well as hobnobbing with the a "pro-cop thug," could negatively affect the defense of our comrades? The least that one can say is that the ICL leaders didn't care what the consequences of their actions might be for those facing a heavy attack by the state and its agents in Volta Redonda. The guiding principle of the new leadership of the ICL appears to be that anything goes in the interests of attacking those who are fighting for the principles of Trotskyism, which the ICL is abandoning. This political degeneration must be fought through the struggle to reforge the Fourth International.

Internationalist Group
30 January 1998



Statement to court by Geraldo Ribeiro, elected president of Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union, after he ordered his former lawyers to withdraw their requests for injunctions, as pro-police faction launched yet another case against him. Statement stresses: "We categorically reject the intervention of the bosses' courts in the workers movement. I emphasize that I do not participate in any case of that kind. More than five months ago, we explained that this is our position.... I reaffirm here once again that the attempts at usurpation by the pro-police, thug and gangster elements who have brought the capitalist courts into the union with the objective of subverting the will of the ranks will not be fought by asking for intervention by the judicial system.... The workers must clean their own house."

Class Struggle Caucus Bulletin No. 2

Against Any Kind of "Union Tax"

The following is a translation of Bulletin No. 2 (September 1997) of the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC—Class Struggle Caucus, initiated by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil). This bulletin, revealing the attempt to loot workers' pension funds and the role of the pro-police group of Artur Fernandes, was the object of the "search and seizure" order issued by a Volta Redonda court at the behest of the Fernandes clique's lawyer, Vanise Alves de Carvalho, in a suit filed by the former Municipal Secretary of the city government. The judicial mafia reacted furiously due to the commotion set off among Volta Redonda workers by the CLC leaflet's exposure of the lucrative rake-off.

In 1994, the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union (SFPMVR) sued the city government demanding that it free up workers' pension funds. The Popular Front administration had been refusing to pay into the funds, pleading lack of money. The issue has become even hotter as laid-off workers have insistently demanded access to the funds as their main source of severance pay. But when the courts finally ordered the city to pay up last June, lawyers in connivance with Fernandes smelled a rich source of loot. In the context of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso's all-out assault against public workers, the defense of pension funds has become a hot issue in Brazil, which has one of the lowest minimum wages in the world and virtually no functioning unemployment insurance. The CUT labor federation opposed Fernandes & Co.'s scheme as breaking the unions' stand against this anti-worker assault.

The "union tax" referred to in the leaflet is a system of government control over union finances originally established by the 1930-45 corporatist regime of Getúlio Vargas.

In 1994 the SFPMVR (Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union) launched a legal action in the 7th federal district court to free up public workers' pension funds (FGTS). Judge Maria Saete Maccaloz issued an injunction (No. 93.0011061/6) freeing up the fund but not agreeing with the 10 percent fee for the lawyers at that time. Geraldo [Ribeiro] and Marcello Lázaro said that from then on the suit should be carried out by the union's legal department.

After the hearing Geraldo Ribeiro, in a discussion with the SFPMVR's lawyer, Dr. Vanise Alves de Carvalho, asked her to correct the error committed in the past and undertake the defense of the municipal workers herself. Vanise said she was not in a position to undertake that wide-ranging a suit. Knowing the judge's position and the *incompetence* of the SFPMVR's lawyer, the union hired two lawyers who would be paid 500 reais [approximately \$500] apiece per month to deal with this issue. We are opposed to the lawyers charging workers 15 percent [of recovered pension money], and maintain that the union should cover the fees.

Today, the pro-police faction of Artur, seeking the city workers' money, is charging 15 percent of funds won by the sweat and

efforts of the majority of the workers, and even charges those who are members of the union. This faction broke the contract with the lawyers who were receiving a retainer, and they have now sued the union, causing a loss of about 3,000 reais.

The pro-police faction ties city workers' hands so they can be robbed by the judicial mafia, and provides a cover for corruption in the union. Ask: 1) Why is it that up to the present no kind of balance sheet has been shown of the union's accounts? 2) What happened to the 8,032 reais in the union's savings account? 3) Why is it that none of the payments were made on the union's van, which was therefore repossessed? 4) Why did they never prove their accusations against Geraldo Ribeiro, the president legitimately elected by the city workers?

All this, city worker, is part of the faction's obscure maneuvers in the union. Don't keep quiet! Get this faction's hands out of your pockets. Don't pay the 15 percent. Don't let City Hall manipulate your union dues! Fight for a union independent of the government and bosses, and for class independence.

Point 1 of the program of the Comitê de Luta Classista says the following:

"Complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state. Against any intervention or interference by the bourgeois 'justice' system in the union. We repudiate any and all control by the government (ministries, 'justice' system, parliament, police, etc.) over the workers movement. It is the workers who decide. Union dues must be freed from the dues check-off controlled by the state and the bosses and be paid directly to the union, so the workers will control the union's money. Against the 'union tax,' 'labor federation tax,' etc. We condemn the traitors who 'invite' the bourgeois courts into the unions."

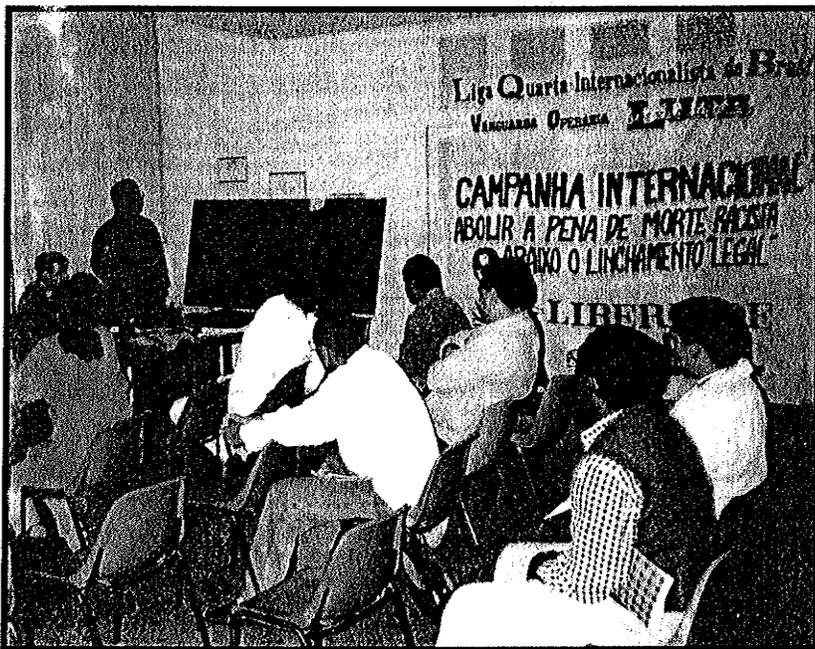
Model letter refusing to pay the lawyers' fees:

To the leadership of the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union.

I, _____, enrollment number _____, from sector _____ of public workers of the municipality of Volta Redonda, employed by the city government, present this document to speak out against the payment of an amount equal to 15 percent of the pension funds in the Federal Economic Savings Bank for lawyers' fees. If this was already done, I request the amount be immediately returned. I also point out that the workers, including those who are not union members, have a right to free legal assistance. This authoritarianism does not help raise the consciousness of the working class.

The fake-Trotskyists of the LBI (Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista), which the pro-police coup faction of Artur Fernandes belongs to, is using the hands of the bourgeois state to rip off the workers' money. This means trampling on the principles of the working class.

The position of the national CUT [labor federation] for all affiliated unions is against charging lawyers' fees. ■



Founding meeting of the Comitê de Luta Classista (Class Struggle Caucus), June 1997, initiated by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil. Brazilian Trotskyists have faced unrelenting capitalist state repression

must counterpose revolutionary class-struggle politics to the pro-capitalist politics of the bureaucrats.

The CLC's policy is not only to organize, but also to denounce and fight against those who stand as enemies of the working class. In order for the unions to be one of the instruments for raising the workers' consciousness, making them understand the need to free themselves from capitalism's chains, what is indispensable is revolutionary politics and a revolutionary leadership, and this is possible only through the fight to build a revolutionary workers party.

The CLC's struggle with respect to the unions is above the mediocrity of the bureaucrats, who use the "union machine" simply for their own benefit and to serve the bosses, dividing and betraying the workers. An example is the agreement made by the São Paulo Metal Workers Union, dominated by Medeiros' yellow "Força Sindical" federation, which sold out the workers in a sweetheart deal with the bosses to cut wages and carry out layoffs.

Any proletarian organization which seeks to fight against these types needs to do so on a revolutionary class-struggle program which defends women, blacks, Indians, homosexuals, children and youth as part of the class-struggle fight and an important part of its program against any form of oppression. Only in this way, rising up as the "tribune of the people," will it build the authority to lead the struggle of the oppressed and exploited against capitalism.

ignores thousands of signatures [for the campaign] collected among the workers.

The types of oppression we have mentioned above directly affect the proletariat, with its multiethnic composition of men and women of various ages, who are the victims of all kinds of prejudices and who must be defended by organizations which claim to be proletarian. Meanwhile, the only thing the LBI and Artur have passionately defended, in their dirty way, is the presence of cops in general and municipal *guardas* in unions together with the workers. The LBI as "theoretician

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Dossier

Class Struggle and Repression in Volta Redonda, Brazil

Cops, Courts Out of the Unions

An Internationalist Group pamphlet
February 1997

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and advisor" and Artur as the "practitioner" not only "defend" the *guardas*, but revive "Zubatovism" in the labor movement. (At the beginning of this century, Zubatov was the inspirer and organizer of Zubatovism or "police socialism" in Russia. He founded phony workers organizations under the tutelage of the police, with the aim of keeping the workers away from revolutionary activity. Zubatov acted directly inside the unions, scheming against the Bolsheviks and the lives of all those who had revolutionary political objectives in organizing the workers.) During the recent "strikes" of the cops (the armed fist of the bourgeoisie against the exploited and oppressed), the LBI wanted the "lower echelons" of the Military Police to "accept the discipline of an anti-capitalist orientation" (*Luta Operária*, November 1997)! This means spreading a criminal reformist illusion and once again reveals the LBI's attitude towards the victims of the bourgeois state's uniformed racist assassins. This makes it clear for the workers movement what the real intentions of the LBI and Artur are with regard to the intervention of the bourgeois courts calling for banning the CLC's leaflets.

The CLC calls for the class independence of the workers and fights against all forms of collaboration with the ruling class!

The judicial attack against the CLC has caused a clamor of protest extending from Brazil to South Africa, El Salvador and the United States.

The workers of Brazil face the brutal austerity plan of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, instigated by the International Monetary Fund and Wall Street bankers in response to the crisis of world financial markets. To impose the starvation plan, the capitalists can rely on Cardoso, who sent tanks and soldiers against the oil workers' strike two years ago.

The one refinery the army did not occupy in 1995 was the plant at Duque de Caxias (in Rio de Janeiro state), because of Caxias workers' reputation for organized and militant resistance. However, the courts intervened against the union and seized control of its bank account. Protesting the new repression against the CLC, the Duque de Caxias oil workers union issued a statement "vehemently repudiating state intervention against the workers' freedom of organization," denouncing the "suspension of the rights of the union's elected president" and stating that "persecution of leaders and various forms of intervention in combative unions has been a constant in recent years, particularly under the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso."

In a similarly firm and energetic tone, the Rio de Janeiro Glass, Ceramic and Optical Workers Union and the Homeless Workers Movement protested against the bourgeois courts' authoritarianism, stating that the courts' aim is to "infringe on the workers' organizations" and demanding: "Down with the intervention!"

Workers in Belo Horizonte (state of Minas Gerais) also supported the campaign and protested capitalist justice. In her protest statement, Elizabete Xavier Diniz, a supporter of the "Critical Analysis of the Minas Gerais Education Workers Union" (opposition to the current union leadership), writes that "this kind of posture by the state takes us back to the recent past of repressive and anti-democratic practices aimed at cut-

ting off the freedom of speech and legitimacy of the movement for the struggle of the working class."

The Oil Workers Union of the State of Minas Gerais, which like the rest of this sector has been the target of attacks by Cardoso, who seeks to suppress their organizations, demands that "the right of free association and opinion must be maintained and differences among the workers must be resolved by the workers themselves," demanding as well: "Down with the intervention!"

From Rio de Janeiro, the Committee Against Persecution and for the Freedom of Political Prisoners in Brazil denounces the fact that Cardoso's "democracy" maintains "111 political prisoners and victims of persecution," while calling on the workers to fight for "dropping the charges against the CLC, canceling the verdicts against members of the Landless Peasants and Homeless movements, and freeing imprisoned members of the [Chilean] MIR and [Salvadoran] FMLN" in Brazil.

Also from Rio de Janeiro, the Committee for a Proletarian Culture Center declares: "we find it intolerable that members of the labor movement or people who should be at its service use the instruments and laws of the Bourgeois State to instigate persecution against class-struggle fighters."

In Volta Redonda, the unions of Hotel and Restaurant Workers, Domestic Workers and Construction Workers protested with solidarity messages noting "the deliberate intention of infringing on workers' organization as occurred for several years under the Military Dictatorship," stating "the day will come when nobody can succeed in silencing the roaring voice of the streets," and demanding "Down with intervention!"

As occurred during a previous period in the campaign of repression against the class-struggle militants, some of the most powerful protests came from South Africa. An 8 October 1997 statement from the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), which has 120,000 members, stated: "For many years, as municipal workers we fought, with others, a brutal

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VANGUARDA OPERÁRIA

Cadernos de Teoria Marxista n° 01

**A LUTA POR UM
PARTIDO TROTSKISTA
NO BRASIL**

Polêmica entre a Liga Comunista Internacional e a
Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (ex-Liga Metalúrgica)

Uma publicação da:
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racist regime here in South Africa," where "the labour movement...suffered many losses at the hands of the brutal police and state machinery." SAMWU hails the CLC's "courageous war on racism" and our fight for the "right to publish information vital to workers of Brazil particularly, and the world in general," demanding: "Down with the charges against Cde Geraldo Ribeiro and the CLC."

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and the National Union of Miners (NUM) of the same country also sent vigorous protests against the new repression against the CLC. The South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) denounced "the latest attack...by the combined dark forces of capital and state machinery" and called on those responsible to stop anti-union repression, "lest they burn themselves in the fire they shall encounter in return."

Stating that "International Solidarity knows no borders," the Association of Telecommunications Workers of El Salvador (ASTTEL) wrote to "condemn this whole new escalation of repression against the unionists of Volta Redonda, Brazil, and specifically against brother Geraldo Ribeiro and the Comitê de Luta Classista." Also from El Salvador, the FEASIES labor federation issued a statement defending Ribeiro and the CLC against the repression. When the president of El Salvador attacked representatives of ASTTEL and FEASIES on television, calling them "traitors" and "inhuman" for denouncing the terrible abuses against workers in the factories there (many of whom are women workers), Geraldo and the class-struggle militants defended the Salvadoran brothers and sisters.

From the other side of the Pacific Ocean, the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees in the Philippines wrote that "we join against racist employers who are in cahoots with the repressive government in sowing terror among municipal workers," stating: "Your struggle is not far from ours. We also [face] racial discrimination against the Cordillera peoples and the Muslim Moros of the South" of the Philippines. This Filipino workers group calls for facing "this disorderly new world order" through "collective action and international solidarity." In New Zealand, the two labor federations wrote to protest the repression against the Comitê de Luta Classista. The acting secretary of the New Zealand Trade Union Federation (NZTUF) sent a protest to Brazil's interior minister, and the secretary of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU) also signed a protest statement against the attacks in Volta Redonda.

In the United States, a solidarity statement to Ribeiro and the CLC from Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 399 (which represents combative janitors and hospital workers in Los Angeles) observed that this is "the eighth legal action against you. This is an attempt to use laws from the military dictatorship to censor and silence the voice of union activists, including the legitimate elected president of the Volta Redonda municipal workers union who has been the victim of court intervention, armed police shutting down union meetings and repeated acts of repression because of the struggles he has led." The statement also denounced the threat "to seize your belongings and the outrageous threat to demand the names

of all the activist[s] who exercised their rights by publishing leaflets to inform the workers and defend their interests."

In the San Francisco Bay Area, in California, longshore union Local 10 (ILWU) denounced "the vicious witchhunt" which follows previous repression aimed at Ribeiro "because you played a central role in carrying out the will of your membership to disaffiliate the guardas (police) from your union." Citing an earlier protest by ILWU Local 10, it underlined: "As we stated then and reiterate now, we support your principled struggle. Police have been banned from membership in our union since they killed workers in the 1934 Maritime Strike. And today, the brutal killings of street children in Brazil by police don't go unnoticed here." The statement also referred to government repression against the dockers' strike in Santos [in São Paulo state] several months ago.

On the East Coast of the USA, a solidarity statement in Spanish and Portuguese from the Independent Farmworkers Center noted: "Farm workers here are predominantly Latin immigrants, and we have suffered repression and intimidation in our countries of origin. This kind of repression continues when we arrive in the United States. We believe the struggle you are carrying out is a great example for other countries and popular movements internationally." An eloquent statement from the Latino Workers Center of New York said "we understand only too well the brutal methods utilized by the police and the state when their interests are threatened" and ended: "Demand that ALL charges against the CLC and comrade Ribeiro be dropped right away!!!"

The broad support from around the world resulted from the international solidarity campaign carried out by our comrades of the Internationalist Group and Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil. Solidarity statements were also been received from the International Bolshevik Tendency, the Freedom Socialist Party and radical historian Howard Zinn in the U.S., the Communist Workers Party (PCT) [in Brazil] and LabourNet in Britain. We thank all the organizations and individuals who have defended the CLC against state repression. ■

Contact Us At:

Internationalist Group/Grupo Internacionalista

Internationalist Group, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S. A.
Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711
E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Boston: write to Internationalist Group, P.O. Box 440129, Somerville, MA 02144.

Mexico: write to Apdo. Postal 70-379, Admón. de Correos No. 70, CP 04511, México, D.F., Mexico

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

Brazil: write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-970, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil.

Rio de Janeiro: write to Caixa Postal 009026, CEP 20072-970, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.

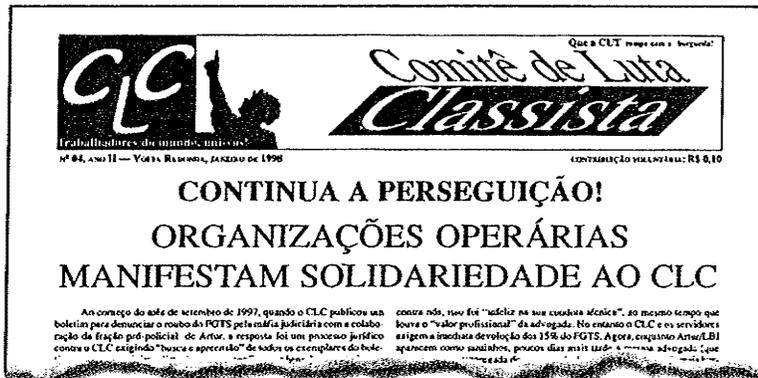
The Persecution Continues! Workers Organizations Express Solidarity with the CLC

The following is a translation of Bulletin No. 4 (January 1998) of the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC—Class Struggle Caucus) on the international solidarity effort and recent developments in the continuing repression against the CLC. The bulletin also includes facsimiles of many of the solidarity statements re-

ceived from around the world (see "International Outcry Against Brazil Witchhunt," The Internationalist No. 4, January-February 1998). It is important to note that the high city official who originally filed the latest suit against the comrades, on behalf of the Fernandes clique's lawyer, had been the direct boss of city workers for the municipal Popular Front government against which Geraldo Ribeiro led a series of successful strikes. The "Estado Novo" (New State) referred to in the leaflet was the 1930-45 corporatist regime of Getúlio Vargas.

At the beginning of September 1997, when the CLC published a leaflet denouncing the rip-off of pension funds by the judicial mafia with the collaboration of the pro-police faction of Artur [Fernandes], the response was a court case against the CLC demanding the "search and seizure" of all copies of the leaflet. The suit's authors demanded a list of names and the confiscation of the belongings of Geraldo Ribeiro and the CLC, together with other repressive measures, basing themselves on the laws of the "Estado Novo" and the military dictatorship.

To alert the workers movement, to protest and to defend ourselves, we published a subsequent bulletin (No. 3) pointing out that this new anti-labor attack is a case of political persecution whose origins lie in the Popular Front municipal government and the campaign by [Brazilian president] Cardoso and the International Monetary Fund to loot the workers' insurance and social security funds. A clear proof: the case against the CLC was filed in the "justice" system, on behalf of Dr. Vanise, by Dr. João Silveira Neto, who was chief of staff in the municipal government of [former mayor] Baltazar and then Municipal Secretary of Public Services (municipal decrees 5955 and 6310). Vanise and Silveira Neto have a "lawyers' office" providing "services" with one foot in Artur's office and the other in the chambers of City Hall. This is yet another proof of the class-collaborationist "partnership" of the pro-police faction and the Popular Front. It was under the municipal government of the Popular Front—com-



posed of the PSB [the Brazilian Socialist Party of longtime bourgeois politician and regional boss of the state of Pernambuco Miguel Arrães], PT [Lula's Workers Party], PCdoB [the formerly pro-Albania Communist Party of Brazil], PCB [a rump of the formerly pro-Moscow Brazilian Communist Party], PV (Green Party),

etc.—that City Hall sent police to disperse and repress union assemblies during our campaign to disaffiliate the municipal *guardas* from the SFPMVR.

Artur Fernandes is the pro-police stooge imposed by the bourgeois courts against the will of the SFPMVR ranks with the objective of ousting the elected president, Geraldo Ribeiro, and subjugating the union. (Artur is advised by the fake-left "Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista." In the most brazen and cynical way, the LBI's union tendency put him forward as a "star" at the Sixth Congress of the CUT labor federation in August 1997 as an "alternative" to the CUT's bureaucratization. During that same month the Fernandes faction scabbed on the Volta Redonda city workers' strike that they themselves called, since they sent their paysheets in to the city offices and received their normal pay for that day.)

New Attack Against the CLC

With the solidarity campaign we have carried out against the repression, the CLC has been receiving solidarity and support from important labor movement organizations in Volta Redonda as well as at the national and international levels. When it found out about the campaign, the LBI came to Volta Redonda and "advised" Artur on how to wash his hands of the affair. While "clarifying" nothing whatsoever about the scandalous rip-off of pension funds which we denounced in CLC Bulletin No. 2, they immediately published a "note of clarification" supposedly criticizing their lawyer, saying that when she used the courts against us this was "unfortunate technical conduct," while simultaneously praising the lawyer's "professional value." Meanwhile, the CLC and city workers demand the immediate return of the 15 percent taken from the pension funds.

Then, while Artur/LBI adopted the guise of little saints, a few days later the same lawyer (who continues to be employed

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WV's New Crop of Fabrications

DECEMBER 1998 – Trotsky once wrote that reading Bukharin was like eating chopped bristles. Today, readers of the "new *Workers Vanguard*" are expected not only to take it with a grain of salt but to swallow whole bucketsful of mud. Once the voice of authentic Trotskyism, WV is now the mouthpiece of the centrist degeneration of the International Communist League (ICL). As such, its falsifications keep getting cruder, since justifying duplicitous politics requires treating the truth as a matter of convenience.

Over the past year, publications of the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International (IG/LFI) have posed fundamental political issues regarding the ICL's revision of the central thesis of the Transitional Program, the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International; its abandonment of the Leninist demand for independence for all colonies and of the call for workers action against imperialist war mobilization; its "discovery" that the Mexican state's corporatist labor front is supposedly a "legitimate" union—to name a few. Yet WV follows its script to the letter: ignore the real political arguments at all costs, and every time the IG provides detailed, documented refutations of the last pack of smears, launch new ones. So now we find WV hip-deep in muck raising a new crop of fabrications against the LFI, this time on...our line on the agrarian question in Brazil. And once again, it has provided readers with an opportunity to see for themselves how the falsifiers operate.

In an accompanying article on the struggle against "Zubatovism" (police "unionism") in Brazil, we unmask the ICL's latest variations on its old smears seeking to disappear the tenacious struggle waged by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB) for "cops and courts out of the unions." Meanwhile, in its recent article on Brazil, *Workers Vanguard* (No. 702, 4 December 1998) adds a new ingredient, feigning a polemic on "Agrarian Revolution and Permanent Revolution" as a pretext for new slanders. This foray into the countryside is more than a little foolhardy coming from the folks who barely a year ago made a laughing stock of themselves with one "polemic" after another furiously insisting that the permanent revolution was inconceivable without a struggle against supposed "feudal peonage in the countryside" which according to their fantasy "continue[d] to plague the countries of Latin America." Then suddenly they dropped this claim like a hot potato when the Permanent Revolution Faction in the ICL's French section unmasked this anti-Marxist thesis borrowed from the Stalinists.

As a preface to its latest pseudo-polemic, WV 702 notes the class-collaborationist reformism of the Workers Party (PT) of Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva and that the Brazilian Landless Peasants Movement (MST) is "a petty-bourgeois formation fully in the grip of Lula's program." It goes on to claim: "The posture of the IG towards the MST peasant

movement has been a textbook case of centrist amorphousness and tailism." Pumping itself up with ersatz indignation, WV accuses:

"So it seems that the Pabloite IG has found in this volatile petty-bourgeois sector a potential 'new mass vanguard' – a substitute for the conscious proletariat. Through such centrist ploys big and little, the IG/LQB takes its place in the 'syphilitic chain' of opportunists who tail the popular front."

Just one problem with this whole construct: it is literally the *opposite* of the truth, and demonstrably so.

To back up its claim, WV writes that "the left portrays the MST as some sort of revolutionary leadership, and the LQB/IG in turn refuses to criticize it when it is so popular. The latest issue of the LQB's *Vanguarda Operária* (April 1998) is silent about recent struggles of the landless peasants." Oh really? Anyone who opens that issue of *Vanguarda Operária* will see the following in the lead article that begins on the front page:

"In reality, all these groups [Stalinists, Morenoites, LBI, etc.] are mere appendices of the PT and as such, their activities in this electoral period will be fundamentally electoralist, even when they claim to be anti-electoralist. "The case is similar with the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), which supports the PT's Lula for president and, at the same time as it backs occupations of landed estates in a dozen states, is turning increasingly to the electoral terrain. While it is hunted at gunpoint by the landlords' goons and the Military Police, the MST has gone hunting for votes.... Despite their sometimes combative tactics, in reality they are a transmission belt for the bourgeoisie through the PT, a bourgeois workers party."

So from the very outset, any reader can see that WV's indictment is a *crude and shameless fabrication*.

WV's next "proof" is that in an article defending arrested MST leaders, the previous issue of *Vanguarda Operária* (August-October 1997) quoted a speech by MST spokesman João Pedro Stédile referring to the need to "mobilize the people in rebellion against the government, as the Bolsheviks did with their slogans of 'peace, land and bread' which thus implanted communism in Russia." WV foams: "Thus the LQB introduces the MST to its readers as Bolsheviks!" What the authors grotesquely leave out is that Stédile's statement was quoted not because the LQB considers him a "Bolshevik" (in fact the article opposes the MST leaders' reliance on "the bourgeoisie and its agents the capitalist politicians")—but *because the speech was the basis for the government's "case" against Stédile*, accusing him of "inciting to violence." The VO article's first paragraph states this in citing Stédile's reported statement, but a reader of WV's account would have no inkling of this basic fact. What does WV care that this was the pretext for a McCarthyite

witch hunt? After all, the ICL refused to defend the LQB and the CLC (Class Struggle Caucus) when a Brazilian court ordered their leaflets seized and their office searched!

So what *WV* says about *Vanguarda Operária* No. 3 is a lie and what it says about issue No. 2 is a truly vile distortion. What about *Vanguarda Operária* No. 1? Perhaps it "refuses to criticize" the MST? In a back-page article denouncing the massacre of landless peasants at Eldorado de Carajás, *VO*'s premier issue stated:

"The MST's pro-capitalist structure and its deep-going adaptation to the bourgeois state have generated large contradictions; it is not uncommon for the leadership to turn over 'radicals' for repression. While we call on the proletariat to mobilize in defense of the struggle for the land, we Marxists warn that the petty-bourgeois conception of self-enrichment through 'small property-holding' is reactionary...."

"The lands which under a workers and peasants government could produce food for the workers of the entire world are held by the avid hands of the bourgeoisie which cares only for profit. In this poor and semi-colonial country, only agrarian revolution, as part of the permanent revolution led by the proletariat and following the path shown by the October Revolution, can liberate the land from this criminal hand. This is the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil's slogan, against the conception of a supposed 'agrarian reform' put forward by reformists and Mensheviks, from the social-democrats and Stalinists to fake-Trotskyists like the [Morenoite] PSTU, Causa Operária and the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista."

Now *WV* No. 702 claims that the "unexplained reference to 'agrarian revolution'" in the LQB's October 1998 statement on the Brazilian elections "could mean the program of the MST!" *WV*'s editors must hope its erstwhile readers will be stricken blind. Headlined "You Can't Combat Capital with the Popular Front—Against the Cardoso/IMF Onslaught: Fight for Workers Revolution!", the LQB statement (distributed as a leaflet in Brazil, posted on the Internet in Portuguese and English translation, and published in the current issue of *The Internationalist*) raises the call for agrarian revolution in counterposition to "agrarian reforms [which] are decreed in laws by bourgeois governments," which is the program of the MST and virtually the entire Brazilian left (PT, PC do B, PSTU, CO). The article also stresses "our program is for revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie" and calls for a "revolutionary workers party which can lead the masses of landless peasants in a fight for a workers and peasants government and the extension of revolution to the imperialist centers." What *WV* dishes out as "facts" would be declared unfit even for hog-wash on any self-respecting collective farm.

WV then goes on to froth: "And in place of the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution...the LQB calls vaguely for a 'worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat.' This differs little if at all from the Maoist-Stalinist formula of 'proletarian hegemony' in the 'bloc of four classes'!" As a rule of thumb, the more exclamation points *WV* uses, the less relation it has with the

truth. The "bloc of four classes" (i.e., the "national" bourgeoisie, the proletariat, peasantry and urban petty-bourgeoisie) was the Stalinists' formula for subordinating the workers and peasants to bourgeois politicians, from Chiang Kai-shek in China to the Maoists' popular front with nationalist strongman Sukarno in Indonesia. The phrase *WV* quotes (which occurs not in the LQB's October statement, as implied, but in the front-page article of *Vanguarda Operária* No. 3) is directed *against* the popular front. The very next sentence reads: "What the PT does is exactly the opposite: it subordinates the workers and peasants to bourgeois politicians."

In the previous paragraph, the same *Vanguarda Operária* article stresses:

"It is necessary to bring the working class the consciousness of the role it must play as leader of the peasantry's struggles. In practice the MST is following the reformist CUT [labor federation] leadership, which leads it to join in the internal struggles of politicians of the bourgeois class. Thus while in hundreds of places around the country landless peasants confront the police and landlord goons who try to expel them at gunpoint from the occupied lands, the political response of the MST is to participate in this rotten broad front [Lula's "Union of the People"] with the landlord Brizola, representative of the large landowners of Rio Grande do Sul, and Arraes, chief of the landowners of Pernambuco."

The article raises the slogans "For a socialist revolution; proletarian opposition to the popular front! Not one vote to any candidate of the popular front!" while denouncing every species of class collaboration (specifically including the so-called "anti-imperialist united front") and calling for a revolutionary workers party to "fight for a workers and peasants government as part of the Socialist United States of Latin America and the extension of revolution to our class brothers in the 'belly of the beast' in North America, Europe, Japan and the entire world."

In a report on "Blood on the Second Anniversary of Eldorado de Carajás," another article in *Vanguarda Operária* No. 3 denounces the assassination of two MST activists who led landless peasants in occupying a large estate in the south of Pará, a state whose governor "is supported by the PT in a popular front of class collaboration," *VO* notes. The article states:

"It is necessary to organize workers and peasants self-defense and the urgent mobilization of the power of the workers movement under revolutionary leadership, which can place the proletariat at the head of the peasants and all the exploited and oppressed in a struggle for socialist revolution accompanied by a genuine agrarian revolution."

It ends: "True solidarity is shown in acts, in the struggle for class independence and to reforge a revolutionary workers party."

"Silent about recent struggles of the landless peasants"? Tailing the MST? "Unexplained reference to 'agrarian revolution'"? A "bloc of four classes"? In each case, what the LQB says and does is the opposite of what *WV* claims. This

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Rio de Janeiro Education Workers and U.S. Longshoremen Stop Work to Demand: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

On 23 April 1999, the comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil and the Comitê de Luta Classista sparked the first-ever work stoppage demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. The teachers union of the state of Rio de Janeiro, SEPE, called a statewide stop work action to hold meetings about the case of the foremost class war prisoner in the United States and about the struggle against the racist death penalty. The next day the ILWU dock workers union in the U.S. shut down every port on the West Coast also calling for Mumia to be freed. The two actions were carried out in conjunction.

The Brazilian action was the result of several years work by the LQB and its predecessor, Luta Metalúrgica, which first brought the campaign to free Jamal to Brazil in 1995. The work stoppage was prepared by winning the support first of the SEPE in Rio, and then of the national teachers federation CNTE. Although the SL/ICL long called for labor action for Jamal's freedom, and although the Brazilian work stoppage was the first such work stoppage anywhere, the ICL has never once mentioned it in its press.

The LQB and CLC have continued to fight for workers action to free Mumia, most recently in an April 2009 one-day strike by the SEPE in Rio de Janeiro. We print below a press release issued by the Internationalist Group.

25 APRIL 1999 – Demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and protesting against racism and the death penalty, workers in Brazil and the United States carried out work stoppages on April 23 and 24 [1999].

In Brazil, schools in the city and state of Rio de Janeiro stopped classes for one hour on day and evening shifts in defense of the former Black Panther and renowned black journalist on Pennsylvania's death row. The April 23 stoppages were called by the assembly of the State Teachers and Education Workers Union (SEPE – Sindicato Estadual dos Profissionais de Educação do Rio de Janeiro).

In the U.S., the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) shut down ports all along the West Coast from 8 am to 6 pm on April 24 demanding freedom for Jamal in an important display of labor's muscle. A sizeable contingent of ILWU dock workers also led off a protest



Vanguarda Operária

Teachers, staff and students at the Paulo de Frontin school in the city of Rio de Janeiro hold up banner and signs calling for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal during 23 April 1999 work stoppage for Jamal called by the SEPE educational workers union.

march in San Francisco that afternoon, chanting: "An injury to one is an injury to all, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

These were the first union work stoppages for Jamal, a key step in mobilizing the power of labor worldwide in political strike action to win his freedom from the capitalist injustice system.

In the afternoon, a demonstration was held outside the U.S. consulate in Rio to demand Mumia's freedom. It was sponsored by the CUT labor federation, the SEPE, the Proletarian Culture Center, the SINDISPREV union of social security workers, SINTRASEF union and other groups. The CUT provided a powerful sound truck. In addition to demanding freedom for Mumia, speakers of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brazil (LQB) and League for the Fourth International called to defend Yugoslavia and defeat the NATO attack.

The stoppage today in Brazil was announced in an article in the *Jornal do Brasil*, Rio's leading daily newspaper, and on Radio Globo, a leading national radio network. The union put out a four-page special newspaper all about the cause of Mumia Abu Jamal, which was sent to every school in the state. Schools in the towns of Valença and Barra Mansa also reported stoppages and assemblies. In addition, some institutions not part of the state school system joined the stoppage, including the federal Agrarian School.

The call for work stoppages was introduced in the teachers union by Marcello Carega of the Comitê de Luta Classista (Class Struggle Caucus), affiliated with the LQB

and LFI. Carega noted that in the 1920s and '30s hundreds of thousands of workers internationally came out in opposition to the death penalty in the U.S. and demanding freedom for Sacco and Vanzetti and the nine youth of Scottsboro, Alabama. The international outcry and mobilization of working-class power stopped the executions of the Scottsboro youth, and we must bring out this kind of power today to free Mumia, Carega said.

From early reports: At the Paulo de Frontin school, a large secondary school in Rio, during the stoppage of the first shift, students and teachers gathered in the school patio with signs such as "Teacher and student stoppage to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal." One sign read, "SEPE and ILWU (U.S. Longshoremen) Together Demand Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal." A teachers union activist spoke of the importance of students gaining social consciousness and that "consciousness is something which must be won," in key struggles against racism and other forms of social oppression. A student leader linked Jamal's case to the oppression of blacks and women in Brazil, as well as the increasing difficulty of lower-income students in getting a college education.

During the stoppage of the first shift at the Ernest Farias high school, in the same zone of the city of Rio (a zone which has the largest concentration of schools in Latin America), a teachers union activist linked the fight against racism and the death penalty with the neo-Nazi racism put forward by the students who opened fire on other students in the state of Colorado and stressed that racism is lethal. Students and teachers protested in front of the school, chanting, "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal."

In the city of Barra Mansa, near Volta Redonda, 50 teachers and students gathered during the afternoon shift stoppage to hear a teacher who is a member of the Class Struggle Caucus explain Mumia's case. In the city of ValenHa the biggest high school was notable for the enthusiasm of teacher and student participation in the union action. In the town of Pinheiral the stoppage was extended to the federal Agricultural School. In this case, it was the students who led the teachers to stop classes and hold a militant demonstration of 150 people demanding Mumia's freedom. A student leader, Nelson, emphasized "we have to introduce the international struggle against racism among the youth." LQB activist C9lia spoke of the need to defend Indians, women, homosexuals and all the oppressed.

The stoppage movement was also extended to students and professors at the FERP, a private university in Volta Redonda, during the evening of Friday, April 23. The connection to the fight against racist oppression in Brazil, where there have been many massacres of black street children in particular was stressed.

At the Educational Institute in central Rio de Janeiro, standing under a banner of the CUT labor federation, SEPE and CNTE national teachers union demanding "Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal," teachers union leaders spoke of the crucial role of the international struggle against racism in strengthening the struggle of the unions. A black teacher described her own experience with racist discrimination in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and leading SEPE spokesman Luciene

Campos stressed how racist white students murdered a man from the Fatoxo Indian people by setting him on fire.

The afternoon rally outside the U.S. consulate was addressed by many activists including from the LQB/CLC, the UNE student union and others. The street was festooned with five large banners bearing Mumia's picture and demanding Mumia's freedom. There were many young high-school students present. A message from the ILWU stoppage was received with great enthusiasm. Marchers chanted "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal" in English and one of the most popular chants was "Down with Imperialism—Long Live Socialism".

Marcello Carega of the CLC said, "This action was an important step in the struggle to mobilize the workers for Mumia's freedom as part of an internationalist fight by the working class against all forms of social oppression around the world. We must use this, together with the dock workers stoppage in the U.S., to organize more and ever more extensive and powerful stoppages, strikes and mass street protests to win Mumia's freedom and against the racist death penalty."

WV's New Crop...

continued from page 61

is so utterly clear that it lays bare the cynical method behind WV's mad fabrications. The ICL is banking on its readers never seeing our answers to its smears or the LQB articles it lies about.

To leave no stone unturned, let us suppose that some ill-informed reader deduces from WV's article that the call for a worker-peasant alliance under revolutionary proletarian leadership is somehow alien to the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. The best answer is to go to the source, a text which states:

"Not only the agrarian, but also the national question assigns to the peasantry—the overwhelming majority of the population in backward countries—an exceptional place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realized in no other way than through an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie."

The author goes on to state that "the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party." He insists that "the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry" and solves the bourgeois-democratic tasks while carrying out the revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie and extending revolution to the imperialist centers.

The author is Leon Trotsky; the source, his theses "What Is the Permanent Revolution?" (in *The Permanent Revolution* [1930]). It is the program of Lenin and Trotsky that the Internationalist Group and the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil defend, as sections of the League for the Fourth International, against the epigones whose unending fabrications are the symptom of profound political degeneration. ■

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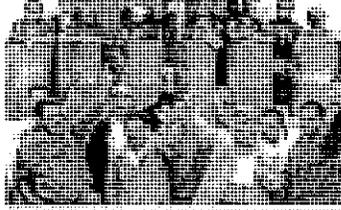
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