



“Operation Car Wash”: An Attack by the Police and Judiciary Threatening Democratic and Labor Rights

Brazil:

No to Impeachment!

For Workers Mobilization Against the Rightist Bourgeois Offensive

No Political Support to the Bourgeois Popular Front Government

For the past month, Brazil has been engulfed in a deep-going political crisis. A million *people marched in right-wing protests around the country on March 13 demanding impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers Party. In response, a half million protested in the streets on March 18 against impeachment, followed by tens of thousands on March 24 and 31. Meanwhile, a runaway corruption investigation threatens basic democratic rights. At the same time, the popular front government continues to push anti-working-class policies in its attempt to conciliate the aggressive right wing, and the left is divided between pro- and anti-government blocs. The following article, translated from a special supplement of Vanguarda Operária (April 2016) published by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, underscores why revolutionary Marxists call for workers mobilization against impeachment and the bonapartist threat, and at the same time to use that power against the attacks on working people by the both the feuding bourgeois forces.*

MARCH 30 – The train is underway, the clock is ticking. The countdown to the showdown over the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff has begun. The big business press is howling for the jailing of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. In the name of fighting corruption, “*Operação Lava Jato*” (Operation Car Wash)¹ has given the green light to the repressive apparatus. The judicial power and the police have

¹ The judicial “investigation” of kickbacks on contracts of the semi-privatized Petrobras oil company – now mainly owned by Wall Street investors but with the Brazilian state still controlling management – in which politicians of all major parties received payoffs, mainly to finance election campaigns. The earliest cases involved transfers of money at a car wash, “Lava Jato” (jet wash).

slipped the leash of civilian control, ignoring laws, placing themselves above any body elected by popular vote. Today they are attacking Dilma and Lula, tomorrow their targets will be the pensions, wages and jobs of working people – and the organizations of the workers movement. Make no mistake, democratic and labor rights are under attack. To defeat this sinister bonapartist offensive, we need a powerful revolutionary mobilization of the working class.

For the last 13 years, the Workers Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores) has governed together with the PCdoB² and with bourgeois parties in a *popular front*, a class-collaborationist coalition that chains the workers to capitalist sectors, their class enemies. The biggest of the bosses’ parties is the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), the eternal party of government for which the be all and end all is burrowing into the state apparatus in order to secure its sinecures. Now these rats are jumping ship as they see

² PCdoB – Communist Party of Brazil, formerly Maoist, now thoroughly social-democratized.

continued on page 3

Class Struggle Against the Bonapartist Threat. p. 9

The Role of Imperialism and the Military in the Crisis. p. 14

The SL/ICL Impeached by Its Own Past. p. 17

Lesson of History: Trotsky and Lenin on Kornilov and Kerensky

Simply rejecting the policies of the right-wing opposition and of the popular-front government while doing nothing about the threatening advance of the judicial and police power – which is the main characteristic of the Brazilian conjuncture at this moment – would be to abdicate the responsibility of defending the proletariat and the oppressed. We are confronting a situation in which the lessons of the Kerensky-Kornilov clash in Russia in 1917 are relevant, but without soviets and without a revolutionary Marxist party recognized by the masses such as the Bolsheviks.

Even though the situation is quite different in many respects, the question of how to respond to a deadly threat to the workers is the same. Trotsky explained the situation in his pamphlet *What Next: Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* (1932) in the face of the fascist escalation of the Nazis.

“During July and August 1917, Kerensky, then head of the government, was in fact fulfilling the program of Kornilov, the commander-in-chief of the army. He reinstated at the front military court-martials and the death penalty. He deprived the duly elected soviets of all influence upon government matters; he repressed the peasants; he doubled the price of bread (under the state trade monopoly of the foodstuffs); he prepared for the evacuation of revolutionary Petrograd; with Kornilov’s consent, he moved up counter-revolutionary troops towards the capital; he promised the Allies to initiate a new attack at the front, etc.”

But at the end of August, Kornilov broke with Kerensky, “because of the latter’s vacillation”.

“What course did the Bolshevik Party take? Not for an instant did it hesitate to conclude a practical alliance to fight against Kornilov with its jailers – Kerensky, Tseretelli,

Dan, etc. Everywhere committees for revolutionary defense were organized, into which the Bolsheviks entered as a minority. This did not hinder the Bolsheviks from assuming the leading role: in agreements projected for revolutionary mass action, the most thoroughgoing and the boldest revolutionary party stands to gain always. The Bolsheviks were in the front ranks; they smashed down the barriers blocking them from the Menshevik workers and especially from the Social Revolutionary soldiers, and carried them along in their wake.”

Russia at that moment was at war, there was a revolutionary situation, the risks were even greater than in Brazil today. But the fundamental lesson, that in the face of a mortal threat, one can make a military bloc, in action, without giving any political support to the bloc partner, is relevant. However, many pseudo-Trotskyists have deliberately misinterpreted the policy of Lenin and Trotsky at that moment, claiming that the Bolsheviks politically “defended” the Kerensky government. Quite false. As the League for the Fourth International quoted in 2009 in calling for a military bloc with supporters of Honduran President Zelaya, a conservative large landowner, against a coup d’état being mounted by Hillary Clinton, Lenin was quite explicit in the case of Kornilov vs. Kerensky:

“Our workers and soldiers will fight the counter-revolutionary troops ... not to defend this government ... but to independently defend the revolution as they pursue their own aim, the aim of securing victory for the workers, for the poor, for the cause of peace, and not for the imperialists, for Kerensky.... A Bolshevik would tell the Mensheviks: ‘We shall fight, of course, but we refuse to enter into any political alliance whatever with you’.”

–“Rumors of a Conspiracy” (August 1917) ■

Visit the League for the Fourth International/ Internationalist Group on the Internet

<http://www.internationalist.org>

Now available on our site:

- Founding Statement of the Internationalist Group
- Declaration of the League for the Fourth International
- Articles from *The Internationalist*
- Articles from *Vanguarda Operária*
- Articles from *El Internacionalista*
- Articles and documents in German, French and Pilipino
- The fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal
- Marxist readings



Visita la página del Grupo Internacionalista en Internet

Visite a página da Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

- Matérias de *Vanguarda Operária*
- A luta para libertar Mumia Abu-Jamal
- Documentos marxistas sobre a luta pela libertação do negro e da mulher

The Internationalist

A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism
for the Reforging of the Fourth International

Publication of the Internationalist Group,
section of the League for the Fourth International

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jan Norden (editor), Mark Lazarus, Abram Negrete, Marjorie Salzburg

The Internationalist (ISSN 1091-2843) is published bimonthly, skipping July-August, by Mundial Publications, P.O. Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A. Telephone: (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711 E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com Subscriptions: US\$10 for five issues.

Special Supplement



May 2016





Workers at Ford auto assembly plant in Brazil's ABC industrial region vote massively to "fight against the coup and in defense of labor rights," March 22. But that requires powerful class actions, including factory occupations and a general strike. The real coup that has to be resisted is the anti-worker offensive of capital – the budget cuts, privatizations and pension and labor "reforms" being pushed both by the bourgeois right and by the capitalist popular-front government led by the Workers Party of Lula and Dilma.

Impeachment...

continued from page 1

it going under. If this leads to a domino effect, other parties supporting the government may follow suit. The bourgeois "allies" are abandoning the PT. What will the PT do? Is it putting forward a more radical program in order to mobilize its working-class ranks? Not a chance. Lula, now acting as an informal advisor of Dilma, is doing everything possible to keep some PMDBers on board, and offering hundreds of positions given up by the deserters to the more than 20 smaller rent-a-parties in Congress. Those who play by the rules of phony bourgeois "democracy" will die by the rules of this fixed game, and the PT has made its choice.

For the popular front government, the departure of the PMDB will probably prove fatal. The PT dug its own grave, and chose the gravedigger. But if Dilma goes down, it will be difficult for the leaders of the "*picaretas*" (crooks) in Congress – Vice President Michel Temer, Chamber of Deputies president Eduardo Cunha and Senate president Renan Calheiros (all of them PMDB) – to take office. On the other hand, the barons of the PSDB³ like Senator José Serra, São Paulo state governor Geraldo Alckmin, former presidential candidate Aécio Neves and even ex-president

³ PSDB – Party of Brazilian Social Democracy, a "center-right" bourgeois party and main opposition in Congress.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso are facing legal charges on scandals like the "Banestado" scandal⁴ and the "trensão" scandal⁵. This gang has already been kicked out of demonstrations accused of being opportunists.

If the federal Supreme Court supports an interim government and the Superior Electoral Court calls new elections, Rede Globo (the right-wing press and TV behemoth) will try to get Marina Silva elected. Legislators of the PT and PSOL⁶ are already fleeing to her. Since Silva was formerly in the PT, they will try to calm the labor federations and set up another form of class collaboration. At the same time, she was the candidate of the evangelical right wing, maintaining good relations with agribusiness and the São Paulo bankers. In short, the perfect anti-PT candidate. And after a transition under Marina, with Judge Sérgio Moro of Operation Car Wash in the forefront, you can see the outlines of a bonapartist strong state dominated by courts and cops.

Be that as it may, the coup against working people – the deadly "fiscal adjustment" (budget cuts), the pension and labor "reforms" – are plowing ahead with the wind in their sails, whether under the command of the PT or the right, or of a "technical" government. Therefore, at the same time that it's necessary to mobilize the power of the workers movement to block the road of the bonapartist offensive, we must use this power against the anti-worker policies which unite the bourgeois forces in conflict, both the right-wing opposition and the popular front which is still in office. We need class actions – not vague "movements," but concrete measures – such as real, not symbolic, strikes and plant occupations to sink the budget cuts, the privatizations and the "reforms" ordered by big capital and imperialism, which is applying in Brazil the same program as in Greece. And to come out victorious, all this must be guided by a program of transitional slogans and measures which prepare the way to socialist revolution.

For that reason, our response to the ominous judiciary/police offensive amid the current deep political crisis in Brazil must be against the bourgeoisie and the labor lieutenants of

⁴ Over billions of dollars of tax evasion funneled through the Bank of the State of Paraná.

⁵ Over bid-rigging on contracts for the expansion of the São Paulo subway.

⁶ PSOL – Party of Socialism and Liberty, a social-democratic split-off from the PT.



Rightist mobilization with the FIESP duck calls for exterminating the Workers Party.

capital within the workers movement. We inscribe on our battle standards:

No to impeachment!

For workers mobilization against the bourgeois rightist offensive, no political support to the bourgeois popular-front government!

Forge a revolutionary workers party! Fight for a workers and peasants government, the beginning of the socialist revolution!

Rightist Bonapartist Offensive Against the Popular Front

At this moment, the workers, the impoverished black residents of the *favelas* (slums) and outskirts of the big cities, the students and women, the landless in the countryside and homeless in the cities cannot remain indifferent in the face of an offensive by the most reactionary forces of the country who want to throw the exploited and oppressed into absolute poverty. It is impossible not to see the hand of big business behind the large demonstrations. The Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP) has for some time been pushing for impeachment, with its gigantic inflated duck as a complaint against the taxes that would result from reintroducing the CMPF (a tax on financial movements by investors and speculators). Now there is an outpouring of statements by business entities, such as the “Communiqué to the Nation” by the National Confederation of Industry denouncing “chaos” and demanding “reestablishment of governability.” The anti-Dilma hard core meets in front of the FIESP headquarters on the Avenida Paulista in São Paulo where the leaders receive coffee, free Internet and lunch with filet mignon, while the pawns in the street get beef stroganoff.

It is also impossible to ignore the ostentatious participation by the militarized police in the rightist actions. Whether they are Military Police with guns, horses and *caveirões* (vans for transporting prisoners) or Federal Police delegates proclaiming, “I am from the Republic of Curitiba,” the city that is base from which super-judge Sérgio Moro directs his Operation Car Wash, the threat is unmistakable. Out there in “Moroland” a teacher who dares criticize on social media that students

dressed in black are calling for a coup d’état is persecuted as a “leftist” and “communist” and driven from her school. And at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, when a sizeable crowd protested a noisy pro-impeachment rally, the Military Police attacked with pepper gas and fired rubber bullets at those opposing the rightist provocation. If in the dying Roman Republic the rulers sought to silence the plebs by offering them “bread and circuses,” the decaying Brazilian bourgeoisie wants to impose its dictates by offering filet mignon and stroganoff to its people, and bullets for their adversaries. For now made of rubber. And if the country goes up in flames over impeachment?

Concerning that fraud, we are about to witness the spectacle of a trial of the president, who has not been accused of personal corruption, by a congress in which 60% of the deputies and senators – 351 out of 594 of the members of those august chambers – are under investigation for criminal activity, ranging from Car Wash and dubious campaign expenses to homicide. The big business right wing is seeking to grab what it was unable to win at the polls: as soon as PTer Dilma began her second term, the *tucano* (PSDB) losers began the marches trying to overthrow her. In the Congressional den of thieves, horse-trading and vote-buying among the 25 parties is so flagrant that they have a “party window,” a period of a couple weeks in which legislators can change their party without penalty if they get a better offer. In this year’s parliamentary auction, some 90 legislators switched parties. But there remains a minor problem by the name of Eduardo Cunha, the president of the Chamber of Deputies who will be leading the impeachment process, and who is being investigated for his millions stashed away in secret accounts in Switzerland.

But this chief of the parliamentary bandits is taking advantage of the party swapping to push a bill to alter the composition of the Ethics Commission in order to get a majority in favor of burying the procedure that would expel him from the Chamber. And since the basis for the original articles of impeachment is quite weak, if not to say non-existent, the Order of Attorneys of Brazil (OAB) has just submitted another bill with different charges. Forget about the alleged “crimes” (of “responsibility,” i.e., the president is not accused of personally doing anything), at bottom this is on the one hand an act of political revenge, a clash between two factions of the bourgeoisie, the traditional right wing and the popular front. On the other hand, it offers the chance to shatter the PT, a reformist workers party – or as Lenin described the British Labour Party, a “bourgeois workers” party – and thereby weaken worker resistance to the economic reforms seeking to jack up the profit rate. As a banner in front of the FIESP duck said during the right-wing occupation of the Avenida Paulista, “Exterminating the PT: Priceless.”

As for the Car Wash “investigation,” Judge Moro assumes messianic airs in raising the Public Prosecutor’s Office on high, placing the judiciary above the Three Powers of the Republic,



Military Police saluting in front of their new armored cars in a gesture of support for the pro-impeachment march on Avenida Paulista, São Paulo, March 13.

far beyond anything imagined by one of those who thought up the separation of powers, Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu. Intimately aware of the visceral crisis consuming the other two powers of the Republic, the would-be master judge has shown partiality and obstinate ideological intent: the effort to destroy the PT while causing the least possible damage to the PSDB jumps out before your eyes. This new Batman with his black cape has judged with equal emphasis the PT leadership and leaders of all the top concerns with whom he collaborated. The judge of Curitiba is able to pull this off this because he has the backing of powerful national and imperialist forces, and the support of these companies' competitors who want to return to the feeding trough so that they can savor the tasty main dishes which the top contractors were able to enjoy instead of having to content themselves with leftovers.

The charges against Dilma and Lula, suffice it to say, are based on absurd pretexts. The president is accused of transferring money from one state financial agency in order to temporarily cover expenses of another agency, and thereby avoid an interruption of service: these are the famous "*pedaladas*" (financial finagling). Governments around the world do this all the time. The ex-president, on the other hand, is accused of being the "true" owner of an apartment of 215 square meters in Guarujá, and of a seaside property in Altibaia which has peddle boats and which he visits from time to time. In both cases he denies being the owner, with documents in hand, and even if they were true, they are hardly crimes. The other charge, that he was paid hefty sums by the Odebrecht construction firm, also is not a crime according to bourgeois law. But his justification gives stunning proof of how the mentality of the "simple worker" of the past has evolved. "People get

upset that I charged US\$200,000, but it doesn't bother them that Clinton charges a million dollars to come here to speak to the National Council of Industry," he remarked. Lula is speaking like a true Paulo Maluf.⁷ But Bill Clinton is not the leader of a party which claims to represent the workers.

If today Judge Sérgio Moro considers himself to be above the other powers, with strong elements of bonapartism, the PT is all to blame and now is itself experiencing the poisonous effects of its class collaboration. The constituent assemblies which produced the Magna Carta of 1988, where Lula played a leading role as the candidate who received the highest number of votes, designed within the limits of bourgeois democracy a strong public prosecutor's office suppos-

edly to protect citizens against excesses by the state. Now the Car Wash judge is using the practically untouchable status of the federal prosecutor's office to project himself as the supreme arbiter of the nation. Moreover, almost the entire judiciary of the country was appointed by the popular front government. The PT didn't reform the judiciary precisely because it sought to collaborate with the bourgeoisie, principally over labor cases or those that could bring a modicum of justice to those down below, yet take decades before a verdict is rendered.

In order to secure its position in government, the PT made a bloc with the top companies including Odebrecht, OAS, Cmarco Correia, Andrade Gutierrez and other construction contractors which were founded or gorged themselves during the military dictatorship. We have here one more proof that the popular-front governments not only allied themselves with imperialism, but also with big capital nationally, causing resentment to fester everywhere among the medium-sized and small capitalists and their party representatives in Congress.

In truth, the leaders of the PSDB are the true fathers and mothers of the "*mensalão*"⁸, "*trensão*" and "*petrolão*"⁹, where the evidence and proof against that party are as strong

⁷ A notoriously corrupt politician who during the military dictatorship was named governor of São Paulo and later ran for president with the junta's backing, and who in recent years has supported Dilma's popular-front government.

⁸ The scandal over monthly payoffs to bourgeois parties and politicians in Congress, principally to buy their support for the PT-led popular-front government. See "Brazil: Lula Against the Workers – Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!" The Internationalist, May 2006, and "Brazil: The Election Racket of the Bourgeoisie," The Internationalist No. 38, October-November 2014.

⁹ An earlier name for Operation Car Wash

as that which Moro has used to condemn the PT leadership. The scales of Judge Moro intentionally tilt to one side. However, accusations of corruption are more problematical for the PT, which arrived in the Palácio do Planalto (Brazil's White House) with middle-class votes promising "ethics in politics." And the reality is more instrumental for the PT governments because it is not simply a matter of personal enrichment but served as a key means of maintaining the popular front and its coalition with the bourgeois elements that are the base of its government. As we wrote at the time of the "*mensalão*" scandal:

"The innovation of Lula's government was to convert the 'presents' into a monthly subsidy, in order to 'rent the allied parties' that the government relied on in Congress, as [former PT treasurer] Jefferson put it. This was the direct result of the government's lack of a parliamentary majority, and was part of an effort to extend the popular front to include notorious rightist elements such as Antônio Carlos Magalhães [leader of the Northeastern landowners], Orestes Quércia and Paulo Maluf, dinosaurs left over from the military dictatorship, all of them accused of corruption and under investigation by parliamentary commissions (which were then dismissed, when they reached agreement with the PT leadership). The *mensalão* (fat monthly payoff) was the counterpart of the '*frentão popular*' (the expanded popular front).

"Corruption is a constant in bourgeois politics. It is the axle grease that makes the gears of the capitalist state machinery function, so that the government of the day can serve as the executive committee of the ruling class, meshing the interests of its different factions. It particularly annoys the 'proper' petty bourgeoisie and social-democratic reformists because it reveals the dirty reality behind the mythology of the 'neutrality' of the state, providing concrete proof of how this state defends the interests of capital, not of 'everyone'." –"Brazil: Lula Against the Workers – Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!" *The Internationalist*, May 2006

Our indictment of Lula, Dilma and the PT is diametrically opposed to that of the bourgeois right: they charge corruption in order to get rid of a government which was hesitant in imposing anti-worker policies. The accusation of class-conscious proletarians is that with its "tips" (bribes), the PT bought bourgeois support so that its popular front could attack the workers.

The Betrayals of Lula and Dilma's PT Against the Workers and In Favor of the Bourgeoisie

From its beginnings, the PT saw itself as a parliamentarist party, its feet firmly planted on the capitalist terrain. Even the original PT, so beloved of pseudo-Trotskyists today, never declared itself socialist. Its slogan was "perfecting democracy." The lesson that Lula and his advisors drew from his two previous (unsuccessful) presidential campaigns was to shift his program even further to the right in order to reassure the bourgeoisie of his reliability. They carried out purge after purge – the most notable being of Causa Operária (Workers Cause), today the PCO, and Convergência Socialista, today the PSTU (United Socialist Workers Party) – in order to

cleanse the party in preparation for becoming the bourgeois government with a minimum of ideological constraints. Lula wrote his famous "Letter to the Brazilian People" (June 2002) – which was really addressed to the International Monetary Fund and Wall Street bankers, and their junior partners in the Bovespa (São Paulo stock market) – promising to continue the policies of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (of the PSDB), with a primary budgetary surplus (i.e., before debt payments).

At the same time as they kicked out leftist elements from the PT, the architects of the popular front, Stalinist ex-guerrilleros José Dirceu and José Genoino, along with the clerical left (Frei Betto), sought to attract elements of the capitalist parties to the PT. In the energy sector, for example, they recruited Dilma Rousseff, who today is mainly known for being an ex-guerrillera but who for 20 years was a cadre of the PDT¹⁰, a populist bourgeois party in the "*trabalhista*" (labor) tradition led by Leonel Brizola; and Delcídio Amaral, who was a political operator for the PSDB in Petrobras and then assumed the same role for the PT, and who recently submitted a bought confession (*delação premiada*) in return for lenient treatment by Judge Moro. Direceu, who was president of the PT from 1995 until he was succeeded by Genoino, dreamt up the "*mensalão*" scheme, and after his fall as Lula's chief of state founded JD Consultancy in order to continue the lucrative work. He probably dreamed of converting the PT into a bourgeois party.

Immediately upon assuming office, the popular front under Lula's presidency pushed through a "reform" of the pension system, attacking the benefits of public sector workers, and expelled another slice of the PT left around the Democracia Socialista current. It was leaders of this tendency who in 1990 purged the leadership of the PT in Volta Redonda who opposed the first Frente Brasil Popular (and who went on to form the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil in 1996). But after flinching over the subsequent (late 1990s) expulsions, a large part of the DS later found itself outside the PT for disagreeing with that reform. In the same period, Lula figured out how to gain favor with Washington. Following the kidnapping of the elected president of Haiti, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in a coup carried out by troops of the U.S., France and Canada, the PT president sent Brazilian troops to serve as mercenary forces in imposing an imperialist occupation on the only country in the world where a revolution of former slaves was successful. It was in Haiti that Lula sealed his alliance with imperialism.

From then on, the attacks have not ceased. The "Bolsa Família" (Family Stipend) is frequently cited as the great achievement of the PT government, even though it was a continuation of the "Bolsa Escolar" (School Stipend) of Henrique Cardoso and was a recommendation of Milton Friedman, the economic advisor of the Pinochet dictatorship

¹⁰ PDT: Democratic Labor Party, a split from the PTB (Brazilian Labor Party) founded by Getúlio Vargas, the nationalist strong man who after coming to power in a 1930 coup d'état ruled the country until 1945 and was later elected president in the 1950s. Since Vargas' time, populist politics in Brazil have traditionally adopted a labourite rhetoric even though the parties are solidly bourgeois.

Photos: Julio Cesar Guimaraes/UOL; Sergio Moraes/Reuters



The National Security Force, created by Lula, represses oil workers and other demonstrators protesting in Rio de Janeiro against the auctioning of the Campo de Libra oil fields, October 2013.

in Chile and father of neo-liberalism. Such programs fit right in with the free-market ideology which approves of welfare programs “in order to ameliorate the life of the neediest” in exchange for eliminating the rights of working people, such as public health, pensions and public education. That is why the United Nations has recommended Bolsa Familia for poor countries. The same could be said of the ProUni (“University for All”) program, which has only enriched the sharks of private education while public schools, from the criminal abandonment of the CIEPs (Centers of Integrated Education) to the universities, were left to decay. Education workers fighting against wage slashing and poverty have led some of the most militant demonstrations and strikes, such as the strikes of the Rio de Janeiro teachers in 2013 and 2014, and in São Paulo and Paraná in 2015.

The peasants and indigenous peoples were already and are still being brutally attacked by the big landowners, who ever since Lula won the support of orange juice exporters in his 2002 election campaign have enjoyed privileged access in Brasília. From 2010 on, Dilma gave the PMDB control of the Agriculture Ministry, currently being run by the direct

representative of agribusiness, Kátia (“Chain-saw”) Abreu. As a result, the numbers of expropriations for agrarian reform settlements under the popular front governments have been well below those of Henrique Cardoso, and in the last year there have been none. The union and labor reform is being carried out piece by piece, and the government has already sent to Congress a series of bills which will undo decades of gains by the Brazilian working class. Even amid the tumult of recent days, on March 17 Dilma signed the anti-terrorism law to inhibit social protests, above all by the working class, which will be used to prohibit demonstrations against the August Olympics, to suppress mobilizations against fare hikes for public transportation, and – why not? – may even be used in the case of demonstrations against impeachment.

In the *favelas* and poor districts, the killing of poor people and black people is increasing. With the National Security Force (FNS) formed by Lula, the popular front has attacked social protests. The privatizations, tax breaks and preferences for big business continue, as shown by the cases of CSN (the privatized National Steel Company), Petrobras and Samarco¹¹. The internal and foreign debt are paid on time and to the letter, sucking resources out of the country. These facts could be multiplied at length, but this is already more than enough proof that ever since taking office the PT adopted the most far-reaching bourgeois plans, including some that even the military dictatorship did not dare undertake. This proves that the function of the

popular front is not to carry out reforms, but rather to wear down the workers movement and demoralize working people to the point that the traditional bourgeois parties no longer need the help of a workers party, even with a pro-capitalist leadership, and can return to the feeding trough in order to directly control the “public” tax receipts. Evidently, the Brazilian bourgeoisie thinks it has reached that point.

What Is To Be Done?

What, then, should be the policy of revolutionary Marxists in this context of sharp class struggle?

At bottom what we are experiencing in Brazil is a variant of the right-wing offensive that is taking place pretty much everywhere in South America and elsewhere around the globe in the wake of the defeat of uprisings and defensive workers struggles within traditional frameworks (street demonstrations, one- or two-day “general strikes, the rise of bourgeois populist politicians and parties) set off by the capitalist crisis

¹¹ The giant mining conglomerate was responsible for the 2015 dam break that dumped millions of cubic meters of iron waste and poisoned water supplies over much of the state of Minas Gerais in the worst environmental disaster in Brazilian history..

which exploded in 2007-2008. Today and over the past year, part of the Brazilian left sought salvation in the arms of the dying popular front while another part has lined up with the antediluvian right, and a smaller section wants to sit atop the fence in the dispute. Despite their differences, all of these groupings place themselves on the terrain of “democratic” struggles within the bourgeois regime.

Most likely there will be no coup, since with impeachment the right wing will have obtained its primary goal. But meanwhile we are faced with a dangerous offensive by the judicial and police powers, and the offensive by the entire bourgeoisie against the working people is proceeding at top speed. It's fundamental to understand that there is no solution under capitalism to the deep economic crisis which gave rise to the Brazilian political crisis. Only by fighting for workers mobilization leading to socialist revolution can we defeat the attempts to shield capital against the resistance of the workers who are bearing on their backs the entire weight of a system that is degenerating into barbarism, where democratic rights and the rights of workers and the oppressed are giving way to the reactionary offensive. We urgently need a revolutionary proletarian response.

Today in Brazil Lula and Dilma have heavily attacked the interests of the working people in defense of the bourgeoisie, which their popular-front government represents. There is utterly justified rejection of the PT among important layers of the youth and proletarian sectors. Thousands feel that Lula betrayed those who voted for him. One must acknowledge that at least part of this sense of betrayal comes from the belief that Lula, Dilma and their pals discredited the workers movement: that is, it reflects the pressure of the cynical bourgeois media campaign. But this should not keep us from seeing the capitalist offensive behind the mask of the struggle “against corruption,” which is preparing an attack against the workers, the poor, the youth and all the oppressed.

Currently there are at least 55 bills and constitutional amendments in Congress which threaten the interests of the working class: unlimited contracting out of jobs, allowing individual contracts, preventing fired workers from appealing to the labor courts, giving negotiated contracts priority over law, regulating rather than prohibiting slave labor, etc. If the popular-front government headed by Dilma and Lula remains in office, they will be pressuring and attacking our rights on a daily basis as they seek to conciliate the right wing and its political partners of the PMDB, the PP¹², and to defend capital. But if the bonapartist right wins, they will proceed with the entire weight of the judicial police apparatus behind them. For that very reason we must use our own class strength to block these executioners.

There are contradictions which revolutionaries can make use of between the working-class base of the union federations and bourgeois workers parties on the one hand, and the tops in the popular-front government. Even though they

are “*chapa branca*” (subservient to the regime), the national leadership of the CUT (United Workers Confederation) is formally opposed to the new pension reform, even though in reality it stands in the way of a genuine mobilization against it. The leadership of the Metal Workers Union of the ABC Region had the workers in the Ford, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and other assembly plants vote a motion pledging the “fight against the coup and in defense of labor rights.” At the same time, it nixes struggle, saying “For now, our framework is resistance. Later it will be to advance.” All these bureaucrats are sellouts, labor lieutenants of capital, an obstacle to workers struggle. Workers should reject the call for a truce with the bosses and the bourgeois government, and instead:

–Prepare *escalating work stoppages, factory occupations, blocking of highways and intersections, and taking over public buildings* (city halls, etc.) beginning immediately at the local, regional and national levels, by all unions and labor federations to quickly arrive at an

–*Unlimited general strike to smash the judiciary/police right-wing threat, block impeachment by the nest of corrupt politicians in Congress, prevent the budget cuts and sink the privatizations and labor and pension “reforms”;*

–*Form elected strike and occupation committees, recallable at any time* at the factory and industrial area level, in the schools and universities, the hospitals, banks and stores, followed by *unifying these committees into workers councils* at the municipal regional and national levels; formation of *workers defense guards to defend against repression*;

–Work out in these committees and councils a platform of demands to be achieved by workers action to *put an end to contracting out jobs, raise the minimum wage to above the cost of the basket of basic necessities as calculate by the DIEESE, ban layoffs and implement a workweek of 30 hours without any cut in pay* (the sliding scale of workers and hours) in order to eliminate unemployment;

–Against Operation Car Wash and the phony investigation of corruption which in reality seeks the destruction and privatization of the former state-owned company, now in the grip of Wall Street, undertake a *strike and occupation of all installations of Petrobras and all private oil companies* in order to impose *workers control*, expelling the top managers and *opening the books to workers inspection*, to reveal who is profiting from the product of the workers toil; and, above all,

–*For proletarian opposition against the bourgeois right wing and the bourgeois popular front in power*, no vote for any party participating in such a political alliance of class collaboration; *break with the PT, the PCdoB and all the bourgeois workers parties* whose bought-off leaders have sacrificed the workers gains; and *forge the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party* on the basis of the program of permanent revolution, to fight for a *workers and peasants government, the start of the international socialist revolution!* ■

¹² Progressive Party, a right-wing party until recently headed by Maluf, which includes ultra-rightist and militarist elements.

World Economic Crisis Behind the Rightist Offensive

For Class Struggle Against the Bonapartist Threat in Brazil

In the present acute political crisis which is shaking the country, a string of explosive revelations, shifting parliamentary alliances, arbitrary actions by the repressive apparatus and huge street mobilizations are presented in the bourgeois media as a struggle over “corruption.” Yet the latter has been a constant in Brazilian capitalist politics for the last century, especially during the “democratic” periods. The idea that there is a moral “cleansing” underway among the rulers is an illusion and a pretext. In reality, there are three main elements of the crisis: first, a political struggle marking the end of the popular-front government that has been in office for the last 13 years; secondly, a blatant attempt by the judicial and police organs to free themselves of all civilian control on the road to an authoritarian regime; and third, underlying it all, the consequences of the world capitalist economic crisis.

The economic crisis of the capitalist system which exploded in 2007-2008 is the deepest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The falling rate of profit on productive investments led to a series of speculative “bubbles” which exploded, one after another. In the imperialist centers, a new depression (not a cyclical recession) broke out which will take years – probably more than a decade – to be overcome by the destruction of capital (either through bankruptcies or war) and heavy blows against the working class which in combination would restore the profitability of capital. As a result of the crisis, not only industrial workers but sectors of educated youth were suddenly thrown into unemployment. These were the ones who initiated the 2011 protests in North African countries (Tunisia, Egypt), which a few months later crossed the Mediterranean and appeared in the “movements of the squares” (the so-called Indignados, or “Outraged”) in Portugal, Spain, Greece and later in Turkey, and subsequently in the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States.

In the case of Brazil, after a year of an abrupt decline in economic activity followed by an equally rapid recovery, that depression wasn’t immediately felt due to the enormous expansion of raw materials exports to China, which as a deformed workers state with an economy still subject to (bureaucratic)



Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in rightist protest against the popular-front government of Dilma Rousseff at the starting point of the rally in front of the headquarters of the São Paulo State Federation of Industry (FIESP) on the Avenida Paulista, São Paulo, March 13.

planning was able to defend itself against the capitalist economic crisis. But little by little, with the declining economic growth in China, the effects of the crisis finally affected Brazil. This was seen in the explosive street protests in 2013, initiated by students in São Paulo and the South which later extended to broad layers of the workers and poor throughout the country. Now the addition of the steep fall in the price of oil has led to the biggest economic crisis in decades. The traditional bourgeoisie wants to throw the blame on the government of Dilma Rousseff. The Workers Party (PT), for its part, enlisted Lula to supposedly return to the golden years. But no politician and no policy can substantially alter the capitalist crisis. Only workers revolution offers a way out for the working people.

Throughout the world, the revolts of 2010-11 by the youth and other sectors hit by the crisis have achieved nothing. The bankers, who unleashed the collapse of the financial markets, came out ahead thanks to the trillions of dollars which were given to them for free by the imperialist governments and central banks. Meanwhile, the rest of the population (including important sectors of the previously well-off petty bourgeoisie) is suffering unemployment, many of them have already lost their homes, their retirement savings have gone up in smoke, etc. Due

to the submission of the trade-union leaderships to the demands of capital, the workers movement either has not put up major resistance (in the case of the U.S.), or ended up capitulating after first initiating defensive protests without a perspective of defeating the capitalist offensive (workers struggles in Europe, or in Wisconsin in the U.S.). As a result of these defeats there arose a series of bourgeois populist electoral movements, like SYRIZA in Greece or the current candidacy of Bernie Sanders in the U.S. But populism cannot combat the capitalist system, and thus it leads again to defeat, forcing the masses to swallow the poison of “austerity,” as we saw with the spectacular about-turn by the Tsipras government in Athens last year.

Movements Evolving to the Far Right

The result of this panorama of defeats is the rise of a new wave of reactionary protests, expressed in support for fascist forces (the National Front in France) or violent racists (the Trump candidacy in the U.S.). In Brazil, the street protests over the last year have the same rightist character, resulting from the defeat of the struggles of the “hot winter” of 2013 and of the struggles against the World Cup (against repression, cutbacks in education, public health, etc.). But the current mobilizations have the specific character of being directed against the dying popular-front government, and its main force, the reformist PT of Lula and Dilma. The big rightist mobilization of March 13, although its main slogan was “against corruption” and while it came off peacefully, was marked by clear hatred against anything leftist.

Begun by the traditional conservative parties calling for the impeachment of Dilma, the marches have evolved in an authoritarian direction, with calls on the judges, the police and military to clean out the dens of corruption. In turn, this is the “popular” reflection of a *sinister bonapartist revolt brewing in the repressive organs of power against civilian authority*. The PT left (PT, PCdoB, PCO and smaller groups) has identified the offensive against President Dilma Rousseff as a “coup.” In itself, impeachment does not signify a break in the bourgeois democratic “order.” The impeachment of Fernando Collor (in 1992) was not a coup. However, in the last month things have changed: what was latent in the past is now dominating political developments. The order for the search, detention and “coercive transfer” of the ex-president to the Congonhas Airport to be interrogated by the Federal Police on March 4 was a notification on the part of the judicial and police apparatus that they were placing themselves above the representative and executive powers of the state.

If the repressive organs gain autonomy in order to effectively dominate a government, whether by a coup d'état or behind the façade of a “technical” or “transition” government, this would be de facto a bonapartist regime, a “state of exception” which is anti-democratic, even within the bourgeois framework. Not every popular front ends in a Pinochet-type coup d'état (Chile) or civil war (Spain). The twilight of Léon Blum's popular front in the 1930s was marked by a succession of governments, first of the bourgeois sector of the front, the Radical Party, and later by increasingly rightist and authoritarian governments ending up with the French State of Marshal Pétain. As the Popular Front

was decaying, despite its attacks on the workers, the Trotskyists called for workers resistance at every step of this downward spiral without giving support to any of the parties of this bourgeois alliance, including the SFIO (socialist) and PCF.

Beginning in March 2015, the PSDB (Party of Brazilian Social Democracy) of Geraldo Alckmin, Aécio Neves and José Serra began a series of large-scale mobilizations around the country in an offensive to bring down the government of Dilma and the popular front by parliamentary means. From the beginning, the marches have had a presence of fascist elements, who were also present in the 2013 protests without determining the character of those mobilizations. However, the March 13 march showed a notable evolution. In addition to the Nazi and monarchist elements, among the ordinary demonstrators the mobilization was one of praise for the “hero” judge Sérgio Moro, the theatrical director of *Operação Lava Jato* (Operation Car Wash), as the savior of the nation. There were cries of “Super-Moro,” t-shirts with the image of Moro, placards proclaiming “Moro: Pride of the Nation,” “Pride of Brazil,” etc. In Brasília there was an enormous banner saying “We Are Sérgio Moro.” In São Paulo and Goiânia and elsewhere there were identical printed banners with a photo of the judge saying,



Veja



Demonstrators in March 13 rally hail the “Super-Judge” and “national hero” Sérgio Moro as the savior of the nation.

Felipe Malavasi/Democratize



Kim Katagiri of the Movimento Brasil Livre (Free Brazil Movement), an ultra-rightist and racist outfit founded and funded by imperialist right-wingers.

YouTube



Federal Police delegate inciting demonstrators to demand police “autonomy” from all civilian control.

“We Are All Sérgio Moro,” followed by “Put Lula in Jail.”

Judge Moro, for his part, issued a declaration thanking people for the praise, highlighting the close collaboration of the Federal Police and the Public Prosecutor’s Office, and saying that the politicians should listen to and obey this supposed “voice of the people.” The March 13 mobilizations calling for the impeachment of Dilma and the jailing of Lula brought over a million people into the streets, quite a bit less than the 4 million claimed by the organizers, but still a very large number. According to all reports and videos, the demonstrators were overwhelmingly white, with very few workers. Datafolha reported, based on a survey in Sao Paulo, that almost two thirds (63%) had incomes of more than five times the minimum wage: a well-to-do petty bourgeois and bourgeois crowd. Above all, its political purpose had little to do with a struggle against “corruption” but was rather aimed at throwing the PT out of the Palácio do Planalto (Brazil’s White House) before the next regular elections in 2018.

This is an inter-bourgeois dispute between the right-wing opposition and the governing popular front. We politically oppose both of the squabbling camps because there are capitalist forces carrying out anti-worker policies. The question of politi-

cal corruption has always been a battle cry of ultra-rightist and fascist forces, as in the famous *affaire Stavisky* in France in the 1930s. At that level, revolutionaries are mainly interested in revealing the details of how capital gets the government to defend its interests, both individually and as a class. Whether it buys influence wholesale, as in the United States with its huge political action committees financed by big business, or at a retail level, as in Brazil, or even if the capitalist state finances electoral campaign costs, these are all methods to guarantee that capital controls elections. We are against the impeachment of Dilma not because the president and her coalition are supposedly more progressive, but instead because it is above all a settling of accounts and political vengeance being pushed by reactionary forces whose victory would aggravate the attacks on democratic and trade-union rights of workers and the oppressed.

Interestingly, when the PSDB politicians Alckmin and Neves arrived at the demonstration where they expected to receive an enthusiastic greeting they were booed as “opportunists” and “assholes.” When the pair approached the tent of the Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL – Free Brazil Movement), people shouted out “you’re thieves, too.” And when instead of climbing atop the sound truck of the MBL they decided to leave, even then they were accompanied by shouts of “*fora*” (get out). The same happened with Serra of the PSDB and Marta Suplicy (currently of the PMDB, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement, the main bourgeois component of the popular-front coalition government under Rousseff) during their lightning visits. On the other hand, the ultra-rightist DEM (“Democrats,” continuation of Arena, the political vehicle of the military junta that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985) is now formally participating in the leadership of the protests. Another confirmation that the “anti-corruption” commotion is evolving toward the far right were the many favorable references in interviews with demonstrators about Jair Messias Bolsonaro, the former parachutist congressman of the “*bancada da bala*” (the “bullet fraction” of parliament), notorious for his praise of the military dictatorship and torture, and for supporting the rape of congresswomen. A typical commentary by a businessman was, “There’s only Bolsonaro, but the Army would be better” (*Folha de São Paulo*, 14 March).

The MBL, the main organizer of the São Paulo protests, is part of the racist far right. It was founded by a group, Students for Freedom, financed by the Charles Koch Fund in the United States, which is also active in Venezuela and Ukraine. In the National Congress, on March 22, the spokesman for the “Democrats” asked that MBL coordinator Fernando Holiday speak on behalf of the DEM against the celebration of the International Day of Struggle for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which commemorates the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa on 21 March 1960. The MBL representative ripped up a piece of paper with the Hymn of Negritude, saying that it “belonged in the trash.” Last year, on 15 March 2015, the calls for military intervention were so insistent and frequent that the MBL had to pretend to distance itself from them, and in fact they were less frequent this year. Which doesn’t mean that these scum changed their views, only that they know how to disguise them and that they have a new

savior, Judge Moro (and his armed wing, the Federal Police). Even so, on March 13 in Rio there were banners like “Only a new military intervention can reestablish order, morality and dignity to the Brazilian people.” Earlier, on March 4, the day of the temporary detention of Lula by the Federal Police, in the anti-PT march in São Paulo there was a banner “Federal Police, Pride of the Nation.”

Beyond that there is the noteworthy presence of the Military Police (PM) in support of the protests (to “monitor” them for their “protection”), its acts of solidarity with the demonstrators and vice-versa. On March 13 there was a photo of PMs ostentatiously saluting on the Avenida Paulista (São Paulo’s main business thoroughfare) while showing off their brand-new armored trucks imported from Israel. There was also a video of São Paulo military police saluting in support of the protests and being applauded by the demonstrators. It’s not only the Military Police. Another video of the same march shows representatives of the Federal Police (PF) speaking from a platform full of cops on Avenida Paulista, calling for “autonomy” for the PF vis à vis the government, a slogan which the crowd massively took up. On the same occasion, a policewoman explained in detail for more than five minutes the content of PEC (Draft Constitutional Amendment) 412 which calls for “autonomy [of the police] to investigate, without limitations, the corruption in the country.”

But they not only salute and whip up the public in support of the anti-Dilma protests, they also act against those who oppose impeachment. Two days before the mega-march in São Paulo, on March 11 according to a report on Telesur, Military Police armed with a machine gun and revolvers invaded an event supporting Lula in the hall of the Union of Metal Workers of Diadema in the ABC industrial area. And once again, on the night of March 21 at the Pontifical Catholic University in São Paulo, when several hundred students made a counter-demonstration against a pro-impeachment protest, the PM intervened to protect the rightists. And when the left-ist counter-demonstrators began to chant, “I want to end the Military Police,” the cops unleashed tear gas grenades, pepper gas and rubber bullets against the left-wing students (article in *Folha de S. Paulo*, 22 March).

Judicial/Police Action: A Bonapartist Offensive

Operation Car Wash is an investigation by the Federal Police which was later handed over to the Federal Prosecutor’s Office specializing in money laundering, dating back to 2009 and whose public phase began in March 2014. From the outset it has been a media production, with leaks to media eager for a scoop and dramatic made-for-TV police actions. In fact it resembles a *telenovela* (television soap opera), already in its 27th installment, each one baptized with a dramatic name. Its 24th installment, called Aletheia, began on March 4 at 5:50 a.m. when a caravan of Federal Police vehicles, armed with a “search and detention” order authorized by federal judge Sérgio Moro, entered the garage of the building where Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva lives in São Bernardo do Campo while others

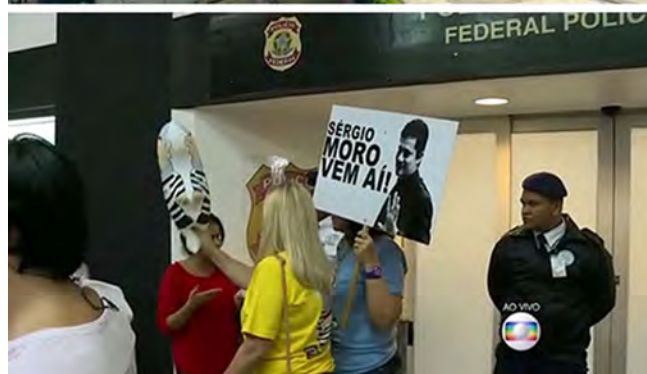
secured the perimeter. The ex-president was taken in “coercive transfer” to the Federal Police post at the Congonhas Airport to “make a deposition” (i.e., to be interrogated by the police).

The target was Lula. At the same time 43 other “search and detention” orders were executed against family members of officials of the Lula Institute. The accusations, as we have already indicated, were absurd, which he countered with documented proof and in any case are of little import, even according to bourgeois laws. The real crimes of Lula against the working people are different, and there are many, notably of chaining the workers to their capitalist class enemies through the popular front, to serve as a sheriff for Yankee imperialism in the Caribbean, providing mercenary troops for the occupation of Haiti, and then after ending his presidential period, turning into a kind of ambassador of the giant construction contractor Odebrecht, notorious for safety violations on its construction sites and “labor in conditions analogous to slavery” in one of its projects in Angola. But whether or not the ex-president and PT leader was guilty of any crime was not what the judicial and police authorities were interested in. Even though Judge Moro said later that he “didn’t anticipate guilt” (then why so much theater?), the clear objective was to produce the image of “prisoner Lula,” like the giant puppet-balloons of him in a prison uniform that floated above the March 13 demonstrations.

However, there are indications that in reality the intention went beyond that, to possibly arresting him and taking him as a prisoner to Curitiba (Moro’s set of operations), and that the



Stills from videos of G1



A Brazilian Air Force plane waiting outside the Federal Police post at the Congonhas airport during the “deposition” (interrogation) of Lula. At the same time, rightist supporters of Judge Moro blocked entrance to the PF post.

Reuters



The Military Police violently attacked PT supporters who arrived at Lula's residence in São Bernardo do Campo on the morning of March 4 to protest against the "coercive transfer" of the ex-president.

rapid arrival of furious PTers around his house and the presence of hundreds protesting noisily in the airport convinced them not to try this. A video of the G1 chain (part of the Globo Network) shows a Brazilian air force plane ready to receive passengers parked just opposite the Federal Police post at the airport, which according to the journalist was totally cut off, with supporters of Judge Moro blocking the entrance. The next day, March 5, Judge Moro attacked the PT protests as "acts of violence." On March 9, São Paulo state prosecutors denounced Lula on the same grounds cited by the Car Wash judge, and the next day they called for the ex-president to be placed under preventive arrest on the basis of their indictment. It's notable that all this occurred after Lula declared that he would again be a candidate for the presidency in 2018. "Operation Aletheia" was a political show and a demonstration of repressive force.

If the temporary detention of Lula on March 4 was the prior notification, authorizing wiretaps by the Federal Police of conversations between the ex-president and the current president of the republic, and then publicizing the March 17 conversation these on the grounds of "public interest," was the announcement by Judge Moro of the independence and supremacy of the judicial/police apparatus under his command. In just about every capitalist state, the actions of the super-judge, his prosecutorial task-force and the police would have led to loud calls to begin a process of removal of the judge and for the immediate firing of the head of the Federal Police and all those involved in the wiretapping. But Dilma did nothing, because she couldn't, she has already lost a large part of her control over the machinery of state. Meanwhile, when the government announced it was looking for a new director of the Federal Police, and the new minister of justice who theoretically controls the PF announced that he would replace the entire team if there was an information leak (as there was in this case), a judge of the Superior Court of Justice gave him 72 hours to produce an explanation. And when Lula was indicated as chief of staff of the presidency, the Federal Supreme Court justice Gilmar Mendes, a political operator

of the PSDB, suspended the action and sent the case to Car Wash judge Moro.

Evidently, the overbearing actions of the "Republic of Curitiba" have led to certain worries in the higher levels of power in Brasília. Marco Aurélio Mello of the Federal Supreme Court declared that wiretapping the Palácio do Planalto "harms the Constitution and constitutes an assault on national sovereignty." The justice who is managing the Car Wash case in the high court instructed Judge Moro to send all relevant material about investigations involving Lula to the Supreme Court. Two weeks later, a plenary session of the Supreme Court upheld the decision and declared the recording and publication of conversations to be illegal, recalling the excesses of police and judges who carried out illegal bugging of telephones on the pretext that it was accidental. But while the justices in their black robes want to prettify the image of justice, the bonapartist impulse continues. The wheels of Operation Car Wash are spinning at top speed, as is the maneuvering in Congress. The indications of preparations for an anti-democratic "strong state" are in full view of all, and it will not be prevented by any kind of "democratic" struggle which is limited to the bounds of bourgeois domination.

In the face of the impeachment procedure already underway, the popular-front government is seeking to give evidence to the bourgeoisie of its reliability. Treasury Minister Nelson Barbosa announced new budgetary amendments, with more drastic cutbacks and a wage freeze for public workers, including a freeze of the minimum wage. Dilma announced in her "breakfast chat" at the beginning of the year in January that she would once again try to legislate pension "reform." In February, the PT, PMDB and PSDB together voted in the Senate to approve the bill of José Serra which would eliminate the requirement for participation by Petrobras in the oil exploration in the pre-salt layer in the Atlantic, which will mean opening the huge oil reserve to the imperialist monopolies. And in March, Dilma signed the new "anti-terrorism" law. Even if the government is paralyzed in the face of the judiciary and the police, we can be sure that they are already preparing to use this draconian measure to smash any protest against cutbacks, reforms and privatizations.

We repeat: the struggle against corruption is only a pretext. In Brazil as in Europe and other parts of the world, the rightist and bonapartist offensive is a product of the economic crisis. Its main targets are the exploited and oppressed, and there is no solution to this crisis in the interest of the workers under capitalism. The rulers in Brazil are imposing the same policies as the European central bankers imposed on the Greek people, and that the International Monetary Fund demands of all the countries under its domination. They want unrestricted powers in order to smash any working-class resistance to the "emergency" measures they are preparing to impose, "to clean up the state and resolve the economic crisis" in the interests of capital. To fight this scourge, what's needed is a powerful class struggle, led by a revolutionary workers party capable of mobilizing the power of the proletariat against the anti-working-class attacks coming from all wings of the bourgeoisie. ■

The Role of Imperialism and the Military in the Brazilian Political Crisis

Victoria Hazou/MINUSTAH; Epoca/Globo; Roberto Stuckert Filho



The popular-front governments led by the PT act as a sheriff for the U.S. in the Caribbean, providing mercenary repressive troops to maintain the imperialist occupation of Haiti. Top: troops of the MINUSTAH under Brazilian command patrol, July 2013. Bottom photos: Lula and Dilma review the Brazilian contingent in Haiti.

In analyzing the political crisis in Brazil, we have to take into account the position of imperialism, particularly that of the United States. There is an old joke in Latin America: why is the United States the only country in the continent where there has never been a coup d'état? Answer: because it's the only country that doesn't have a U.S. embassy. But Brazil is no banana republic, it has a relatively strong bourgeoisie with its own interests.

The PT and pro-PT left is acting as if the Brazilian government is a hindrance for the U.S., which is absurd. Even if U.S. spy agencies bug the telephones of the president (as they also did, and are surely continuing to do, with imperialist allies, such as Chancellor Merkel in Germany), the governments led by the PT have acted as firemen for the International Monetary Fund in Latin America, and as a sheriff for Yankee imperialism

in the Caribbean, supplying mercenary troops for the occupation of Haiti. The Brazilian popular front has played a key role in pressuring Venezuela, and beyond that the construction giant Odebrecht is now helping open Cuba for massive capitalist investments, building a port there.

In general, Washington doesn't want any big upheavals in the largest country in Latin America. Even so, there is no reason to presume that the would-be masters of the planet always act with consistence, and there are already indications of changing opinions among imperialist spokesmen. Three months ago, both *The Economist* of London and the *New York Times* came out against impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. Now *The Economist* (26 March) published an article on the Brazilian political crisis with the title, "Time to Go," declaring that "The tarnished president should now resign" rather than be impeached.

At the same time, sectors of the North American ruling class are working in collusion with Judge Sérgio Moro. It was already known that the judge had taken a course for foreign lawyers at Harvard University (one of the main centers of U.S. imperialist “diplomacy” and espionage) and took part in a specialized program on money laundering at the State Department (*Istoé*, 19 December 2014). However, the connection is much closer than that. According to a telegram of the U.S. embassy in Brasília (dated 9 October 2009) which was made public by Wikileaks, Judge Moro was the main Brazilian presenter at a conference of “Project Bridges” sponsored by the U.S. government on illicit financing and “terrorism,” which lasted an entire week in Rio and included the participation of judges and prosecutors from every state in Brazil and more than 50 officials of the Federal Police. The telegram encourages practical training for investigators, which:

“should be longer-term and coincide with the formation of training task forces. Two large urban centers with proven judicial support for illicit financing cases, in particular Sao Paulo, Campo Grande, or Curitiba, should be selected as the location for this type of training. Then task forces can be formed, and an actual investigation used as the basis for training...”

Concretely, in Operation Lava Jato (Operation Car Wash), Moro authorized the Federal Police and the Public Prosecutor’s Office to work together with the FBI. In June the judge sent teams of investigators to the United States where they “had access to bank records totaling US\$230 million (*Folha Política*, 19 July 2015). In exchange, last October an FBI task-force spent a week in Curitiba working with Moro’s team collecting information to be used in court cases in the U.S. against Petrobras.

What are these cases? The main one is a class action suit demanding reparations to the tune of billions of dollars for supposed losses suffered by Wall Street investors (among them several Brazilian funds) between 2010 and 2014. They allege that due to corruption, the balance sheets published by Petrobras were distorted in order to hide the bribes and laundering of funds paid to suppliers like Odebrecht. A second corruption investigation of the Brazilian oil company is being carried out by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

In fact, *the entire so-called Car Wash investigation is being carried out together with Brazilian and imperialist sectors which are seeking to break Petrobras’ monopoly of oil production from the famous “pre-salt” layer in the Atlantic.* In order to feed the voracious appetites of the imperialists, the popular-front government already organized several auctions of exploration of oil fields. However, above all do to the present extremely low prices of the black gold, the oil majors are particularly interested in engineering services and construction of oil installations. It is precisely in this industry where imperialist companies like giant Halliburton want to win contracts which until now were the private hunting preserve of Odebrecht and the OAS, two of the main targets of Operation Car Wash.

In another State Department telegram unearthed by Wikileaks, from 2 December 2009, the PSDB candidate in the 2010 presidential elections, José Serra, is quoted promising that, if elected, he would “change the rules” which gave

Petrobras exclusivity in oil exploration in the pre-salt layer and change the model of “partnership” giving the former state company 30% of oil production. The current legislation (in 2010), approved by Lula’s government, already meant an enormous privatization of this strategic resource, guaranteeing private (and above all imperialist) companies 70% of the exploration of the pre-salt layer. According to another law, passed in 2013 in response to the previous year’s mobilizations, a percentage (rather small in reality) of the profits from pre-salt production is earmarked for health and education.

The imperialists’ major interest in this question was indicated in an article published by the liberal journal *Foreign Affairs* (4 March 2015), under the title “Crude Calculus,” which stressed the importance of the stipulation requiring 85% local content of technology and equipment, and the “potential for corruption.” That journal is part of the base of support of Hillary Clinton who, it should be recalled, gave the green light for the coup d’état which overthrew President José Manuel Zelaya of Honduras, in July 2009. The fact that Barack Obama said of Lula that “he’s my man” at a meeting of the G20 doesn’t mean that there aren’t other imperialist sectors involved, in one way or another, in attempts at “regime change” so popular in Washington. Today, it seems that the right-wing president of Argentina, Mauricio Macri, is the favorite of the White House, and of Wall Street for having agreed to finally pay off the vulture speculators who snapped up at bargain basement prices the loans defaulted on by Buenos Aires 15 years ago.

Loyal to his imperialist patrons, the ex-candidate Serra presented, four days after the giant anti-Dilma mobilization in March 2015, a bill, PL131, that would eliminate the partnership requirement and Petrobras’ 30% cut of oil production. The FUP oil workers union, the CUT labor federation and the Workers Party (PT) itself declared their opposition to the bill. However, when it was approved by the Senate this past February 25, President Rousseff *approved* it in hopes of winning the sympathy of the capitalists. As usual, the FUP, CUT and PT didn’t mobilize anything, nor did they shut down any facilities to oppose this fateful law.

Note as well that Judge Moro participated in various forums sponsored by the PSDB and that his wife is the lawyer for that party in the state of Paraná, as well as for Royal Dutch Shell oil company that won a slice of the Libra Basin rights in the 2013 auction. It was notable that when Odebrecht published a list of more than 200 recipients of its largesse, the large majority of them with the PMDB and the right-wing opposition parties, Moro (who lifted the right of privacy for the phone conversations of ex-president Lula and President Dilma) clamped a ban on publication of the details of the payoff list, clearly in order to protect the PSDB, the “Progressive Party” (a rightist-militarist outfit), the Democrats (DEM, the continuation of the political vehicle of the military dictatorship) and the rest.

We do not know the specific connections between Moro and the imperialist companies and governments. But it is quite clear that he is working together with forces who are those most interested in privatizing to the max the formerly state-owned

Petrobras, which has been largely sold off to imperialist and Brazilian investors. A 43-year-old judge in a provincial city does not act so aggressively – not only interrogating and jailing officials of Petrobras and the president of the largest contractor and construction company in the country, but also ordering the search, capture and forcible transfer of the ex-president, and the publication of private telephone conversations of the current president, the head of state – without having powerful allies protecting him.

The Position of the Military

The question of the position of the military is of great importance in evaluating the extent and gravity of the confrontation. The attention of the media was caught by the firing of General Antônio Hamilton Martins Mourão, head of the Military Southern Command, last October. At that time, the Army commander, General Eduardo Villas Boas, made statements to the press excluding military intervention in the current crisis, saying in an interview with the newspaper *Zero Hora*: “As to the legal aspect, there is no possibility of military intervention, a coup, nothing of the sort. When I’m asked what the military is going to do, I answer: it’s written down in Article 142 of the Constitution. We laid out the role of the Army to contribute to stability.” He added: “We cannot permit any kind of rift in the structure and among active duty and reserve personnel.”

Nevertheless, it’s necessary to note the opinions of the general who was replaced, who publicly criticized the president (and all the parliamentary politicians) for corruption and was baying about “awakening the patriotic struggle,” speculating about the possibility of a “controlled fall” of the president, “discontinuity” in government or a situation of “crisis” in the current political context. At the same time, this same General Mourão authorized an official homage to Colonel Brilhante Ustra, “ex-commander of the DOI-Codi [intelligence division] of the Second Army in São Paulo, a unit that was one of the main centers of repression by the military regime and where 45 prisoners died.” It was precisely in this unit where Dilma Rousseff, today president, was tortured during the dictatorship (*Zero Hora*, 30 October 2015).

The removal of General Mourão unleashed a torrent of criticism on social networks by military officials against the “Communist” defense minister Aldo Rebelo, of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), and calls for impeachment of the president. A notable comment came from the former commander of Brazil’s expeditionary force in Haiti, General (retired) Augusto Heleno Pereira, who commented about the reaction to the replacement of Mourão (who commanded by largest military force in the country, with 48,000 troops):

“Lefty psychopaths should cool it... The military are not thinking about taking power. But we aren’t brainless robots, and we still have the right to kick about so many abuses and such thievery!”

The armed forces are surely full of elements like Mourão and



Banner in the March 13 pro-impeachment rally in Rio de Janeiro says “Only a New Military Intervention Can Reestablish Order, Morality and Dignity to the Brazilian People – Federal Police, the Pride of the Nation.”

Heleno, at every level.

General Eduardo Villas Boas recently reiterated his litany about how there will be no military intervention. But when we read another interview that he gave to the press last October, it’s clear that the Army commander, who was in charge of security during the 2014 World Cup, is keeping his options open: “The street demonstrations calling for the return of military rule are a complex issue. Our interpretation is that people are not asking for a return of a military government, with a few exceptions. That are calling for a return of values. We are in the midst of an economic, political and ethical crisis. If it should be transformed into a social crisis, it could create problems of public security and the Army could be called upon to intervene.”

—*Diário do Pernambuco*, 17 October 2015

For the moment, the crisis does not seem to have reached into the military institution. The active elements are the Military Police, which has acted as a protagonist of the first order, and the Federal Police, which is acting as if it is the armed wing of the Public Prosecutors Office of Judge Sergio Moro, when in reality it is the police who are calling the shots. It should also be noted that the big right-wing mobilizations are being financed and promoted by the employers’ federations, and that the activity of the Federation of Industry of the State of São Paulo (FIESP) against the current popular-front government recalls its siege of the government of João Goulart in the run-up to the 1964 coup. And that Super-Moro is being promoted as the savior of the nation by the Família Marinho, owners of the media giant Rede Globo (which also vociferously supported the ’64 military takeover).

Indications point to a employer-media-judiciary-police movement with at least some support from imperialism. Even if it does not result in a classic military coup, it points to an authoritarian outcome, a strong state whose job is to impose, with an iron fist, the budget cuts, reforms and privatizations demanded by capital, which the popular-front governments led by the PT have only partially implemented. Now they want to go all the way. ■

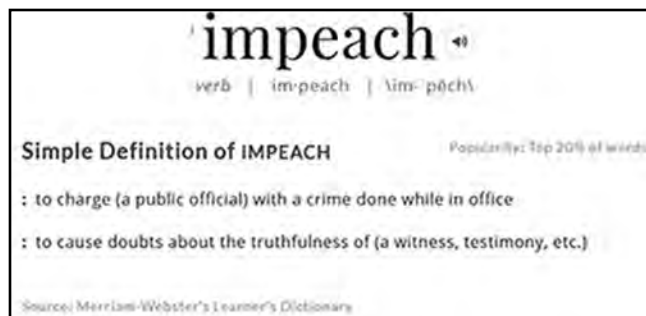
SL/ICL Impeached By Its Own Past

So here's a new one. For the first time in ten years, the Spartacist League and its International Communist League (SL/ICL) have published an article on Brazil. Could it be, now that the *New York Times* and other imperialist media have started publishing articles on the acute political crisis wracking the country, that their interest in the class struggle in the largest country in Latin America has been awakened? Actually, no. The main point of the article in *Workers Vanguard* (6 May), and the sole reason for publishing it, was to attack the Internationalist Group and our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, sections of the League for the Fourth International, as supposed "Militant Supporters of the Popular Front." Why now? The answer is obvious to divert attention from the SL/U.S.' recent expulsion of the Better-Late-Than-Never Faction of the ICL, which posed a sharp and effective challenge to its zigzagging opportunism.

What's happening in Brazil today is that after 13 years in office, the Workers Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores) is on the ropes. Its "popular front" government with bourgeois allies is coming apart. As the PT has succeeded in demoralizing many workers and youth with its pro-capitalist policies, the traditional bourgeois right wing, with ominous backing from the repressive apparatus, is moving to reclaim political power in order to ram through even more brutal anti-working class austerity and to further open up Brazil's oil industry to the imperialist monopolies. In this difficult situation the working class must fight against the power-grab by enemies of workers and democratic rights, and also against the popular-front government with its anti-worker policies. In short, the anti-democratic drive for impeachment is the spearhead of an attack whose real target is the working class and the oppressed population of Brazil. All of this is of no interest to the SL/ICL which – unsurprisingly – presents no program for class struggle in Brazil. The WV article sums up their passive neutrality: "Brazil Impeachment: Workers Have No Side."



The IG and LQB oppose impeachment in Brazil while calling for workers mobilization against the ominous judicial/police offensive targeting the working class, and against the anti-worker policies of the popular-front government.



The single count of WV's indictment of the IG and LQB is that in the current drive to oust Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff, "their line is 'No to Impeachment,' which is a vote of political support for Rousseff's popular-front government." Says who? The LQB has, uniquely on the Brazilian left, opposed the PT-led popular front from the beginning. Although the SL/ICL loves selectively quoting, an attentive reader can see in an illustration that the full headline from the LQB's *Vanguarda Operária* (Workers Vanguard), translated in *The Internationalist*, reads: "No to Impeachment! For Workers Mobilization Against the Rightist Bourgeois Offensive – No Political Support to the Bourgeois Popular Front Government." Later on WV dismisses our "ritually denouncing the popular front and calling not to vote for it" as merely "Marxist-sounding rationales to push the same line as much of the reformist left: save the Rousseff government." Except our headline and article say the opposite, in considerable detail.

The SL/ICL's claim that to *oppose* the seizure of power by the den of thieves in the Brazilian Congress together with a judicial apparatus working hand-in-glove with pro-imperialist reactionaries and increasingly assertive militarized police forces you *must be for* the current government is pure sophistry. When we call to oppose Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and the Democratic Party, that supposedly means we are for Trump and the Republicans? Nonsense, *unless* those making the argument accept that there is no alternative to the "choices" offered by the current bourgeois political system. In fact, that is exactly the SL/ICL's policy in Brazil, since they hold that revolutionary struggle is impossible today, whereas the LQB and LFI present a program for working-class mobilization against *all* wings of the bourgeois ruling class. WV sneeringly dismisses this, saying "the IG/LQB throws around calls for factory occupations and a general strike, even claiming to politically oppose the government."

But the SL/ICL's pathetic attempt to smear the LQB, the IG and the LFI as supporters of the popular-front government we vociferously oppose has an additional problem. As the 20th century was drawing to a close, the latter-day Spartacist League *opposed the impeachment of Bill Clinton*. Take a look at the front-page of *Workers Vanguard* of 25 September 1998: "Imperialist Chief Clinton Witchhunted for Sex, Impeachment Drive Threatens Right to Privacy for All." By



Workers Vanguard opposed impeachment of Bill Clinton. By SL/ICL logic of today, this meant politically him.

the SL's current logic, in opposing impeachment it supported Clinton and the Democrats. When we raised this with SLers buzzing like disoriented bees around our contingent at this year's May Day assembly in NYC's Union Square, they flatly denied that the SL had opposed impeaching Clinton. A few days later, at a Verizon strike rally, one SLer claimed that WV had corrected that line. Except it didn't. In an article on "Clinton Impeachment and U.S. Imperialism," WV (8 January 1999) favorably quoted its earlier article, repeating "Anti-Sex Witchhunt Threatens Privacy for All," but opined that if impeachment weakened the imperial presidency it "would not be a bad thing."

For our part, the IG headline on the issue was, "To Hell with Monicagate and Impeachment – Clinton Is a War Criminal." Noting that U.S. bombs began falling on Baghdad only hours before the U.S. Congress began voting on the impeachment of the warmonger-in-chief, we declared: "Democrats, Republicans Murder Iraqis, Starve Welfare Moms and Kids" and we called to "Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" (*The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999).

Back in the days when *Workers Vanguard* was the voice of revolutionary Trotskyism, the Spartacist League explicitly supported the impeachment of Richard Nixon. In a much-commented-on headline, WV No. 43 (26 April 1974) proclaimed, "Impeachment Is Not Enough!" The article stated: "The Spartacist League has pointed out that the labor movement must support a move by the bourgeoisie to impeach Nixon" at the same time as it argued that in response to "the real crimes of Nixon and his class, it is necessary to raise a program which leads to the inescapable conclusion that workers must take power in their own hands." So according to the present-day SL's logic, did this mean supporting the Democrats? In fact, it was part of the then-revolutionary SL's struggle against both bourgeois parties.

The latest *Workers Vanguard* linked the impeachment proceedings against the Rousseff government to "a widespread corruption scandal rocking the country." This is the ludicrous

explanation given for *why* key sectors of the Brazilian ruling class are so avid to oust the popular front. It simply repeats the pretext spouted by the bourgeois press, and ignores completely how the impeachers (who are among the most corrupt politicians in the country) are gearing up to crush workers resistance to cutbacks, privatizations and anti-labor "reforms." The WV article says "While the IG/LQB cynically rants and raves about 'bonapartism,' they admit that a coup in Brazil is unlikely," but it leaves out our explanation of the mounting dangers of an authoritarian regime being installed without a coup d'état.

Another red herring thrown into its *pot pourri* of lies, distortions and non-sequiturs is a tortured attempt to contrast saying no to impeachment in Brazil to Jan Norden (editor of *The Internationalist* and of *Workers Vanguard* in its revolutionary period) justifying a vote that brought down the government of Sri Lanka in 1964.¹ We uphold both positions, which are in no way contradictory.

In the course of its step-by-step abandonment of revolutionary Trotskyism in a downward spiral of defeatism following the counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet SL has come up with a string of electoral caveats, to wit:

- thou shalt not* call for a constituent assembly, on principle, even as part of a revolutionary program for soviet power against a dictatorship; but
- thou shalt* vote for a bourgeois constitution coming out of a constituent assembly in order to oppose the right (in France, in 1946);
- thou shalt not* put forward revolutionary candidates running for executive offices (as the then-revolutionary SL, as well as its predecessors in the Marxist movement, did repeatedly); but
- thou shalt* in certain cases give critical support to candidates of opportunist groups running for executive offices (go figure);
- thou shalt not* even solidarize with electoral boycotts (as the ICL's Mexican group timidly did last year, only to be sharply reprimanded (while the Grupo Internacionalista actively participated in workers' actions against the electoral farce)² except on the eve of insurrection (in which case the bourgeoisie would be insane to call an election); and now
- thou shalt not* take a side on impeachment (repudiating the SL's own past positions for the impeachment of Nixon and against the impeachment of Clinton)

This hodgepodge of contradictions is a program for centrist confusion, not revolutionary struggle. For these pettifogging ex-Trotskyist poseurs,

- thou shalt not* call for any concrete workers struggle against the bourgeoisie to drive police out of the unions, to hot-cargo war material, to have workers strikes against the war, to defeat U.S. imperialism;

¹ The earlier reference is taken from an article, "No 'Critical Support' to Popular Frontism," included in our bulletin of class readings on *The Popular Front: Roadblock to Revolution* which is available along with other IG pamphlets in the Encyclopedia of Trotskyism On Line.

² See "Mexico: Grupo Espartaquista Boycotts the Class Struggle," *The Internationalist*, March 2016.

and the supreme commandment is

—*thou shalt pull thy hands out of the boiling water of the class struggle*, as the ICL advocated when in 1996 it abandoned and stabbed in the back the struggle of the LQB to remove police from the unions.

The SL/ICL then followed this up with accusations that we sued the unions, a flat-out lie, when in fact LQB supporters were the elected leadership of the union who were sued (and removed from office by the courts) by pro-police elements whose lies the ICL has repeated ever since (including in its latest article).³

And as we explained in our “International Perspectives of the League for the Fourth International” (see The Internationalist No. 40, Summer 2015):

“Recoiling from their social-chauvinist support for U.S. imperialism in Haiti in 2010, the ICL nonetheless still refuses to raise the defeat of U.S. imperialism as a proletarian task. ‘Outsourcing’ this task to the I.S. is yet another example of looking to reactionary social forces after writing off the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat as a result of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union.”

At the May 4 Verizon strike rally, an SLer accosted a young comrade, saying that the Internationalist Group betrayed the workers of Brazil. She responded, “No, you already did that.” And when he claimed that by opposing impeachment we are supporting the popular front, she replied, “No, we fight the popular front, but you don’t care that there is a right-wing offensive against the workers.” Hit the nail on the head. ■

³ To read more about the persecution of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, and the ICL’s slanders against them, see: *Dossier: Class Struggle and Repression in Volta, Redonda* (February 1997) and *Dossier: Responses to the ICL Smear Campaign Against Brazilian Trotskyists* (May 2010).

Opportunist Left...

continued from page 26

archist riot of 6 February 1934 resulted in the installation of a right-wing government under the Radical Gastón Doumergue, but also five days later set off an enormous mobilization of working-class united-front opposition. Leon Trotsky in his pamphlet *Whither France?* (November 1934) explained that Doumergue’s bonapartist government was raising itself above parliament, basing itself not on a parliamentary majority but instead on the police and army:

“The essence of Bonapartism consists in this: basing itself on the struggle of two camps, it ‘saves’ the ‘nation’ with the help of a bureaucratic-military dictatorship.... The Doumergue government represents the first step of the passage from parliamentarianism to bonapartism.... French Fascism does not yet represent a mass force. On the other hand, Bonapartism finds support, neither sure nor very stable but nevertheless a mass support, in the Radicals. Between these two facts there is an inner link. By the social character of its base, Radicalism is the party of the petty bourgeoisie. Fascism can only become a mass force by conquering the petty bourgeoisie. In other words, *fascism can develop in France above all at*

the expense of the Radicals. This process is already under way, although still in its early stages.”

Fascism seeks to smash the working class, annihilating its organizations at the same time as it eliminates parliamentary institutions and democratic freedoms. Brazil presently finds itself in an initial, transitional phase marked by the evolution of *this* state in a bonapartist direction, not a military barracks revolt or a fascist uprising to overthrow it.

But let us suppose that the situation is as the PCO describes it, that we are on the verge of fascism or an imminent coup d’état (which, we repeat, are not the same thing), what then does it propose? It calls for “permanent mobilization,” “intense mobilization in the universities and, at some point, to take the university into the street,” “mobilize the people now against the coup,” “take the people into the street, make demonstrations, big and small, every day,” “multiply actions throughout the country,” etc. (“The Coup at High Speed: What Is to Be Done?”, *Diário Causa Operária*, 22 March). Really? The fascists or coup plotters are (supposedly) on the brink of taking power and we’re going to stop them by going into the streets marching and chanting? There’s no class criterion, it’s always “the people” or, at the most, “the productive people.” And if that isn’t enough? The PCO recalls that in the past workers have carried out factory occupations and general strikes, but it doesn’t make any concrete appeal, only a vague suggestion that in that case, “we’ll raise the bets.”

Any class-conscious worker would say, “The gentlemen are playing games, they don’t take their own words seriously, you can’t have confidence in them.” On top of that, the pseudo-Trotskyists of the PCO, far from combating the popular front, have joined it. In 1989, when the PT formalized its popular-frontist course, the internal tendency Causa Operária criticized the Frente Brasil Popular acerbically (although confusedly). Now we read that the March 18 action was called by the CUT (PT-allied union federation), the MST (Landless Rural Workers Movement) and the “Frente Brasil Popular (PCO, PCdoB and PT along with other groups).” If the PCO dreams of obtaining some position of sub-sub-secretary in order to improve its meager electoral score, it has already paid the admission price. It denounces those who “put forward ‘leftist’ criticisms of the Dilma government” and preaches that “at this moment, all struggles are subordinated” to the struggle against the “coup.” A CUT bureaucrat couldn’t have put it better. Will the PCO be rewarded for its words?

In subsequent days the PCO extended its defense of the government to embracing its worst bourgeois politicians. Thus it hailed the continued presence of the representative of agribusiness at the head of the agriculture ministry: “Kátia Abreu breaks with the PMDB and stays in the government” (*Diário Causa Operária*, 30 March). That’s the same *fazendeira* (large landowner) who is known by the landless workers as “chain saw.”

There are several minor groups, which like the PCO abuse the name Trotskyists, that are headed in the same direction. One of the most cynical, the Frente Comunista dos Trabalhadores (Communist Workers Front), has gone so far as to call “For Lula and Dilma to put the government apparatus in the service of fighting against the Coup!” (Declaration of the FCT, March 17). Not even in your dreams! It couldn’t be more clear that the

opportunists depend on the capitalist state. Unfortunately for them, the government apparatus is already headed in the opposite direction, and the reach of the president is not at all clear. Another variant of this deluded PT left, the Espaço Marxista (Marxist Space) group, part of the Frente de Resistência, is more modest: it writes that “the Dilma government also needs to react through the available institutional means,” and calls for “judicial and administrative measures,” such as making a complaint to the National Council of Justice against the “Torquemadas of the PSDB² [Judge] Sergio Moro and [Supreme Court justice] Gilmar Mendes.” Later they admit: “Even though such measures won’t result in the least punishment (“Considerations About the Coup Plotting Now Underway,” 20 March). In contrast, authentic Trotskyists call to combat the bonapartist danger by mobilizing the working class to the fight *against* the bosses’ state.

Less delirious but in the same camp is the centrist Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI). The LBI mislabels the rightist demonstrations and demonstrators as “fascist,” and the axis of its policy is the call for a “united front of anti-fascist action.” On March 18, in response to a call by the PT, the CUT and others in the PT retinue, some half million supporters took to the streets “in defense of democracy, the rights of the working class and against the coup” (from the CUT call). In a “Preliminary Balance Sheet,” the LBI admits that “Lula used the rallies to attempt to again seek a ‘broad agreement’ with the national bourgeoisie.” It also said that “the March 18 demonstrations clearly served as an element in the bargaining by the Popular Front, a demonstration of relative political strength in the framework of its policy of class collaboration.” But if on that occasion the LBI urged participation in the rally “without supporting the program it was called on,” by the time of the next rally of the PT camp, it declared that “we support the call of the ‘People Without Fear Front’ for March 24.”

Despite its rhetoric of “united front of action,” what the LBI is advocating is the formation of a “fighting” popular front, as some socialist groups did in France in the 1930s as Blum’s popular front was losing steam. If the LBI wanted a real united front, in the meaning that the Communist International gave to that slogan, what would be the concrete common *action* that it is proposing? In reality what it is proposing is a political propaganda bloc with sectors of the left around the PT. Thus it calls on the “People Without Fear Front to join this United Front of Anti-Fascist Action as part of the political-programmatic combat to forge an alternative revolutionary leadership.” This sleight-of-hand of mixing up a political bloc with a united front goes back to Lula’s presidential campaign in 2002. At that time, when the entire left was trying to sidle up to the PT, the LBI, after formally calling to cast a blank ballot, claimed to have discovered “the biggest fraud in history” and called to “unleash a broad mobilization” to insist that the Higher Electoral Court proclaim the victory of the popular front on the first round of voting. We in the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), in contrast, underlined our “Proletarian Opposition to the Popular Front” and our refusal to vote for Lula and his vice-presidential

candidate, the multimillionaire capitalist José Alencar (see *The Internationalist* No. 14, September-October 2002).

The Anti-PT Camp: “Car Wash” Left Tails After the Rightist Opposition

On the other side of the barricade we find the Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado (PSTU, United Socialist Workers Party) and the trade-union and “popular” federation it leads, Conlutas, with its slogan “Throw Them All Out!” On its banners it always puts the names and photos of Dilma and Lula in first place, so that in practice it coincides with the right-wing protests demanding “Dilma Get Out!” At times the PSTU claims to oppose impeachment, but it is only a façade: recently it refused to accept the slogan “No to impeachment” as a demand for the rallies of the Unity and Action Front which it dominates. And the call by the PSTU for “General Elections Now!” in the current situation amounts to a call to install a right-wing government. This is also advocated by Luciana Genro (ex-presidential candidate of the Party of Socialism and Freedom, PSOL) and even the *Folha de S. Paulo* (a leading “liberal” bourgeois newspaper). Even if it is disguised with the face of Marina Silva, the puppet of the evangelical far right, the agribusiness interests, the bankers and arms industry – in other words, the “BBBB (bible, beef, banks and bullets) parliamentary fraction” – there is nothing democratic about it, given the control of the elections by capital which determines the results of the voting.

However, it’s not very likely that the other parliamentary parties will call new elections, since they are also in the crosshairs of Operation Car Wash. Almost everyone in Congress is corrupt to the core: the way Brazilian bourgeois democracy works is through bribes and the “*caixa 2*” (second set of accounts). If the president isn’t ousted by parliament via the impeachment process, resulting in a government of Michel Temer (who gets 1% of voters’ preferences in opinion polls), it will be up to the Superior Electoral Court to call new elections. And if that court, not elected by anyone, declines to annul the 2014 elections when Dilma won with 54 million votes, then how does the PSTU intend to expel her from the presidential palace, since we are quite far from a leftist workers uprising? In fact, the slogan “throw them all out” (referring to the politicians, of course) could be used by the ultra-reactionaries who want a bonapartist government under Judge Sérgio Moro (based on the Federal Police).

Let’s take a look at the history of the watchword “*fora todos*” translated from the Spanish, “*¡Que se vayan todos!*” which arose during the Argentine protests in the popular revolt of December 2001 against President Fernando de la Rúa of the conservative Radical Civic Union (UCR) party. Prior to a brief intermission of two years of a UCR government, there had been a decade of the regime of the Justicialista Party (Peronists). And after 18 days of pot-banging (*cacerolazos*), strikes and massive protests that have come to be known as the “*Argentinazo*,” on 1 January 2002 a new Justicialista president (Eduardo Duhalde) was sworn in, who was then succeeded by two more Justicialista presidents (Néstor Kirchner, followed by Christina Fernández de Kirchner) who governed the country up until December 2015. This is supposed to be a victory or a

² Party of Brazilian Social Democracy, the largest right-wing bourgeois opposition party.



Sindmetat São José dos Campos

Banner of the Conlutas trade-union federation, led by the PSTU, calling for “Throw them all out, general elections now.” In the context of the pro-impeachment and “Dilma out” mobilizations, this amounts to a call for replacement of the bourgeois popular-front government with the traditional bourgeois right. The slogan is an attempt to disguise the support by this anti-Trotskyist tendency to the reactionary right wing.

guideline to be followed?! The slogan “throw them all out!” served to *divert* a potentially revolutionary situation, by limiting it to the bourgeois-democratic framework.

At bottom, there is little to discuss with the PSTU, which is merely a puppet of the right-wing opposition to garner support from the left.

Still, there are two points worth mentioning. For months the PSTU formed a cheering squad applauding the Car Wash “investigation” and the so-called “*petrolão*” (oilgate), just like ten years ago the PSOL acted toward the “*mensalão*” (the fat monthly paycheck, of bribes to congressmen). Recently, in the face of the adulation of Judge Moro, the PSTU published on its Internet site an article (17 March) with the title, “No confidence in the judicial system” and a subtitle, “Double standards.” It criticizes the “partiality” of the justice system (which it never characterizes as bourgeois, among other things because under the leadership of the PSTU, Conlutas unionizes employees of the capitalist courts, as well as police, the armed thugs of capital, whom it calls “workers in uniform”). It asks, “Why doesn’t Moro go all the way and reveal all the dirty linen of the PSDB?” This accepts the fiction that the “Curitiba Republic”³ is investigating corruption, when in fact it is serving as a vehicle for the judicial/police apparatus to impose itself on the other powers of the bourgeois republic, in the service of the traditional right wing which wants to grab a bigger slice of the juicy pie of Petrobras for the Brazilian bourgeoisie and

imperialist sectors (and its front men, like PSDBer José Serra), by further “opening” the national petroleum market.

The second point to be stressed is that the position taken by PSTU/Conlutas is not any kind of lapse, on the contrary it is the finished expression of its supposedly third-campist politics that in reality serve the most reactionary bourgeois sectors and imperialism. In Venezuela its international tendency, the International Workers League (LIT), went so far as to state in an article (9 January) on its site that, “The electoral victory of the right wing,” led and financed by imperialism in the elections of last December, “expresses in a distorted way the outrage” (of the masses) against the bourgeois nationalist government of Chávez-Maduro. In Libya in 2011, the LIT openly supported the NATO attack to overthrow the erratic nationalist Qaddafi. In Egypt in 2013, it gave its support to the coup by General al-Sisi, who was supported by the United States. In Ukraine in 2014 it gave support “from the left” to the nationalist and fascist coup in Kiev, which was supported by the imperialists. In Syria, it supports the bloody Islamist mercenaries of the Free Syrian Army, the mercenaries of the Pentagon and the CIA. As we noted in our article, “Brazil: Leftists in the Camp of Pro-Imperialist Syrian Islamists” (*The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014), “The LIT ‘critically’ tails after ‘democratic’ imperialism.”

The “theoretical” foundation of the bourgeois “democratist” politics of the PSTU and the LIT are to be found in the counter-revolutionary heritage of its founder, the pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno and his calls for a “democratic revo-

³ The “Operation Car Wash” investigation is based in the provincial capital Curitiba.

it claims “that there is a threat to democracy, to the democratic state of law. When, actually, there is none of that.... I disagree with the idea that these arbitrary measures against Lula are signs of a ‘coup by the judiciary’.” That interview stirred unease in the PSOL leadership, which put out a note warning against an “institutional coup” and a second statement disavowing Genro and stating that the demonstrations are not the product of a strategy of fear but instead the “response to abuses committed by the judiciary, by business entities, by the monopoly media and by the National Congress.” However, the PSOL leadership (in the hands of the Socialist Unity coalition) is in fact acting as a “lifeline” for the popular front, joining the People Without Fear front from its inception last October.

Like the PSTU, the PSOL is a thoroughly reformist social-democratic party which supports and depends on the capitalist state. It is an electoralist party *par excellence*, a kind of “substitute PT.” In contrast to a Bolshevik communist party, it is an absurd alphabet soup of internal tendencies with counterposed policies on just about everything, a guarantee that in the face of any crisis (such as the present one) it will be reduced to paralysis, or split apart. As we wrote at the time of the founding of the PSOL, “We Don’t Need a Social Democratic ‘New Party’ of Disillusioned *Lulistas*,” *The Internationalist* No. 20, January-February 2005. As for Luciana Genro’s posture as the heroic standard-bearer of the struggle against corruption, we recall the donations to her 2014 campaign by the Grupo Zaffari (for the details, see “Brazil: The Election Racket of the Bourgeoisie,” *The Internationalist* No. 38, October-November 2014).

The MRT on the Fence, Looking for a Mass Movement to Tail After

In contrast to the reformist social democrats of the PSTU and the PSOL currents, who with their “third-campist” policies serve as satellites of the right-wing opposition, the MRT (Movimento Revolucionário de Trabalhadores, Revolutionary Workers Movement), a centrist ex-Morenoite group, makes an effort to give the appearance of lining up against both sides in the current political crisis. In an article in its digital newspaper, *Esquerda Diário* (20 March), it claims to “Combat impeachment while not supporting the cutback government of Dilma.” While the PSTU calls for new general elections (to install a right-wing government), the MRT comes out in favor of a “free and sovereign constituent assembly.” This supposed neutrality completely ignores the bonapartist offensive, as if it was simply a dispute between two bourgeois tickets. In reality,



Candidates Marina Silva (left) and Luciana Genro (right) along with Eduardo Jorge of the Green Party on TV Globo, October 2014. Today they are joining with the *Folha de S. Paulo* in the right-wing pro-impeachment camp.

the democratist policy of these ex-Morenoites is only a kind of shamefaced version of “Morenoism lite.” But if the PSTU is a fellow traveler of the judicial/police right wing, the MRT is a hitchhiker who climbed aboard the Car Wash Express, but after taking a look at the other passengers decided to hop off.

On the eve of the March 18 mobilization “against the coup, for democracy” called by the CUT, the CTB (labor federation led by the PCdoB) and pro-government coalitions, in an article explaining “Why the MRT won’t be part of the March 18 rallies,” it assured readers that “those pro-government organizations are going to focus solely on defense of President Dilma and Lula.” In the entire article there wasn’t a single indication of the existence of a bonapartist danger. Nor did it advocate being present while openly fighting against the anti-working-class policies of the government. The article caused considerable concern and furious rejection among its readers: among the dozens of comments, only a couple defended its line, while the rest said that they were opposed to “almost everything” the PT governments did, but they were still going to the demonstration. A worker at the University of São Paulo wrote: “And what about the threat to democracy? It doesn’t exist? ... And what about the explicit growth of the right, of conservatism? That also doesn’t exist?” However, in an article published after the 18th, the MRT did an about-face and wrote that, “Even though the leaders of the Frente Brasil Popular did everything it could to turn the character of the rally into defense of Lula and Dilma”:

“For the most part the chants, did not refer to defense of the government but rather a sentiment of ‘no to a coup.’ The most notable sector present was university youth, more prevalent than in the right-wing rallies of March 13... At various workplaces and places of study the distrust of the movements by

the judicial power, the Federal Police and the right were not connected to defense of the PT.”

The MRT tacitly admits that it misjudged the sentiment of the masses, above all in the youth. As a result, it empirically changed its policies which was reflected in the report on its national conference, where it says:

“We judge that despite the new phenomenon of reactionary right-wing marches, the offensive of the institutional coup produced a reaction in the whole of society, which was partly shown in the streets in the March 18 rallies called by pro-government forces, but didn’t just come out in order to support Dilma and Lula, were critical toward their government, seeing the clear threat of the right further advancing in the country.”

So what is the programmatic conclusion of this? The MRT proposes to:

“work on the ranks of the big pro-government union federations like the CUT and the CTB, as well as on the student bodies, to require that they break their subordination to the government and call rank-and-file assemblies and a plan of struggle combining work stoppages, demonstrations and culminating in a general strike to block the reactionary institutional coups, the attacks by the governments, particularly of the PT, on the living conditions of the workers and the youth, and opening the way to an effective response to the crisis we are experiencing in the country.”

Here you have a classic example of the Morenoite policy of pressuring the current leaderships to adopt a class-struggle “plan of struggle,” which they are not going to do. In contrast to this illusory program, genuine Trotskyists call for *concrete actions* where one can demand of the unions and workers parties that they participate, as the LQB did in our 30 March article. This is what the *united front* means: a powerful common class action, beyond the profound political differences. But this also places on the agenda the struggle to break politically with the sellout leaderships who constantly act as an obstacle to workers struggle.

The tactic of the MRT (formerly the LER-QI), and of the international tendency to which it belongs, the Trotskyist Faction, whose main section is the Argentine PTS (Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas – Socialist Workers Party), is one of constant maneuvers always seeking to be the left wing of some mass movement. They run into trouble when they can’t decide between two conflicting movements, when the object of their attentions is indisposed, and when they discover that they are the ones being used instead of the other way around. On the Brazilian terrain they have gone back and forth between tailing after the PSTU and the PSOL. From July until December, the MRT was asking to be admitted as an internal tendency of the latter party which consists of a conglomeration of tendencies, only to see its amorous advances rejected. More recently it concentrated its activity on the “Unity and Struggle Space,” which includes various groups of the extra-parliamentary left that, in the MRT’s imagination, “seek to build an alternative camp in the face of the conjuncture characterized by the dispute between the PT and the right-wing opposition over impeachment.” However, in the latest meeting of this propaganda bloc under the influence of the PSTU, the call to oppose impeachment was brushed aside.



Leaders of the October Revolution, Trotsky (left) and Lenin (center) with Kamenev in 1919. Moreno’s call for “democratic revolution” is counterposed to Trotsky’s permanent revolution, the program of Red October. It also echoed Reaganite anti-Communism. Ex-Morenoites of MRT/Trotskyist Faction balk at Moreno’s conclusion but put forward a “democratacist” program of constituent assemblies everywhere.

In various polemics against the policies of the PSTU, the main difference the MRT pointed to was that instead of calling for “new elections” it wants a “Free and Sovereign Constituent Assembly.” It calls for a “a democracy where the working people themselves and the entire people decide the direction of the country and how to combat corruption and to put a stop to cutbacks.” Waving this banner of “radical democracy,” it pretends that there is a solution favorable to the workers under bourgeois rule, which is a lie. On the one hand, it proposes that its dreamed-of constituent assembly should decide that “all cases of corruption should be judged by a popular jury, that every public office, from judges to congressmen, be elected and recallable.” Popular juries and the election (and recall) of judges and prosecutors already exist in the U.S., and that doesn’t change a thing about the reactionary *class* character of the justice system, as one can see in the cases of the murders of young black men by racist police, who continue to enjoy impunity. Why? Because the courts are an essential part of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, along with the police and the army.

Like the slogan “throw them all out,” the call for a constituent assembly was also a battle cry of the pseudo-Trotskyist groups during and after the “Argentinazo” of 2001. As we explained at that time:

The ‘big fish’ in the pseudo-Trotskyist swamp in Argentina are all agreed in calling for a ‘constituent assembly.’ Do they claim that there are still holdovers from feudalism in Argentina, a country without a peasantry (the rural settlements are almost all of agricultural wage workers)? Nor is Argentina under the boot of a military dictatorship, having instead had a series of elected parliamentary governments. No, this slogan is expressing the desire of these opportunist groups to sidle up to the middle class on a ‘democratic’ (i.e., bourgeois) and not a socialist basis. It is the current expression of the so-

called ‘democratic revolution’ preached by the late Nahuel Moreno – the godfather of the PTS, MAS and MTS - who raised this slogan echoing the anti-Soviet propaganda of the Reaganites in the 1980s.”

–“Mass Upheaval Rocks Argentina, Brazilian Workers Movement Under Attack,” *The Internationalist* No. 13, May-June 2002

On the other hand, in its bourgeois-democratic delirium, the MRT would like its imaginary constituent assembly to vote in the “nationalization of foreign trade, the expropriation of large landholdings,” “to impose the end of draining of resources from the country by imperialism through payment of the debt,” etc. A utopian fantasy, and ultimately reformist. They are attributing to a bourgeois body tasks which in this imperialist epoch can only be carried out by overthrowing the rule of capital. As we underlined in the same article:

“Thus in order to save the working people of Argentina from ruin, it is necessary not only to repudiate the foreign debt but also to expropriate the banks and the rest of the key companies in the country, something no capitalist government is about to do, whatever nationalist rhetoric it may employ. Even a revolutionary workers government would have enormous difficulty in the face of the inevitable reprisals by imperialism in carrying out these essential steps which require international socialist revolution.”

Responding to the (justified) worry that any constituent assembly today would facilitate the rise of the reactionary right, and that it would be worse than the one that gave birth to the 1988 Constitution, the spokesmen of the MRT insist that their constituent assembly would be “imposed by the mobilization of the working people.” But if the workers mobilize, the revolutionaries would offer them a “radical democratic” rather than a socialist program?! This isn’t Trotskyism, it is the reformist “two-stage revolution” so dear to the Stalinists, or in the case of the Morenoites, the social democrats.

Agrarian revolution, democracy for the working people, national liberation from imperialist domination: none of this can be carried out today under the rule of capital. In fact, it was this perception that gave rise to Trotsky’s theory of *permanent revolution* and his insistence that in this imperialist epoch, only by means of a workers revolution and its extension into the heart of imperialism can the great tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the past be achieved. While the Morenoites of the PSTU openly reject permanent revolution, following the footsteps of its master Moreno, the ex-Morenoites of the MRT say they uphold that thesis. But in practice they put forward the same program of “democratic” reforms, only proposing to radicalize them a bit, like a constituent assembly instead of new general elections. And as for its slogan of a “government of the working people that breaks with capitalism and imperialism,” they separate this from the socialist revolution that overthrows capitalism. The PT itself talks of a government of the working people, within the framework of the bourgeois state. We’ve already seen the result.

Two final comments on the MRT: first, even while rejecting Moreno’s thesis of calling for a “democratic revolution,” they continue his methodology of looking at everything from

a “democratic” viewpoint. And second, it sows utter confusion by comparing the PSTU’s policy to that with the German Communist Party when it lined up with the Nazi fascists in the “red referendum” of 1931. The Communist International was repeating the orders of the Kremlin under Stalin, who at that time was pursuing the temporary ultra-leftist line of the so-called “Third Period,” which he later abandoned in favor of the program of Popular Front. The PSTU today, which the MRT erroneously labels centrist, is a social-democratic tendency that is *reformist* to the core. Trotsky criticized the line of the German CP as an “error” and “adventurist,” but the fact that the PSTU’s policy today coincides with that of the bourgeois right wing is consistent with its overall outlook of class collaboration.

What is clear from this summary is that the entire Brazilian left – centrists and reformists alike – raises the banner of a bourgeois “democratic” program in the midst of a deep political crisis which requires a working-class and revolutionary response. Only the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista puts forward a program of *proletarian opposition against the bourgeois right-wing and the bourgeois popular front in power*. We call for work stoppages, plant occupations, the formation of elected and recallable strike committees, workers councils and mass workers defense guards to defend against repression. We say that it is necessary to prepare a general strike of unlimited duration in order to smash the judicial/police threat, to bloc impeachment, stop the cutbacks and sink the privatizations and labor and pension “reforms.” And to carry all this out, it is necessary to *forge the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party, Leninist and Trotskyist, to fight for a workers and peasants government, the beginning of international socialist revolution*. ■

League for the Fourth International

LFI, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A. E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Internationalist Group/U.S.

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

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

Brazil: write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-740, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

Rio de Janeiro: write to Caixa Postal 3982, CEP 20001-974, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
E-mail: lqb1996@yahoo.com.br

LIVI/Deutschland

Germany: write to Postfach 80 97 21, 21007 Hamburg, Germany

Grupo Internacionalista/México

Mexico: write to Apdo. Postal 70-379, Admón. de Correos No. 70, CP 04511, México, D.F., Mexico
E-mail: grupointernacionalista@yahoo.com.mx

Brazil's Opportunist Left Tailing After the Bourgeois Blocs

For the last year, Brazil has been shaken by an acute political crisis pitting the bourgeois popular-front government of President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers Party (PT, Partido dos Trabalhadores) against the traditional right-wing opposition which wants to throw her out of the Palácio do Planalto (the presidential palace) by parliamentary means (impeachment) or in some other way. However, the government and opposition share the same fundamental program, of resolving the capitalist economic crisis by attacking the working people, while they may differ (at times) only over the rhythm and degree of the attacks. In this context of a dispute between two bourgeois forces, the Brazilian left is divided into two major camps: the pro-PT camp, which chants “*não vai ter golpe*” (there will be no coup d’état), and the anti-PT camp which chants “throw them all out.” Despite the claims of political independence by each camp, in reality they are both appendages of the conflicting capitalist forces within the framework of bourgeois democracy. Now with the addition of escalating arbitrary judicial and police actions on the part of the prosecutors of *Operação Lava Jato* (Operation Car Wash)¹,

¹ See “Class Struggle Against the Bonapartist Threat in Brazil,” in this issue.

what’s needed is not an illusory “third camp” on the terrain of bourgeois democracy but a *working-class opposition* with a *program of revolutionary struggle against the entire ruling class and against the danger of an authoritarian outcome*.

The Camp of the PT Left: Seeking to Camouflage the Popular Front

For the PT and pro-PT left, impeachment *is* the coup. This is the constant theme of articles published by the Partido da Causa Operária (PCO – Workers Cause Party), repeating the same refrain of the PT and of the social-democrats of the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB). The PCO insists that “imperialism wants the overthrow of the PT government,” which is not only an exaggeration, it is political praise for the popular front. Even if opposition forces and strong elements of the state apparatus are pointing to a fateful bonapartist solution, at least for now this doesn’t necessarily imply a coup d’état or fascism (which are two different things).

Consider the analogous situation of the French Third Republic, which during the great capitalist Depression of the 1930s was sinking in a sea of corruption. The fascist and mon-

continued on page 19



Ex-president Lula (center, in red shirt), at rally against impeachment called by the PT, the CUT and CTB union federations and the PCdoB on the night of March 18. Claiming to fight against the “coup” and an imminent seizure of power by “fascists,” the Partido da Causa Operária and other tendencies in the PT “camp” give political support to the bourgeois popular front. Genuine Trotskyists draw a class line by opposing impeachment and simultaneously calling for sharp class struggle against the anti-worker measures of the government and the right-wing opposition.