

democratic party. Participants in this effort were sociologist Francisco Weffort, later the PT's foreign affairs secretary and culture minister in the current government; José Alvaro Moisés; Francisco de Oliveira; José Serra, current planning minister; Paulo Singer; then-candidate for the federal Senate from the MDB, Fernando Henrique Cardoso; Almino Afonso; Mario Covas, current São Paulo governor; and Luís Carlos Bresser Pereira, current administration minister.

At that time, Luís Inacio da Silva was a famous and charismatic metalworker union leader from the industrial heart of São Paulo, and the intellectuals wanted to win him over to their projected new party. In 1979, the unions he led used their votes to put Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the Senate.

On Jan. 24, 1979, trade unionists attending the Ninth Metalworkers Congress voted for creating the Workers Party, and not the social democratic party sought by the intellectuals. Some of these joined the PT, and others who did not, nonetheless remained within the party's orbit.

Strong ties to Cuba were evident from the very inception of the party. Originally, these were established through the mediation of Frei Betto, who, in 1980, became friends with Fidel Castro. There were also strong ties with the Cuban intelligence service, the DGI. In his book *Paradise Lost*, Frei Betto reports that in July 1980, Lula da Silva met Castro for the first time, in Managua, Nicaragua, during the celebration of the first anniversary of the Sandinista revolution. Also present was commander Manuel Piñeiro, whom Betto characterizes as "a professional conspirator endowed with an enviable sense of humor."

The PT has maintained permanent relations with Piñeiro through his wife, Chilean Marxist Marta Harnecker, who has served as an adviser to several Brazilian city governments, such as those of Pôrto Alegre, Santos, São Paulo, and Vitoria, which are, or were until recently, run by PT members.

According to PT historians, the party was consolidated throughout Brazil in 1982, having at that time 400,000 members.

In the 1988 elections, the PT garnered big electoral victories, winning the municipal presidencies of three state capitals: São Paulo, Pôrto Alegre, and Vitoria.

Later, it had significant participation in Presidential elections, in 1989 against Fernando Collor de Mello, in which it won more than 10 million votes in the first round; and in 1994, against Fernando Henrique Cardoso, winning 17 million votes in the first round.

Inspired by such liberation theologians as Frei Betto, the PT has also created other battlefronts involving a broad spectrum of the New Age movement, together with more marginal layers of the population which are the ideal bases for jacobinism. These include the National Articulation of Popular and Trade Union Movements (Anapos), created in 1980 with Lula's backing, and in April 1993, the Popular Movements Confederation.

## The MST: the other face of usury

**Name of group:** MST, Landless Movement (Movimento dos Sem Terra).

**General headquarters:** São Paulo, Brazil.

**Founded:** 1989-90.

**Locations of operations, areas active:** land invasions throughout the country, especially in the south, which is the region of greatest economic and cultural prosperity of the country, and where there are the fewest *latifundios* (large land holdings). The MST's areas of operations, by order of importance, are in the states of: 1) Paraná; 2) Rio Grande do Sul; 3) São Paulo; 4) Minas Gerais; 5) Mato Grosso; 6) Pará; and 7) Rondônia. The actual area occupied adds up to some 700 square kilometers, while their regular encampments cover 72.5 square kilometers, according to the MST itself.

**Major terrorist actions:** In 1993, the MST carried out 81 land invasions; in 1994, there were 119. In 1995, the most important actions have been:

On Aug. 9, in Corumbiara, Rondônia, they ambushed a military police battalion that was going to evict them from a ranch that had been occupied by 600 families, with the bloody outcome of two soldiers and nine peasants dead. The occupation of this ranch was headed by a radical "dissident" group of the MST, led by Cicero Pereira Neto, a member of the Workers Party (PT). After the incident, Pereira Neto declared: "Corumbiara was a regional fight. The fight for agrarian reform is greater." The *New York Times*, the *Economist* of London, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Amnesty International defended the MST and blamed the Brazilian government for a "massacre."

On Aug. 13, in Pedra Preta, Mato Grosso, 1,100 families invaded a 6,600 hectare ranch; in Nova Xavantina, a group from the MST took the head of the mayor's cabinet as hostage, and took over a bridge on the River of the Dead for 24 hours.

Also in August, nearly 700 families occupied a ranch in the region of Unai, 30 kilometers from the ranch owned by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

In early September, in the region of Pontal de Paranapanema, São Paulo, more than 4,000 families occupied four ranches totalling 8,000 hectares. In this same region, they invaded land belonging to the company Centrais Eletricas de São Paulo, where the Taquarucu hydroelectric project was being built.

In September, more than 800 families occupied a ranch in Cruz Alta, Rio Grande do Sul.

**Modus operandi:** In the central offices of the MST in

São Paulo, they use maps to plan what areas are to be invaded. Many of these properties are productive, others not. An advance group of MST professional activists is sent, and later they lead families in a land invasion, families who don't necessarily belong to the area, but are brought there like serfs. It is common that the land to be invaded is located near some strategic area, such as hydroelectric projects.

The professional MST cadre take charge of the security of their camps, using a Vietcong-style methodology: They build trenches and pits around the occupied area, camouflaging them with leaves and branches, and then place sharpened wooden stakes at the bottom of the pits, smeared with human feces. This ensures that anyone falling into the pit is quickly killed, as the excrement enters the blood stream.

Then the "education" team arrives, to begin indoctrination.

**Leaders' names and aliases:** Father Ricardo Rezende, international spokesman for the MST and for the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT); Gilmar Mauro; Maria Rainha; João Pedro Stedile. The leadership structure of the MST, according to sources from the group cited in the Sept. 24, 1995 issue of *Folha de São Paulo*, is the following: They operate without a president, but with a collective leadership named the National Coordinator, made up of 65 members; after that is the National Directorship, which also functions as a collective, with 15 members; then come the state directorships, many of which are made up of Workers Party cadre, or cadre from the PT's labor federation, the CUT; finally come the camp coordinators, made up of 7 individuals who organize land occupations and are divided into sectors (education, food, health, security, production, and conflict negotiation.)

**Groups allied to nationally or internationally:**

*National:* Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), an official agency under the Brazilian National Bishops Council (CNBB), but actually controlled by the theology of liberation faction; the Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI), also an agency of the CNBB; Institute of Economic and Social Studies (INESC), an NGO which is the main lobbying group in the National Congress in favor of the MST; Brazilian Institute of Socio-Economic Analysis (IBASE), headed by Herbert de Souza, an NGO that serves as an intelligence unit for the MST, PT, and other radical groups.

*International:* São Paulo Forum; Popular Indigenous Peasant Movement 500 Years of Resistance; Shining Path (Peru).

**Religious/ideological/ethnic motivating ideology:** Existentialist theology of liberation, combined with pagan worship of the Mother Earth goddess (Gaia).

For the MST and CPT, as well as for the innumerable Ecclesiastical Base Communities (CEBs) linked to them, the key to a victorious insurrection is in their capacity to "spiritualize the earth," based on their view that "the earth is a mystery" in the religious sense, and "to free the earth is to create space for God to act in the world." They hold

indoctrination rites, and thus justify their acts of violence.

One of the top leaders of the MST, João Pedro Stedile, has stated that land occupations are "our main form of pressure, but our entire socialist approach is related to the principles of the Catholic Church, our main base of training"—that is, the theology of liberation.

**Known controllers/mentors/theoreticians:** Political controllers of the MST are a group of PT leaders from theology of liberation. Their ideologues are: Paulo Freire, Leonardo Boff, and Frei Betto (for these three, see PT profile). MST leader José Rainha Junior confessed in an Oct. 15, 1995 interview with the daily *O Estado de São Paulo*, that his activism began in 1978 in what was the embryo of the Ecclesiastical Base Communities, and that since then "I have had the joy of knowing Frei Betto, who has inspired me so."

**Current number of cadres:** 5,200 professional militants, according to *Folha de São Paulo*.

**Training:** Cuba has trained activists in "agricultural techniques." Also links with Shining Path of Peru, according to Brazilian Army intelligence sources: "the methodology of the Landless is very similar to that of Shining Path, which was already imported by the Zapatista National Liberation Army of Mexico and by the National Revolutionary Union of Guatemala (URNG)," explained the daily *Gazeta Mercantil* of Sept. 18, 1995.

In one of the MST camps, manuals prepared by the Nicaraguan Sandinista Front were found, according to a 1994 report of the military police of São Paulo.

**Known drug connections/involvement in:** Unknown.

**Known arms suppliers/routes:** Unknown.

**Known political supporters/advocates:** The Workers Party (PT), on whose electoral lists were five elected federal congressmen of the MST; Cardinal Evaristo Arns of São Paulo, the de facto "chaplain" of the São Paulo Forum; Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga of São Felix de Araguaia, a long-time intimate friend of Mexican Bishop Samuel Ruiz, EZLN commander; Americas Watch; Amnesty International; Anti-Slavery International (London); Brazil Network; Survival International; Catholic Institute for International Relations (London).

**Financing:** Misereor, according to the press of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, sends money indirectly to the MST through the Center of Popular Alternative Technologies (CETAP), which includes agricultural technicians linked to the MST, to the CUT, and to the Pastoral Land Commission. The Catholic organization Caritas also has been mentioned as a financier of the MST under cover of providing humanitarian aid to the needy, money which is channeled through entities of the Catholic Church.

**Thumbnail historical profile:** The MST was created 15 years ago by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), which until today remains the most important center of theology of liberation in Brazil. Since then, the MST has managed to get land for some 130,000 families, which maintain links to the organization.