



BATAY OUVRIYE

Dec. 16th, 2005

CLARIFICATION

Being attacked by the enemy is an excellent thing. But only to the extent we are able to transform the attack, as a negative element, into a positive aspect in the general interest of the working class.

During the past weeks, enemies of the working class have been attacking Batay Ouvriye in various forms. Practically at the same time, we have undergone the assaults of sectors in the emigration looking for practices to carry out or continuing the practices of their "leaders", those of reactionary bourgeois candidates within Haiti itself and those of various big landowners. These reactionaries' practices seem to be well orchestrated... And even if this isn't the case, we can speak of an organic coordination reflecting the class struggle, in particular, the polarization created by the struggles led by our movement. What we are undergoing is a moment in the struggle of the masses, the workers, the working class. We need to be able to correctly handle these attacks. We need to carry out practices that allow us to maximize the realization of the working class' interests facing our enemies. One of the objectives we should seek is our own camp's reinforcement. And, for this, we have to understand Batay Ouvriye's position and practices under various aspects not directly concerned by the attacks in question, for militants and consistent progressives to be able to go beyond their present understanding of Batay Ouvriye.

The question of destabilizing the Aristide government

Being elected doesn't make a government popular. If this was the case, we'd believe Bush is popular. For us, it isn't the fact of having been elected with high percentages either that make one popular. If such was the case, we might as well believe France's Chirac, in the last elections, was extremely popular. To be popular depends on the struggles' position precisely, nationally and internationally. To decide upon whether a government is **truly popular**, we have to analyze the politics in question in **relation with the popular masses, the real interests of the popular masses**, without demagogy. It is in this sense that we say the Aristide government never defended or allowed for the defense of the popular masses' interest! It was a populist government leaning on a fraction of the sub-proletariat, guaranteeing its reproduction, for the organization of repression and terror under Aristide's direction, in the context of an autocracy. This is what explains that populist-opportunists like them wish to have the Aristide government pass for a popular one. Under the Aristide administration, repression and terror were organized against the workers, in all their conflicts, against all their general interests. This was a reactionary government. Its autocratic form allowed the bourgeois adversaries to diffuse their whole demagogy on "democracy". These adversaries, equally reactionary, Aristide defended their interests. Amongst them were the bourgeois fighting to assume a central role in the State. In this way, consequently, Batay Ouvriye was facing 2 reactionary bourgeois currents. One was directly headed by the assembly sector industrial bourgeoisie linked with certain capitalist interests, particularly those recently emerged from accumulation under the Duvalier regime. The other was composed of new monopolists trying to restructure the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, accumulating at the head of the State led by the populists, and linked to a large sector of the banking bourgeoisie.

The responsibility of all consistent organizations should be: **to work towards a true popular alternative**. For Batay Ouvriye, this means constructing a **popular alternative with the workers in central role**, in order to come out of, or go beyond, populism, precisely, and all of the dangers and confusions it carries with it. For this, the task at hand should have been to allow an understanding of the **two enemies** fighting one another, while using the least spaces created by such a struggle. In the context of a genuine popular alternative, this was the correct position. And it remains the correct position.

We never participated in the destabilization of any government, as we already stated in other recent documents. Besides, the very concept of "destabilization" is a bourgeois one, in itself. A correct analysis should go further, questioning the contradictions amidst the ruling classes themselves and between the popular masses and their class enemies.

On working class independence and that of Batay Ouvriye

For us, the independence of the working class is crucial. It should be independence in its line. And it is on the basis of this independence that a constant struggle should be waged against retrograde, populist, opportunist and reactionary currents. Our independence should be a **fundamental** position in our orientation. Batay Ouvriye endeavors in this sense since it knows independence is based before all in the dynamics of its **practices**.

But does independence mean total isolation? We don't think so. Many situations exist in which, even taking into account our independence, relations develop, particularly with other social classes in the peoples' camp, but also with other organizations. This is true in the context of various sorts of unity like alliances, unities of action, solidarity... And it also holds true whether within a social formation or in relations amongst social formations. All these forms of unity / alliance / solidarity find their basis in the **concrete practices and relationships** we establish through our practices.

Up through today, Batay Ouvriye has never affiliated with any international federation. However, it has carried out common practices with numerous organizations, on the battle field itself, nationally and internationally. For us, the most important thing, that which is fundamental for the workers and popular masses in general, is the permanent respect of our **independence**. In this context, Batay Ouvriye has accepted various forms of solidarity. In this, we took into account the various contradictions amidst the class struggles, nationally and internationally. In the fight against Disney, for example, we accepted solidarity from many currents. Some offered a politically limited solidarity on a humanitarian basis. We accepted it. But we always clearly showed its limits and, in some cases, its reactionary nature. We hold the same position with respect to financial solidarity. We should point out that, in general, solidarity coming from various organizations or NGOs, foundations, and such... are never clean. Worse, we're aware that the enemy can attempt to slip amidst us in such contexts. Our principle is to use the **real** contradictions, the **concrete** contradictions in the **field**. Here, again, our independence remains fundamental. Only it can allow us to maintain our line firmly in the interests of the working class, the workers, the popular masses in general. Only it can allow us to maintain our steadfastness facing our enemies always, even when they try to slip within our ranks. Thus, secure in our line, **we clearly and openly criticize all those who should be criticized**. Everywhere we are invited to formulate our stands, we expose them clearly, as long as they take place in contexts where workers are present and that this practice is in the interests of the working class. If an organization offers its "solidarity" in the struggle, we are in no position to thrust aside or refuse its assistance. The working class' struggle in Haiti is a very hard one! If the enemy believes it can use such "solidarity" to try to deviate or infiltrate our practices, let them try, they'll fall flat! The most important for us is to preserve our independence, and, for this, to fight all reactionary elements, even when they say they wish to "help" in any form.

In this context, some have nevertheless formulated serious fears for our credibility. These worries being based on the possibility of class collaboration, we reassure them by maintaining that advancement in the field of the struggles will always exist to consolidate our credibility. Furthermore, with respect to those insisting that accepting funds automatically entails an automatic submission to the orientation of these organizations and the governments heading them, our political positions concerning those who wish or seem to wish to support us delimit us formally, placing us directly and openly in the working class' camp. We are aware of the historical danger of possible changes or distortions of this position, but, faced with such a possibility, we've developed and apply appropriate mechanisms and principles. A practice with the workers and in their interest, an open practice confronting the enemy, wherever and however it is carried out punctually and historically, will always be credible. There is no other criterion.

On Opportunism

Certain comrades supporting our practices have shared a legitimate concern with us and which demands our attention. It is the question of "opportunism". For them, establishing relations with the AFL-CIO, for example, is opportunistic, particularly with respect to financing. We say 'particularly' because, in general, other forms of relations (such as militant solidarity and support letters) don't and won't give way to such problems. To examine this question correctly, we need to clearly understand two things:

- A) It is neither possible nor desirable to consider practices at the democratic level just as practices at other, more advanced political levels. The **fundamental unity** existing at these levels allows a specific respect of positions and principles. At the democratic level, however, this fundamental unity doesn't exist; a democratic functioning must reign amongst the working class and the workers

whose political development is average. Certainly, all practices dragging behind the least advanced workers should be ruled out. But this is a permanent battle wherein, for us, the transformation necessary to advance the working class' real interests will occur: within this level, with it. We should always correctly resolve this contradiction. We should also mention that this in no way means that opportunism can't exist within the democratic level. For sure, opportunism may occur here, but this is mainly in relation with the line and the principles that should guide this level, within the limits of the concrete unity existing.

- B) In addressing opportunism, a practice can, of course, be analyzed independently. But if this practice is an integral part of a totality, it shouldn't be considered in isolation. It should be examined in its relations with the struggles, with the practices constituting its totality.

Examining our position on the question of 'solidarity' and financial support we may receive, we take both these aspects into account. First, we are carrying out concrete practices. We're **concretely** waging battles, which force us to take into account concrete contradictions (concerning solidarity) that aren't exclusively financial. We have to deal with real needs and to be able to solve them at our present degree of development. Furthermore, all of this takes on a specific character when the question of "solidarity" is set in a general context where other organizations are also present in the field. We take into account the entirety of our practices.

In the case of the AFL-CIO, we had to resolve contradictions **within the field**. And in the context of the workers' general level of political development, the correct line was to establish organization to organization relations in order to avoid practices that could open up on forms of individual corruption, as well as various related problems (deviations from the strategic line, infiltration of negative principles, infiltration of ruling class interests within the workers' organization...). But we wish to insist on one point: **the lack of exterior support won't ever block our practices**. Surely, the absence of outside support may slow it down, but even with this negative effect, practices in the framework of our line are the most **fundamental** for us, on the basis of our full independence, including financial independence.

We should also add that, in the case of doubtful organizations, organizations who think they might be able to compromise us in order to better absorb us, they'll fall flat on their faces. However, we are extremely aware that we constitute a target for the enemy who won't spare us and will employ all possible forms to attain this goal. When we say they'll fall flat on their faces, this isn't voluntarism, idealism or boasting, to cover ourselves. All our relations with these organizations bear a mark: that within relations of unity and struggle, the real relative weights are of **STRUGGLE-unity/struggle-STRUGGLE**. Thus, struggle is permanent, **in all domains**, even when we accept the "unity" on certain aspects. **This STRUGGLE** is in the global interest of the working class, nationally and internationally. In the case of the AFL-CIO, this is what we considered and, in our relations with them, we explicitly had them understand this. If they invite us to partake in an activity of theirs, we participate (in "unity") but in order to be able to **STRUGGLE** in presence of all the workers **against all negative elements this current may choose to diffuse** (which we did recently in Guatemala, for instance). In light of the concrete relations the AFL-CIO maintains with a great number of workers throughout the world, we fight for them to clearly understand this apparatus' role, all the while building the workers' real unity on the basis of their interests. We denounce the AFL-CIO's negative practices in direction of the workers, as well as the manipulative, collaborationist, bureaucratic line it diffuses in the worker milieu. We denounce the AFL-CIO's insertion in international level struggles and its relation with the government and the American state. We denounce its nature (all of these positions are clearly expressed and diffused on our website so all, and progressives particularly, may not be deceived). The AFL-CIO is only an example, for **we always function in this way in our relation with other organizations**. As we already stated in our document on solidarity, we are outright, frank and outspoken. If some understand and wish to continue conveying their solidarity, they do so. If they disagree, however, with the clarity of our approach and wish to block their support, they are also free to do so.

All this shows what we understand to be the preservation of our independence. And in considering our positions and practices in their totality, we are sure there is no "opportunism" here. The debate remains open!

Batay Ouvriye's Stand on Certain Forms of Terror and Repression

We recognize that we've had serious limits concerning the diffusion of our positions concerning certain forms of terror and repression. This is true for the period of the Aristide regime, as well as for the present. The situation's complexity often makes it difficult for us to intervene rapidly.

Clearly, this is a limit, but we know that: we are condemned to confront the repression and the terror that characterizes the historical moment we are going through. This is what we meant lately in our various communiqués stating that we had to “Confront!” them. Specifically: just as many militants and/or observers have pointed out, the Aristide government exerted repression and terror against workers (small peasants, merchants, artisans...) and the working class (to counter the resistance arising from his having established the neo-liberal orientation, in working class conflicts with the bourgeois, due, for instance, to his having set minimum wages much lower than even those the bourgeois were ready to pay, his allowing/favoring/organizing the accumulation of banking capital, particularly... and also his opening the door to Dominican capital in a providential backing to the moribund Haitian capital). At the same time, **presently**, the police and repressive forces exert terror by trying to destroy grassroots lavalas organizations that, in the absence of their leaders, are more inclined to convey demands closer to their own interests. And the masses, amidst this blind terror-repression of the police and MINUSTAH forces, are terribly subjected. Executions are carried out throughout the country in very many places, including several of our head members and not sparing our meeting places. The invasion of military forces in popular neighborhoods in view of spreading the terror is a characteristic of the present situation. Batay Ouvriye denounces this terror, although this denunciation may not have the force some observers may wish. This is due to the fact that we have to concretely take into account the existing relation of forces in the context of the construction occurring so as to **really** be able to confront it and find a solution to this situation. Indeed, we **do** confront this terror concretely in various places, although we choose not to make much noise around this. We should recall the confrontations with the “assailants” in the North-East, or in the North-West; in the latter, head organization members were killed. More recently, we mobilized against the arrest of various Batay Ouvriye head members because of their positions on the elections and their concrete practices against the candidates’ demagogy in the rural areas where they were present. In some Cap-Haitian neighborhoods, we’ve confronted ex-army members regrouped to steal the workers’ lands, particularly those of fishermen; we confronted them too when they allied with former lavalas gang members who had undertaken to steal the small peasants’ land plots under the orders of latifundists. These are a few examples from the field, there are numerous others. So, today, we formally denounce, once again, the violence and anti-popular terror the reactionary forces heading the country are spreading, with their puppet Latortue government and in on-going coordination with the MINUSTAH and the president Alexandre. In denouncing the repression and the terror, in concretely fighting it, we’re always aware that, independently of the pretexts invoked, its true objective is, as always, to destroy the masses’ resistance. In particular, they use the contradictions within the popular masses to spread this repression. In the last year, we’ve lived this concretely and have always exposed it in our publications.

We should add that an element rendering this situation even more difficult is the misled nature of the lavalas gang terror, its widespread character, without clear orientation, in which this violence is often exerted against the very popular masses. The lavalas heads, as a reactionary political sector, are using a part of the sub-proletariat to carry out this directionless violence. This violence also contributes to the terror. It is very negative for the masses on all levels. It cannot be referred to as a “resistance”. There furthermore exists the violence of the reactionary anti-lavalas sector, within the popular masses too: gangs at the service of the bourgeoisie, in the factories and popular neighborhoods. And there are also the occupation troops, with the police, heading their own anti-popular violence. In this context, the task of allowing a clear and precise understanding isn’t easy. It becomes all the more complicated when populist, opportunist, reactionary sectors attempt to pass the directionless violence as “resistance” (a violence often exerted against the very popular masses and helping to spread the terror even more, thus highly hindering real mobilization)! Our task of helping the masses to clearly resume their own practices and methods of struggle in their own interest isn’t easy at all. But it is the way to follow.

On the Occupation

For Batay Ouvriye, just as in 1994, when the putschists and lavalas both worked together to encourage and accompany a 20,000 foreign soldiers’ occupation, today again, we are undergoing a plastering occupation. In this case again, both lavalas and the opposition worked together for this disguised occupation of UN troops. Batay Ouvriye stated and will continue to state, concretely, that it is against the occupation. Here again, it is a difficult practice because of the forms of contradiction amidst the ruling classes. These forms allow many sorts of demagogy. And we have to handle them correctly. But every day more, the situation is becoming clearer. Without rhetoric, the construction of forces capable of waging a real fight against the occupation is advancing as an aspect of the general struggle. It is a key aspect. And this is exactly why it has to happen with all the depth necessary. We repeat : Down with the Occupation! The Struggle has just begun!

On the Elections

In the context of the occupation and contradictions amidst the ruling classes, the reactionaries are doing their best to attempt to escape from the crisis through the unique course of the elections. Our position is clear: just as during the previous elections, they constituted a means for the ruling classes to try to break out of the deep structural crisis they were going through, now again, the elections are attempting to reestablish hegemony amongst the ruling classes. Whether in the previous or present elections, they are settling their own business. Here again, the workers' independence must be clear. That is what we are fighting for. But we need to precisely analyze the political arena in a situation in which, this time, the stakes concern all the classes with much force. On the other hand, we have to take into account the real level of the masses whose conscience of the situation remains limited to the simple democratic level. We have to take into account the level they can presently attain, in the context of their independence. Because of this, the contradictions amidst the ruling classes can be useful in allowing the creation of better conditions for the advancement of the masses' struggles, in defending their interests as well as to eliminate the confusions and illusions-mystifications the lavalas current had conveyed. For this, we need to develop our tactics very precisely. We are against all bourgeois elections but determined to use all contradictions amidst the bourgeois and those they carry with them, in the most appropriate forms. "Against bourgeois elections" means even when they are happening, they should allow the workers to clearly see that this path will never open the way towards seizing power or even the possibility of attaining the qualitative leap necessary to convey their demands. We have to support the masses in clearly understanding that what is going on is the ruling classes using them for their own interests. At the same time, the masses should clearly understand the contradictions amongst the ruling classes and between the ruling classes and us. We should clearly know how to use these precisions to attain our objectives. As much as possible, we should heighten these contradictions. Presently, alongside our fundamental position and the work we are carrying out on its basis, we have to correctly take into account the masses' practices and thus create better conditions for the struggles' development, while countering the fascist reactionary currents developing.

On the Question of Levels

Batay Ouvriye is a movement fighting on the democratic level. All should be clear on this. The feeble-minded talk of individuals having no nuances or precision shouldn't confuse anyone. It's by creating all sorts of confusions that they're trying to carry out their assigned tasks, but that concerns them. Batay Ouvriye isn't a Marxist-Leninist organization or a revolutionary one. It doesn't attempt to pass as such either. But, at the same time, the working class' real interests, even on the democratic level, force it to open up towards increasingly advanced positions, since the general orientation remains within the **general context of the working class' theory**. It is in the framework of the general struggle, of the practices in the field themselves that the constant surpassing that needs to happen occurs. The practices' advancement therefore is the framework for their surpassing. But, each time, at each moment, positions will remain limited to the democratic struggles, even when they contain / have to contain the seeds to go further. Batay Ouvriye must be a part of the general movement to attain the working class' interests totally, but there should be no confusion on levels. In this sense, Batay Ouvriye's practices won't open up towards seizing power, although it may support this necessary alternative and the need for the class to work towards this end. But reaching power isn't Batay Ouvriye's responsibility. So, we have nothing to do with anarcho-syndicalism.

Within Batay Ouvriye, the **May First Batay Ouvriye Union Federation** exists with its own unions and committees in various factories. Their presence in Batay Ouvriye should be respected, at the same time as they impose respect on the democratic level, without liberalism. Concretely, this conveys the effects it should on Batay Ouvriye's practices.

With the permanent anti-union repression, the movement's construction, within the struggles themselves, has to face numerous difficulties. The unions' direction is constituted by workers. Their coordination too. Other militants support them, in all practices. All this level's functioning is based on internal democracy. And in the context of the construction of the spokesperson's responsibility, the same logic exists, that is, progressively, taking in hand / taking from the hands of. Militants support this transformation. The workers, in their renewal, are permanent. There is no other way.

On Denunciations

Despite its secondary aspect, this point has its importance. In general, we don't have the practice of denouncing individuals who, in one way or another, are leading struggles against a clearly identified, common enemy (in this case, imperialism). Even when we disagree with their line, with their tactical orientation or some of their practices in the field, in confronting the enemy, we always try to protect militants

or activists carrying out such practices, even if we can denounce (and have to denounce) practices we feel erroneous, incorrect, or reactionary. Contrary to the political current attacking us (which, itself, takes care to indicate our names, headquarters and personal addresses, and even pictures -! to the enemy...), we, in the context of our criticisms, always try to insist rather on current practices we feel incorrect and exterior to the interests of the working class, the workers' or the popular masses. That is how we criticized the CATH union federation when we felt their line was directly opposite the interests of the workers struggling. We've never fallen into practices of denunciation.

If we've presently chosen to name Ben Dupuy, this is an exception - but not a useless one. It is because, in truth, we have here an extreme case. Even if, once again, we generally insist on practices and, more specifically, occurring practices, despite this, we've chosen to name him. This is because all those we've met and discussed with on the indicators' role he has played amongst progressives, still today answered us: "But all know Ben Dupuy perfectly well, the tasks he has pursued, the tasks he continues to pursue! That's how he has always acted! It's his assignments he's carrying out for his chiefs! We all know this perfectly!". However, no one ever formally set it down in writing, put it on the record. So, this is what we have done, presently: we **set the record** for something **people know perfectly well** but only discuss amongst themselves, in meetings and sometimes in mobilizations or assemblies.

Addendum: An end to useless loitering – Final words on the “left-” and “anarcho-”slinging red-baiters...

It's dismaying but not surprising to us that the student, Jeb Sprague, with such a low political consciousness, has chosen to continue a debate to which we felt we had unequivocally responded. The ongoing defamation, at this point, doubtlessly indicates at once both Sprague's nature as an unscrupulous university student, concerned with maintaining the impossible thesis he has concocted; and the provocateur nature of his backers, the IAC – Haiti Progres consortium, intent on proving (to their financiers?) the righteousness of their one and only militant action, that in favor of the return of their messiah, Aristide. In direction, then, of the progressive communities of various honest forums (Znet, Indymedia, amongst others) deliberately misled by the nauseating distortions of a truth touching upon such a difficult reality as that of working class struggles in Haiti, we are forced, once again – and for us, finally, this time – to counter the fallacious allegations of this deceitful team. We do so this time, however, quickly, with the objective of not being lured into the provocateurs' snare. But just before going further, we will once again comment:

1. On the fact of **still** never having been contacted by the “researcher”, despite our very public website and email addresses... while he chose (according to the internet), rather, to contact the Solidarity Center, demonstrating in this way, quite the colonialist mentality...
2. On the grossly despicable red-baiting they've chosen to prolong in the rabid primary anti-communist setting they perfectly know exists in Haiti – and the US as well, for that matter. By falsely accusing Batay Ouvriye of “*anarcho-syndicalism*”, “*advocating for the control of industry and government... through the use of direct action, such as sabotage...*”, of being “*ideologically opposed to working with or under any form of government*”..., and so on and so forth, whereas never has our organization put out any such declaration publicly or privately, Sprague and consorts directly put us in the target of the reactionary ruling classes and governments they supposedly are against, thereby playing a role of which all may gather the conclusions.
3. Consistent with such a practice is Sprague's revealing of identities often necessarily covered by aliases in working class organizing practices and frequently key for the basic security reasons. Who, but utterly reactionary working class enemies, would indulge in such grossly low-level informer designations?

By stating that Batay Ouvriye was “*initiated as an office space*” and that the “*Batay Ouvriye Federation (sic) was founded in May 2002*”, the author reveals his **complete ignorance** of our movement. First of all, we've never been constrained to “an office space”, which would be quite contrary to any consistent line of organizing **directly amidst the workers, in the industries**. Batay Ouvriye was born out of the “Batay Ouvriye Classic Apparel” (“Workers' Fight in Classic Apparel”, the “Batay Ouvriye nan Brokosa” (“Brokosa Workers' Fight”); “Batay Ouvriye Nòton” (Norton Industries Workers' Fight”), the Batay Ouvriye at Gilanex, Megatex, Villard, Abraham's, Frank Vincent, etc. etc. When all these workers' groups decided to gather together on the basis of their common demands for the labor law's application (Batay Ouvriye bulletin No. 2, April 1993), the name of Batay Ouvriye rightly corresponded to their common element of unity. All of these emerged as a sign of the renewed militancy of past “Kòdinasyon Sendikal Premye Me” (KSPM) members who had been forced into hiding by the 1990 military coup and who, necessarily reintegrating the work market, had the common demand of receiving their severance pay from industries who had chosen to close their doors at that time. All of this is documented, for example, in an ILO 1998 report on work conditions in Haiti (<http://www.oit.or.cr/mdtsanjo/actrav/travail/travail.htm>).

Secondly, **there is no “Batay Ouvriye federation”**, but rather a **May First Batay Ouvriye Union Federation** (ESPM-Batay Ouvriye) that was legally registered in May **2001**, not 2002... (But: has Sprague ever set foot in Haiti, in the worker setting? Perhaps he only visited the American embassy? Did he even consult our website?). This Union Federation, part of the Batay Ouvriye movement, regroups the labor unions and functions conjointly with neighborhood and peasant federations.

To return to Sprague's supposed bone of contention, the relation between Batay Ouvriye and the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center in the context of Aristide's forced departure, the answer is simple: there never existed any before the Center's support of the SOKOWA workers' struggle in 2004. Zero, zilch. We are in the greatest ignorance of all the IRI meetings Sprague insists were held in the Dominican Republic or other, and that contributed to Aristide's “destabilization” early that year. It's that simple. And to state that, because of their donation of the very small \$3,500 in June 2004, we were “*on the US bank roll*” is a real joke. On the other hand, Sprague's deliberate amalgamation of financial and political questions is a much more serious point that should be corrected. It seems Sprague has never heard of, or conceived of an **independent** workers' movements; doubtless, he read our recent reply to his attacks in a sloppy manner, skipping over the annexes, particularly that “On Solidarity”. Though this short statement should be read in full

(<http://www.batayouvriye.org/English/Positions1/solidarity.html>), we will nevertheless quote it here, even at some length, with perhaps a more precise translation and emphasis added:

*(...) The struggles of the working class, our struggles, occur in dominated social formation in which the ferocious exploitation they are undergoing confers tremendous difficulties to survive. Naturally, this gives rise to important struggles... one of the key elements to carry them out is material capacity. So, we have no illusions: clearly, all support can be very useful in this sense. However, in the context of the construction of the workers' movement's material independence, we always endeavor to count on our own forces; particularly, material solidarity must not have any negative incidence on our line or our practices. At the same time, imperialist domination causes a value transfer from dominated countries towards imperialist ones. Thus, a return of transferred value is legitimate **without ever, once again, putting our independence in question.***

On these bases, in a recent past, we've even developed relations with organizations stating they simply "wish to help". Sometimes we've note that, quickly, this "help" was cut off. We consider this normal; being aware of the political limits of such an approach, we always anticipate such developments. But, in other cases, these existing relations have reproduced themselves: in such cases, this is because solidarity, as a basis, was more real and more solid. Despite all this, practice reveals that organizations conveying solidarity generally also have limits. Here again, we consider this normal.

One of the contradictions we face is the origin of the funds of some of these organizations wishing to help us. We respect their independence: our relations are of a bilateral nature, the most important aspect is the respect of our independence and, in this sense, our capacity to take all politically necessary stands, our capacity to develop all struggles going leading towards the exploited workers' interests, nationally and internationally. We realize this has sometimes caused the support's canceling; but this again remains secondary for us: the struggle for the advancement of the workers' struggles must remain before all independent, even when rendered very difficult because of this. It even happens these organizations' financiers may convey these "support" funds in the logic of worldwide imperialist development. We see through this clearly. Nevertheless, within these relationships, our stands remain the same, on the principle of complete political independence, while we accept all support, solidarity or even "help" as long as it is accompanied by the workers' full independence.

*This holds consequences. At times, the organizations' "support" towards us puts them in contradiction with their own sources of financing. In this case, it's important they realize that **we are in no way implicated in this contradiction.** Even if we accept to discuss the point, it is their own responsibility. And, from this moment on, if their solidarity was genuine and sincere, then they will decide on the basis of this fundamental stand."*

Following such a position, where the Solidarity Center's support comes from concerns that organization. The answer given to Sprague by the Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Network member (inappropriately but characteristically labeled "low-level" in Sprague's reactionary hierarchical conception) that Batay Ouvriye doesn't receive any funding from the US government, was exactly right.

Equally correct was his second answer concerning the absence of a supposed Batay Ouvriye leadership. That which characterizes Batay Ouvriye is the full participation of workers at all levels of organization, **their direction of the movement** and this is largely known and readily observable to all and any person who **even remotely approaches our practices.** So we find extremely laughable his assertion concerning a lack of democratic functioning within Batay Ouvriye, that the workers present at a meeting "*were not permitted to speak... independently of Batay's supervision*". Similarly, Sprague's allegations of a Solidarity Center member's "overseeing" a March 2004 meeting is preposterous, since that day, when we accepted to hold a large encounter with some twenty Quixote/Haiti Reborn visitors, we explicitly explained that this meeting coincided with the first meeting we were having with the Solidarity Center and other organizations in the context of the difficult unfolding free trade zone struggle and that their representatives might also have the occasion of hearing the exposé of our activities, as well as our views on the Haitian situation. Following Sprague's reasoning, the Quixote/Haiti Reborn visitors were "overseeing" our joint meeting with the Solidarity Center and other organizations?!

Really, that's enough! How can we respond to such trash being put out against us by an individual openly revealing his ignorance and such profound ill-faith that it is impossible to even begin putting things right? The collusion of his interests with those of the political sector he is defending, which bears the marks of the worse elements of the development of the "left" in the United States as well as in Haiti, forces us to insist on the central point of, once again, debating: whether 'Lavalas Family' was a government defending the people's interests, particularly the workers (and whether Sprague, benevolent advocate of the Haitian people, is the appropriate judge for such a question!), if it wasn't just another trick to facilitate the

penetration of imperialism, that of a crony capitalism, an upstart bourgeoisie cluster of swindlers and professional hoaxers taking advantage of a situation to accumulate by all means – thus carving out the path towards our present-day new ruling classes? (See our December 2004 position: <http://www.batayouvriye.org/English/Positions1/decsituation.html>) And: why, then, “defend” such a bunch facing an equally bourgeois “opposition” – by defending the “big-eaters” who, long before, had already been designated as such by the people? This main issue, the red-baiting team refuses to question or even to consider. And, even explicitly invited to do so by us in our last message, they refused. The only argument they pursue is that Aristide was democratically elected. As we’ve said: what elections?! --- but, even admitting: Bush too, and Chirac overwhelmingly! So they’re ‘popular’ governments?! Here’s the debate ! That we accept to engage in. Whether it be in our final Dec. 20th Statement, whether it be in the field of our battles. And our position is clear on this question.

In ending, we’ll simply say: we think it’s really too bad that what might have been a serious and valid questioning of the roles played by the various agencies of US imperialism at work in Haiti since the past decade has been so oddly travestied into such a dishonest, slanted and **reactionary** attack. We sincerely wish Sprague, as a university student, return to his academics (more intelligently, seriously and, above all, honestly). Certainly, he will not get much further on this track. As for us, we continue our participation amongst the Haitian working class with the firm determination of advancing in our practices confronting much more important class enemies.