



# BATAY OUVRIYE

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## RESPONSE TO SLANDER AT THE “HAITI INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL: New Heights Attained By The Haiti-Progrès Current And Its Allies

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005, we, at Batay Ouvriye, learned that a supposed “tribunal” organized by the Haiti Progrès current, the International Action Center and Kakola (amongst others) during that weekend hosted a presentation by a journalist/history student, Jeb Sprague, in which he alleged that our organization was a main recipient of United States government funds destined to overthrow President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. According to Sprague, these funds from the AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center, one of the four primary conduits of three million dollars in such blatant imperialist projects, went from Batay Ouvriye to a “sub-grantee”, Socowa, thus converting this workers’ movement into the unwitting “co-conspirators” of an unholy alliance fabricated by the State Department.

This is a very serious allegation for which, at the start, we must begin by challenging the “researcher/witness” who never once contacted our organization for information. Nor were we contacted by the organizing committee of the “Tribunal”.

First, we’ll say no “research” was needed to reveal that, amongst others, Solidarity Center funds were channeled to the Sokowa free trade zone worker’s union through Batay Ouvriye. These finances (US \$3,500! – August 2004), destined to coordinate the struggle and, specifically, support the fired workers undergoing much difficulty due to the situation’s duration, resulted from a general appeal we issued. As is clear in the excerpt included in *Annex 1*, this appeal (relayed by various labor websites such as Labourstart - [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/show\\_campaign.cgi?c=30](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/show_campaign.cgi?c=30)) was public and open to all. The AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center was one of the organizations that concretely responded. This phase of the struggle concluded, we publicly thanked all those who had contributed to the struggle whether through militancy or solidarity funds, amongst them the Solidarity Center (*Annex 2*). So, as we said, the slightest “research” wasn’t necessary to disclose such publicly issued information.

The Haiti Progrès group, International Action Center and Kakola... accusations reached further heights, however, when their “researcher” advanced that we received funds from USAID and the NED to destabilize Aristide and then overthrow his government, that we were under the control and orientation of the “184 organizations” group, the “Democratic Convergence” and even, by association of ideas, the CIA mentioned just a little further! This, now, is complete disparagement, an outright attack. We’ll reply in several points:

1. First, that, concretely, Batay Ouvriye by no means participated in Aristide’s overthrow. We refused to engage in that mobilization precisely because of its direction. And when in December 2004 we issued a position on the situation of the country at that moment (*Annex 3*) we were absolutely meticulous on this point, specifically in order not to contribute to the goals of the bourgeois opposition, and not to be associated with this group. In this sense, the very first base allegation of this “university researcher” is hopelessly null, passing fully aside our positions, included here in extenso. No wonder he was so hesitating and stuttering on WBAI’s September 28<sup>th</sup> “Wake Up Call”.
2. We have always pursued and engaged in relations of solidarity, whether militant or financial, on the basis that they relate to struggles and practices **based solely on our deep convictions and in total independence of orientation and functioning**. These positions are clearly expressed in a public statement again included (*Annex 4*).

3. We hold this position concerning all groups who contribute to our struggles, whether through militancy or financial support. This explains our clear stands taken concerning the yellow, rotten, collaborationist unions in Haiti, while, at the same time, in the framework of the free trade zone specific struggle, members of the OGITH union traveled there to convey their support and we accepted their solidarity. Similarly, we participated in PPN (Parti Populaire National) demonstrations in the North of the country, but when they distorted the grounds of our presence in a basically opportunistic and untruthful way in their newspaper, we denounced them too, in writing, which they refused to print in their paper, denying us the very basic right of response. In the same way, even as we accept the AFL-CIO's solidarity practices, we have clearly informed them of our position concerning the current they belong to, the disagreements we have with a good number of their fundamental national and international practices historically and in the present, our issues with their forms of labor militancy and our views on the internal struggle they are now confronting (*Annexes 5 and, especially 6 where these stands were put in writing*).
4. Insofar as criticisms of Aristide in 2003: within the large scope that included many various facets, we'll say once again and confirm that **yes**, we totally confronted the Lavalas **leaders** who we certainly exposed to be reactionaries, swindlers, complete frauds, anti-popular and fundamentally anti-worker. It is no accident at all that the people themselves, in all conscience, named them clearly: "gran manjè" ("big eaters")! In a statement we issued during these mobilizations, we clearly expressed this position (*Annex 3*). But even before, long before, ever since 2001-2002, Batay Ouvriye-organized workers denounced the practices of this reactionary government concerning a massacre it was preparing in collusion with the big landowners, the bourgeoisie in Cap-Haitian and major multinationals (Cointreau) at the Guacimal orange fields; indeed, the massacre occurred. This same clash was the first occasion in Haiti in which a large mass of workers, thwarted in their most essential demands by the Lavalas mayor, the Lavalas Northern delegate and the Lavalas director of the ministry of interior, shouted together: "Down with Lavalas"! British GMB unionists who had accompanied us in the field on this occasion can bear witness. And everywhere workers, peasants, poor market women... workers in general were confronting big landlords, macoutes, bourgeois and multinationals, the lavalas leaders always, always, supported these upper classes.

At this time, in this very Guacimal struggle, Haiti Progres was also clearly against these nefarious Lavalas practices. Ever since 2001, it issued articles of denunciation, warning of the role the Lavalas leaders were playing against the masses (See "Workers Fight for Rights on Orange Plantation", Haiti Progres – May 16-22, 2001). And in 2002, around the Guacimal massacre itself in which the paper's own reporter who had accompanied the workers was arrested too, they even titled: "Repression: Lavalas Reveals Itself!" (June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002). All throughout this conflict, Haiti Progrès continued to title, often on its front page: "Guacimal: Haitian Government Supports Big Landowners in Clash with Peasants" (June 6<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002 – the latter including the picture of a graffiti in Cap-Haitian saying "Down with the Lavalas government that kills peasants of St. Raphael); "Guacimal: Neoliberal Repression" (June 12<sup>th</sup> 2002); "Guacimal, Free Hand to Repression" (June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002); "Guacimal, Lavalas persists in Illegality" (July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002)... Was Haiti Progres then paid by the US government to destabilize Aristide?

5. **Yes**: we fought Aristide with his practices of embargo during the 1991 coup at the expense of the Haitian people which only enriched its enemies, instead of choosing a popular mode of struggle; Aristide who returned with 20,000 soldiers of US imperialism to reestablish his personal and crony power; the lavalas leaders, - and Aristide in particular – who, exactly like the "opposition", formally requested the present occupation; all the usurpation leaders of the lavalas movement, opportunistic, reactionary and anti-popular in the extreme, except when they've been rejected causing them to again appeal to the feelings and demands of mass struggles that put them in power in 1990;

... Aristide and all the corrupt and treacherous lavalas leaders, but also, immediately, the 184 Group and the bourgeois direction of the opposition movement, not only exclusively theoretically (or in 'newspapers!') but in the construction of this same popular movement in which we were demanding the

independence of the people's camp, warning of what may come and preparing the aftermaths that had just begun (*Annex 3*); later yet, until the present, as always, in the workers' struggle against the bourgeois and macoute-bourgeois (in which we've hardly ever seen militants related to the Haiti Progres/PPN current); up till the present then, in our struggles against Apaid, Baker, Mrs. Bayard, ADIH... (*Annex 7* – News Bulletin 2 & Press Statement on a free trade zone judgment) and the occupation (*Annex 8*). So it is concretely that we are against all the macoute, bourgeois, multinational, imperialist, 184, “big eaters” movements confronting the workers and the Haitian people **in general**.

Why then are Haiti Progres, the International Action Center, Kakola... and their quack researcher seeking to introduce a confusion that either they haven't sought to probe, or that they know perfectly well to be contrary to the simple truth that Batay Ouvriye is frontally opposed to all reactionary orientation! Why don't they have the minimum of courage to confront us on the necessary orientation in the unique interest of the working masses, of the real popular masses?

If such was the case, we would remind them that Aristide himself is bourgeois, that it is under his government that the largest concentration of financial capital ever occurred in Haiti, with banks mushrooming all over... We would remind them that it was all the monopolistic bourgeois who, under Aristide, controlled the quite evidently neo-liberal privatizations taking place especially in the ports. We would remind them that it was Aristide who, secretly, went to lay the first stone of the Ouanaminthe free trade zone that would become a hell on earth for all workers, as was foreseeable and explains why he chose to carry out this mission secretly. We would remind them of all the corruption and state graft, all the anti-popular repression, all the treasons the lavalas leaders concretely and consciously carried out. The general director of the Ministry of interior in the Guacimal conflict, to defend his petty climber's interests, officially declared to the press: “this government is here to defend the lands of diplomats”!!!

6. The Haiti Progres, International Action Center and Kakola... detractors know this, just as, generally, they know Batay Ouvriye practices. Is it by accomplished opportunism and a complete lack of principles, to defend a cause that can't be defended – the advocacy of the lavalas leaders (who in Haiti have already surrendered and, being the chameleons they are, fully engaged in the electoral process under the imperialist occupation)? Is it their complete absence of practices amidst the workers in Haiti that causes them to adopt such an already putrid cause?

We will understand this group's attitude and particularly that of Haiti Progres in analyzing the nature of the conflict on hand. For, precisely, it is a real conflict and not a simple debate with petty bourgeois. We should clarify that these attacks won't deviate us one inch from our objectives or from anything we believe should be done in the interests of the workers, particularly the wage laborers. But we give them and will continue to give them all their importance.

In the context of the struggle's development within the country in which the ruling classes and petty bourgeoisie have failed, the imperialists and their different types of servants all have interest in attacking the forces rooted amongst the workers and advancing in concrete struggles. Given certain obligations - the ruling classes and imperialism sometimes have to maintain a “democratic” appearance -, the best weapon they can use is the supposedly ‘left’ current. In this sense, when these enemies, themselves, objectively, in the interest of the most archaic sectors in the country, attack us, this is a good thing. Although this is how we understand it, we still need to issue explanations unveiling the enemy for all to understand quite clearly.

The leader of the ‘current’ suddenly attacking us is Ben Dupuy. We need to follow his itinerary and that of his ‘current’ to fully comprehend the situation. During the whole period of struggle against Duvalier in the 1970's, he set up, participated and/or promoted various organizations, particularly “Rezistans Ayisyenn” (RA), linked to “Radio Vonvon” of notorious reputation in its suspected infiltration, selecting youths of those years to prepare “invasions” in which all the participants were found and/or killed, except the leaders...! Later, “Rassemblement Démocratique Haitien”(RDH), MHL (the Movement of Haitian Liberation), “IDEE” (“Idea”)... various organizations which were completely sterile and functioned on the sole basis of recruitment, void of political coming together, not to speak of militant practices amongst

the masses. The various youths recruited, often on a militaristic basis, functioned with one main orientation: that of attacking progressive orientations, denouncing them as CIA and even publishing their pictures. In the Haitian emigration, many militants rose against these practices and wondered if it wasn't precisely the Dupuy current that was playing the CIA role in setting up these sterile organizations just to pressure Duvalier, deviating the youth from deeper and more consequential practices (in particular with the workers) and finally denouncing all progressives.

This appeared even more clearly in 1971-72 when Dupuy fawned before Senator Fullbright, leading a large number of youths behind him, supposedly to overthrow Duvalier. Yet more: in 1974-1976, when he traded his boots and military fatigues for the Marxist-Leninist intellectual's tie and attaché case, this current attempted to stab the Unified Communist Party (PUCH) to infiltrate Cuba. They issued books and movies showing the "major work" they were accomplishing; but the Cubans, despite a short period of laxism, finally unmasked them. During this same period, the current traveled to Cuba to meet with the militants who had kidnapped the American ambassador, Clinton Knox. And returned to the United States **with no problem at all!**

During the following Jean-Claude Duvalier period of liberalization, roles changed: Dupuy's current upheld the 'independents' that the Carter administration and CIA were allowing to develop in the country. After Duvalier's departure, MHL engendered the APN, the Haiti-Progrès newspaper and finally the PPN. It's in the context of the latter organization that instead of targeting the 184 Group that was setting up anti-Aristide associations, they chose to attack workers in the Plaisance area, in landowners' interest.

This itinerary is that of an agent who went to great lengths to dismantle the Centrale Autonome des Travailleurs Haïtiens (CATH) when it was at its most dynamic. If, seriously speaking, he had had issues with that labor federation, he would have initiated a new one with major differences. An agent who, upon further scrutiny, doesn't single out the so-called "unionists" of the 184 Group, i.e. the notorious "Secteur Syndical" regrouping of most of the unions of the country (except the Batay Ouvriye May First Labor Federation) that openly and outright supported the 184's actions, was responsible for funds in that grouping and closely resembles the pro-imperialist and pro-bourgeois Confederation of Venezuelan Labor (CTV)... but rather chooses to pick Batay Ouvriye as a target. As mentioned previously, this in defense of a particularly reprehensible cause such as the upholding of the anti-worker, anti-popular Lavalas big-eaters and in a similar logic as that of AFL-CIO members' "lesser evil" endorsement of the Democratic Party. Or, precisely, playing a CIA role?

We repeat: the enemy's hostilities are a good sign. They allow us to precise our struggle and always keep in mind that we can't be playing with the enemy. Finally, this, at the same time, allows us to unmask these reactionaries and their chameleon nature, seeking to infiltrate the popular struggles, and, in this sense, for us to reinforce and consolidate the people's camp, thanks to such denunciations.

7. This is why our own conclusion, in this conflict, is our wish to meet with these various petty bourgeois currents in the actual field of struggles against the landlords, their field administration and servants; in the field, against the bourgeoisie concretely in the factories, sweatshops, plantations, and in the political arena, alongside the peasants, workers, wage laborers, and then, necessarily, as they had already seen it in 2002, against the landlords-bourgeois-multinational allies, that is, against the Lavalas leaders.

Let us meet in the concrete battlefield, the workers will then advise.

Port-au-Prince, Oct. 1, 2005

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1

ARCHIVE: (Codevi Ouanaminthe Free Trade Zone Files) :

<http://www.batayouvriye.org/English/Dossiers1/Sokowa/sokowasolidarityappeal.html>

### ***Urgent Solidarity - Fired SOKOWA/CODEVI Free Trade Zone Workers - Grupo M's Last Card: A War of Attrition***

April 3, 2004

Dear Solidarity Friends,

The situation in Haïti's first free trade zone has reached a dramatic point. Let us recall that we have here a precedent – the Drouillard and Laffiteau free zones are already under construction. In this sense, the new Haitian government bears the national responsibility of it's outcome. After the entirety of the union (that, at the price of courageous efforts, had managed to implant itself in the factory last February) was fired on March first, our meetings with Grupo M confirmed the deliberate and entrenched character of this measure. Despite over two thousand solidarity letters addressed to Grupo M, its main buyer Levi-Strauss and the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank (IFC), the company continues to maintain this characterized, despotic and illegal measure.

Starting with the announcement of the union's establishment and that of its dismantling, which followed very closely (Feb. 10th and March 3rd, respectively), several groups implicated themselves fully in the situation. These were, on one hand, the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), close to "UNITE" (a US based needle workers union) that, itself, contacted the Washington-based Workers' Right Consortium (WRC) as well as the AFL-CIO's American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS). Both of these organizations maintained tight contact with Levi-Strauss, in an effort to demand that it respect the terms of its own social Code of Conduct. This choice to pressure Levi-Strauss was all the more justified as Grupo M is notorious for its disrespect of union rights in the Dominican Republic (where it is the largest employer with over 12,000 workers in its factories) and the IFC had already declared itself openly the Grupo's "partner". Both the WRC and ACILS had participated in the campaign leading to the first collective bargaining convention in Dominican free trade zones, that of the BJ&B, linking relations then with the Fedotrazona union federation, itself in struggle with Grupo M concerning this same subject...

## ANNEX 2

ARCHIVE: Codevi Ouanaminthe Free Trade Zone Files  
(<http://www.batayouvriye.org/English/Dossiers1/Sokowa/victorybut.html>)

April 18, 2004

### ***VICTORY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE SOKOWA WORKERS ! BUT VIGILANCE AND MOBILIZATION ARE STILL IN ORDER!***

... Mobilization of the workers still present at the Codevi factory ; interventions (towards the factory workers in general, those in difficulty; the union and its committee, the Ouanaminthe population,

national and international press, groups in solidarity and the public in general, the Haitian government...); permanent orientation of Batay Ouvriye; active solidarity (letters, presence in the field and, at times, within the very negotiations, debates, financial support...), as well from local union federations (OGITH) and foreign ones (ACILS, FEDOTRAZONA...) and from support organizations (Batay Ouvriye Solidarity Network, Haïti Support Group, Réseau-Solidarité – Peuples Solidaires, WRC, Maquila Solidarity Network, Clean Clothes Campaign...) have allowed, finally, the reinstatement of the workers that Codevi's management in the Ouanaminthe free trade zone, in the North-East of Haiti, was trying to illegally fire. ...

## ANNEX 3

Dec. 20th, 2003

### BATAY OUVRIYE STATEMENT ON THE HAITIAN SITUATION TODAY

At Batay Ouvriye, the framework of our everyday struggles as members of the working class, workers of all sorts, popular masses in general, made it already **quite** clear: the Lavalas leadership, by contributing to destroy all the popular components of the large 1984 -1990 mass movement, had become a **totally anti-popular power**. And, within this very evolution, frankly **reactionary**; consequently, necessarily, **more and more repressive, to the point of becoming outright criminal**. We've been facing this since a long time.

Indeed, on large landowner's properties, at the Ministry of Labor, at the Ministry of Justice... always, this power has taken sides against the peoples' struggles claiming their legitimate rights! All around us too, by its exactions on the poor in neighborhoods, small merchants, drivers, cooperative shareholders, school and university students, press workers, everywhere, indistinctly, always the same objective: to dismantle the demanding peoples' struggles, annihilate free speech! And, to fight the working classes' interests, those of the poor peasants, workers, and popular masses in general, this repression is always more complete, more ruthless. We've been denouncing this since way back!

Nevertheless, like everything in this society we're living in, only when this power has arrived to the point of also repressing the petty bourgeoisie, civil servants, intellectuals and bourgeois, has this situation become "unacceptable"...!

Today, having managed to repress all these classes and social categories, the political crisis has become general and the heights of repression attained by the government indicates clearly the **beginning of its end**. Almost the entirety of the democratic space previously attained has been abolished and the whole population is crying its complete disagreement with this state of things, demanding the elimination (or, at least, the changes at the summit) of this power.

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But, on the other hand, an understanding based on the people's real interests imposes a **differenciation** amongst the numerous social classes, categories and protesting sectors. Few of these regroupings or individuals really carry the interests of the large popular masses. And we can even say, frankly speaking, that : **many stand against the popular interest. Which renders the situation at once complex and complicated.**

We, at BATAY OUVRIYE, intimately know the haitian bourgeoisie and its profoundly **anti-worker, anti-people** nature. The daily occurings in the factories, workshops, businesses, large and small.... It is we, workers, working-class of various types, who endure them! We are those who can testify as to the

breadth of its contempt, the humiliations it imposes, its overwhelming domination and repression of the haitian workers in order to deploy the unlimited exploitation it wishes to generalize throughout the territory, in perfect class accord with the multinational imperialists. Similarly, its class representatives (political and intellectual bourgeois) ceaselessly denounce the slightest protests, work stops, strikes, mobilizations... whatever form they may assume, as long as they claim the workers' democratic rights, under pretext that these "unrests" result in income losses for the "country"!

We also know how much it is the very Lavalas regime that has always guaranteed these classes total **IMPUNITY** in all of their exactions and crimes against the working class, poor peasants, workers in general. We've always denounced and fought against this impunity, with the political and economic alliances underlieing it. If, presently, the bourgeoisie is fighting Lavalas, this is due to the fact that this power, given its chronic incapacity and archaic contradictions, obstructs its clear administration of the State, as well as the development of its hegemony for the establishment of a full and whole exploitation. Finally, if it is presently forced to present itself personally, this is due to the dominant classes' crisis of representativity, which we have referred to often.

Lavalas has pounced upon this open presentation in order to present itself as the greatest popular power in the world. **LIE OF LIES!**

- 1.) Lavalas has always granted the bourgeois the most wonderful advantages, not only in conflicts opposing the bourgeoisie and workers, but also in all of the country's profound elements of political economy: financial capital (banks flourishing everywhere), all sorts of big business, the free trade zones being the main example.
- 2.) **Lavalas is also bourgeois too**, and in business with the largest monopolists. Only its avoids showing it publicly.
- 3.) Lavalas is the main agent of corruption (in the government, drug traffic, contraband – rice, zinc roofing, cooperatives... scandals).
- 4.) They are the worst theives and have consequently received the people's title of **Gran Manjè** » ("Big Eaters").
- 5.) So : **never have they tried to satisfy the popular demands, not to mention structuring a power on this basis.**
- 6.) With the bourgeois, their counterparts, Lavalas keeps speaking of "giving work"... But we say, ourselves: during the colony, the french colonialists, "gave work" too! But: **in slavery!** To "give work" is one; in what conditions, an another!
- 7.) Lavalas is the greatest State destructor, privatizing State institutions one after another, granting big business (local and foreign) the largest advantages, making profits with that which should be guaranteed public services.
- 8.) Finally, Lavalas is the summits of **country-selling!** Water, land boundaries, zones... free trade, are neither owned, nor under the control of local authories, but rather controlled by the U.S. government, or under the Dominican bourgeoisie and army's strict control.

So we repeat it once again : **LAVALAS AND THE BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION ARE TWO ROTTEN ASS CHEEKS IN A SAME TORN TROUSERS !**

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Within the general protest movement against Lavalas, which is fundamentally and deeply just, fortunately other tendencies than that of the bourgeoisie have begun to appear, progressively imparting their traces. Despite the bourgeois Opposition's attempts to recuperate it, this level is trying to define

itself. It should deepen this conscious initiative and progress towards a more concentrated level in order to, within the Anti-Lavalas mobilization itself, put in question and even thwart frontward the bourgeois orientation (which includes a supposed “state of rights” which refuses to name, talk about attacking, bosses’ impunity, but which, as we know perfectly well, defines itself as completely dependent of the economic imperialism).

**Organizations or individuals belonging to the true people’s camp should, within the struggle itself, convey the basic demands of the people:** working class, poor peasants, workers of various sorts, poor school and university students, all consequent progressives, that is: the **PEOPLES’ CAMP** and, progressively, **build their autonomy**, always under the direction of the **true peoples’ interests**.

Presently, the ruling classes are aiming to confuse the popular masses’ interests in a question of a simply technical, abstract and hazy “democracy”. Which is why, even as Lavalas prepares to finish closing the last cracks of democratic struggle development, we must be clearly conscious of the basic differences in the interests aiming to reopen it. And that many of them are even extremely CONTRARY to ours. We must take into account our experiences made between 1986 and 1990, wherein the popular masses were basically recruited under the direction of the bourgeoisie and its representatives, which limited and diverted the mobilization.

This is why we repeat ceaselessly, in this precise movement of high protest: Within this general movement of struggle, that fundamentally possesses the concrete bases of existence and continuous development, **the popular masses and the different levels of organization must develop their concrete autonomy and must manage to take their own initiatives, where the popular interests, interests of workers, are also clearly definite.**

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In this sense we even anticipate: one should expect a serious and maybe even equally terrible repression from the large land-owners and bourgeois under imperialist orders (directly or through the intermediary of intellectual or political representatives) as soon as this phase succeeds and we’ll be truly advancing in the defense of our own true interests.

It is insofar, in the framework and the development of the struggle itself, as we’ll be able to **organize ourselves independently, that we’ll FORM AND CONSOLIDATE THE PEOPLES’ CAMP, THAT WE’LL TRULY DEFEND OUR OWN INTERESTS AND CONFRONT ALL THOSE WHO MAY PRESENT!**

**DOWN WITH THE BLOODTHIRSTY LAVALAS THIEVES, CRIMINALS!**

**DOWN WITH EXPLOITATION OF ALL SORTS!**

**LONG LIVE THE INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION AND MOBILIZATION OF THE PEOPLES’ CAMP, TO CARRY AND DEFEND ITS’ OWN INTERESTS, WITH WORKERS AS THE CENTER POST AND UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE WORKING CLASS!**

## **ANNEX 4**

### **“On Solidarity”**

June 2005

On the basis of the struggles we have waged, Batay Ouvriye has obtained various forms of solidarity coming from different organizations or groups. For a better relation with all, we find it useful to circulate this statement that will allow all our friends following our practices and wishing themselves also to offer their support, to understand our positions, our practices, in the framework of these relations.



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- As a first principle, we feel it is possible to sit down and discuss with all organizations who wish to do so as long as this presents is beneficial to the struggle of the workers in their own interest. First of all, we inform those we are in discussion with of our stands and practices and, if we have an opinion on theirs, we communicate it to them in the same spirit. If, on this basis, they wish to initiate or continue a relation with us in the interest of the workers' struggle, we are disposed to do so in the respect of mutual independence.
- In doing so, the theme of **solidarity** is invoked. Sometimes, to approach it, we are asked how, from a foreign country, to support Batay Ouvriye's struggles. In this sense, our answer is always clear: the main element, for us, is militant support, given our political line which sets the problem of imperialist domination (even if it is sometimes deformed, since we are often discussing with organizations having a humanist orientation) while also setting that of exploitation (here again, and for the same reason, at times limited to its forms and scope). Also, as soon as possible, in approaching this question, we insist on presenting, as much as possible, that material contributions help the workers' struggles in their own interest but that these contributions are of a different nature than militant support. Certain organizations, given their own nature, have more capacity for the militant support we give priority to. Others, rather, can contribute more to the workers' struggles with material support. Some, finally, have the capacity to operate at both levels. What is important, in all cases, is to clearly show that **political independence** will always remain the fundamental principle guiding us in all forms of articulation.
- On this angle, we always insist on specifying that the workers' struggle occurs in a dominated social formation thus, the latter have tremendous difficulties to survive, given the ferocious exploitation they undergo. Naturally, this gives rise to important struggles but, once again, one of the key elements to carry them out is material capacity. We have no delusion: this support can be very useful in this sense. Nevertheless, in the framework of the construction of the workers' movement's material independence, we will always try to count on our own forces, but, especially, material solidarity should have no negative incidence on our line or our practices. On another hand, imperialist domination causes a value transfer from dominated countries towards imperialist ones. Thus, a return of transferred valued must occur without, once again, putting our independence in question.

On these bases, we even manage to develop relations with organizations who would like to "help". Sometimes, within a lapse of time, this "help" is cut off. We consider this normal; since we are aware of the political limits of such an approach, we anticipated such a possible development. However, in other cases, these relations manage to reproduce themselves: this is because the solidarity base was more real and solid. Despite all of this, practice reveals that the organizations in support often also have their limits. Here again, we consider this normal.

Another important solidarity axis is the development of relations between dominated countries where their struggles are developing. Here, where militancy takes the form of coordination, our practices remain limited and much must be done. We need to work in this sense with all the means we have towards this end.

One of the contradictions we face is where the funds some of these organizations wishing to help us come from. We respect their independence: our relations are of a bilateral nature, the most important aspect being 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 are aware of the fact that this has sometimes been the cause

of the support's "cutting off"; 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 by this cause.** It even happens that sometimes these organizations' financiers 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 goes in the workers' independence.

This carries consequences. It may occur that the organizations give us "support" and that this places them in contradiction with their own financiers. In this case, it's important they realize that we are in no way implied in this contradiction. Even if we accept to discuss the point, it is their responsibility. And, from this moment on, if their solidarity was real, then they will decide on the basis of this fundamental stand.

As we mentioned, many comrades are following our practices. This is positive. We also believe this stand may help them. To avoid all forms of dogmatism, however, we consider it important for them to follow our **practices**, for them to take position on the basis of the stands here taken. We are always open to debate these questions, as much as possible.

The **practice of solidarity**, just like social phenomena in general, is complex and should be considered in the framework of this complexity, with a clear line guiding in which the essential remains the firmness of a position always corresponding to the exploited workers' interests, particularly in their struggles and starting from their general interests. In this sense, the most important is the permanent respect of political independence. Nevertheless, we must always consider all other aspects that may help to specify tactical orientations. This is especially valid for solidarity, militant before all. Amongst workers' organizations, it will be approached in one way, with others, differently, with inherent limits.

## ANNEX 5

### Extract "Sobre Sindicato"

(...) El obrero está en el sindicato por su propia determinación y está allí únicamente porque ve la necesidad de luchar, todos, unidos, para defender intereses comunes, en base a su conciencia. Y una de sus responsabilidades es hacer que el sindicato esté más fuerte, más sólido, para enfrentarse al enemigo de los obreros todos: el patrón y su estado que lo defiende. Para sostener este papel, el sindicato debe de tener una estructura profunda, concentrada y amplia, firme y flexible, de núcleos y abierta. Capaz de responder a todas las responsabilidades que se presentarán. Así, se necesitará de una dirección, ella también con varias responsabilidades, varios niveles de responsabilidad. Pero, al mismo tiempo, existe la asamblea de obreros, que igualmente tiene toda su importancia. Muchos dirigentes sindicales piensan que son ellos el sindicato, algunos obreros también piensan que la dirección es todo el sindicato. Esa es una mala concepción. No permite tener un sindicato fuerte. Hasta podemos decir que no permite tener sindicato del todo. Esa mala concepción, la debemos de denunciar y enfrentar en medio de nosotros. Al contrario, debemos trabajar para que los obreros entiendan y tengan conciencia de que el sindicato somos todos los obreros sindicalizados, dirección y asamblea.

(...) Todos los demás miembros forman la asamblea del sindicato. Con la democracia que debe de existir dentro del sindicato, la dirección no puede decidir de nada sin que no sólo esté al tanto la asamblea sino también que lo apruebe. Dirección y asamblea deben de trabajar juntos, donde la asamblea es la última palabra, el lugar de decisión. La asamblea tiene pues una importancia tremenda.

Entonces, para poder concretamente y seriamente jugar este papel (tener la responsabilidad de este papel), todos los obreros deben de estar concientes que tienen que jugar este papel. Eso exige pues una actitud extremadamente conciente, responsable, activa de parte de cada obrero. La dirección, junto con los obreros concientes, debe de hacer un trabajo serio, profundo y constante para que cada obrero esté más y más conciente de su papel y se responsabilice por ello, en la vida como tal del sindicato.

(...) De hecho, varios obreros piensan que con dar su nombre en el sindicato y su cotización semanal, basta: la dirección se responsabilizará por lo demás. Hasta que hay direcciones que no sólo tienen ellas mismas esa concepción, la divulgan y llegan a hacer que los obreros se comprometen al respecto. Esa concepción del sindicato no es nada buena. Es equivocada. Es cierto, el sindicato debe de saber cuales son sus miembros, por eso hay que tener listados los nombres de los miembros. Es cierto, el sindicato debe de poder hacer frente a sus obligaciones económicas dentro de la misma lucha y en su vida global como tal, y la única manera, la más confiable y autónoma, es con las cotizaciones de los miembros. Pero queda tan cierto que todo obrero sindicalizado tiene otros papeles que jugar, otras responsabilidades que tener.

(...) Un sindicato que defiende los intereses obreros tiene que de arrancada estar claro sobre lo que es la colaboración con los patronos, precisamente para no caer en esa trampa traicionera. Debe de estar claro que los intereses obreros y patronales son diferentes, contrarios y hasta antagónicos. Nunca debe de caer en la trampa de considerar la fábrica como “bien de todos”, como a menudo nos quieren hacer tragar los patronos, o dejarse llevar por la propaganda estatal que pretende que por el hecho de trabajar “juntos”, obreros y patronos tienen sus intereses “en común” y, así, son “partenarios”! Debe de ser de arrancada claro que patronos y obreros son enemigos (basta con ver con que crueldad tratan los patronos a los obreros que quieren defender sus derechos – ¡justos y legales! - para sentir fácilmente lo que estamos avanzando) y como tal, las negociaciones no son del todo “diálogos” sino una forma específica que por este momento coge la lucha. Todo obrero conciente debe obrar para que el sindicato entero esté conciente de y activo con esa concepción fundamental.

(...) Con eso en mente, ¿qué clase de lucha puede / debe llevar un sindicato? Para empezar, en caso de estudiar este tema, primero que nada, no se debe dejar llevar por lo que cuentan los capitalistas al respecto. Debemos ser concientes que los burgueses nunca nos dejarán derechos lo suficiente como para poder luchar de veras. (En cada país, las leyes laborales están siempre muy por debajo de lo que necesita la lucha concreta de la clase obrera en cada momento dado. Y esto va empeorando.) Al contrario, las leyes existentes están siempre allí para frenar las luchas obreras.

Para bien saber qué clase de lucha deben de llevar los obreros, qué clase de lucha debe de llevar el sindicato, debemos considerar dos cosas: la primera es que el sindicato debe de luchar dentro de lo que le permiten las leyes para defender los derechos obreros. Así podrá uno ser mejor y mejor organizado y, a la vez, preparar la situación donde se podrá entonces sacar más derechos de parte de la burguesía en el poder. La segunda es que la forma de lucha a escoger siempre debe depender de las relaciones de fuerza y como estimamos su posible evolución en la lucha misma. Al estudiar el código de trabajo, podemos decir que está hecho principalmente para bloquear los obreros en su lucha. Si un sindicato piensa pues quedarse dentro de estos límites, nunca podrá defender sus intereses realmente. Por eso, gran parte de las luchas obreras deben proponerse ir más lejos que el código de trabajo. De arrancada hay que ser concientes que cada vez que sea posible, llevaremos luchas dentro de las leyes burguesas pero, cuando consecuentes, las luchas tendrán siempre como tendencia superar esas leyes. Por eso, uno de nuestros más importantes trabajos es precisamente hacer que se llegue a superar esas leyes. Para eso, esperar decisiones de los ministerios laborales, de justicia, o del estado en general, no servirá de nada: sólo nuestra movilización, otra vez, será nuestra garantía. Paros laborales, huelgas (bien preparados, planificados, donde todos los obreros participan activamente y de una manera conciente),

manifestaciones frente a la fábrica, frente a la zona misma, frente a los ministerios responsables, en toda calle... en una palabra: ¡MOVILIZACIÓN!

Como podemos darnos cuenta, lo que piensa – y divulga - mucha gente (que el sindicato está allí nada más que para llevar algunas negociacioncitas, o para establecer buenas relaciones entre obreros y patronos), no sólo no tiene que ser así, sino que es globalmente falso. Los sindicatos que consideran ese tipo de colaboración o de auto censura como límites u objetivos, son los que finalmente defienden los intereses patronales en medio de nosotros los obreros. MOVILIZACIÓN y LUCHA obrera son para nosotros las mejores garantías no sólo del respeto de nuestros derechos sino también de su ampliación.

## ANNEX 6

### **On the AFL-CIO, Its Role Nationally and Internationally, Its Present Crisis with respect to Working Class Interests**

From Batay Ouvriye, Haiti – June 2005

#### **I.**

The extraordinary development of English capitalism, the most advanced of its time, found in the colonization of the Americas the circumstances allowing the creation of conditions which, in the future U.S. especially, fomented great leaps ahead prefiguring, through its own laws of internal evolution, the present's global imperialism.

It is no accident if these were the first colonialists to obtain independence from their “old world”. No accident either if this forceful transforming gust managed to concentrate its military, political and economic spheres into the most powerful in the world.

However, this development was of course accompanied by the fierce resistance of the working class, its antagonistic opposite. Indeed, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American working classes struggles were amongst the most constant, fierce, combative: exemplary. The Haymarket martyrs left us the May First celebration, of the highest emotional level for all conscious workers today. From them, the working class in the whole world benefits of the 8-hour workday and so many other extremely important social conquests and, most importantly: the battle itself as **the** working class' means of expression of struggle to wrest its rights.

In light of this battle, the ruling classes not only employed all the State apparatus to repress the struggle movements and physically eliminate the worker combatants, not only sought to corrupt certain lackeys, but more profoundly, deviated, took the direction of certain tendencies in this movement, even establishing their own yellow unions at their beck and call. This would mark the historic evolution of the working class organizational movement in the U.S.A.

#### **II.**

The AFL-CIO, an outcome of this history, is completely submerged in this problem. Worldwide, critics have denounced this organization's corruption, its subservience to the ruling classes and its active participation in dominating projects, both products of the position and practices of capitalism and imperialism within the working class. Internationally, denunciations have flowed readily, with reason, on this federation role in Latin America and the entire world, where it has directly and openly assumed imperialistic stances. Critics have highlighted its links with the CIA.

All of these practices have quite precise characteristics and illustrations.

- Within the apparatus itself, a flagrant antidemocratic aspect appears, in which main orientations are uniquely taken from above
- Which results in an extremely bureaucratic and elitist functioning
- Explaining, therefore, the predominance of paid bureaucrats, often never having had the slightest contact with the working class; in this sense, the composition of the apparatus is fixed, without the possibility of a foreseeable change. Even when working class origin employees attain this employment, they are cut from their roots and have no possibility of organically articulating this origin.
- This orientation is also passed on to the establishment of the unions through sector federations also reproducing the same practices
- Reaching finally the grassroots organizations, set up through recruitment, home visits and signatures in which the workers, in order to be a part of the union, surrender to the union leaders' negotiations.

The AFL-CIO'S bureaucratic functioning blocks the workers organizations' real construction, it impedes the workers from being truly responsible for themselves, it eliminates all laborers' mass struggles, all active and conscious mobilizations, and, additionally, cancels – from the start – the workers' movement qualitative accumulation: it weakens and gangrenes it. This appears clearly.

Batay Ouvriye, in a text we circulated called “On Unions”, opposed this orientation firmly and sought to play a role in denouncing it and transforming it, all the while remaining quite aware that this is not where our main action to counteract such practices in the field should be concentrated.

The infiltration of ruling class positions within the AFL-CIO and the nature it has thus developed explains that, nationally still, it maintains the same sort of practices:

- By the simple and permanent practice of negotiations through bureaucratic leaders, the field is open, finally, for an inevitable class collaboration, and, from there, decisions that the working class, unrepresented, doesn't control (and is often ready to denounce);
- Since there are no permanent, on-going assemblies or structured working class organization allowing space for the working class force to recognize itself and its capacities, since there isn't mobilization as a principal and permanent method of struggle, even the demands are themselves, at the start, minimal and flat, isolated, and especially thwarted from the start of the energy necessary to rise towards social and political demands.

This absence of life thus causes the reduction of the workers' movement, explains its static and sterile nature. Two important characteristics follow:

- The constant practice by the leader-bureaucrats of fighting and turning away from all contrary dispositions, i.e. those holding independent organization, permanent mobilization and struggle as main mechanisms, to attain, finally, the development of higher political and systematic consciousness. These leaders even reach the point, in situations of struggle, of expelling comrades conveying this consciousness and level of organization in struggles;
- All of this translates into their inevitable junction with the bourgeois apparatus, especially the political parties, particularly the Democratic Party. Even when leaders assert that they are aware of this party being a bourgeois one, that they are support the lesser of two evils, they still back it. Yet, the vast amounts of funds and energy necessary for this support, and, especially, their own bureaucratic form and nature, as illustrated above, causes them to reproduce these parties'

ideology, the bureaucratic bourgeois functioning and, finally, the mystifying ideology that has one believe that workers should engage behind parties which, in the context of the lesser evil, should impart better chances of struggle.

On the international level, the AFL-CIO's functioning, also existing in its organ destined for its foreign extensions, the Solidarity Center, causes the extension of such negative forms:

- Its employees have a basic will for all organizations they contact, to organize training and thus convey the same devious mind frames
- The bureaucratic nature they naturally embody structurally greatly facilitates the transmission of this very deviation with all the characteristics mentioned above: elitist leader functioning, negotiations behind closed doors and uniquely at the highest level as a main practice, lack of interest in mobilization and even occasionally causing local levels with who they are in contact to disavow grassroots mobilizations
- Forced at times to support very difficult struggles in dominated countries, decision levels often aim to recuperate them in order to, internationally, coordinate them themselves, instead of establishing grassroots working class organizations
- Organizationally, a view predominates in which unions exist to defend their members, instead of to develop the international working classes' interests as such
- The structure's relationship with bourgeois political parties in the United States and, in fact, the State Department, explains that they seek to hinder the union movement from being in charge and taking in hand the working classes' political organization
- When entering in action with unions or federations involved in political situations, it's relationship with parties in the U.S. and the State Department cause them to support, help organize, and even enter into struggle alongside completely reactionary currents or federations. The most flagrant example is the Solidarity Center's involvement in highly financing and supporting the bourgeois union federations in Venezuela against the Chavez government.
- Presently, the AFL-CIO has a policy of supporting US mainstream politics with regard to governments critical of the United States or those having a nationalist character or popular, such as Cuba, or, again, Venezuela. In these cases, the CIA is naturally involved.
- When the State Department decides to dump governments it previously associated with (even if the latter were disguised as "populist") but having evolved as impediments to imperialism's advance (for reasons of technical or historical incapacity), the AFL-CIO assumes the function of contacting fake union federations, linking them with (and especially under) bourgeois opposition and, under this orientation, spearheading the mobilization against them.

It is therefore evident for us that the AFL-CIO is an apparatus integrated within the United States establishment, and continuing, in this regard, to pursue objectives against peoples' struggles worldwide.

### **III.**

US capitalism's offensive, nationally and internationally, in the recent phase in which they seek to establish their global hegemony, has caused the working class' loss, in the US as in the rest of the world, of many conquests it had managed to wrestle through dire struggle during the past centuries. This has caused numerous workers to rebel and request to leave the AFL-CIO; record lows in

membership have been attained, manifesting quite clearly a general disagreement with present policies. At the last congress, many criticisms concerned the bureaucratic centralism and the problems grassroots organizations have in disagreeing and recording these disagreements. Furthermore, minority groups and Blacks in particular showed their increasing marginalization within the organization. Others yet expressed the lack of articulation with neighborhoods. Finally, certain critics advanced the fact that engaging in the Democratic Party process was totally negative for the American working class, that it would lead them to their loss and that, consequently, an independent workers party was needed. In all of this, certain important branches that were a part of this movement, such as UNITE-HERE and the Teamsters, chose to defect.

Even if the present open debates reveal the various currents operating within the AFL-CIO, even if, at present, these internal struggles show clearly the negative aspects of this prevailing bourgeois orientation, at the same time, they have generally been unable to go beyond the general anti-worker / collaborationism problematic. Worse, the imperialist role played by the AFL-CIO has never been truly debated and it is no accident that the Solidarity Center hasn't formulated its stand on this international role.

Capitalism's globalization, and in particular the delocalization of the textile industry (from North America and Europe towards the South and Asia) explains that imperialist countries' large federations have objective interest in participating in the dominated countries' struggles, to convey an increasingly balanced resistance, to reinforce the working class' internationalism, which in turn corresponds with industrialized countries workers' real interests. Despite all, however, we continue to believe this apparatus is at the service of imperialism, generally. Because of its need for more vigorous struggles in the dominated countries, it has changed orientation from its past support to federations at the service of the feudal oligarchies; now it must support organizations truly in struggle.

#### **IV.**

We have, at Batay Ouvriye, a clear position with regard to these forms of "solidarity" (see our Statement on this subject). Succinctly: in order to be able to accept solidarity coming from anywhere in punctual struggles, we need to pursue and consolidate the line of workers' independent struggle as a basic principle, assemblies and the structuring of the workers as a main mechanism and the representation of the interests of the working class generally and historically as a unique guide. In this sense, in the field, we've always opposed (as we are doing it in this precise case) the elitist, collaborationist and / or anti-popular line of any organization wishing to engage in a practice with us.

Internationally, we still have to face major contradictions. They are ever more complex. The struggle against all AFL-CIO deviations and implications must continue and the structure's real role in the establishment, in the fundamental defense of capitalism and imperialism should be denounced everywhere and always. A true condemnation must occur nationally within the context of the struggle itself and internationally at all possible levels and instances of debate. However, this denunciation shouldn't be superficial, mystifying and precisely dissimulating the critic's lack of practices and/or linkage with basic principles of defense of true working class interests.

Concretely, we need to be clearly realize that the relation between the practices of various AFL-CIO, particularly with respect to international solidarity, is of a contradictory nature, given the very internal crisis occurring and the imperative of an objectively necessary struggles' globalization. We have to take these contradictions into account in the working class' interest and at all levels. But we should also be very clear that this apparatus is controlled, in the final analysis, by the ruling classes in the United States. Its solidarity will assume – and assumes – specific forms. Since its "solidarity"

practices have reached the point of developing relations with grassroots workers organizations, we are faced with the obligation of managing them, while it inevitably attempts to manipulate these relations variously in order to recuperate them. So, we need to correctly manage these relations in the working class' interest and on a permanent basis.

The U.S. working class, given its position in the present-day process of globalization, has an important role to play in the workers international struggles. It is of fundamental importance to wage, there, a struggle against all currents conveying deviation and recuperation in the interest of the ruling class. Battle must be waged outside and inside of all organizations to attain the necessary independent, international working class organization based solely on its interests. In this sense, our positions form a whole, a totality that is mainly based on our independent practices and our open criticisms in the interest of the working class.

## ANNEX 7

### Excerpt from March-April 2004 Statement

We are quite conscious that during all of its administration, Lavalas accomplished nothing. Quite the opposite, if they did, all they did was negative: theft, corruption in general. We waged important battles against this. The Casec and Asec local authorities accomplished nothing other than violating peoples' rights. We fought that too. Repression against various sectors: here again, we organized to be able to face it as we could and our capacity need to keep growing.

But we can't move forward from Lavalas to fall into the toilets. We experienced 1986. We knew a little of what we didn't want but we weren't sure of what we wanted and how to fight for it. That's what led us to the mess we are in presently. We've had experiences. After the sickness, we know its cures.

Today, after a new format coup, **THE COUNTRY IS OCCUPIED**. We can say that this is where the ruling classes, with their old recycled politicians, whether Lavalas or of the Opposition, have led us. Terror and repression are becoming even more widespread. All democratic rights, if they haven't already been trampled, are becoming so. We see this, for example, in the Ouanaminthe Free Trade Zone where the big Dominican bosses are taking advantage of the political vacuum to exploit even more severely the workers, as they repress their rights without hesitation, particularly rights to unionize. We find this as well in various bourgeois factories where these vampires are taking advantage of the vacuum to trample all over the workers even more, while doing their best to be, themselves, at the head of everything happening in the major cities! We find this in all the countryside too, where the big landowners, with the assailants ("rebel army"), are terrorizing the small peasant to be able to steal the lands they've been working, along with their harvests. This is true throughout the country. **THE STRUGGLE HAS JUST BEGUN AND IT'S VERY TIGHT!**

The Lavalas problem equaled one single thing, **TERROR**, which covered us throughout the country. The big politicians never mentioned it but we, in the masses, were undergoing it every day more. **THAT'S GOT TO BE SOLVED!** Nobody's going to solve it for us. We should know very clearly: the occupation forces have come here to solve the imperialists' and the archaic dominant classes' interests over here, nothing else! We have to take our responsibilities in hand to defend ourselves in this new situation, in all the cities, all the communes, every neighborhood, every town, every region. **WE'VE GOT TO PUT IN PLACE OUR WORKERS' INTERESTS DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS!**

The opposition, with the imperialists, think they'll come to build-rebuild the rotten state on our backs. They aim at reestablishing the same state apparatus without any real change, without any deep



transformation, without the slightest mechanism for popular control. We have to block that or at least hinder it, with our independent struggles. It's through our battles we can attack both of these problems, the present repression and the identical state they've decided to ram down our throats again. Today, delimitation has to be crystal clear. No technocratic bourgeois government can't make us dream or deviate us.

## **ANNEX 8**

### **Excerpts from News Bulletin 2**

... The period of union organizing following the embargo revealed a reality of which we were already aware: that the assembly industry cannot be an orientation to develop the economy. It's too fragile! And the bourgeoisie involved in it is an anti-national one, totally dependent (i.e. lackey) to the imperialist powers. But it revealed too, that it is only through tremendous struggle for the working class to be able to wrestle its rights, particularly union rights. Batay Ouvriye worked to establish several unions, amidst important confrontations with the anti-democratic bourgeois who keep smashing unions left and right, sometimes outright from the start. We won't dwell upon several examples but we'll indicate the most serious ones, like Mrs. Bayard and Classic Apparel, or Michel Liautaud and Megatex. If we signal these cases, it's because, at two different moments, these were the bourgeois at the forefront, in major positions of responsibility in the boss associations and they were speaking everywhere, pretending to be democrats publicly, while, within their own industries, they were making workers' lives hell, trampling workers' rights on a regular basis and rising their bloody exploitation permanently. Which show us how the battle to wrestle union rights and, from there, manage to wrestle all of our rights, is an on-going struggle, even if, despite the bourgeois' attacks, the workers always manage to obtain a few settlements...

Practices are developing in the assembly industry and in the factories for local production. In the assembly sector, organization is advancing in Richard Coles' factories, in those of Apaid, at Madsen's too. There are organizations developing in the factories producing garment for GILDAN (REC, ALLIANCE, GILDAN, AGC, Mrs. Pierre's, etc.). At the same time, organizations are developing in factories producing for direct distribution within the country. Finally there are committees to wrestle union rights at SOGA, ACE BASKET (which changed names without warning the workers, it's only present struggles that have allowed us to know this), LA COURONNE, LARCO, BRASSERIE NATIONALE, MIRAGE INDUSTRIES, ECEM, ACIÉRIE, amongst others. We can say that in several of these factories, there already exists the legal capacity for them to begin as unions, in order to force these owners to negotiate. But we feel it is preferable to continue assembling strength and to organize more concretely a general movement or wrestle political rights which is union rights and the collective bargaining convention. This movement must coordinate its practices amongst various places, while the practice continues to grow more and more. Certainly, Batay Ouvriye is present in more factories than those mentioned here, but to not hinder the practices in some of these places that have just begun, we find it better not to mention them yet.

Organized presence is one thing: it allows a view of the organizational work being carried out. But in our line, it is accompanied from the start with struggle. Everywhere we are present, there are always struggles, denunciations, demands happening. Leaflets circulate permanently to point out various problems, mobilize, lay the basis for the organization's expansion and, in this way, for us to be able to fight better to obtain better work conditions within the factories and to fight against the permanent repression in this setting. Very often, people consider more the political repression, they single out insecurity in the streets, but we can say, ourselves: the factories of Port-au-Prince are the places where not only are poor living and work conditions systematized, but furthermore they are the places where

repression and a form of permanent insecurity is also systematized. These questions, in general, don't interest the media's "wider public" and that's why the press almost never mentions them although we try to send this information to them on a regular basis. Nevertheless, not only are they essential questions for many workers presently but furthermore, if indeed more 'employment' arrives in Haiti, then these questions will only gain even more importance for workers. As you can already perceive, it is with these bad conditions, combined with this very unbounded repression, that the bourgeoisie intends to introduce its economic redressment!

Take a place like SOGA, for example, a local production factory : there aren't even clean toilets and drinking water is in a battered old stinking drum. In Cap Haitian, at Novella's, the same thing – the workers even found earthworms wriggling in the water! The workers had to all rise together to put a stop to this situation. At Junior Boulos' Ace Basket, the same thing. At La Couronne, still the same. And so many others of the assembly industry: we could cite, for instance, Chevalier and Marca, where the water workers are drinking are full of larvae. Yes indeed, we are before a filthy bourgeoisie who believes these are the conditions in which it should make its workers toil!

As for repression within the factories, it continues to be very strong. The supervisors, in many cases, are the tormentors there to organize the sapping of the workers' blood. Just recently, these torturers innovated with the MODULE system which has slightly reduced the supervisors' role. But the modules cause the very workers to put pressure on other workers in the modules, for them to work quicker to meet production quotas. And since these quotas rise every day, themselves workers become those demanding a greater production, that is: the heightened exploitation! This is another form of repression, more subtle but even more terrible! Not only is it a "natural" form to spread out the repression, but it divides the workers and creates a climate of total distrust, when it isn't outright dog eat dog. Another form yet: in the Apaid factories, for example, workers aren't allowed to enter the factory with written papers. This is to stop them from keeping any sort of leaflet or newspapers militants might be distributing outside and that might go in the sense of their interests. So now when leaflets are given out in front of the factory, the workers can't even read them or take them. This is why Apaid and his supervisors organize a number of lackeys to watch who might take a leaflet and they fire them without even severance pay! Useless to say that at Apaid's, union rights are a dream!

At the GILDAN factory in Tabarre, 5 workers were fired without reason. But on closer scrutiny, we note that these are the workers who played a role in fighting for the factory to pay transportation in coming and going from the factory (which is actually stipulated in the Labor Code!). At first, Richard Coles, a close Aristide ally, was the main production responsible for Gildan in the country. But Coles lost the contract and Apaid is the one who came to play this role. Presently, several bourgeois in the assembly industry are producing for Gildan. All use the module production to exploit the workers, as described above, with repressive control embedded in the production structure itself... Gildan, however, is the most sadistic exploiter of the module production systems. That's why struggle at Gildan is a concentration amongst others that has great importance presently.

Another example is that of Baker, him and his partisans, they went to photograph militants and the car plates of people who had come to leaflet or to talk with the workers! This same Baker would later use the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to not pay the workers he fired during the month of March, after the departure of Aristide. These examples already allow us to understand quite clearly. They already exist from within the factory itself. And, as soon as the bourgeois feel it is necessary, they mobilize the state apparatus to beat workers and follow them all the way to their homes. Here again, the most recent example is this same Baker, once again, who called the SIMO SWAT teams to come beat workers!

This repression is accompanied by impunity. Of course, this impunity is the necessary condition for the repression to be able to spread as it wishes. Without this, the bosses would have to have a certain restraint...

**Excerpt from Batay Ouvriye's Press Release concerning the judgment of two SOCOWA workers against CODEVI**

When we consider the way in which Haitian management, then through their association of industrialists - ADIH -, their columnists and economists all went in the same orientation reacting in the conflict, defending tooth and nail the Dominican capitalist against the Haitian workers, even when a truth was largely proved, arguing then – and up to today – that Batay Ouvriye's denunciations were mere lies! When we remember the unjust and humiliating treatments incurred against Haitian workers!... We rejoice that the illegally fired workers' final reinstatement and the collective work convention they are presently negotiating gives us perfect reason, just as did the report of the delegation of the Union of Haitian Physicians concerning the non-understandable doses of "two flasks" vaccines! Now, the various cases in justice are exposed in broad daylight.