Brazil?s Partido dos Trabalhadores: what kind of a workers? party?

Sat, 30/04/1994 - 10:59

Lula and the party he leads have captured the imagination of millions of workers in Brazil. Keith Harvey assesses whether the PT can live up to their expectations as election victory beckons.

This year is a crucial one in Brazilian politics. If opinion polls are to be believed then Luis Inácio da Silva (Lula), leader of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), may well be elected President. At the start of 1994 Lula was by far the most popular candidate, registering over 30% support. He has spent the years since the 1989 Presidential elections ?preparing the party for the assumption of power?1 by building up support for PT around the country.

The impact of a Lula and PT victory in the continent?s largest country would be considerable. Never in Brazil?s history has there been a working class party of any kind in power or sharing power, not even a reformist one. It would be a blow to the neo-liberal agenda of the imperialists and the Brazilian bourgeoisie.2 The region?s largest economy?larger than all the East European states combined?would remain out of synch with the prefered plans of the IMF and World Bank.

But it is not only the bosses who would sit up and take notice.

As the PT said at its 8th conference in June 1993: ?Victory in 1994 will mean the PT and its experience of government will be a point of reference for the international socialist movement.?

The collapse of the ruling Stalinist parties after 1989 in the ex-USSR and East Europe had a heavy ideological impact on hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the world, many of whom had previously identified these oppressive and bureaucratic regimes with ?socialism?. Meanwhile, the right-wing trajectory of social democracy, under the impact of the neo-liberal offensive offered no alternative to those workers seeking a different model.

Lula?s near victory in 1989 tantalisingly offered a new vision; a new model of socialist advance that allegedly avoids the pitfalls of the compromised character of social democracy and the bureaucratic nature Stalinism, a socialism which is both popular and democratic while consciously putting the notion of class struggle at the centre of its political project.

The rise of the PT runs counter to the decline of the left in other Latin American countries in the 1990s and, indeed, to the defeats and retreat of the trade union movement in Brazil itself. In the last year further developments have enhanced the expectations in the radical results of a PT election victory. At its 8th conference in June 1993 it was accepted that ?the present leadership has lost its legitimacy?3 as a result of two or more years of reformist ascendency in the party, centring on the experience of its local government administration. The PT elected a new leadership committed to the ?revolutionary socialist character of the PT.? The platform of the ?Leftwing Option? bloc4 that won a majority of the delegates?
votes forms the PT’s new Guiding Principles.

Not since the rise of Popular Unity in Chile in the late 1960s has there been so much hope and expectation in a mass left force in South America.

The stakes and the emotions are high. Brazil’s poor and unemployed have increased sharply since the PT was founded in 1979. Since the 1989 election Brazil has suffered three years of recession, repeated austerity plans, further real wage erosion and a growth in unemployment and underemployment. The misery of the urban poor, especially the street children subject to murderous assassination at the hands of the military police and gangsters, has intensified. Brazil long had the worse disparities of social wealth in the western hemisphere. Never has there been such an urgency to tackle the roots of the gross social inequalities thrown up by Brazilian capitalism; never has there been such expectations among tens of millions of urban workers, rural landless and mass of the poor, that a government?their government?will set about tackling them in a revolutionary way. But is the PT up to this task?

The short answer is regrettably not. At its foundation and in its early years the loose coalition of radical political forces that went to make up the party, its subjective commitment to revolutionary change and amorphous programme marked out the PT as a centrist party, that is one that hovered between reformism and revolution, eclectically combining aspects of the programmes and organisational regimes of both.

The PT’s lack of a coherent revolutionary strategy for state power linking the minimal and concrete day to day demands with the goal of a socialist society has given way to a minimum programme (or programmes) and maximum rhetoric; in short, a reformist party and programme. The party itself has been transformed from a shambling coalition of representatives of the social movements into a reformist political organisation with a distinct bureaucracy that channels and filters out the more radical demands of its supporters.

The experience of running local and city administrations has crystalised a clear right-wing (social democratic) reformist wing of the PT based on some of its local mayors and some of its Congress deputies, as the PT has become more and more a vehicle for winning elections. Lula, with his enormous political prestige, has presided over the taming of the PT and turning it into an essentially electoral vehicle.

In 1979 Brazil echoed to the sound of unusual slogans: ?Workers vote for workers! A party without bosses! Vote PT, the rest is bourgeoisie! If we can work, we can lead!? These were the slogans of a new party, of a type unique in the history of Brazil. Brazil’s workers had never had a mass political party which openly portrayed itself as a class based organisation. Ever since the 1930s the workers had voted for populist parties. But the massive growth of the Brazilian working class in the 1960s and 1970s gave birth to new trade unions and a new type of trade union leader.

Lula had been politicised in the years after the defeat and break up of the left in the wake of the 1964 army coup; indeed, a large part of the Brazilian industrial working class was a product of the feverish capitalist development in the wake of, and partly as a result of, that defeat. In his early years, Lula was pushed forward by the old trade union bureaucrats, themselves tied to the old populist relations with the state, but he was always far closer and far more responsive to the demands of the rank and file.

The huge explosion of strikes in metal working in Sao Paulo in the 1970s created a movement and an awareness for new forms of political representation. Lula’s support for a workers party was a minority one for some time after 1977-78 but eventually found enough support. When the ?controlled opening? of the military legalised political parties under strict conditions the stage was set for launching a new party.

A critical take off point was reached early in 1979 when the Ninth Congress of Metalworkers, Mechanics...
and Electricians?representing more than a million workers?met in São Paulo and voted (despite the resistance of the Communist Party) to form a Workers Party. On May Day the early activists were to be found on the streets distributing the ?Statement of Principles?.

Nine months later, in February 1980, the PT was launched with only about 300 activists.6

At this stage the PT was a centrist party; that is, in an eclectic and contradictory manner, its programme combined elements of a revolutionary and a reformist outlook. This reflected the nature of the original forces that combined to form the party. At the outset about 60% of the PTs members were active trade unionists, often leading rank and file militants or officials like Lula himself.

Lula, today aged 49, came from a poor working class family of North-East Brazil which emigrated to the south to work in the port of Santos and later Sao Paulo.

At 18 he got a job in a machine goods factory. It was only when he was 22, three years after the 1964 military coup, that he took an active interest in the union. By 1972 he secured his first union post in the Metalworkers Union and in 1975 was elected union President.

His rise owed much to patronage from the old guard bureaucracy?he was nominated by the outgoing President! At this stage Lula had never even spoken to a mass meeting. It was the upsurge of 1976-79 that was to prove the strengths and limits of trade unionism to Lula and others like him.

At first, working through the closely supervised system of labour courts and using strikes the workers gained wage increases. But the 1978/79 mass strike wave illustrated to the new union leaders the close collaboration of the government and the bosses to crush strikes and, decisively, the utter lack of support within the traditional Congressional parties for the unions? demands. The idea of a new party to press the claims of the unions at the political level was an obvious step.

But not all the trade union leaders saw things the same way. The growth of the working class and the mass struggles of the 1970s prompted a clear political differentiation within the trade union bureaucracy without which the formation of the PT would have not been possible.

In 1942, under General Vargas, the unions were institutionalised and regulated by the Labor Ministry under the rubric of the Consolidation of Brazilian Labour Law (CLT); unions were recognised by the state, not by the employers. The ministry collected one day?s wages a year from each worker as a tax and used this to run the unions who received 80% of the money. Funds could be frozen by the state if the unions acted contrary to the regime?s interests, Naturally, a system of labour courts adjudicated on whether strikes were legal or not. After the 1964 coup the military purged the whole union system of militants and only placed the tried and trusted in positions of power. The difference of outlook between this layer of officials and the ones that emerged in the 1970s was well summed up by Antonio Alves de Almeida, conservative head of theCNTC, who remarked ?While leftist unions financed strikes, we bought and constructed buildings.?7

Brazil?s new union radicals wanted a complete break with this system; dubbed the ?authentics? they argued for union autonomy from the state, the unrestricted right to strike, direct negotiations between unions and bosses, and shop floor rank and file organisation. This layer eventually grouped their unions into the Central Workers Union (CUT) in 1983 and the old guard founded the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) in response.

To this degree the PT replicated the path mapped out in the 1890s in Britain by the unskilled ?new unions? and their differences with the old, skilled, labour aristocratic unions born in the 1840s and 1850s. These new unions came up against the limits of their traditional Liberal Party political leadership to which the
The Labour Party was born in 1900 as the parliamentary fraction of the new trade union bureaucracy.8 Yet the PT was not simply the political expression of this new class struggle oriented trade unionism. One PT document summarises the mixture of influences and ideologies that were built into the foundations of PT in 1979:

?Another innately democratic dimension of the PT is its ideological-cultural pluralism. We are in fact a synthesis of libertarian cultures, united in our diversity. Different currents of democratic and revolutionary thought?Social Christianity, various Marxisms, non-Marxist socialisms, democratic radicalism, secular theories of revolutionary action, etc.?joined together to create the PT . . .The ideology of the party does not unilaterally express any of these sources.?9

Within this pot pouri of ideas it was nevertheless true that many of the original activists and promoters were members or supporters of the far left?especially those in the centrist Trotskyist tradition. The far left contributed to the marxist and revolutionary aspirations that can be found in the documents of the PT and had a disproportionate influence over policy documents and programmes throughout the 1980s.

In the first couple of years of PT?s existence the key concern was building the party organisations on a national scale and involving itself in social struggles. Perhaps nothing was so important as the role elections were to play in the pursuit of working class power and the nature of the PT?s participation in the institutions of the capitalist state. As the military regime deepened its process of ?controlled opening? between 1982 and 1985 this experience was to be crucial in shaping the PT.

The 1982 election campaign was the first real public test of the PT in that arena. In 1981 the PT argued that ?participation in elections and parliamentary activity will be subordinated to the objective of organising the exploited masses and their struggles.?10 Elsewhere they argued that elections should serve ?as a tool in the organisation and mobilisation of workers and the construction of popular power?.11 Elections were understood mainly as a propagandistic campaign by which the party would be able to strengthen its ties with masses; participation in any coalition was ruled out. Elections were considered ?an isolated moment? in the march towards socialism and ?the electoral process cannot, therefore, serve to divert the party from its programmatic objectives.?12

Lula stood for the governorship of São Paulo but finished a distant fourth with 10% of the vote.13 The PT got only one mayor elected, and eight deputies were elected to Congress. More than anything the results tended to underline the magnitude of the work to be done to make PT a national force.

The next electoral milestone was the Presidential election of 1985. The PT refused to stand because the elections were not direct ones, based on a popular vote; rather, the President was to be chosen by an Electoral College made up of Congress deputies. Prefiguring future tensions three PT congress deputies announced they would vote in the college and the Party?s executive expelled them.

Between 1982 and 1990 the PT participated in six separate state and federal elections. At first, when the elections were hedged in by many undemocratic safeguards and the PT?s electoral success was muted anyway, it was easy enough to continue to portray elections as merely a series of ?isolated moments?. But as the PT?s support broadened, as its success in city and state elections increased, and as the date of the first direct Presidential elections approached (November 1989) elections moved to the centre of the party?s political strategy.

In the November 1986 elections PT?s vote went from 3% to 7% and from 1.5 million votes to 3.5 million. It
now had representatives in half (i.e. 13) of the state legislatures and had federal congress representation from 7 states. Lula received more votes (650,000) than any other Congressman.

The explosive development on the electoral front took place between 1986 and the November 1988 elections. These were years of mounting social struggles against austerity and inflation. There were massive strikes and attacks on these strikes by the state. The PT was closely involved throughout, denouncing the repression and supporting the strikers demands.

This was the background against which the November elections took place and they registered a huge boost in support for PT and a repudiation of the conservative bourgeois parties that had loyally participated in President Sarney’s ?transition process? of 1985-88 which, under the name of the Cruzado Plan, brought such misery to the workers.

The PT won 36 mayoralities including the city of São Paulo and won over 1,000 local councillor seats with 28% of the national vote.

By the time Lula narrowly failed to win the Presidential elections a year later the PT was mired in electoralism. As one book sympathetic to the PT stated ?The party?s nucleos were activated and deactivated to the beat of the electoral calendar, which became their driving force. . . . its organic effect upon the PT was irrefutable?.

This observation was confirmed by the General Secretary of the PT, Jose Dirceu when asked why the mobilisations against Collor in his first year of office (1990-91) were not massive despite Lula?s strong showing in 1989:

?I think that the PT bears a great responsibility in this. For months we were practically immobilised and were unable to develop significant political campaigns. This is the result of the repeated electoral campaigning over two years?from Lula?s defeat in 1989 to the 1990 legislatives . . . We experienced a crisis in the roles of our political cadres; civic administration has taken up thousands of militants, hundreds of cadres and dozens of national leaders, who were previously involved in leading peasants, workers, students, women?s movements and so on. Many of our cadres are today deputies in the parliament, others are municipal councillors?we have 82 deputies, in 21 provinces, 35 in the National Congress and one senator. Our work in the institutions?the parliament, municipal administration or the provincial governments?seems fundamental to us?

Gradual success in this arena shifted the leadership?s attitude to parliamentarism. In 1985 Lula did not believe that the right would let the left come to power via the ballot box even in one state and defended the right to use arms to oust the right when they refused to vacate office after an electoral defeat. Perhaps carried away by his own success in 1989 in 1990 Lula argued on the contrary:

?Not long ago, I never would have believed it was possible for the workers to take power through the vote. Today I do. With a little more organisation , the working class can take power in Brazil, and carry out a revolutionary programme . . . ?

Given these expectations perhaps it was no surprise when a few months after this interview was given Lula reacted to the terrible PT results in the October 1990 legislative elections by saying that the poor outcome was the greatest disaster in history.

PT candidates came nowhere near to the levels of support shown for Lula in the Presidential elections a year earlier, and in fact pro-Collor candidates did well. In searching for a reason for the ?disaster? the party leadership drew conclusions that deepened its commitment to electoralism and all its consequences.
They accepted the argument that they had suffered a loss of support as a result of the huge upsurge in strikes in the middle of 1990 which were a response to the Collor administration's savage attack on real wages. Whereas in the 1987-88 period the strike wave against the Cruzado Plan benefitted the PT in the 1988 elections, the opposite was true in 1990. The PT's ambivalent stance towards the political value of strikes, towards defence of state ownership of industry, and the fact that the strikes were defeated in 1990, led to a drop in support for the PT.

Once the party defines its strategy in these terms then the next logical step of electoralism when you are in a minority as the PT often is in the various states and city administrations is the need for electoral alliances.

In turn this begs the question of what political concessions will be made to secure the alliance. In 1985 the PT rejected coalitions. By the time of the second round of the Presidential elections of 1989 the programme of the alliance to support Lula for the second round was substantially toned down and modified to incorporate social democratic and populist ideas. This was particularly to be seen in the watered down programme for land reform and foreign debt in order to get the PSDB on board.

The gap dividing socialist goals and immediate tasks was becoming wider.

A purely negative conception of the capitalist state whether at local or national level is not enough to guide revolutionaries. Understanding its repressive character, its class bias is only the beginning of wisdom. One of the key problems of revolutionary strategy in a federal regime is how to conduct the struggle for power when a working class party finds itself in positions of government in parts of the state before the working class has advanced to a situation where the overthrow of the whole state machine is possible.

General Secretary Dirceu summarised the PT's position thus: We must govern, while developing the class struggle. This is something that the revolutionary left in Latin America has not understood until now.

It was in 1985 elections that the PT won its first significant post that of mayor of the city of Forteleza. The PT candidate Maria Luisa Fontenelle received 35% of the vote, after having won less than 1% three years earlier. The utter ideological confusion of the PT at this stage was illustrated by the course of events over the next three years.

Fontenelle was from the Maoist faction of the PT and, despite resistance from many inside the party and to many people's surprise, she won the office by strong campaigning around the dire social problems of the region. But once in office she and the PT had little idea of how to use the new position to develop the class struggle. She allowed herself to become a prisoner of the post, resigned herself to the limits of what was possible.

She then defected to the Brazilian Socialist Party and the PT got a mere 5% of vote in the 1988 elections.

In the very same 1988 elections, the PT secured its greatest electoral victory yet by winning the mayorality of São Paulo. In her campaign Luiza Erundina called for a Leninist dual power regime in the city's administration as a means of preventing a PT government from being imprisoned by existing bourgeois power structures.

This was no personal whim. The Fifth National Conference of PT in December 1987 took the step of defining for the first time the party's programme for power, that is, the relationship between its day to day activity and the goal of a socialist society. In that programme it called for the radical democratisation of the
state. Insisting that the existing institutions of the Brazilian state inhibited the working class from taking or exercising power the PT argued that it was a priority for all PT militants to be involved in the creation of factory commissions and promote popular control of neighbourhoods:

> These embryonic forms of proletarian power are schools for self-organisation and workers' political participation which aim at the construction of an effectively democratic socialism, where power is exercised by workers themselves and not in their name.\(^\text{25}\)

However, the PT programme also adopted a completely contradictory position which undermined this one, namely:

> at this historic moment . . . there is no possibility of creating a socialist society in Brazil . . . ? and thus the party's proposals for the constitution focused on ?a package of principles and mechanisms capable of broadening democratic spaces and popular participation in the political process. . .?\(^\text{26}\)

Real dual power, by its very nature, implies a struggle and a contest for one set of class institutions to overcome the resistance of the other set and achieve a single sovereignty. By definition this contest cannot be institutionalised but is unstable and shakes the whole structure of political power.

The PT recognised the class nature of the institutions of the Brazilian state and its constitution and recognised that the workers must become a hegemonic class and dominate state power.\(^\text{27}\)

But the PT also ruled out in advance that progress towards the resolution of dual power was on the agenda, that Brazil was not yet ripe for socialism, that these institutions of dual power turn out to be little more than organs of popular participation, indeed of legitimation of the actions of the organs of local government where real power lay and was destined to stay.

That is why, for example, the PT's main emphasis has been on participation of the people in the budget setting process at city level. It is no surprise then that, five years after these grand designs for dual power were drawn up, the actual experience of local government was more sobering. PT leader Dirceu has admitted that neither the union movement nor the popular organisations have a clear conception of the tasks of a democratic government. The unions and the residents' associations do not see our elected representatives as theirs and the latter do not live as if they are the representatives of those sectors.\(^\text{28}\)

Moreover, we have not succeeded in getting the People's Councils off the ground in the town halls, when we have run some of them for two years.\(^\text{29}\)

The PT was caught on the horns of a dilemma; whether to use the positions of power, or at least influence, to promote specifically pro-working class policies or to use public office to promote the interests of the citizens in general.

Certainly, the record of the PT has been better than other parties in getting rid of corruption within local administration and making decision-making more transparent.

But it has failed to use the posts to rouse the workers against capitalism and against the federal government. As for Erundina, as her time in office dragged on she became noted for her conciliatory attitude towards the local bourgeoisie, evident in the deliberately non-sectarian slogan of her government, city and government for everyone? and her negotiations with entrepreneurial sectors which were a regular feature of her last year in office, were taken to be a sell-out by the left.\(^\text{30}\)

The logic of Erundina's attitude to public office was that in a confrontation between her government?
and the working class she would defend the government since, like all reformists, she drew the conclusion that her office represented the whole people and it must be defended against the "selfish" claims of one part of the people, even if it was the working class part.

So it was when São Paulo's municipal workers went on strike for higher pay in 1989 to protect themselves against spiralling inflation. While professing no money and lots of sympathy Erundina sought to break the strike by trying to maintain services during the strike. This is an unthinkable position for revolutionary elected representatives to put themselves in, who in principle cannot take responsibility for protecting a defective system from the justified resistance of the workers.31

The Third International in Lenin's time laid down the revolutionary programme for conduct in local administrations. Its Second Congress insisted that for Comunists . . . in the local government institutions, it is their duty to take the following measures:

(a) form a revolutionary opposition to fight the bourgeois central authority:
(b) aid the poorer sections of the population in every possible way (economic measures, the organisation or attempted organisation of armed workers? militias etc):
(c) expose at every opportunity, the obstacles which the bourgeois state power places in the way of fundamental social change:
(d) launch a determined campaign to spread revolutionary propaganda, even if it leads to conflict with the state power:
(e) under certain circumstances, replace the local government bodies with Soviet of workers? deputies.

All Communist activity in the local government institutions must be seen as a part of the struggle to break up the capitalist system.32

Thus the task of revolutionaries is neither to seek to manage the affairs of public office better than other parties and thereby prove that national state power can be entrusted to them, nor to merely declaim and denounce the evils of the system.

Rather, their task is to use the limited time available to enlarge the base of support for the party. The aim is not to serve one? s time out until the next elections. It is vital from the outset to touch the lives of the masses and make a visible difference.

Where such powers existed, the PT should have used local powers of taxation to tax the rich. They should have requisitioned housing from the rich to house the homeless, build homes for the urban poor; set up massive public works to employ the under-employed. The PT could refuse to shoulder the portion of the national debt off-loaded by the federal state onto the local cities. It would be necessary to establish local workers? militia, based on the factories to help protect the city administration and even enforce its decisions against resistance.33

Above all else the city council would seek to renew its mandate and seek approval for its decisions by appealing to the workers councils, the factory commissions and neighbourhood groups that the Fifth Conference of the PT paid lip service to.

In this way even a minority PT administration (or even a mayor) could appeal to the workers over the heads of resistance within the council and thus polarise the council structure along class lines. It is easy to
see then that the city or state administration could be the starting point for the development of dual power by deepening its roots in the working class and deriving its power increasingly from them, rather than the amorphous citizens of the city or state.

The dual power would not be an artificial one between the local council and the popular organisations but would run through the former as the latter grew.

PT supporters would point to the fact that, when in office after 1988, the federal state and courts obstructed the PT’s progressive measures. They refused to allocate funds for low-cost housing projects or free money for health services that São Paulo was owed.

All this and more did happen. But it was precisely when faced with this naked act of class revenge by the bourgeoisie that the PT should have taken direct action to requisition materials for housing, to take over the holiday homes of the rich and place workers’ families in them. Such a course would have telescoped the inevitable clash between rival authorities.

The whole experience of revolutionary municipalism could touch the lives of millions and show what a workers’ government could do if it had real power. Instead, the PT preferred to complain about the unfair practices of the federal state and wait for the next elections, hoping in the meantime that the failure to improve public transport or street rubbish would not rebound upon them when they finally took place.

Lula, and even more so many of the councillors and deputies, drew a very different lesson from the contradictions of holding office, a reformist lesson. Lula quite simply decided that the establishment of popular councils was not feasible and that it would be preferable to use a variety of organisations representing civil society.34

Looking forward to the tasks of First Congress of the PT at the end of 1991 Lula argued:

?In my opinion we must be a lot more pragmatic at this Congress than before, for the PT has the perspective of coming to power in 1994. I think we must formulate our ?utopia? on concrete foundations drawn from ten years of experience. We have to consider a socialist project which corresponds to our reality. . . The PT has to stop making proposals for the distant future and put forward solutions for the here and now.?35

Here we see the whole logic of a centrist project collapsing into reformism. Having failed to establish a practical connection between the goal of socialist revolution and the responsibilities of public office Lula wants the PT to be less ambitious, draw a veil over the socialist goal and concentrate on the art of the possible, determined by the balance of class forces on assuming office.

In a real sign of its reformist degeneration, the PT decided in 1993 that it actually supported the Presidential system of government in Brazil, a system that by its very bonapartist nature is the antithesis of popular power.36

Lula, once the scourge of the institutions of the bourgeois state, now seeks to preside over them as its chief guardian.

In its early years the organisational regime of the PT reflected its origins in a series of mass social movements.37 It did not have a consolidated bureaucratic regime any more than it had a clear programme. In its official documents and statutes the PT espoused rank and file democracy. Final decisions rested with the base units of the PT, not the national leaders, yet once decisions were made everyone was expected to carry them out. Moreover, in order to inhibit the crystalisation of a layer of privileged and unaccountable
deputies, PT candidates who won office had to give 40% of their salary over to the party.

The PT had to operate with a dual structure, imposed upon it by the law on political parties established in 1979 as the first phase of de-militarisation opened. According to the law Party members had to be officially registered, candidates for elections had to be appointed by officers of the party etc. In 1983 the PT even introduced proportional representation in the elections to posts within leading committees.

Hence the PT set up a shadow structure for the militants and activists. It held parallel congresses and assemblies which really deliberated and formal conferences which merely endorsed these decisions. But real power never really lay with the base units?nucleos?of the PT. As the party became increasingly a machine for winning elections after 1988, bureaucratisation of the PT evolved steadily.

The material base for bureaucratisation was the emergence of a distinct caste of officials in the trade union federation closely allied to the PT?the CUT. While not privileged to the extent of labour bureaucracies in the imperialist states, the incorporation of the CUT trade unions after 1982 in the process of constitutional rule in Brazil, did transform the union leaders into a more privileged and conservative layer increasingly divorced from their members.

Parallel to this the hundreds and then thousands of office holders in city, state and federal government also emerged as an identifiable layer which had not existed before 1985. Naturally, the experience of their sell-outs in office provoked dissension and opposition within the PT, to them. Equally, it was no suprise that those criticised used the party machine to protect themselves from the consequences of this criticism. Between 1988 and 1992 a series of measures consolidated a more bureaucratic regime in the PT. First of all the nucleos became even less decisive for determining the direction of the PT and the mass assemblies were less authoritative. As one PT observer noted, ?In reality, most nuclei have only been really active in the period before an election.?39

The plenary sessions of the PT and enlarged assemblies, in effect, involved all PT members and sympathisers without any graduated rights to speak and vote with the result that ?the final outcome . . . was] only ?deliberative? in nature for consideration by the formal authority.?40

As the party?s mass base became less decisive, less frequent and more inchoate, power became more concentrated in the party apparatus at every level. It was within this machine that the decisive battles of the early 1990s were fought out.

As the left wing critics of the PT deputies and councillors grew in number in the wake of the 1990 electoral set backs the party leaders around the majority faction of Lula decided to hit out at the democratic structures in the PT. In 1992 the PT leadership banned open tendencies within the PT which had their own press as a measure to silence left critics of the reformist tendencies.

Two groups were expelled?one of them being Socialist Convergence (supporters of the LIT) which ?had the effect of strengthening the leadership of the party, and of making it able to direct the disparate elements of such an unwieldy machine?.41

Michael Lowy has said that the PT represents ?an almost unprecedented attempt to go beyond?within the framework of a mass organisation?the usual models of politics within the workers? movement: neo-Keynesian reformism, parliamentary cretinism, bureaucratic centralism, doctrinaire sectarianism, apparatus substitutionism.?42

Yet the experience of electoralism, the emergence of a parliamentary caste and the bureaucratisation of
the party machine has naturally had its effect upon the PT’s programme and ideology which increasingly expressed the aims of this caste and this machine.

The PT has always insisted that it is not reformist. Is this true?

PT statements are littered with clear anti-capitalist indictments, proclamations of the need for socialism and even that the existing framework of the political institutions must be ended. Thus a circular from the National Directory issued to Congress during the debate around the new constitution in 1985, argued that:

?The PT, as party that supports socialism, is by nature opposed to the bourgeois order, the foundation of capitalism?.43

The Fifth National party Conference in December 1987 defined for the first time what it meany by socialism and how it would be implemented. It argued ?there is no historical example of a class that has transformed society without placing political power?the State ?at its service.?44

But the essence of reformism is not whether or not a party is ?anti-capitalist? but the precise nature of the institutions that are needed to place political power in working class hands, the exact limits to the use of the democracy of the existing bourgeois institutions and especially what role the armed forces will play in the process.

At the social and economic level the question is decided by the attitude the party takes towards the expropriation of private property in the main means of production, industry and finance.

Judged from this perspective the PT has a left reformist programme; reformist because it sees working class power as essentially coming through the broadening of democracy within the existing institutional framework of the Brazilian state; left, because it ascribes a central role to non-constitutional mass movements in society in pressurising for radical political reform and social change:

?Our project of social transformation will work only if it is supported by a solid and self-organised base of the exploited and the oppressed. To achieve a true and substantive democracy we will have to set up workers? councils and consult constantly and directly with the people.?45

Or again, ?To defeat those sections which now hold economic power will demand combined action by the government and its allies, especially in the union movement. . .?

But, crucially, the role of the mass movement is not to take and wield power for itself:

?The PT is committed to preserving the role played by the organisations of civil society in keeping the government on its toes. . . Those who vote people into office should not simply relinquish power to them but remain watchful, suspicious, and critical. It is most important that a revolutionary government not co-opt its organisations and thereby deprive them of their primordial watch-dog function.?46

The PDG will only seek to consult with popular organisations and keep them informed and involved, to lean on them to act against the enemy. These forms of working class organisation, education and participation and struggle are not to be organs of working class power .

At the heart of this reformist conception is the PT?s notion of ?democracy? and it?s relationship to working class power and socialism. The 1990 political programme sums up their position:

?The PT understands that, in the transformation of Brazilian society, democracy should be defended and assumed as a strategic value. . . [The PT] believes democracy, understood as the wide aggregate of
citizens’ rights to political participation and representation, cannot be seen as a bourgeois value, incorporated by the workers? movement.?

The Party proposes that ?democracy became a universal ideal when it was taken by the working class from the hands of the bourgeoisie, and made a conquest of humanity.?47

This thoroughly reformist and abstract conception of ?democracy?48 crippled the Popular Unity government in Chile twenty five years ago. A systematic comparison of the positions put forward by the Chilean left and those of the PT is particularly useful to understand the extent of the problems faced by the Brazilian workers.

Reviewing the lessons after the Pinochet coup one of the Socialist Party leaders said,

?The popular government put into practice a policy which reflected the idealization of democracy as something outside the class struggle dialectic, and which envisaged the possibility of separating the state apparatus created by Chilean society under bourgeois rule from the material and political interests that forged that apparatus.?49

The idea that the existing state machine?including its legislative apparatus?is neutral as to which class is in possession of it under capitalism, is the most purblind illusion of all. Again, the Chilean Socialist Party left-wing were clearer:

?Every state sector of which we can take control is important, so long as we don?t lose sight of our central objective, which is liquidation of the bourgeois state. That enormous bureaucratic machine is useless in every way for the construction of socialism. ?50

How different this is to the PT talk of working within the institutions of the state without being prisoners of it. The dangers of this false naivety is never clearer than in the PT?s attitude to the armed power in the state.

The PT has only this to say on the matter, namely, that they favour ?Democratisation of the armed forces and struggle against the ideology of ?national security? ?

If a PT-led popular democratic government meets resistance, sabotage and illegal actions?

?We will only be able to confront any destabilisation if we base our governability in the ability to execute our programme with popular support, with coherence, with clarity. . .?

?We will break the resistance of the dominant class by combining action by our government, our Party and allied forces with independent workers? action. We will not hesitate to give support to large popular mobilisations, measures which democratise to their roots the mass media, full and intense diplomatic activity . . and also legal action.?

While the PT favours diplomatic activity it certainly does not accept that the working class must be the armed power in the popular democratic government, because this would be ?insurrectionist?.

Indeed, after many years of discussion, at its First Party Congress in November 1991, the PT explicitly rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat.

By renouncing in advance the ruthless suppression of the class enemy by the workers the PT threw a lifeline to the Brazilian bourgeoisie and reassured them that the PT was mired in the same illusion that led to the crushing of the Chilean workers; namely, that the Brazilian army can be trusted to act loyally for a PT government if democratically elected.
The left wing of the Chilean SP in May 1971 noted that the ?destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, and socialisation of the means of production must inevitably pass through an armed confrontation between the classes to repress reactionary and bourgeois sedition.?51

Once the Chilean bourgeoisie lost badly in the March 1973 elections the bourgeoisie gave up on recovering the constitutional mechanisms to control the government and moved to prepare the coup.

One of the great weaknesses of the left in PU was that traditionally, after 1933, the Chilean military had not played a major role in politics compared to the rest of Latin America. The myth of the army?s ?professionalism? thus arose and deceived the left. Given the experience of 1964 there is no excuse for the Brazilian left to think this.52

Matters do not improve when the PT moves away from the realm of radical political democracy to the social programme. In the PT programme of 1990 we find:

? . . what socialism? What society, what state are we struggling with so much effort to build? . . . It is as useless to emphasise the magnitude of this historic task as it is to theoretically and practically respond to such questions. . . .The workers must transform themselves into a hegemonic class in civil society and the state. Other aspects of our socialist project are open challenges, to which it would be presumptuous and incorrect to claim we can give any immediate answers.?53

This is a blank cheque. Once ?state power? is achieved the social programme of the popular democratic government will have to be defined in the light of what the PT finds when in office.

On the one hand we find in the 1993 programme: ?the bourgeoisie must be defeated and submit to the redistribution of income and the elimination of poverty.? Yet at the same time: ?the speed of application of the PDP will be defined by the correlation of forces and in particular the level of popular mobilisation and self-organisation.?54

Over the last ten years the reformist content of the PT?s programme has been in the ascendency over its centrist rhetoric. The latter is increasingly the outcome of the far left?s influence in certain layers of the party machine and base units reflecting the hopes and aspirations of millions of the poorest in Brazil, while the former is the codified practice of the elected representatives and key party leaders as the PT has ?matured? into an electoral machine.

But even if the PT really can be said to be won to a practical programme that corresponds to its most left-sounding rhetoric then history has already given its verdict on this path of confrontation. In combat with Leninism others, from the Austro-marxists to the later Gramsci, tried to follow the path to power that Lula now treads.

Some have sought to marry the democratic virtues of conflicting forms of state power (parliament and councils) in the hope of cancelling out their supposed respective defects. Others, long before Lula, have devised schemes for harnessing the extra-parliamentary energy and organisations of the popular masses to the ?institutional? struggle from within. At worst it leads to the debilitation of the struggle of the masses, at best it leads to self-limiting dual power and then tragic results.

In the run off for the 1989 Presidential elections Fernando Collor polled 35 million votes to Lula?s 31 million.55 Naturally, his promise of ?clean government? (very important in attracting many rural and interior votes) was a fraud. Collor was just one more sharp-suited glitzy crook. On 16 March (the day after Collor?s inauguration), his New Brazil Plan froze bank assets.
The result was that his first month of office saw a 14% increase in unemployment in São Paulo alone. By the end of 1990 inflation was 20% a month and GNP had fallen by 4.6% in a year?including a 12% drop in industrial output, the worse drop since 1947.

The Collor recession of 1990/1991 was in part induced to break the CUT?s rising influence. Support and membership of the CUT had been growing up to the end of 1989, over its rival, the CGT. Attacks on the workers? wages and jobs came thick and fast during 1990-92 and the CUT, by and large, suffered a series of defeats.

In the face of this CUT militants needed political answers. For example, to Collor?s charge, that by defending their jobs in state industries they were guilty of the old corporatism and corruption that was at the heart of Brazil?s malaise and which he was attempting to correct. But at this critical time, the correct preoccupation of the PT that unions should be autonomous resulted in it maintaining a neutrality before the obstacles faced by the union movement, and absolving itself, in large part, from working out a policy to guide the PT?s militants.

The PT?s deliberate renunciation of ?vanguardism? thus led to a crippling weakness in the Brazilian left?s response to the Collor neo-liberal programme as did its inability to resolutely defend state control and nationalisation, even under capitalism.

One-sidedly reacting to the defects of ?bureaucratic socialism? after 1989, the PT was increasingly disavowing a clear commitment to state ownership of industry, which left it and the CUT defenseless in the wake of Collor?s attacks.

The PT took the lead in bringing to the surface the Collor administration?s own internal crisis in early 1992. In May the PT called for an investigation commission and joined forces with other parties to get one. In July the leadership of the PT called for Collor?s resignation. But this opened a debate in the PT between those who wanted the action against Collor to be confined to parliament and the call for new elections and others who wanted mass mobilisations to force early elections for a new President.

As the campaign for Collor?s impeachment gathered momentum during 1992, the PT?s programme, which separated out the fight for radical democracy and for social change, inevitably led to a failure to unite the struggle to indict Collor with resistance to the economic programme of his government. As the year went on these questions diverged more and more.

This is reflected in the fact that there were no big strikes during 1992 outside of urban public transport.

The mass movement against Collor was organised by CUT as the Movement for Ethics in Politics. The mobilisations reflected indignation against corruption more than they did rejection of the neo-liberal programme or the economic policy.

Worse, in late 1992 the union elections at Vota Redonda, amongst metal workers, were won by the enterprise management candidates around a privatisation plan; this was the same factory where workers led the militant resistance to austerity in 1988 and occupied their plant for a month before being bloodily suppressed.

Instead of being an occasion for further advance the enforced resignation of Collor at the end of 1992 only led to a new crisis within the PT over how to react to the new Itamar government which replaced him.

Since 1990 the PT has been internally riven as a result of experience of local government?increasingly, leftist positions were adopted and then ignored in practice by its representatives. Now Collor?s downfall
and the formation of a new government around Itamar sharpened this again.

The majority (Lula) current?Articulação?split, a majority combining with left wing currents to form a new majority within the leadership bodies. But would the deputies and mayors obey the decisions? Four positions were presented within the PT in response to the new administration.

Luiza Erundina and some other deputies led the right-wing which wanted to join the government and influence it from within. The ?independence? position insisted on no participation in government but sought to ensure stable government through responsible opposition to Itamar.

Lula and the main party leaders led the third camp, a variation of the second. He wanted no participation, but also more vigorous opposition to the government around clearly defined issues but without contributing to the downfall of Itamar. Finally, the left60 argued that the PT should not concern itself with ensuring ?governability? and should do its utmost to stop sympathisers of the PT, like Walter Barelli going into government?

Originally, the NEC voted for Lula?s position but later voted narrowly for the left wing position. The right tried to get that overturned and then Erudina joined the government anyway for which she was merely suspended from PT for a year in February 1993.

As the Presidential elections came onto the horizon, the party was increasingly polarising with the centre around Lula more and more dedicated to a reformist campaign while seeking to distance himself from the naked opportunism of the right wing, which sought to join a national unity government dominated by open bourgeois parties.

On 3 October 1994 Lula will make his second attempt to become President of Brazil as a PT candidate. So far ahead in the polls at the turn of the year one business magazine noted that his election ?looks like an historical inevitability?61

But far from putting a revolutionary action programme before the exploited and oppressed masses of Brazil Lula will, in classic reformist fashion, only put the immediate or minimal programme, in the hope of garnering the broadest support possible, including sections of the bourgeoisie for the necessary majority.

So at its January 1994 Executive meeting, the PT approved a draft manifesto for a party platform to be adopted in April 1994 for the start of the Lula campaign.

Its component parts were: a foreign debt moratorium; a negotiated reduction of the costs of domestic debt service; restructuring of the banking industry to make credit cheaper; a crackdown on cartels and oligopolies; the revocation of all privatisations of the past three years; the strengthening of ?strategic? parts of public sector industry; agrarian reform; and greater labour influence in national economic policy.

Far from being a programme to end exploitation and oppression and establish working class power, one business review noted ?There is nothing very new here and none of these ideas is the exclusive property of the PT.?62

Indeed, so tame is this manifesto that the same article concluded that Lula may well be the least worst choice for President given the eruption during 1993 of yet another corruption scandal over the Congressional federal budget.

The fact that PT?s leaders have no record of stealing is being seen as a great qualification for the business community. Still, the Brazilian bosses will not choose Lula and the PT as their preferred candidate.
It is a party that has built up many expectations among the masses in the possibility of real and lasting social change under its rule; but the bourgeoisie do recognise something real in the fact that the PT has considerably widened the gap between its maximum and minimum programmes since the 1989 election and as the same review commented:

?The PT will certainly have to be beaten into shape by reality. But that may be said of any party which wins the highest office for the first time.?63

Moreover, the PT manifesto could in the course of the campaign be watered down even more as the PT seeks to build coalitions for office or even for the second round run off. Already it has been said that a deal could be done between the PT and the PSDB.

The former would agree to the economic programme of the PSDB current finance minister, Cardoso, in return for PSDB support for a suspension of the present review of the constitution, which is opposed by PT since it may attack social guarantees and remove restrictions on the role of foreign capital in the economy.

The PT became very soon after its formation in 1979-80 a mass centrist party and reflected all the moods and surges forward and backward of the trade unions and social movements in Brazil. But in the transition to constitutional democracy after 1982, and especially under the pressure of local government power after 1988, the PT adopted a reformist programme that expressed the dominant outlook of this elected layer. In the early 1990s the party machine has been significantly bureaucratised to protect these ?conquests? from attack from below.

Throughout the early1980s all those committed to revolution in Brazil should have fought within the PT to steer it towards revolutionary intransigence and away from centrist confusion.

Now it is impossible for the PT to evolve in revolutionary direction without a split from top to bottom. The revolutionaries should still clam their pace inside the PT. They should fight the consolidation of the reformists; they should certainly call on all workers to vote for the PT in the forthcoming elections. The PT needs to be put to the test of office and the mass base of the PT needs to be organised. The masses have many illusions in the possibilities that could be opened up by a PT government or even a Lula Presidency.

And not only they. Despite all this evidence of lowered ambitions and modest social and political goals, the supporters across Latin America of Partido dos Trabalhadores consider that it is a unique new starting point for the Latin American left. Indeed, the PT is the ideological reference point for the so-called ?new left? launched under the name of the São Paulo Forum in 1990. Unfortunately there is nothing new about the PTs leftism.

This branch of left reformism has bene tried and found wanting with tragic costs in Italy during 1920, Austria in the 1920s and 1930s, to Chile in the 1970s. The Partido dos Trabalhadores is a reformist party and as such will use the institutions of the bourgeois state it reviled fifteen years ago against the workers in any decisive conflicts, just as a PT mayor did in São Paulo in 1988. The Brazilian workers have still to build their own genuine, revolutionary, workers? party.

The USFI tails the reformism of the PT

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International?s (USFI) members in the PT say that the PT is ?the only political and social force capable of offering a genuine solution to the country?s current crisis.?1

João Machado (USFI) says that ?the advances already made by the Party and the hope which it offers for the mass movement in Brazil far outweigh any reversals or defeats.?
This assessment came after reviewing the results of the 8th national conference of the PT in June 1993. There the Left Wing Option bloc received the support of a majority of delegates for its platform for the PT. The USFI was a leading component of this bloc.

The USFI says the conference ratified an explicitly class struggle, democratic and popular orientation for the party.

João Machado admits that the the PT programme (which the USFI advocated be adopted) is not socialist and the votes for Lula will not be for socialism. Rather, they will be votes for a real change without the masses having a specific end in mind. In an astonishing admission of how far they are from the method of transitional demands that lie at the core of Trotskyism Machado states,

"Our role is to propose a programme which takes the basic needs of the population as its starting point, then sets out socialist ideas."

Far from criticising the dangers of the traditional reformist divisions between the minimum (day to day reforms) and the maximum programme, the role of the USFI is to cover it up and even give a "marxist" explanation for this advance.

At the heart of this right centrist cover-up is a deliberate confusion over the relationship between the gradual elimination of the role of the market in the transition to socialism under a workers' state and reforms under capitalism which impinge on the operation of the market.

The USFI members say that since nationalisation has been discredited since the collapse of Stalinism, "we have to approach the question of the transition to socialism in a different and innovative way...something in which until now we have made little progress."

But this does not hold Machado back.

"We will not be able to get rid of the market in the foreseeable future... However, we can and must establish control over and limits upon the free play of the market."

In between neo-liberalism and a bureaucratic state there lies a third alternative way to run the economy? that of the population itself choosing alternatives?

He advocates, as does the PT, that the party and government build upon the experience of local government, especially their popular participation in drawing up of city budgets. It would be possible, for example, to televise the Budgetary Commission of Congress; greater decentralisation of spending decisions to the community could be made.

At the workplace level this process would build on existing examples in the car industry;

"What is most interesting about the Sectoral Chamber is that by negotiating over prices, salaries and jobs, the workers can formulate a proposal for organising production, evaluating costs, investment priorities and so forth.

Combined with a discussion of the all-round economic priorities of the population, under the auspices of a popular democratic government this would result in pressure on and control over the capitalists."

Apparently, "without doubt, this is a revolutionary path?the changing of the economy based on a radical democratisation of society."
This centrist attempt to reconcile the gap that divides Marxism and PT reformism is classic of USFI. A system of genuine workers' control has got nothing to do with the Sectoral Chamber in the car industry. It is not a question of formulating proposals to throw into a broader discussion that may result in pressure being brought on the capitalists.

The encroachment by workers on the logic of profit will be made by imposing shorter hours, a veto over hiring and firing. Throughout the world workers' representatives sit with employers on boards to 'evaluate costs?', usually to prove the need for speed-ups, pay cuts and jobs losses.

?Our conception is compatible with the Marxist vision of the process of building socialism. In the long term it will eliminate regulation by the market and the State will wither away as it reabsorbed by society. It is also more adapted to the PTs project for socialism.?5

The left wing of the social democratic Socialist Party of Chile was more ?Marxist? than the ?Trotskyists? of the USFI when they wrote during the Popular Unity government:

?One can?t talk of building socialism without taking power, and that in turn implies destruction of the bourgeois state and construction of a new one?a workers? socialist state which will begin withering away as the building of socialism proceeds . . . ?6

According to the USFI in Brazil the revolutionary path ?hitherto undiscovered by any Marxist this century? involves popular involvement in budget setting and monitoring the activities of the government from below. In this scenario the market and the state will be forced to wither away by popular control encroaching upon the operation of capitalist wealth.

On the contrary, the revolutionary path to socialism and the abolition of the market for labour power and the key means of production first has to get over the small obstacle of smashing the capitalist state by deploying the force of a workers? state (or semi-state).

The USFI forget that if a ?popular democratic government? encroaches on the free market in a way that is likely to make a difference to the lives of millions of Brazil?s poor then the bosses will use their state (army, military police) to offset this encroachment.

The ?revolutionary path? does not consist of an uninterrupted, smooth ascent signposted 'deepening of democracy?. It involves a radical discontinuity and revolutionary leap to the other side of a chasm that divides the capitalist state from the transition to socialism. The USFI?s role in the PT is to give left cover for a reformist practice.

1 International Viewpoint (IV) #239 23 November 1992
2 ibid
3 IV #251, December 1993, p12
4 ibid
5 ibid, p13
6 ibid, p14
7 ibid, p15
8 G Smirnow The Revolution Disarmed, New York, 1979, p125

Note from main article
2 When it looked as though Lula might win in 1989 the Brazilian ruling class panicked; one leading
industrialist announced that £800,000 businessmen will leave Brazil if Lula wins.

4 Leftwing Option is made up of four groupings: Articulação-Hour of truth current (18% of 518 delegates); Socialist Democracy (USFI supporters in the PT); a current around Vladimir Pereira (head of PT’s parliamentary group); Socialist Orientation current.

5 President Collor induced a slump by his shock economic measures when he took office in March 1990. In 1991 unemployment in industry rose by 10% and real wages fell by 13%; half a million workers lost their jobs in São Paulo alone.

6 Around 750 attended the founding conference in São Paulo and 101 signed the founding document which stated ?The PT is born of the will for the political independence of the workers, who are tired of being putty in the hands of politicians and parties committed to the maintenance of the current economic, social and political order . . .?

7 Cited in E Sader & K Silverstein op cit, p52. The authors state that ?the labor bureaucracy established by the CLT provided thousands of sinecures. One observer explained that mainstream union leaders had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo as the system ?permitted an immense contingent of officials spread among the 4,672 unions, 159 federations and 21 confederations to have a modest, but assured career.? ? p38

8 M Lowy argues more narrowly that ?the example it [PT] most closely approaches would be the Independent Labour Party, the first English workers Party, formed in 1893 by a group of combative union leaders, socialist militants (including some Marxists), and Christian leftists . . .? M Lowy, op cit, p454

9 ?Our socialism? op cit, p265

10 PT Manifesto, 1981

11 Sader and Silverstein, op cit, p79

12 ibid, p80.

13 PT obtained 3.1% of the share of the national vote and 73% of PT’s national vote was cast in São Paulo. The vast interior of Brazil was largely untouched by the influence of the PT at this stage.

14 PT had 18 deputies in Congress out of a total of 570 as a result of these 1986 elections.

15 PT won only 19 in 1985.

16 Sader and Silverstein, op cit, p84. According to the authors one episode ?helped accelerate the party’s explicit commitment to electoral politics. PT members raided a bank in Bahia. Lula expelled them and denounced all and any armed actions; this troubled the far left because they saw in it an increasing commitment to exclusively institutionalised forms of struggle.

17 International Viewpoint (IV) #203 1.4.91

18 See Lula interview from 1985, ibid, p100

19 Lula interview, August 1990, ibid, p166

20 Quoted in the weekly review Veja, reprinted in Infobrazil, October 1990.

21 M H Moreira Alves, ?Brazil?is Partido dos Trabalhadores?, in The Latin American Left; from the fall of Allende to perestroika., p240.

22 IV #203

23 The capital of the north-eastern state of Ceará.

24 Sader and Silverstein, op cit, p98

25 ibid, p91-92

26 ibid.

27 ibid, p94

28 ibid. In the Presidential elections of 1989 Lula only received a disappointing 36% of the votes in São Paulo compared to Collor who got 50.1%. Lula blamed this result partly on the record of the PT mayor; ?Here our people had to justify the bus, the holes in the street, the trash.?
29 ibid.
31 The contradictory evolution of PT towards reformism can be seen in the opposite example of the Santos city government, headed by a PT mayor. he supported the port workers? fight against redundancies in 1991 and helped beat Collor?s privatisation plan.
33 Militias would also be necessary to counteract the military police who are the prime agency for killing street children and who will be used against the left if necessary.
34 R Crossley, op cit, p32
35 Interview with Lula, February 1991, in IV#208 10/6/91
36 It was this decision that precipitated a split in the Lula leadership faction, Articulao, and led to a realignment around a left majority at the June 1993 conference.
37 In 1989 PT had 400,000 registered members, one million militantes and 4 million sympathisers, representing different degrees of activity and commitment. This figure has no doubt increased.
38 One writer has said ?The vertical ?top-down? tension between PT members elected to public office and the rank and file has generally been much more problematic than the horizontal left-right factional divisions.? R Crossley, op cit, p8
39 ibid p13
40 ibid
41 ibid
42 Lowy, p464
43 Sader and Silverstein, op cit, p94
44 ibid
45 (PT?s Guiding Principles June 1993, IV p18)
46 Sader and Silverstein, op cit, p244
47 ibid, p107
48 Among the specific political reforms the PT will promote are: strict proportionality in voting; rejection of voting thresholds; election by party lists; access to mass media; anti-corruption measures. All these are supportable but they do not give the working class state power!
49 G Smirnow, The Revolution Disarmed, Chile 1970-73, New York, 1979, p129
50 Political Document of the Socialist Party Santiago regional district, cited in G Smirnow, ibid, p125.
51 ibid, p15
52 Already there are clear signs that the business class and the army are consulting each other about their intervention. In October 1993 some leading Brazilian capitalists tried to persuade Itamar to follow the example of Peru?s Fujicoup and close down Congress. Itamar declined. Then a meeting took place between 100 businessmen and former deputy army chief of staff, General Glauber Vieira, urging the military to intervene to form a ?new republic?; he told them ?we are not blind or deaf and our silence might not last much longer.? Such a coup?ostensibly against government corruption?would of course, be an ideal pre-emptive strike against a possible PT victory later this year, or a warning to Lula about the limits of his power.
53 Sader and Silverstein, op cit, p269-70
54 IV203. In fact the speed and content of the social reforms will be as much if not more decided by the nature of the alliances that the PT strikes with other parties than the pressure from popular organisations. For the PT has insisted that they are in favour of alliances with sectors of the bourgeoisie? the famous non-monopoly sectors. Of course, contradictions exist between sections of the bourgeoisie; The elimination of monopolies and cartels can open fields of growth and dynamism for the small and medium capitalists. But
this contradiction is only a secondary one which is subordinated in the face of a genuine revolutionary movement which threatens their existence as a class.

55 For the first time the results showed that PT made inroads into the North-East peasantry.

56 Only about 30% of workers are in trade unions.

57 Dirceu, op cit. Another commentator and PT activist in Rio said ?there are no formal mechanisms for moulding militancy in the social movement to the positions of the party. The influence is from the grass roots to the PT and not the other way around. . . They represent their social movements within the PT but have no disciplinary mechanisms built into their militancy in the grass roots.?

58 E Sader and K Silverstein, op cit.

59 Franco Itamar was Collor?s Vice-President and merely stepped into his shoes without a new election.

60 A bloc of Socialist Democracy (USFI supporters); the left wing of Articulação and the Na Luta bloc.

61 Brazil Watch, 6-20 December 1993, p7

62 Brazil Watch, ibid p8

63 ibid

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