

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

MST's irregular warfare advances

Brazil's Landless Movement is using the drought in the northeast to expand its Jacobin insurgency.

The insurgency unleashed by the Landless Movement (MST) of Brazil, which has been aptly characterized by the leadership of that terrorist organization as "low-intensity civil war," is proceeding without significant obstacles. Without abandoning their strategic fronts, located in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, and the Amazon region of Pará, the MST has taken advantage of the chaos caused by the drought now ravaging 1,092 municipalities in the northeast and which is threatening 10 million Brazilians with starvation. The group has launched rapid-deployment operations throughout the area, such as looting food from warehouses and trucks, thus exercising their considerable mobilization capabilities.

To prepare for the social convulsions that are expected to occur because of disappearing food stocks and the drought, which President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's neo-liberal government had been warned of ahead of time, the MST deployed José Rainha, one of its national coordinators, to tour five states of the drought-plagued region to incite peasants to loot supermarkets and government-run food warehouses. Rainha runs the MST in the Pontal del Paranapanema region, in the state of São Paulo, and is the MST's Maoist military leader. In a May 20 harangue at an MST camp in Passira, in the state of Pernambuco, Rainha told peasants, "If you need to organize workers to loot, then loot, don't be afraid; go into the *latifundios*, don't be afraid; if comrades are jailed, fight for their freedom . . . in the plazas, in the streets; that is our place."

In the drought area known as the "polygon," which embraces eight states, the organizing presence of the MST is still small. However, using the support infrastructure provided by the Pastoral Land Commission, which is dominated by the existentialist Theology of Liberation faction of the Catholic Church, the MST is increasing its influence with each day the drought continues, and it has turned this impoverished area of the country into a powderkeg.

According to Federal Police reports, there have been formal charges brought in only 20% of the looting incidents, all led by MST cadre. The Cardoso government has reluctantly called in the Army to protect trucks transporting food to the northeast. A large percentage of the looting has been carried out to supply the MST's own camps. After several incidents of looting involving the MST, the government decided to cut off food aid to those families living in the MST's camps.

As *EIR* has documented, the MST—which was conceived from abroad by organizations under the domination of the British monarchy—owes its growth to the government of President Cardoso, in part due to the aid that it has received through government social programs. For example, in 1995, the government distributed 24,086 food baskets to the MST camps; in 1996, they increased donations to 252,295 baskets, and in 1997, to 416,433. That is, 10,410 tons of food went to this narco-terrorist outfit, courtesy of the Cardoso government!

Trained in guerrilla warfare, the

MST is highly aggressive, especially in Pernambuco, where it carries out carefully planned military actions. According to sources, there have been numerous assaults carried out by MST militants under the command of Cuban military intelligence personnel with combat experience in Angola in the 1980s. This should come as no surprise, since the MST is an affiliate of the São Paulo Forum, a narco-terrorist umbrella organization created in 1990 on the joint initiative of Fidel Castro's Cuban Communist Party and the Brazilian Workers Party (PT).

It has also been reported that in Paraná, where the MST has launched a separatist operation to create the so-called independent republic of "Pontal," North Korean military advisers are assisting the MST. This is occurring in São Paulo, the first state in which the MST launched quasi-terrorist actions, ordering impoverished peasants to occupy banks in the region.

With its eye on the Brazilian Presidential elections at the end of this year, the MST is combining its Jacobin insurgency tactics with playing its so-called "democracy" card, by backing the Presidential candidate of the PT, Luís Inácio "Lula" da Silva. The MST has also intensified its links to Mexico's Zapatista National Liberation Army, which is running a separatist insurgency in that country's southeastern state of Chiapas. At the same time, inside the PT, the bloody model of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and ELN narco-terrorists is growing increasingly influential. "The difference is that the Zapatistas defend the Indians," PT Congressman Milton Tremer told the June 3 issue of *Veja* magazine. "I would say that the MST has something in common with the FARC. In this case, the difference is that the FARC is already an armed movement, and the MST isn't."