

People's Agrarian Reform



"Struggle, Build People's Agrarian Reform" was the motto of the 6th National Congress of the MST and highlights the main challenges for the next period.

The current situation reaffirms the need to combat the large estates and the agribusiness model and at the same time requires that we continue building our proposed people's agrarian reform that goes beyond the settlement of families, looking to implement a new model of production based on agroecological experiences that produce healthy food for all people and guarantee decent living conditions for families who live and work in the countryside.

Our agrarian program seeks structural changes in how we use our natural resources, which belong to all of society, and in the organization of production and social relations in the countryside. We want to contribute permanently to building a just, equal, and fraternal society.

International solidarity and struggle

International relations, in all its dimensions, but mostly with the working class of the whole world, has always been present in MST.

From the start, the MST established important relationships with other peasant organizations, particularly in Latin America, and also with NGOs and European cooperation agencies. Over the years these ties were getting stronger, surpassing the limits of financial solidarity for political solidarity; support for our struggle, for building common struggles; the individual relationship to building coalitions such as the International Via Campesina and the Alba Movimientos Sociales (an anti-neoliberal coalition of social movements in Latin America and the Caribbean with an anti-imperialist and anti-patriarchal perspective).



The MST often sends activists on internationalist missions and today has Solidarity Brigades and students in Cuba, Venezuela, Paraguay, Haiti, Central America, South Africa, Palestine, USA, Colombia, Italy and China.

Also in Europe and North America friends and supporters have founded several groups that conduct outreach activities and support our movement, and there are currently Committees of Friends of the MST in 11 countries.

Some pages for Friends of the MST:

- Estados Unidos - <http://www.mstbrazil.org> - (english)
- Espanha - www.sindominio.net/mstmadrid (español)
- www.amidessansterre.blogspot.com.br (français)

srimst@mst.org.br
<http://www.mst.org.br>

 /MovimentoSemTerra  /MST_Oficial




MST

30 years of struggles and victories!



The Brazilian Landless Rural Workers Movement – MST -- is a Brazilian social movement fighting for land, agrarian reform and social change. It is the result of a long history of land concentration and social inequality and is inspired by various forms of resistance and popular struggles for social justice and the sovereignty of peoples.

For 30 years the MST has organized landless peasants throughout Brazil to fight for their land and produce healthy food, building a better life for their families with education, health, and culture, based on cooperation and respect for each other and for nature. The MST is part of La Via Campesina, an international coalition of more than 170 peasant movements from 80 countries worldwide.

The MST has organized more than 1.5 million people in about 1,200 cities located in 23 states and the Federal District.

Occupations are the main ways to apply pressure so that lands that do not fulfill their social function are destined for land reform.

CONCENTRATION OF LAND AND INEQUALITY IN BRAZIL

Brazil is the country with the second-highest concentration of land in the world. Furthermore, much of the land produces very little or nothing. This situation persists in Brazil since the Portuguese invasion in 1500 and is the foundation of great social inequality that characterizes the country today.



About 1% of landowners hold around 46% of all lands.

Of the approximately 400 million private acres, only 60 million are used for crops. The rest of the land is idle, underutilized, or intended for livestock.

Today in Brazil there are about 4 million landless peasants (farmers who have no land, or do not have enough land to survive).

AGRIBUSINESS

Starting in the 1980s, world capitalism took the form of agribusiness in the countryside. This is characterized by the production of agricultural commodities on a large scale through monoculture, high level of mechanization, the use of large amounts of pesticides and GMOs, with the control and the concentration of the entire production chain by a few companies.

With the crisis of capitalism, the developed economies are turning to countries like Brazil that still have large amounts of natural resources such as land, water and forest, as well as incentives from the state and lax environmental and labor laws. Agribusiness companies and large financial groups are appropriating more and more arable land and investing in the production of commodities for export.



- Agribusiness controls 85% of the land and virtually all production of commodities for export.
- Its production is concentrated in soybean, maize, sugar cane and cattle.
- Monoculture requires the over-exploitation of natural resources, causing deforestation and fires; contamination of soil, water, food and people.
- Agribusiness further increased the concentration and land grabbing by a few foreign transnational companies like Monsanto, Syngenta, Nestlé, Bunge, Bayer, Dupont and Cargill.
- Brazil is now the largest consumer of pesticides in the world, consuming about one billion liters per year, an average of more than 5 liters per capita. Fourteen pesticides used in the country are banned elsewhere in the world.

HOW WE ARE ORGANIZED

Encampments – struggle, resistance and organization. When landless families occupy a large estate, we organize encampments where they start living. The encampments are organized in a collective manner, where each person takes on a task and everyone participates in the community decision-making processes.

Settlements – a space for life, dignity and production. The settlements are organized when land is won, that is, when, the state expropriates land and gives the families the right to use the land and the encampments become settlements. In the settlement, the group of peasant families lives, works and produces, providing a social function for the land. Even after being settled, these families remain organized in the MST, as the conquest of the land is only the first step towards implementation of land reform. The struggle continues in the settlement, both to ensure the social rights that must be guaranteed to all Brazilians: home, school and food, and for the construction of a new way of living and producing in the countryside.



Currently, we have 150,000 landless peasants in encampments and 380,000 families in settlements throughout the country. Altogether, more than 60 cooperatives and 100 associations integrate the MST's productive process.



MST Sectors and collectives:

Health, Human Rights, Gender, Education, Culture, Communication, Training, Projects and Finance, Production, Cooperation and Environment, Mass Front, Youth, and International Relations.

Main organizational principles:

collective leadership, division of tasks, gender composition of groups, autonomy, planning, discipline and respect for collective decisions, criticism and self-criticism, study, ongoing connection with the base, among others.

The families in settlements and encampments are organized in a democratic and participatory structure to make decisions in the MST. They form nuclei that discuss production, the school and the needs of each area. Out of these nuclei come the coordinators and they are constituted in sectors and groups which seek to work on each front that is necessary for agrarian reform.

The same structure is repeated at the regional, state and national level. And in the assemblies of the encampments and settlements, everyone has the right to vote: adults, youth, men and women.

Agroecology:

Agricultural production must use agroecological techniques, abolishing the use of pesticides and genetically modified seeds and promoting various forms of agricultural cooperation, as well as the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. We should promote the organization in the countryside of agro-industries under workers' control and ensure the technical-scientific and political training for all who live in the countryside in order to continue developing the new model of agriculture.

Food Sovereignty:

Food is a basic human right: all people should have access to healthy, nutritious food that is appropriate for their culture. But food sovereignty is more than having access to food. It should ensure the right of workers to produce their own food and to decide how and what to produce without the control of the market.

Education and Culture:

Knowledge must be a process of consciousness-raising, liberation, and ongoing cultural elevation of all people living in the countryside. We struggle for the right to public, free and quality education at all levels, close to where people live. We must also ensure that the peasant population has the right to produce and enjoy cultural events and the diverse means of social communication.

Gender:

The egalitarian transformation of society implies the construction of new gender relations and the effective participation of women. Through political education, study, construction of spaces that collectively ensure the care of family and tasks of daily life, such as child-care centers and collective kitchens today we have at least 50% of women in areas of coordination and decision-making, production and income generation, and in different areas, such as education, health, and culture.

Political Education:

One of the priorities of MST is the political education of its members and its base. It is a broad and inclusive process that takes place entirely through courses, meetings, gatherings, collective actions, etc. Therefore, it spans over different time periods and is built into the daily struggles undertaken by the organization