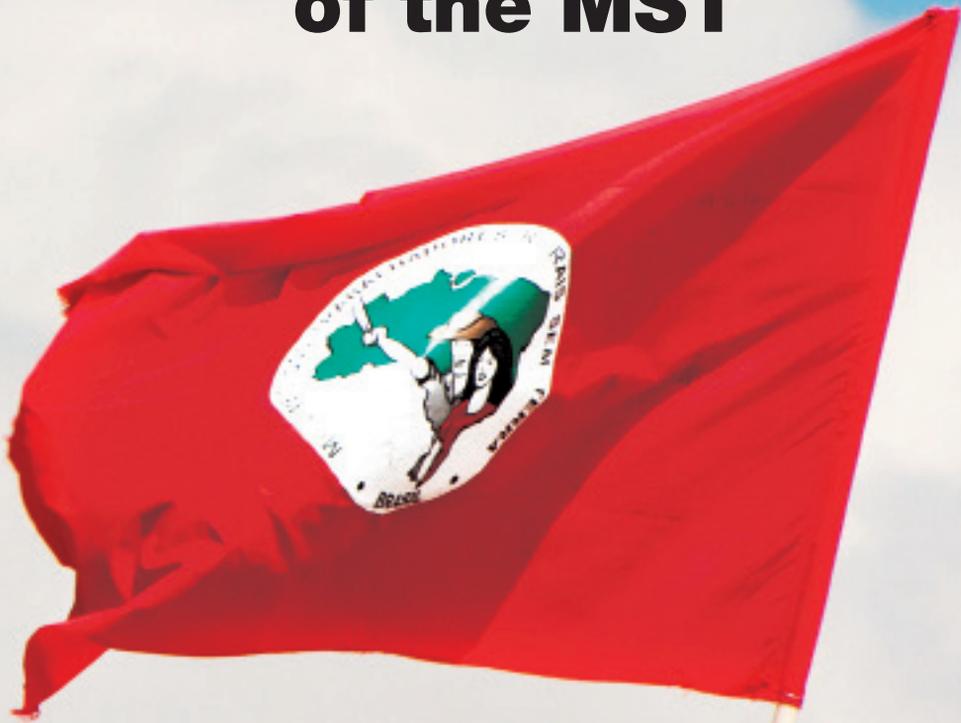




**Sixth National MST Congress,  
February 2014**

# **Agrarian Program of the MST**



**Struggle, Build People's Agrarian Reform!**





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# Introduction

Dear comrades and activists of the MST,

In August of 2011, the national leadership of the MST initiated a series of debates and discussions in preparation for our Sixth National Congress. Since then, we have held various seminars at the national, regional, and state level. These seminars have taken place in vocational schools, government agencies, and cooperative organizations. We believe that the vast majority of our active members have been involved in these discussions.

We have created two basic documents. The first is the agrarian program of the MST for the period 2014-19. The second contains the political positions of the MST concerning the Mass Front, agricultural production, and the tactical challenges of our struggle. We have also updated the General Rules, which govern the functioning of our internal organizations.

Here, we present the results of our debates and discussions regarding the Agrarian Program. As you can see from the table of contents, we begin with an analysis of the agrarian sector in Brazil. Then we have a chapter on the nature of agrarian reform today. This is followed by a chapter on the fundamentals of our proposal for a new People's Agrarian Reform program in Brazil.

And finally, we introduce the slogan of the next National Congress, agreed upon by more than 300 leaders in the Movement's National Coordinating Committee: **Struggle! Build People's Agrarian Reform!**

The slogan is meant to motivate us and guide our struggle, organization, and work. It is also meant to help us dialogue with society, proclaiming the objectives of our struggle in the coming years.

This is the synthesis of a collective process of discussions that took place over the last two years. Hundreds of comrades participated actively in this process, the results of which you now hold in your hand.

This document should not be read as a prescription or as a fi-





nished product. On the contrary, these are ideas that we have come up with based on scientific knowledge stemming from the concrete practice of daily class struggle across the country. It should be read accordingly as a historical synthesis for the current moment.

The implementation of our People's Agrarian Reform depends in part on our ability to assert ourselves and put pressure on the government. Reclaiming the bourgeois state is an important factor in the class struggle and the formation of a political conscience among our base. Important, but insufficient.

Its implementation depends on the relations between the forces we confront, including the principal enemy of agrarian reform — agribusiness. Willingness and readiness to fight are not enough. We need organized strength, political agility, and creativity to defeat the enemy.

It depends, more than anything, on our ability to strengthen our internal organization. We need a strong MST, one with effective mechanisms for democracy that motivate and facilitate everyone's participation in organizational discussions and decisions.

It depends on our ability to continue building strength in our settlements, in our schools, in our training centers, and in all the other spaces we have occupied. They should all reflect our model of agriculture for rural Brazil.

It depends on our ability to build strong alliances, founded on the specifics of our program, with other agricultural sectors and with the urban working class.

It depends on our ability to influence the discourse of broad segments of Brazilian society and to create a hegemonic discourse — a consensus — that understands and promotes our agricultural program.

It depends on democratizing the Brazilian state, on changing its bourgeois character. It depends on having a hegemonic government of the people.

And so our program is always a work in progress. It will continue to change in the course of our struggles, occupations, and new challenges throughout the course of history!

We hope that all of our comrades will help deepen these discussions, share them with other comrades, and use them in schools, classrooms, and training centers. We also hope to use





this document to discuss our ideas and proposals with society as a whole.

In this way, we hope to help build a better future for our country, grounded in the ideals of socialism, so that future generations can inherit the Brazil we have only dreamed of — a country that is just, egalitarian, democratic, and fraternal.

National Coordinating Committee of the MST  
Brasília, August 2013







# I. The process of capitalist development in the countryside

## 1 - Historical context

1. Global capitalism since the 1980s has entered a new phase of its development, having been dominated by financial capital and by oligopolistic private transnational companies, which control the global markets for the world's main commodities. This means that the process for producing wealth is still carried out by labor in the areas of industry, agriculture and trade. However, the rates of accumulation and division of revenue are concentrated in the area of financial capital and big private capitalist companies (the oligopolies) that act on a global scale. (According to data from the UNDP, the United Nations Development Program, the 700 biggest companies control 80% of the global market!)

2. In 1980, the global GDP (which theoretically represents the global production of all commodities in a year) was around 15 trillion dollars and there were around 16 trillion dollars in circulation in equivalent currency. Now, in 2010, the global GDP has risen to 55 trillion dollars (increasingly concentrated in fewer countries – the USA, Europe, China, and Japan) and the volume of money in circulation has risen to 150 trillion dollars. This is in addition to the fictitious capital represented by securities and letters of credit.

3. This dominant form of capital all over the world also brought about structural changes in the way that the production of agricultural commodities is dominated. A class alliance was formed between the bourgeoisie of the transnational corporations, bankers (financial capital), the bourgeoisie of owners of mass media companies, and large landowners in order to control the production and circulation of commodities (standardized agricultural goods). As an expected result, they control prices and volumes of commodities in circulation, and therefore they receive the majority of agricultural profits and revenue.

4. In the organization of commodity production, they imposed the rationality of capital through large-scale monoculture





production in contiguous areas with the objective of achieving maximum productivity of the workforce and maximum economic profitability. To this effect, they substituted the labor force with intensive mechanization, and used ever-increasing volumes of industrial chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

5. The transnational companies that control the production of pesticides also began controlling the supply of seeds, both hybrids as well those genetically modified in laboratories. These seeds, known as transgenics, are carriers of genes that make plants more susceptible to disease and plagues, necessitating the obligatory and more intensive use of pesticides. These transgenic seeds are patented as private property, which legally allows companies to charge 'rights of use' from farmers: royalties.

6. This production model resulted in a technological matrix of universalized production from the 1990s onwards, with the application of biotechnology (particularly transgenics), computers, and irrigation techniques all controlled by private transnational corporations. It could be considered as a new phase of the conservative modernization that began in the 1960s, but different and more intense than the previous phase, which was called the 'green revolution' due to the intensive use of agrochemical inputs of industrial origin.

7. This way of producing became increasingly dependent on the advances of financial capital, in the form of rural credit, to finance access to inputs acquired in the markets as seeds, seedlings and semen; chemical fertilizers and herbicides; pesticides and hormones, tractors, machinery, and transport vehicles.

8. This model of agricultural production was adopted en masse by rural capitalist companies and became known as the agribusiness model. It turned agriculture into a business for the accumulation of wealth and profit under the control of big capital.

9. With the international crisis of capitalism, from 2008 on, an offensive was observed consisting of a flood of foreign capital, both financial and fictitious, that migrated from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere. This capital was invested in agriculture, the private appropriation of natural re-





sources (land, water, hydroelectric facilities, energy sources, minerals, ethanol plants) as well as in the control of commodities (soybean, corn, oranges, cocoa beans, poultry, pigs, cattle, etc.)

10. In Brazil's case, statistics show that from 2008 to 2012 around 80 billion dollars of foreign financial capital entered the country for the acquisition of natural resources alone.

11. In addition to the offensive of foreign investments to control production and agricultural markets, we have also witnessed an offensive of international capital from the northern hemisphere to invest and control, through large private transnational companies, Brazil's mineral wealth such as iron, bauxite, gold, copper, niobium, etc. They also seek to control energy sources such as oil and natural gas, ethanol, hydroelectricity and wind farms.

12. The Brazilian macroeconomic model practically did not change with the change of government, maintaining a logic centered on speculative gains linked to financial capital. The government maintained the primary surplus in the national budget as a way to guarantee payment of interest on domestic debt, and had no exchange rate controls. This means that the exchange rate was left to the "mercy of the markets" and therefore fluctuated in accordance with the interests of speculative private international capital in our economy. The United States (USA) issues dollars without control and plays the international market so that we pay their deficit.

13. This process that occurred during the eight years of Lula's government resulted in a transfer to financial capital of more than 700 billion Brazilian Reais, just to pay interest on the internal debt. This contributed to the concentration and centralization of capital, as, according to studies made by Márcio Pochmann, the creditors and beneficiaries of these interest payments were fewer than five thousand capitalists.

14. Agribusiness began to have an expressive economic function in the model of financial capital (generating commercial balances to boost exchange reserves, an essential condition for attracting speculative capital in Brazil). This advance of agribusiness shields and protects unproductive lands for future expansion of their businesses, blocking the procurement of lands for agrarian reform.





15. The Brazilian State, in addition to its legal framework that protects the interests of the ruling class, has played a key role in ensuring the hegemony of the agribusiness model in agricultural production. The State acts to guarantee the transfer of public resources, via investment and through compulsory financing earmarked for it, collecting the national savings deposited in banks.

16. This model affects, on various dimensions, the partisan and legislative grouping, the forms of pressure on governments and the nature of political power disputes in the context of social class contradictions. The establishment of a multiparty rural lobby group is purely emblematic, putting the interests of the capitalist enterprises, directly and indirectly related to rural capital, ahead of social interests.

## 2 - Structural changes in the ownership of land, production, labor, and income

17. The process of capital development resulting from the top-down implementation of this economic model, which is increasingly structurally dependent on foreigners and which organizes production solely on the capitalist business model in the form of agribusiness, provoked structural changes in the way that land and natural resources are privately appropriated, as well as changes in production, in market conditions, in the composition of social classes, in the profile of the employment structure, in the technology used, and in the scientific and technological research in the Brazilian agricultural sector.

18. The capitalist entrepreneurs, both Brazilian and foreign, started to prioritize investment in the production of soybean, corn, sugarcane (with sugar and ethanol production plants), the extensive cultivation of eucalyptus for cellulose to produce charcoal (for smelting iron ore to produce iron for export) and extensive cattle ranching.

19. The 50 biggest foreign and domestic agribusiness companies started controlling practically all agricultural commodities trading in Brazil and, indirectly, the composition of agricultural production in the country.

20. There was an increasing centralization of the capital





used in agriculture: a single company controls seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, sales, the industrialization of agricultural products and the production and sale of farm machinery.

21. The capitalist landowners, who are subordinate to these transnational companies, control an agricultural GDP of around 150 billion Brazilian Reais annually, and need rural credit advances of approximately 120 billion Reais a year. The Brazilian government guarantees these advances. They then share their capital gains with suppliers of inputs, the purchasers of goods, and the banks that made the credit advances.

22. In the last ten years, there has been an accelerated process in concentration of land ownership. The index that measures land ownership concentration continues growing. The 2006 Gini index was 0.856, which is greater than that registered in 1920, when we had only recently abolished slavery. According to statistics of rural property registers from the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCRA), between 2003 and 2010 the number of large properties grew from 95 thousand units to 127 thousand units. The area contained by these properties grew from 182 million hectares to 265 million hectares in just eight years.

23. Analyzing the large properties classified by the criteria of the 1993 land law, based on information declared by the rural property owners to INCRA, in 2003 there were 47 thousand large unproductive properties, consisting of 109 million hectares, and by 2010 there were 66 thousand large unproductive properties, consisting of 175 million hectares. While there are flaws in the INCRA statistics, they still indicate a trend of concentration and growth in the number of unproductive properties.

24. Analyzing the data per establishment (criteria adopted by the IBGE, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), the latest census in 2006 showed that there were 22 thousand large properties with over two thousand hectares of land, the so-called latifundios. The other 400 thousand establishments between 100 and 2,000 hectares are the modern rural establishments that make up the biggest part of the agribusiness model.

25. The large and medium landowners that represent agribusiness control 85% of the land, and practically all pro-





duction of commodities for export.

26. A concentration of agricultural production per product was also observed, and in 2010, 80% of commodities and lands used in their production were dedicated to soybean, corn, sugarcane and extensive farming.

27. There was an accelerated increase in the denationalization of land ownership, with an increase in the presence of foreign companies. However, it is impossible to get reliable statistics on this because foreign capital buys the shares of Brazilian companies which hold lands without needing to change their registration in the INCRA. Nevertheless, it is estimated that foreign companies hold more than 30 million hectares of land in Brazil.

28. Agribusiness has regional priorities for its expansion when it comes to crops and livestock. Soybean is a priority in all regions of Brazil; sugarcane is a priority in the Center-South region; cellulose in Bahia state, the north of Espírito Santo state, and Mato Grosso do Sul. Wood for charcoal production is important in northern Brazil and in Minas Gerais state, principally where the steel industry is based. In the semi-arid northeast, irrigated fruits reign. And on the northeastern coastline, shrimp farming. Extensive farming continues encroaching on the poorest regions and on the farming borders, “breaking and taming” the land for the gradual increase of capital.

29. With regard to the dairy industry, this is being pushed to the South of Brazil, just as sugarcane is occupying the pastures of the Southeast. Another important product is cotton, which is grown on the large farms of the Center-West region.

30. There has been a significant increase in agricultural productivity per hectare and per worker, in all branches of production. However, this productivity was combined with the increase in scale of monocultures and with intensive use of pesticides and farming machinery. The increase in profit margins did not bring about improvements in the living conditions of workers who produced this wealth.

31. Capital interests seek to expand agriculture, incorporating new lands for agribusiness in the Center-West region, the Cerrado ecosystem, the south of Amazonia and pre-Amazonia, in the so-called “Mapito” (encompassing the south of Maranhão





state and Piauí state, the west of Bahia state and north of Tocantins state). In this sense, capital faces legal obstacles to its expansion such as the Forest Code, which designates 80% of the Amazon ecosystem as a natural reserve, and 40% of the Cerrado ecosystem. It establishes restrictions in relation to the quilombola areas (“Maroon” communities of descendants of escaped slaves) which, once recognized as such, cannot be sold. The same happens with indigenous areas. Beyond these legal limitations, the indigenous peoples face the wrath of capital in the form of illegal invasions of their territories, mainly in the Center-West region.

32. The agribusiness model accommodates an ideological class partnership between the large landowners and the mass media enterprises of the bourgeoisie, particularly television, magazines and newspapers, which constantly defend and make propaganda for the rural capitalist enterprises, promoting them as the only possible projects, modern and irreplaceable. In addition to economic pressure, the ideological reproduction of the class interests of the dominant classes is now carried out by the mass media. There is a symbiosis between the big business of mass media, the agribusiness companies, publicity budgets and economic power.

33. We can see in the development of productive forces on a Brazilian level that farm machinery sold today (tractors and harvesters) has increased in terms of power but not in the number of units. In the 1970s, when family farmers had access to subsidized rural credit that was linked to agroindustry in a more intense way, the tractor market was 75 thousand units per year. Now, in recent years, it has dropped to 36 thousand units per year, although the average power has increased.

34. Generally, however, the mechanization indices of Brazilian farming are very low, compared to the volumes of productions. The total number of tractors used in Brazilian farming is just 802 thousand tractors, according to the latest IBGE census (an average of two tractors for every agribusiness owner). Compared to the level of development of the productive forces of farming in the United States, in 1920 they already had 900 thousand tractors!

35. The hegemony of this economic model is spreading





towards the control of all natural resources, such as minerals, water, forests and energy sources. In all these sectors there is increasing concentration and centralization of capital, as well as the denationalization of the companies that control them.

### 3 - Social classes

36. Various social researchers have collated statistical data about agricultural and forest production in order to get an understanding of the approximate facts about the condition of social classes in Brazilian farming. In this way, it can be said that there is a capitalist-entrepreneurial sector (those that possess and control the means of production and production), represented by approximately 450 thousand farming establishments, which hold 300 million hectares and control all production of commodities for export. This is the dominant class in the Brazilian countryside.

37. The permanent rural wage workers, those that work on farms of over 1,000 hectares, number about 400 thousand. Temporary rural workers and another 1.8 million workers on properties of 500 to 2,000 hectares total 2.2 million workers in agribusiness.

38. In the 1980s, the number of workers in farming, including permanent and temporary workers, varied between 6 to 10 million. Looking at the data of the 2006 IBGE census, there has been a significant reduction in the total number of rural workers. The number of temporary rural workers throughout 2006 (census) was 2.2 million, part of which is made up of family members of poor peasants that migrate from their own regions for temporary work during harvests of sugarcane, oranges and coffee. The number of permanent rural workers was 2 million.

39. The peasants: Data from the IBGE 2006 census identified 4.8 million rural establishments classified as family farms, with areas of less than 100 hectares. This would be the approximate number of families that supposedly live in the social condition of peasants. Of these, approximately a million families are peasants with an agricultural income that guarantees the social reproduction of the family and some savings, that make a living from the family work, occasionally contract wage workers and





are integrated into the market. They are the ones who access the lines of credit from Pronaf (National Program for Sustainable Family Farming). The majority of them will produce the commodities integrated into farm industries such as pigs, poultry, tobacco, milk, fruit and vegetables.

40. There are another 3.8 million families of poor peasants whose lives are derailed by this model, and who basically produce for subsistence only and sell small volumes of surplus, without the ability to maintain regular savings. Among these families there is the social base that fights for land and land reform. They are at the margins of the agribusiness economic models, excluded from public policies; most of them survive on government grants or are dependent on the pension payments of a more elderly family member. For capitalist business owners, these impoverished peasants form either the workforce reserve or the simple food providers for local towns.

41. In the various segments of farm families, there are 14 million adult workers who work in the countryside, under the most varied social relations of production.

42. There is a super-exploitation of farm labor in Brazil. Among the peasants, this happens through the lengthening of the working day, the involvement of the whole family, and the low remuneration received. Among the rural proletariat employed in agribusiness, there is a relative super-exploitation, found by comparing their wages, which are more than what peasants earn, but much less than their counterparts working in the same agricultural commodities in other parts of the world. On in other countries. On average, Brazilian tractor operators earn barely 20% of what their counterparts in the northern hemisphere earn, working in the same production of soya, corn, etc.

43. There are still cases of unpaid work, similar to slavery. According to data from the Ministry of Labor and the Federal Police, around 5,000 cases are registered yearly. Despite the fact they represent such ignominy and should be condemned in all forms, this is not the principal means of accumulation of capital in agribusiness.





## 4 - The contradictions of the model of capital production versus the interests of society

44. The industrial agriculture production model adopted by agribusiness is totally dependent on agrochemicals which are, in turn, dependent on non-renewable resources of oil, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Moreover, their prices are established on a global level, controlled by a small group of transnational companies with oligopolistic practices. In the Brazilian case, this dependence is aggravated by the necessary imports, which even affect the national sovereignty of agricultural production. For the last harvest, 16 million tons of fertilizer were imported. Brazil imports 75% of all chemical fertilizers used.

45. The oligopolistic control of the large transnational companies over the food trade leads to the establishment of monopoly prices (see Guilherme Delgado) and a process of food standardization that in the medium term will even affect public health.

46. Agribusiness farming is totally dependent on the use of agricultural poisons, which are used in increasingly large volumes and intensities. Brazil controls just 5% of all land farmed in the world's 20 biggest agricultural countries. However it consumes 20% of the global production of poisons. These poisons destroy biodiversity, change the environmental balance, contribute to climate change, and, above all, affect the health of humans, with the proliferation of disease and cancer. The agribusiness model cannot produce healthy food.

47. The control of and introduction of private ownership of seeds by transnational companies puts at risk the family farming model and affects the food sovereignty of the country in the medium term. Whoever controls seeds and seedlings will control agriculture as a whole.

48. Foreign ownership of natural resources such as land, water, forest and minerals generates a contradiction between the interests of the Brazilian people and the interests of capitalist businesses.

49. The current model of global domination of capital that imposes a global division of labor and production condemns the countries of the southern hemisphere to be producers





of only raw material, agricultural and mineral goods. This will increase global inequalities and add to social conflicts in the medium term.

50. Wealth produced in agriculture and the surpluses of farm labor, which previously remained in the same region (even if they went to the capitalists), are today appropriated by other areas and other urban centers, which leads to greater social and regional inequality.

51. The expansion of monocultures does away with biodiversity and leads to increased economic dependence, increased social fragility and serious environmental consequences, which are starting to be felt in all regions.

52. The agribusiness model, unlike the stage of industrial capitalism, does not redistribute income, nor does it generate youth employment. Capital applies a model of agricultural production without farmers and with a very small workforce. This results in the absence of a future for the youth, an increase in migration and the depopulation of the countryside.

53. The large landowners (who previously, as owners of the latifundios, kept all the profits and exercised all of the political power derived from this economic power) must now share their gains, and thus lose political power. This causes contradictions, though secondary, with other capitalists. This will certainly be felt by the next generation that inherits the latifundios, who also will not be able to reproduce themselves as traditional latifundio owners.

54. The agribusiness model permanently expels the rural workforce that must migrate to the cities. Yet later, when they concentrate production and make new investments, they are not able to bring manpower to the countryside to work as employees, much less young workers. As such, a contradiction exists, as the model does not attract a work force and in the medium term this will be a serious limiting factor.

55. The predominant logic in the appropriation of natural resources is purely profit. It is the permanent search for extraordinary revenue that the exploitation of natural resources provides. This leads to a permanent discrepancy as there are limited resources in the face of the growing needs of a population to feed itself and meet its needs.







## II. The nature of the struggle for agrarian reform: historical context and current challenges

1. A diversity of agrarian reform programs has accompanied, and been emphasized by, the forms of capitalism across distinct periods. Here we provide a brief historical review of the different emphases given to agrarian reform on the national and international scene during the development and consolidation of capitalist societies. At the end of the chapter we describe the challenges presently faced by the MST and the struggles for agrarian reform in our country.

2. In the transition from European feudalism (and also pre-capitalist societies and Asian modes of production) to commercial capitalism, peasants fought against the rural oligarchies and feudal lords for the right to access land. These struggles were not yet characterized as struggles for agrarian reform however, as they were limited merely to the articulation of peasant demands.

3. It was only after the development of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth century that the phrase 'agrarian reform' came into circulation. In this period, the term came to refer to a policy of government and state which sought to redraw the country's property structure and the structure of agricultural production. As a consequence, agrarian reform served the demands of the nascent urban-industrial societies.

4. This redrawing of the land ownership structure served the immediate needs of the peasants who were struggling for land and fighting against dispossession by the big landowners. But changing the land structure served an additional purpose: it would drive the process of industrialization and consolidate the domestic markets of capitalist societies.

5. A contradiction emerged in the development process of industrial capitalism. The challenge of developing the domestic market for fabrics found itself up against an enormous concentration of land ownership, where a mostly countrified, landless population with no income was completely excluded





from the market. The industrial bourgeoisie, who controlled the apparatus of the state, sought to resolve this contradiction by forcing agrarian reform upon the rural oligarchs. For the peasants, this amounted to the democratization of land ownership.

6. By democratizing land ownership, by expropriating land from the lords and doing away with the remnants of feudalism, the bourgeois state sought to transform the peasants into commodity producers. For industry they would produce goods while for the urban population they would produce food. In this way, the income earned by the old peasantry would enable them to become buyers/consumers of industrial commodities.

7. It was this type of agrarian reform that began in the West European countries and the United States from 1870 onward. It was extended across the northern hemisphere countries until the 1950s, when the Korean War unfolded. Each effort at agrarian reform, in different countries and at different times, served to support the industrial development processes rolled out by the bourgeoisie.

8. These changes made to the land ownership structure by the bourgeois state are referred to as either 'classic bourgeois agrarian reform' or simply 'bourgeois agrarian reform'. They share the same basic characteristics: they were carried out by the industrial bourgeoisie; they enhanced the domestic market through the democratization of land ownership; and they sought to transform the peasants into commodity producers and consumers.

9. From this matrix of classic bourgeois agrarian reform emerged numerous other proposals for agrarian reform in the peripheral countries. These were suited to both the realities and challenges that these countries sought to overcome, but above all to the correlation of political forces in the historical period in which they were implemented. Here in Latin America, the government of John F. Kennedy came to promote a hemispheric meeting in Punta del Este in 1961 to encourage governments there to implement bourgeois agrarian reform. It would serve as a way of developing domestic markets and preventing a radicalization of the peasantry, as had happened in the Cuban Revolution. Economists from ECLAC (a United Nations commission for Latin America) promoted the reform as way of confronting the challenge of underdevelopment during the 1960s.





10. Agrarian reform was also implemented by the so-called nationalist governments, such as that of General Cárdenas (1939-1946) in Mexico, General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) in Peru, and Jacob Árbenz (1951-1954) in Guatemala. In the 1960s in Egypt, Colonel Nasser distributed all the fertile land along the Nile River to the peasants. Meanwhile in Brazil, the inclusion of agrarian reform in the Base Reforms of the João Goulart government can be seen as an effort to implement this type of agrarian reform, as part of a national project for capitalist development.

11. There are also examples of agrarian reform with an anti-colonial dimension. These amounted to the redistribution of land from the capitalist colonizers to the creole peasants. They were not labeled agrarian reform, but merely the 'right to land for those who live and work on it'. It was in this way that the distribution of lands to the peasants was consolidated in the 1804 social revolution in Haiti, led by Dessalines; by the Artigas government in Uruguay; the França government in Paraguay in the 1810; and by some measure, the distribution of land during the Mexican revolution of 1910-1920.

12. What is more, the Asian and African continents were witness to a series of liberation struggles following the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). Land was expropriated from the European colonizers by the forces that drove the struggles for national independence, and it was distributed to the peasants. This type of agrarian reform sought above all to consolidate the political sovereignty of the country, and was the case in countries such as Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Algeria and Libya.

13. In distinct historical periods, popular governments have also envisaged agrarian reform as a means of facilitating a transition from capitalism to a socialist society. In Cuba agrarian reform accompanied the Revolution of 1959 and in Vietnam it followed victory over the United States in 1973. The agrarian reform of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979 is another example.

14. Finally, there are the agrarian reforms proposed during the popular revolutions that dared to look beyond the horizon of capitalist organization. These are the socialist agrarian reforms. These nationalized the ownership of land as a right of





every nation, socialized the ownership of the means of production, and collectivized, in different ways, agricultural work. They were agrarian reforms carried out within a set of policies adopted by governments resulting from social revolutions that intended to build socialism. Therefore, they were subordinated to the radical changes in the general mode of production of society. We can cite as examples of this type of agrarian reform those that occurred resulting from the revolutions in Russian (1917), Yugoslavia (1945), China (1949), and North Korea (1956).

15. Many proposals and attempts to realize agrarian reform within the development framework of national capitalism have emerged throughout the history of Brazil. Some abolitionists like Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910) for instance maintained that the freedom of black people needed to be accompanied by a process of land distribution. Nabuco and others were brushed aside by the so-called 'colonels of the land' - a slave-owning rural oligarchy that held a grip over political power.

16. The first peasant movements emerged in the midst of Brazil's transition to industrial capitalism, away from slavocratic, commercial capitalism centered around the plantation (large estates based on monoculture that utilized slave labor and produced for export). There was a great deal of struggle and dispute over land throughout the territory at the time. Led by religious leaders, peasant communities such as Canudos (Bahia, 1894-1896), Contestado (Santa Caterina, 1912-1916) and Caldeirão (Ceará 1926-1937) exemplify this form of struggle for land. The communities did not demand 'agrarian reform' however. Rather, they simply sought to guarantee their survival, their work, and their livelihoods under extremely unfavorable natural and political conditions.

17. It was only after the Second World War that the struggle for agrarian reform and the associated expression emerged. With the ascent of popular mobilization in Brazil, the struggle for agrarian reform strengthened. Peasant movements like the Peasant Leagues, Ultabs (Union of Agricultural Tillers and Workers of Brazil) and Master (Movement of Landless Farmers) gained prominence, and over time successfully established themselves as organizations on a national scale. By 1961, they were organizing around the slogan, "Agrarian reform – in law or by force!" The programs for agrarian reform advocated by the peasant movements





of the time (and by the aforementioned popular government of João Goulart), were of the classic bourgeois agrarian reform type, as they were incorporated into the national development goal of developing the country's internal market for Brazilian industry.

18. Throughout the 1950s until the military coup of 1964, the debate around how to develop Brazilian agriculture unfolded around the need for bourgeois agrarian reform versus a pact between the industrial bourgeoisie and the rural oligarchy that would keep the land structure unchanged. During the period, Brazilian agriculture was already far behind in terms of social relations, while four centuries of the country's agro-export model had left the agriculture relatively unproductive.

19. The military dictatorship imposed their project of "modernization without reforms", and cracked down hard on the peasant movement. Unlike the European bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century, here in Brazil the industrial bourgeoisie allied itself with the rural oligarchy as a means of developing national capitalism – and a form of which left Brazil dependent on the core countries.

20. There are many theories and interpretations of why Brazil's industrial bourgeoisie did not push for an industrialization of the country through agrarian reform. Among the most prominent, we can cite the following: Brazil's industrial bourgeoisie never constituted itself as a nationalist bourgeoisie that wanted to develop the country; Brazilian industry was born dependent on foreign capital and not on a market for the people; the bourgeoisie needed to gain from the overexploitation of the workforce, and that this could only be done through an enormous industrial reserve army made up of peasant migrants who moved to the cities year after year and pushed down wages. Even today, the average salary in Brazilian industry is one of the lowest in the world.

21. With the imposition of the military dictatorship in the period 1964-1984, the bourgeoisie's project for agriculture was both conservative and painful for the peasants. From a political point of view, they physically massacred all forms of peasant organization. With a silent and repressed society, hegemony was imposed across the whole of society and agriculture. For capitalist agriculture it was a period of consolidation. The system would





be geared to the export market, and based on large tracts of land, agricultural mechanization, the adoption of agrottoxins, and the expulsion of the peasants. The only way out for the peasants was to migrate to the city or to the agricultural frontier, where they might be able to make use of Amazonian land. The result was the adoption of the “green revolution” as a technological package to increase exploitation and labor productivity. The biggest peasant exodus in history subsequently ensued, and the concentration of land ownership went up.

22. With political redemocratization in the 1980s, with the cyclical crisis of capitalism and the revival of the land struggle, the new peasant movements raised the flag of agrarian reform. The struggles and demands however were incorporated into the objectives of classic bourgeois agrarian reform: democratize land ownership to guarantee peasant livelihoods, integrate the peasants into the internal market, and increase their income as a means of improving the living standards of their families. It was in this historical political context that the MST was born.

23. The program of the MST was situated however in a framework for bourgeois agrarian reform. This was due to the form of the Movement’s theoretical development and because of the historical conditions of the time. Nevertheless, the MST has occupied a prominent place in the popular struggles of our country and has played a key role in the politicization of the struggle for agrarian reform. The prominence of the peasantry, the radicalism of the struggles, the backlash from landowners and the bourgeois state, and the raising of the flag for progressive and revolutionary struggle, has made this so. At the heart of it, these struggles always came in combinations: the struggle for land combined with the right to work; the struggle for agrarian reform overlapped with the struggle for the democratization of land ownership; while the struggle for a more just and egalitarian society fused with the ideals of socialism.

24. The early peasant mobilizations (1979-1984) that would later lead to the formation of the MST were therefore limited to the promotion of the struggle for land. From 1984 to 1992 the focus shifted however. As the MST grew across the national territory during these years, it was able to push the agrarian reform struggle while taking advantage of internal conflicts between the





interests of the industrial bourgeoisie and the rural oligarchy. For the bourgeoisie, it was in the interests to keep the mass of landless peasants on idle land, under the control of the latifundio.

25. For the industrial bourgeoisie, the interest was in promoting the development of the rural productive forces and integrating them into the capitalist market. The oligarchs however reacted strongly as it threatened to dissolve their control over the lands and their political influence over the rural population. This conflict unfolded across the institutions of the state, where the big land owners maintained unquestionable power and influence despite being only a tiny bloc. In the end, even though agrarian reform was viable –and necessary -- for the development of industrial capitalism, the power of the oligarchs was enough to systematically grind agrarian reform to a halt.

26. With greater clarity, the power of the backward latifundio revealed itself through its confrontation with the peasants and their struggles. The repression of both the MST and the struggle for land was organized by rural oligarchs through methods that were archaic in the extreme: banditry and control over the police and local courts. Besides this, they counted on the connivance of state governments who were mostly conservative and had roots in the latifundio. This violence, produced by the most backward and least productive sector of the Brazilian economy, came to national and international attention to the degree that it provoked a wave of sympathy and support for agrarian reform.

27. From 1985 onwards, the conservative forces of the latifundio began to reorganize themselves. They formed the Rural Democratic Union (UDR) in 1986, widened their forces in the Constituent Assembly (they formed the 'centrão', a block in the Assembly made up of federal deputies and senators from parties such as the PMDB, PFL, PDS and the PTB), and unleashed a wave of targeted violence towards peasants and their organizations. The murders of Father Josimo in Maranhão in 1986 and Chico Mendes in Acre in 1988 bore witness to the criminal practices of landowners. The Federal Constitution of 1988 was considered progressive, but treated the question of agrarian reform in the most conservative way.

28. After a decade of mobilization for democratization and the reemergence of union, student and popular struggles, the





hegemonic bourgeoisie gained an important victory in the 1989 with the first presidential election by direct vote since the end of military rule (1964-1985). The victory served the bourgeoisie by uniting and giving unity to the ideologically more conservative sectors of society – first through the Fernando Collor de Melo government (1990-1991) and then through the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1992-2002). Aided by the information and ideological apparatus of the bourgeois media, these political-economic forces implemented a new model of economic development: neoliberalism.

29. Strengthened by these electoral victories, neoliberalism rammed through its policies of: a) an open market, which guaranteed the unrestricted movement of foreign capital and commodities; b) cuts in social spending; c) privatization and denationalization of certain sectors relevant to the economic development of the country; d) facilities for international capital to seize natural resources – minerals, energy, biodiversity and agriculture; and e) attack on social and labor legislation, leading to losses and setbacks for the working class.

30. These neoliberal policies contributed to transformations in the way in which capitalism structured production and work (technological innovations, decentralization and outsourcing) and contributed to the offensive of international capital – so-called globalization. Neoliberalism thus inflicted two defeats on the working class. Since that time, an ebbing of the mass movement, organization and preparation, and policy disputes have characterized the period. In other words, the neoliberal decade of the 1990s succeeded in consolidating a framework of bourgeois consensus and coercion over the working class.

31. This neoliberal offensive on the national wealth took longer to reach Brazilian agriculture. At first, international capitalism prioritized the most dynamic sectors of the urban economy before moving on to Brazilian agriculture. It was during the second mandate of the Cardoso government that it became an object of interest for the transnational corporations operating in agriculture and large rural properties, and linked to international capital. As a result, the MST pushed a struggle for land offensive throughout the 1990s and imposed upon the Cardoso government an agenda for agrarian reform. It was in this way that the





struggle for agrarian reform garnered support from the public and from those social segments opposed to neoliberal policies. It is the period in which the MST assumed an important role as protagonist in the struggle for agrarian reform and more broadly in the country's popular struggles.

32. Launched by the Cardoso government, the neoliberal offensive on Brazilian agriculture consolidated itself in the 2000s. It succeeded in introducing a new agricultural model which would no longer serve the demands of the development model of national industry (1930-1980) and the internal market. Rather, the new model for control of rural capital would serve the demands of the foreign market. Today, it is a model through which land owning capitalists in alliance with international and financial capital reap the riches of the countryside as we wrote about in Chapter 1, "The development of capitalism in the countryside".

33. This new model of capitalist agriculture was defined by a division in the world in the 1990s between production and work. At that time, the central capitalist countries reserved for the countries of the south the role of being the suppliers of agricultural materials, cellulose, energy sources, and minerals for the foreign market. The model of agribusiness is the result of the hegemony of international and financial capitalism over the world and production.

34. With this model, the bourgeoisie, the state, and governments took the political position that bourgeois agrarian reform is no longer necessary for the development of Brazilian agriculture's productive forces. Clearly there is a dispute between two incompatible models for agriculture: the one put forth by the peasants and the other of agribusiness. What has reappeared then is a conflict that took place during the period when Brazil's rural oligarchs reigned (1889-1930): should agricultural land be used for the production of food for the peasants or for production destined for export, as agribusiness argues? With the latter view, the popular movements of the countryside that struggle for land and classic bourgeois agrarian reform are attacked. That is to say, from the point of view of capital, the agrarian question in Brazil is considered resolved.

35. This agribusiness agricultural model, subordinate to





international capital, was boosted by the 2008 world crisis when an enormous volume of fictitious, speculative capital came to Brazil and was applied to land and natural resources. Conversely, it applied to the commodity markets and speculated with stocks. All of this raised the average prices of agricultural goods, and raised land rent and land prices. In sum, this has erected yet another barrier to the democratization of land ownership. Contrary to the view that the agrarian question in Brazil is resolved, we have seen in the last decade an increase in the concentration of property alongside an expeditious denationalization of land ownership.

36. This new model for agriculture alters the balance of forces in the countryside. The large rural landowners--capitalized and modernized, allied or subordinate to financial capital and multinationals--have dominated the current model of agriculture. They have amassed land, public policy, and support from society. The large, unproductive landowner, violent and backwards, is viewed by agribusiness as a small fraction of its social class that should modernize and capitalize. In the absence of this, it is seen as a sign that they should lose their lands through absorption into the agroexport economy, instead of through a process of bourgeois agrarian reform.

37. There are, however, in different regions of the national territory many geographic areas in which the large land owners maintain control over both the land and local political power. Government data and academic studies point to the existence of approximately 30,000 large rural properties – landowners who are backwards from the point of view of capital. Yet, in the event the peasants occupy one of these latifundios, the principal adversary will still remain agribusiness. This is the case for three basic reasons:

- a) The occupied land is also sought after by agribusiness.
- b) There exists a class identity between the large, capitalized, rural propertied classes and the backwards landowners.
- c) Agribusiness is clear that there is a dispute between different and incompatible agricultural models. Even without peasant occupation of the large estates, agribusiness aims, through purchase or lease and with the same objectives, to get a hold of these lands and extend its reach over public land. It is fighting





an ongoing battle made up of victories and successful control over territory. This agribusiness offensive always depends on the support and connivance of state and federal governments.

38. In the same way, agribusiness considers backwards the continuation of areas belonging to traditional communities, indigenous people and quilombolas. They think the same of the restrictive Forest Code rules which limit the expansion of their fields. This is why the ruling class has put on their list of priorities an attack and weakening of the rights of these populations, and a reform of the rules of the Forest Code.

39. Today, the struggle for land and agrarian reform has changed as it confronts the prevailing economic model in the country. There is no more room for a classic bourgeois agrarian reform supported by the industrial bourgeoisie or by nationalist forces. But from the point of view of both the peasants and a people-oriented project for the country's development, agrarian reform is increasingly more urgent and necessary.

40. Now the struggle for agrarian reform has transformed itself into a class struggle against the capitalist model for Brazilian agriculture. This means that the struggle of the peasants for agricultural land and a new agricultural model is going to have to confront new forces and new actors that wield powers of coercion and consensus far stronger than the traditional big land owners. These are the large rural propertied class, finance capital and the transnationals.

41. Meanwhile, Brazil's administrative apparatus for serving family farms finds itself increasingly marginalized or eliminated, as the agencies were originally formed and put to use inside of a framework for bourgeois agrarian reform. Such is the case for INCRA, Embrapa, Embater and Funai. These agencies do not recognize that the agrarian reform settlements today are the seeds of a new agricultural model, and they have become unable to formulate public policies that meet the demands of the peasants. This has made them obsolete and expendable. Worse still they risk cooption by agribusiness.

42. This shift demands that the social movements and the MST take new, united stands:

a) A classic agrarian reform is not enough. We now must defend





a new project for people`s agrarian reform. All that classic agrarian reform can do is divide up land ownership and integrate the peasants as suppliers of raw materials and food for the urban industrial society.

- b) In the face of agribusiness power, the need arises to build alliances among all peasant movements, the working class, and other popular social groups fighting for structural change.
- c) The struggle for agrarian reform now becomes part of the struggle against the capitalist model. This stage in our struggle is marked by greater and more complex challenges than before. Today, the scene looks different than that during the phase of industrial development (1930-1980) when the agrarian reform settlements in unproductive lands were linked to employer-driven agriculture geared primarily toward agroexports.
- d) The confrontations with capital and its agricultural model extend from disputes over land and territory. But these widen into disputes over control of seeds, agroindustry, technology, nature, biodiversity, water and forests.

43. The program for People`s Agrarian Reform is not a socialist program. This remains true even though the strategic objectives of our struggle are around building a society with better forms of socialization of production, of natural resources, and a stage in the social relations of Brazilian society. A socialist agrarian reform has as its foundation the socialization of the land. It will flow from the policy implementation of a socialist state and from a lengthy process of politicization, organization and cultural transformation together with the peasants, that is to say, a social revolution. The objective and subjective conditions are not on the agenda in this historical period.

44. In this way, our struggle and program for People`s Agrarian Reform seeks to actively participate in making urgent structural changes. At the same time, our program is dialectically dependent on these transformations. A new national project built by all popular forces that attend to the interests and needs of the Brazilian people. With the struggle for people`s agrarian reform, we seek to earn victories for the peasants and inflict losses upon the oligarchs. We aim to gain strength, and to organize and politicize our social base. We further strive to expand and consolidate





societal support for our struggle. It is in this way we will widen our participation in the struggles of the working class, building towards a revolutionary process that organizes society and a new mode of production under the ideals of socialism.

45. Our project is incorporated into the working class struggle for social relations of production that eliminate exploitation, the concentration of private property, and injustice and inequality. We look beyond the horizon of capitalist production. The objectives that lay at the heart of the MST at its formation are still relevant, and they serve as the cornerstones of a People`s Agrarian Reform. The notion of people`s serves to depart from the idea of classic agrarian reform, implemented at the limits of capitalist development. It indicates the challenge of building towards productive forces and social relations of production that define an alternative standard for the use and ownership of land.

46. Agrarian reform integrates broad relationships between human beings and nature. It involves a range of processes that amount to the social expropriation of nature, such as those that rally against its private, capitalist appropriation. It recognizes the need for a new model of production and technological development centered on the coproductive relationship between man and nature, and on diversification in production that can reinvigorate and promote biodiversity. What is more, it is centered on the new political understanding of `coexistence` and the social use of nature.

47. The traditional people (indigenous groups, extractivists, quilombolas), and the peasants and workers in the countryside have been key practitioners of alternatives to capitalist agriculture. They have established themselves through their resistance and their direct confrontation with capital. Thus, they can take the lead in a new model of agricultural production under the control of the workers and focused on meeting the needs and rights of all people.

48. The attainment of a People`s Agrarian Reform can only be realized through the broad spectrum of popular forces represented by the union of workers from the city and countryside. Yet there is also an internationalist dimension to the struggle. The workers` struggle, at this present stage of capitalist hegemony, is unfolding against an order characterized by the worldwide ope-





ration of financial capital and transnational corporations. At the same time, the model of people`s and peasant agriculture has been formed from the experiences of the workers in many countries, in different cultures, organizations and struggles.

**49.** This new trajectory of the struggle for agrarian reform brings new challenges:

- a) People`s agrarian reform should resolve the deep problems faced by the rural population.
- b) Agrarian reform is based on the democratization of land through which healthy food should be produced for the whole population. This is something which the capital model cannot achieve.
- c) The buildup of forces for this type of agrarian reform now depends on a consolidated alliance between the peasants and all the urban workers. Alone, the landless will never achieve people`s agrarian reform.
- d) For the peasants and the entire working class, this represents the buildup of forces for the construction of a new society.





### III. Fundamentals of our program for People`s Agrarian Reform

Our agrarian program seeks structural changes in how we use our natural resources. which belong to everyone, in the organization of production and in social relations in the countryside. We want to contribute in an ongoing way to building a just, equal and fraternal society. To this end, we propose the following objectives:

#### 1. Land:

The earth and all natural wealth in our country should be under social control and should benefit all Brazilians and future generations. For this we must strive to:

- a) Democratize access to land, water, biodiversity (forests, fauna and flora), minerals and energy sources.
- b) Prevent the concentration of private property;
- c) Establish the maximum size for the ownership of land;
- d) Get rid of the latifúndio;
- e) Ensure that the use, possession, and ownership of land fulfills a social function;
- f) Return to the people all lands, territories, minerals, and biodiversity appropriated by foreign companies.
- g) Demarcate and respect all areas belonging to indigenous peoples and communities of afro-descendants (quilombolas), riverbank dwellers, extractivist communities and traditional artisanal fishermen and women.

#### 2. Natural resources:

Water and native forests are assets of the natural world and they should be treated as a right of all workers. They cannot be treated as commodities and must not be subject to private appropriation.

- a) Ensure that the waters and forests are preserved as a public good, accessible to all.
- b) Combat deforestation and illegal logging and illegal trade;





- c) Reforest the degraded areas with ample biodiversity of native and fruit trees, ensuring environmental preservation.

### **3. Seeds**

Seeds are a patrimony of the people in the service of humanity and cannot be considered private property or be under any kind of economic control:

- a) Preserve, multiply and share native seeds, whether traditional or improved, in accord with the biodiversity of our regional ecosystems so that all peasants can use them;
- b) Defend national sovereignty over production and the multiplication of all seeds and seedlings.

### **4. Production**

All production will be developed with the control of workers over the result of their work. The social relations of production must abolish exploitation, oppression, and alienation.

- a) Give top priority to the production of healthy foods in environmentally sustainable conditions for all Brazilians and for the needs of other peoples.
- b) Consider that food is a human right of all citizens and cannot be subjected to the logic of profit.
- c) Utilize organic techniques, abolishing the use of pesticides and genetically modified seeds.
- d) Use farm machinery that is appropriate and adapted to each environmental context in order to increase the productivity of the land, labor, and income in balance with nature.
- e) Promote the various forms of agricultural cooperation to develop the productive forces and social relations.
- f) Establish farm industries in the countryside, controlled by the peasants and other workers, to generate alternative employment and income especially for youth and women.

### **5. Energy**

- a) We must find ways to develop people`s sovereignty over energy in every community and in all Brazilian municipalities.





- b) Develop in a cooperative way the production of energy at a local level, with the most varied sources of renewable resources in order to meet the needs of all Brazilians.

## **6. Education and Culture**

Knowledge should be a process of consciousness raising, liberation and ongoing cultural elevation of all people living in the countryside.

- a) Ensure that the population living in the countryside has access to culture and the right to public, free, and quality education at all levels;
- b) Encourage, promote, and disseminate the cultural and social identity of the rural population;
- c) Ensure access, production, and control of the most diverse forms of mass media in the countryside;
- d) Develop ongoing technical, scientific, and political education for all who live in the countryside;
- e) Continuously combat all forms of social prejudice in order to wipe out discrimination of all types: gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

## **7. Social Rights**

- a) The wage workers must have all their social, pension and labor rights guaranteed and equivalent to those of city workers and labor relations must be built on the basis of cooperation, social management and combating alienation.
- b) Ensure that pay is compatible with the revenue and the wealth generated.
- c) Ensure decent and appropriate work hours.
- d) Combat in an ongoing and uncompromising way work that is similar to slavery, expropriating all the farms and businesses that use this practice.
- e) Combat all forms of violence against women and children, punishing in an exemplary way anyone who practices it.

## **8. Decent living conditions for all.**

The countryside should be a good place to live, where people have rights, opportunities, and decent living conditions.







## IV. Proposal for a program of People`s Agrarian Reform

Our proposal for a program of People`s Agrarian Reform brings together broad measures that represent and synthesize the main ideas about the model for agriculture that we support for the country and for which we struggle.

This program summarizes a strategy of resistance to the model of capitalist agriculture for agribusiness and proposes a process for gathering strength, aiming to build a new model of agriculture, focused on the needs of all Brazilian people. For this we need to fight and to strengthen our organization and effectiveness of our struggles to promote, along with the entire working class, structural changes in capitalist society.

This program should also guide our movement in our list of demands, negotiations, in the struggles, in the internal skills of our organization and in practical actions in the coming years.

The program of Agrarian Reform, discussed widely with our membership and our social base, represents the challenges and prospects of peasants in the current stage of the class struggle in which the Sixth National Congress of the MST is being held. The program is an important tool in defining the political alliances and unifying mobilizations together with the people`s organizations and trade unions of the working class in the countryside and the city.

It serves as a communications channel with all of society and with sectors of the working class to clarify our objectives and political demands, the need to democratize the land, ensuring its social function and prioritizing the production of healthy food.

Starting from the program and according to the correlation of forces in the concrete class struggle and in the spaces that open up in the political situation, the Movement will define its demands and struggles in a detailed and specific way, corresponding to the needs of our social base and of the working class in general.





So the detailed proposals of what we want for agriculture, details of our demands and negotiating agendas are defined according to the circumstances, in the spaces of the class struggle and in the application of our fighting tactics.

Thus, through our program of People`s Agrarian Reform, we support:

## **1. The democratization of land**

1.1. Access to land, to natural resources and to the means of production in agriculture should be democratized for all peasants.

1.2. Ensure that the democratization of the use, possession and ownership of land and of natural resources is tied to the interests and social, economic, cultural and political needs of the farm population specifically and the whole population generally.

1.3. Ensure that all Brazilian workers have the right to have access to land to live and/or work.

1.4. Ensure that all the indigenous people and quilombola communities, riverbank dwellers, fishermen and women and traditional communities have the right to possess and use the land.

1.5. Prioritize the process of expropriating lands of the biggest farms, of the properties of foreign businesses, and of the businesses of the secondary sector (industries) and third sector (services, banks, and traders).

1.6. Immediately expropriate for the purposes of Agrarian Reform all the lands that do not fulfill a social function relative to productive use, to the social and working conditions of the workers and to the preservation of the environment, as the Federal Constitution of 1988 specifies.

1.7. Establish a maximum limit for the property size of agricultural lands.

1.8. Combat and eliminate all forms of collection of rent for land and/or lease of rural areas.

1.9. Fight for governments to eliminate bureaucracy and create favorable conditions for access to land for the landless families in encampments and/or enrolled as beneficiaries of the agrarian reform.





rian reform program.

1.10. Immediately expropriate all the farms that use slave labor, are involved in narco-trafficking or smuggling of goods and allocate them to the agrarian reform program.

1.11. Demand the return of all public lands that were illegally occupied by ranchers and businesses and allocate them to land reform.

1.12. Require governments to consult all the families affected by public works, so the projects have minimal social and environmental impact. And if there is need for the public work, families must have the right to receive land in the same conditions in which they lived and fair compensation for losses and damages for their work and improvements to the buildings.

1.13. Prevent areas in the border zone of the country from being handed over to corporations, especially to foreign capital. Use them for settlement of rural families and for the settlement of squatters already residing in these areas.

1.14. All the families benefiting from agrarian reform will receive only “concession for use” titles, with a right to family inheritance with dual ownership including the wife, while the sale of agrarian reform plots is prohibited.

1.15. Mining projects by businesses will not be allowed in settlement areas. The minerals should be utilized in a sustainable way to benefit the community and all the people.

## **2. Water: a natural resource that benefits humanity**

2.1 Water is a natural resource and should be used to benefit humanity. Demand that the possession and use of water be subordinated to the interests and needs of the whole population.

2.2. Oppose water becoming a commodity because it cannot be a private property. Access to water should be guaranteed for everyone. All the water reservoirs, dams, ponds and even underground aquifers should be in the public domain.

2.3. Require a specific policy of the State to protect the aquifer, especially the Guarani, and the springs of all river basins, especially of the Cerrado. (Of the 12 major river basins of Brazil, eight have sources in the Cerrado).





- 2.4. Ensure that the State and its public enterprises supply clean drinking water in all rural communities and towns.
- 2.5. Require the State to adopt policies that guarantee peasants the conditions for access to and proper use of water, especially public reserves like dams, reservoirs, lakes, irrigation projects, etc.. for consumption and irrigation of production. Demand that the State adopt policies for the protection and management of fountains and springs, promoting reforestation of native trees on the banks of streams, ponds and rivers.
- 2.6. Implement a comprehensive program of sustainable water management, which facilitates natural conservation and sustainable infrastructure for capture and use.
- 2.7. Fight for the promotion of sustainable development specifically adapted to each of the six ecosystems of Brazil, namely Amazonia, the Caatinga, the Atlantic forest, the Cerrado, the Pantanal and the Pampas.
- 2.8 Along with the State, implement and ensure the political sustainability and existence of peasants in the semiarid region during periods of drought.
- 2.9. Establish programs that use rainwater to supply water for families, communities, agriculture, and farm industries.

### **3. The organization of farm production**

- 3.1 Uphold the principle of food sovereignty by prioritizing the production of healthy food for the Brazilian people, free of pesticides and GMO seeds.
- 3.2 Organize production and sales on a cooperative basis such as task forces, traditional forms of community organizations, associations, cooperatives, public enterprises and social enterprises.
- 3.3 Organize farm industries close to where the peasants and workers live.
- 3.4. Develop programs of energy independence in all the rural communities of the country based on renewable alternative sources with non-food plants, solar, water and wind.
- 3.5. Demand that the State have its own policies to ensure the





production, distribution, and energy use for the rural population.

3.6. Establish irrigation programs that are accessible to all peasants for the production of food.

3.7. Through the public supply company (Conab), the State must ensure the purchase of all the food products from family farms.

#### **4. A new technological matrix that changes the way that the riches of agriculture are produced and distributed.**

4.1. Demand that the State provide credits, subsidized financing, research and technological training focused on organic farm production with the incentive to adopt techniques that increase productivity of labor and land in balance with nature.

4.2. Demand that the State provide incentives and machinery, equipment, and appropriate agricultural tools for the needs and welfare of peasants and rural workers on the basis of regional realities and environmental preservation.

4.3. To uphold the principle of food sovereignty and ensure that peasants can produce foods that are part of Brazilian culture, require that the State provide programs for the production, multiplication, storage and distribution of native and organic seeds.

4.5. Develop a national program of reforestation with native and fruit trees and forest management in settlement areas, farm areas, areas degraded by agribusiness and in areas controlled by indigenous peoples and traditional communities.

4.6. Oppose intellectual private property and patents on seeds, animals, biodiversity, or production systems.

4.7. Require the State to organize, promote, and establish public enterprises and peasant cooperatives to produce organic inputs that can be stored and distributed to all peasants. Set up facilities to transform organic waste from cities into organic fertilizer and distribute it free to all peasants.

4.8. Require the State to oppose the production and sale of agrotoxins and GMO seeds.





## 5. Industrialization

5.1. The program of People`s Agrarian Reform should be an instrument to bring industrialization to the interior of the country in order to:

- a) Promote balanced development among the regions;
- b) Encourage technical skills and work opportunities in the countryside;
- c) Generate more income for the farm population;
- d) Eliminate the socio-economic inequality that exists between urban and rural life;
- e) Strengthen and encourage organization and cooperation among peasants;

5.2. Develop a program of farm industries and cooperatives that are under the control of the peasants in the rural agrarian reform settlements.

5.3. Establish public service enterprises with the participation of peasants to ensure prices, storage, and distribution of food from the peasants.

5.4. Create lines of credit and bureaucracy-free financing directed exclusively to the industrialization of peasant production.

5.5. Develop research centers, technical training, and knowledge exchanges focused on farm industries and environmental preservation.

## 6. Farm policy

6.1. Require the State to use all its policy instruments of farm policy--ensuring profitable farm prices, advance purchase of the food production of all peasants, adequate rural credit, rural insurance, technological assistance, storage--to encourage and train peasants and support the organic production of healthy food,

6.2. Ensure, through public policies, that all peasants have access to the means of production--machinery, equipment, inputs--needed for agricultural and environmental preservation activities.

6.3. Require the State to reorganize and restructure agricultural research directed primarily to organic farming for food produc-





tion and to eliminate pesticides and genetic modifications in balance with nature and in line with the needs of family farming.

- 6.4. Ensure that technical assistance, the transfer of technologies, support and rural extensions are politically guided by the principles of the democratization of skills, favoring exchanges and encouragement for the creativity of the peasants.
- 6.5. Demand that the State organize institutions to facilitate the certification of organic products from family farms.
- 6.6. Demand that the State provide the greatest number possible of technical and higher courses in organic farming in all the regions of the country.
- 6.7. Require that the peasants and wage workers actively participate in the formation of all public policies for agriculture.

## 7. Rural education

Education is a fundamental right of all people and should be provided at the place where they live and should respect all of their human and social needs. And access to education for workers is one of the basic conditions of the project for People's Agrarian Reform.

We prioritize the struggle for access to education because this access is still not guaranteed for everyone in our country, especially those who work in the countryside.

But for us, education does not just happen in the space and time that the student is attending school. The right to education is also related to access to different kinds of knowledge and cultural goods; training for work and for political participation, learning how to produce and organize, to eat in a healthy manner; and to practice the humanist and socialist values we stand for.

We fight for free public schools in order for the State to fulfill its role of ensuring all workers, rural and urban, a school with the material conditions necessary to carry out their educational task. At the same time we fight against the political and pedagogical supervision of the bourgeois State, no matter which government is in office. It is up to the people to be the subject of their own education.

*It is this autonomy that allows us to:*





- a) Strengthen the link between schools, settlements, and encampments and between schools and the MST;
- b) Discuss and serve the new demands for training posed by the construction of the project for People`s Agrarian Reform.

*In terms of public policies for rural education our priorities for struggle:*

7.1. Establish a massive literacy program for all rural youth and adults.

7.2. Provide universal access to public, free and quality education (preschool, elementary school, high school) to ensure:

- a) That schools are built and maintained in all agrarian reform areas;
- b) That students have transportation so that they can travel between the rural communities and their schools;
- c) That there is adequate physical infrastructure in schools including libraries, laboratories, sports fields, internet access, equipment for agricultural experiments, materials to work in different artistic media;
- d) That those with special educational needs can get specialized care;
- e) That the performance of teachers in rural schools is measured, to ensure that teachers remain in the same school and have transportation and housing;
- f) That teacher training is ongoing.

7.3. Improve the access of youth and adults to vocational and higher education, with priority for courses related to the needs of the People`s Agrarian Reform project and development of the peasant communities.

7.4. Improve the access of young people and adult peasants to higher education in various areas, including graduate and post-graduate courses and ensuring, where necessary, the system of alternation, with lodging and meals made possible by public funds. Expand the university network and the federal institutes within the areas and regions of agrarian reform.

7.5. Establish training programs and projects of experimenta-





tion and research in organic farming, linked to schools of basic, vocational and higher education and the existing training centers in the settlements.

7.6. Promote scholarship programs so that young peasants can participate in international exchanges in other countries that have the experience of peasant and organic production.

7.7. Support networks of researchers that prioritize investigations and university extension programs aimed at improving educational processes developed in agrarian reform areas.

## **8. The development of the social infrastructure in rural and farm communities**

8.1. Develop a comprehensive program of construction and improvement of housing in the countryside, respecting the specificities of farm culture in each region, along with access to electricity from alternative sources, drinking water, sanitation, transportation and access to good roads.

8.2. Encourage forms of sociability, with decent housing, organized in villages, communities, groups of dwellings or agro-villages, according to regional cultures.

8.3. Establish libraries, computer services, cultural and recreational spaces in all settlement areas focused on the access, dissemination, production and sporting, artistic and cultural exchanges.

8.4. Ensure that public transport and local roads are in decent and safe conditions for people in rural areas.

8.5. Provide access to high-quality, free public health services for the entire rural population. Ensure that health centers are built in the settlements and encourage the creation and cultivation of herbs and medicinal plants.

8.6. Ensure that the entire farm population has access to social security benefits.

8.7. Promote the democratization of the mass media, giving rural communities access to community radio and community TV and all other forms of digital and print communications.





## **9. Changes in the nature of the State and in its administrative structure**

**9.1.** The implementation of the People`s Agrarian Reform program requires democratic changes in the current form of organization and functioning of the bourgeois State. Considering that the undemocratic nature of the bourgeois state and its bureaucracy prevent public policies that are favorable to the working class in general, the advancement of our achievements to benefit peasants and the vast majority of the rural population will be made only if we face the nature of the bourgeois State.

**9.2.** At the same time, we carry out struggles and social pressures for the democratization of services, regulatory agencies and the operation of all spheres of federal, state and municipal governments, as well as the spheres of judicial, legislative and executive powers.

**9.3.** This transition to a different model for the management of natural resources and Brazilian agriculture will only be possible with a true people`s government, which puts the State at the service of the majority, with a lively mass movement that puts workers in charge of these changes.

**9.4.** Only then can the proposals for people`s agrarian reform expressed in this document be the center of public policies of the State and government.





## V. Our Slogan: **STRUGGLE! Build People's Agrarian Reform!**

We used the same process to select the slogan as we used to put together the program. In the past 12 months we consulted all the activists. We received dozens of suggestions and opinions from activists, teachers, and friends.

In the national coordinating committee meeting of August 2013, we focused the discussion around the main suggestions that reflected the agrarian program. And overwhelmingly we decided on the slogan shown above.

### *1. Goal to fulfill:*

A conference slogan should represent the political moment that the organization is going through and at the same time present the main challenges for the coming period. The tradition of the MST has always been to transform the slogan of the congress into one that accompanies us throughout the period in struggles and mobilizations.

The slogan should represent the challenges faced in the period of the Congress. It should also be a tool for mobilizing and spreading the ideas of the program to the activists, the masses, and Brazilian society in general.

For the masses and the activists, the wording of the slogan for our Sixth Congress would have to represent a forceful response to the political and organizational difficulties imposed by the situation (including the State, the government, and agribusiness) during the recent period. At the same time, it lets our friends and allies know about the strategy that we chose to overcome the current difficulties. It also points out ways to gather forces for the construction of People's Agrarian Reform and our proposals for Brazil.

Our slogan should signal to the movement's base and all our allies in society that we stand firm in defense of our political goals to fight for land, for agrarian reform, and for social transformation.





## ***2. Struggle!***

To achieve our goals we need to STRUGGLE. This slogan is driving our decisions today and has always motivated motivating our practices and actions.

STRUGGLE is the foundation of our social movement, of political organization and of economic struggle. We learn that all our achievements are the fruits of our collective struggles and resistance. We lead using the tactics of struggle and negotiations (“sticks and words”). We carry out struggles and ensure economic and political gains for those who undertake the struggles. We struggle as Florestan Fernandes taught us - “Struggle always: Do not let yourselves be co-opted, do not let yourselves be defeated and achieve concrete victories to improve the lives of the masses.”

STRUGGLE is part of our history and our heritage received from the history of the working class in Brazil and the whole world. All we have achieved is a result of struggle: the struggle carried out for land, for education, for healthcare, for credit, for the right to produce, sell, live, etc. We struggle against GMO seeds, against pesticides, against corruption, against the American Empire. We struggle against all forms of oppression and domination. We struggle to practice solidarity with other people, with the organization of our internationalist brigades in other countries such as Haiti, Mozambique, Venezuela, etc.. We even struggle to be able to enforce the law and punish those who commit violence against workers!

So nothing is more representative for the next period than the call to STRUGGLE. For everyone to continue struggling on every one of the fronts of activity in society.

## ***3. Build!***

The second part of the slogan that guides us in the coming period is to BUILD people’s agrarian reform. Building is a process of organizing, struggling, training and mobilizing our people. Building is a signal for the future. Our task is to go on building the people’s agrarian reform as a strategic mission, linked to the political struggle against capitalism and for a people’s project. However there are tactical tasks we have to perform in order to build this strategic possibility.





BUILD People's Agrarian Reform in combating the latifundio, monoculture for export, the agribusiness model, the bourgeois state, bureaucracy and corruption. But also build experiences in organic production, and in the priority for the production of healthy food. Build by reforesting, planting fruit trees, restoring the environment for the whole of society. Building, ensuring schools at all levels for our children, youth and adults. Build by training ever more cadres and activists.

***TO BUILD IS TO GATHER STRENGTH for our strategic project!***

#### ***4. People's Agrarian Reform!***

As part of the process for our Sixth Congress, the MST built a draft Agrarian Reform Program, which is for the people. Such a program is built from the analysis of current agrarian reality, dominated by agribusiness, which is the project of capitalism. The analysis shows the impossibility of carrying out classical agrarian reform under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, which only distributes the land to develop the productive forces of the countryside and the internal market.

The analysis of the impoverishment of classical agrarian reform does not preclude the continuing struggle for land and against the latifundio. In Brazil and around the world, the workers achieve victory only through an intense process of mass struggle, even when it does not succeed in changing the correlation of forces in the predominant agricultural model, such as with the settlements.

The MST states that there has never been even limited agrarian reform in Brazil that would at least alter the concentration of land ownership and democratize access to land. So what we have designed and are building in the concept of People's Agrarian Reform is beyond the old classic project of distributive agrarian reform, beyond the limits of bourgeois power.

That is to say, the roots of People's Agrarian Reform are not in the depletion of classical agrarian reform. More than that: the roots of people's agrarian reform sprout and grow from one place - the confrontation of the subject workers with the





forces of capital. The confrontation is now worsening with its world-wide crisis and the violent appropriation of all natural resources, of health and of popular culture in the attempt to turn everything into a commodity, into profit!

Our program is destined not only for landless workers or people who live in the countryside. Agrarian reform is for the people because it covers all the groups and individuals who believe in and require changes in society. And it can only take place if we build a grand alliance of the whole working class. It is an agrarian reform for all the people.

Therefore, the people's agrarian reform has a direct link with the historical legacy of 30 years of the MST and the past of massive peasant struggles. It allows us to design alliances with all the people and the relationships that we want and need to develop with the land, the territory, and production to build a just, egalitarian, and fraternal society for all.

Our struggle for People's Agrarian Reform represents the confrontation with agribusiness, capitalism's model, and seeks to create the conditions and accumulate forces for structural changes throughout society.

**This is the historical meaning of the slogan of our Sixth Congress!**











**Struggle, Build People's Agrarian Reform!**

