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Editorial

WTO-instigated agricultural trade liberalisation worldwide and “hidden” export subsidies used by Western countries along with protectionist barriers have plunged millions of farmers and their families into hardship. The gap between the productivity of farmers from the North, or those well off in the South, and small farmers constitutes an insurmountable obstacle for the small farmers. How can one imagine fair competition when from the 19th century to the present, the gap between, on the one hand, manual and artisan agriculture productivity of the overwhelming majority of farmers and, on the other, Northern agriculture productivity, heavily mechanised, has increased from a ratio of 1 to 5 to a ratio of 1 to 2000 in terms of gross productivity while at the same time the real price of wheat on the international market has fallen by a factor of 3 and the price of the corn and sugar by 2?¹

Denouncing the inconsistencies and the dangers of these neo-liberal policies promoted by the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular for the poorest segments of humanity, has long been a focus of the CETIM's struggle.

During the last session of the Human Rights Commission, the CETIM invited two representatives of farmers' and indigenous people's movements to speak during a conference devoted to violations committed against them by their own governments acting in favour of large-scale landowners or of foreign companies. You will find a review of the conference in this bulletin, as well as several extracts of speeches dealing with related questions such as the right to food as opposed to “laws of the market”, the forced displacement of farmers in Colombia and the future Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA-ZLEA-ALCA). The last CETIM publication, *MST-Brazil: The Construction of a Social Movement*, is presented at the end of this bulletin and can be ordered with the enclosed order form.

1 On this subject, see *Via Campesina : une alternative paysanne à la mondialisation néolibérale*, Edition Cetim, 256 pages, october 2002.

59th session of the Commission on Human Rights (17 March - 25 April 2003)

*Did the Session Finish in Failure?**

The fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), which sat in Geneva for a month and a half, finished its work 26 April 2003, leaving behind it several questions.

Observers characterized the results of this session as a failure for several reasons: the non-condemnation of certain countries; the Libyan chairperson; and the paralysis of the system triggered by a group of countries. But are these reasons valid?

First off, one must recall that, composed of 53 members states, the Commission of Human Rights is the primary organ of the UN charged with promoting and protecting human rights. In this regard, it elaborates standards relative to human rights, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the General Assembly. It deals with civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, the right to development, the right to self-determination, racism, the rights of the child, the rights of women, of migrants, of indigenous peoples...

A Broader Mandate

It is undeniable that the criticism directed at the Commission concerns only the condemnation of countries for serious violations of human rights. Yet the mandate of the CHR is not limited to condemning countries. Every year during its annual session, the CHR adopts more than a hundred resolutions and decisions. Only 15% of these concern condemnation of countries.

In this regard, it is true that alliances between member states play a determining role in avoiding the condemnation of a particular country, but this is not the monopoly of countries of any particular region of the world. We shall try to explain our observations by looking at the votes on three countries (Sudan, Zimbabwe and Iraq) as well as by examining the position of the United States.

With regard to the draft resolution on Sudan, the African Group proposed transferring the question from agenda item 9 (examination of the situation in specific countries) to item 19 (technical cooperation), claiming that the Sudanese government had made progress and that it had signed an agreement with the rebel movement of the South. For this reason, it required technical cooperation regarding respect for human rights. Faced with the intransigence of the European Union, the African Group set up a voting block that resulted in the failure of the draft resolution on Sudan in response to the refusal of the European Union to transfer the Sudanese case to item 19.

Settling of Accounts

As for the draft resolution on Zimbabwe, it was perceived by the Africans as a settling of accounts by the former colonizer (the United Kingdom) against its former colony (Zimbabwe) for the agrarian reform, which resulted in a rejection of the draft resolution by the African Group.

Regarding the situation in Iraq, discussion degenerated into a theater of the absurd, for, after having refused a special debate on Iraq subject to United States and United Kingdom

* Press article published in the *Le Courrier*, 13 May 2003, over the signature of Malik Özden.

aggression, the CHR adopted a resolution on the last day of its 59th session condemning the crimes committed by ... Saddam Hussein's regime over the past several years (!). However, the special rapporteur has no mandate to carry out an investigation into the present situation whereas the country is currently under United States and United Kingdom occupation...

It would nonetheless be erroneous to speak of a homogenous group of countries imposing obstacles to the CHR in order to paralyze the system, for the alliances change according to the position of one country or another, whether it be from the North, from the South, from the East or from the West. For example, the United States was the only country – along with Australia, which in the end abstained – opposed to the resolution on the right to food. And the United States allied itself with, among others, Saudi Arabia and China to oppose the resolution on the death penalty.

Moreover, there is a most disquieting tendency, confirmed this year at the Commission: the overall questioning of the universality of human rights. For example, during the discussion on the draft resolution on access to medicines (aids, tuberculosis and malaria), the United States delegation forced a vote on a paragraph mentioning the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two conventions relative to human rights, whereas these texts constitute the very pillar of international law concerning human rights. It is worth noting that the United States systematically demanded a vote, or expressed reservations, whenever a draft resolution referred to international texts to which it is not a party (for example the International Criminal Tribunal, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Migrants etc.), thus showing their contempt for the defense and the promotion of human rights.

An Exemplary Chairperson

The attitude of the United States tends to support the position of some countries that fail to observe human rights and cite the argument of “cultural diversity” in order to escape from their obligations.

One must be clear on this point. There are principles one cannot and must not depart from. Whether one be white, yellow or black, who wants to be tortured or to see his loved ones suffer atrocities? Who wants to be deprived of his dignity or to see those near and dear to him deprived of a decent life? This is the very basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims precisely that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights... without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin...”

Regarding the Libyan chair of the CHR, it should be noted from the outset that, according to the principle of rotation observed in all UN organs, all 191 member states have the same right to accede to this position. It is the five regional groups that, in turn, designate the candidate, and the election becomes a simple formality. If the United States raised a hue and cry about the Libyan candidacy and forced a vote for the first time in the history of the Commission over the choice of the chair, it was because it was aiming to weaken the Commission in order better to shirk its responsibilities as a member by setting up a situation where the chair could be blamed for any short comings that might occur.

Having said this, it would be dishonest and easy to point the finger at Ms Najat El Meh-di Al-Hajjaji, chair of the 59th session of the CHR; for she conducted herself in an exemplary manner. At the risk of offending her own constituency (Arabs and Africans), she maintained a disconcerting impartiality, whereas she could have used her margin of maneuver to influence heatedly debated topics such as Palestine and Iraq.

Moreover, at the end of the session, all observers were unanimous on this point, notwithstanding attacks on Ms Al-Hajjaji by the press.

In view of the preceding, the question that one should be asking is who benefits from attacks on the CHR that aim to discredit it and question the universality of human rights? It is obvious that this benefits first and foremost the United States, which no longer hesitates to dispense with the UN when it serves United States interests to do so, as we have seen in the case of the war of occupation declared unilaterally by it against Iraq. Free from international monitoring, the United States feels freer to “call the shots” throughout the world, according to its own criteria. If certain repressive regimes think that they can benefit from the situation, they are mistaken, for their salvation depends only on the level of the collaboration with the world master...

As for the UN's detractors, who seem to think that it serves no purpose and that humanity would be better served without it, it behooves them to ask themselves why the United States right-wingers make the same argument.

Certainly, the UN is greatly in need of serious reforms (notably the role and the structure of the Security Council), and it is urgent to fight for them. But, whereas the United States imposes a monopolar world and sets itself up as a sort of Damocles sword over its peoples, one may well ask if the disappearance of the UN would really strengthen the capacity of peoples to resist the principle that might makes right.



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Extracts from the CETIM Interventions

Right to food versus “laws of the market”

◀ In principle, everybody agrees that it is appropriate for human rights to take precedence over any other consideration, private or economic. Thus, nobody can invoke ‘free trade’, ‘the free play of competition’, or the ‘laws of the market’ to justify violations of basic human rights, in particular the right to life.

“However, in practice, the observance of this principle is geometrically variable and even perfectly contradictory. Let us take two areas, both relative to agriculture and in particular to the rights of farmers: on the one hand, the cultivation of coca and poppies, and, on the other, basic foodstuffs.

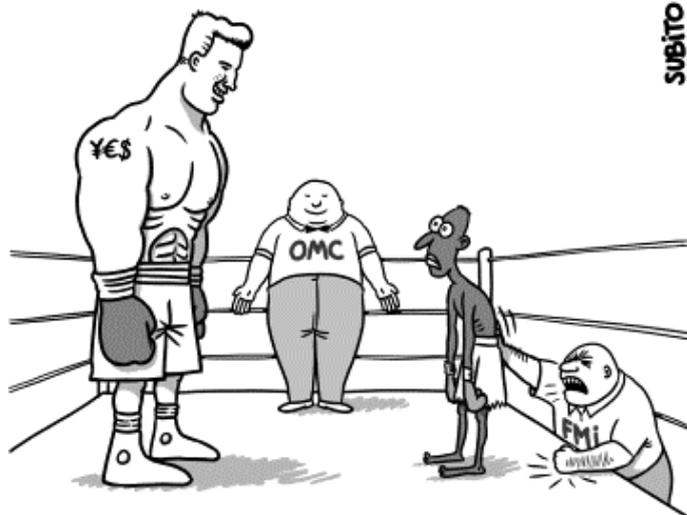
“Concerning drugs, this principle is observed very strictly. No government would run the risk of declaring that the free trade should take precedence over public health and the protection of the human person. No government, no international body, advocates the least ‘liberalism’. And

nobody would dare suggest only minor restrictions or limitations on 'free enterprise'. On the contrary, in the name of the social necessity of "the war on drugs" the most forceful policies are demanded. The result is the all-out prohibition of poppy and coca growing, the prohibition of the marketing of their narcotic derivatives for any reason other than for strictly medicinal purposes, derivatives then sold only by prescription. Those violating this principle are subject to powerful repressive measures.

"Let us now take the example of the production of basic food stuffs for the world's populations, with the survival of whole communities depending upon them and, in the final reckoning, half of the population of the planet. All serious studies show that the rules of free movement of agricultural products, imposed by the World Trade Organization, will harm the overwhelming majority of the world's small farmers, literally condemning them to death. Yet, nothing has been set up to protect their rights. On the contrary, all the powers of government machinery, of the WTO and of the major transnational corporations have combined to deny small farmers their rights, massively and brutally.

"Thus, in this case, paradoxically, the simple idea of imposing restrictions and limitations on international trade in basic foodstuffs, in order to preserve local markets and save millions of small farmers from bankruptcy, sets off cries of outrage from even the most virtuous of the economic liberals. [...]

"Both moral principle and common sense require an urgent and immediate restoration of peoples' sovereignty over their food supply: in order that they may freely determine their own agricultural policies and freely exercise their right to development. The WTO must be evicted from agriculture."



Drawing taken from the Attac-website: <http://bombi.net/attac/>

Forced Displacements of Small Farmers in Colombia

◀ The armed conflict in Colombia and the development policies of the government have over the past fifteen years resulted in the forced displacement of some three million persons across the most of the country's territory. These displacements seem to be part of a strategy aimed at expelling small farmers from their land. This is indeed the case in Urabá, a rich region in the northwest of Colombia, where the displacements started after the government began planning economic development projects that include such mega projects as the Urra I and Urra II dams, the Interoceanic Canal

(parallel to the Panama Canal and joining the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic), the biggest port in Colombia (Turbo)... The forced displacements have also been increasing in the petroleum and gold regions, notably in the Magdalena Medio, the Meta and the Sud de Bolivar departments.

"The primary cause of these displacements is the Colombian government, which is acting either directly or indirectly, by tolerating or supporting outright acts committed by the paramilitaries, as attested to moreover in the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

"Indeed, according to the High Commissioner, 'Paramilitary activity has continued to benefit from the omission, the tolerance or the complicity of public employees in the different regions of the country. In several areas, paramilitary groups have replaced the government in various sectors, including that of the armed forces.'¹

"Currently, there is a veritable counter agricultural reform taking place in Colombia, an agricultural reform that is tantamount to pillaging the country, especially on the best arable land, on the land rich in mineral resources or in the regions where gigantic projects are planned that will benefit a minority. [...]

"Colombia was a rural country in 1950 with more than 60% of its population living in agricultural regions, and it has been transformed into an urban society (more than 70% of the population lives in cities).

"The concentration of land ownership in the hands of a minority has been accentuated. Indeed, 57% of the rural landowners own 1.7% of the land, with holdings of less than three hectares, whereas 0.4% of the owners own 61% of the land, with holdings of more than 500 hectares, which clearly testifies to *latifundium*².

"The deficit of agricultural production caused by the exodus of thousands of small farmers is truly disquieting. The lack of infrastructure and the unequal competition generated by the neoliberal economic policies adopted by the government result in small farmers not finding outlets for the products. This situation has forced small producers to seek alternatives to subsistence farming, such as, for example, growing coca.

"According to a recent study, '... the growth of the agricultural production between 1987 and 1997 was, for each year respectively, 7.6%, 2.2%, 3.5%, 8.4%, 4.5%, 0.9%, 2.1%, 4.7%, 1.0% and 0.5%. In looking at these figures, one notices that, in spite of jumps, the tendency is downward. To this one can add that the agricultural sector, which represented 22% of the gross national product in the 1980s, represented only 18% in the 1990s, whereas food imports rose from 1.2 million tons in 1992 to 5.1 million tons in 1996 – imports which have continued to increase under the Pastrana government.'³

"Plan Colombia, which, in theory, was to eliminate the drug traffic, has also generated massive displacements. In reality, the plan targeted only the small growers of coca leaf by burning indiscriminately (with chemical products) both coca crops and food crops. Plan Colombia, in practice, has no crop substitution to offer in place of the illegal crops. The small farmers are obliged to migrate to the towns and cities or to clear new land situated more deeply in the forests in order to continue to grow coca leaf, thus destroying the Colombian ecosystem and only displacing the problem. Moreover, this anti-drug campaign has turned into an anti-subversive campaign, affecting primarily any of the civilian population suspected of collaborating with the guerilla.

"In the towns and cities, the panorama is no less disquieting. The majority of the displaced settle around the

big cities, in poverty belts, which are highly contaminated areas, without health services, without infrastructure and without government services. They constitute a the creation of a veritable time bomb that can trigger a social explosion of an incommensurable dimensions. [...]"

¹ Cf. E/CN.4/2003/13.

² Cf. Revista Taller, N° 1, marzo 2002, Bogotá. Pérez Soetonio, Encuesta Nacional Agropecuaria, DANE, Minagricultura, y Desarrollo Rural.

³ Cf. Fajardo Marulanda, Nelson Raul. Contribuciones para la crítica y la transformación. Ideas y Soluciones Gráficas, Bogotá, 2002.

FTAA: a threat for the people of the american continent

◀ The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), currently under negotiation and promoted by the United States, is a trade agreement [...] aiming at the free movement of goods and capital throughout an area stretching from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego (34 countries). This agreement, which has been under negotiation behind closed doors since 1994, would enter into force during the year 2005 in order to progressively eliminate barriers and 'obstacles' to trade, investments and services as well as to protect the 'intellectual property of the firms.'¹

This agreement would go well beyond the WTO agreements, which have been strongly criticized by NGOs and social movements from all over the world. The subjects in question are: access to markets, investment, services, agriculture, intellectual property, purchases by the public sector, subsidies, competition policy, antidumping and rights to compensation, and disputes settlement.

The agreement under negotiation is very similar to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA-ALENA-TLC) in force since 1994 in Canada, the United States and Mexico. The implementation of this treaty is useful in illustrating the most likely effects of the FTAA on human rights. [...]

Right to health

The enormous powers conferred by the FTAA, combined with Chapter 11 of the NAFTA and the introduction of the 'universal coverage of all service sectors', are a serious threat to the social health programs run by many governments. [...]

Although the governments consider these social programs a fundamental right and excluded them from the commercial agreement, the FTAA gives the lawful right to any "utility companies" from the hemisphere to claim financial indemnity if a government tries to resist and to keep its programs under national control. [...]

The impossibility for a government to continue these health programs is a substantial threat to the right to health, because many people will not have access to health services for lack of money. [...]

Environment and health

The effects of environmental pollution on health are well known. [...] However, free trade agreements similar to the FTAA, such as those of the WTO and the NAFTA, authorise excessive pollution of the environment. [...] With this type of agreement, governments will have to pay a very high price to preserve the right to protect environmental, human and animal health.²

To create norms in the health and environment sectors, governments must demonstrate with 'scientific certainty' that the activities or the goods being prohibited or restricted are

harmful. [...] So, neither transgenic foods (GMFs), nor medicines nor other products, whose effects could be harmful to health or to the environment, can be prohibited. [...]

Some examples of complaints

1) *Chapter 11 of the NAFTA has been used successfully by the firm Ethyl Corp. from Virginia to oblige the Canadian government to revoke legislation prohibiting the transnational sale of its product, MMT, a dangerous fuel additive. [...]*

2) *The United States waste treatment firm S.D. Myers, dealing in PCB (a toxic product already prohibited), forced the Canadian government to revoke its prohibition on the exporting of PCB [...] and was awarded US\$ 50 million in compensation for the loss of profits caused by the prohibition.*

3) *The global leader in methanol production, Methanex, is demanding US\$ 970 million from the US government, which in 1999 ordered the progressive phasing out of this pollutant used as a fuel additive.*

Other effects of the FTAA on environment and health

The trade and investment policies promoted by the WTO and the NAFTA do not take into account the environmental and social costs, they intensify the use of energy, above all fossil fuels, excessively exploit natural resources and have harmful effects on biodiversity. These policies also favor the expropriation of genetic resources (e.g. indigenous medicinal plants), the destruction of the ecosystem, and environmental degradation in rural and urban areas. All this has resulted in serious harmful effects on health, such as respiratory problems, a lack of medicines, and the diseases typically caused by an unhealthy environment (water, food and air pollution). [...]"

¹ The final characteristics of the FTAA will be determined thanks to negotiations between the government's official representatives of 34 participating countries..

² Source : document *Los derechos humanos y el Área de Libre comercio de las Americas* on: [www. Alcaabajo.cu/sito/alca/articulos/derechos.html](http://www.Alcaabajo.cu/sito/alca/articulos/derechos.html)

The interventions, extracts of which are found above, as well as others concerning debt, the right to health, indigenous peoples in Colombia, etc. are available on our website: <http://www.cetim.ch/2003/2003.htm>

Conferences of CETIM

Globalisation and social movements *The freedom of expression undermined from Genoa to Davos! Why?*

Since the accession of anti- and other globalisation movements, demonstrations are organized regularly against meetings of financial and commercial international institutions (IMF, World Bank and WTO), intergovernmental organizations, but also against structures that are considered illegitimate (in particular the G8). Although the main demand of these demonstrations is the rejection of neoliberal globalisation, they also have another point in common: they are systematically oppressed.

In fact, from Genoa to Davos, via Seattle and Stockholm, rarely have we seen such police violence against demonstrators in western countries. The freedom of

expression and demonstration is no longer guaranteed.

The suppression during demonstrations in Genoa is without doubt the most blind and violent one that has taken place until now, with one victim, more than 300 people arrested and more than 1,000 demonstrators injured. Reason why CETIM has organized a conference on this subject, on Thursday the 10th of April 2003, with the following speakers: Mrs Enrica Bartesaghi, of the Committee on Truth and Justice for Genoa, Me Gilberto Pagani, lawyer and member of the International Committee on investigation of the protection of fundamental rights within the context of globalisation and Mr. Jean Rossiaud, sociologist, researcher on social movements at the University of Geneva.

Mrs Bartesaghi described, through the experience of her daughter who demonstrated in Genoa, the brutalities of police officers and the arbitrary arrests of Italian and foreign demonstrators. The events that took place at the Diaz school in the night of 21-22 July are a striking example. Police intervened due to stones that were thrown on cars during the day. The intervention caused 62 injuries among the 93 persons present. In spite of the fact that several of them needed medical care and were taken to the Hospital, for example Mrs. Bartesaghi's daughter was diagnosed a cranial traumatism, all residents of the Diaz school were arrested for criminal association for the only reason that they had travelled together on the train to Genoa.

For 3 days, Mrs. Bartesaghi did not receive any news from her daughter, imprisoned like the others at the Polstato office in Genoa-Bolzaneto, where she had undergone humiliations and was deprived of food and sleep. In addition the police obliged the foreigners to sign an attestation stating that their injuries were caused by the disorder during the demonstrations and not by police violence...

Me Pagani talked about the tortures that had been inflicted upon the arrested persons. He denounced the fact that these acts, normally illegal, are considered today, by certain people, as a normal way to obtain proof or confessions. He presented the *Decision Framework*, adopted by the European Union in 2001. He judged this document dangerous for the respect of freedom of expression and demonstration because it criminalizes every demonstration of social opposition to a government. The association of criminals in the case of demonstrations in Genoa does not make sense according to him. However, it is the principal charge that has been retained by the Italian court in the case of several hundreds of demonstrators. Their process should take place at the end of the year.

Mr. Rossiaud gave a short historical overview of the protest movements in the sixties till today. He presented different movements that have passed like the globalised social movements, zapatists, feminist movements, movements of landless, NGOs, environmental organizations, third world movement, etc. While there has been a demand for more democracy during the 1960-1980 period, today there is a clear demand for abandoning neoliberalism.

Mr. Rossiaud concluded that the current social movements are characterised by their non-violent democratic dimension, even if they are at the same time quite helpless with regard to violence and their own violence.

Right to food and violations of human rights of farmers

Farmers form a particularly vulnerable group where human rights are concerned. All over the world, numerous farmers who engage themselves to obtain respect of their rights (access to land, healthy environment, control of seeds, etc.) and for political change, are victims of pursuits, oppression, physical torture and even attempts to murder. The realisation of the right to food is closely linked to living conditions and production methods of farmers. Rural population (small or landless farmers) are among the first victims of hunger and malnutrition.

Florian Rochat, director of CETIM and president of this conference, reveals that in the history of humanity, farmers have suffered a lot due to civilization, which has been in favour of urban centres. Neoliberal policies, developed by WTO and IMF, have amplified this phenomenon and have provoked a «real genocide of rural areas».

Henry Saragih, representing the Human Rights Commission of Via Campesina and General Secretary of FSPI, (Indonesia), presented a deplorable situation in Asia, where millions of farmers without land or with very small parcels, which are expropriated to develop an agricultural policy focused on exportation, have no rights to oppose themselves to this, and keep silent.

Thus, with those policies, farmers are deprived not only of their seeds, their land and their traditional knowledge by multinational organizations, which are the first to benefit, but the introduction of genetically modified seeds (OGM) has aggravated their environmental situation. Mr. Saragih is not very mild with the international organizations either. He criticises the World Bank and its water privatisation programme that has impoverished even more rural populations, but also the IMF that with its adjustment programmes has forbidden subsidies to farmers, whereas simultaneously Europeans and Americans continue to benefit from support from their governments.

Finally, Mr. Saragih asks for ending the criminalization of the fight for land, water and seeds by farmers and the liberalization of imprisoned farmers in Indonesia, as well as for setting up an international court to judge human rights violations committed by international and transnational organizations.

Luisa Curin, representative of the National Organization of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI Chile), explained in a striking presentation that farmers and indigenous people in South America remain completely powerless towards the violation of their rights. She also blames the World Bank, IMF and WTO of being responsible for this. The indigenous people, like farmers, fully undergo neoliberal policies and see their ancestral land being sold to transnational companies (for example in Colombia).

Michael Windfuhr, representative of FIAN international, briefly presented the activities of his organization before making some comments on the previous presentations, in particular with regard to the persecution of farmers who try to resist and the problem of access to resources. He concluded by stressing the importance of developing new international instruments. Jean Ziegler, Special reporter on the right to food, who was unable to attend, was represented by his assistant, Mr. Christophe Golay, presenting succinctly his report and mandate.

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TO BE PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER 2003

MST-Brésil : la construction d'un mouvement social

by *Marta Harnecker*. 256 pages. On a subscription basis until August, 31 2003 to the price of CHF 18.- or 12 €/ US\$ (+ postage). This book is also available in Spanish (original version) and in English (*Landless people: Building a Social Movement* by Editora Expressão Popular, Rua Bernardo da Veiga, 14, CEP 01252 - Sao Paulo, Brasil, 1a.ed. january 2003, e-mail contact : editora@expressaopopular.br).

Brief picture of the contents of the book

The work provides first of all a short history of the MST and of the context of farmer struggle in Brazil from the 1950's on, of which the MST arose. The ideological roots of the movement are also highlighted, especially the very particular mixture between the rural trade union movement, of fight for land, and the theological liberalization movement, expressed in Latin America and Brazil in particular by the work of the pastoral Commission for land of the Catholic Church. The fights and occupations of land which were developed at the end of the 1970s and onwards, especially in the south of Brazil, ended up in the foundation of MST in 1984. Which in turn takes up the slogan first used by the pastoral Commission for land: «land for those who work on it ». But the MST does not limit itself to the fight for land. Its fight also includes conditions allowing farmers to work on the land which means access to credit, technology, distribution channels for agricultural products, etc.

In addition the book describes the specific way of struggle by the MST, namely occupation of land lain fallow by large landowners. During the 1990s around 160,000 families have participated in these occupations. Today, around 500 camps of occupied land exist in Brazil, regrouping around 100,000

families. The figures give an idea of the magnitude of the movement of land occupation. These occupations are, for the MST, a means of political pressure while negotiating with authorities regarding the legislation of granting of land to farmers. Another important function of these occupations is to allow for the development of a conscience, of a collective identity among occupants, to promote different values of those dominating the present society and to reinforce the organization of rural families.

The author

Journalist, researcher and very well known militant in Latin America, Marta Harnecker has written this book after intensive fieldwork. She has paced up and down the "battlefields" by visiting the *acampamentos* (camps), the *assentamentos* (agricultural communities) and the *agrovillas* (agro villages) while muddling and dust biting. She heard landless farmers tell her their story, held multiple interviews and went through the publications of MST. She then dealt with all this material with great rigour before offering us this magnificent book, translated from Spanish, which values the lessons of a social movement which marks already very profoundly the history of the struggle of farmers for land: the MST.

JOIN THE CETIM

The situation in the South - and now in the East - grows worse and worse, while the North is more and more on a double standard. Under neo-liberal globalization inequalities have hugely increased and continue to be on the rise, threatening the entire planet with major social and ecological catastrophes.

By its books and its interventions at the UN, the CETIM, for more than thirty years, has been denouncing this disastrous development model and the irresponsibility of the capitalist North. It supports the struggles of the Third World, develops collaborative projects and proposes alternatives.

Among its numerous subjects of study: globalization and the international economic system (IMF, World Bank, WTO), debt, new technologies, transnational corporations, impunity, the increase of racism, political asylum, tourism, but also struggles and resistances, alternatives, workers, farmers, citizens, feminists, alternatives to globalization...

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