

MST'S INTERNATIONALIST BRIGADES AND THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 AND FOR LIFE IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

AUTUMN 2020, LUSAKA-ZÂMBIA

The world is currently undergoing a serious health crisis and is possibly facing the biggest social and economic crisis of the 21st century. While scientists strive to find ways to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, hypotheses about the origin are being made. The fact is that there is a high probability that the virus that caused this pandemic may have originated from the environmental crisis we are also facing and the actions of the capital, especially in agriculture. Agri-business has been promoting deforestation and the destruction of forests while pesticides continue to poison rivers, soils, the environment and our food.

At the time of the pandemic's advance, with increasing extreme poverty and increasingly difficult access to food, peasants became an essential subject for overcoming this crisis. This is because they have the possibility of feeding the population by producing and providing food free of poison and by building and strengthening a technological matrix of agricultural production based on the principles of agroecology and solidarity which is capable of opposing the selfish and destructive model of agribusiness.

On the other hand, these same peasants are in a vulnerable situation. In most countries there is no state policy that preserves the integrity of this subject and that encourages the production, sale and distribution of the food produced for the population. In addition, most of these families, who live and work in the fields, are far from health centers prepared to diagnose and care for those infected. In addition, most of these families, who live and work in the fields, are far from health centers that are prepared to diagnose and care for those infected. This fact puts the lives of these farmers at risk.

From the Landless Rural Workers Movement, we are sure that confronting agribusiness and building a society without oppressors and oppressed is a task

for the working class as a whole, and that the trenches of struggle must be opened around the world.

For this reason, since our creation, we have constructed internationalism as a political line based on the **values** such as solidarity and love between peoples. For us internationalism is a **principle**, as it is one of the foundations of the MST, and as a **revolutionary strategy** that helps us to define actions that seek the articulation of the working class in different countries, allowing us to accumulate forces to face and defeat capital in all its dimensions and in all places of the world.

Our internationalist brigades are perhaps the best manifestation of this political line. They are collectives of our organization formed by militants from our different regions who live and work in different countries, in cooperation with local progressive organizations, where we stand in solidarity as a class and people's fighters.

In the face of this global disaster, aggravated by capital and with consequences that affect the entire working class, our internationalist solidarity brigades are redirecting their actions to fight the coronavirus and prevent the increase in the number of deaths and infected people, in the countryside and in poor neighborhoods. Thus, we are carrying out actions to exchange experiences among peasants on the production of healthy food, reforestation, seed donation, literacy of young people and adults and on the production and distribution of hygiene and protective materials, individual and collective, in countries where we are based. Because it's time to save lives, and

“We are going to need everyone !!”



SAMORA MACHEL BRIGADE - ZAMBIA



Located in southern Africa and with over 17 million inhabitants. Today, (June 17) the total number of infected people is 1,405, with 11 confirmed deaths. In addition, the country has alarming social indicators: 54% of the population live in extreme poverty and only 46% have access to drinking water. This combination can cause an unprecedented catastrophe in the country, as there are only 0.09 doctors and 2 hospital beds for every 1,000 inhabitants.

In addition to working with youth and adult literacy, holding agroecology workshops with peasants and supporting the construction of the Women's League, we are running a campaign to produce and donate hygiene and individual and collective protection kits. 400 liters of hand sanitizers and 400 masks have already been distributed, and our goal is to produce and distribute another 1,200 kits in the coming weeks. The objective is that no person is infected in the activities carried out by the Socialist Party, which following the prevention guidelines of the health agencies, has been running political training courses and a literacy campaign for young people and adults in the countryside and on the outskirts of urban centers in the country.



Distribution of hygiene material and doing an activity kits for Sem Terrinha Magazine, June 5, 2020 - Chipata Compound, Lusaka/Zambia.

DESSALINES BRIGADE - HAITI



Located in the Caribbean region, Haiti has about 12 million inhabitants. Of these, 80% live in conditions of poverty and 54% in extreme poverty. With the COVID-19 crisis, the country is on the verge of yet another disaster. In a country that has only 45 respirators, so far 4.441 people have been infected and 76 died.

Currently, our brigade has been working on food production (vegetables, greens, beans, livestock, etc.) in three agricultural areas. Donations were made for seedlings of fruit plants, buckets for hygiene and masks for individual protection.



Production of fruit seedlings and planting of agroecological garden, Dessalines Internationalist Brigade - Haiti.

APOLÔNIO DE CARVALHO BRIGADE - VENEZUELA



Located at the gates of the South American continent and bordering the Caribbean Sea, Venezuela has about 30 million inhabitants. 98% live in cities and only 2% live in the countryside. Its economy is based on oil income as it has the largest oil reserve in the world.

On April 12, the first case of COVID19 was registered. Even before then, the government had taken firm steps to contain the spread of the virus including social quarantine, economic support for the population to stay at home and a health plan that guarantees free and quality care to the entire affected population. Today, June 17, 2020, the total numbers add up to 3.062 infected and 26 deceased. It is one of the countries in the world with the best control of the disease.

During this period the brigade has been maintaining activities, even if at a slow pace. We are focused on supporting agricultural production with an emphasis on agroecology and seed production and monitoring 104 medical students, 57 in the first year and 47 in the fifth year.



Planting of agroecological garden, Apolônio de Carvalho Brigade - Venezuela.

