

EDITORIAL

BRAZIL: WESTERN AMAZONIAN REVOLUTIONARY PEASANTS CONQUER IMPORTANT VICTORY ON THE ROAD TO THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION

The comrades of the revolutionary peasant movement of Western Amazonia and Rondônia, through a historic declaration signed by the League of Poor Peasants (LCP) of Rondônia and Western Amazonia, National Commission of LCP, Committee for the Defence of the Agrarian Revolution, published on May 25, 2021, released the resolution passed at the end of May by the families of the camp Manoel Ribeiro in Chupinguaia / RO, on the decision taken unanimously in Popular Assembly to withdraw in an organised way from the lands of the former Santa Elina Hacienda (Nossa Senhora Aparecida) that they had occupied since August 2020. The statement has been published with a title and appeal that highlights its great significance: "We will come back stronger and more prepared!"

The retreat is a battle won by the revolutionary peasant movement in that region of Brazil, because as we know and as is clear from the text, the enemy – the old Brazilian state, the landlord-bureaucratic state at the service of imperialism, mainly Yankee, and the landowners led by the military government of Bolsonaro and the state government, who had launched a military campaign of encirclement and annihilation, accompanied by a campaign of criminalisation and demonisation against the camp Manoel Ribeiro, which was heroically and exemplarily resisted by the revolutionary peasants. Those who applied themselves to combat and resist with decision and audacity, practising to fight with justified, in advantage and with limitations, in order to preserve what they conquered, decided to outwit the siege and make a fool of the enemy forces when they were preparing to apply the annihilation.

The retreat or retraction shows the capacity of the revolutionary leadership of the peasants. It is a necessary step to return with more strength because, as we know, this struggle is part of many battles to come, because the struggle to conquer the land and end the latifundia, can only culminate with the culmination of the democratic revolution, which means sweeping away the three mountains that oppress the people: imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and semi-feudalism, with the culmination of the road of encircling the cities from the countryside, with the seizure of power throughout the country to give way to the socialist revolution. As the declaration states:

“For us it was becoming increasingly clear, and even clearer after the *carte blanche* and reinforcement coming from the fascist and genocidal Bolsonaro, the willingness of this government, servant of the landowners, to commit a new massacre, throwing against us a force of hundreds of bloodthirsty troops of the poor who are raising their heads and facing them with decision and courage. Among us there were many who were prepared to face

such an extreme situation and make these criminals pay dearly and in the same coin. But after evaluating the situation, knowing the sinister plans of these bandit rulers to spill the blood of the people in struggle, understanding that we have accomplished a victorious day for the Agrarian Revolution, that has forged so much the Manoel Ribeiro, counting still on so much support from our people all over the country and from comrades from all over the world, to whom we gratefully greet with the promise of continuing firm in the struggle, we decided to withdraw in an organized manner to return in thousands and prepared to sweep the latifundia from the region.

All the apparatus and so many attacks did not intimidate anyone in the camp and only served to train our people in resistance. What a shameful failure by the enemies of the people! When we withdrew, we made fools of the whole apparatus of war set up to provoke us and justify another massacre of families of honest workers. We withdrew, nobody saw us, under the beards of this bunch of cowards used to killing unarmed poor people. The organised people, armed with revolutionary ideology, are not fooled by the cackles of imbecile rulers of the Bolsonaro and Marcos Rocha stripe. They attack the people with troops of hooligans commanded by energumen, strategists of massacres of unarmed poor people. Unlike them, we withdraw with our heads held high with the certainty that we will win, because our cause is just, as it is right to rebel, convinced that this journey was only one of many battles for the conquest of land, that it continues and we repeat: we will return!”

As part of the balance sheet the revolutionary peasants, point out:

“These nine months of struggle in the Manoel Ribeiro area have taught us much. The lessons we learnt there will serve us for the new and bigger battles to come. In the daily life of the camp we learned to raise our organization and discipline as workers, to solve problems and do everything collectively with our own hands, without depending at all on the government that is only present in the areas when it is to guarantee the interests of the latifundia against the peasants.”

And from this balance sheet they draw lessons for the future:

“In these nine months in the Manoel Ribeiro area it has been proven once again that the organisation of the people is much better, and is the necessary way for the popular force which today is still dispersed and disorganised to become a powerful organised force and through its expansion and multiplication bring about the transformations that the country needs.”

Read below the declaration of the revolutionary peasant movement of Western Amazonia and Rôndonia

We will come back stronger and better prepared!

Written by LCP Rondônia e Amazônia Ocidental, Comissão Nacional das LCP, Comité de Defesa da Revolução Agrária, Autores Diversos|Publicado 25 de May de 2021

At the end of May, we, the families of the camp Manoel Ribeiro in Chupinguaia/RO, decided unanimously in our Popular Assembly to withdraw in an organized way from the lands of the former Santa Elina Hacienda (Nossa Senhora Aparecida) that we have occupied since August 2020. We took this decision to avoid a new massacre. We withdrew

to come back with more strength and organization and not to leave anymore! The whole structure of organization and mobilization is still in force and functioning in our retreat and displacements: The Popular Assembly, the CDRA and all the working Commissions.

We did not lack the courage to face the gunmen and the puppet government of the land thieving landowners of the Union. We bravely resisted all the cowardly attacks they made on us. We have faced all kinds of attacks, and from the beginning we have never been allowed to work and live in peace. Both the police and the gang of guaxebas (several are policemen paid by the landowner Toninho Miseria) never stopped attacking us, beating us up and making death threats to the residents of the region.

After the latifundium's armed gang was arrested, the government of the hired gun Colonel Marcos Rocha, sent his police to take the place of the rascals, to act as goons for the interests of the bandit landowner, thief of federal land, and murderer of indigenous people and peasants. The General Commander of the Military Police, Colonel Alexandre Almeida, during a hearing in the Legislative Assembly of Rondonia, among many lies and attacks against us, spoke the truth: he explicitly admitted that the Military Police are there on the Nossa Senhora Aparecida Hacienda providing private security. They use public resources, collected from our taxes, to defend the private interests of a landowner and criminal, while the people suffer from health care, die of pandemics and are in need.

Since the Rondônia government definitively took over from the estate's rascals, they have intensified their attacks. They have mounted a war operation against us. For more than a month they have kept the camp besieged by troops and vehicles, using helicopters, planes, drones, rubber bullets, bombs, pepper spray, and even live ammunition. On several occasions, the shock troops tried to invade the camp, but were repulsed each time by our just and brave resistance. Not satisfied with attacking and besieging the camp, they continued to commit other illegal acts, harassing, threatening and repressing residents and supporters from around the camp, in addition to having carried out several illegal arrests, many of them with the aim of intimidating people to harass and incriminate the camp.

Even with a court order ordering them to stop the attacks and raids against the camp, the police never stopped attacking us, and even increased their operations against us. The attacks were further intensified after the statements made by Bolsonaro against our struggle. From then on, they increased the lies and criminalisation of our struggle, all with the aim of justifying the illegal repression against us, and the preparation of another massacre they intended to carry out on those lands.

It was in this situation that the cowards arrested four campers. To make the arrest, the police cut the fence wires and launched their vehicles in pursuit of the comrades until they ran over some of them and arrested four of them. Then they told the lie that the police were ambushed (how is that possible in a pasture, in an open field?) and that the campers had fired shots at the police. Liars as always! How is this possible if they didn't even have any weapons, apart from firecrackers, slingshots, machetes and other work tools? The gun and cartridges that they showed to the press, in photos of the arrest, are forged evidence to incriminate our comrades.

Every unjust and criminal action taken by the police against us was done totally contrary to the law that they claim to defend. But even so, whenever he can, the governor Marcos Rocha fills his mouth talking about "abiding by the law". But for this shameless defender of landowners the "strictness of the law", as they like to say, only applies against the poor.

For us it was becoming increasingly clear, and even clearer after the *carte blanche* and reinforcement coming from the fascist and genocidal Bolsonaro, the willingness of this government, servant of the landowners, to commit a new massacre, throwing against us a force of hundreds of bloodthirsty troops of the poor who are raising their heads and facing them with decision and courage. Among us there were many who were prepared to face such an extreme situation and make these criminals pay dearly and in the same coin. But after evaluating the situation, knowing the sinister plans of these bandit rulers to spill the blood of the people in struggle, understanding that we have accomplished a victorious day for the Agrarian Revolution, that has forged so much the Manoel Ribeiro, counting still on so much support from our people all over the country and from comrades from all over the world, to whom we gratefully greet with the promise of continuing firm in the struggle, we decided to withdraw in an organized manner to return in thousands and prepared to sweep the latifundia from the region.

All the apparatus and so many attacks did not intimidate anyone in the camp and only served to train our people in resistance. What a shameful failure by the enemies of the people! When we withdrew, we made fools of the whole apparatus of war set up to provoke us and justify another massacre of families of honest workers. We withdrew, nobody saw us, under the beards of this bunch of cowards used to killing unarmed poor people. The organised people, armed with revolutionary ideology, are not fooled by the cackles of imbecile rulers of the Bolsonaro and Marcos Rocha stripe. They attack the people with troops of hooligans commanded by energumens, strategists of massacres of unarmed poor people. Unlike them, we withdraw with our heads held high with the certainty that we will win, because our cause is just, as it is right to rebel, convinced that this journey was only one of many battles for the conquest of land, that it continues and we repeat: we will return!

We are convinced that we are marching in the right direction, in the struggle for a piece of land to live, work and support our families with dignity. The justice of this struggle is confirmed by the attacks and shouting that the landowners, the government, their spokespeople and the politicians who suckle at the teat of the public coffers and the rubbish press of Rondonia are moving against us. The imbecile Colonel Marcos Rocha and the butcher of Santa Elina Colonel Pachá say that we are dangerous bandits, that the League is not a social movement, that it does not want to get land for anyone but to use the people for other objectives. In fact, the League is not only fighting for land, but we are also fighting for justice, for the power of new democracy and a new Brazil for our children and grandchildren. So then, gentlemen who are perched in power, why don't you expropriate the land for the people and get rid of the League? The League is the peasant people organized in a combative and independent struggle against the oppression and exploitation imposed by the parasites of the nation. It is the masses organised in the conscious struggle who are ready, as they have been for centuries, to use all means necessary to conquer the land. Only the masses have the strength to remove all obstacles from their path and to transform society.

The land in the Manoel Ribeiro area is already cut up into small plots to be distributed to the families. Why don't they expropriate and distribute them? They can't, aren't they the servants of the landlords who are thieves of the Union's lands? Only the Agrarian Revolution gives land to the rural poor! The land has been cut and the lots drawn and although it has been interrupted by the cowardly attacks against us, our commitment still stands. The struggle is far from over, the Agrarian Revolution will continue advancing every day a little bit and will take great leaps, all the campers and those who have contributed will have their piece of land.

These nine months of struggle in the Manoel Ribeiro area have taught us much. The lessons we learnt there will serve us for the new and bigger battles to come. In the daily life of the camp we learned to raise our organization and discipline as workers, to solve problems and do everything collectively with our own hands, without depending at all on the government that is only present in the areas when it is to guarantee the interests of the latifundia against the peasants.

In Manoel Ribeiro the masses decide everything collectively with discussions and studies and decisions by vote on all issues taken by the will of the majority through the Popular Assembly-AP and applied by its governing body the Committee for the Defense of Agrarian Revolution-CDRA, elected directly by the masses with delegations and revocable mandates at the moment that the majority of its sovereign body, the Popular Assembly-AP, so requires, thus ensuring that those with leadership functions always remain faithful to the application of the will of the majority. Everyone has rights and duties with equal conditions for all.

Women have increased their participation in all levels of responsibility, from base to leading and in all matters, in addition to the respect and recognition, combat and education against female oppression through the MFP-Movimento Feminino Popular (Popular Women's Movement). Children are given special emphasis in child care, schooling, and sports and recreational activities. For every kind of task there are working committees to forward, whether problems of logistics, production, supply, health, education and cultural activities, celebrations of the historic dates of the popular struggle of the Brazilian people and of the whole world, of our heroes and heroines, security and defence, etc. In relation to health, during all this time, the prevention of the pandemic and other health care inside the camp was kept under control.

In these nine months in the Manoel Ribeiro area it has been proven once again that the organisation of the people is much better, and is the necessary way for the popular force which today is still dispersed and disorganised to become a powerful organised force and through its expansion and multiplication bring about the transformations that the country needs.

We will be back! And we will come back stronger and better prepared!

After the episodes of armed peasant resistance in Corumbiara in 1995, we swore that those lands would be taken back. Every year since then we have reaffirmed that commitment. And after 13 years, in 2008, we occupied again the former Santa Elina, but we could not win on that occasion. Two years later, in 2010, we took it back again and this time we were victorious, guaranteeing the peasants ownership of the vast majority of former Santa Elina lands. In 2020, we occupied its remaining lands, and once again, despite all our struggle, efforts and sacrifices of everyone engaged in it, the battle for its complete conquest is not yet over. We withdraw now to come back stronger and never leave. These lands, claimed by the indigenous and peasant blood spilled on them, blood that runs in our veins, will be taken back and given to the families by right and in fact. Those who live will see!

Down with the criminalization of the struggle for land! End of persecutions, imprisonments and trials!

Immediate freedom for comrades Ezequiel, Luis Carlos, Estefane and Ricardo!

**Down with the genocidal military government of Bolsonaro!
Conquer the land, destroy the latifundium!**

Long live the Agrarian Revolution! Land for those who work on it!

Popular Assembly of the Manoel Ribeiro Settlement
CDRA - Committee in Defense of the Agrarian Revolution
LCP - League of Poor Peasants of Rondonia and Western Amazonia
National Commission of the League of Poor Peasants of Brazil

22 May 2021