

Limoeiro do Norte, January 15th, 2019

ORGANIZATIONS ARTICULATED TO THE 21 MOVEMENT

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PROHIBITION OF AERIAL SPRAYING OF PESTICIDES IN CEARÁ: RIGHT AND CONQUEST OF PEOPLE, EXAMPLE FOR BRASIL!

In 2009, when European Union prohibited aerial spraying of pesticides, the city of Limoeiro do Norte, in Ceará took the same initiative. The municipal law edited in 2009 was the result of the fight of the communities who were affected in their health by the monoculture of fruits by big enterprises, in the plateau of Apodi.

The perception of the problem came from the city resident José Maria Filho, Zé Tomé de Limoeiro, when he saw his daughter and other children of the community feeling itchiness after their bath, symptoms that disappeared when bathed with bottled water. He correctly related the symptom with the contamination by pesticides of the public water.

*“Companion Zé Maria, we are speaking for
you, as they have silenced you!”
Fight and resist for the Apodi Plateau!
No one lets hands go,
we continue holding hands!*



Zé Maria do Tomé brutally murdered

This led this community leader to begin a series of fights, aiming to preserve health and environment. He personally - not the State or the enterprises - took the water to be examined to identify the contamination; he spread information so that many people could understand what was happening; he looked for help by the public ministry and together with other residents put pressure on the City Council to forbid the most severe form of environmental contamination, which was affecting the community – **aerial spraying**.

The Universities also took part, together with MST – Movement of Landless, CPT – Pastoral Commission of the Land and Caritas Diocesana – a popular church movement. The Universities' researches showed strong evidences of the contamination of air and water, of acute intoxications, with growth of mortality rate by cancer, congenital malformations and other

chronic effects of pesticides.

Studies developed by Cogerh – the state Water Resources Management Company - showed the water contamination of Jandaira aquifer by pesticides, including the active ingredients used in aerial spraying: the fungicides. The researches of the Federal University of Ceará showed the contamination of the water of the aquifer, as well as the water which went to the communities, in 100% of the samples.

As a consequence of all this, after 5 months of the approval by the City Council, of a municipal law prohibiting aerial spraying in the city of Limoeiro do Norte, Zé Maria do Tomé was brutally murdered with 25 shots, on April 21th, 2010. That is why the law 16.820 that has been just approved on January 8th, which forbids aerial spraying in the whole state of Ceará has the name of environmental activist Zé Maria do Tomé.

The violence and injustice of his death led to the movement M21, which has, since then, kept the memory of Zé Maria do Tomé alive, and his fight as well, denouncing the impunity of this crime and reverberating in the state of Ceará and of Brasil, the cry of questioning of the people of Apodi plateau about the real situation of this model of development imposed by agribusiness in all Latin America: mourning, pain, suffering, illness, deprivation of health and of lifestyle.

In resistance to this model, the camp Zé Maria do Tomé, which started in May 5th, 2014, insists in staying in Apodi Plateau, producing without pesticides. There happened several attempts of retaking the area where they are. This reinforced the fight of Zé Maria and the need of a law about this.

This state law that forbids aerial spraying has its origin in suffering and death, continues through the fight of the people and for us is a

conquest which we will not give up! It is our right to life, to health and environment. This has more value than work for a few, which is badly paid and unhealthy, offered by big businessmen.

We greet the governor of the State, Camilo Santana (PT) for having approved this law. As an experienced agronomist and very familiar with peasant family farming, he must know why there are pests in the monoculture of fruit, and that there exist other forms of production of healthy food.

We would like to greet and thank the state deputy Renato Roseno (PsoL) and his whole team, for the ethical commitment with life on the land, and for the competent effort in achieving to approve this project in 5 commissions in the State Legislature of Ceará, and at the plenary as well.

We hope that this initiative may serve as inspiration and example for other states of Brasil!



Aerial spraying in Chapada do Apodi