

# **Amazon / Brazil: Against Bolsonaro's destructive policy - It's mobilization time**

Sunday 25 August 2019, by [AGUIAR Thiago](#), [DUTRA Israel](#) (Date first published: 24 August 2019).

## **Dark Night**

Great Amazonian writer Milton Hatoum, in his latest novel, addressed the contradictions of authoritarian Brazil from the military dictatorship. The title sounded premonitory "The Night of Waiting - the Darkest Place". On the afternoon of Monday 19 August, the largest city in the country, São Paulo, had its dark night when, at 3 pm, it was completely dark. The soot night in Sao Paulo was a tragic metaphor of what happens in Brazil.

In a combination of climatic phenomena, the smoke that covered the sky of São Paulo originated from the destruction of the Amazon that, since August 1<sup>st</sup>, has been the target of uninterrupted burning. States like Acre, Amazonas, Rondônia and Mato Grosso do Sul have already put themselves on alert and assume that they do not have the proper conditions to control fires. After several warnings from national monitoring agencies attacked by the government, even a NASA report announced that the Amazonian fire outbreaks are a result of deforestation.

In yet another absurd statement, Bolsonaro blamed environmental NGOs for promoting the burning. Cynically, the government pretends to be unaware of the announcement by farmers in southern Pará, Rondônia and Mato Grosso of the coordinated organization of intense burning last weekend, which they called "Fire Day", to signal their support for the president. and your "willingness to work". It is evident that the scandalous increase in the burnings is the result of the policies of the Bolsonaro government and its minister Ricardo Salles, based on attacks against native, indigenous and quilombola peoples.

The resignation of INPE president Ricardo Galvão following the announcement of a record increase in deforestation in June and July foreshadowed the current tragedy. Bolsonaro overcomes any scientific or objective criteria to end any hypothesis of questioning or critical thinking within the state structure.

Around the world there is a contradiction between the extreme right-wing policy of accelerated dispossession in the service of capitalist accumulation and the growing limitation of natural resources. The high temperatures this summer, the frequent weather disasters around the world or the "death" of glaciers are the last morbid symptoms that light the warning signal about the future of the planet. The far right is adept at "terra-planism" and climate negationism. It is impossible to separate the struggle for the environment and the future of humanity from the relentless fight against the far right. In Brazil, this is expressed in the popular and social struggle in defense of the Amazon against Bolsonaro and Salles.

## **The politics of destruction**

In an interview with the foreign press, Bolsonaro stated that his goal as president is to "destroy" certain institutions and achievements made in Brazil in recent decades. This is its most general strategy, visible in different government interventions in education, science, public service, and the

economy. Bolsonaro and Guedes are in charge of a policy of destruction: surrendering the national public patrimony (this week, the privatization of 18 more state-owned companies was announced), dismantling public education and the entire Brazilian system of scientific research.

If, in recent years, the territory of Brazilian forests, particularly the Amazon, had already been destroyed by initiatives such as changes in the Forest Code and the construction of hydroelectric plants such as Belo Monte, the policy of destruction has gained unprecedented speed with Bolsonaro and Salles. The government has promised to end indigenous and quilombola lands. Ricardo Salles, who organizes and leads this line of action, has always been an agent of mining and ruralism, a prominent figure of the extreme right of São Paulo and militant of climate negationism.

The destruction policy promoted by the government led to intervention in supervisory and scientific bodies such as Ibama, ICM-Bio, INPE, among others. The recent amendment of 16 items of the Forest Code, always under the aegis of red tape, is in fact a clear line of restriction on the supervision and control of systematic deforestation promoted by large ranchers, prospectors and mining companies. The release of gun possession in the countryside completes this policy, facilitating the formation of armed militias to defend the interests of landowners.

Important sectors of agribusiness and mining are the major stakeholders in this destructive line. Not by chance, they are part of the militant and organized base of pockets. At the end of July this year, the Ministry of Agriculture approved the use of 51 more pesticides in the Brazilian market, totaling almost 300 new pesticides released in 2019. The rate of approval of pesticide use is considered the highest in history. The results of the destruction policy were felt beyond the Amazon. The large mining companies, in turn, are interested in opening new exploration areas and are responsible for two of the largest environmental crimes ever seen in the world: the rupture of the Mariana and Brumadinho dams in Minas Gerais.

### **Defend the Amazon and the environment**

The aforementioned data from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) show that from January to August 19, there was an 83% increase in forest burning in Brazil compared to the same period of 2018. In addition, the institute revealed whereas 65% of the forest fires in Brazil in 2019 occurred in the Amazon; in 2018, it was 20%.

The criticism from foreign countries in the face of this scenario has increased. Since the beginning of the year, Bolsonaro and Salles have threatened to close the Amazon Fund, to which funds from countries such as Norway and Germany have contributed. The crusade against the fund was, according to the government, driven by the need to “cut money for NGOs”. Following the announcement of cuts to fund transfers by the two European countries, the pressure increased this week as early evening images of the largest city in the southern hemisphere caused by burning soot were released.

Foreign media were already highlighting the issue, as the cover of The Economist magazine, the leading publication of the transnational bourgeoisie, highlighted as the increase in deforestation in Brazil as a result of Bolsonaro policy. French President Emmanuel Macron’s statements proposing that the G7 address the issue, followed by criticism from governments in Germany, Canada, Ireland, Finland and even the United States, raised concerns for agribusiness leaders, who fear the imposition. sanctions and the loss of markets for Brazilian meat and grain exports.

It is evident that leaders like Macron mobilize the environmental issue to strengthen their domestic political positions - in the French case, in the face of pressure from the country’s agrarian lobby and the growth of the Green Party in the election to the European Parliament. The exposure of Brazilian

affairs by foreign powers, in turn, is the result of Bolsonaro's anti-national and environmental destruction policy - which is unconditionally aligned with the Trump government and the anti-scientific and climate negativist policy of the international far right. Openly lying and blaming environmentalist NGOs for the burnings, Bolsonaro mobilizes arguments against foreign interference seeking to hide the obvious: his pro-Yankee government, national heritage surfer, and defender of the interests of the transnational bourgeoisie is one of the greatest threats to national sovereignty in Brazilian history.

### **It's time for mobilization**

It is therefore necessary to encourage mobilization in defense of the Amazon, a heritage of the Brazilian people, and against Bolsonaro's attacks on the national environment, science and culture. Mobilization against this criminal, authoritarian and criminal government can and must take advantage of the growing confusion of the ruling class that supports the government in the face of the risk of losing export markets for agribusiness. But above all, links need to be established with mobilizations around the world against the dispossession of natural resources and the destruction of the environment by transnational corporations that threaten the survival of peoples.

It is time to expand domestic and international complaints, build and support mobilizations in Brazil and abroad. There are already acts in more than 100 cities around the world. For our part, we will actively encourage and participate in the acts of August 24 and 25 against Bolsonaro's destructive environmental policy and the immediate overthrow of Ricardo Salles, complicit in environmental destruction. With this fight, we will take a fundamental step in organizing mobilization for a world climate strike on September 20.

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