

Notes on the Camp of the Anti-capitalist Youth of Brazil: Our North is the South

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The road that connects the international airport of Rio de Janeiro with the city immediately reveals the beautiful form of that city to us. Also it reveals a “petista” government which boasts of its social advances and with walls alongside the highway wants to render invisible to the world the favelas which are one of the deepest expressions of the inequalities in Brazil.

The country of samba and soccer was, in June 2013, marked by important mobilizations against the soccer World Cup. More than the Cup in itself, this footballing country par excellence was protesting against the stratospheric infrastructural investment in the coming sports events in the country, as the popular sectors have seen the cost of living rise, the most concrete example being the rising cost of the public transport.

Once the mobilizations started, there was no delay in the reaction from the militarized police in the service of the government and the employers, brutally repressing the mobilizations in Latin America’s biggest country. The shouts of “the cup, the cup, the cup bores us, I want my money in health and education” have awoken a people which is lively and rebellious by nature.

The giant green lung of “America Morena” has entered a state of alert of mobilizations, opened by a new cycle of popular struggles in the country. Like the Arab spring, the Chilean student movement or the movement of the indignant in Spain in 2011, a new flood of struggle has begun in Brazil, which makes the anti-capitalist organizations protagonists in a new political and social scene.

In this context, the first camp of the anti-capitalist youth of Brazil was held from January 20-24, 2014. In Niteroit, a “dormitory” city of Rio de Janeiro connected by a bridge of 13 kilometres, more than 800 young people from various states in Brazil met in a very significant encounter.

More than 30 groups of Brazilian anti-capitalist youth, three of national scope, have taken a giant leap, breaking with the recurrent fragmentation and making the much discussed “anti-capitalist unity” a reality. These unified groups have initiated the way to rise to the level of the new Brazilian context and mark an example worthy of replication at various latitudes.

The Federal University of Fluminense was the venue for the meeting of anti-capitalist youth, who participated in five days of revolutionary fraternity, political education, collective deliberation and cultural recreational activities. The camp officially began on January 21 with an exciting “mystic”, who remembered those assassinated by the repressive state in Brazil at different stages and also touched on sexual and gender discrimination among other things.

Diverse forums across the camp dealt with “the explosion of youth struggles around the world”. Thematic meetings and those dealing with particular sectors of struggle were held continuously. The feminist struggle had a fundamental space at the camp and a deep commitment to end patriarchy and its enabler, capitalism, was evident in every corner of the camp.

As this was a self-managed camp, the anti-capitalist youth were organized through brigades.

Rotating brigades were responsible for cleaning, decoration, security, food and all that allowed for the smooth operation of the collective space.

The night-time cultural celebrations were a space of relaxation from the intense days of work. Thematic celebrations of women or LGTB breaking with hetero-normality were a tonic at night. And the last party at camp ended virtually at sunrise, with hundreds of anti-capitalists in the swimming pool of the university.

The last activity of the camping was a plenary session where concrete advances for the struggle of Brazilian anti-capitalist youth were envisaged. Here an important manifesto for the new organization was approved and the new name of the group was discussed heatedly.

“Retomada”, “Juventud Anticapitalista”, “Enfrente” and “RUA” were some of the ten names proposed for the new organization. The previous day the proponents of the different names made an artistic presentation in support their option. Also in the plenary a couple of minutes were given for the political defence of each name before voting. By a narrow margin the option of “RUA” was adopted – I voted for this option, but as the majority was a relative one it was decided to take a new vote through the network that can count on the participation of some groups that could not come to the camp.

Also the structure of the new body was reviewed, defining the various areas of struggle like “mobilizations for the World Cup”, “the university and secondary student movement”, “women”, “LGTB”, “black”, “popular and favela culture”, “countryside and ecology” and “anti-prohibitionism”. Collective coordinations for each front were established and a calendar of mobilizations for 2014 was adopted.

The camp also served to strengthen Latin American revolutionary integration. Between the Brazilian anti-capitalist youth and the international delegations that we were present, we decided to strengthen our fraternal relations through systematic joint work. A joint magazine in Portuguese-Spanish with emphasis on youth and Latin America, to strengthen communication channels and the initiation of the first camp of Latin American youth for January 2015, tentatively in the south of Brazil, are some of the important advances that we took away from the camp.

The deep collective conviction that “our north is the south”, will help us advance in the construction of a free and popular Latin America. More than 500 years ago the Spanish and Portuguese invaders pillaged our main natural resources and wanted to eradicate our cultural identity, but also left their languages to us as an inheritance. Although most Latin American countries have a language different from that of Brazil, our fluid communication is possible through good “portuñol”. For that reason the Latin American revolution will be transmitted in “portuñol”. I believe that there was great agreement on this at the camp.

Marco Alvarez

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* <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/>