

Statement

International Trade: The new Free Trade Agreements (TPP, TTIP AND TISA), are not a solution: they are another problem

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STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Surreptitiously – like bandits who prey on their victim – and undemocratically, the elite which owns finance and the multinationals is driving the implementation of new “Free Trade Agreements”: the Trans-Pacific Partnership, (TPP); the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP); and the Trade in Services Agreement (TSA).

As on previous occasions - when the treaties that gave birth to the European Union or the North American Free Trade Agreement were imposed - the dominant classes present these initiatives as magic formulas to “eliminate poverty and increase wealth and prosperity”. The balance sheets of the latter leave no doubt about what awaits those who are seduced by this siren song: new rules that will allow the multinationals to violate the legality and sovereignty of each nation where they are present; “private” courts to settle conflicts between companies and states; the privatization and commodification of public services that are still in the hands of the state (education, health, transport, water and so on); telecommunications regulation to eliminate freedom of expression in social networks; dismantling of peasant and familial agriculture, expansion of monoculture and genetically modified food and insecticides; prioritizing greed over environmental protection laws; still more degradation of the living and working conditions of people in the city and the countryside; and the provocation of new migratory waves.

If the goal of these treaties was in reality the expansion of world trade, then why leave out nations that, as a whole, represent more than 3 billion people, i.e. more than one third of the world population? The real purpose of these new regulations is twofold: to limit the presence of “other” nations within the sphere of influence of the Western imperialist countries and to ensure maximum benefits for their multinationals.

The crisis that capitalism is currently undergoing is not caused by the alleged limitations of the conditions for the exercise of “free trade”.

The excessive concentration of wealth in the hands of a few (according to Oxfam currently 62 families possess a wealth equal to that of the remaining 99.99%), the drastic reduction in the purchasing power of the working class, the huge debt burden on a global scale (more than 200 billion dollars in 2014), and the insane growth of fictitious capital, have caused a relative surplus of productive capacity and reduced the ability of states to prevent a new recession even more serious than that of 2008.

The growth of the contradictions between the economic interests of the United States and its allies (Western Europe, Japan and its satellites) with China, which forms part of the countries known as

the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), has encouraged the momentum of these new treaties to strengthen the power of their respective transnational companies, privatize as much as possible and cancel all employment, human, social and ecological preservation law which is opposed to this.

The world working class of the world cannot be confined in the narrow area of national politics. We must attentively follow these contradictions and master all the secrets of the foreign policy of both sets of imperialist brigands, not allow ourselves to be dragged down by spurious interests totally alien to the interests of the world working class and of humanity. The ruling classes of China, Russia, the United States or the countries of Europe are our common enemies. This is not a struggle between nations, it is a class struggle and we extend a hand to all peoples of the world in opposition to the multinationals and militarization.

We must declare ourselves totally opposed to the creation of these “commercial treaties” and promote an alternative policy based on improving the living and working conditions of all workers on a global scale; restoring the free exercise of trade union activity and collective bargaining; renationalizing the strategic sectors of the economy; applying a strong progressive tax to big fortunes and speculative capital; opening the borders to free emigration (“no human being is illegal”); repudiating all odious, illegitimate, illegal and/or unsustainable public debt; requiring the application of the international conventions in the area of labour and in defence of human rights; and fostering an international trade that takes into account the existing asymmetry between various groups of nations.

The Fourth International - whose members, in all continents, are part of the movements opposed to the approval of these treaties - salutes initiatives like that approved on February 21, 2016 in the Spanish state, by various radical left political forces on the European continent, with the intention of developing an alternative program for the social integration of the peoples and of realizing the broadest mobilizations, such as that planned for the coming Saturday May 28, 2016.

Initiatives of this type should be expanded to the world level and intercontinental unitary mobilizations should be coordinated. The approval of these treaties is not inevitable; the peoples of the world have the last word.

Fourth International, March 1, 2016

P.S.

* <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article4419>