

Declaration of the Assembly of Social Movements at the World Social Forum 2009, Belém

Wednesday, 25 February 2009

WE WON’T PAY FOR THE CRISIS. THE RICH HAVE TO PAY FOR IT!

Anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, feminist, environmentalist and socialist alternatives are necessary
By the Assembly of Social Movements

We the social movements from all over the world came together on the occasion of the 8th World Social Forum in Belém, Amazonia, where the peoples have been resisting attempts to usurp Nature, their lands and their cultures. We are here in Latin America, where over the last decade the social movements and the indigenous movements have joined forces and radically question the capitalist system from their cosmovision. Over the last few years, in Latin America highly radical social struggles have resulted in the overthrow of neoliberal governments and the empowerment of governments that have carried out many positive reforms such as the nationalisation of core sectors of the economy and democratic constitutional reforms.

In this context the social movements in Latin America have responded appropriately, deciding to support the positive measures adopted by these governments while keeping a critical distance. These experiences will be of help in order to strengthen the peoples’ staunch resistance against the policies of governments, corporations and banks who shift the burden of the crisis onto the oppressed. We the social movements of the globe are currently facing a historic challenge. The international capitalist crisis manifests itself as detrimental to humankind in various ways: it affects food, finance, the economy, climate, energy, population migration… and civilisation itself, as there is also a crisis in international order and political structures.

We are facing a global crisis that is a direct consequence of the capitalist system and therefore cannot find a solution within the system. All the measures that have been taken so far to overcome the crisis merely aim at socialising losses so as to ensure the survival of a system based on privatising strategic economic sectors, public services, natural and energy resources and on the commoditisation of life and the exploitation of labour and of nature as well as on the transfer of resources from the Periphery to the Centre and from workers to the capitalist class.

The present system is based on exploitation, competition, promotion of individual private interests to the detriment of the collective interest, and the frenzied accumulation of wealth by a handful of rich people. It results in bloody wars, fuels xenophobia, racism and religious fundamentalisms; it intensifies the exploitation of women and the criminalisation of social movements. In the context of the present crisis the rights of peoples are systematically denied. The Israeli government’s savage aggression against the Palestinian people is a violation of International Law and amounts to a war crime, a crime against humanity, and a symbol of the denial of a people’s rights that can be observed in other parts of the world. The shameful impunity must be stopped. The social movements reassert their active support of the struggle of the Palestinian people as well as of all actions against oppression by peoples worldwide.

In order to overcome the crisis we have to grapple with the root of the problem and progress as fast as possible towards the construction of a radical alternative that would do away with the capitalist system and patriarchal domination. We must work towards a society that meets social needs and respects nature’s rights as well as supporting democratic participation in a context of full political freedom. We must see to it that all international treaties on our indivisible civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights, both individual and collective, are implemented.

In this perspective we must contribute to the largest possible popular mobilisation to enforce a number of urgent measures such as:

- Nationalising the banking sector without compensations and with full social monitoring,
- Reducing working time without any wage cut,
- Taking measures to ensure food and energy sovereignty
- Stopping wars, withdraw occupation troops and dismantle military foreign bases
- Acknowledging the peoples’ sovereignty and autonomy ensuring their right to self-determination
- Guaranteeing rights to land, territory, work, education and health for all.
- Democratise access to means of communication and knowledge.

The social emancipation process carried by the feminist, environmentalist and socialist movements in the 21st century aims at liberating society from capitalist domination of the means of production, communication and services, achieved by supporting forms of ownership that favour the social interest: small family freehold, public, cooperative, communal and collective property.

Such an alternative will necessarily be feminist since it is impossible to build a society based on social justice and equality of rights when half of humankind is oppressed and exploited.

Lastly, we commit ourselves to enriching the construction of a society based on a life lived in harmony with oneself, others and the world around (“el buen vivir”) by acknowledging the active participation and contribution of

the native peoples.

We, the social movements, are faced with a historic opportunity to develop emancipatory initiatives on a global scale. Only through the social struggle of the masses can populations overcome the crisis. In order to promote this struggle, it is essential to work on consciousness-raising and mobilisation from the grassroots. The challenge for the social movements is to achieve a convergence of global mobilisation. It is also to strengthen our ability to act by supporting the convergence of all movements striving to withstand oppression and exploitation.

We thus commit ourselves to:

Launch a Global Week of Action against Capitalism and War from March 28 to April 4, 2009 with:

- Anti-G20 mobilisation on March 28,
- Mobilisation against war and crisis on March 30,
- A Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to promote boycott, disinvestment and sanctions against Israel on March 30,
- Mobilisation for the 60th Anniversary of NATO on April 4,
- Etc.

Increase occasions for mobilisation through the year:

- March 8, International Women Day;
- April 17, International Day for Food Sovereignty;
- May 1, International Workers' Day;
- October 12, Global Mobilisation of Struggle for Mother Earth, against colonisation and commodification of life.
- Schedule an agenda of acts of resistance against the G8 Summit in Sardinia, the Climate Summit in Copenhagen, the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, etc.

Through such demands and initiatives we thus respond to the crisis with radical and emancipatory solutions.