



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR:

Food, Water and Energy are not Commodities!

Newark, NJ - March 12th-14th, 2017

LETTER FROM THE II INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR: FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY ARE NOT COMMODITIES

From March 12 through 14, 2017, we, who came together from 11 countries and representing 32 union, social, environmental, human rights and indigenous organizations, met in Newark, in the United States, for the **II International Seminar: Food, Water and Energy Are Not Commodities**, where we discussed topics related to the commodification of energy and nature, food sovereignty, actions of transnational corporations, the struggle of populations affected by mega capital projects and the defense of territories.

From the discussions and the contributions of the participants, we made an analysis of the current reality we are living in, in order to support the process of organization and struggle in the many different parts of the world from which we came.

Our analysis is that capitalism is going through a productive crisis of character and provokes terrible consequences in society, spreading itself into a crisis of civilization and proving that, besides being unsustainable, it expands armed conflicts around the world, intensifies the destruction of nature and increases societal inequality, religious persecution and persecution of people of different sexual orientations, racism, patriarchy, sexism, xenophobia and all kinds of discrimination.

This system is not able to provide for the basic demands of humanity such as food for all the population, health, education, dignity, liberty and justice. Therefore, it is the working class who pay the bill of the crisis and suffer the consequences of capitalism, especially Black and immigrant populations and traditional and indigenous peoples.

To overcome the crises, capitalism intensifies its exploitation of nature, through the appropriation of water, territories, seeds, forests, oil, minerals and above all the workers, taking away rights, reducing salaries and allowing for dangerous working conditions.

Energy is central in the struggle for hegemony in the world. Capitalists try to appropriate the most productive sources in order to guarantee extraordinary profits and geopolitical control. This requires us to engage in deep discussion and build an energy model that aims to ensure the sovereignty of the people, respect for the communities affected by energy production and insure that people have control over energy production.

Water and food suffer as well in the commodification process and are intensely disputed. Therefore, the right to access these resources are denied to millions of people, which causes hunger and poverty in rural and urban areas, expulsion of peasants from the land and families from urban centers. The exacerbation of conflicts over water forces us to think hard about the urgent and necessary struggles to maintain access and quality [of water] for all workers.

Around the world we are living in a moment of advancing conservative forces, marked by fascist characteristics, whose purpose is to deepen neoliberalism, attack human rights, threaten democracy

and popular organizations and provoke political destabilization of countries. These forces, taking advantage of the moment of crisis, have been referenced using mass media and propaganda, seizing state structures in various parts of the world.

If that were not enough, the cases of criminalization of the struggle of traditional and indigenous communities that have defended the land for centuries, as well as the imprisonment and assassination of strugglers/ defenders It is important to recognize that the crisis is global because the actors who created it are transnational and so, being what it is, our struggles of resistance must be international.

Given this scenario, the organizations gathered at this seminar understand that:

- 1) It is necessary that we do grassroots organizing and involve the majority of the population to build social strength and engage in struggle of resistance and build a project of the people;
- 2) A collective effort is necessary for the building of unity of the widest range of organizations willing to struggle against capitalism and patriarchy and to build a new society;
- 3) It is necessary to build a societal project in a collective way, where we will put forward our proposals, guided by an ecological thinking of energy, food and water sovereignty and all issues important to life and people, with just laws and respect for Mother Earth. This project should be presented in a way that is clear and appropriate for society.
- 4) The ongoing cultivation of principles of what we wish for a new society is necessary – such as solidarity, companionship, internationalism, sustainability, feminism, environmentalism, equality with respect to differences, antiracism, anti-war.
- 5) It is necessary to continue the process of building a joint analysis between organizations involved in the issue of water, energy and food, as well as to advance the articulations and united struggles between these organizations.

FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY ARE NOT COMMODITIES!

