

The defeat of the FTAA: 10 years of struggle and resistance

Build and promote popular participation in the decisions that directly affect people was one of the bases of the struggle and resistance of the Campaign against the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) in Brazil and the Continental Campaign. The defeat of the FTAA has been more than 10 years; when the popular struggle waged in Mar del Plata, Argentina in 2005. The streets of this Argentine city were taken by fighters of our America who shouted in unison: No to FTAA, Another America is Possible.

Since the beginning of the Brazilian and continental campaign, many were accumulations in the field of critical development along with in the field of action. In Brazil, in 2002 one second plebiscite was held. The first of which was in 2000 concerning the external debt, a successful process. In 2002, we use this important tool for debate, meeting with people, reflectioning and that had carried with it a popular pedagogy of dialogue. This tool, plebiscites, is considered a "school of political training". That refers to the Brazilian case. Today it was already conducted five times in popular plebiscite, always with great success. In this process of plebiscites, the Brazil Jubilee South network was in charge of the secretaries, with great political responsibility to build processes horizontally and with the collective of plebiscites' Debt in 2000, the FTAA in 2002 and the Vale in 2004.

This plebiscite experience was experienced by other countries to hold this debate concerning the FTAA with different formats and methodologies according to the reality of each region or country. In the debate on the FTAA, other issues were on the agenda of the joints, networks, movements in Latin America, such as the fight against free trade agreements - FTA and the WTO (World Trade Organization), genetically modified food, militarization, the fight against debt, and many others who are gaining strength.

It is important to emphasize that before 2002, both in Brazil and in most countries of our America "Patria Grande", there wasn't any talking about FTAA or almost nothing. In this context, the abysmal silence by stakeholders (governments, businessmen from various sectors - communications, industry, commerce, ...) sought that the treaties negotiated have succeed. Our campaign breaks boundaries and begins to denounce the report pack "Trojan horse" that was carrying harmful impacts for different sectors and for the sovereignty of our countries. Since then a number of continental working groups consolidates to monitor the agreements and negotiations in both the FTAA and the WTO. Because in the understanding that was built in the Continental Campaign it was that the FTAA and the WTO were sides of the same coin, imposed by capital people.

The following years from 2002 to 2005 in Mar del Plata were full of great and victorious struggles, where a common agenda across the continent has turned us stronger, has held us together, has identified us. The continental meetings in Havana, Cuba gave us the dimension and unified us in action. Mar del Plata, in 2005, was a beautiful moment (during the IV Summit of the Peoples, during the

Fourth Summit of the Presidents of the Americas) to crown this long road of resistance in defense of the peoples' sovereignty and self-determination. We have noted that many agreements that were present and were trading within the FTAA have been or are being implemented in installments through bilateral treaties, through the WTO or otherwise, in accordance with the interests of capital and imperialism. But the struggle of the organized people "has buried" the FTAA in Mar del Plata. The Capital always finds new ways to transform and continues to accumulate, appropriating territory and applying their way of expropriation, has not been achieved through the FTAA, but it does today in other ways (privatization, financeirization of life, the common properties,...) But we have to celebrate in this year 2015 this fight and the beautiful story built and ask how we are today, when we look at this process as we move forward?

The campaign was also a great success for the reconstruction and the discovery of organization's new forms of the struggle, the demonstrations has created an identity, has generated commitment and popular participation, either through plebiscites, popular consultations, the marches, innovating in communication, participating in the summit of the peoples (parallel meetings in the governments' official spaces), hemispheric meetings and many other ways we have discovered together, all with common objectives, defend the interests of the people, the sovereignty in a tireless struggle against the common enemy, the advance of imperialism.

It is important to consider that we come to this cumulation, for having also a process of struggle and critical development since the 90s in the continent, a large resistance against the advance of the imposed neoliberal policies, that culminated in the early years of the decade 2000, contributing to the organization of the campaign. The strength's correlation of the social and popular movements and governments against imperialist neoliberal reforms that have been introduced, either through FTAs or even deepening economic embargo on Cuba, the struggle of the coca growers in Bolivia, the struggle against privatization in Brazil, Venezuela with the arrival of Hugo Chavez to government and the new form of integration, has enabled a large number of possibilities for the arrival of popular governments, which on the one hand contributed to the FTAA would have not been implemented. It was a time of great convergence and unification of the need for unity as organizations and activists about the common enemy, the advance of imperialism.

The peoples are setting an example of struggle and resistance against the bourgeois forces and neoliberal policies that aim at advancing and gaining ground in our Patria Grande. During the years of struggle against the FTAA, new processes emerge and grant strength to think of popular projects, new forms of integration, the ALBA, for example, that strengthen the resistance against the offensive of imperialist capitalism on the peoples. The Imperialism also finds new ways to move forward and has done so through new groupings of conservative aligned sectors with major media groups, multinationals, and progress has been made in the territories, appropriating natural resources and by human life and nature financialisation. To deal with that, the social

movements propose another integration and believe in new mechanisms such as ALBA, Unasaur, CELAC or processes as the Assembly of the Peoples of the Caribbean, just like it was the People's Summit at Rio + 20. The FTAA is over as we know it, but continues to be applied with many other names and faces. We consider that while the fight progresses to defeat the FTAA, the offensive of capital continues to make progress in countries with a history of struggle and resistance, as in the case of the occupation of the MINUSTAH troops in Haiti and the coup d'état in Honduras in 2004, the impeachment of Lugo in Paraguay in 2012. We can not forget the ways in which imperialism and its tentacles find new ways to sustain and maintain themselves, we must always be alert. Alert! Alert! Alert! Walking, Alert, Alert! Alert! Our Latin America!

The stage after 10 years of FTAA collapse is also too much complex and demanding for countries and for our great country. Finally, the Continental Campaign against the FTAA should be placed within a powerful process of organization and mobilization of the people driven by a growing struggle in the 90s and culminating in the 2000s. It was in this rich process which brought together hundreds of thousands of militants and activists eager, energy and synergy with women's movements, traditional/native peoples, peasants, youth, students, trade unionists and many other organizations, networks and movements was the engine to achieve the goal in that moment. And now, looking at the road travelled, we could once again strengthen and reorganize the struggle in the continent, because the enemy continues to advance and taking our lands and appropriating.

After 10 years, now is the time to reconnect and look in the road built, in the process, and ask ourselves: what have we learned and what we can still build together for sovereignty?

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