

People's Summit in Argentina poses alternatives to neo-liberalism



Santa Fe, July 17 (RHC)-- The Southern Cone Trade Union Coordinator Center (CCSCS), the Argentinean Workers' Central Union (CTA), the Santa Fe Federation of Municipal Workers Trade Unions (Festram) and dozens of South American social organizations began the "Peoples Summit for Regional Integration" on Tuesday, an event which takes place at the same time as the summit of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in the city of Santa Fe, Argentina.

"This Summit is a huge step forward for the workers' movement [because] it clearly points to another integration model different from Bolsonaro or Macri's model, which is absolutely functional to large economic groups, those same groups which want to break workers' unions to make them accept labor reform in Argentina," stated Claudio Leoni, the Festram Secretary-General.

In its 2019 edition, the Peoples Summit is focussing its debates on the need to generate a regional integration model capable of being different from right-wing proposals promoted by the majority of MERCOSUR governments.

In order to value local workers and companies, this opposing event is debating alternatives to free trade policies that benefit only transnational corporations, such as the forthcoming MERCOSUR-European Union (EU) free trade agreement.

Some Southern Cone congressmen will also be present at the discussions of the issues that mostly concern workers from the MERCOSUR member countries: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.?????? This year's summit is being held in the Nestor Kirchner hall, a space dedicated to the memory of the late former Argentinean president which is at the Santa Fe municipal workers facilities.

Its participants are organized in working groups on topics such as work, production and integration, geopolitics and regional sovereignty, rights and resistance against the neoliberal offensive, and realities and challenges of the Latin American integration processes.

At the end of the day, participants will conclude their work by presenting a public document which will be delivered to the Mercosur parliamentarians.

Since the nineties, the Peoples Summits have become a regional reference for the struggle and resistance of Latin American popular organizations against right-wing governments. While the South American workers hold their event, the Mercosur foreign ministers have prepared documents that will be revealed at the official summit of Presidents held on Wednesday.

The event is being attended by Argentina's President Mauricio Macri, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, Chile's Sebastian Piñera and Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, which is seeking full membership in Mercosur.

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