



THE
KARIBU
FOUNDATION

E-Newsletter -January 2017

Global resistance against injustice: Where do we go from here?

In the context of growing political, social and economic setbacks globally and regionally, as well as the deepening environmental crisis, a broad network of Brazilian social organizations and movements hosted the Social Forum of Resistances held in January 2017 in Porto Alegre, Brazil (the birthplace of the World Social Forum). The forum aimed to bring together movements from across Brazil, South America and further, in order to set focus on resistance and the global struggle for democracy, the rights of peoples, and the rights of the planet. In this month's "Voices from the South," we speak with Mauri Cruz, leader of the organizing committee of the Social Forum on Resistances in Porto Alegre, on why movements are joining together in the struggle, what the key resistances are, and the way ahead in the struggle for a more just world.



Karibu: Can you tell us more about why the social movements are meeting here now in Porto Alegre?

Mauri Cruz: We are gathered here in Porto Alegre for the Forum on Resistance for two main reasons: First, locally in Brazil after the political coup d'état that occurred last year, we knew we had to mobilize to resist. But then we realized that the whole region needed mobilization for resistance against injustice. Movements in Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, and other countries that have been trying to secure the rights of people and nature felt that they needed to join forces. And globally too, of course, as President Trump gets inaugurated while we are meeting here.

Second, we wanted to recognize the al-

ready ongoing resistance of traditional people that have always been excluded, and who have never been totally included in our democracy. Indigenous people who have been resisting and have been fighting for their existence ever since the invasion of the Americas. On top of that, you have slaves that were brought here to the Americas and the Caribbean, mostly to Brazil and Venezuela in South America and to the Southern States of the US in North America. For them, we are now entering one more chapter of the resistance in order to fight for democracy and inclusion.

So we are joining forces of the historic resistance efforts, plus resisting the current situation facing our world. We need work together.

Karibu: What have the movements (in Latin America and around the world) identified as the key struggles ahead?

Founded in 1985, the Karibu Foundation is an independent foundation that supports voices from the Global South that provide alternatives to the dominant paradigms of power, distribution, and development.

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The Social Forum of Resistances for democracy and the rights of peoples and the planet was held 17.-21. January 2017 in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

For more information, visit:
<http://forumsocialportoalegre.org.br/>



First of all, we know that neoliberalism is not a reaction to the progressive voices. No, neoliberalism is an on-going strategy that has always been there to gain territories and to continue doing what they have always been doing now with new faces. So we are continuing to resist this on local, national, and global levels.

Additionally, we are resisting new waves of extreme xenophobia and fundamentalism. Many right-wing fundamentalists have left the closet, and feel more free to be exposed in today's political climate. This affects global peace, and we see this in the mini world-wars taking place now in the Middle East.

We also see the fights and struggles of women, indigenous people, black people, LGBT-movements, people who live in the outskirts of the cities and other that have always been excluded continuing. Their struggle is not defensive or reactionary. They are not only resisting, but they keep surviving. They are identifying different ways of building a new world in the current realities.

Karibu: Is there still hope in the struggle for “another world”?

MC: Yes, there is always hope. I like to say that I am not an optimist and I am not a pessimist. Optimists think that things are going to work out in the end, so “why bother”. Pessimists think, no matter what I do nothing is going to change so “why bother”. But if you are a hopeful realist, then you feel empowered to resist and move forward.

Nothing is forever. There are always waves. Sometimes the forces we are opposing gain momentum, and sometimes we gain more momentum. We of course are in a moment when we are back, but we

see the new time coming again.

Karibu: Where do we go from here? What are the next step?

MC: Today, we are seeing that the roots of all these problems are very deep. So there is much more to do still. But we are identifying the causes of the problems, and are continuing to identify solutions.

I see a new “1960s” is in the foreseeable future, where the hope and vision that another world is truly possible will come again. I think back after the second world war, when we eventually saw what blossomed out of that in the 1960s and 1970s. We saw new waves of women's movements. We saw new waves of black empowerment movements. People began identifying issues that were very covered up.

More people now are starting to stop accepting the de-facto situation we live in today. The world scenario calls for courage, and there is novelty in this current moment of change.

We do not have all the answers, but we are taking steps ahead together for democracy, the rights of peoples, and the rights of the planet.■

Mauri Cruz is leader of the organizing committee for the *Forum Social des Resistances* in Porto Alegre, and is a member of the International Council of the World Social Forum. He can be reached at mjvcruz@gmail.com.

A special thank you to Leonardo Vieira from *Central Única dos Trabalhadores-Brazil* for his assistance with interpretation.

Photos:
Opening march of the “Social Forum of Resistances” in Porto Alegre. T. Hauger

