



Toward a Peoples' Social Forum... and another Canada!

The validity and relevance of World Social Forums¹ are already very well established. We have all heard talk of these exceptional events as breeding grounds for discussion, networking and reflection on social and economic alternatives. And now, for the first time, Canada will play host to a social forum of its own!

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Next August 21st to 24th, we are invited to take part in the first social forum in Canadian history. Thousands are expected to converge on Ottawa to debate strategies for resisting the austerity measures of Stephen Harper's Conservative government and to build the alliances needed to do so. Environmentalists, Aboriginal communities, students, labour unions, democratic organizations, women's groups, cultural associations—in short, the entire civil society—will be answering the call!

A participative process

The organization process for the forum is already under way, with meetings taking place in cities across the country under the umbrella of “expansion committees.” Whether in Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, Saint-Jean or Regina, the wheels are in motion to make this first Canadian social forum a watershed event.

A social forum gives participants a space for debating and discussing the problems and issues we face as a society and for proposing solutions and action plans to address them. Its purpose is therefore to promote education and political debate, to create solidarity and to build convergence among the various movements. Motivated by the values of social justice, participative

democracy, horizontality and inclusion, this forum is meant for organizations and movements of the civil society that oppose neoliberalism, the primacy of the almighty dollar and all forms of imperialism, and that are committed to building a global society centred on the human.

Apart from the forum itself, convergence meetings will also serve to bring participants together around common themes in order to promote the consolidation of ideas, analyses and proposals and the bridging of action.

Self-managed activities are an integral part of the social forum process in order to give voice to the grassroots. What this means, in a concrete sense, is that while organizers facilitate the presentation of activities—by suggesting the thematic strands, coordinating the venue logistics, producing the event programme, and so on—it is the participants themselves who build the content by developing and leading the workshops.

The CSN and FNEEQ

“Think globally, act locally,” the popular battle cry of the alter-globalization movement, was re-issued by CSN President Jacques Létourneau at the World Social Forum in Tunis during a workshop on the project to bring Quebec, Aboriginal and Canadian social

movements together for a Peoples' Social Forum (PSF) in summer 2014.

The CSN has been actively collaborating on the organization of the PSF since the process got under way in 2011, as has the FNEEQ. It was evident from the outset that there is a pressing need to tighten links with Canada's social and Aboriginal movements in order to wage an effective battle against the Harper government's neoliberal policies and conservatism.

A first general assembly was therefore held in Ottawa in January 2013, followed by a second one in Edmonton this past July. What emerged was a clear consensus that the primary aim of this forum will be to build a broad strategic alliance against neoliberal and neoconservative policies in Canada and to advance the principles of social justice, sustainable development, international solidarity and participative democracy.

In Quebec, the consultations for the Peoples' Social Forum officially kick off this February, and a provincial tour will be launched to raise awareness and generate the widest possible mobilization at the ground level. Front and centre will be the FNEEQ...

**Because another Canada
is possible!**

¹ The first World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2001. Since then, many cities have hosted world social forums, the most recent being Tunis in March 2013, to which the FNEEQ sent a large delegation. The organization of various national and regional forums, including the Quebec Social Forum, European Social Forum, and African Social Forum, as well as of such thematic forums as the World Forum for Democracy, World Forum on Education, World Social Forum Free Palestine, etc. further illustrates the vitality and relevance of this movement.