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Fourth International

# **Fighting side by side from Kyiv to Panama: A look back at the 2025 International Youth Camp**

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**“Will you be coming to our summer university?”**

**“No, I can’t this year. But I sent word to comrades, and quite a few of them are interested.”**

The last bus awaits in the camp’s parking lot. Young people, most of whom didn’t know each other a week before, exchange phone numbers, social media, and hugs. Here and there, tears flow, as if to prolong the downpours that punctuated the week.

On July 26, the 40th edition of the anti-capitalist International Youth Camp came to an end. It brought together nearly 300 young people under the Belgian rain, a 30% increase from last year. 300 participants came from 29 countries [\[1\]](#), not counting the comrades who had to cancel their participation at the last minute due to visa issues. [\[2\]](#) This success reflects the new dynamic found in some sections of the Fourth International (FI), which, although most are much smaller than they were in their post-1968 heyday, are once again attracting many young people eager to organise a response to the fascist threat, the destruction of our hard-won social rights, the resurgence of race and gender-based violence, and climate chaos. Gauche anticapitaliste, the Belgian section of the FI, is a case in point: in just a few years, it has rebuilt its youth wing, won 2% of the vote in the European elections, and become one of the driving forces behind the social movement that has opposed the new federal government led by the far right. It was therefore quite natural that it would succeed the French section in hosting the camp.

## Discussions rooted in current struggles

The urgent issues dictated by the ongoing crises were reflected in the programme and in our debates. For the first time, the week began with a day dedicated to anti-racism. But this topic was not neglected in the days that followed, with multiple moments dedicated to the autonomous expression of racialised people: a commission that met three times during the week, non-mixed workshops, a dedicated evening event...

Anti-fascism was also a pervasive theme. Several of the plenary educationals (the one on Anti-fascism & Internationalism of course, but also the one on Feminism & the LGBTI+ Struggles, and the one on Anti-racism) devoted significant time to analysing the global far right and seeking a strategy to combat it. The anti-fascist commission, which met several times throughout the week, provided an opportunity to send a message of solidarity to all anti-fascist activists facing repression, from the Zaragoza Six to Maja, a German activist imprisoned in Hungary, to the French anti-fascist group Jeune Garde.

Resistance to the reactionary offensive targeting transgender people also took up a large part of the discussions, as did labour struggles in the face of the intensification of student work and youth precariousness in our different countries – among the camp’s new features, a day on Work & Trade Unionism was introduced for this reason.

But the backdrop to this camp was, sadly, war and the barbarism of imperialisms. Western imperialism, of course, which continues its genocide in Palestine, despite the ongoing global solidarity movement – a movement that remained omnipresent in the discussions. But all other imperialisms as well, including Russian imperialism, which continues its colonial war in Ukraine and gives European powers a pretext to militarise doggedly. How to articulate the necessary rejection of the various rearmament plans, the continuation of our historic struggle against NATO, and solidarity with peoples engaged in armed struggle, such as the Ukrainian people? This reflection, central to the last

World Congress of the Fourth International, was inevitably part of the discussions at the camp – with solidarity with the exploited and oppressed of all countries and the refusal to prefer one imperialism over another as principles shared by all.

## A European camp, a global struggle

What gave these debates a new dimension was of course the exceptionally large presence – in addition to the usual Western European countries – of guests from other parts of the world – in particular Latin America and Eastern Europe. This new development also reflects the evolution of the Fourth International, whose largest sections are now to be found in the Global South. This fact has prompted reflection on the very definition of this camp, which, although it is “international” in the sense that it brings together several nations and has always welcomed guests from other continents, has historically been organised in Europe by the youth wings of the European sections of the International. While it obviously seems impossible to organise a global camp where young people from all countries could participate under the same conditions, the question remains open as to how to take this new situation into account: can we include non-European organisations more in the political preparation of future iterations? Can we use the experience of these European camps to replicate them in other regions of the globe?

## Hot water, sound system and annoyed neighbours

Aside from the debates however, the camp is also a unique human experience full of surprises – especially when you take on the technical challenge of organising it on a completely empty field. Between the food delivery arriving five days late, the showers delivered with a blown fuse, and the electric generator that had to be replaced along the way, we had to navigate a number of unforeseen events. But between our Danish electrician, Swiss drivers, and improvised Spanish and Catalan sound engineers, we had no shortage of resources. All the companies we had to work with, in one way or another, presented us with a new challenge; and we met all these challenges through democratic self-management. You can draw whatever political conclusions you want from that.

## Now, let's fight

As young revolutionary activists, a week like this one is always emotionally charged for us. And the comedown can sometimes be tough. Seeing those buses leave, loaded with comrades whom – for the most part – we won't see again for a year, is heartbreaking. And after all that, it's never easy to go back to our exploitative jobs, to our families from whom we hide our sexual orientation, or to our universities that call the cops as soon as we speak up a little too loudly. For a week, we found ourselves dreaming together of a world without borders, hierarchy or oppression, and now we must quickly return to reality. But the tenderness of peoples is not just a distant ideal: it is our weapon.

International solidarity has just dealt Viktor Orban a major blow by making it possible for Pride in Budapest to go ahead. It has finally secured the release of Georges Ibrahim Abdallah. It is beginning to force the isolation of the Israeli regime, which is as violent as ever but increasingly cornered. Sooner or later, it will defeat all reactionaries, machos, cops, bankers, landlords, oilmen, tech gurus, colonial settlers, fascist wannabes and genuine dictators. Until then, no border will prevent us from fighting side by side.

9 August 2025

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*This article was written by the organising team of the camp: Léonard Brice, Lucie Choquet, Elena Fernández-Fernández, Léa Maucourt, Denis Verstraeten.*

PS:

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[1] Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Kosovo, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Latvia, United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Panama, Brazil, Malta, Cyprus, Australia.

[2] Algeria, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Sudan