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Revolutionary youth camp

On being revolutionaries one hundred years after the Russian Revolution

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The 34th International Youth Camp in political solidarity with the Fourth International took place in Otranto, Italy in the last week of July. The camp, under a banner proclaiming "Revolution Addicted - 1917-2017", was opened by a rally with speakers from Italy welcoming the participants and explaining the political goals of the camp. The rally concluded with this contribution from a leading young woman comrade from the Anticapitalistas delegation of the Spanish state.

((A few days ago, looking for materials to prepare for this opening rally, I came across the statistics of attendance at last year's camp. If we assume that the figures are the same this year, and that is more or less what usually happens, we find that three quarters of the people here today are under 28 years old. And this information, which may seem anecdotal, takes on all its importance if we consider that just 28 years ago the Berlin Wall fell. Those of us, like myself, who are in our mid-twenties, were born the same year that Fukuyama proclaimed the end of history and shouted to the world in 22 languages that ideologies were no longer necessary. The average age of attendance last year, less than 23, indicates that most of the 400 people here were born at a time that was no longer that of the "short twentieth century". (And yet here we are.

Revolutionaries without revolutions. Militants and activists born after the fall of the Berlin Wall, opening what is already the 34th edition of the Fourth International Youth Camp in a year, 2017, which is not just any year, but the centenary of the greatest hope for humanity that ever lit up the world. A century on from the Russian Revolution, one wonders: what does it mean to be a revolutionary today?

1917 was the year in which a workers' party, supported by the peasantry, took power to change the world. And many things have changed since then, but deep down everything continues the same: plenty for the few; poverty, precariousness existence and sorrow for the many. In 2017, it is the logic of accumulation and dispossession that continues to rule the world. The destruction of the planet for private gain has not stopped, nor has the expropriation of the women's bodies, nor has reproductive work ceased to be made invisible or stigmatized through the imposition of heterosexuality and the sexual division of labor within the nuclear family. The ghettoization of racialized people within the so-called "First World" continues, as does the proliferation of imperialist wars and the plundering of resources in the world's subordinated regions. The ideological war has not ended, while the means of production remain concentrated in just a few hands. Many of these things, in fact, have got worse.

Those of us who were born after the fall of the Wall have grown being told endlessly that there was no possible alternative. What happened happened, simply and plainly, because it was impossible for anything else to happen. Capitalism is the only viable system. Liberal and bourgeois democracy, the only possible democracy. And, well, as everyone knows, Marxism is equal to Stalinism, and that is not going anywhere. But we know that history is never inevitable, and that the past is full of possible presents, which never came to be. We know that, one hundred years after the Russian Revolution, ideologies remain necessary. That the ideal future promised by capitalism with a human face is not possible because, simply, capitalism with a human face is not possible. The central task for us today, as the heirs of those communists, women and men, who from the beginning fought Stalinism from Marxist positions and in the name of socialist democracy, is to reappropriate our past and free the living "from the weight of the dead of yesterday and the political corpses of today."

We are revolutionary, yes. And one of the reasons we are, is that 1917 cannot be forgotten. The promise of humanity, universality, and emancipation that appeared in "the ephemeral flame of the moment" is too tied to the interests of humanity for it to be forgotten. We are revolutionary out of loyalty to those who came before us, and out of loyalty to those who will come after. Because, as comrade Daniel Bensaïd said, being a political activist is above

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all professing loyalty to people we do not know.

We are revolutionary, yes. Because we know that it is possible to assault the heavens, and that there must be an alternative to this murderous system which devours us to reproduce itself, and condemns us to the most absolute of miseries. We are revolutionary because we struggle in the day to day against all types of oppression, but also and especially because we try to prepare ourselves for the great leaps. We are revolutionary because we love life deeply, and we refuse with all our strength to believe that this is the only way it can be lived.

1917 was the year when the outcasts of the earth rose up. In 2017 it is our responsibility to keep pushing for the world to change its basis. Life is beautiful. It is up to us to rid her of all evil, oppression and violence, so that the generations to come can live it to the full.

PS:

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