
Happy New Year – in spite of everything

A new year has begun. But a change in the calendar does not necessarily imply a change in the intensification of the processes of domination and destruction that are the reason for the resistance struggles of so many peoples and communities, and the social organizations who work alongside them.

Nevertheless, it is a symbolic opportunity to stop for a moment, look back and look forward, gather forces, raise banners, and feel hope.

And when we look around us, what we see is that the processes that are the direct and indirect causes of deforestation stem from the same root causes as those that violate the rights of indigenous and peasant communities over their lands; and that the same factors involved in the privatization of rivers for the construction of mega dams are also behind large-scale mining projects, which also displace communities and damage ecosystems. The same holds true all down the long list of extractive activities: oil drilling and contamination, shrimp farms and destruction of mangrove forests, the expansion of industrial monoculture plantations and loss of food sovereignty. Behind all of these are the new “King Midases” of globalized neoliberal capitalism, the big transnational corporations who want to turn everything they touch into gold – or more precisely, in this modern version, commodities and financial assets – and therefore subject us to the threat of being left without food, just like the King Midas of old, by occupying more and more land for their large-scale monocultures.

But on the horizon we also see that, just as these problems are interconnected, our struggles must be interconnected as well: indigenous peoples fighting for their forests and their identity, peasants fighting for their land and seeds, women, discriminated minorities, exploited majorities, displaced peoples, the defence of forests, grasslands, mountains, plains, rivers, seas – all of these and more, which suffer every time the globalized world starts its engines, fires up its smokestacks, manipulates genes, sets the table.

We must continue along our path, raising awareness, supporting each other, to confront the successive crises, instability, uncertainty. We must continue working to build, all together, worlds of solidarity and love. This is the task that lies ahead of us as peoples, communities and organizations. And it is beautiful. Which means we have good reason to say, Happy New Year.