



## **13th Tri-national Conference—Call for the meeting**

*November 9, 10, 11, 2018, Orizaba, Veracruz, Mexico*

**Internationalism: a strategy for struggles to defend education as a social right.**

**Mexico, United States, Canada**

Two years after the last Trinational Conference was held in Vancouver Canada, we have experienced a radical change in the international situation. In our last conference we focused on the threat to public education represented by the deepening of free trade agreements. But today, in their effort to escape the economic and political crises generated by the neoliberal model, financial groups that dominate the economies and governments of our countries have redefined their strategies. “Free” trade is no longer the policy they seek to impose on the world.

To hide that the exacerbated poverty, lack of decent jobs and the alarming concentration of wealth in our societies have been generated by the neoliberal model of dispossession, a xenophobic and racist discourse is constructed that seeks to hold migrants responsible for the failure of that model. A supremacist discourse accompanies authoritarian policies, such as those implemented by United States president Donald Trump—policies which violate basic human rights of migrants, and also of African-American workers, women, and workers in general.

There is a hardening of the forms of power exercised as large financial groups worldwide seek to maintain their hegemony by restricting democratic freedoms, social rights, human rights and the sovereignty of our societies.

Today more than ever, education as a social right is in danger. Not just because we face more aggressive forms of privatization and commodification, but because education is seen as a coveted tool for imbedding in the ideology of our peoples these supremacist, xenophobic and racist ideas of contempt of one for the other, and rejection of everything collective, social or public.

However, it is encouraging and inspiring to see in these two years the growth of the struggles of teachers, students, and the people in defense of public education, labour rights, and political freedoms in Mexico. In the United States, we see the consolidation of the Chicago Teachers Union, its connection and commitment to communities, and promotion of the democratic organization of education workers around the country. Important struggles are rising from the rank and file of education workers’ unions in Oklahoma, West Virginia, and other states in defense of their teaching/learning conditions, but also

against the mercantilist model of closing public schools and replacing them with charter schools. In Los Angeles, the movement to defend migrants has sparked initiatives such as sanctuary schools that refuse to collaborate with federal migration officials.

In Canada, important struggles have been waged by teachers' unions and community allies to revert education budget cuts and defend collective bargaining agreements.

Today, if we are to advance in expanding the universal right to education, decent work and the democratization of our communities, we must change the economic model and the political regime to build societies with social justice.

It is in this framework that we call on trade unionists, teachers, researchers, students, education activists from Mexico, the United States and Canada, interested in the defense of education as a social right from an internationalist perspective, to participate in the 13th Trinational Conference to be held November 9-11, 2018 in Orizaba, Veracruz, Mexico. The host organizations are the Mexican Section of the Trinational Coalition in Defense of Public Education and the Veracruz Popular Teachers Movement, a member of the National Coalition of Education Workers (CNTE).

#### **Workshop Themes:**

- 1) Commercialization of education, new forms of privatization, NTICs, consortia and foundations.
- 2) Education financing, budget cuts and the use of public resources to subsidize the private sector;
- 3) Precarization of working conditions for education workers and the deterioration of learning conditions at all levels, from K-12 to post-secondary;
- 4) Standardized testing and "evaluation" of teacher performance;
- 5) Construction of educational alternatives, including indigenous education; and
- 6) Successful experiences of organization and struggle at local, regional, national, tri-national and hemispheric levels.

In each workshop proposals for international action will be made, which will be incorporated into the plan of action for the next 2 years.

To be participant in the 13th Tri-national Conference in Defence of Public Education, please apply by e-mailing a BCTF CV form accompanied by a letter indicating why you want to attend and how you would use the learnings from the conference when you return to your local and school, to:

[researchassistants@bctf.ca](mailto:researchassistants@bctf.ca)

More information for prospective BCTF delegates [here](#).

Organizing Committee

13th Conference of the Trinational Coalition in Defense of Public Education.