

Political declaration of the 1st Trinational Student Gathering

Mexico, United States of America, Canada



1^{ER} ENCUENTRO TRINACIONAL ESTUDIANTIL
Educación neoliberal en Norteamérica transformaciones e impactos.
Perspectivas y horizontes del movimiento estudiantil

**VIERNES 18
DE MARZO**

16:00 hrs.

Auditorio Ho Chi Min
Facultad de Economía UNAM

CONVOCA:
Coalición Trinacional
en Defensa de la Educación Pública
Grupo Estudiantil Tiempos Modernos

Información, inscripciones y envío de ponencias: trinacional.sec.estudiantil@gmail.com

Fuente: Poster "1st Student Trinational Meeting"

In March, 2016, student activists from the USA, Mexico and Canada met at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City for the First Trinational Student Gathering. The following is the declaration that emerged from the event.

As participants of the First Trinational Student Gathering, organized by the Trinational Coalition in Defense of Public Education, after analyzing the current context of public middle and higher education in Mexico, United States and Canada, we conclude:

That the privatizing offensive on education as a social right, is exacerbated by budget cut policies, subsidies to

private education, and the new Free Trade Agreement being negotiated between governments of our three countries, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It includes the interference of businesspeople in defining the content of study plans and the direction of universities and education as a whole. It seeks to deliver the final blow to dismantling education as a human right, selling it to the highest bidder. It is also accompanied by the criminalization of social struggles by teachers and students who defend public education, exacerbating the exclusion of academic communities in decision making and eliminating the small spaces in which we exercise democracy in our institutions.

In the face of the aforementioned context and the necessity to recover the social purpose of education, we pronounce ourselves in this First Transnational Student Gathering for:

1) The demand to include free public education on the agenda of the three countries (Canada, United States and Mexico), including university education. In Mexico, the federal government tries to evade its responsibilities by implementing the idea of “self-management” in basic education and policies oriented towards efficiency in middle higher and higher education (with the reduction of semesters and investment in the private sector, that takes more from universities and bachelor’s degree programs than they invest in them).

In this same vein, Canadian students do not have access to government subsidies, in order to guarantee free education, on the contrary, the NAFTA agreements have declared that resources should not be used meet public education’s needs, and instead introduce students to the need to recur to student debt. Adding to this is the problem that only 4% of the student university population in Canada comes from Indigenous communities, in conditions of institutional marginalization, a situation that limits their cultural development and interaction with the rest of the students. This percentage is evidence of the policies of discrimination, exclusion

and criminalization, when it is compared to the percentage of the Indigenous population that is in Canadian prisons which reaches around 30%.

For US students the context does not change, since private investment in prisons is greater than that which the US government allots to education. To the contrary, in addition to dealing with a university system that is impossible to access for the lowest income sectors, African American and Latino American youth, are affected by a government policy of criminalization. It is enough to examine the rates of arrest and imprisonment of Latino and African American youth, especially among those youth that for a variety of reasons were not able to be in school for more than basic education. As such, we demand that free access to university be added to the agendas of the governments of Canada, United States and Mexico.

2) To coordinate our actions so the impacts of economic agreements such as the TPP are made visible in the Northern region of our continent. We demand that these agreements be reversed, as they are total contrary to the interests of our societies. Since the structuring of these applied economic measures will deepen the already existing problems among university communities and of education as a whole. It will also increase the rate of exclusion and marginalization of different proposals to those that subordinate all social necessity for the survival of the transnational market.

3) That public university in Canada be financed by funds dedicated to the debt and that private education stop being financed with public monies. The influence of private corporations, specifically the mining companies, on decisions regarding content for training of specialized students must end. The marginalization of Indigenous students in Canada must cease and these students’ identity be recognized in the face of the Euro-centrism of university officials.

4) An end to the criminalization of youth struggles. An end to unjustified imprisonment of Latino and African American students in the United States and youth in general in throughout the continent.

5) Greater resources must be dedicated to public sector education institutions. No more diversion of funding for health and education to prisons or other areas.

6) Respect for the social purpose of university education, against the systemic attack on the critical nature of education in our three countries. In Mexico, exemplified by the gradual dismantling of alternative education projects with social commitment, such as the case of the College of Sciences and Humanities (CCH) and the Institute of Middle Higher Education (IEMS) of Mexico City. We reject all interference by financial bodies in decision-making, evaluation and accreditation of our universities, and as such we demand the real and effective integration of students in spaces of institutional representation. No more exclusion of students from decision-making.

Special Resolutions

In solidarity with the Veracruzana University that in the face of violence unleashed against the university community by the state government and embodied by the current governor Javier Duarte; in the process of struggle for democratization and with respect to our comrades' institution's budget in Veracruz we declare our support by joining in demanding an immediate solution to their demands.

An explicit call for the Mexican government to recognize the education model of the rural teacher's colleges (*escuelas normales*) and to put an immediate end to the project to eliminate them

An end to the intimidation and harassment of students of the National Autonomous University of Mexico

(UNAM) Law Faculty for their defense of university democracy.

The defense of public education is a responsibility of all society and as such we, the Trinational Student Gathering, demand from presentation with life of the student teacher comrades were were disappeared from Ayotzinapa, Guerrero. They were taken alive, and we want them back alive!

Let us fight for a new model that transforms the objectives and direction of public education and coordination of the sectors involved in this struggle.

The resolutions of this first Trinational Student Gathering, will be distributed and presented in the 12th Conference of the Trinational Coalition in Defense of Public Education, to be held May 13, 14 and 15 of 2016 in Vancouver, Canada.