
Jeers for Lula, Cheers for Chavez in Brazil

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The fifth edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) ended today, January 31, in the city of Porto Alegre (capital of the southernmost Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul).

According to information supplied by the organization, the event, which started on January 26, included the participation of 155,000 people and 6,588 organizations from 135 countries.

The reading of the text with the forum figures was done by Brazilian Indian Ariana Morinoco and by the representative of the afro-descendant movement, Valério Lopes.

In all, there was a total of 2,500 activities like debates, talks, shows, art exhibitions and film presentations, among others. 352 proposals for action in various fields were submitted in the six days of the event.

At the closing of the forum, there was a performance by musical groups from Palestine, India, Zambia and Morocco, and also by American Indians.

Chavez

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez was received as a rockstar, January 30, at the WSF. He was greeted with hugs and cheers by a 15000 strong crowd and there were people shouting "Here comes the boss!"

Many activist in the Forum expressed their opinion that Chavez is now their most important voice against liberalism in trade, an idea sponsored by the the U.S. and a move believed to benefit multinational companies and harm workers, who are made into slaves.

Chavez addresssed the Forum saying: "Now the imperialist forces are starting to strike against the people of Latin America and the world, and it's up to our soldiers to stay alert and be prepared to defend the people and not to submit themselves to the interests of the empire."

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in contrast to Chavez was jeered and booed contantly while speaking to the Forum participant on January 28. He has been accused of failing to fulfill his promises of social reforms.

Chavez came in defense of Lula saying: "I love Lula! I respect him. Lula is a good guy with a big heart. He's a brother and a comrade."

Lula

Addressing the Forum on January 27 the Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva defended the union between the developing countries. "It is important to know that all countries in South America had, until recently, a subordination to the so-called developed world.

"And we decided to establish a relationship of political trust and complementarity amongst us, defining the thesis that the integration of speeches is not enough, that integration has to be with concrete policies," stated Lula.

"I learned in the union movement that if I am poorer and need more strength I need more people next to me," he declared. One of the main strategies in the government's foreign policy is the approximation of Brazil with other

developing countries, not forgetting, however, relations with the traditional partners, such as the United States, the European Union and Japan.

Lula participated in the launch of the campaign entitled "Global Call Against Poverty", which gathers almost 100 entities engaged in the fight for development and fulfilment of the Millennium Goals, established by the United Nations Organisation (UN) that foresees the reduction by half of misery in the world by 2015.

With information from Anba