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France

Notre-Dame-des-Landes: a popular and militant success!

- News from around the world -

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The propaganda of the media and the government will not change anything. The mass rally on 3rd and 4th August at Notre-Dame-des-Landes is a success in terms of mobilization against the Ayraultport

Far from the ridiculous figure of 4,000 participants announced by the local authorities and the media, nearly 40,000 people came together to declare their opposition to the proposed airport. And far from the divisions that were announced, it was furthermore the whole movement, whether political activists, trade unionists, associations or autonomists, that demonstrated its unity of action in the context of this mobilization.

Beyond the fantasies of the media, the formal and informal discussions that took place between the various components of the movement placed this weekend under the sign of solidarity. Furthermore, it was hundreds of volunteer activists, reflecting the broad scope of the local mobilization, who worked for several months to organize this gathering.

This popular gathering, festive and political, in the middle of summer, demonstrated the determination of all those who want to do away with the capitalist vision embodied in this project.

In the course of the fifty debates that took place over the weekend, all of them packed out, the participants were able to discuss jobs, agriculture, repression, competition between different areas, public-private partnership, energy, democracy. All of these debates went far beyond the project and posed fundamentally the question of a change in society. The activists of the NPA participated fully in these exchanges.

Activists came from all over France to share the experience of their struggles against other big useless projects. And because it could be the first popular victory against the Ayrault government, the battle of Notre Dame-des-Landes is now inspiring other struggles, such as the one taking place in Morvan, where the occupation of territory, through the construction of an area to be defended (ZAD), is playing a key role in mobilizing against an industrial sawmill.

Young people are not mistaken. If they were particularly active this weekend, it is also because Notre-Dame-des-Landes represents an area of freedom, autonomy and self-organization in the face of the authorities. In this sense the struggle of Notre-Dame-des-Landes is already a victory.

This gathering marks yet another step in the construction of a relationship of forces against Vinci, the government and local employers: we won't give anything up!

August 8, 2013

[1] This is a play on words. Ayrault is the French Prime Minister and the French for airport is "aéroport"