

The spectre of a Fifth International

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Among the issues being debated by the theorists and publicists of the movement is the formation of a Fifth International.

One of the key figures on the reformist wing of the movement, Bernard Cassen of Attac and the World Social Forum, declares himself firmly opposed to what he calls the 'nagging temptation of the fifth international'.

Michael Lowy, co-drafter of the declaration of the World Social Forum, noted that a French employers' newspaper spoke recently of 'the danger of a Fifth International', while himself preferring a new international 'without name or number'.

Author Patrick Bond has a section of his essay in a recent book, *The New Politics of Empire* called *Next steps: towards a 'fifth international'*. Welcoming the rise of the anticapitalist movement he argues: 'The time may well arise for a formalisation of the movement's character in explicitly political terms, such as within the traditions of international socialism' for which the four internationals provide a host of lessons?.

Why is a discussion starting to emerge on the apparently obscure question of a Fifth International? The answer is that the descendants of previous four working class internationals influence and indeed 'lead' the new anticapitalist movement.

The Past Grips the Present

Each of the four Internationals represented a great gain for the anticapitalist workers of the world. In their heyday they represented a deadly threat to the exploiters. This meant that the capitalists used every possible means to divert them from their anticapitalist goals and break them up. Due to their direct pressure from without and from their bureaucratic agencies within each of these Internationals collapsed as an effective instrument of social revolution. As a result, what remains of them organisationally represents the political continuation of their periods of betrayal and degeneration, still misleading and aborting working class struggles.

Anarchists, with all their misleading prejudices against politics, leadership and effective organisation, represent the degeneration of the First International. ATTAC, the PT of Lula in Brazil, the reformist clique around the Mayor of London, continue the class collaboration of the Second International, just as Rifondazione Comunista and the French Communist Party (PCF) do for the Third.

Today, the Fourth International and its fragments 'from the French LCR to the British SWP' continue the unprincipled policy adopted in 1951 of adapting systematically to the programmes and leaders of the Second and Third Internationals, in the hope that they will automatically evolve in the direction of revolution through the unfolding of a disembodied 'process'.

Everything essential and vital in the previous four Internationals can be preserved and restored only by

founding a new Fifth International. On the basis of the lessons to be learnt from the previous four, and by analysing the new reality of globalisation and the 'war on terrorism' that we face today, a new programme must be elaborated and a new international fighting party must be built in every country.

Far from being an 'artificial' or 'obscure' question which has been 'dragged into the debate' as if from the outside, the question of a Fifth International has inevitably arisen at this time.

As the South African anticapitalist writer Patrick Bond observes, the interconnection of the struggles and movements that have emerged against neoliberalism, capital and war over the last ten years has reached a historic height. The absence of an International has meant that the achievements of the new global movement are less than those of many previous international initiatives – we have held gigantic protests but secured remarkably few victories.

Nevertheless the possibility of overcoming this absence can be seen in what Bond calls a 'multi-issue convergence' of resistance on a broader world scale than ever before, from the Zapatista uprising on 1 January 1994, through Seattle, Genoa and continuing.

These struggles demand organisation. The Zapatistas' global initiative in 1996 led to the creation of People's Global Action. When this failed to adopt an effective structure and programme, replicating the errors of the anarchists in the First International, the traditional mass organisations came onto the scene – often more conservative, with a more established bureaucracy but also wielding far greater power in terms of funds and, above all, numbers.

Whereas the initial phase of street actions and protest saw large numbers of newly radicalised youth rallying to libertarian ideas and above all to direct action, the subsequent emergence of counter-summits resembling gigantic policy forums were ideal locations for the remnants of the Second and Third Internationals to nurture a new global reformism. The first WSF in Porto Alegre in 2001, subsequent counter-summits, national, regional and continental social forums all followed, including European Social Forums in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

The high point of the movement, its greatest achievement, flowed directly from the first ESF in Florence in 2002 – the most radical yet of the international counter-summits. On the last day an Assembly of Social Movements was held which called for worldwide protest against the threat of war on Iraq for 15 February 2003. Twenty million people answered the call – the biggest ever co-ordinated anti-imperialist action in human history.

But that lies in the past. It is clear to any participant in the movement that it has reached a crossroads, even an impasse. The movement has now entered a period of sharp disagreement on the next steps to take in developing its structure. And this represents a deep difference about what we want the movement to achieve, where we want it to go.

Back to the First International?

Many anarchists and populists – especially on the Peoples Global Action wing of the movement – firmly believe that the movement should not form a political party, that parties should not be allowed formally to exist within the movement, that the working class should not come to the head of the struggle as this would divide the popular masses, that the peasants and excluded urban poor can play just as much of a leading political role as the workers, that the workers and peasants should not seize state power, that all power and authority must be rejected, but 'direct action' is the key to success.

It scarcely needs to be said that these are not 'new' ideas. Nor are they merely a bald repetition of old

ideas. They are the ideas of the collapsed First International and specifically of its anarchist wing applied in contemporary conditions.

There was a powerful resurgence of these ideas between 1996 and 2001. This can be traced to an international initiative of the Zapatista rebels in Mexico. From the mid-1990s onwards they declared that they wanted to reach out beyond national boundaries and create an intercontinental network of resistance. Marcos said in 1996 to the first Encuentro in Chiapas:

?This intercontinental network of resistance, recognizing differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistances around the world. This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organizing structure; it doesn't have a centralising head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network of all who resist.? (Our Word is our Weapon: Selected Writings of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, published by Serpents Tail, UK)

There was great historical merit and originality in the Zapatista call to use the new media of personal computers and the Internet to target neoliberal globalisation, to urge global concerted protests against it. It led directly to the great series of global mobilisations and summit sieges which remain a key feature of the twenty-first century class struggle. But Zapatismo had great weaknesses too.

The first post-modern guerrilla movement praised diversity as the source of our strength- a phrase consciously echoing and negating the traditional working class slogan ? ?unity is strength.?

Of course the myriad struggles of the oppressed nationalities, of the poor or landless peasants, of the shantytown dwellers, of women and young people of those persecuted by racists are an enormous resource of strength for the struggle against capitalism.

But is it sufficient to create another world? Just as unity (a good thing) can easily be confused with uniformity (a bad one), so diversity can be confused with disunity. Diversity, if it is simply ?celebrated?, is no more than divergence. And let no one imagine that the ruling class of all countries does not actively set out to turn diversity into disunity in the ranks of those who are fighting it.

If we simply leave our struggles each with its own goals, developed from and only adapted to a series of separately conceived ?realities?, if we stubbornly refuse to develop a global strategy to deal with the totality of the system that exploits and oppresses us, then the tiny handful of capitalists will continue to ?divide and rule?.

Despite the enormous successes of its global days of action in the 1999-2001 period, the PGA, the attempted organisational expression of this ?intergalactic network?, has also suffered stagnation and proved unable to continue to summon, let alone coordinate action.

In a report from the PGA meeting held in Mumbai in January 2004 it confesses:

?PGA has always had great difficulty maintaining communication and developing real working relations between convenors, precisely because the convenor organisations are not NGOs, but authentic grassroots organisations (..) engaged in huge, often critical and even desperate local struggles. International coordination has consistently been a last, neglected point of their agenda.?

The European PGA activists ? ?the support group? ? have not stepped in for fear of being Eurocentric, or taking over or, above all, of offering leadership but since, ?so far, the convenors or other southern organisations haven't taken their place?, fragmentation has continued.

Here is the whole dilemma for the anarchists, autonomists. They see themselves as simply 'supporting' the struggles of the global south, but not in any way participating in a common organisation which will produce a strategy and a leadership that could work to realise shared goals.

This organisation should be democratic, its programme truly global and its leading bodies constituted by elected representatives from all over the world, not just Europe. Then there would be no need for guilty heartache and promises to serve and support not dominate or direct.

On the other hand the reports shows that the mass peasant and indigenist organisations formally signed up within the PGA show an unwillingness, or an incapacity, to join in forming even an operating international network. All this shows that once again, as in the 1860-70s and the 1930s, anarchism, a product of the disintegration of the First International 'though rejuvenated by the degeneration of the Second and Third ' only repeats its incapacity to fight capitalism.

Reanimating the Second

Chico Whitaker is a founder of the World Social Forum in Brazil. He is a Catholic activist, an influential member of Lula's Workers' Party (PT), a local councillor and a member of the WSF's International Council. In his essay Open Space, which was circulated in March 2003, he argued that the WSF and its regional forums like the ESF should not become a movement, and should remain only a 'space'.

'The Charter of Principles of the WSF emphatically defines it as a 'space'. Not everyone, however, thinks and acts as if it were really a space, or that it should always remain a space. Many consider the Forum a 'space' that is something of a 'movement'. To others, it is 'still' 'only a space'. This means it can and should become an enormous movement, or a 'movement of movements' as some journalists call it.

'The great success of the February 15, 2002 demonstrations against the war on Iraq leads most enthusiasts to see this as a result of the Forum, even tending to say that it is the product of the Forum. It encourages others to want the Forum to take up a mobilising function, like all movements. To begin with, movements and spaces are completely different things... either they are one or the other. Nevertheless, they can co-exist. Nor are they opposites, which means that they do not neutralise each other, but rather, they may even be counterparts. But you can't be both things at the same time, not even be a bit of each ' which would end up by impairing one or the other.'

But who called the 15 February 2003 demonstration? The Assembly of Social Movements that took place on the last day of the European Social Forum in Florence in November 2002. By acting not only as a space but also precisely as a movement, the Florence meeting succeeded not only in coordinating the biggest ever global protest against imperialism ... it also directly refuted the undialectical notion that it is impossible to be a space and a movement at the same time.

What does it mean when Whitaker says, 'it is fundamental to ensure at all costs the continuity of the Forum as a space and to not yield to the temptation of transforming it now or even later, into a movement'? It means our model must not be one that can co-ordinate and organise action.

A movement, as its name implies, aims to go somewhere ' from one place to another. A space, on the contrary, is defined not by motion, but by stasis, not by its content, but by its emptiness. Things move through it ' it stays put. It is just a location, or, as Whitaker and others like to put it, it is like a public square and, moreover:

'It is like a square without an owner. If the square has an owner other than the collectivity, it fails to be a square, and becomes private territory. Squares are generally open spaces that can be visited by all those

who find any kind of interest in using it.?

Now nobody could deny ? and nobody is denying ? the need for a physical location in which movements can meet and discuss. This is simple common sense ? there is no theoretical breakthrough here. Rather Whitaker is making an absurd counterposition: that in order to constitute a location in which discussion can occur, the participating movements must observe a self-denying ordinance and refrain from planning action and creating a higher movement expressing common goals.

How is this reactionary rule imposed? In Porto Alegre in 2001 and in London 2004, the municipal state exercises real control over the ?space? just as it does over the square. It is no accident that local councillor Chico Whitaker has recourse to this metaphor, just as the bureaucratic supporters of London mayor Ken Livingstone have appealed to precisely the same arguments in their efforts to control and police the agenda and outcome of the 2004 European Social Forum. Money and power decide.

We need rather to proceed from the needs of struggle ? a question Whitaker utterly avoids. Even when those seeking action have tried to hold assemblies directly after a Social Forum, Whitaker objects. He zeroes in on the Assembly of Social Movements ? the body that called the tremendous 15 February 2003 demonstration, and attacks it directly: ?those who want to transform it into a movement are working against our common cause. They are ... destroying a powerful instrument that is available to them, for expanding and enlarging their presence in the struggle we are all engaged in. Initiatives that have been taken by certain self-nominated ?social movements? point in this direction. Recently the ?co-ordination? of these movements has gone farther: as members of the Organisation Committees for the WSF events, they have proposed that their own final meeting, that is normally held towards the end of the Forum, be included in the last day of the Forum schedule.?

How can this venomous hostility to the coordination of mass action be explained? To do so we should view Whitaker?s campaign in its historic context.

The ideas of the Second International still exert a powerful hold in the movement ? or, to be more exact, over the movement. This reformist social-democratic organisation has acted as an instrument of capital since the onset of the First World War in 1914. Today it is one of the parties of the Second International ? Lula?s Workers? Party in Brazil (PT) ? which, in alliance with reformist intellectuals in Europe, is seeking to exert control over the movement through the illegitimately imposed ?Porto Alegre Principles? and the International Council of the World Social Forum.

The ideas of the Second International are represented in the movement both by actual members of that International or by ideologues of initiatives like ATTAC.

They want the activities of the movement to be strictly limited to lobbying governments for minor changes to the global taxation and trade systems and creating supra-national bodies under the aegis of the United Nations to check the actions of the USA and corporations. Therefore they oppose the name ?anticapitalist? for our movement; they do not want to challenge capitalism, just to modify it. They speak only of opposing neoliberalism, as if the issue were a matter of changing only the predominant policy of the capitalists, not the system, not capitalist exploitation itself.

Like the proponents of anarchism and populism, they use arguments first raised by supporters of Bakunin in the First International to oppose ?leadership?, ?politics? and ?authority? dominating the movement. But unlike the activists of the PGA, they do so cynically, without actually opposing the principles or the practice of bourgeois leadership, bourgeois politics or bourgeois authority. Drawn as they are overwhelmingly from the bourgeois intelligentsia, from the academic, professional, property owning strata and from the

bureaucracy of the local and regional state, they use pseudo-anarchist phrases to prevent the movement taking on a more defined, structured, form, with its own democracy and its own defined goals and actions as a movement. And understandably so: they have already chosen other, existing parties and institutions which they want to preserve as the unchallenged instruments of modest social change: the Brazilian PT, the French Socialist Party and other parties of 'social' capitalism.

They believe that they can use the mass movements of resistance as a 'stage army' to back their negotiations. But there is one thing they fear far more than the failure of their polite lobbying - they do not want to see a democratically organised mass movement, let alone a new International, emerge based on a fight for working class politics and working class power.

Refounding the Third

The Third International was dead for revolution when it approved the policy of the German communists that allowed Hitler to come to power. It went over to reformism in 1935 when it backed French militarism and proceeded to enter 'popular' governments with capitalist parties.

Today the supporters of the unreconstructed policies of the degenerated Third International are active in the new movement. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), played a huge part in hosting the World Social Forum in Mumbai through its various 'social' organisations. The Rifondazione Comunista of Italy was influential at the Genoa protests and the first European Social Forum in Florence in 2002.

The French Communist Party was instrumental in delivering local authority support for the ESF in Paris in 2003. The PDS of Germany and the Stalin-worshippers of the Belgian Workers Party have participated in the protests and preparatory assemblies. And the Greek KKE will play a major role in hosting next year's ESF in Athens.

Given the rightward shift of social democracy towards implementing neoliberal policies, some of these parties seem like the only mass left and socialist forces around and consequently have expanded into the terrain the Second International vacated.

Others have transformed themselves into old style social democratic parties. A number of them have come together and formed the European Left Party. Yet none have learned the lessons of the catastrophes and crimes which the 'Stalintern' inflicted on the working class: paralysing bureaucratism; offering the capitalists a popular front governmental coalition whenever the system goes into crisis; and poisonously disloyal attacks on forces to its left.

At the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002, Fausto Bertinotti, the leader of Italy's Rifondazione Comunista, resisted the idea of a new International by declaring that the movement should 'avoid the mistakes of the past'. It would be well if he would identify clearly what these mistakes were. Not the formation of an international leadership, but the adoption of the Stalinist policies that destroyed the International: these are the '20th Century ideas' we should seek to avoid today. But this was not what he meant.

Bertinotti has steadfastly refused to rule out participation of Rifondazione in another capitalist government. The policy of the people's front - which has already seen the RC participate in the Olive Coalition in the mid-1990s, could see Bertinotti and his party once again bailing out the Italian capitalists in time of crisis.

Activists of the anticapitalist and labour movements should call on Rifondazione Comunista - and on all left wing parties within the movement - to break with the capitalists and rule out sharing government with them. This can only be achieved by showing to the movement in struggle the need to break once and for

all with the Third International's fatal 'theory of the Popular Front'.

The hidden hand of the Fourth International

What of the Fourth International? Though the FI never had mass support, today the 'official' Fourth International organisation has recognised the potential of the global movement to contribute towards the creation of a new mass International. Sections of its supporters in Brazil have been purged from Lula's PT and are involved in the WSF process. In Europe their supporters in France - the LCR - are active in the ESF. In Italy they play a role as a loyal current within the Rifondazione Comunista.

Its 15th World Congress, held in the summer of 2003, declared: 'The construction of the Internationals that have existed in history has been linked each time to new tasks linked to large-scale social and political developments. This new political cycle of reorganization poses from the beginning the problem of a new mass revolutionary anti-capitalist/anti-imperialist International.'

So far, so good. The question is how the FI believes this can come into being, and what activists can do to make it happen.

The FI rightly focuses on drawing the new forces of the anticapitalist movement into the struggle for a new International. The Congress resolution observes:

'We cannot imagine the qualitative step towards the creation of a new International without an important contribution from these new forces.'

And yet then immediately, with its very next words, the resolution draws back from an open struggle towards this aim: 'These important but diverse forces cannot be formed into a new international political organisation at this stage.'

If this were merely a statement of fact - that the argument for the formation of a new International has not yet been won within the anticapitalist movement - then no-one could quarrel with it. But as so often with the latter day Fourth International it is more than this - it is used to justify their refusal to campaign openly within the movement and bringing forward concrete proposals for the establishment of a democratic global political organisation to fight capitalism - a new International.

The reason is that to bring forward these proposals would alienate the reformists, such as ATTAC and the union leaders, without whom unity would break down. So instead of an open struggle for contending class aims we get 'behind the scenes deals. This is why within the co-ordinating bodies of the Assembly of the Social Movements (ASM) for the Paris ESF, members of the FI pushed for the abandonment of proposed commitments to a Europe-wide day of strikes and demonstrations against attacks on welfare and social provision, opting instead for a declaration on a lowest common denominator that would not alienate the right wing of the movement. It is why they do not challenge the ban on voting and effective democracy within the ASM.

Of course when a majority of participants in the ESF do not agree with a proposal one has to recognize facts. But we should scarcely treat this as a reason for postponing commencement of an open struggle for action. How else will people's views change? How else will the 'process of experience and clarification' that the FI Congress seeks, take place? While some of the participating initiatives will be vehemently opposed, some may rally to it, some may enter a process of internal differentiation, some may change. How else do movements emerge; how else do minorities become majorities?

Leading supporters of the FI conjure up a disembodied historic process in which the antagonism between

the component forces in the movement is somehow magically blown away as if in a great cleansing wind of suprahistorical reconciliation. Michael Lowy encapsulates this perfectly:

?This new international could selectively integrate the positive contribution of the four proletarian internationals. It would be the heir of Babeuf and Fourier, Marx and Bakunin, Blanqui and Engels, Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin, Emma Goldman and Buenaventura Durutti, Gramsci and Trotsky, Emiliano Zapata and Jose Carlos Mariategui, Augusto Caesar Sandino and Farabundo Martí, of Ernesto Ché Guevara and Camilo Torres, of Ho-Chi-Minh and Nazim Hikmet, Mehdi Ben Barka and Malcolm X ? and of many others. However, its main reference point would be the existing social movements and, in the first place, the Movement of Global Resistance to neoliberalism.?

And of course it would be a huge advance if an international were to emerge encompassing such broad and mass forces ? but how would it happen? And would it really be the ?heir? of all these figures whose theories and practices not only diverged but violently clashed? Marx and Bakunin had one or two run-ins in their time: the anti-political and anti-democratic programme of the anarchists destroyed the First International as an effective weapon against capital. The supporters of Ho Ch Minh ?selectively integrated?? the supporters of Trotsky through a policy of physical extermination.

None of this is to decry the need to call on all the forces in today?s movement to unite in a new International. But it is either hopeless naivety or a form of deception to hold out the prospect that this ?integration?? will occur without sharp political conflict and struggle. We say this not because of an obsession with resolving doctrinal disputes of the past for mere historical reasons, but because of their direct relevance to the struggles of today.

We have to fight openly within the Social Forums and the Assemblies of Social Movements to go beyond the limitations of Porto Alegre imposed by the reformists and accepted by the populists and anarchists. We need to propose and fight for the adoption of a democratic structure. We need to insist on the movement?s right and duty to adopt policy, challenge the neoliberals and social democrats, call and co-ordinate action and, yes, to lead a struggle for power. What does this mean? To fight for the formation of a fifth International.

Instead the FI holds out the prospect of an automatic process which will carry out the tasks of revolutionaries ? so that we don?t have to. According to this logic it is counter-productive to bring forward criticisms of allies within the movement because ?history? and ?the struggle? will overcome these for us. Far better to press gently on one or two points and, above all, remain on good enough terms to keep positions of influence within the movement, ready for when the day comes.

In this way all the ?big questions? that divide revolutionaries from reformists can be left aside for history to ?sort out? questions like not whether the left should participate in capitalist governments or not.

So rather than demanding, as the revolutionary FI did between 1938 and 1951, that anticapitalist working class parties should rule out governing in coalition with the capitalists, it proposes the following for the programme of its electoral bloc, the European Anticapitalist Left: ?against participation in social-liberal governments.?

Why not rule out participation in capitalist governments entirely? Because the Italian Rifondazione Comunista did take part in a capitalist government in the Olive Green Coalition ? and because to its shame the Fourth International took part in Lula?s coalition government with capitalist politicians in Brazil today, where an FI member was minister of agriculture. In the government which refuses the Brazilian peasants? insistent demands for land!

In reality the FI leaders' policy is not to fight within the broad anticapitalist movement for a new International, but to create a reunification of the far left currents within it. How? By negotiated compromise, aiming to draw in a 'big fish' like Rifondazione. This was revealed in the programme it advanced for the European Anticapitalist Left. Its journal International Viewpoint approvingly quotes the decisions of the EAL at its June 2003 conference:

'Our alternative programme is as simple, easy and clearly defined as the bosses' one: a full-time, stable job, a decent wage, and a liveable replacement income (in the event of unemployment, disease, disability or retirement) for everyone; radical reduction of working time without loss of pay or intensification of work, with compensatory hiring; the right to housing, education and professional training and health care, all good quality; and access to means of public transport. These political and social rights will be equal for all workers, native and immigrant, men and women. Implementing them requires: a radical extension of public services; a recasting of the state budget (including the tax system) which drastically increases social spending; and a radical redistribution of wealth and income from capital towards labour. For this purpose all anti-capitalist measures must be taken that are needed to control and, if necessary, expropriate private property and transform it into social, public property. Another Europe is possible: social, democratic, egalitarian, ecological, internationalist - a socialist Europe!'

What is this? It is a programme for the peaceful transformation of current society into one based on controlling private property, nationalising property 'if necessary', an enhanced welfare system, certain guaranteed rights and a redistributive tax system. All of these things are entirely progressive - and all are possible within the confines of the capitalist system. This is nothing more than a programme of reforms. It is silent on the forms of struggle that workers will need to develop to achieve these goals, and silent on the type of government and type of social transformation that will be needed to carry them out.

No lasting gains can be made for the working class if the key levers of economic and political power remain in the hands of the capitalist class - they will sabotage and undermine all attempts at an equitable distribution of wealth and will use their armies to crush us if we push too far - as in the Paris Commune over 130 years ago and Chile 30 years ago.

Without abandoning the fight for reforms which benefit the working class, revolutionaries must never shy away from pointing out these fundamental features of the system. Instead we explicitly link the struggle for partial improvements to 'a system of transitional demands, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very foundations of the bourgeois regime,' as the Fourth International once recognised under Leon Trotsky.

Today's Fourth International has abandoned this approach and reverted back to an earlier, social democratic view of programme in which the socialist programme is divided into a minimum programme, 'which limited itself to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the maximum programme, which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future. Between the minimum and the maximum programme, no bridge existed', as Trotsky noted.

The Fourth International has had its day. Its revolutionary heritage must be recovered and reapplied through the creation of a fifth International.

Towards a Fifth International

Each of the four Internationals represented an attempt to unite the fighting working class and popular forces of the world in a global political party. Each began with the aim of coordinating struggles between the workers of several countries, drew together (or attempted to draw together) parties and movements

from different traditions and ideological starting points, but which were being compelled to fight together on the same historical and political terrain. Each sought to develop an international democratic structure, so that differences of analysis and programme could be not merely discussed or stated, but actually resolved at a higher level. In this way, Congresses and delegate voting enabled a higher level of unified action and coherence to be achieved not just through negotiations between established national leaders, but through open political struggle and voting by the delegates and activists of an international movement.

How can this be achieved today? We must fight at the London ESF and the WSF in Porto Alegre in 2005 for all anticapitalist, worker, peasant and youth organisations to unite in a democratic structure. This means that we must reject and overturn the so-called 'Porto Alegre Principles' in the Charter of the WSF, which ban decision-making, democracy and political parties from the Forum.

What is more, we must utilise initiatives like the Assembly of Social Movements to propose permanent delegate-based, elected, co-ordinating bodies that can prepare the way for a structured Congress in which organisational and policy proposals can be debated out, amended and adopted.

In order to express the real historic interests of the working class movement, and to challenge the essence of capitalism, not just this or that expression of it, these movements will need to agree to struggle for political power. The new International will therefore be a political party or it will not be an International at all. But this emphatically does not mean that there would be the no role for a broader movement, no role for forums for encounters and debates, no role for unions or alliances with peasant initiatives.

But the need for alliances and forums cannot and must not be allowed to remain an argument against the formation of a world party in which the working class organisations express their political independence. The counter-argument that this stress on class independence will break the unity of the movement is an illusion. Class is a real social relation that cannot be 'excluded' from the global movement through an act of will. If working class interests do not come to the fore in the movement, then the interests of other classes will continue to predominate: the interests of the capitalists, which the reformist policies of the Second and Third Internationals ultimately uphold; or the interests of the petit-bourgeoisie, which are so clearly expressed by the vacillating and inconsistent programmes, the petty maneuvering and intrigue, and the tawdry horse trading of the inheritors of the First and Fourth.

A strong working class international will not bring the era of the broad global movement to an end, but will deepen it and raise it to a higher level. While some arch-bourgeois elements might well withdraw, this would be no loss, certainly not when we take into account the tremendous attractive force that the movement would achieve by bringing the power of workers in action to the head of all its campaigns and initiatives.

Like the First, the Fifth International will need to draw the broadest layers of fighting forces together ? but it must quickly define its political goals, and resolutely reject any demands that renounce the only methods that can defeat capitalism: working class government and working class power.

Like the Second, the Fifth International must use the techniques of mass political action to rally not scores of hundreds in propaganda societies, but hundreds of thousands to parties of the working class. But we must never repeat the fatal error of tolerating reformist officials and careerist place-seekers in our ranks. Bureaucracy, national chauvinism, parliamentary or trade union reformism mean bloody defeat for the anti-capitalist movement.

Like the Third, the Fifth International must combine the maximum internal democracy with the maximum unity in action; both are preconditions for effective revolutionary struggle. But Communist Parties that rally

to the call for the Fifth International must break with the reactionary programme of Stalinism, its shameful methods and its cowardly goals.

Like the Fourth in its early years, the Fifth International must be prepared to fight, against the stream if necessary, for explicitly revolutionary goals. Unlike the Fourth International today, it must embrace its real responsibilities, and resolutely refuse to shift them onto 'history' or 'the process'. It must be unsparing in its criticisms of those centrists who promote the failed programmes of previous Internationals and shield the reformist leaders from revolutionary criticism.

There will be no lack of opportunities for the new internationalism to coalesce into a new International. The mass struggles of the last 10 years herald still greater days to come. Revolutionary crises and the chance to take power will emerge in South America, the Middle East, Europe and Asia over the years ahead. To go from protest to power, however, demands the formation of a Fifth International.

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