

Five, Six, Many New Internationalisms! (Nine Reflections on a Fifth International)

Wednesday 12 May 2010, by [WATERMAN Peter](#) (Date first published: 8 May 2010).

We first published this text when it had eighth thesis. After Cochabamba conference on Climate Change, Peter Waterman added one more. Here is the updated version of the text... waiting for thesis 10 to come...

‘Chavez Calls for a 5th International’. An unsourced image on the Links (Australia) website [1], possibly a Cuban poster, given it includes two of its statesmen, the iconography requires a paper of its own. In the middle is José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930), the ‘Peruvian Gramsci’, who famously said: ‘Las comunicaciones son el tejido nervioso de esta humanidad internacianalizada y solidaria’ (Communications are the nervous system of a humanity internationalised and in solidarity).

Introduction

At the turn of 2009-10 proposals for and public interest in a new Left International have finally come to a head.

The initial and major initiative has been that of Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela. This was widely endorsed at an international conference of Left parties in Caracas, November 2009, and was to be followed by an international conference, in Caracas again, April 2010. [2]

The second initiative is that of Michael Albert, the theorist of Parecon (Participatory Economics) and coordinator of the extensive Left Znet website in the USA. This began with an article by Albert and was followed by the project itself, which allowed for individual endorsements (1,262 by February 26). This second project was provoked by and addressed to the April 2010 conference. [3]

In the spirit of Gramsci’s ‘scepticism of the intellect, optimism of the will’, I wish (in reverse order) to both welcome and challenge these interrelated projects. My welcome and challenge follows that many of us accorded an earlier such project, that of the Neo-Marxist and Thirdworldist political-economist, Samir Amin.

Like Samir Amin’s initiative, those of Hugo Chavez and Michael Albert relate not only to the World Social Forum (founded 2001) but also to a long history of left internationals, going back to the International Working Men’s Association (the so-called First International), founded 1866, with the notable contribution of Karl Marx.

The Chavez project evidently emanates from a radical-nationalist state(sman) with socialist aspirations. It combines features of a socialist and thirdworldist international, being apparently open to states - or at to state-aligned or state-sponsored parties such as that created by Chavez - as well as to other Left parties and social movements. Whilst recognizing that the current crisis of global

capitalism touches all spheres of life, and the necessity for diversity, a conference call, echoed the Left tradition, declaring:

"The international encounter of Left-wing Political parties held in Caracas on November 19, 20 and 21, 2009, received the proposal made by Commander Hugo Chavez Frias to convoke the Fifth Socialist International as a space for socialist-oriented parties, movements and currents in which we can harmonise a common strategy for the struggle against imperialism, the overthrow of capitalism by socialism and solidarity-based economic integration of a new type."

There is here a notable silence on the state nature of the initiator. The social-movement project of Michael Albert is equally silent on the role of the state (or states?) in his 'participatory-socialist' international. But he is more explicit on the issues and forces familiar from the WSF and the global justice and solidarity movement more broadly:

- economic production, consumption, and allocation should be classless - which of course includes equitable access for all to quality and accessible education, health care and the requisites of health like food, water, and sanitation, housing, meaningful and dignified work, and the instruments and conditions of personal fulfilment
- gender/kinship, sexual, and family relations should not privilege by age, sexual preference, or gender any one group above others - which of course includes ending all forms of oppression of women, providing daycare, recreation, health care, etc
- culture and community relations among races, ethnic groups, religions, and other cultural communities should protect the rights and identity of each community up to equally respecting those of all other communities as well - which of course includes an end to racist, ethnocentric, and otherwise bigoted structures as well as securing the prosperity and rights of indigenous people
- political decision making, adjudication of disputes and implementation of shared programs should deliver people's power in ways that do not elevate any one sector or constituency to power above others - which of course includes participation and justice for all
- international trade, communication, and other interactions should attain and protect peace and justice while dismantling all vestiges of colonialism and imperialism - which of course includes cancelling the debt of nations of the global south and reconstructing international norms and relations to move toward an equitable and just community of equally endowed nations
- ecological choices should not only be sustainable, but should care for the environment in accord with our highest aspirations for ourselves and our world - which of course includes climate justice and energy renovation

I do not here wish to debate with either the Hugo Chavez or Michael Albert projects, which I have already done on the Znet site. Nor, for that matter, to respond to the growing number of contributions to discussion on the one project or the other. Some of these are well worth reading. They can be traced in the Resources below, in which I have concentrated references. I wish, rather, to make eight points I consider relevant to a new kind of international/ism that surpasses the limitations of past ones and that is relevant to the era of a globalised and networked capitalism.

1. Let a hundred flowers bloom!

One can utter this slogan with either enthusiasm or resignation. The era in which it was possible for *one* international or internationalism to gain or be granted primacy is over. I incline to celebration of new internationalist projects because of a) the long dearth of discussion on internationalism and the

absence of the necessary renewal, b) their thought-provoking effect, c) because these latest ones are themselves marked by the rising wave of the 'global solidarity and justice movement' and because, d) in an increasingly interconnected and informatised world, such other movements or networks are likely to be or become aware of and respond to them.

2. The newest internationalisms are *inventing* themselves, Left internationalism is trying to *re-invent* itself

The notion of a new *Left* international/ism is evidently dependent on the old Left – whether this goes back to the Third World internationalisms of the 1960s, the First, Second, Third and Fourth labour or socialist internationals, or to the French Revolution itself. The Left is 'the Left' because of the position occupied by the radical and populist wing of the Constituent Assembly of that revolution. The 'Left' is inevitably relational to a Right or Centre. This means that it was and is a part, as well as a critic, of that first great modern, national, liberal, but also militarist, commercial, bureaucratic, racist and problematically-democratic project. (Its 'fraternity' was not only machista but also nationalist and therefore compatible with French state centralism and imperialism). Something similar goes for the labour and socialist internationals, profound critics and opponents of the political-economy of capitalism yet in part also prisoners of its Eurocentred national-industrial productivist and centralising notion of modernity.

The newest global social movements often only pose themselves against *neo-liberalism and globalization* – as suggested by the adoption of such names as 'anti-globalisation' or 'alter-globalisation'. But increasingly they have been criticizing and taking action against the economy, politics, social relations and cultural and communication practices of capitalism more generally. Moreover, their internal and external articulations (articulation = both connection and expression) commonly go beyond those traditional to an industrial-national-colonial capitalism.

At a time of crisis for both capitalism and its Left, these newest global social movements, ideas or expressions, are surpassing the limits of both of the former and reviving the utopian thinking lost by the Left as capitalism over the centuries normalised itself.

The newest movements, thinkers and activists tend to surpass old Left ways of being, doing and proposing. They are surely better thought of as 'global social emancipatory movements'. And the fact that this new emancipatory movement has so far only been sketched out is to its (and our) advantage. It is still inventing itself. We can all take part in this invention.

That the historical or traditional international Left is now trying to reinvent itself is surely to be welcomed. Its major – sometimes overwhelming – stress on the political-economy of capitalism, on the import of class and class struggle, as well as more recent reflections on a post-capitalist political economy, all these make a welcome contribution to a new movement that may be weak on one or all of these. But the Left has not only to reinvent itself. It has also – given past crimes and misdemeanors in its name – to reassure a once-burned public, particularly in societies that experienced these. And this would seem to argue for maximum modesty in the face of the new global social movements that have in large part inherited its own original emancipatory appeal and role.

3. Beyond the privileged revolutionary subject (or *place, contradiction, enemy or problem*) there lies an expanding universe of such

Historical internationalisms/ists have depended on a privileged revolutionary *subject* (the proletariat, the peasantry, the lumpen-proletariat) or a privileged *place* (Russia, China, Cuba, Venezuela – or the next 'weak link in the capitalist chain'). They tend to particularise or prioritise one or two problems or enemies (the capitalist political-economy, imperialism, the North).

The new global solidarity movements may be sympathetic to or even positive about such priorities and may themselves appear to be 'single-issue' movements, but they evidently identify with their global opposite numbers and, increasingly, with the global justice and solidarity movement more generally.

The new movements are, however, highly sensitive about attempts to incorporate them into some universalistic project (i.e. a particularistic universalism). Particularly when this is identified by or with a particular state or statesperson, a particular party, theory or ideology. True, new political parties or tendencies, new states and statespeople (as well as elderly clergy in the tradition of liberation theology), have been effected by and are cognizant of the necessity of allowing for many or all emancipatory movements. As have certain projects for a New International. But until and unless they a) seriously recognise their traditional limitations, b) prioritise *social movement* internationalisms over those of parties and states, and c) act as *rearguards* to such, they may not be considered as trustworthy partners in creating a new kind of international/ism.

4. From a Left International (singular) to the global solidarity and justice movements (plural)

Enthusiasm for any new internationalism needs to be tempered by reflection on its etymology and history.

International suggests a relationship between nations, nationals, nationalisms, nationalists. It is self-evidently dependent on the word 'national'. There has been a tendency - even amongst some on the Left - to surpass the problematic implications of the historical internationalisms by using the concept 'transnational'. This, however, is a purely descriptive word, still dependent on the 'national' and carrying no necessary implication of solidarity. I propose we talk, rather, of 'global solidarity' or 'the new global solidarities' - in the singular or the plural.

There were 'internationalisms' before internationalism (and the nation), such as the religious universalisms, bourgeois and liberal cosmopolitanism, and the radical-democratic universalism of the French revolutionary epoch. 'Internationalism', however, came into its own as the universalistic aspiration of the 19th century labour and socialist movement. Each of the previous 'internationalisms' carried its own particularism, not only inviting but often imposing its universalism (Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, Western Modernity).

Labour and socialist internationalisms stood on the shoulders of these earlier giants... and reproduced various of their limitations. These 19th century internationalisms, too, represented were Eurocentred and often Eurocentric, hierarchical, mutually-competitive, dogmatic, and reproductive of the very nationalisms and state-isms they originally aspired to surpass. The universalistic (or ethnic, or regional) third-world internationalisms that followed World War II were linked to and commonly became dependent upon the post-colonial or anti-imperialist states.

The name 'Global Justice and Solidarity Movement' (GJ&SM) comes out of the Assembly of Social Movements at an early WSF. It still seems to fit. The idea of 'global solidarity' as ethic, theory and movement opens a way beyond the historical internationals. 'Global' obviously implies 'worldwide', but also encompasses that ever-expanding arena, cyberspace. 'Global' moreover, suggests 'holistic' and therefore allows for a surpassing of the single-subject, privileged-subject, regionally-biased or one-sided internationalisms of the past.

The GJ&SM could and should be the developing expression of radical-democratic social movements themselves, rather than the states or inter-state organs that claim to encompass or represent 'We the Peoples...', and the partisan politics/parties/politicians that have previously mediated between

the variously-alienated, exploited, marginalised social collectives and the capitalist, patriarchal, fundamentalist, military, polluting, racist hegemons.

Finally, both the diachronic (historical) and synchronic (social) perspective suggest the necessity for specifying the much too easily-used concept of 'solidarity'. It has long been an under-theorised term, thus allowing for the most contradictory and counter-productive practices – of paternalism, of group self-interest, of political manipulation, militarism, and of social, cultural and regional/racial domination.

Solidarity needs to be specified in terms of such possible different elements as Identity (Workers of the World Unite!), Substitution (standing in for the other), Reciprocity (exchange of equal qualities over time), Restitution (compensation for past wrongs). It also needs to be specified in relation to the different parties involved (worker to worker? worker to indigenous?). And it needs equally to be specified in terms of Axis (North-South?), Direction (South to North?), Reach (EU? Also Russia?) and - most difficult of all - the Impact on Meaning for the collective actors addressed or involved (reinforcing corporate identity? opening up to other Others?) .

5. Beyond institutionalization, networking

Is a Fifth (or other Left) institutionalised internationalism either appropriate or possible today ? The various bureaucratised and/or sectarian splinters of such abound.

There is still an International Trade Union Confederation, its allied Global Unions and – a pragmatic recent innovation – union-sponsored or union-friendly international NGOs, mostly headquartered at the core of the globalised capitalist European Union. Some of these are dependent on EU funding.

There are various internationals of Left, Socialist, Communist, Maoist, Anarchist or Marxist political parties. There is a Sao Paulo Forum of Latin American Left political parties. There are the remains of various state-sponsored and state-funded Thirdworldist internationals. There is even a (Trotskyist?) League for a Fifth International!

None of these has a particularly high profile either internationally or regionally. None is an evident source of innovation. None of them seem relevant to the epoch of a globalised networked capitalism and the rich but complex struggles against and beyond such.

The temptation to create or endorse a Fifth International, in either explicit or implicit reference to previous such, is comprehensible. But the promoters of these seem to make only superficial reference to the transformed – the revolutionised - nature of global capitalism, to the crisis of the state and inter-state system, of the political parties, of worker internationals or to the *relational principles* (it would be limiting to say *organizational principles*) of the multiple global solidarity movements - the way they operate internally or externally.

Within and against a globalised, informatised capitalism, increasingly networked and operating in the cultural and cyberspace, we see the newest global solidarity movements operating at all levels (local to cyberspatial). They are developing a cultural/communicational internationalism that goes both beneath and beyond the state-defined nation, the 'world of nation states' and their literally international relations.

Whilst commonly provoked by and addressed to the excesses of capital, state, inter-state agencies or strategies, the new global movements are at least implicitly aware that the power of the enemy lies in the weakness of (global) civil society (here understood as in increasing tension with state, capital, industrialism, racism, fundamentalisms). The increasingly common orientation is not to 'capture' the 'commanding heights' of capital, state, the military or culture, but to disempower these by reference

to the principles of peace, justice, equality, the commons, the local, the popular, the radically-democratic, the extension and deepening of self-determination, self-management, the environmentally-responsible and climate-friendly.

Whilst the New International projects, prophets or sponsors show awareness, to differing degrees, of Manuel Castell's 'real virtuality' (cyberspace) it is hardly seen as either the foundation stone (an admittedly too-concrete metaphor) of their projects nor even a building block for such. This despite the New International projects being overwhelmingly known through and discussed on the web!

If the past was that of place-fixated and institutional internationals - connected by the press, rail, telegraph, later by phone, radio and film - the present is surely the age of a communications and cultural internationalism, an increasingly networked and horizontal movement, operating in infinite space, re-inventing itself according to a computer logic (horizontality and feedback) and as powerful new applications develop. Increasing millions of workers, women, citizens and the indigenous have some kind of computerised access (if only a cell phone), often in their own language. Billions have computer communication and millions have growing programming skills.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is not simply a tool (a hammer, a sickle, a gun, a vaccine), nor simply an existing community (The Hague, the Andes, trade unionists, women, Marxists). It is also utopia - a non-existing but desirable place or space (or various compatible or cooperative utopias) to be constructed by those interested and capable. The web is where capitalism increasingly lives and governs, and where increasing radical-democratic struggle occurs. And in relationship to that old world of institutions - of industrial, financial, military, national, religious, educational, inter-state agencies - our own region of cyberspace operates less to capture hegemonic heights than to circumvent, subvert, dissolve, decentralise, democratise, to connect, to advance a never-ending dialogue and dialectic of movements and civilizations.

6. Not beyond the World Social Forum but complementary to it

There are certain things that the World Social Forum will not do, cannot do and even should not do. Projects for a New or a Fifth International have been informed by WSF achievements, tend to pay it homage - sometimes grudging - and to present themselves as complementary to rather than competitive with the WSF. Others may consider their project as superior to this. The areas or issues of struggle globalised by the WSF may even find recognition in the charters or programmes of these new projects.

But the question must arise of whether the new projects go forward from or back before the WSF and the global justice and solidarity movement of which it forms a part. The two latest projects highlighted above seem open to the presence within their particular internationals of states, statespersons, and state-created or state-dependent political parties. The WSF distances itself in principle from such participants. But in practice it has made concessions to such, and even to commercial interests. Are we now to go back to the future?

However decisions might be taken in such a New International, it must be recognised that state-like instances, state-subordinated parties and self-proclaimed vanguard parties with anti- or simply counter-hegemonic claims, are going to carry disproportionate institutional weight and (particularly where state-linked) financial power. They have historically been ideologically heavy and democratically light. (Many development funding agencies, foundations and NGOs carry heavy financial weight and disguise their Euro- or Atlantic-centrism behind developmentalist jargon or technological funding criteria).

It thus behooves proponents of any New International to take this into account and to prioritise -

with all the problems and ambiguities this might itself imply – social movements of a radical-democratic nature. This can be done by foundational charter, by definition of membership (collective and individual) and by rules of procedure. It is, surely, one thing to have states or their substitutes *within* an international, something quite different for an autonomous international to enter into openly negotiated relationships with such.

7. The labour movement: internationalism's 800-pound gorilla

Given the extent to which the latest projects for a New International refer back to the socialist internationals of the past, their failure to make more than passing or rhetorical reference to the international working class and the organised labour movement is, well, striking. Admitting the existence of this 800-pound gorilla requires surpassing rhetorical appeals and responding to contemporary social-movement realities. Whether in the room or outside the house, labour is going to represent a major challenge for any Fifth International (as well as for *any* socially-emancipatory internationalism). [4]

It may well be that an implicit invitation to all (revolutionary? participatory? Social-democratic) Leftists to join a Fifth International would result in a considerable number of national, sectoral or regional unions (or shopfloor organisations, or autonomous labour networks) joining. It could have the effect of stimulating discussion amongst trade unions more generally. These have for decades seen little or no consideration of the meaning of international labour – as distinguished from *union* - solidarity. Yet, given the common destruction or reduction of unionism consequent on capitalist globalization, given the world-wide *informalisation* or *precarisation* of labour, such discussion is more urgently needed than ever.

This has, however, not notably occurred within the World Social Forum, despite its openness. Traditional trade unions, national or international, have increasingly joined, and the Brussels- or Geneva-based and Euro-centred International Trade Union Confederation/Global Unions and some of their members are members of its International Council. The ITUC has used the WSF largely as a friendly global civil society space in which to propagate its 'Decent Work' campaign (which actually originates with the UN's *inter-state* labour agency, the International Labour Organisation). An 'alternative' Labour and Globalisation network within the WSF has represented a union-oriented pressure group rather than an alternative pole of emancipatory orientation. The earlier New International project – that of Samir Amin – had a serious chapter on labour and has organised some dialogue on its internationalism, but has little to show for its efforts.

Given the weight and complexity of this area – both within capitalism and for emancipation from it – it would seem essential to have a wide-ranging, geographically-universal, deep-going dialogue on a new labour internationalism and its relation to the global justice and solidarity movement. And this *before* any pronouncement or institutionalization takes decisions over the heads – out of the hands – of the organizations, the networks, the support bodies *and the workers* concerned!

8. Don't New Internationalists need to speak before they leap?

Simple pronouncements of a Fifth or New International, so far subject more to endorsement than dialogue, and with a foundation to occur within months – this is to risk, if not invite, failure. Such proposals carry with them the scent of individual or group vanguardism – of a self-proclaimed elite or individual prophet substituting for a specified constituency, for all 'real' or 'revolutionary' socialists, 'the working class', 'the people', or the world.

Yet, given the very internet that these projects might gesture toward, the coordination of an open-access worldwide dialogue – or several such – would seem not only more democratic and more likely

to mobilise but also cheaper, more ecologically friendly, more flexible, more sustainable and, of course, less manipulable.

Such discussion as is occurring on the matter might even lead to the conclusion that what we *first* need is a website, or a portal drawing attention and giving access to the growing number of those concerned with a New International/ism (such as the Australia-based Links, see below). It is less with an authoritarian or even authoritative international structure and leadership that the road to global social emancipation starts, it is in virtuous spirals of dialogue, coordination, reflection, proposition, action and evaluation – as well as forms of cultural expression and exchange reaching parts of the human psyche that politics cannot touch.

9. An international(ist) state initiative informed by the newest social movements

So, there can be a statist initiative for a New Socialist International which does not take place as announced. And then, apparently, there can be a state initiative *informed by* the new internationalisms which does take place! Even within the same continent and the same inter-state alliance (ALBA - the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America).

This second initiative was, of course, that of the government of Evo Morales in the poverty-stricken, landlocked, but new ‘plurinational’ (multi-ethnic) state of Bolivia. It was on climate change and followed, on the one hand, the miserable public failure of the interstate conference in Copenhagen, 2009, and, on the other, the considerable impact there of the social movements or (radical-democratic) civil society (Neale 2010). The initiative was also clearly raised by the rising tide of Bolivian, Latin American and global indigenous movements. And it took place in the city that, with the successful Water Wars of 2000, [5], became one of the iconic moments/ places of the new global movements. The ‘World Peoples Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth’, to give it its official title, took successful place April 19-22, 2010. Numerous state and inter-state organizations were in attendance, and there was an extensive list of ‘self-organised activities’, proposed by interested NGOs, social movements and even a few Latin American unions. All this could be found on the WPCCC’s attractive website [6].

The PWCCC represents a radical innovation in state-initiated international conferences. Two of these can be found in the title itself. The first is the address to ‘peoples’ rather than to states or nations, thus assuming the attendance of ‘peoples’ existing within or across states; participation was numerically dominated by the indigenous, these coming not only from Bolivia but also from the region and the world. Another radical innovation was, of course, the address to the ‘rights of mother earth’, a notion originating with neither the West, Modernity, Socialists or the Proletariat but coming directly out of the experience and cosmovisión (worldview) of indigenous peoples. Yet another innovation was the decision to organize a referendum or plebiscite of the world’s peoples on the issue. Finally, and in self-evident contrast to the invisible Fifth International, the PWCCC not only had its own professional website but was accessible worldwide, due to the use of the full range of web applications. Such broadcasting was not only of a ‘one to many’ kind since numerous participant or observing entities were carrying out their own activities here.

Despite its innovatory address to Mother Earth (Pachamama to Andeans), to peoples rather than states or nations, some of my above-expressed doubts about the Hugo Chavez International re-appeared with respect to the Evo Morales project. These came first from the Uruguayan ecological activist, Eduardo Gudynas and had to do, firstly, with the ambiguity of the regime with respect to the conference itself (Gudynas 2010a), secondly to the ‘new extractivism’ of the new left governments of Latin America more generally (Gudynas 2010b).

That such doubts were grounded was literally demonstrated when the WPCCC took place.

Community groups elsewhere in Bolivia were embarrassing the government with a strike and transport blockage against a mining multinational. And autonomous social-movement events were held before and during the conference itself. The most dramatic of these was the addition of an unofficial *Mesa 18* (Workshop 18) to the 17 officially listed. This workshop, held under some police surveillance, outside the official conference, was sponsored by Aymara activists. It proposed the expulsion of all extractive industries from Bolivia, and the adoption of a new development model based on the Andean *cosmovisión*, on the *ayllu* (the traditional collective land-holding form) and on local self-sufficiency.

I am dependent for my impressions of the conference on the internet. What came over to me was the extent to which this state-sponsored conference appeared to be influenced by the model of the World Social Forum, right down to the 'official self-organised' workshops within the event, and the 'unofficial self-organised' workshops on the periphery. As also, according to at least one participant, of the chaotic programming. I further note the postponement of the planned global referendum on climate change, though this time to a fixed date in 2011 (it being argued that this could not be organised effectively before the next inter-state conference on climate change, Cancun, Mexico, late-2010).

In some ways, however, it seemed to me that the conference was more radical than the World Social Forum in clearly condemning capitalism and its civilisation (not just 'neo-liberalism' or 'imperialism', or 'the North'), in its many nefarious aspects. And in calling for an alternative model. This is not called 'socialism', presumably since it is inspired by pre-capitalist and, indeed, pre-class socio-ecological models and worldviews. In at least one other way, however, it reflected the statist preference for a (UN-approved? inter-state?) climate change tribunal, rather than one informed by, for example, the non-state model of the Russell Tribunal on the Vietnam War, and its successors http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russell_Tribunal. It is difficult to imagine the polluting states, complicit with global capital, agreeing to such a tribunal, particularly if with powers (like the World Trade Organisation) to not only judge but punish. And the energy any social movements devote to this effort would inevitably be at the cost of an autonomous tribunal, formed from and oriented toward social movements and civil society.

Whilst there were clearly tendencies on the part of the state to dismiss or delegitimise the critical social movements (local, national, global), and, possibly, for some opposition movements to demonise the state, this was not the dominant impression I received online. Here, it seemed to me, the 'autonomy from/engagement with' relationship of the social movements to the state or states had moved to a more advanced level. And the state was recognising the sometimes bothersome social movements as a legitimate and even helpful or necessary presence.

Greater scepticism about the prospects opened by Cochabamba came after the event from Edgardo Lander, a Venezuelan academic and activist best known for his critical engagement with the revolutionary process there. Lander (2010) fears that a developing critique of a perverse *civilisational model* (capitalist and/or socialist) may be reduced to 'climate change', understood rather as a 'problem'. And that the energy of the many diverse social movements that found expression in Cochabamba may be reduced to a 'Global People's Movement for Mother Earth' controlled or dominated in practice by the ALBA states. Although Lander nowhere refers to internationalism here, this is one more powerful warning of the limitations built into any state-initiated, state-based or state-dependent movement of global solidarity.

Conclusion

If I started with two explicit projects for a Fifth Socialist International, why do I finish with a state-sponsored conference on climate change, which social movements both motivated and attended, but

in which the concept of internationalism did not even figure? This may be because of a feeling that the two initiatives with which I began, one state-initiated and one proposed by a libertarian socialist, belong to the 20th century, either in language, relational form (how they imagine their own immediate community, how they relate to a wider public) or both. And that the radically innovative Cochabamba conference shows - if we consider global social-movement engagement with it or around it - one of the many faces, aspects or moments of a new global solidarity movement in formation.

There simply are more things in the ether and on earth than were dreamed of in your First International, Karl Marx!

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Footnotes

[1] <http://links.org.au/taxonomy/term/94>

[2] See on ESSF: [Commitment of Caracas](#)

[3] See on ESSF: [Proposal for a Participatory Socialist International](#)

[4] An unavoidable footnote: my own five-year effort to launch discussion on a Global Labour Charter has so far failed to interest even Left union or labour activists. I would like to put this down to labour's profound continuing incorporation into a previous era of capitalism, social struggle and compromise. It may be that a Fifth International would have more appeal to labour than my own apparently too-individual or too-utopian project.

[5] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2000_Cochabamba_protests

[6] <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/>