

Mumbai, India

Success of the first Meeting of Radical Parties

Friday 30 January 2004, by [ROUSSET Pierre](#) (Date first published: 30 January 2004).

An international meeting of parties of the radical, anti-capitalist left took place on January 200, 2004 in Mumbai (Bombay) in the Andheri district - thus outside the premises of the World Social Forum. It was a real success in both the atmosphere and warm solidarity in which it took place and the political breadth and number of organizations represented: 48 from 25 different countries (5 others involved in planning this initiative were not in the end able to come to Mumbai).

The meeting of a World Social Forum is always an exceptional occasion for many organizations to meet. This is obviously true for the organizations that prepare the forums . It is also true for those that support them and follow their activities, without necessarily being co-organisers.

This WSF was special in that it was meeting in Asia for the first time. And what is true for associations, movements and trade unions is also true for political parties: the relations are a lot more tenuous between the two extremities of the Eurasian continent than between Europe and Latin America, for example.

The opportunity offered by the World Social Forum's "migration" to India was therefore particularly precious. In this context, 18 radical, anti-capitalist parties from Europe and Asia launched on December 5, 2003 an invitation to the meeting in Mumbai. For the Asia-Pacific region there were three Marxist-Leninist communist parties from India (CPI-ML Liberation, CPI-ML, CPI-ML Red Flag), two Pakistani organizations (Labour Party LPP, and PKMP), the New Left Front (Sri Lanka), the DSP (Democratic Socialist Perspective) from Australia, two movements from South Korea (Power to the Working Class and All together) and three Filipino parties: the Marxist Leninist party of the Philippines (MLPP), the Philippine Workers' Party (PMP) and the Revolutionary Workers' Party-Mindanao (RMP-M). In Europe, the invitation was signed by the Left Bloc (Portugal), the United and Alternative Left (Catalonia), the Revolutionary Communist League (France), the Scottish Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party (Britain), and Solidarités (Switzerland).

Despite the lateness of the call the response was very positive. Participation broadened to Latin America although unequally, with three Brazilian components including Democracia Socialista (DS of the PT), the United States (the International Socialist organization (ISO and Solidarity), Canada and Quebec (including the Union of Progressive Forces from Quebec); and to the African continent with South Africa and, for Niger, the Revolutionary Organization for New Democracy (ORDN). One will also note, for Europe and Asia, the presence of Communist Refoundation (Italy), the Alternatifs (France), Akbayan and other Filipino movements, the Indonesian PRD, as well as organizations from the Spanish state, Japan, Egypt...

The organizations present were very different in their social implantation and size. Important movements and countries were still absent. But the meeting was nevertheless representative of today's revolutionary and anti-capitalist left is, of the reality of radical parties at present. There were

many different ideological roots: various currents of Maoists, Trotskyists and many components who could not be categorized as an “ism” (a form of categorization moreover which is increasingly dubious today).

If the meeting was a success it is because it responded to a need, to an aspiration. Today, in the era of imperialist globalization - on both the military and economic fronts - the lack of any framework for international collaboration between anti-capitalist parties is particularly strongly felt. There is an increasing sense of urgency. Most of the organizations concerned broke years ago with the worst sectarian traditions that tended to dominate in the 1970s. Mutual solidarity relations have been forged going beyond the differences in historical and programmatic references. Regional networks have been formed such the European Anti-Capitalist Left (EACL), and the Asia-Pacific International Solidarity Conference (APISC, started in Sydney).

The development of movements against globalization has now created a new space for political action, which is both very broad and from the outset international. Thanks to this, and this is essential, it has become possible to act together, to help the mobilizations succeed, and not simply to exchange experiences and alliances. Given the major developments underway the radical parties have to respond to both political and practical responsibilities.

This dual sentiment of new possibilities and responsibilities dominated the Mumbai meeting. A first step was taken in forming an international framework for collaboration between radical parties. It is no more than an initial step, and without any attempt at formalising. It was indeed clear for the participating organizations that time would be necessary to consolidate such a process. Many of the organizations present did not know each other at all - or hardly - before meeting in Mumbai! And everybody was thinking about what this international framework of collaboration could become: how should it be different from previous experiences of Internationals? There are obviously many more questions than answers on this topic. But a start has been made. The processes can develop.

P.S.

Article published by International Viewpoint.