

CALL TO LIMA

Summit of the Peoples: Enlazando Alternativas 3

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For the third time since 2004, we will hold the Enlazando Alternativas 3 (EA3) encounter in May 2008 in Lima, Peru, sponsored by various social movements and non-governmental organizations in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). This gathering is a Summit of the Peoples of both continents. It will coincide with the Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government of LAC and the EU, the highest political meeting of governments of the two regions. The bi-regional political framework in which both events will take place is, without doubt, crucial for the future of our peoples.

In LAC, the social movements that include indigenous communities, farmers, trade unionists, migrant organisations, youth, women, communities of African descent, defenders of the environment and other organisations in various countries have succeeded in stopping the (worst) effects of the economic and social policies implemented throughout the 1990s, known as the Washington Consensus, which led to crises, poverty and the privatisation and transnationalisation of our societies.

In recent years, the range of social movements in Latin America has been strengthened in many ways while promoting various alternative experiences. This is reflected in the mobilisations by farmer movements for food sovereignty, by original (indigenous) peoples in defence of territory and resources, by workers for a decent wage and social rights, by women, demonstrations against impunity and mobilisations by Latin American emigrants in the United States for the recognition of their rights. As a result, in various countries, political representatives identified with the desire for social change have won public office. A new front has recently opened up to combat the criminalisation of these struggles by some governments in the region.

In the European Union, the situation is marked by a generalised attack on the rights and achievements - economic, political, social and environmental - that the peoples of the "Old World" won during years of struggle.

The spearhead of this offensive is the strategy promoted by big capital (transnationals, financial capital and the European governments), reflected initially in the "Constitutional Treaty of the EU" — defeated in 2005 as a result of the referendum in France and Holland — and now in the "Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union" and the guidelines of the "Lisbon Agenda".

It is also reflected in the EU Strategy called "Global Europe: Competing in the World," which combines an aggressive foreign trade agenda with a domestic market offensive to make European corporations more competitive at the expense of the people and the environment in Europe and the global South.

In the face of this offensive, social movements and grassroots organisations have organised various forms of resistance, as reflected in the struggles against the Bolkestein directive, which poses a particular threat to public services and labour rights, the mobilisations against war, the growth of militarism, climate change and Fortress Europe that seeks to close the door to immigrants. Mobilisations against precarious employment and social exclusion, which have been on the rise throughout Europe, deserve special mention.

The peoples of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean are being affected by so-called global capitalism, which is especially reflected in the proliferation of free trade agreements and the liberalisation of investments, which are tools for expanding the privileges of capital over the rights of the people. The Europe of capital and its governments thus foster a policy aimed at the reconquest of Latin America, just when the countries of the region are marking two centuries since the beginning of their struggles for independence.

The EU is negotiating new trade and investment protection agreements, under the guise of economic association and cooperation agreements with the Andean Community of Nations, Central America and the Caribbean. It also wants to renew negotiations with MERCOSUR. By those means, it seeks to expand the dominion of its transnationals, as it has already done with Mexico and Chile.

For these reasons, as we did in Guadalajara, Mexico (2004), and Vienna, Austria (2006), we are constructing a new convergences of solidarity among the peoples of Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe to create a political space and bi-regional mobilisation that unites the struggles that are under way, emerging grassroots resistance movements and alternative visions, while revealing social discontent as a public form of grassroots pressure. We resist, and we join forces with other movements that seek to defeat the neoliberal policies that have been implemented on both continents.

We propose the creation of an agenda of common plans and alternatives based on the proposals presented by social movements. We seek to attract broad-based grassroots participation to disseminate information about the issues that will be discussed at the official Summit and raise a critical voice.

In Lima in May 2008, we will not only create opportunities for critical analysis of relationships between the EU and ALC, including the association agreements, the behaviour of multinationals, militarism and the criminalisation of social movements on both continents, but there will also be a People's Tribunal to judge the power system of the European transnationals, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the EU.

The undersigned organisers of the Summit of the Peoples "Enlazando Alternativas 3" invite all who identify with social movements and civil society networks to come to Lima to participate actively and with solidarity in debate about a new bi-regional alliance based on human rights, the self-determination of peoples, participatory democracy, social justice and peace.

For more information about the Summit of the Peoples in Lima, see:

www.enlazandoalternativas.org