

Perspectives

On Anarchist Theory

Volume 7, Number 2

Fall 2003

Some Notes on the Argentine Anarchist Movement in the Emergency

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By *Fernando López*

The social conflict that exploded in Argentina on the 19th and 20th of December 2001 is part of the crisis of legitimacy affecting Latin American political institutions and, in particular, the democratic regime that emerged from Argentina's sinister dictatorship of 1976 to 1983. The military dictatorships suffered

by our people in the 1970s gave birth to weak democracies that were subject to the blackmail of military forces that never fully left politics. The majority of these democracies, in Argentina as in Uruguay and Chile, emerged from pacts between the traditional political survivors of the storm and the military leaders that were in power during the dictatorships.¹

On the economic plane, these restricted democracies managed to legitimize the violent concentration of wealth produced by the dictatorships for the benefit of a parasitic class, which every day became smaller and more omnipotent. The promises made by populist politicians for a greater distribution of wealth were frustrated with the continuation of a system that simultaneously shrank the economy and condemned millions to exclusion, while concentrating income and making the rich richer and more powerful. In the 1990s, during the Menem's presidency, the privatization of public businesses, the rationalization of the state, and the weakening of labor legislation brought the number of unemployed to a quarter of the economically active population, on top of a similar percentage that was *already* excluded from the economy. Citizens were shocked to see politicians, who had sought their support to get into power, enrich themselves.

In 1999, the **Alianza Radical-Frepasista**,² noting the problems created by ten years of Menem's government, promised to banish corruption from the state apparatus, the justice system, and the parliament, and to elevate the quality of life of the population. However, just after taking over, this

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Institute for Anarchist Studies Update

Welcome to the fall 2003 issue of *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*! This year has been full of changes for the Institute for Anarchist Studies. We have appointed a new General Director, the IAS Board of Directors has been very active developing the IAS's short and long term goals, and we have just launched a new website (see page 19). This is, of course, on top of our regular activities, which include awarding grants, fundraising, and publishing our newsletter.

The transition of Directors, from John Petrovato to myself, has, of course, been challenging but relatively smooth. Since being appointed last march, much of my energy has been focused on learning the ropes and moving the IAS's offices from Amherst to Montréal, Canada. Working across the U.S. and Canadian border has not been as easy as it should be, but it is do-able.

With the change of the Directors, there has been a change on the IAS's Board as well. I am sad to say that Dan Chodorkoff has stepped down from the IAS's Board in order to focus more of his energy into the Institute for Social Ecology, which he directs (please see page 11). Dan has served on the Board since the beginning of the IAS and we are indebted to his commitment to us. Although Dan will no longer be serving on the Board, he will remain an ally of the organization. We all wish Dan the best with his important work.

Our 2003 granting session has come to an end, and we have once again provided \$8000 U.S. in grants to radical authors in need. To date, we have funded over forty projects by authors from countries around the world.

Thank you to all our supporters who have donated generously this year. We still have far to go in order to meet our 2003 fundraising goal and I encourage all IAS allies who haven't given yet to do so. As an added incentive, on top of the gift books offered by Raven Books, *The New Formulation* journal is offering a complimentary annual subscription for donations of \$50 or more during our 2003 fundraising campaign (see page 19).

The demand for financial support through our granting program has grown tremendously over the past few years. While the expressed need is well beyond our present capacity, this exciting development has demonstrated to us that the quantity and

quality of anti-authoritarian theoretical work is on the rise. We look forward to the challenge of building our pool of supporters in order to enlarge our granting program to meet these movement needs.

While the IAS is working at expanding our granting program, we are also looking toward our future. We see the IAS taking on other work that supports emerging and established anarchist thinkers and promotes anarchist discourse. The Board is now working on developing a plan that maps out our long term and short term program development goals.

Due to a fortunate combination of circumstances, five IAS board members are now living in New York City. This give us the opportunity to take on an active, local role. To start, the IAS will be hosting a talk titled "Black Anarchism" with IAS Board member Ashanti Alston. For more information, please see the back cover of this newsletter.

This issue of *Perspectives* is a very exciting one for us. We have been working hard on expanding the newsletter features to include more original material. With a new layout, increased page count, an exciting core focus on contemporary South American (with emphasis on Argentina) social movements, plus our regular features, we are certain that our readers will enjoy this issue.

As part of the focus on Argentina, IAS grant recipient Fernando López writes about the social conflict that exploded in Argentina on the 19th and 20th of December 2001 and offers an overview of contemporary movements and anarchist organizations. As well, Marina Sitrin, who was awarded an IAS grant this summer, interviews the Colectivo Situaciones of Buenos Aires. The CS is a radical research collective that has published several books exploring questions of power, tactics of struggle, and how to think about revolution today.

You will also find two other articles in keeping with the South American anarchism theme. The first is an interview Alfredo Vallota, a Venezuelan anarchist intellectual, on Hugo Chavez's populist movement. Also is an article on three important anarchist archives in South America.

Enjoy!

Michael Caplan

Perspectives

on anarchist theory

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What's Happening: Books and Events

By Chuck Morse

War

It is important to understand that the super-aggressive U.S. imperialism now transforming the planet is not only a frightening, "bad" development, but also a shift in elite strategies that will create new opportunities for resistance at the base. Anarchists should focus on the contradictory nature of current circumstances by both denouncing the new terrors and articulating the new possibilities disclosed by recent changes in world affairs.

The barbarism of the U.S. government's foreign policy is well documented in several new books. Noam Chomsky's *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* dissects America's quest for global supremacy by tracking the U.S. government's pursuit of policies intended to achieve "full spectrum dominance" at any cost. He shows how policies such as the militarization of space, the ballistic-missile defense program, unilateralism, the dismantling of international agreements, and the response to the Iraqi crisis cohere in a drive for hegemony that ultimately threatens to turn the world into a wasteland (Henry Holt and Company, November 2003, 224 pages).

Likewise, in *Incoherent Empire*, Michael Mann argues that the "new American imperialism" is actually a new militarism that will bring disaster to the United States and the world (Verso, October 2003, 284 pages). John Feffer's anthology, *Power Trip: Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11*, which is the

first book-length critique of the shift in U.S.

foreign policy since

September 11th, shows how

this policy is designed to consolidate and extend U.S. global control (Seven Stories Press, 2003, 254 pages). Tariq Ali's *Bush in Babylon: Recolonising Iraq* book details the longstanding imperial ambitions of key figures in the Bush administration and shows how war profiteers close to the President are cashing-in. He also offers an in-depth analysis of Iraqi resistance to the U.S. occupation (Verso, November 2003, 230 pages).

Anti-Militarism

The long history of anti-war activism is rich with lessons for contemporary anarchists. Michael Foley's *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War* tells the story of one of the most important anti-militarist campaigns in history. Draft resisters were the cutting edge of the antiwar movement at the height of the war's escalation and, unlike so-called draft dodgers who left the country or manipulated deferments, draft resisters openly defied draft laws by burning or turning in their draft cards. Focusing on Boston, one of the movement's most

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2003 Summer Grants Awarded

Twice a year, the Institute for Anarchist Studies awards \$4000 U.S. in grants to radical writers from around the globe who are in need of financial support. We are pleased to announce the recipients of the summer 2003 IAS grant awards.

\$2,000.00 to Marina Sitrin for *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina*. This project will be a book length collection of interviews with participants in the autonomous social movements that have recently rocked Argentina. The neighborhood assemblies, movements of the unemployed and workers in the occupied factories have advanced a visionary politics of creation and initiated new, radical dialogues about power, democracy, and hierarchy. This collection of interviews will help to represent these movements while also contributing to the global conversation on means of resistance.

\$1,000.00 to Kolya Abramsky for the Spanish-to-English translation of *Capitalismo Financiero Global y Guerra Permanente: El Dollar, Wall Street y la Guerra Contra Iraq* (Global Finance Capital and the Permanent War: The Dollar, Wall Street and the War Against Iraq). In *Global Finance Capital and the Permanent War*, Duran shows how financial institutions, such as Wall Street and the IMF, force global capitalism into a permanent state of war in order to

maintain its hegemonic control of the international marketplace. This study shows the emerging tensions between capitalist powers while calling for a deepening of anticapitalist resistance through the creation of communally and democratically controlled economies of solidarity.

\$1,000.00 to Nate Holdren for the Spanish-to-English translation of *19 y 20: Apuntes Para El Nuevo Protagonismo Social* (19 and 20: Notes for the New Social Protagonism). This translation will make available the influential book by the Argentine group Colectivo Situaciones (CS) on the social

movements that exploded in Argentina on the 19th and 20th of December 2001. The CS is a collective of militant intellectuals who participated in these events and continue to be active in Argentinian anti-capitalist movements. CS are autonomous Marxists who have rejected vanguardism and thus move very close to anarchism. CS's theoretical insights provide rich material that anarchists can employ in understanding and challenging the contemporary world. ✱

... *What's Happening*, from page 3

important centers, Foley reveals the crucial role played by draft resisters in shifting antiwar sentiment from the margins of society to the center of American politics. Their actions inspired other draft-age men opposed to the war—especially college students—to reconsider their privilege placed in a draft system that offered them protections while sending disproportionate numbers of working-class and minority men to Vietnam. This recognition sparked the change of tactics from legal protest to mass civil disobedience, drawing the Johnson administration into a confrontation with activists who were largely suburban, liberal, young, and middle class (the core of Johnson's Democratic constituency). Examining the day-to-day struggle of antiwar organizing carried out by ordinary Americans at the local level, Foley argues for a more complex view of citizenship and patriotism during a time of war (University of North Carolina Press, 2003, 456 pages).

James Lewes's *Protest and Survive: Underground GI Newspapers during the Vietnam War* explores the emergence of an anti-militarist subculture within the United States armed services. These activists asserted that individual GIs could best challenge their subordination by working with like-minded servicemen through GI movement organizations, whose activities they publicized in underground newspapers. Drawing from more than 120 newspapers, published between 1968 and 1970, Lewes focuses on their treatment of power and authority within the armed forces and how this mirrored wider relations of power and authority in the United States. He argues that opposition among servicemen was the primary motivation for the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam

and sheds light on the utility of alternative media for social change movements (Praeger Publishers, October 2003, 256 pages).

A study of a more recent anti-militarist campaign can be found in *Pilgrimage Through a Burning World: Spiritual Practice and Nonviolent Protest at the Nevada Test Site* by Ken Butigan (State University of New York Press, September 2003, 256 pages). For a selection of anarchist anti-militarist texts, see the new pamphlet from the Kate Sharpley Library, *No War but the Class War! Libertarian Anti-militarism Then and Now* (Kate Sharpley Library, 2003, 22 pages). This pamphlet includes writings by Ricardo Flores Magón, and Alexander Berkman, among many others.

Anti-Cop

Activists experiencing the inevitable link between war and domestic repression will be interested in Don Mitchell's *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. This book focuses on how political dissent gains meaning and momentum—and is regulated and policed—in the real, physical spaces of the city (Guilford Publications, 2003, 270 pages).

Of course, police action against activists is part of a broader continuum of violence. Kristian Williams' *Our Enemies in Blue: A History of Police Violence in the United States* shows that police misconduct is not just a matter of bad apples but rather a function of the very nature of policing in the United States. Williams explains how modern police forces evolved from slave patrols and protection rackets, critiques community policing, explores racism in law enforcement, and suggests strategies for combating police violence. Williams includes a chapter on prison economics, with an emphasis on how police have cooperated with politicians to

Grant Updates

Ramor Ryan has completed his project titled *The Revolt of the Globalized* (originally titled *Globalization and its Discontents*). The book is a collection of stories about resistance to capitalism compiled over the last 15 years. Starting with first-hand experiences in anti-imperialist struggles for national liberation in the 1980s and 1990s (Ireland, Nicaragua, Kurdistan), and ending with the recent wave of protests against globalization, Ryan analyzes the shortcomings of these movements from a radical, anti-authoritarian perspective. Ryan uses his own political travels and experiences to share stories of revolution, resistance, and freedom while expressing profound solidarity and compassion. Ryan was awarded \$2000 in July 2002.

Peter Lamborn Wilson has completed his pamphlet length piece, *Brand: An Italian Anarchist and His Dream*, and is awaiting publication by Autonomedia Press. This piece was originally intended to be an introduction to a book length autobiography of Enrico Arrigoni. Since the publication of the autobiography was abandoned, Wilson expanded his introduction into a larger project. Wilson was awarded \$250 in June 1997.

Joseph Lowndes has completed his project titled *Unstable Antistatism: The Left, The Right, and the Outlaw Josey Wales*

(originally title *Anarchism and the Rise of Rightwing Anti-statism*). This essay is an examination of the diverse origins of modern conservative antistatism in the U.S. through an analysis of the 1976 film *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, and the book on which it was based. The consolidation of a conservative politics in the 1970s was achieved in part by the Right's appropriation of New Left antistatism via older forms of racial discourse. This emphasis on New Left influence helps explain the rise of the New Right in a way that is missed in conventional accounts, while demonstrating more generally that political discourse is always contingent and unstable, and open to unintended consequences. The essay appeared in the *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Winter 2002. Lowndes was awarded \$1000 in June 1998.

Murray Bookchin is pleased to announce that his three-volume history of popular movements in the revolutionary tradition, *The Third Revolution*, has finally been completed. The first two volumes, which have already been published by Continuum, spanned the period from the late medieval peasant wars to the Paris Commune of 1871. The just-completed third volume, the largest of the three, is now in the hands of the Continuum editors. Based in large part on archival material that is still being revealed in the aftermath of Stalin's Russia and Franco's Spain, Volume 3

increase the number of prisons, and offers anecdotes from those who have encountered police brutality while working for social justice (Soft Skull Press, 2003, 200 pages).

A more localized exploration of the issue can be found in *Street Justice: A History of Police Violence in New York City* (Beacon Press, November 2003). This work traces police brutality cases in New York—the city with the oldest and most comprehensive records on the issue—and the anti-brutality movements that sought to eradicate it, from the years after the Civil War through the 1960s.

Of course control is also exercised indirectly: Christian Parenti's *The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America, from Slave Passes to the Patriot Act* explores not just the history but also the politics of everyday surveillance, and explains why the question of who is watching and listening is of the utmost importance today (Basic Books, 2003, 288 pages). Parenti details how seemingly benign technologies—such as E-ZPass, GPS systems in rental cars, and iris scans at airports—reconfigure the balance of power between the individual and the state. Parenti argues that corporations and the U.S. government have, under the aegis of security and convenience, substantially eroded civil liberties that Americans have long taken for granted.

Anti-Globalization Movement

The anti-globalization movement opened a new chapter in the long history of anti-capitalist struggle and partisans and professors continue to debate its meaning. Tom Mertes's anthology, *The Movement of Movements: A Reader* charts the strategic thinking behind the mosaic of movements currently challenging neo-liberal

globalization. Leading theorists and activists discuss their personal formation as radicals, the history of their movements, their analyses of globalization, and the nuts and bolts of mobilizing against a U.S.-dominated world system. They also explore how the Global South and the experience of indigenous peoples have provided inspiration, the roles played by anarchism and direct democracy, the contributions and limitations of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre as a coordinating focus, the effects of and responses to the economic downturn, September 11th, and Washington's "War on Terror" (Verso, 265 pages, January 2004).

We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism offers a collage of texts, graphics, and interviews to prompt insights into the ideas and activities of the movement against capitalism (by the Notes from Nowhere Collective, Verso, 2003, 320 pages). Last year's popular anthology *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization*, which has been updated and expanded by fifty percent, will be re-issued as *Confronting Capitalism: Dispatches from a Global Movement* (edited by Daniel Burton-Rose, George Katsiaficas, and Eddie Yuen, Soft Skull Press, November 2003, 420 pages). This book both documents and analyzes the movement (and the new edition contains an essay by Institute for Anarchist Studies board member, Cindy Milstein).

Paul Kingsnorth's *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* uses the author's travels with the anti-globalization movement as a basis upon which to examine the movement's novel political culture (Free Press, 2003, 368 pages). Another broad look at the anti-globalization movement can be found in *Representing Resistance: The Media, Civil Disobedience, and*

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explores in-depth the Russian Revolution of 1905 and 1917-24; the tragic German insurrections of 1917 to 1923; the Central European "Soviet" uprisings of 1919 in Bavaria and Hungary; the "Vienna Commune" of 1934; the development of anarchism, syndicalism, and socialism in Spain; and finally the Spanish libertarian revolution of 1936-37.

The section on Spain, which Bookchin received a grant from the IAS to complete, examines closely the grave errors made by the CNT-FAI's leadership—notably the failure of the Spanish libertarian movement to develop a viable social alternative to a class-based social structure. Bookchin was awarded \$1000 in January 1997.

Andrés Pérez and **Felipe del Solar** are nearing completion of their book, *Chile: Anarchist Practices under Pinochet*. The first section of the book covers the 1970s including anarcho-syndicalist activities, anarchist involvement in the student movement and counter-culture, and armed anarchist struggle. They are currently finishing the last section of the book that focuses on radical activism during the 90s. The authors are hoping to have the book finished in time to commemorate 30 years of Pinochet's "Putsch." They were awarded \$2000 in January 2001.

Nate Holdren has gotten a good start on his translation of *19 and 20: Notes for the New Social Protagonism* by the militant Argentine group Colectivo Situaciones. See "Grants Awarded" for more information. As part of the English edition of this book, an appendix will be included about the Argentinean barter networks. Holdren was awarded \$1000 in July 2003.

Kolya Abramsky has begun work on his translation project *Global Finance Capital and the Permanent War: The Dollar, Wall Street and the War Against Iraq* by Ramon Fernandez Duran. See "Grants Awarded" for more information. Duran is working on a new epilogue for the English edition and the bulk of the translation work will be carried out over October and November. Abramsky is also working on expanding the project to include other original work from different authors that explore anti-authoritarian interventions in the USA, Western Europe, and Israel/Palestine. Abramsky was awarded \$1000 in July 2003.

Lucien van der Walt is nearing completion of his project *Anarchism and Revolutionary Syndicalism in South Africa, 1904-1921*. This project deals with the influence of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism on broader social movements and the impact of libertarian socialist ideas on trade unions and black

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the Global Justice Movement (edited by Andrew Opel and Donnalyn Pompper, Praeger Publishers, November 2003).

The social democratic wing of the anti-globalization movement will have a voice in *Insurrection: The Citizen Challenge to Corporate Power* (by Kevin Danaher, et al). This book attempts to rally people to the movement, document activist victories, and provide strategic insights (Routledge, September 2003, 288 pages).

Global South

Although the Zapatistas are an inspiration to radicals worldwide, the literature on their struggle is often more celebratory than substantial. Fortunately, readers can explore the deeper history of the movement in *Mayan Lives Mayan Utopias: The Indigenous Peoples of Chiapas and the Zapatista Rebellion*, edited by Jan Rus (et al). This volume explores the different ways that Indians across Chiapas have carved out autonomous cultural and political spaces in their diverse communities and regions. It offers a consistent and cohesive vision of the complex evolution of a region and its many cultures and histories. (Rowman & Littlefield, October 2003, 336 pages).

A study of radical movements at the other end of the Americas can be found in Raul Zibechi's Spanish language *Genealogía de la Revuelta: Argentina, Una Sociedad en Movimiento* (*Genealogy of the Revolt: Argentina, a Society in Movement*, Nordan/Comunidad, 244 pages, 2003). This book analyzes the new social movements that have appeared in Argentina over the last ten years.

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nationalism. A final draft will be ready at the end of 2003, and a book and a number of scholarly articles are projected for 2004 and 2005. Van der Walt has already published several shorter articles based upon this research, and will also be presenting his research at the 2004 European Social Science History Conference in Berlin. Van der Walt was awarded \$1000 in June 2000.

Bill Weinberg is currently in South America doing research for his book *Pachamama Betrayed: Ecological Crime and Indigenous Resistance to the Andean Drug Wars*. This book deconstructs the Orwellian euphemism of the "War on Drugs" by revealing how U.S. military involvement in Latin American has not changed since the era of "gunboat diplomacy." Weinberg's bi-weekly reports from South America can be found on his website www.ww3report.com. Weinberg was awarded \$1000 in July 2001.

Sandra Jeppison's project, *Anarchy Revolution Freedom*, is progressing rapidly. In this project, Jeppison looks at both mainstream and explicitly anarchist representations of revolution to try to come to an understanding of anarchist culture and to develop a means of theorizing it in a way that is significantly different from Marxian cultural studies. She has completed a chapter on Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production*, developing

Anarchism

Although there are countless summary treatments of anarchism, the definition and redefinition of the tradition continues. Spanish readers will want to check out John Barchfield's *Estatismo y Revolución Anarquista* (*Statism and Anarchist Revolution*). This book presents a synthesis of anarchist thought via a treatment of its most notable theorists' confrontations with central problems faced by the movement in its struggle against capitalist exploitation, particularly the problem of the state and the nature of the anarchist revolution (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2003, 140 pages). French readers will find a general history of anarchism in *Les Anarchistes* by Pierre Miquel (Albin Michel, 2003, 328 pages).

Also of interest is a new statement of the left-communist tradition: taking the first centenary of Lenin's, *What is to be Done?* as its point of departure, *Leninism, Anti-Leninist Marxism and the Question of Revolution Today* (edited by Werner Bonefeld and Sergio Tischler) offers a timely restatement of the left-communist critique of Leninism and shows its contemporary relevance (Ashgate, 2002, 222 pages).

Education

For an anarchist approach to the politics of education, see Matt Hern's *Field Day: Getting Society out of School*. With an overview of the historical and contemporary relationship between democratic theory, education, pedagogy and culture, Hern investigates the rationales and repercussions of a schooled society and examines alternative, healthier ways for children to learn, live with adults, and grow (New Star, 2003, 256 pages).

a theory of the field of anarchist cultural production and distribution, using the *Elabo Valley Anarchist Horde* as a primary text. She has also made good progress on each of the four chapters: the Introduction which develops theories of revolution, a chapter on Ann Hansen's biography *Direct Action* that considers anarchist action as an epistemological site, and another on *The Matrix* that examines the circulation of anarchist ideas in mainstream film. A fourth chapter investigates the CrimethInc., a series of zines and books, using Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* to develop a post-situationist theory of anarchist culture. Jeppison has also presented several sections of this work at conferences and bookfairs over the past several months. Jeppison was awarded \$800 in February 2003.

Fernando Gustavo López Trujillo has finished a draft of his historical study titled *The FACA and the Anarchist Movement in Argentina, 1930-1950*. López examines the growth of the Federación Anarquista Comunista Argentina (FACA) from 1935 and into the 1940's, a development that is exceptional given that the Argentine anarchist movement and its organizations were shrinking at this time (after being the largest anarchist movement in Latin America). López looks at the decline of the FACA in the

Spain

The anarchist role in the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939 is an inexhaustible source of interest for historians and activists alike. The most expansive history of the Friends of Durruti—the controversial Spanish anarchist group—has recently been published (in Spanish) in Miquel Amorós's *La Revolución Traicionada: La verdadera historia de Batiús y Los Amigos de Durruti* (*The Revolution Betrayed: The True History of Batiús and the Friends of Durruti*, Virus Editorial, 2003, 444 pages).

Also of interest is Antonina Rodrigo's new Spanish language biography of Amparo Poch y Gascón, an anarchist doctor and co-founder of the *Mujeres Libres*: *Una Mujer Libre: Amparo Poch y Gascón: Médica Anarquista* (*A Free Woman—Amparo Poch y Gascón: Anarchist Doctor*, Flor del Viento Ediciones, 2002, 300 pages).

IWW

The legacy of the Industrial Workers of the World testifies to the possibility of a genuinely revolutionary, anti-authoritarian labor movement. Travis Wilkerson's film, *An Injury to One*, focuses on the mysterious 1917 murder of Wobbly organizer Frank Little in Butte, Montana to tell a broader story about the IWW, the American left, the rise of McCarthyism, and the destruction of the environment (2003, 53 minutes). A biography of Joe Hill and a treatment of the IWW's cultural dimension can be found in Franklin Rosemont's *Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Working Class Counterculture* (Charles H Kerr, 2003).

Punk Not Dead

Anarchism and culture have a contemporary link in punk rock. An exploration of this connection can be found in *Between Resistance & Community*. This documentary film tells the story of the Long Island Do It Yourself punk scene, focusing on the efforts of young people to create a radical anti-corporate youth culture as well as some of the problems they encounter in doing so. It tells the story through interviews with those involved in the scene as well as live performances by its bands (by Joe Carroll, Ben Holtzman, and Jimmy Choi, 2002, 45-minutes). For another take on the connection between anarchism and punk rock, check out *Footnote*, the new memoir by Chumbawumba guitarist Boff Whalley (Pomona Press, 2003, 222 pages).

Anarchist Bookfairs

Bookfairs provide a great opportunity to pick up good books, hang out with friends, and participate in important discussions. The **Mid-Atlantic Anarchist Bookfair** will take place on October 11th at Levering Hall at the Johns Hopkins University Homewood Campus in Baltimore, Maryland. The second annual **Toronto Anarchist Bookfair** will be held on October 25th, with workshops also the following day, at the 519 Church Street Community Centre, in downtown Toronto. The 22nd **London Anarchist Bookfair** will be held on October 25th at ULU, Malet Street, London. ✱

1940s and 1950s and the relationship of its decline to the rise of the Peronist movement. López is currently revising the draft and collecting illustrations, and hopes to finish the work by the end of the year. López was awarded \$2200 in June of 1999.

Josh McPhee's work on his collection of essays, *Building New Contexts for Anarchist Graphics, Video and Film*, has involved him in an array of related work. This project focuses on how anarchist cultural products are produced in a world defined by visual literacy, how this relates to capitalism's use of design and art to "brand" ideas and products, and how anti-authoritarian signs and signifiers compare and compete. McPhee is near completion of a book entitled *Stencil Pirates* (Soft Skull Press, March 2004), which is a global survey of street stenciling. Part of his work on the book includes an essay from his IAS funded project which explores the connections between anarchism and the stencil aesthetic. Next, McPhee is working on an essay on anarchist culture and audience for the zine *Smash Action*, and has completed an interview published with Nicolas Lampert on art, politics, and anarchism. McPhee was awarded \$1000 in February 2003.

Errol Schweitzer's project, *Rage at Dawn*, is proceeding with bursts of creativity. This work of historical fiction presents two

major themes: the attempt to reform and organize against the present structure of oppression and the construction of a libertarian and egalitarian alternative. Schweitzer's work to this point has focused on developing the story's themes, characters and scenes; he has written several chapters so far. Schweitzer was awarded \$1200 in February 2003.

Justin Jackson has begun primary research at several archives for his project *Black Roses, Black Masks: The American Anarchist Movement and Its Media in the Vietnam Years*. This project will compile an edited collection of writing, poetry, art and images from the anarchist press in the United States between 1945 to 1980, with a focus on the 1960s and 1970s. Within the last year, Jackson has surveyed collections of anarchist print media at several radical American archives. His research into secondary materials is ongoing. Jackson was awarded \$1000 in February 2003.

Carlos Fernandez and **Jena Cephas' Quilombo Project** has been largely on hold besides the occasional interview. Both will be participating in the Anarchist People of Color conference to gather additional material for their final written pieces, completing their project in the next few months. Fernandez and Cephas were awarded \$2000 in July 2001. ✱

The Shock of the New

An Interview with ^{colectivo} SITUACIONES

By Marina Sitrin

The social movements that exploded in Argentina in December 2001 not only transformed the fabric of Argentine society but also issued a ringing testimony to the possibility of a genuinely democratic alternative to global capital. The whole world was watching.

For all the theories about what constitutes and how to make revolutions, in essence they are nothing more than ordinary people coming together to discuss and fight for social possibilities that were previously beyond the horizon of historical possibilities. At its root, it is about the creation of new dialogues.

Colectivo Situaciones is a radical collective in Buenos Aires dedicated to stimulating these dialogues. They have tried to facilitate the most far-reaching aspects of the discussions that have unfolded among the social conflicts in Argentina through their books, which are (literally) structured as dialogues.

These discussions transcend national boundaries. Marina Sitrin interviewed Colectivo Situaciones while in Argentina this spring, where she was working on her forthcoming book, which will be a collection of interviews exploring the Argentine uprising through the political and personal experiences of those involved. She was awarded a grant by the IAS in July 2003 in support of her work (see "Grants Awarded" for more information).

Reprinted here is an excerpt from her interview. This interview explores the difficulty of creating concepts adequate to the new Argentine social movements, some of the political vocabulary that has emerged from these movements, and the meaning of engaged theoretical work. It was conducted in Buenos Aires on April 25th, 2003.

Chuck Morse

Radicals have often been criticized for imposing ideas and dogmas upon events instead of attending to their real nuances and complexities. Colectivo Situaciones has tried to overcome the strategic and intellectual impasse that this creates by advancing a contextually sensitive approach to the world. I asked them to explain their method and to give background on their collective.

At a particular moment we began to see what, for us, was a fundamental lack of options for left libertarians and autonomists in general. We began to feel very dissatisfied with the discourse on the Left—of the activists, the intellectuals, the artists, and the theoreticians—and began to ask ourselves if we should put our energy in the investigation of the fundamentals of an emancipatory theory and practice. Since that day, we have continued pursuing that same question and, since that day, things have been appearing, like *Zapatismo*. Certain people also began appearing in the theoretical camp, asking very radical questions, and they influenced us a lot. We studied them, got to know them, and exchanged a great deal. Also, in Argentina there began to emerge very radical practices that also questioned all of this, carried out by people who were also searching.

During this process, certain key ideas kept appearing to us that we decided to develop and see where they would lead. One of the ideas that we came across was that, as much potential as thought and practice have, they cannot reach their full potential if not based in a concrete situation. In some respects, this is pretty evident, or should be, but normally developing a thought or practice within a situation is not easy. We decided to immerse ourselves in this work. We do not think that situations can be created, and this is the difference that we have with the Situationists of Europe in the late 50s and early 60s, who believed that a situation could be created, and who tried to create situations. We think not: situations are to be entered or taken on, but cannot not be invented by ones' own will.

Colectivo Situaciones emerged from Argentina's radical student milieu in the mid 1990s and, since then, have developed a long track record of intervention in Argentine social movements. Their books are dialogues with the unemployed workers movement, explorations of the question of power and tactics of struggle, and conversations about how to think about revolution today.

Their radical views pertain to practice as much as theory. They are genuinely a collective and all of their projects are collectively produced. Presently, in addition to their publishing work, they are also working in a collectively run, alternative school.

In a note printed on the back of many of their books, they describe their work as follows:

[We] intend to offer an internal reading of struggles, a phenomenology (a genealogy), not an "objective" description. It is only in this way that thought assumes a creative, affirmative function, and stops being a mere reproduction of the present. And only in this fidelity with the immanence of thought is it a real, dynamic contribution, which is totally contrary to a project or scheme that pigeonholes and overwhelms practice.

More information can be found on their website at www.situaciones.org. The IAS awarded a grant to Nate Holdren in July 2003 for a translation of their book *19 and 20: Notes for the New Social Protagonism* (see "Grants Awarded" for more information).

This gives rise to what Gilles Deleuze said: "creation as resistance, resistance as creation." We consider our own collective an experience of resistance and creation, to create resisting in the area of thought, linked to practice.

However, for us it is difficult to speak in general terms. When you say "Piquetero movement," you are creating a homogeneity—an equality of circumstances, of characteristics, of a quantity of things—that in reality does not exist. This has to be seen in context. We work in concrete experiences and part of our work consists of attempting *not* to make generalizations. We believe there are points, or practical hypotheses, that develop in distinct moments, and that each movement, each concrete situation, develops in a particular, determined form. For example, the influence that *Zapatismo* has had is evident as an inspiration, but to say that the Argentine movement is the Zapatista movement would be an absurd generalization. What we are working to make more general is the concept of "new social protagonism." This concept is not something that lumps together various phenomena, but is rather a concrete way of working in specific contexts, that we believe will advance and radicalize the question of what social change means today. Not everyone has the same work, the same answers, nor develops in the same way. But, shared is the new social protagonism's radicalism in posing these questions as well as bringing forward its practice. Generalizing is difficult because it hides the complexity of concrete situations.

Through the Argentine uprising many people began to see themselves as social actors, as protagonists, in way that they had not previously. I asked Colectivo Situaciones how such a rapid radical transformation could take place and how it could be so widespread.

The parties were a huge fraud for all the people, for everyone in general, but doubly so for those that had an emancipatory perspective. In addition, it is evident that the Argentine state failed, not only the political parties. The state in default, totally captured by the mafias, a state that neither manages to regulate nor generate mediations in society, ended up destroying the idea, so strongly installed in Argentina, that everything had to pass through the state. Thus, between this and the global militancy that was developing, the ideology of the network, plus the presence of the Internet and the new technologies, the new forms of the organization of work... these things reinforced the ideology



A young *piquetero* (unemployed worker) participates in a citywide road blockade, cutting off all access to Buenos Aires, Feb. 11, 2002. Photo by Andrew Stern/Indymedia - www.WeAreEverywhere.org

of horizontalism. This also coincides with the most important ideas of the new social protagonism: Decisions made by all; the lack of leaders; the idea of liberty; that no one is subordinated to another; that each one has to assume within him or herself responsibility for what is decided; the idea that it is important to struggle in all dimensions; that struggle doesn't take place in one privileged location; the idea that we organize ourselves according to concrete problems; the idea that it is not necessary to construct one organization for all, but that organization is multiple; that there are many ways to organize oneself according to the level of conflict one confronts; the idea that there is not one dogma or ideology, but rather open thinking and many possibilities. It also has to do with the crisis of Marxism, which was such a heavy philosophical and political doctrine in the 60s and 70s. Also, in Argentina, the collapse of the military dictatorship produced very strong experiences, such as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, who showed early on that political parties are not an efficient tool for concrete, radical struggles.

But now there is an ambivalence, because there are many people doing very important things at the level of this new social protagonism: in a school, a hospital, a group of artists, a group of people creating theory; and perhaps the notion of horizontalism is not the most important for them. For example, we are working in a school where, of course, everyone makes decisions together, but not because the participants adhere to a horizontalist ideology, but rather because the situation itself makes us equals in the face of problems.

Thus, it seems there is a distinction. Many times, in *asambleas*, we see a discussion of horizontalism as a political identity. We say that it is not about the theme of horizontalism,

but about political identity. We say that one is not organized according to pure imaginaries—I am a revolutionary, a communist, a Peronist, an autonomist... but rather one works on concrete problems. For us this is where nuclei of greater power exist: in some *asambleas*, neighbors, without anyone convoking them, without a political power, with any political representation, start discussing what it means to say that they want to play a leading role in something; what it means to take charge themselves, that the state is not going to take responsibility for them, that society is unraveled, is disarmed, disintegrates if there is not the production of new values by the base. Thus, this self-organization is very important from this point of view. Previously there were the *piqueteros*, who have a much longer history than the *asambleas*, and discovered all of this before.

The word “horizontalism” is part of the new political vocabulary that has emerged out of the Argentine movements. It is used by many in these movements—from the piqueteros and asambleas to those who have occupied factories—to speak of the political relationships being formed. I asked Colectivo Situaciones to share their thoughts on the meaning and usage of this word.

There is a question of leadership. The politics of horizontalism, in the most moral sense, supposes that when a group of people exercise leadership or are very active or tend to be organizers, that there is a danger of verticalism or institutionalization. To us, it seems that this can only be known in the context. What happens if every time a person talks a lot or is very active that person is accused of being an institution that restrains the movement? To us it seems that this reveals a significant exteriority of the situation and a big moralization.

Many times, in a simple perspective, it would seem that there is horizontalism when everyone speaks equally, because nobody does more than the others. But it is necessary to see that often subjugation is not the subjugation of a person: it can also be the subjugation of an ideal, or subjugation in the impossibility of doing things. There is the impotence and sadness that can exist in forms that appear horizontal from the outside.

Thus, we don't celebrate the fact that there are *asambleas* in the abstract. Many *asambleas* don't interest us, because even though everyone speaks, there isn't really an opening, there isn't really active power (*potencia*). Whereas other groups that are accused of not being sufficiently horizontal are creating possibilities and hypotheses and changing the lives of the persons so much that they generate a very strong attraction and very strong power. For example, think of *Zapatismo*. As in *Zapatismo*, as in some MTD (Movimiento de trabajadores desocupados/ Unemployed Workers' Movement)—like the MTD of Solano—there are people who are the most horizontal of the horizontals that question if there is sufficient horizontalism. But, to us it seems unnecessary to try to make an experience that functions a model for the majority.

Collected Works

La hipótesis 891: Más allá de los piquetes (The Hipótesis 891: Beyond the Pickets). Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de Solano. Buenos Aires, De Mano en Mano, 2002.

19 y 20. Apuntes para el nuevo protagonismo social (19 and 20: Notes for the New Social Protagonism). Buenos Aires, De Mano en Mano, 2002.

Contrapoder: una introducción (Counter-Power: An Introduction). De mano en mano, Buenos Aires, 2002.

Genocida en el barrio: Mesa de escrache popular (Genocide in the Neighborhood: Roundtable on Political Outings) Ediciones de mano en mano, Buenos Aires, 2002.

Movimiento de trabajadores desocupados de Solano (Unemployed Workers' Movement of Solano) Ediciones de mano en mano, Buenos Aires, 2001.

Movimiento campesino de Santiago del Estero (Rural Movement of Santiago del Estero) Ediciones de mano en mano, Buenos Aires, 2001.

In Scalabrini Ortiz y Padilla, the neighborhood assembly occupied a branch of the Provincia Bank and organized an open-air café, with popular soups for the neighbors. Depicted here is a meeting of the occupiers. Photo: Nicolas Pousthomis / Indymedia Argentina



Horizontalism is a tool of counter-power when it is a question—power is socialized, it is democratized, it is the power of all—but horizontalism is a tool of power when it is a response, when it ends the search, when it shuts down all questions. Horizontalism is the norm of the multiplicity and the power of the people who are different, not of those who follow the conventional. The risk is that horizontalism shuts you up and becomes a new ideology that aborts experimentation. That is the risk.

Although *Colectivo Situaciones'* books are highly theoretical—and often difficult reading for native Spanish speakers—they are decidedly anti-academic and try to produce a militant, engaged theory. I asked them to explain their approach to me.

Something that interests us is the struggle against academic thought, against classical academic research. It is often said that militant investigation is good, because it manages to show things closely, very internally, but that it is not good because it lacks distance and does not permit objectivity. We are developing an



Illustration by Latuff - <http://www.sinkers.org/latuff>

ideas. We see very clearly the difference between us and them. Our work functions in exactly the opposition sense.... ✱

Translated from Spanish by Chuck Morse and Marina Sitrin

The Institute for Social Ecology Needs Your Help

The Institute for Social Ecology, founded by Murray Bookchin and Daniel Chodorkoff in 1974, is based in Plainfield Vermont, and has been in the forefront of the struggle for a decentralized, directly democratic and ecological society for almost thirty years. The ISE focuses on offering programs that educate people to play an active role in the creation of a free society. Over the years, activists associated with the ISE have had a major impact in the anti-nuclear movement, the anarchist movement, the eco-feminist movement, the peace movement, the green movement, the anti-biotechnology movement, and the global justice movement.

The Institute offers programs that examine social theory and action from a left libertarian perspective, as well as issues like community-based food security, and decentralized, ecological approaches to land use and community planning. Programs range from workshops and conferences to degree programs for BA and MA students. The ISE has attracted thousands of students from all over North America and over 20 foreign nations. Every summer activists from around the world gather to attend the ISE's summer programs.

The Institute maintains a campus in central Vermont that has hosted the annual Renewing the Anarchist Tradition conference, a lecture series featuring many leading anarchist theorists. The

ISE has been a crucial resource for the libertarian left, serving as an important home for both scholars and activists. In troubled times the ISE has served as a beacon of rational thought and a source of creativity and hope, influencing three generations of activists and thinkers.

The current political climate and concurrent economic downturn requires that we rally to support radical organizations that we believe in. The ISE needs your help. Any material assistance will be greatly appreciated. Donations are tax deductible and will help to insure the survival of this important project. ✱



✱
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Some Notes on the Argentine Anarchist Movement in the Emergency

... Continued from page 1

splendid government unleashed a formidable policy of state adjustment that deepened the economic stagnation of the last four years. Unemployment, the masses of the excluded population, and the struggles of the new social movements—born at almost the same time that Menem took power—increased exponentially in the face of the administrative dauntlessness of the **Radicals**³ who did not manage to institute any palliatives for the victims of their policies. And soon the political front began to fray. The Vice President of the nation resigned a year after assuming power in the face of corrupt maneuvers carried out by the government, behind his back, in the Senate that he himself led. This ending up proving that the second part of the campaign promises—the moralization of public life—was also not a priority of this administration.

Likewise, since the middle of the 1990s, many economists had warned that the “straightjacket” put on the currency by the law of convertibility, which theoretically transformed each Argentine peso into a dollar, could explode the economy at any moment: they noted that productivity was distinct, that the backwardness it produced in market prices would discourage any reactivation of the economy, and that it could only finance itself through an unsupportable foreign debt. At the beginning of 2001, this tension was already so acute that the countdown to the system’s bankruptcy began. Although the Radical government continued denying the urgency of the crisis, it seized bank deposits, which theoretically were in dollars, to avoid a run on the banks. This would have emptied the financial system because the banks did not have the capacity to return these dollars to the market. The immobilization of bank deposits, which came to include all bank accounts and affected not only the middle class but also salaried workers, constituted a significant element in the increase of popular irritation that exploded at the end of 2001.⁴

In December of this year, the government responded to the increasing popular mobilization of 2001 with repression that

corresponded to the scope of the consensus that the popular mobilization began to have. Also, at the same time that it tried to repress the *piqueteros* and other activities of the marginalized, it carried out a perverse campaign of disinformation likening the popular mobilization to a political attempt to destabilize institutions carried out by the Peronist opposition. (It is worth remarking that the Peronist opposition, from its privileged places in the parliament and the Supreme Court, did nothing during these two years except support the plundering of the people).

For the first time in our history a “Declaration of a State of Siege” was met with a popular mobilization so massive and multi-sectoral that it became inoperative and was repealed in silence a little later. This supreme symbol of disobedience to the state and its institutions marked the beginning of an extraordinary period of radical social transformation in which countless experiences in self-management and self-government were carried out with distinct success throughout the entire country.

This introduction is only a cramped synthesis of the emergency that caused the resignation of De la Rúa and the process of transition in which we are currently living. The word *transition* seems to suggest that we are moving toward a “telos,” but for the time being it is very difficult to predict a destination for this society that is developing as if it were a laboratory for the most perverse affects of globalization.

What are the bases of this popular mobilization? Does it have organizational referents to some earlier experience or is it totally spontaneous and organic? Any response to these questions is, by necessity, incomplete. On the one hand, December’s mobilization, which continued in an intermittent form during the months of January and February 2002, can be characterized as spontaneous, multi-class, and pluralistic. In fact, the detonator of the generalized mobilization was the discourse of President De la Rúa himself in which he announced the “state of siege,” a speech that was immediately answered (minutes later!) by the uncontrollable indignation of thousands of residents of Buenos Aires who poured



Panorama from the February 10, 2002, general assembly in El Parque Centenario. Photo by Joshua Breitbart

into the streets to express their rage at the taunt that his discourse signified. The spectacle of the people in the street, multiplying as the media covered events, turned the streets over to millions in the whole country with saucepans or anything that could be beaten. The movement did not have leaders, managers, or organizers. Nobody could appropriate the movement's paternity, and the opposition parties—the left included—were probably the most surprised by the sudden explosion. The movement's spontaneity and independence from traditional political actors gave rise to an internal crisis of the most varied political forms, a crisis that still has not passed. Although it did not have predetermined slogans, one adopted almost immediately and without recognizable origin, was: “Que se vayan todos”—*They all must go*—a slogan very dear to anarchists, but doubtlessly lacking concrete content.

On the other hand, it is certain that the new groups of unemployed, known by the generalizing name of “*Piqueteros*,” that have emerged over the last twelve years from the systematic destruction of the population's sources of work and subsistence, spearheaded an agitation that began much earlier than December 2001.⁵ The novelty was that towards the end of De la Rúa's government this movement achieved a visibility never before reached and a sympathy that almost transformed into popular consensus by the end of December.

Another interesting aspect of the movement was the creation of the neighborhood assemblies with an orientation towards self-management. Even when they were excessive with respect to their real possibilities of social management, these assemblies permitted a politicization and a practice of deliberation for social sectors who have been remote from such practices since the repressive storm of the 1970s. This form of democracy—which many neighbors confidently regarded as a replacement of the existing forms of political organization—only unfolded in Buenos Aires and the surrounding areas, a sizable conglomerate of around twelve million people. In the interior of the country, the experience was different and assemblies only occurred in some neighborhoods of Rosario and La Plata, which copied the example of Buenos Aires but lacked great continuity.

Anarchists immediately perceived the possibilities that a movement of these characteristics had and adopted it as a natural environment for its engagement and proposals. Militants of anarchist groups participated in many assemblies in Buenos Aires, such as those from the **Federación Libertaria Argentina** (Libertarian Federation of Argentina)⁶ and groups connected to it, and those from the **Biblioteca José Ingenieros** (José Ingenieros Library),⁷ a small but very dynamic group. These comrades tried to generate some type of internal coordination but could not overcome the slow dissolution of the movement. People began losing enthusiasm and withdrew as the traditional left-wing political parties tried to manipulate the assemblies, a manipulation that ultimately resulted in their definitive asphyxiation. Nevertheless, militant participation in the remnants of this experience continues: assemblies that were consolidated into neighborhood groups continue to carry out important cultural projects and provided help for the weakest families as well as support the efforts in the occupied factories.⁸ This is the case of the **Asamblea de Palermo Viejo** (Assembly of Palermo Viejo), that of Floresta, and the **Asamblea Popular del Cid Campeador** (Popular Assembly of Cid Campeador), among others. A synthesis of anarchist activity in the Federal Capital and the greater Buenos Aires (GBA), should include the **FORA** (Regional Workers' Federation of Argentina); the **Organización Anarquista Libertad de Avellaneda** (GBA; Libertad); the **Organización Anarquista Bandera Negra** and the **Unión Fraternidad Anarquista de Berisso** (GBA; Bandera Negra); the group **Nueva Aurora**⁹ and the **Organización Revolucionaria Anarquista** of the Flores neighborhood in the Capital.

The engagement of more specifically militant anarchist organizations is more systematic and of a broader perspective. This is the case of the **AUCA**¹⁰, which has an influence in La Plata and southern parts of the province of Buenos Aires and the **Organización Socialista Libertaria** (Libertarian Socialist Organization), with a center in the Federal Capital and Greater Buenos Aires. The latter is the heir to the ideas “declared by Bakunin, outlined



Top: *Piqueteros* blockaded the main roadways to the center of Buenos Aires on Feb. 11, 2002, shutting down traffic for the day in order to demand food, jobs, and justice from the government. Photo by Andrew Stern/Indymedia -

www.WeAreEverywhere.org

Middle: A few thousand people marched around Congress in the afternoon of February 13, 2002, to encourage those inside the building to think about the world outside. Photo by Joshua Breitbart.

Bottom: Protestors shut down Buenos Aires December 20, 2001. Photo Indymedia Argentina.



by Malatesta, developed by the Ukrainian group *Dielo Trouda* in exile and picked up by Federación Anarquista Uruguaya in 1955 in the Latin American context...[who] propose an anarchism that is a product of the class struggle, a tool for political militancy, that is social and popular, class-based, and revolutionary." It was constituted halfway through 1996 with the name **CAIN Agrupación Anarquista** (CAIN Anarchist Association). In November 1997, they began to publish their periodical *En La Calle* (*In the Street*) monthly, together with AUCA from La Plata and the **Organización Anarquista de Rosario** (Anarchist Organization of Rosario). This collaborative work was maintained until September 2000, when AUCA abandoned it. The OAR also abandoned the project in September 2001.¹¹ Since then *En La Calle* has been the official periodical of the OSL.

Today, due to the radical character that this struggle has assumed, the OSL has put great energy into the *Piquetero* movement. They have sought to affect the direction of the movement by developing their own formation with **Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados Anibal Verón** (Unemployed Workers' Movement Anibal Verón), a neighborhood movement that has stood out for its radicalism while not excluding the work with other unemployed groups. Their activity focuses on denouncing the true character of unemployment, publicizing the experiences of these movements, insisting in movement unity, and supporting the demands and methods that contribute to the creation of popular power. Likewise, they promote the creation of autonomous, self-sufficient, and productive projects as laboratories for the emergence of new models of sociability. They also carry out work on the union plane, wherein they promote workers' democracy, horizontalism, and federalism.

AUCA-Socialismo Libertario is an "anarcho-specificist" organization "which means, in general terms, the union of all militant anarchist in the same collective, in the same organic body, trying to introduce anarchism to all the social processes where the class struggle is expressed." Since 2001, they have produced their periodical *Ofensiva Libertaria* (*Libertarian Offensive*), and also edit other newsletters that serve their areas of engagement, such as the union publication *Mate Cocido* (*Boiled Mate*). Their work in the unemployed movement includes its own tendency, the **Movimiento de Unidad Popular** (Popular Unity Movement), which is active in ten neighborhoods of three jurisdictions in the southern part of the Buenos Aires and La Plata. There they carry out propaganda and organize things such as soup kitchens, gardens, workshops for academic assistance and political education, political activities like the assemblies, and economic activities such as self-managed bartering networks.¹² **Aguanegra** is the name of a group through which they work in the La Plata's student and university movement. They engage in political work in the Department of Journalism, Fine Arts, Humanities, Social Work and Law, and have even co-led the Student Center in the first two departments.

The AUCA and the OSL both participate in the **HIJOS**¹³ movement and other human rights organizations as well as the struggle against police repression. In summary, the scope of both groups is considerable and the quality of its engagement magnifies and multiplies the effect of its militants.

There is less activity in the interior of the country. In addition to that already mentioned, in Mar de Plata there is: **Biblioteca Juventud Moderna** and the **Grupo Anarquista Marplatense**; in Rosario the **Biblioteca Alberto Ghirardo** (magazine: *Archivo*) and the **Grupo Autogestionario** (Magazine: *Ideación*). In Cordoba there is the activity of the **Cooperativa Agrícola CARACOL** and the **GRANCO Grupo Anarquista de Córdoba**; in Neuquén there is considerable activity through the **ONAS Organización Neuquina Antonio Soto**¹⁴ and the group **Colectivo Feminista Libertario "Kasandras"**; in the south in Bariloche (Province of Río Negro) the **MALO** (Movimiento Anarquista de Liberación Obrera) works as a neighborhood group with a library.

All of these groups have distinct (and occasionally contradictory) perspectives and sometimes are products of splits that occurred between groups many years ago. Nevertheless, their development and growth nurtures the rise of radical social movements in Argentina and the desire to organize these movements horizontally and democratically.

The recent elections in Argentina, although eventful and a product of the emergency, marked the beginning of the re-institutionalization and re-legitimization of the state. Although

the government has responded rapidly and decisively to deeply felt social demands, the new social movements have not lost their legitimacy and continue to pressure the state and generate autonomous spaces. Participants in the popular mobilizations will need to think about how to manage a new society and how to replace of the state if such autonomous spaces are to grow. It is possible to imagine that a basis exists for the creation of a new Left in which the anarchist movement and the emergent socio-political and cultural actors could converge into a broader movement for anti-authoritarian self-management. ✱

Translated from Spanish by Chuck Morse

Fernando López is a longtime anarchist and presently lives in Buenos Aires with his daughter. He is an active member of the Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura Izquierdas en Argentina, a radical archive specializing in the history of the Argentine Left. He received a grant from the IAS in January 2000 for his book *The FACA and the Anarchist Movement in Argentina, 1930-1950*.

Notes

1. In Uruguay the period came to a close—although not totally—with a plebiscite in 1985, in which the recently elected government shamelessly blackmailed the people with the threat that the militaries might not withdraw to their barracks, and thus managed to release militaries from legal action who were implicated in the brutal repression of the 70s. The Chilean case is better known. The regime managed to impose a new constitution and institutionalize the power of the military over the state. The hostage character of the Chilean people in this negotiation between political and military leaders became a symbol of what these new “democracies” have meant in the last twenty years.

2. In 1999 the Peronists, in power since 1989, confronted at the ballot box a coalition of the UCR (Unión Cívica Radical, a hundred year old liberal progressive party) and the FREPASO (Frente País Solidario), a conglomerate of dissident Peronists, social democrats, and various liberal parties that took the name Alianza.

3. “Radical” refers to the UCR (Unión Cívica Radical), who are populist liberals.

4. The total “bankization” of the economy was instituted during the Menemist government by the same minister of the economy of the later government of Alianza Domingo Cavallo. It established that the payment of even the lowest daily wages or any remuneration must pass through banks, thus enriching the banks with millions of new and involuntary clients.

5. This name is generalizing because it only refers to the most common method of struggle. The activity of the marginalized is, by its own definition, invisible to the mass media, although the interruption of the circulation of people and merchandise in the country’s roads carried out

by these movements imposed a visibility that the mass media (in the hand of national and multinational consortiums) tried to hide. Highlighting the distance between “reality” and that showed by the media, a slogan was popularized—painted on thousands of walls—that read, “they piss on us and *Clarín* says rain.” *Clarín* is Argentina’s largest circulation newspaper and is owned by the Consorcio Multimédios.

6. Heir to the FACA (Argentinean Anarcho-Communist Federation), which publishes the monthly *El Libertario*.

7. It publishes *Desde el Pié*.

8. Factories declared bankrupt—at times fraudulently—and abandoned by their owners that were then taken over by their personnel and put to work in a self-managed form.

9. Nueva Aurora publishes an anarchist cultural magazine of the same name.

10. AUCA means “rebel” in the Mapuche language.

11. Very likely due to internal problems of the Rosario group.

12. The MUP in the Capital Federal edits the newsletter *La Voz de los sin Voz* (*The Voice of the Voiceless*) together with Milicias Culturales Autónomas and Colectivo Editorial Desalabrando.

13. H.I.J.O.S. (Hijos por la Identidad, la Justicia, contra el Olvido y el Silencio—Children for Identity, Justice, Against Forgetting and Silence) is one of the most dynamic groups in the human rights movement.

14. This is the name of a celebrated anarchist leader that led the Patagonian strikes in the 20s.

To Think that Power Will Dissolve by Itself is an Absurdity

Interview with Alfredo Vallota

Populist movements have always been a problem for Latin American anarchists. On the one hand, they seem to share goals that are dear to anarchists: they build mass, working class mobilizations, often articulate a strong anti-imperialist message, and celebrate the virtues of popular culture. On the other hand, they are always centered around charismatic political leaders and are fundamentally state-centered, hierarchical projects. Brazilian, Argentine, and Mexican anarchists struggled to build an alternative to the populist movements in their respective countries before World War Two with varying degrees of success.

This problem has returned for Venezuelan anarchists in the form of Hugo Chavez's "Bolivian revolution" and comrades from the magazine *El Libertario* have initiated a rich dialogue on the subject.¹ Here we present excerpts from an interview they conducted with Alfredo Vallota, a professor of philosophy and author of the book, *Bitácora de la utopía: Anarquismo para el siglo XXI* (*Utopia's Binnacle: Anarchism for the 21st Century*).

Chuck Morse

Why was the attempted coup d'etat led by Chavez on February 4th, 1992, a retreat? There are people that suggest that it was a transition towards something else...

Of course, but transitions can be backwards. In this moment, the political leadership had disconnected from the interests of the base. The structures of power were transformed into an oligarchy that didn't see anything but its immediate interests. The political structure had ruptured, something that did not happen the first years of the project of 1958.² But, to replace an oligarchy with another one, a militarist oligarchy, is a backwards transition. It does not contain any mechanism for resolving the problems of the base, the disconnection of the leading economic and political oligarchy from the interests of the Venezuelan population. For this reason, I consider it a step back, politically speaking. The political structure should have established a connection with the population through the political parties, but it did not do so, and a group of soldiers had the resources to do it.

Is it possible to find parallels with what occurred on the 4th of February with other historical moments in other latitudes or it is a uniquely Venezuelan event?

It has its own particularities. If one is referring to the military coups that took place in Chile or Argentina, these had an ideological content and Chavez's coup has none. Chavez's coup is simply a coup for the sake of power, taking advantage of circumstances, but it does not have an ideological structure. It has been in power for almost 5 years: could someone tell me what are the five fundamental points of the Bolivian revolution? There aren't any.

Some analysts associate Chavez with the historic examples of Fascism and [Argentina's populist tendency of] Peronism. Do links exist?

There are links. Chavez's [movement] has the same connotations as Peronism. That is to say, it never had an ideology. In Peronism, there was a revolutionary left, a unified right, the industrialists of national capital, the capitalists of import and export, the armed forces, and left-wing Peronist guerillas. Everything fit within Peronism, [but] it was just a name and a person. The proof is that [former Argentina President] Menem was a Peronist, and he was and is the perfect neo-liberal. López Rea, who founded the equivalent of the Bolivian circles, with the Triple A was a Peronist also. [Peron's third wife and one-time Argentine President] Isabel was a Peronist. In this sense, Chavezism is similar to Peronism.³ With Fascism, certain policies can be identified, except that fascism has a more defined ideological force than Chavez possesses.

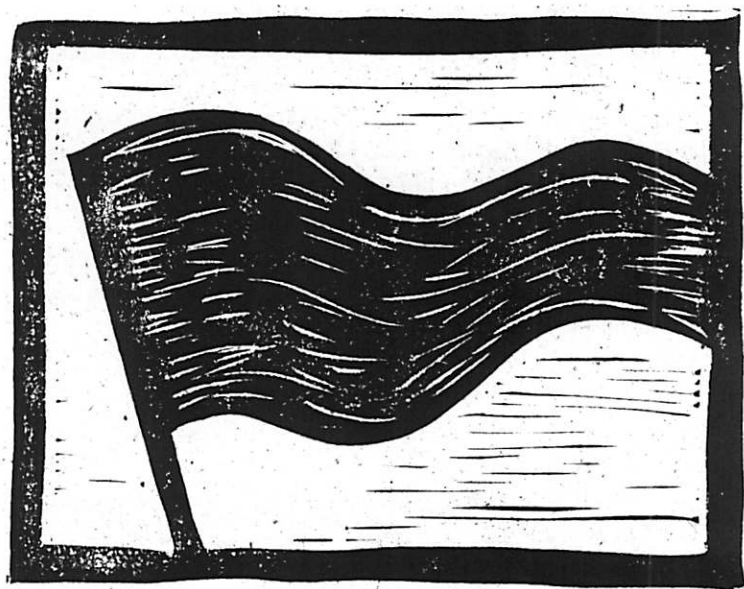


Illustration by Josh Macphee -
www.justseeds.org

If we put the opposition (to Chavez) under the magnifying glass, do you see novel elements? Is it a socio-political movement or the re-composition of the old leadership trying to restore itself to power?

The positive thing that I see is that the people have participated. The people participate in both sides. Everyone has been obliged to take part. Not in the best manner possible, because it would have been much more useful to participate in the constructive, not destructive work. That is the defect. But the participation, abandoning an absolutely flaccid and disdainful situation for a public concern, for a political concern, and limiting itself to the vote every five years without greater participation... the people see that this has brought them to disaster. The problem is that this participation has been carried out in a habitual or customary way, a way that tries to structure itself in the traditional manner: that is to say, organizing itself to follow leaders, searching for someone to represent them.

What things can be rescued with Chavezism?

As in the other faction, there has been a positive participation of the base. However, the official movement's difficulty is precisely that it requires the support of the base, but it is an authoritarian project. So, all the organizational models that are stimulated and that can orchestrated have a very low limit: they are immediately pressured, co-opted, limited, and disciplined.

A fundament of the anarchist movement is to regard power as a social relationship as well as an institution. What is Chavez's relation with the distinct factors of power? Are there antagonisms or relations?

Anarchism is one of the few currents that is raising ideological discussion today. There is not much outside of this, because there are not many philosophical fundaments for raising such discussions: conceptions of man, of society, of technology, and also the aspirations of the old ideologies. Thus, the absence of this discussion generates a void... This void is filled by the struggle for power in whatever forms.

The Chavist movement is immersed in an anachronistic ideology because it still personalizes power, but power does not have subjects whom it owns. That is to say, today we personalize the policies being carried out by the United States, but Bush is not the owner of this power. Three years ago, there was Clinton and now who is it? Nobody.... One of the problems that Chavez has had is that this personalization of power cannot be implemented because the forces of power are larger than he is.

What can anarchism propose as a contemporary alternative?

We can understand power as an historical error in the progress of humanity. Anthropology has shown that for thousands of years humans lived without power. Power isn't necessary. For thousands

of years humanity lived with an economy of reciprocity.... Power is the possibility that an individual or group influences the decisions, the actions, in the spaces and environments, of the other. All power leads to an oligarchy because power does not distribute itself, it does not soften. Power is avaricious, it condenses. What is there to do? Dissolve power. Anarchism's great project is to dissolve the asymmetry of power. How? There are thousands of alternatives and there is not only one solution. To advance "one" solution would be a doctrine of power, a manifestation of power.

In the context of Latin America, Venezuela has a very brief anarchist tradition. What is its significance for local social movements?

It is true that it does not have a history as an organized movement. There are countries in Latin American that have much more historical force: Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and Peru have anarchist movements that have existed for a hundred years.... But, the past is not always the future, and the Venezuelan anarchist movement now has a presence in the Latin American anarchist movement, and it also has a presence in the international anarchist movement. Interestingly, there are various aspects in the Venezuelan anarchist movement. Inherited, like always in traditional anarchism, is the desire to inform the people about their conflicts, their solutions, their alternatives, their possibilities, and actions. In this moment I believe that anarchist publications in Venezuela are the only ones with a open and explicit ideological content that circulate around here. Without a doubt, I would say that anarchism is a contemporary ideological alternative, not of the majority, but also not ignored. And the proof is that the Chavezist movement has put out pamphlets and notes warning its militants of the risks of anarchism. ✱

Translation from Spanish by Chuck Morse.

Notes

1. This interview was published in on April 14th, 2003 in *El Libertario* (<http://www.nodo50.org/ellibertario/>) Annual subscriptions (6 issues) are \$5 US or \$11 US (slow and fast mail, respectively) for readers outside of Venezuela. Send subscriptions to E. Tesoro, apartado postal 6303, Carmelitas, Caracas, Venezuela.
2. Here Vallota refers to the 1958 election of president Betancourt.
3. The Bolivian Circles are popular groups organized to support the Chavez government.

Libertarian Archives in South America

By Lorenzo Pezzica

The following is the latest information on two important archives, which also function as centers for the study of contemporary Brazilian and Argentine history, and on the ongoing "Luce Fabbri" library project in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Brazil

The **Edgard Leuenroth Archive** (AEL) and Research and Social Documentation Centre (Sao Paulo), was established in 1974 thanks to the initiative of a group of researchers from the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences (IFCH) and the State University of Campinas (Unicamp). The aim was to create an information center to aid researchers dedicated to the preservation of Brazilian social cultural history. The name of the archive stems from a militant Brazilian anarchist, who was a typographer, a journalist, and an influential figure in the Brazilian anarchist movement. It is not, therefore, by chance that the first active group involved in AEL was the same as that involved in the Edgard Leuenroth Fund, which was acquired by Unicamp in 1974. Since then, the archive has engaged in the gathering and conservation of numerous collections related to the history of anarchist and workers movements and of the social, political, and cultural histories of Brazil from the nineteenth century to the present.

Between 1974 and 1986, the archive went underground. After 1986, AEL went public and gained legal recognition. Since the 1990s, the archive has embarked on the digitization of the documents and periodicals. Today, the AEL collection is available for consultation on the Internet at the following address: www.acl.ilch.unicamp.br.

AEL currently maintains 58 archival sections (a total of 280,000 documents), 28,000 books, 171 bulletin titles, 3,811 periodical titles, 3,878 newspaper titles, 854 videos, 289 films, 1,419 audio tapes, 2200 "cartazes", 13,330 audio records, 621 scores, and 45,000 photographs.

The most important archival section is, unsurprisingly, the one named after Edgard Leuenroth, which is comprised of a large number of working-class, anticlerical, anarchist, and socialist periodicals. Other important, biographical archival sections are those of the founder of the Communist Party of Brazil, Astrojildo Pereira, the communist party secretary Octavio Brandao, the socialist lawyer Evaristo de Moraes, the syndicalist Mauricio de Lacerda, and the recently recovered personal archive of the syndicalist lawyer Mario Carvalho de Jesus, founder of the Frente Nacional di Trabalho (FNT).

AEL also maintains the documentation of two great Brazilian working-class organizations: the archive of the metal workers union of Volta Redonda and the collection of the Movimento Sociale Recente, wherein the documents produced by the trade union movement since the 1870s are preserved. Yet, the Archive does not merely preserve the institutional memory of the Brazilian working-class and anarchist movements and personalities: the

AEL also preserves many documents from enterprises, public administration, and of other left-wing organizations. As a result, AEL is presently one of the most important research centers for the study of contemporary Brazilian history.

Argentina

The **Biblioteca Archivo de Estudios Libertarios** (BAEL) library was established by the Argentine Libertarian Federation in 1998 with the objective of recovering, preserving, cataloging, and making available the existing material related to the history of the anarchist and working-class movement, so as to contribute to the building of a libertarian alternative.

The documents preserved through the Argentine Libertarian Federation are of considerable importance not only for their magnitude, but also for the uniqueness of the material, for the lengthy time-span they cover (from the nineteenth century to the present), and for their geographical breadth. The archive actually contains publications from 44 countries. Frequented by numerous European and American researchers, the archive is located in spacious surroundings amenable to preservation and consultation.

In 2002, BAEL published its first catalogue covering its library and documentary holdings. The publication of the catalogue offers all interested researchers the chance of recovering an important part of Argentine history through both scientific periodicals, such as "Ciencia Social" (1890), and working-class papers, such as "La Protesta." More than 20,000 periodical issues have been catalogued, ranging from 1890 to 1945, along with the library publications that are part of the Jose Ingenieros Popular Library (Biblioteca Popular Jose Ingenieros).

The catalogue offers a wealth of information and an introductory section that includes, aside from the description of the archive, an interesting reconstruction of the contemporary history of working-class and anarchist movements in Argentina as attested to the archive's own documentation (*Catalogo de publicaciones politicas, sociales y culturales anarquistas (1890 - 1945)*, Coleccion Archivo - I, Federacion Libertaria Argentina, Biblioteca-Archivo de Estudios Libertarios, Editorial reconstruir, 2002).

Uruguay

This last recommendation is the **Archive "Luce Fabbri"** library project in Montevideo, Uruguay. The library will specialize in the diffusion of materials and in the research connected to the social, political, and historical aspects of the oppositional movements, emphasizing the anarchist movement. Along with the construction of a library, the project involves the building of a cultural center aimed at supporting conferences, meetings, exhibits, and social gatherings, along with photographic exhibits, historical research projects, and research grants. ✱

*Translated from Italian by Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro.
From the July issue of Bollettino Archivio G. Pinelli*

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An Anti-Authoritarian Review of Books



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IAS On the Web

We have been very busy at the IAS reworking our Internet presence. This past August, we launched a completely re-designed website that includes many new features. A small, but growing, anarchist calendar of events is now available on the website (<http://www.anarchist-studies.org/calendar>), along with a semi-regular column, *Theory & Politics*. *Theory & Politics* features original essays and reprints on anarchist practice and thought—http://www.anarchist-studies.org/publications/theory_politics. Since our website launched, we have run several articles as part of this column, including:

In "The Politics of Postanarchism," Saul Newman, author of the book *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*, offers an overview of postanarchist thought. As post-Marxists attempt to rethink the revolutionary project, Newman argues that contemporary theory needs to take account of the intervention of anarchism. But, anarchism itself could benefit greatly through an incorporation of contemporary theoretical perspectives, in particular those derived from discourse analysis, psychoanalysis and poststructuralism. <http://www.anarchist-studies.org/article/articleview/1/1/1>

Jesse Cohn, Professor of English at Purdue University North Central, and Shawn P. Wilbur, independent scholar, follow up on Newman's postanarchism in "What's Wrong With Postanarchism?" Here, Cohn and Wilbur outline what they see as positive developments within postanarchist thought, while taking a critical position on the problems of wedding poststructuralism to anarchism. <http://www.anarchist-studies.org/article/articleview/26/2/1/>

Cohn also has contributed a review of the Culture and the State conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, May 2nd to 5th (<http://www.anarchist-studies.org/article/articleview/25/1/1/>), as well as Sandra Jeppesen who attended the Denman Island Green Anarchist Gathering, August 15th to 18th (<http://www.anarchist-studies.org/article/articleview/27/1/1/>).

With the IAS's *Anarchist Summary* (<http://summary.anarchist-studies.org/>), avid readers of anarchist theory on-line can stay on top of the latest articles. Culled from a wide range of English language anarchist websites, the *Anarchist Summary* offers pointers to what is new on the web within the world of anarchist theory.

Lastly, be sure to sign up to receive the IAS's new email newsletter in order to keep tabs on what's new and happening on the IAS website by visiting <http://newsletter.anarchist-studies.org/>

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Over these past seven years we have supported over forty projects by writers from around the world, including authors from South Africa, Nigeria, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, the United States, Canada, as well as other countries. We have funded movement research, translations, historical studies, and even a play. Many of these projects would not have been completed without our assistance.

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- The IAS will publish *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, our biannual newsletter. *Perspectives* is a unique source of interviews, publishing news, and commentary pertaining to anarchism. It helps keep people informed about anarchist scholarship and encourages dialogue among those interested in this work.
- The IAS will strengthen its web presence so that it becomes a more valuable resource to the milieus that we serve.

It has been a great seven years and we are excited about the future of our work! Please help make this work possible by sending a donation today.

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