



Call for papers for an *ephemera* special issue on:

Latin America struggles: Organization and critical strategy for liberation from below

Issue editors: Maria Ceci Misoczky, Paulo Abdala and Steffen Böhm

In this region we are living a very interesting period, creative, fertile. It is hard to understand sometimes, especially when you look at it from the outside and above. The things that people really understand, things that can be comprehended by reason and felt with the hearth, are the things we are able to see from within and from below [...] Latin America is the reign of contradiction and diversity, where all the colors, odors and pains of the world mix and confront each other. (Eduardo Galeano, interview for the documentary 'Latin American Blood')

Ten years ago, in 2006, *ephemera* published a special issue on Latin America. The aim was 'to inform readers across the globe about the organization of the ongoing struggles and resistances and the tensions lived and experienced by so many Latin Americans'. The intention was 'to move away from over-generalizations about Latin America into unexplored areas in which the emergence of these movements reflects the continuing struggles for liberation' (Misoczky, 2006: 227-228). A decade later – at the closure of the cycle of the so-called progressive or post-neoliberal governments in many countries of the region – the same old features that had historically defined the Latin American socio-economic formation have shown their strength and continuity: dependency, class inequality, overexploitation of labour, export-led extractivism, democratic deficits

and the usual repression against popular organizations and struggles.

According to Dussel (2009), every people have problematic cores that are universal, constituting a set of fundamental, ontological questions that homo sapiens must ask at some point of their existence. However, the content and process of responding to these questions trigger many different narratives, depending on the social reality where they are embedded in. In line with this proposition, the proposed special issue aims to articulate the contribution of Latin American social thought to understanding contemporary issues related to the organization of social movements and popular struggles in the region.

To support this articulation, we define organization as ‘a means for liberation’, and as ‘the expression of processes and practices oriented by a critical-strategic reasoning’ from the perspective of producing collective subjects of emancipatory praxis (Misoczky, 2010: 39). Whereas, by social thought we understand an epistemological body related to a specific intellectual field and its discourses (Heredia, 2010); in our case knowledge produced in and about Latin America. This includes reflections and critical engagements with a social subject or, indeed, the intellectual process itself. Yet, we invite knowledges that go beyond the frontiers of the academy, including militant intellectuals, artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, poets, theatre companies and other possible forms of social manifestations that are able to put to us questions, knowledges, comparisons or forecasts about a certain social reality. In this sense, we believe that those involved in social and popular struggles produce valuable knowledge and, thus, we are interested in learning from them. This is in line with Rauber (2004) when she states that theoretically elaborated knowledge must be articulated through knowledge that emerges from below. Adopting this perspective, we believe it is possible and necessary to produce geographically located and socially relevant research that is engaged in comprehending reality to transform it, as Orlando Fals-Borda (2009) has proposed.

The objective of this special issue is to explore the possibilities and potentialities of theoretical and political analyses developed within and/or for Latin America and its specific socio-economic and historical formation. We believe the best way to avoid anachronisms is to read existing critical theories, but applying them to the analysis of contemporary struggles and hence updating their explicative power in articulation with the organization of social struggle and the knowledge that is produced from below.

For Montero (1998), the many ways of knowing that have been produced in Latin America make it possible to identify the existence of an episteme organized around key ideas, such as a concept of liberation through praxis and a critical sense that leads to the denaturalization of canonical forms of apprehending and constructing the world. This tradition of thought crosses the centuries. Just to mention a few examples: José Martí and Félix Varela in the 19th Century; the Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui and his indigenous socialism at the beginning of the 20th Century; the diverse strands of the dialectics of liberation/oppression that

started around the middle of the 20th Century (the pedagogy of liberation, the theatre of the oppressed, the theology of liberation, the philosophy of liberation, the sociology of liberation); and also the rich debates on dependency, especially the Marxist Dependency Theory by Ruy Mauro Marini and the many theoretical reflections and practical interventions on the dialectics of development/underdevelopment; and, of course, revolutionaries like Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Sub-Comandante Marcos.

Academics and researchers are invited to send contributions, as well as social activists engaged in social movements and/or in the production of knowledge about them in alternative mediums, including photographers and filmmakers. The submissions might take the form of papers, empirical field reports or picture essays. The authors do not have to restrict themselves to the reading of Latin American intellectuals; non-Latin American thinkers can also be brought into the analysis. But we also take this call for papers as an invitation to become more aware of the richness of the knowledge produced in the region.

We particularly invite – but do by no means restrict submissions to – manuscripts on one or several of the following topics, always related to social struggles and social thought in the Latin American context:

- Critical engagements with the definition of many Latin American governments as ‘post-neoliberals’ over the last decade, analysed from theoretical, epistemological and/or political-economic perspectives.
- Social and popular struggles that have been present in the region, confronting extractivism and dispossession, defending indigenous rights, constructing valued ways of living, among many others.
- Organizational practices of these activists, the ways they resist repression and criminalization, the political and personal relationships they build.
- New forms of alternative media production and circulation used to confront the common sense around social struggles, helping to produce consciousness by disseminating information and stories about the social movements from below.
- Engagements with the renewed interest in critical and revolutionary thinkers that has arisen in Latin America in the wake of the deep socio-economic and environmental crises of the region.
- Historical and critical analyses of the contingencies and ruptures in Latin American socio-economic formations.
- Critical perspectives of the political economy of Latin American countries and their relation to the international capitalist order and division of labour.

Deadline for submissions: 15 September 2017

All contributions should be submitted to the issue editors: Maria Ceci Misoczky (maria.ceci@ufrgs.br), Paula Abdala (paulo.abdala@ufrgs.br) and Steffen Böhm (s.boehm@exeter.ac.uk). Full papers, conceptual/literature review articles, book reviews, notes, interviews and a variety of other formats of contribution are all encouraged, as long as they address the remit of the special issue as outlined above. Information about some of these types of contributions can be found at: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit>. The submissions will undergo a double-blind review process. All submissions should follow *ephemera*'s submission guidelines, which are available at: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit> (see the 'Abc of formatting' guide in particular).

We will accept submissions in Spanish, Portuguese and English. We aim to publish the special issue in all three languages, translating some of the contributions, but at least providing abstracts in all three languages. For further information, please contact one of the special issue editors.

The final deadline for the submission of full papers and contributions is 15 September 2017. It is anticipated that the issue will be published towards the end of 2018.

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