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# Vozes da Dissidência e a Organização das Lutas e Resistências: Uma Edição Especial sobre a América Latina

# Voices of Dissent and the Organization of Struggles and Resistances: A Special Issue on Latin America

Maria Ceci Misoczky

Há um ano escrevi –juntamente com *Miguel Imas*– uma proposta para um número especial de *ephemera* sobre a América Latina. A principal razão e objetivo era contribuir para o avanço da internacionalização das lutas e resistências. O texto escrito naquele momento foi, de fato, um guia para a produção dessa edição e, também, o meio para entrar em contato com os potenciais autores. Por isso, reproduzo a proposta na sua versão original para, posteriormente, apresentar o contexto e os artigos desse número especial.

## A Proposta

América Latina: uma dinâmica e vertiginosa paisagem de narrativas mágicas e tempestuosas, vividas no cotidiano caótico de nossas cidades, nas lutas pela vida em nossos campos imensos, e expressa na beleza poética da nossa gente. Uma terra uma vez ocupada por orgulhosas tribos nômades, como os Araucanos e os

A year ago, I sent – jointly with *Miguel Imas* – a proposal for an *ephemera* special issue on Latin America. The main reason and aim was to contribute to advancing the internationalization of struggles and resistances. The text we wrote then became, in fact, the guidance for the production of this issue, and also the means for getting in touch with potential authors. Hence, let me present the proposal as it was then before I present the context and the articles of this issue.

## The Proposal

Latin America: an ongoing and unfolding landscape of magical and storming narratives, lived in the chaotic subtlety of our cities, in the struggle for life in our immense fields, and expressed in the poetic beauty of our diverse people. A land roamed once by proud nomad tribes, such as the Araucanos and the Guarany, who never yield. A land where the Aztecs

Guaranys. Uma terra onde os Astecas e Incas construíram algumas das sociedades mais organizadas e dos impérios mais impressionantes que o mundo já ouviu falar. Uma terra devastada por terríveis conquistadores em seu esforço para reinventar a nossa gente, provocando séculos de guerra, dor, pobreza, doenças; gerando novos discursos sob os quais recraram e leram esse território majestoso e sua história. Uma terra que tem produzido inumeráveis revoluções, ditaduras, mitos e contos que refletem a natureza enigmática e mítica de nossa existência (des)organizada.

Guerras e processos pacíficos de independência produziram, no século XIX, a reorganização da terra em distintos países, sob um panóptico na forma da Doutrina Monroe dos Estados Unidos. Nem mesmo o grande libertador continental, Simon Bolívar, conseguiu realizar o sonho de uma grande nação sob uma única bandeira. Em vez disso, emergiram nação após nação, com suas próprias tradições, religiões, leis, sistemas políticos, negócios, costumes, folclore e história. A chegada de imigrantes europeus e japoneses, escravos africanos, comerciantes palestinos e sírios, trabalhadores chineses, entre tantos outros, acrescentaram mais ‘cores’ à nossa sempre ativa e fragmentada *bricolage* de pessoas. No século XX essa *bricolage* explodiu nas novas megalópolis e no campo, enquanto, com diferentes ideologias e regimes, alguns lutavam para emancipar a população crescente. Lutas e revoluções em Cuba e na América Central (como o Movimento Sandinista), mesmo a ascensão de políticos populistas, tais como Juan Domingo Perón na Argentina, trouxeram um pouco do ar fresco do otimismo para os grupos indígenas, camponeses, trabalhadores e mineiros submetidos a viver, nas favelas, pobreza e exploração. A revolução democrática introduzida pelo governo

and Incas constructed some of the most outstanding empires and organized societies that the world has ever heard of. A land crashed by the daunting conquerors and their effort to re-invent our people, bringing centuries of war, pain, poverty, disease and new discourses with which to recreate and read this majestic territory and its history. A land that has produced innumerable revolutions, dictatorships, myths and tales that come to reflect the enigmatic and mystic nature of its (dis)organized existence.

Wars and pacifying processes of independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emerging re-organized nature of the land in distinctive independent countries under a *panopticon*, in the form of the Monroe Doctrine of the United States. Not even one of the great continental liberators, Simon Bolívar, managed to fulfill the dream of one big nation under one banner. Instead, nation after nation emerged with its own traditions, religions, laws, political systems, businesses, customs, folklore and history. The arrival of European and Japanese immigrants, African slaves, Palestinian and Syrian traders, Chinese workers, amongst others, added more ‘color’ to this ever melting and fragmented *bricolage* of people. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century the *bricolage* exploded in the new *mega-polis* and countryside as Latin Americans dealt with different ideologies and regimes to emancipate their growing populations. Struggles and revolutions in Cuba and Central America (e.g. the Sandinista movement), even the rise of ‘caudillo’ populist politicians such as Juan Domingo Peron in Argentina, gave way to a fresh air of optimism among the embattled indigenous groups, peasants, workers and miners submitted to live in slums (*favelas* and *callampas*), poverty and exploitation. The democratic revolution introduced by Salvador

socialista da *Unidad Popular* de Salvador Allende, no Chile, gerou a esperança de que era possível reclamar pacificamente o direito à terra e a seus recursos, e dispô-los do modo que o coletivo considerasse o mais apropriado para proteger suas necessidades e dignidade.

No entanto, o desejo de emancipação de sociedades em seus territórios só gerou mais violência, repressão e tortura, com a instauração de ditaduras militares pelo continente afora. Todas apoiadas pelo governo e pelas multinacionais norte-americanas, que perceberam a liberação da América Latina como uma ameaça a seu discurso hegemônico e, mais importante, ao seu controle sobre nossos ricos recursos naturais.

Pelo menos por duas décadas muitos países estiveram sob regimes sangrentos; Argentina, Bolívia, Brasil, Chile, Paraguai, Peru e Uruguai. Assim, o terror organizado –sob os auspícios do discurso da economia de mercado neoliberal disfarçado na grande narrativa do progresso– foi imposto à maioria da população da América Latina. Estes regimes, compartilhando uma ideologia anti-comunista e organizados como uma rede de violência –sempre com o apoio dos Estados Unidos– disseminaram a destruição não apenas de vidas, mas também de idéias. Universidades foram fechadas ou censuradas, acadêmicos foram assassinados, forçados ao exílio ou a silenciar suas vozes.

O neoliberalismo, introduzido pelos regimes autoritários ganhou legitimidade durante a transição das ditaduras para as democracias representativas. Durante as últimas décadas governança e harmonia foram as marcas usadas pela nova ordem para qualificar como subversiva qualquer busca de alternativa. Some-se a isso a propalada ameaça de desordem, incerteza, instabilidade monetária, usada como

Allende's *Unidad Popular* socialist government in Chile gave hope to the belief that it was possible to reclaim peacefully the right to the land and its resources and to dispose them in whatever way the collective felt most appropriate, in order to protect their needs and dignity.

However, the desire for emancipation by the local societies only sparked more violence, repression, persecution and torture by the instauration of military dictatorships across the continent, supported by the United States government and its multinational businesses, which perceived the liberation of Latin Americans as a threat to their hegemonic discourse and most importantly their control over our rich natural resources.

For at least two decades, many countries were under bloody regimes; Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. Thus, organized terror under the auspice of neoliberal market economic discourses dressed in ‘grand-narratives of progress’ were imposed on most of the people living in Latin America. These regimes, sharing an anti-communist ideology and organized as a network of violence – always with the support of the United States – spread destruction not only of lives, but also of ideas. Universities were closed or censored; academics were murdered, forced into exile or to silence their voices.

Neoliberalism, introduced by authoritarian regimes, gained legitimacy during the transition from dictatorship to representative democracy. During the last decades governance and partial peace were the labels used by the new order to qualify any alternative as subversive. In addition, the threat of disorder, uncertainty and monetary instability has been used as an excuse to silence the

desculpa para silenciar vozes rebeldes.

Ainda assim, na América Latina a marcha do neoliberalismo não avançou sem resistência. Desde o Rio Grande no México até a Patagônia chilena, novos movimentos, lutas e resistências organizadas emergem para reclamar o direito de viver em igualdade e com dignidade, e a melhoraria das condições de vida e trabalho. Podemos facilmente mencionar alguns exemplos: a organização da resistência pelo Exército Zapatista de Libertação Nacional e pelo Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra; a luta para colocar Pinochet na prisão e a busca incansável das Mäes da Praça de Mayo por seus filhos e netos desaparecidos durante a ditadura militar argentina; a destituição de presidentes pela insurgência popular no Equador, Argentina e Bolívia; a organização dos povos indígenas em muitos países, principalmente na região andina, lutando por sua cultura e pelo direito de explorar os recursos naturais.

Esta tradição de lutas, apesar de derrotas e adversidades, tem sido representada por muitos artistas populares, como Victor Jara, Mercedes Sosa, Violeta Parra, Silvio Rodriguez, Chico Buarque de Holanda, e tantos outros; escritores e poetas como Pablo Neruda, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Benedetti, Julio Cortazar, Antônio Callado, e outros; combatentes idolatrados, tais como Sandino, Marighela, e o mítico Che. Uma longa tradição de autores, em busca da construção de um discurso capaz de contribuir teoricamente, na política e na filosofia, tem estado sempre presente, de José Enrique Rodó e José Carlos Mariátegui a Rodolfo Kusch, Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda, Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Quijano.

*Portanto, o objetivo desse número especial* é informar aos leitores de todos os lugares sobre a organização das lutas e resistências

voices of rebellion.

Yet, in Latin America, the march of neoliberalism has not been without resistance. From the Rio Grande in Mexico to the Chilean Patagonia, new movements and organized resistance emerged to reclaim their right to live in equality, with dignity and to improve their working and living conditions. We can easily mention some examples: the organization of resistance by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and the Landless Workers Movement; the struggle to put Pinochet on trial; the enduring search of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo for their children and grandchildren who disappeared under the military regime in Argentina; the destitution of presidents by popular insurgency in Ecuador, Argentina and Bolivia; the organization of indigenous people in many countries, mainly in the Andes region, fighting for their culture and for the right to exploit natural resources.

These traditions of struggle, despite defeats and adversities have been represented by: many popular artists such as Victor Jara, Mercedes Sosa, Violeta Parra, Silvio Rodriguez, Chico Buarque de Holanda and many more; writers and poets such as Pablo Neruda, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Benedetti, Julio Cortazar, Antônio Callado and others; idolized combatants, such as Sandino, Marighela, and the mythic Che. A tradition of Latin American theorists, in search of local discourses that provide political and philosophical guidance, has always been present: from Jose Enrique Rodó and José Carlos Mariátegui to Rodolfo Kusch, Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda, Enrique Dussel and Aníbal Quijano.

*Hence, the aim of this special issue* is to inform readers across the globe about the

em curso, e sobre as tensões vividas e experimentadas por tantos latino-americanos. Ao fazê-lo, este número especial quer evitar as generalizações simplificadoras sobre a América Latina, explorando áreas nas quais a emergência desses movimentos reflete as lutas contínuas pela libertação. Também é nosso objetivo considerar o contexto político e a sempre presente ameaça interna da repressão e da intervenção externa. Ainda, queremos evitar uma visão ingênua, unidimensional, ou super otimista da intensidade dos movimentos através do continente.

Em síntese, esperamos que essa edição desperte o interesse sobre como nós – latino-americanos – estamos lidando com esses problemas: sobrevivendo, organizando a resistência, construindo alternativas, abrindo novos espaços. Pensamos que essa pode ser uma importante contribuição no sentido de que outros indivíduos e grupos decidam pesquisar e escrever sobre essas organizações. Também pensamos que esse pode ser um espaço de mútuo reconhecimento para aqueles que trabalham na América Latina e para todos nós, não importa onde nos localizemos, interessados em contribuir para a organização da luta e da resistência.

organization of the ongoing struggles and resistances and the tensions lived and experienced by so many Latin Americans. By doing this, this special issue intends 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. We also aim to consider the political context and the always present threat of internal repression and external intervention. Still, we do not intend to present a naïve mono-voice and an over-optimistic view of the intensity of movements throughout the continent.

In sum, we want this issue to be a catapult for interest in how Latin Americans are dealing with these issues; coping, organizing resistance, providing alternatives and opening new forums. We think this will mark an important contribution into the way other individuals and groups decide to do research and write about these organizations. We also think that it may provide a space for mutual recognition for those working in isolation inside Latin America and for all of us, no matter where we are, interested in contributing to the practice of organizing struggle and resistance.

## Esse Número Especial

Na América Latina estamos vivendo um intenso momento de “la articulación de las resistencias, de desarrollo conjunto de propuestas políticas abiertas, de desarrollo del pensamiento propio, de rescate y afianzamiento de los conocimientos, de fortalecimiento de la comunicación y de las interacciones entre quienes resisten” (León, 2006: 23). Esse momento só pode acontecer porque nosso contexto tem sido

## This Special Issue

In Latin America we are living an intense moment of “articulation of resistances, collective construction of open political proposals, development of original references in connection with the rescue of traditional knowledge, improvement of communication and articulation among those that resist” (León, 2006: 23). This moment only happens because our context has been marked by a tradition of five

marcado por uma tradição de cinco séculos de lutas e pela produção teórica e política conectada a essas lutas revolucionárias e populares.

Michael Löwy, durante sua apresentação no último Fórum Social Mundial em Caracas, mencionou três momentos da cultura política do movimento internacional por uma outra globalização: protesto, resistência e utopia.

O *protesto* se relaciona com as muitas formas de expressar indignação contra o liberalismo-capitalismo-imperialismo; é o momento do grande NÃO! do YA BASTA! É usualmente criticado por ser puro negativismo.

O momento das *propostas*, apesar de ser claramente positivo, é usualmente criticado por ser não aceitável ou não realista. Rauber (2004) considera a existência de quatro tipos de propostas. Propostas para superar emergências sociais relacionadas à sobrevivência e usualmente articuladas em torno de problemas como fome, desemprego, saúde, educação, etc. Esses são componentes de primeira ordem no nosso contexto de resistências e lutas. Outro tipo de proposta se relaciona às lutas por melhores salários, condições de vida, liberdade sexual, etc. Também podemos ter propostas para a reestruturação do sistema: taxa Tobin, democratização das Nações Unidas (essas propostas usualmente se originam no Norte Global). Finalmente, temos propostas e demandas com uma clara estratégia alternativa, no sentido de questionar e transformar as irracionalidades do sistema. Aqui podemos encontrar propostas como a defesa da água como um bem público, a luta pela reforma agrária ou contra as monoculturas.

No momento *utópico* temos aspirações subversivas por outra civilização, além do capitalismo, imperialismo e neo-

centuries of struggles, and a theoretical and political production connected to these popular and revolutionary struggles. This special issue is a consequence and recognition of this moment.

Michael Löwy, during his presentation at the last World Social Forum in Caracas, talked about three moments in the political culture of the alter-globalization movement: protest, proposals and utopia.

*Protest* is related to many forms of expressing indignation against neoliberalism-capitalism-imperialism; it is the moment of the NO! of the YA BASTA! It is usually criticized for being pure negativism.

The moment of *proposals*, despite being clearly positive, is usually criticized for being not acceptable and non-realist. Rauber (2004) considers the existence of four kinds of proposals. Proposals to overcome social emergencies related to survival and usually articulated around issues like hunger, unemployment, health, education, etc. These are first-order components in our context of resistances and struggles. Another kind of proposal is related to struggles for better income, working conditions, sexual freedom, etc. We can also have proposals for the re-structuring of the system: Tobin tax, democratization of the United Nations (these proposals usually originate from the Global North). Finally, we have proposals and demands with a clear alternative strategy, in the sense that they question and transform the irrationalities of the system; here we can find proposals like the defense of water as a public good, the struggle for land reform or against monocultures.

In the *utopian* moment we have subversive aspirations for another civilization, beyond capitalism,

liberalismo; entretanto sem afirmações programáticas ou organizações unificadas.

Em nosso contexto esses momentos podem ser expressos por diferentes tipos de discurso. De acordo com Volnovich (2002), escrevendo no contexto da crise econômica argentina de 2001-2002, existem três discursos em circulação: o discurso do sofrimento, o discurso da resistência e o discurso da luta.

O discurso do sofrimento descreve as infinitas maneiras das penúrias econômicas e miséria cultural que o capitalismo de nossos dias impõe. Tenta definir os parâmetros que possam medir a ‘dor país’, o despedaçamento interior, a devastação cotidiana: o discurso do sofrimento esclarece o impacto em mulheres e homens; esclarece como as meninas e os meninos, como os adolescentes são afetados pela exclusão social, pelo desemprego, pela falta de equidade na distribuição de bens simbólicos e materiais; esclarece a sanção e confirmação de uma temporalidade sem futuro [...].

O discurso da resistência tem a virtude de ressaltar a construção de novas formas para enfrentar a política de arrasamento e extermínio delineada pelos centros capitalistas. [...] Esse discurso apela para a construção e reconstrução de laços sociais e exalta o indiscutível mérito de uma trama urbana baseada em redes solidárias e criativas. Registro da originalidade com que homens e mulheres aceitam o desafio de sobreviver a despeito dos que estão convencidos de que sobramos, o discurso da resistência põe o foco nas engenhosas formas de gerenciar a miséria que nos resta, nas propostas alternativas para administrar a decadência [...].

Agora, escolho dedicar-me ao discurso da luta. Vou me referir aos esforços que realizam homens e mulheres para incorporar-se de maneira inovadora na produção. Também vou me referir aos obstáculos e interdições que tendem a neutralizar a eficácia dessa incorporação, e às infinitas maneiras como o sistema de dominação captura toda iniciativa destinada a questioná-lo, transformando em pura repetição o que surge como inovação. Na atualidade, a

imperialism and neoliberalism; however, without programmatic statements or unified organizations.

In our context, these moments can be expressed within different kinds of discourses. According to Volnovich (2002), writing in the context of the Argentinean economic crisis of 2001-2002, there are three discourses circulating; the discourse of suffering, the discourse of resistance and the discourse of struggle:

The discourse of suffering describes the many ways of feeling the pain of economic scarcity and cultural misery that the capitalism of our days imposes. It tries to define the parameters that can measure the ‘country pain’, the daily devastation: the discourse of suffering highlights the impact of social exclusion and unemployment, the lack of equity in the distribution of symbolic and material goods, the sanctions and co-validation of a time without future [...].

The discourse of resistance has the virtue of stressing the construction of new forms of confronting the strategies of extermination designed by the capitalist centers. [...] This discourse appeals to the construction and to the re-construction of social links; and honors the merits of an urban web based on creativity and solidarity. However, the discourse of resistance has its focus on forms of managing the misery, on proposals to administrate our decadence [...].

The discourse of struggle refers to the efforts made by men and women to incorporate themselves in creative ways of production. It also refers to the obstacles and interdictions that tend to neutralize the efficacy of this incorporation, and also to the many ways by which the system captures every initiative directed to question it, transforming in pure repetition what emerges as innovation. The methodology adopted by the *piquetero* movement – self-organized assemblies, workers co-operatives that take control of occupied factories, and different organizations of the unemployed – carry the marks of the women’s movement:

metodologia adotada pelo movimento piquetero, pelas assembleias autoconvocadas, pelas cooperativas operárias que assumem a direção de fábricas ‘quebradas’, pelas diferentes organizações de desocupados, levam a marca do feminismo e do Movimento de Mulheres [...]: a horizontalidade [...], a posição crítica sobre a teoria da representação [...], a autonomia com autogestão [...].

O discurso do sofrimento, iniludível e necessário como é, corre o risco de levar água para o moinho da vitimização e do masoquismo [...] O discurso da resistência, deseável e inevitável como é, corre o risco de contribuir para a hipóstase da permanência, para a idealização do durar, para a exaltação paliativa mais como fim em si mesma que como um meio para realizar mudanças revolucionárias. Ambos os discursos, o do sofrimento e o da resistência, podem ter efeitos desmobilizadores e reacionários frente às mudanças que se avizinharam. Aspiro a que o discurso da luta comparta, desde uma posição privilegiada, seu lugar com o discurso do sofrimento e com o discurso da resistência. (Volnovich, 2002, minha tradução)

Os artigos desse número especial nos contam sobre protestos, propostas, utopias; expressam discursos sobre o inevitável sofrimento, a necessária resistência, sempre emoldurados pela perspectiva da luta; porque é na luta para construir mundos alternativos que experimentamos novas práticas de organização.

Para começar temos o ensaio fotográfico de *Eduardo Seidl*. As fotos expressam a beleza da nossa gente, a diversidade da nossa terra, diferentes modos de sobreviver, momentos de luta, sentimentos de religiosidade. Quando as vi pela primeira vez o que imediatamente chamou minha atenção foi que –em lugares e momentos tão diferentes, alguns deles em meio à tensão– havia sempre confiança e orgulho nos olhares.

O artigo teórico de *Miguel Mazzeo* recusa a conexão naturalizada entre organização e

horizontalidade, a critical position concerning representation, autonomy and self-management [...].

The discourse of suffering, necessary as it is, runs the risk of taking water to the river of victimization and masochism. The discourse of resistance, desirable and inevitable as it is, runs the risk of contributing to hypostasis and permanence, of idealizing permanence, of becoming a palliative exaltation – as an end in itself instead of a means to achieve revolutionary changes. Both discourses can have demobilizing and reactionary effects, despite the importance of its articulation. I aspire that the discourse of struggle could share, from a privileged position, the space with the discourses of suffering and resistance. (Volnovich, 2002, my translation)

The articles of this special issue tell us about protests, proposals, utopias; they express the discourses of the unavoidable suffering, of the necessary resistance, always framed by the perspective of struggle; because it is in the struggle to construct alternative worlds that we experience new practices of organization.

To begin with we have the photographic essay by *Eduardo Seidl*. The pictures express the beauty of our people, the diversity of our landscape, different ways of surviving, moments of struggle, feelings of religiosity. When I first saw them, what caught my attention was how in such different places and moments – some of them full of tension – there is always confidence and pride.

*Miguel Mazzeo*'s theoretical paper refuses the naturalized connection between organization and oppression and the supposition that emancipation does not need organization. The institution-movement dichotomy, expressing the opposition between conservatism-bureaucratization and change-horizontality, needs, according to Miguel, to be overcome by a more complex

opressão, bem como a suposição de que a emancipação não precisa de organização. A dicotomia instituição-movimento, expressando a oposição entre conservação-burocratização e mudança-horizontalidade, precisa, de acordo com Miguel, ser superada através de uma reflexão complexa e prática, na direção de uma relação dialética entre organização social e movimento político – uma relação que transforma cada uma das partes e permite o surgimento de algo diferente e melhor. O desafio de construir um movimento político, como uma organização de organizações, como um corpo de ampla inclusão, deve ser considerado a partir do espaço de práxis significantes, evitando posições políticas e ideológicas *a priori*. Esse artigo é uma importante contribuição para o debate político no campo das práticas organizacionais onde, para muitos ativistas e acadêmicos, ‘estratégia’ e ‘organização’ são palavras proibidas.

Um problema óbvio para organizar esse número especial é o intenso dinamismo de nosso contexto. Durante o processo de editá-lo, ao longo de um ano, os eventos se moveram rapidamente. Portanto, os artigos devem ser considerados como registros de certos momentos políticos e históricos. Entretanto, isso não significa que estejam superados. Pelo contrário, o artigo de Pablo Mamani foi incluído exatamente porque é um documento histórico de um momento decisivo; quando em 2003 a população de El Alto, Bolívia, organizou *una rebelión desde abajo*, ajudando a depor um Presidente, proclamando a demanda pela nacionalização dos hidrocarbonetos – o que veio a ser parte de medidas presidenciais de Evo Morales há poucos meses. Esse artigo é também sobre uma realização organizacional: de baixo para cima centenas de micro-organizações autônomas foram capazes de se tornar atores críticos de um movimento que

reflection and practice, moving towards a dialectic relationship between social organization and political movement; a relationship that transforms each part and gives rise to something different and better. The challenge of constructing a political movement, as an organization of organizations, as a body of wide inclusion, should be considered from a place of significant praxis, avoiding previous political and ideological positions. This paper is an important contribution to the political debates in the field of organizational practices where, for many activists and academics, ‘strategy’ and ‘organization’ are forbidden words.

One obvious problem of organizing this special issue has been the intense dynamism of our context. During the course of editing this issue over the past year or so the events have moved quickly. Therefore, the papers should be taken as registers of a certain historical and political moment. However, this does not mean that they are outdated. On the contrary, the paper of Pablo Mamani was included exactly because it is a historical document of a decisive moment; when in 2003 the people of El Alto, Bolivia, organized *una rebelión desde abajo* (a rebellion from below), helped to depose a President, and proclaimed the demand for the nationalization of hydrocarbons – something that was part of Evo Morales’ presidential measures a few months ago. This article is also about an organizational achievement: from the bottom-up hundreds of autonomous micro-organizations were able to become critical actors in a movement that helped to change the country.

The organization of the struggle in Bolivia has an obvious connection with the indigenous tradition and culture. It is part of a wider process that articulates many indigenous movements. In a meeting in El

ajudou a mudar o país.

A organização das lutas na Bolívia tem uma óbvia conexão com a tradição e a cultura dos povos indígenas. É parte de um processo mais amplo que articula muitos movimentos. Em um Encontro realizado em El Alto, em março de 2006, com a presença de movimentos indígenas do Equador, Bolívia e México, o ponto central de debate foi a relação entre movimento indígena e Estado nação. Primeiro no Equador, e agora na Bolívia, parte do movimento indígena e popular opera dentro do aparelho de Estado. No Equador o resultado da aliança com Lucio Gutierrez foi uma catástrofe. Na Bolívia contradições entre o governo e os movimentos têm surgido. Uma delas tem sido precisamente a exclusão de formas não partidárias de participação na Assembléia Constituinte. Esse é um dos aspectos discutido no artigo de *Maria Galindo*. No México *la otra campaña* do EZLN, em aliança com outras organizações e forças sociais, representa uma outra abordagem da relação com o Estado. Considerando esse evento e a experiência do Equador, uma das conclusões do Encontro em El Alto foi sobre a necessidade de distinguir entre a dinâmica dos movimentos e as inércias do nível institucional nos limites das práticas liberais.

O artigo de *Pablo Dávalos* é uma expressão de como as dinâmicas e forças do movimento indígena podem exercer, com sucesso, pressão sobre o Estado neoliberal. Pablo nos conta sobre os processos políticos e administrativos de substituição de um Estado industrializante e de bem estar por um neoliberal, e sua relação com a derrota do movimento operário equatoriano. A emergência do movimento indígena, sua organização e estratégia, precisam ser compreendidas nesse contexto. Na ausência de organizações proletárias, o campo da

Alto in March 2006, which was attended by movements from Ecuador, Bolivia and México, the central point of debate was the relation between indigenous movements and the nation state. First in Ecuador and now in Bolivia, parts of the indigenous and popular movements operate within state apparatuses. In Ecuador the result of the alliance with Lucio Gutierrez was a catastrophe. In Bolivia there are contradictions arising between the government and the movements. One of them has precisely been the Constituent Assembly and the exclusion of non-party forms of participation in the parliament. This is one of the aspects discussed in *Maria Galindo's* paper. In México *la otra campaña* (the other campaign) from the EZLN in alliance with other organizations and social forces represents another approach to the relation with the state. Considering this event and the experience of Ecuador, one of the conclusions of the meeting in El Alto was the need to distinguish between the dynamics of the movements and the inertias of the institutional level within the limits of liberal practices.

The paper by *Pablo Dávalos* is an expression of how the dynamics and strengths of the indigenous movements can successfully put pressure on the neoliberal state. Pablo tells us about the political and administrative process of substituting the industrializing Welfare State with the neoliberal State and its relation to the defeat of the Ecuadorian working class movement. The emergence of the indigenous movement, its organization and strategy, has to be understood in this context. In the absence of proletarian organizations the field of political dispute was therefore occupied by the indigenous movement assuming a historical role of opposition to national elites. Within a complex web of

disputa política foi ocupado pelos movimentos indígenas, que assumem o papel histórico de oposição às elites nacionais. Em uma rede complexa de instituições, nacionais e internacionais, o movimento indígena resiste a processos de cooptação, enfrenta derrotas, toma decisões controversas, e algumas vezes parece desestruturado. É na oposição ao Tratado de Livre Comércio (TLC), com massivas mobilizações e com uma força surpreendente para confrontar a intensa repressão, que o movimento desarma o sistema político e as elites. Os eventos analisados nesse artigo podem parecer estranhos para alguns leitores do Norte Global. Categorias ‘fora de moda’ –Estado, nacionalidades e identidades, território como local da política– são centrais nessa narrativa. A intensa conexão entre Estado nacional e capital internacional, o confronto entre instituições internacionais poderosas e movimentos locais, a derrota do discurso do capitalismo global pela cultura ancestral local, são alguns aspectos que chamam a atenção para velhas e novas categorias, no sentido de avançar na nossa aprendizagem a partir da prática.

Para atualizar os eventos: em 15 de maio de 2006 o governo equatoriano decidiu controlar os campos de petróleo explorados pela OXY e os Estados Unidos abandonou as negociações para um TLC bilateral. Não havia opção para o governo fora desse caminho, como nos diz Pablo no final do seu artigo. Como consequência da vitória, o movimento indígena se organiza para produzir mudanças mais radicais, incluindo a nacionalização dos recursos naturais.

Uma outra visão do processo boliviano, desta vez com as lentes do anarquismo e do feminismo, é apresentada no texto escrito por *Maria Galindo de Mujeres Creando*. Esse artigo apresenta as propostas políticas de Maria como candidata à Assembléia Constituinte. Ele também expressa uma

institutions, national and international, the indigenous movement resists processes of co-optation, faces defeats, takes controversial decisions, and sometimes seems destructured. It is in their opposition to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that massive indigenous mobilizations, with surprising strength in confronting intense repression, disarm the political system and the elites. The events analyzed in this paper may sound quite bizarre to some readers from the Global North. ‘Old fashioned’ categories – the State, nationalities and identities, territory as a political locus – are central to this narrative. The intense connection between national States and international capital, the confrontation between powerful international institutions and local movements, the defeat of the global capitalist discourse by the centrality of local ancestral culture, are some of the insights from which we can extract old and new theoretical categories in order to advance our learning from practice.

To update the events: on 15 May 2006 the Ecuadorian government decided to control the oil fields exploited by OXY and the USA, thus abandoning the negotiations towards a bilateral FTA. There was no way out for the government, as Pablo tells us at the end of his paper. As a consequence of the victory, the indigenous movement is organizing to produce more radical changes, including the nationalization of natural resources.

Another view from the Bolivian process, this time with the lenses of anarchism and feminism, is presented in the paper written by *Maria Galindo* from *Mujeres Creando*. This paper presents the political proposals by Maria as a candidate for the Constituent Assembly. It also expresses an intense critique of the political process that allowed only traditional, formalized institutions (e.g. parties), excluding

intensa crítica a um processo político que permitiu apenas instituições tradicionais e formalizadas (como partidos políticos), excluindo os movimentos populares dinâmicos. Esse texto, performático com é, problematiza as relações entre a estrutura vertical da organização do Estado e as demandas por participação de organizações de base e horizontais. As contradições entre estrutura e práxis estão muito claras. Ele também expressa uma contradição dialética entre diferentes tipos de identidade: coloca claramente uma questão muito presente nestas partes da América Latina onde o movimento indígena recupera a cultura tradicional – a questão sobre como valorizar uma tradição marcada pelo patriarcalismo e lidar com as lutas de mulheres e o feminismo. Existe ainda outra contradição dialética presente no texto de Maria: o papel da religião em nosso contexto. A teologia da libertação é parte de nossa história de lutas pela emancipação nesse continente. Entretanto, a religião também desempenha um papel disciplinador – principalmente contra mulheres e homossexuais. Em muitos sentidos, um dos aspectos mais relevantes desse artigo é desvelar as muitas e presentes contradições que tendem a ser silenciadas em nome de um objetivo maior.

É claro, Maria Galindo não foi eleita! Uma semana ante da instalação da Assembléia Constituinte, ela enviou uma mensagem comentando o processo eleitoral no qual obteve 1.877 votos. A eleição culminou com um triunfo do Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) de Evo Morales que, de acordo com ela, vai reescrever com onipotência o grande poder das leis patriarcais.

Ha ganado Evo, ha perdido Eva.

Es así que los 1877 votos cayeron pesadamente dentro de las urnas para sedimentarse bien al fondo y transformarse en abono de rebeldías que nada, ¿nada?, ¡nada! tienen que ver con un proceso

popular dynamic movements from the process. This paper, performative as it is, problematizes the relations between the vertical structure of the organization of the State and the demands for participation from horizontal, grassroots organizations. The contradictions between structure and praxis are quite clear here. It also expresses a dialectical contradiction between different kinds of identity: it poses clearly a question very present in those parts of Latin America where the indigenous movement is claiming the recovery of traditional culture – the question of how to value a tradition marked by patriarchalism and deal with the struggles of women and feminism. There is also another dialectical contradiction present in Maria's text: the role of religion in our context. The theology of liberation is part of our history of struggles for emancipation on this continent. However, religion also plays a disciplinary role – mainly against women and homosexuals. In many senses, one of the most relevant aspects of this article is to open up very present contradictions that tend to be silenced in the name of a greater objective.

Of course, Maria Galindo was not elected! One week before the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly, she sent a message commenting on the electoral process in which she obtained 1877 votes. The elections culminated with a triumph of Evo Morales' MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo; Socialist Movement). This, according to her, will mean – with omnipotence and great power – the rewriting of patriarchal laws:

Evo has won, Eva lost.

The 1877 votes fell heavy within the ballot boxes to settle to the bottom and to transform themselves into installment of revolts that have nothing (nothing?, nothing!) to do with an electoral process.

electoral. Son votos que hacen más bien de palanca para tomar decisiones existenciales. Son votos que no construyen representación. Los imagino bailando al fondo de las urnas, cantando y rompiendo el aburrimiento de los cientos de miles de votos que corean un sí y que tienen como contenido una renovada forma de clientelismo estatal, una renovada forma de caudillismo esta vez indígena. [...] los cientos de miles de votos que suicidan dignidades y entierran disidencias. [...] Había que ver cómo se hostigaba a nuestras delegadas con insultos escogidos del gran basurero de la homofobia, del racismo y del machismo. Como se pegaban los busca-pegas por las actas. Como se impusieron los candidatos y las candidatas sin respetar la decisión de las organizaciones, como esos candidatos no asistieron a debates porque tenían como único discurso el “yo soy Evo”. Así se armó esta constituyente a la mala; sin aire para respirar, sin ideas para discutir y sin voluntad de cambiar nada de nada. Como dice el vicepresidente Alvaro García Linera, no se trata de cambiar la Constitución Política del Estado, se trata de reescribirla con otros protagonistas, reescribiendo, reiterando y copiando todos los odios. Reescribir tomando como base las formas de repartija del poder; sea este autonómico, regional o nacionalista. Sea este empresarial, militar, de color de piel, de sexo o de edad. [...] No son las leyes que nos devolverán nuestra maternidad a las mujeres, aunque son leyes y mandatos que nos la expropien. No son leyes que nos devolverán a las mujeres la soberanía sobre nuestros cuerpos aunque son leyes las que nos la arrebatan en violaciones, maternidades impuestas y formas de cosificación varias que nos convierten en cosas sin decisión, ni dignidad. Nuestras familias sin padres seguirán siendo de segunda y de segunda nuestros hijos e hijas. En los colegios religiosos o no, religiosamente repetirán nuestras criaturas que mamá no trabaja, que papá es el que manda y que la patria se la defiende en los cuarteles. Seguirá proscrita del aula la poesía, proscritas las formas del amor entre hombres y entre mujeres. Vetadas las historias y las literaturas que no hagan referencia a héroes, vetadas las historias de quienes se rebelan contra las culturas “originarias” para plasmar peligrosas originalidades. Se refundará el país en base a los elegidos para reescribir las leyes a medida del poder y de los poderosos y a ese hecho y a ese acto se nombra hoy en

These are votes to make existential decisions. These are votes that do not construct representation. I imagine them dancing to the bottom of the ballot boxes, singing and breaking the boredom of the hundreds of thousands of votes that carry a yes and that have as content a renewed form of state ‘clientelism’, a renewed *caudillismo* [rule/cult of a leader] – this time indigenous. [...] hundreds of thousands of votes that suicide dignities and bury dissidences. [...] It had to be seen how they harassed myself and other delegates with insults selected from the great waste basket of homophobia, of racism and machismo! It had to be seen how the candidates were imposed without respecting the decision of the organizations, and how those candidates did not attend the debates because they had only one speech “I am Evo”. This is how this constituent was arranged; without air to breathe, without ideas to discuss and without the will to change anything. [...] As the Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera says, it is not about changing the Political Constitution of the State; it is about rewriting it with other protagonists; rewriting, reiterating and copying all hatreds. Rewriting it, taking as its bases the forms of sharing power – be it autonomic, regional or national; be it of the enterprise, of the army, of age or sex or skin color. It is not the law that will give back our maternity, although it is the law and its mandates that expropriate us. It is not the law that will give us back the sovereignty over our bodies; although it is the law that snatches us in violations, imposed maternities and several forms of turning us into objects without decision or dignity. Our families without fathers will continue to be second class; and second class our sons and daughters. In the schools, they will religiously repeat to our children that the mother does not work, that the father is the one who commands and that the country is defended by the army. Poetry will be prohibited in the classroom, and also prohibited the forms of love between men and between women. Histories and stories that do not make reference to heroes will be vetoed; histories of those that rebel against the original cultures to shape dangerous originalities will also be vetoed. The country will be re-founded on the basis of the chosen ones to rewrite the laws in

Bolívia como Asamblea Constituyente.  
(Mensagem eletrônica enviada por Maria Galindo em 29 de julho de 2006, minha tradução)

Uma das consequências mais dramáticas do machismo e do patriarcalismo em nossas sociedades é a violência contra as mulheres. A tragédia de Ciudad Juárez, México –que não tem sido reconhecida por muitas organizações sociais e populares na sua magnitude e concentração em um território específico– produz uma questão óbvia: por que estas mulheres estão sendo assassinadas? O artigo de *Servando Pineda Jaimes* esclarece como a divisão geográfica da produção pelas empresas transnacionais, a intensa exploração de trabalhadores locais, o desemprego e o machismo, se juntam para produzir um número absurdo de mortes e desaparecimentos de mulheres. Essa ligação perversa entre capitalismo e machismo produz um fenômeno que tornou nosso vocabulário insuficiente – a palavra ‘feminicídio’ precisou ser criada.

Após o artigo de Servando se encontra um texto de *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (NHRC) – uma organização social de Ciudad Juárez. Ele oferece mais informações sobre esse fenômeno que é tanto local quanto global. As vítimas podem ser dessa parte do mundo, mas a lógica que gera é sistêmica. A ação de NHRC é tanto um ativismo contra a impunidade como uma intervenção social para satisfazer as necessidades das famílias das vítimas, abandonadas pelo Estado. A decisão de incluir esse texto institucional é nossa contribuição para sua luta.

O segundo artigo de *Miguel Mazzeo*, dedicado a analisar a práxis e algumas consequências do movimento piquetero na Argentina, é outro texto onde a teoria é revisada e reconstruída a partir da prática. Aqui, como nos artigos de Pablo Mamani e Pablo Dávalos, a categoria do território ganha centralidade em suas ligações com

accordance with the power of the powerful; and that fact and that act are today named in Bolivia as Constituent Assembly. (Maria Galindo; electronic message sent 29 July 2006, my translation)

One of the most dramatic consequences of *machismo* and patriarchalism in our societies is the violence against women. The tragedy of Ciudad Juárez, México – which has not been recognized by many social and popular organizations in its magnitude and concentration in a specific territory – produced an obvious question: why are those women being murdered? The paper by *Servando Pineda Jaimes* highlights how the geographic division of the production by transnational companies, the intense exploitation of local workers, unemployment as well as *machismo* come together to produce an absurd number of deaths or disappearances of women. It is the perverse link of capitalism and *machismo* producing a social phenomenon that made our vocabulary insufficient – the word ‘femicide’ had to be created.

After Servando’s paper a text by *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (NHRC; May our Daughters Return Home), a social organization from Ciudad Juárez, is included. It provides more information about a phenomenon that is both local and global. The victims may be from that particular part of the world, but the logic that generates those victims is systemic. The action of NHRC is both an activism against impunity and a social intervention to fulfill the needs of the victims’ families abandoned by the State. The decision to include this institutional text is our contribution to their struggle.

The second paper by *Miguel Mazzeo*, dedicated to the analysis of the praxis and some of the political consequences of the *piquetero* movement in Argentina, is another text where theory is reviewed and

aspectos organizacionais e políticos. Miguel nos lembra que os nativos da América concebiam o território como um elemento essencial da cultura e do espaço de realização da comunidade. Esta é a razão pela qual, ao longo de 500 anos, os territórios têm sido a base para a resistência e reconstrução dos laços comuns. Em um território as relações sociais são articuladas e o poder gerenciado. No contexto do movimento piquetero, a configuração territorial inscreve relações sociais alternativas. O piquete, como uma ação direta que expõe territorialidades alternativas e, ao mesmo tempo, como uma pré-figuração de uma transformação revolucionária conectada com a construção da organização política, produz oportunidades para o questionamento concreto da dominação política e social. Este é o caso não somente do movimento piquetero, mas também do MST e do EZLN, entre tantas outras organizações na América Latina.

O último artigo, de *Joysinett Moraes da Silva e Rafael Vecchio*, trata da história de um sujeito coletivo –o Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (MST)– e do uso de um meio simbólico para apoiar e organizar os processos organizativos. A *Mística* é um desempenho teatral que precede todas as atividades coletivas do MST. É uma representação criada para reproduzir acontecimentos de suas próprias lutas. É uma espécie de teatro do oprimido, um instrumento pedagógico e, ao mesmo tempo, uma celebração.

Na proposta, apresentada há mais de um ano atrás, prometemos não apresentar uma visão ingênuas, unidimensional, ou super otimista da intensidade dos movimentos através do continente. Tenho a sensação de que realizamos nossa promessa. No entanto, revisando os artigos, prestando atenção nas fotos, e deixando a típica paixão latina aflorar, não posso evitar

re-constructed through practice. Here, as in Pablo Mamani's and also in Pablo Dávalos' papers, the category of territory gains centrality in its link to political and organizational aspects. Miguel reminds us that the native people of America conceive territory as an essential element of the culture and space for the realization of the community. That is the reason why throughout the past 500 years the territories have been the basis for resistance and reconstruction of communal bonds. In a territory social relations are articulated and power is managed. In the context of the *piquetero* movement, the territorial configuration inscribes alternative social relations. The *pickete* (picket) – as a direct action that exposes alternative territorialities and at the same time as a pre-figuration of a revolutionary transformation connected to the construction of political organization – provides opportunities for the concrete questioning of political and social domination. This is the case not only with the *piquetero* movement, but also with the MST and EZLN, amongst many other organizations throughout Latin America.

The last paper, by *Joysinett Moraes da Silva* and *Rafael Vecchio*, mixes the history of a collective subject – Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (Landless Workers Movement, MST) – and the use of symbolic means to support and stimulate organizational processes. Their *Mística* is a theatrical performance that precedes all collective activities of the MST. It is a representation, created to reproduce events of their own struggle. It is a kind of theatre of the oppressed, a pedagogical tool and, at the same time, a celebration.

In the proposal, presented more than a year ago, we promised not to present a naïve mono-voice and over-optimistic view of the intensity of movements

encerrar esse editorial com a expressão de uma intensa confiança em nosso futuro, e com o sentimento de um imenso orgulho, porque estamos –no presente– honrando nossa história e nossa tradição de lutas.

throughout our continent. I have the feeling that we have fulfilled that promise. However, reviewing the articles, paying attention to the pictures, and letting the typically Latin passionate temper free for a while, I cannot avoid finishing this editorial without expressing intense confidence in our future and a sense of immense pride, because we are at present honoring our history and our tradition of struggles.

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**a editora**  
**the editor**

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## Comportamento Fotográfico

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## Photographic Behavior

translated by Clovis Belbute Peres

Ela se tornou uma extensão do meu olho e, desde que a descobri, jamais me separei dela. Vagava pelas ruas o dia inteiro, sentindo-me muito alerta, pronto a dar um bote, determinado a capturar a vida – a preservar a vida no ato de viver. Acima de tudo, eu ansiava captar, no âmbito de uma só foto, toda a essência de um situação que estivesse em processo de desdobramento diante dos meus olhos. (Cartier Bresson citado por Susan Sontag)

Cenário de José Martí, Bolívar, Pancho Villa, San Martin, Che... Basicamente se conhece a América Latina pelos contos europeus dos livros didáticos. Até hoje assistimos nossa história, pelos meios oficiais das classes dominantes, latifundiários, empresários, grupos partidários, exploradores. Viajando pelas estradas/carreteras da Latinoamérica se encontra uma versão distinta desta que nos contam. Entrando no altiplano andino, desviando dos centros urbanos, encontram-se povoados de costumes originários trançados entre gerações que constroem uma sociedade longe de ser ou estar pobre.

Talvez, do ponto de vista da lógica do capital, poder-se-ia concluir que é um povo pobre: não possuem mansões cercadas e protegidas por alarmes eletrônicos; não possuem meios futurísticos de transporte motorizado; não possuem variedades de equipamentos eletrônicos de conforto

It became an extension of my eye and, since I have discovered it, never have I departed from it. I wandered through streets all day long, feeling very alert, ready to lunge, to capture life – to preserve life in its living act. Above all, I wanted to capture, in one single picture, all the essence of a situation that was unfolding before my eyes. (Cartier Bresson quoted by Susan Sontag)

The scene of José Martí, Bolívar, Pancho Villa, San Martin, Che... Basically, one learns about Latin America through European telltale didactic books. Even today, we watch our history through the official media of dominant classes, large landowners, businessmen, party groups, and explorers. Traveling on the roads of Latin America, the eye meets a distinct view. Entering the Andean Highlands, away from the urban areas, one sees villages where original customs are preserved by generations that construct a society which is a long way from being 'poor'.

Maybe, from the viewpoint of capital, one might see this as a poor people: there are no fenced, alarm-protected mansions; no futurist, motorized transportation; no myriad of electronic equipment for domestic comforts. People work close to the earth, to craftsmanship, to the

doméstico. Seguem seu trabalho perto da terra, de artesania, de adaptação à vida na diversidade de ecossistemas e em comunidade.

O que mais instiga, quando se percorre alguns países em um pequeno intervalo de tempo, é viver o conflito de classes presente em todo continente. É ver, com os próprios olhos, a quantidade de gente que vive, trabalha, ama, se reproduz. Cruzar a América é conhecer a semente da vida que nos grandes centros já está apropriada, mercantilizada e infértil.

Cruzar a América é percorrer essa terra que presenteou o mundo com muita riqueza e que segue oferecendo matéria prima, força de trabalho, lazer para a turistada em troca de uma aculturação consumista, que deteriora os costumes autóctones, simples, solidários, harmônicos, coletivos, sustentáveis. Pode-se dizer que esta hierarquização de classes é tradicional nas diversas civilizações no decorrer da história. Mas, está certa? É inevitável? Necessária? Não será o gringo ou o governo representativo que dirá sobre a independência do latinoamericano. A liberdade se sustenta em bases políticas, econômicas e culturais de cada pessoa dentro de sua comunidade.

A iniciativa da proclamação de um outro mundo possível ainda não declarou uma fórmula para se executar. Mas também não sei se é uma fórmula que temos que buscar. Um método milagroso como solução para a independência dos povos. Esta é a idéia da globalização capitalista, oferecer um plano de desenvolvimento comum para todos os países da América, através do Banco Mundial entre outras instituições. Um remédio e, de brinde, uma nova enfermidade.

Estas fotos são expressões de protestos sociais, bem como de modos de viver e de

diversity of living ecosystems and in community.

When one travels to so many countries in a short time span, what is most intriguing is to see the class conflict present all over the continent, and to see with our own eyes the number of people who all live, work, love and reproduce. Crossing America is to meet the life seed that has already been appropriated, merchandized and made infertile in the large centers.

Crossing America is to roam through this land that has presented the world with much richness and that continues to offer raw materials, labor force and touristic leisures in exchange for a consumerist enculturation which ruins native, simple, solidary, harmonic, collective and sustainable customs. One might say that this class hierarchization is normal for a diverse set of civilizations throughout history. But, is it right? Is it inevitable? Is it necessary? It will not be the *gringo* or representative government that will define the independence of Latin-Americans. Freedom is supported by the political, economic and cultural bases of each person within his or her community.

The initial proclamation of another world being possible has not yet declared a formula through which it can be executed. However, I am not certain it is a ‘formula’ that we must seek; a miraculous method as the solution for the peoples’ independence. This is the idea of capitalist globalization: to offer a ‘development plan’ that is common to all American countries, through the World Bank and other institutions. A medicine and, as an extra gift, a new infirmity.

These pictures are expressions of social protest, as well as ways of living and traditional customs. They show the direct or indirect resistance of cultures to a

costumes tradicionais. Mostram a resistência direta ou indireta de culturas ao pensamento único que pretende globalizar ambições comuns, projetar consumos e estabelecer necessidades que sustentem um sistema baseado no mercado. São testemunhos visuais que iniciaram há 10 anos atrás, acompanhando fatos locais, ampliando aos poucos o campo de visão da cidade, do estado do Rio Grande do Sul ao Brasil e além fronteiras. Boa parte delas foram feitas durante uma viagem que iniciou no Chuy no dia 8 de julho de 2005. Percorrendo Uruguai, Argentina, Bolívia, Peru, Equador, Colômbia e Venezuela. Entrando no Brasil por Santa Helena em Roraima, descendo até Porto Alegre num intervalo de oito meses.

A idéia nasceu e foi crescendo durante alguns anos de estudo e trabalho no jornalismo em Porto Alegre, da observação e participação em organizações sociais, do trabalho de documentação, da inconformidade diária com a cultura do acúmulo do lucro, insustentável e competitiva, opressora; com a prática política que maneja massas em benefício de interesses de poucos, fazendo apologia da dependência. Uma atitude fotográfica, uma documentação das vidas, dos rostos, dos cultos e das práticas dos povos latinoamericanos; dando continuidade a uma escola fotográfica que se estrutura no início do séc. XX e da qual fazem parte Robert Capa, H.C. Bresson e David Seymour. A escola do fotojornalismo que conhecemos hoje: “O olho do fotojornalista é orientado pelo princípio do momento decisivo, uma expressão desenvolvida por Henri Cartier-Bresson para sintetizar seus sentimentos sobre a convergência, no tempo e no espaço, dos elementos visuais críticos” (Dunleavy, 2006: 2). Assim declara Emmet Gowin: “A fotografia é um instrumento para lidar com coisas que todos sabem mas a que não prestam atenção. Minhas fotos tencionam

single philosophy; one that claims to globalize common ambitions, projects consumptions and establishes needs that sustain a system based on the market. They are visual testimonials that began 10 years ago, following local facts, widening the perspective slowly, from the city to the province of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and beyond the border. Many pictures were taken during a trip that started in Chuy (at the border of Brazil and Uruguay) on 8 July 2005. It included Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela, returning to Brazil through Santa Helena, in Roraima State, and moving down to Porto Alegre in a period of eight months.

The idea was born and nurtured during a few years of study and work in journalism in Porto Alegre; it stemmed from the observation of, and participation in, social organizations, from documentation work, from the daily non-conformity with the culture of profit accumulation; unsustainable, competitive oppressing, and a political practice that manages the masses in the interest of a few, producing an apology for dependence. This is a photographic attitude, a documentation of lives, of faces, of creeds and practices of the peoples of Latin America. This is the continuation of a photographic school, put in place at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that included Robert Capa, H.C. Bresson and David Seymour. This is the school of photojournalism, as we know it today: “The photojournalist’s eye is informed by the principle of the decisive moment, an expression coined by photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson to sum up his feelings about the convergence of critical visual elements in time and space” (Dunleavy, 2006: 2). As Emmet Gowin states: “A photograph is an instrument which allows us to handle problems we all know about but do not

representar algo que não se vê.”

Eu quero lembrar todos que a Magnum foi criada para nos permitir, em fato para nos obrigar, a trazer um testemunho de mundo aos nossos contemporâneos de acordo com nossas próprias habilidades e interpretações. Quando eventos significativos acontecem, quando não envolvem uma grande quantia em dinheiro e se está presente, deve-se ficar fotograficamente em contato com as realidades que aparecem em frente às nossas lentes e não exitar em sacrificar conforto material e segurança. Esse retorno às origens manterá nossas cabeças e nossas lentes sobre a vida artificial que tantas vezes nos cerca. Estou surpreso em ver até que ponto, tantos de nós estamos condicionados quase exclusivamente pelos desejos dos clientes. (Cartier Bresson citado por Chris Boot)

pay any attention to. My photographs are supposed to show something you can't see.”

I want to remind everyone that the Magnum was created to allow us, in fact to force us, to bring a testimony of the world to our contemporaries according to our skills and interpretations. When significant events occur, when they do not involve a large sum of money and one is on the spot, one must remain photographically in contact with the realities that appear before our lenses and not hesitate in sacrificing material comfort or safety. This return to the basics will maintain our heads and our lenses above the artificial life that surrounds us. I am surprised to see to what extent many of us are conditioned almost exclusively to the wishes of our clients. (Cartier Bresson, quoted by Chris Boot)



Retorno da escola no povoado de San Isidro, província de Salta, entre montanhas do norte argentino  
Returning from school in the village of San Isidro, Salta province, in the mountains of North Argentina



Mercado popular de Pisaq, no vale sagrado que leva à Machu Pichu  
Popular market of Pisaq, in the sacred valley that leads to Machu Pichu



Artesanía indígena em Purmamarca, província de Jujuy, Argentina  
Indigenous craftwork in Purmamarca, Jujuy province, Argentina



Aji acompanha qualquer prato boliviano,  
mistura de pimenta e tomate  
Aji, a mix of pepper and tomato, which is used  
in all Bolivian dishes



Artesãs de Pisaq, caminham entre as ruínas, procurando os turistas  
Craftswomen from Pisaq walking in between the ruins looking for tourists



Madres de Mayo, carregam as cinzas de Olga Aredez até a praça de Libertador San Martín, Jujuy, Argentina, durante 29º Marcha del Apagón, em memória das vítimas da ditadura; Julho de 2005  
'Madres de Mayo' carrying the ashes of Olga Aredez to the park of Libertador San Martín, Jujuy, Argentina, during the 29<sup>th</sup> March of Darkness in memory of the victims of the dictatorship; July 2005



Mulheres Quetua, durante levante indígena contra o Tratado de Livre Comércio com EUA, Quito, Equador, novembro de 2005  
Quetua women during the indigenous uprising against the Free Trade Agreement with the USA, Quito, Ecuador, November 2005



Família de campesinos, interior de Cochabamba, Bolívia  
Peasant family in the interior of Cochabamba, Bolivia



Tecelã trabalhando o algodão, interior de Sucre, Bolívia  
Woman weaver working the cotton in the interior of Sucre, Bolivia



Cemitério no topo da montanha, Salta, Argentina  
Cemetery on top of a mountain in Salta, Argentina



Mercado dos Mineiros, Bolívia. Mantimentos e todos utensílios usados nas minas de Potosí: Coca, cigarros, álcool, galochas, capacetes com luz entre outras ferramentas  
Miners market, Bolivia. *Mantimentos* and all utensils used in the mines of Potosí: Coca, cigarettes, alcohol, shoes, helmets with lights, amongst other tools

Sucre: uma das tantas festividades católicas  
espalhadas pela Bolívia  
Sucre: one of the many catholic celebrations  
throughout Bolivia



Tropeiros levando mantimentos para o povoado San Isidro  
Mule packers carrying foodstuff to the village of San Isidro



Peru, litoral norte  
The North coast in Peru



Neve provoca congestionamento das 22h às 8h, na Cumbre entre Cochabamba e La Paz, Bolívia  
Snow causes a hold-up from 10pm to 8am on the road between Cochabamba and La Paz, Bolivia



Missa na chegada em Quito das comunidades do sul ecuatoriano para o levante indígena contra o TLC

A mess for the people arriving in Quito from South Ecuador for the indigenous uprising against the FTA

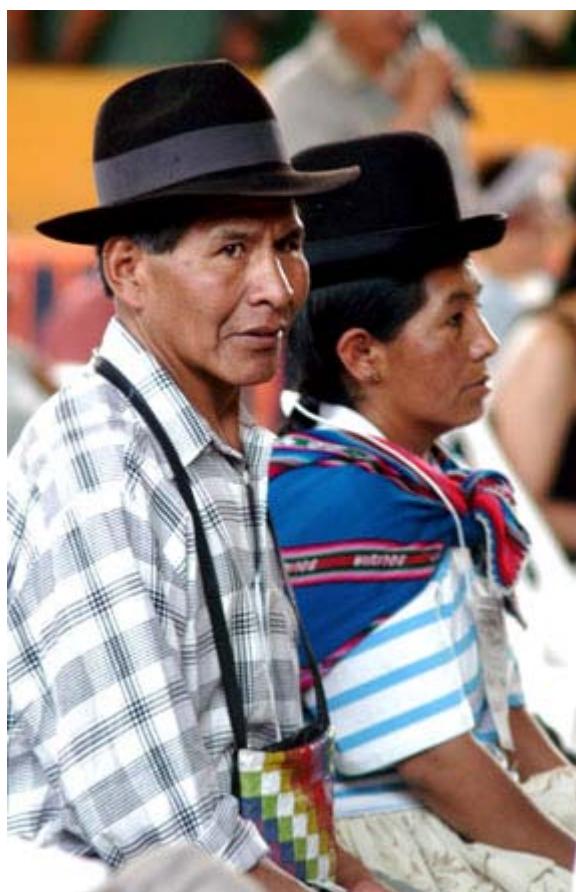


San Domás tem 46 anos e trabalha coletando sal na cidade de Colchani, departamento de Potosí, Bolívia. Ganha 60 Bolivianos por tonelada, cerca de 21 reais  
San Domás is 46 years old and works collecting salt in the city of Colchani, Department of Potosí, Bolivia. He earns 60 Bolivianos per tonne, around 10 US Dollars



Calchani, mais ou menos 350 km e a 5h de viagem de Cochabamba. Uma área de terra que foi entregue a população na reforma agrária de 1953

Calchani, around 350 km or 5 hours trip from Cochabamba. A settlement which was part of a land reform process in 1953



Lideranças indígenas no 2º Encontro Social Alternativo, realizado em setembro de 2005 em Camiri, Santa Cruz, Bolívia

Indigenous leadership at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternative Social Meeting, which took place in September 2005 in Camiri, Santa Cruz, Bolivia



Exercito argentino fecha a ponte da amizade em Uruguaiana, impedindo a passagem da 7ª Marcha dos Sem, em 5 de agosto de 2002  
The Argentinian army closes the Friendship Bridge in Uruguaiana, blockading the passage of the 7<sup>th</sup> Marcha dos Sem ('March of those without anything') on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2002



Campesina brasileira, protesta durante conferência sobre reforma agrária da FAO/ONU, em Porto Alegre, março de 2006  
Brazilian peasant protesting during a conference about land reform of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Porto Alegre in March 2006



Protesto indígena em Quito, Equador  
Indigenous protestor in Quito, Ecuador



Mulheres do MST, em assentamento na região das Missões no Rio Grande do Sul, setembro de 2002  
Women from the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in a settlement in the region of Missões in Rio Grande do Sul, September 2002



Cozinha andina, fogo de chão e produtos da agricultura familiar  
Andean kitchen with a fire in the ground and products of family agriculture



Protesto das mulheres contra o latifúndio, no Congresso da FAO em Porto Alegre  
Women protesting against big landowners at a Congress of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Porto Alegre

**referências**  
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## Pensar la herramienta política (estratégica) del campo popular\*

Miguel Mazzeo

## Thinking the (strategic) political tools of the popular field\*

translated by María de la O López Abeledo

En la lucha [...] esta masa se reúne, se constituye en clase para sí. Los intereses que defiende se convierten en intereses de clase. Pero la lucha de clase contra clase es una lucha política. (Karl Marx)

Cuando hombres y mujeres implicados en formas modestas y locales de resistencia política se vean transportados por el impulso interior de estos conflictos a una confrontación directa con el poder del Estado, es posible que su conciencia política pueda modificarse de manera definitiva e irreversible. (Terry Eagleton)

No somos fatalistas. No creemos que todo poder político indefectiblemente termine generando opresión y devenga en fuente de privilegios. Incluso algunos han planteado con total irresponsabilidad que el ejercicio de la opresión es el destino inevitable de toda organización, como si la emancipación no necesitara organizarse. Hasta el mismísimo Max Stirner, ácrata paladín de las utopías más individualistas, manifestó su intención de unirse a un partido si este no tuviera nada de obligatorio. También Bakunin planteó la necesidad de una vanguardia consciente, cerca, muy cerca de Augusto Blanqui y Lenin y lejos de Rosa Luxemburgo.<sup>1</sup> Estimamos tan desatinado concebir la acción de las masas desorganizadas como la de las vanguardias separadas. Y vale aclarar que concebimos a

In the struggle [...] this mass comes together to constitute a class for itself. The interests they defend are converted into class interests. The class struggle is a political struggle. (Karl Marx)

When men and women involved in modest and local forms of political resistance see themselves being carried by the interior impulse of these conflicts to a direct confrontation with state power, it is possible that their political consciousness can be modified in a definite and irreversible way. (Terry Eagleton)

We are not fatalist. We don't think that every political power, without exception, ends up generating oppression and becoming a source of privileges. Some have even proposed, with a total lack of responsibility, that the exercise of oppression is the unavoidable fate of any organization, as if emancipation didn't need organizing. Max Stirner himself, anarchist champion of the most individualist utopias, declared his intention of joining a party if this didn't involve anything compulsory. Bakunin, too, posed the need of a conscious vanguard, close, very close to August Blanqui and Lenin, but far from Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>1</sup> We consider it foolish to think of the action of disorganized masses as separate vanguards. And it is worth

la ‘vanguardia’ en términos sociales, como un sector del movimiento de masas que con sus luchas crea posibilidades para un conjunto más amplio. Mabel Thwaites Rey señala que una cosa es tener en cuenta “que la disputa por el poder logra degradar y aniquilar la posibilidad de construir una sociedad alternativa que diluya las condiciones mismas que hacen factible el poder como imperativo de un grupo sobre otros. O alertar contra las formas de replicar en la propia práctica emancipatoria el esquema de poder que se desea combatir. Pero otra muy distinta es pretender ignorar la dimensión ‘política’ en el sentido profundo de la disputa por crear o mantener una organización social acorde con intereses y valores específicos”.<sup>2</sup>

Ante la creciente heterogeneidad de las clases subalternas, ante la necesidad de conciliar intereses de clase con intereses de grupo y la discontinuidad del accionar de las masas; para garantizar posiciones de fuerza permanente que le permitan al pueblo tanto el repliegue en el momento del reflujo como el relanzamiento en el momento del alza y para contrarrestar las limitaciones de los combates aislados, se torna imprescindible pensar en una herramienta, una organización política, instancias institucionales e instrumentales, claro que totalmente diferentes a las que conocemos, hijas todas de una concepción mecánica: que no pretendan reemplazar la actividad del pueblo y sus organizaciones por un poder pro-popular, que no se concibian como medios de expresión de una voluntad colectiva supuestamente unificada ni como ejecutores exclusivos de esa voluntad; que no se concibian como encarnación de la conciencia de clase o de la ética de los trabajadores (el partido como herramienta de la conciencia para labrar un destino histórico y realizar una ética); que abandonen definitivamente los enfoques cohercitivos<sup>3</sup> y el instinto policial; que no operen por encima de la existencia

explaining that we understand ‘vanguard’ in social terms: as a sector of the movement of masses that, with its struggles, creates possibilities for a wider whole. Mabel Thwaites Rey points out that it is one thing to consider “that the struggle for power can damage and annihilate the possibility of constructing an alternative society, which dilutes the conditions that make it feasible for power to be an imposition of a group over others; or to be alert about the ways one’s own emancipatory practice can reproduce those power schemes that one wants to fight against. But it is a very different thing to try to ignore the ‘political’ dimension, in the deep sense of the struggle for creating or maintaining a social organization in accordance with one’s specific interests and values”.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the growing heterogeneity of subaltern classes and the need for combining class interests with group interests, as well as the discontinuity of mass actions, it is indispensable to think up a tool – a political organization, institutional and instrumental bodies – in order to guarantee strong permanent positions; positions that allow the people to retreat in the moment of a backlash, as well as relaunch in the moment of an impulse, and to counteract the limitations of isolated combats. However, this tool must, of course, be totally different from those we know that have grown out of a mechanistic conception. It must not aspire to replace the people’s activity and their organizations with a pro-popular power; it must not be conceived as means of expression of a supposedly unified collective will or as exclusive performers of that will; it must not conceive itself as the embodiment of class consciousness or of the workers’ ethics (the party as a tool of consciousness to bring about a historic fate and accomplishment of an ethics); it must definitely withdraw, once and for

cotidiana del pueblo y de sus organizaciones; que sostengan la confianza social, la participación y la coordinación organizativa; que hagan de los objetivos emancipatorios forma emancipatoria real y concreta; que sirvan para realizar las metas de las organizaciones del pueblo y que no pretendan reemplazarlo; que ‘aporten’ a una causa y que no se crean la encarnación de esa causa; que rompan la relación medios-fines; que anticipen el futuro deseado en las formas; que se asuman como momento, no como exteriorización fija y especializada en el ejercicio del poder; que unifiquen –sin dominar– los discursos y prácticas emancipadoras (que unan a los ‘pequeños destacamentos’ dispersos, que pongan en movimiento al conjunto); que no reduzcan el ‘logos’ a una organización, y que, ocasionalmente y secundariamente, sirvan para la disputa y el ejercicio del poder estatal. No podemos dejar de destacar que en la Segunda Declaración de la Selva Lacandona de 1994, los mismos zapatistas hablan de partidos políticos de ‘nuevo tipo’.

El partido de izquierda tradicional (al igual que los grupos ‘antipartidos’ que actúan como partidos) se caracteriza por plantear objetivos que se deben alcanzar con los pasos que da el propio partido. Busca imponer sus propios ritmos, los ritmos de la organización, los ritmos del aparato, dejando de lado el trabajo tendiente a generar o apuntalar los hechos capaces de modificar la realidad. Se caracteriza también por su concepción instrumentalista de la lucha de clases y su negación como parte fundamental del proceso autoemancipatorio. Respecto de este tópico creemos que no queda mucho por discutir. La actitud reciente de una parte de la izquierda argentina en relación al fenómeno de las asambleas y al movimiento piquetero es lamentable. Han buscado cooptar, manejar, imponer. En lugar de apostar al movimiento social real masivo han apostado al ‘control’ de una parte, a la

all, any coercive approaches<sup>3</sup> and the instinct of policing; it must not operate without considering the daily existence of the people and its organizations; it must support social trust, participation and organizational coordination, transforming emancipatory goals into a real and concrete emancipatory form; it must help to achieve the goals of people’s organizations and not try to replace them; it must contribute to a cause and not consider itself as the embodiment of this cause; it must break with the logic of means and ends anticipating the forms of the desired future. These forms must be provisional, but not fixed and specialized objects for the exercise of power, unifying, without dominating, discourses and emancipatory practices; uniting the dispersed groups and putting the whole into motion. They must not reduce the *logos* to an organization; occasionally and secondarily they can be useful for disputing and exercising State power. We cannot ignore the fact that in the Second Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle in 1994 the Zapatistas themselves talked about political parties of a ‘new kind’.

The traditional left-wing party (as well as ‘anti-party’ groups that work like parties) is characterized by posing goals to be achieved by the steps of the party itself. It seeks to impose its own rhythm – the organization’s rhythm, the apparatus’ rhythm – leaving aside the work that will generate or signal events that can modify reality. It is also characterized by its instrumental conception of class struggle and its denial of class struggle as a fundamental part of the self-emancipatory process – with regard to this topic we believe there is not much left to argue about. The recent attitude of parts of the Argentinean Left regarding the phenomenon of assemblies and the *piquetero* movement is regrettable. They have tried to co-opt, manipulate and

subordinación de toda instancia de acción práctica y de lucha y a la creación de sellos desarraigados. Muy pocas organizaciones partidarias (por no decir ninguna) han concebido su actividad en función de un proceso de autoemancipación de las clases subalternas. Al autoerigirse en ejes de unidad, reproducen la fragmentación. El pueblo solo cuenta para el sectario como apoyo para sus fines.<sup>4</sup> Otra vez ‘el pez en el agua’, otra vez el vanguardismo de los que consideran a las masas la piscina en la que van a realizar sus destrezas nataorias. ¿Cuándo vamos a pensar en maremotos? La experiencia histórica es contundente: los instrumentos elitistas siempre han conducido a la entronización de élites. Un proyecto que toma como ejes principales la justicia y la igualdad nunca puede fundarse a través de la práctica de una organización centralizada, verticalista y jerárquica. La apuesta principal pasa por construir una herramienta de cambio, evitando que la misma herramienta se convierta en el objetivo de la lucha, una herramienta ‘flexible’ (a la que consideramos absolutamente necesaria) que aporte a la generación de hechos capaces de modificar la realidad.

Por lo menos como ejercicio de abstracción ¿No se puede pensar en otra forma de poder político? ¿No es factible un poder socializado, horizontal, democrático, que conviva con un mínimo de centralización coyuntural y efímera, un poder asentado en organizaciones populares activas y sólidas? ¿Las fuerzas populares consolidadas a partir del ejercicio de lo que Holloway<sup>5</sup> llama ‘poder-de’, no deberán ejercer el en algún momento el ‘movimiento’ de poder-sobre, con el objetivo de ‘separar’ a los sectores dominantes? ¿la ‘conquista del poder’, sin considerarla como pivote, no debería ‘complementar’, ‘consolidar’, etc., el proceso de autoemancipatorio que implica la lucha de clases? ¿Más que las formas del ‘anti-poder’, las fuerzas

impose, instead of backing the massive social movements. They have tried to control parts of the movements, betting on the subordination of all forms of practical actions and struggles, as well as the creation of uprooted images. Very few party organizations (not to say none) conceive their activities as support for the self-emancipatory process of subaltern classes. When they declare themselves as axes of unity they reproduce fragmentation. The people are only considered by the sectarian as a means for their goals.<sup>4</sup> Once again we watch the vanguardism of those who think of the masses as if they were a swimming pool in which the vanguards would perform their swimming skills. When are we going to consider the masses as the sea that can produce tidal waves? The historical experience is convincing: elitist tools have always led to the enthronement of élites. A project that takes justice and equality as its main axes can never be established through the practice of a centralized, vertical and hierarchical organization. The main bet has to be on the construction of a tool for change; and we have to avoid that the tool itself becomes the goal of the struggle. We need a ‘flexible’ tool that contributes to the generation of facts and events that can modify reality.

At least as an exercise of abstraction, isn’t it possible to think of a different form of political power? Isn’t a socialized, horizontal and democratic power feasible? One which coexists with a minimum of contextual and ephemeral centralization; a power settled on active and solid popular organizations? Shouldn’t consolidated popular forces, generated by the exercise of what Holloway<sup>5</sup> calls the ‘power-of’, exercise, at some point, the ‘movement’ of ‘power-over’, with the goal of ‘separating’ the dominant groups? Shouldn’t the

populares no deben reivindicar el ejercicio de un poder entendido como capacidad de imponer un sentido, de resignificar y resimbolizar las redes significativas que componen el mundo humano? ¿la causa de la deshumanización y la ‘cosificación’ de los dominados, no es precisamente la falta de poder? Los sucedáneos propuestos para las clásicas nociones de ‘poder popular’ y para las que plantean ‘el papel social dirigente de los trabajadores’, no nos parecen convincentes.

No se trata de obligar a todo el mundo a que acepte nuestra forma de hacer/pensar y el tipo de vínculo social y político que proponemos. Pero sucede que existe un poder y un sistema de dominación que impone, por todos los medios, con todos los recursos, sus propias formas de hacer/pensar basadas en la naturalización de las desigualdades, en los vínculos mercantiles y en una idea negativa de la libertad. Lo nuestro es básicamente rechazo, no intento de imponer. Afirmamos nuestras formas porque las consideramos justas y superadoras del orden imperante, pero también porque nos permiten resistir y vivir.

La dicotomía movimiento-institución, prácticamente nace con los primeros movimientos antisistémicos. En algunos casos esta dicotomía se expresa como una contradicción entre el movimiento como construcción social y dinámica de las organizaciones populares y el movimiento como estructura (herramienta política, conjunto de aparatos, etc.). A diferencia del movimiento, la institución tiene un instinto conservador, una tendencia natural al reposo y a la burocracia. Se resiste a los cambios porque amenazan el ideal de estabilidad. Su temor al paso en falso conduce a la parálisis. En determinados contextos cumple la función de freno del movimiento, pero en otros ese rol ‘conservador’ puede resultar vital para el

‘conquest of power’, without considering it as a pivot, ‘complement’ and ‘consolidate’ the self-emancipatory process implied by class struggle? Instead of the forms of ‘anti-power’, shouldn’t popular forces demand the exercise of power as the capability for imposing meaning, for re-signifying and re-symbolizing the webs that make up the human world? Isn’t exactly the lack of power the cause for the dehumanization of the dominated? The substitutes proposed for the classical notions of ‘popular power’ and for those notions that pose ‘the leading social role of workers’ are not convincing from our point of view.

This is not about forcing everyone to accept our way of doing/thinking and the type of social and political bond we propose. However, it is clear that there is a power and a system of domination that imposes – using all means and resources – its own ways of doing/thinking, which are based on the naturalization of inequalities, mercantile bonds and a negative idea of freedom. Our basic position is to reject this and not to attempt to impose. We state our forms because we consider them fair and able to overcome the prevailing order, but also because they allow us to resist and live.

The movement-institution dichotomy arose with the first anti-systemic movements. In some cases this dichotomy appears as a contradiction between the movement as a social and dynamic construction of popular organizations, and the movement as structure (political tool, set of apparatuses, etc.). Unlike the movement, the institution has a conservative instinct, a natural tendency to quiescence and to become a bureaucracy. It resists changes because they threaten the ideal of stability. Its fear of making mistakes leads to paralysis. In

movimiento, para garantizar su continuidad histórica, para habilitar su recomposición, etc.. Un desafío para la izquierda y el campo popular es pensar la complementación de formas centralizadas (siempre adecuadas al momento histórico) con otras no centralizadas, con organizaciones no institucionales, flexibles, traslaticias, diseminadas en el barrio, en la calle, en cada casa y, a veces, inubicas.

Evidentemente, existe una relación muy estrecha entre el partido de izquierda en su formato tradicional y la toma del poder estatal como horizonte estratégico, lo que históricamente condujo a priorizar la institución sobre el movimiento. Algo que cuestionaba Rosa Luxemburgo a comienzos del siglo XX al plantear que en la acción política no eran las masas desorganizadas las que permanecían inmóviles, sino los partidos organizados y sus direcciones (se refería a los partidos socialdemócratas, en particular el alemán). Rosa Luxemburgo denunciaba la pérdida de tiempo en ‘pamplinas burocráticas’. Karl Kautsky, por su parte, consideraba que este tipo de planteos conducía a la negación de la necesidad de la organización. ¿Qué hacer para evitar que la institución se fagocite al movimiento? ¿Cómo evitar caer en el fetichismo del movimiento como reacción ante el fetichismo de la institución? ¿es suficiente la capacidad de acción ‘autéonoma’ y la iniciativa de las clases subalternas para el éxito del movimiento de masas? Formulamos estas preguntas porque partimos de la base de que el movimiento, por si solo, se agota, no alcanza, se aísla. Proponemos pensar la institución como medio al servicio del movimiento, porque este último es el campo fundamental de la contrahegemonía o de la hegemonía alternativa, el locus en el cual las clases subalternas pueden desarrollar una praxis independiente.

Sostenemos la noción que establece la

certain contexts it functions as a brake for the movement, but in others this ‘conservative’ role can be essential for the movement in order to guarantee its historical continuity and allow its recomposition. A challenge for the Left and the popular field is to think of the complementation of centralized forms (only if they are suited to the historical moment) with non-centralized forms: non-institutional, flexible, transferable organizations, which are spread out in the neighborhood, the street and each house, and which are sometimes impossible to locate.

There is, of course, a very tight relationship between the left-wing party in its traditional format and the taking of State power as a strategic horizon, which has historically led to giving priority to the institution over the movement. This is what Rosa Luxemburg questioned at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when she stated that in political action it was not the disorganized masses that remained still but the organized parties and their formal leadership (she referred to Social Democratic Parties, the German one in particular). Rosa Luxemburg denounced the loss of time in ‘bureaucratic nonsense’. Karl Kautsky, in turn, considered that this kind of statement leads to the refusal of the need for organization. What to do to avoid the institution absorbing the movement? How to avoid falling into the fetishism of the movement as a reaction to the fetishism of the institution? Is the capability of ‘autonomous’ action and the initiative by subaltern classes enough for the success of the mass movement? We pose these questions because we consider that the movement on its own becomes exhausted; it fails and isolates itself. We propose to think of the institution as a means in the service of the movement, because the latter is the fundamental field

existencia de un sujeto popular fragmentado o plural en América Latina. Esto no debe confundirse con la tesis débil del antiposmodernismo que termina diluyendo al sujeto en una pluralidad de ‘posiciones’ o ‘hábitos de posiciones’ del sujeto. Menos aún debe confundirse con las vana pretensión de servir a dos clases al mismo tiempo. Para el caso argentino la situación se presenta en parte como novedosa en función de la perdida (en términos relativos) de centralidad estratégica de la clase obrera industrial, el actor privilegiado en tanto sector social dinamizador de las luchas populares durante las etapas anteriores. Las nuevas condiciones exigen formas originales de intervención política que den cuenta de la diversidad y del carácter plural de los nuevos sujetos (de la clase).

Vale la pena recordar que la tesis de la centralidad obrera terminó favoreciendo en muchos casos a las interpretaciones de tipo estructuralista que veían a las conductas y a las prácticas sociales como determinadas unilateralmente por la posición que los sujetos ocupaban en el terreno de la producción. Estas concepciones, sumadas a las que sostenían la noción de externalidad de la política en relación a la clase obrera hicieron que la izquierda terminara compartiendo nociones axiales de la cultura política dominante.

En nuestro país, y en el resto de América Latina, la fuerza de trabajo es difícil de ubicar en términos de clase rígidos. El desarrollo capitalista en nuestro caso no necesariamente hace más homogénea a la fuerza de trabajo, por el contrario, va delineando una estructura social altamente segmentada. Estamos ante una clase obrera heterogénea y no ante un proceso de reducción o disolución de la clase trabajadora. Por supuesto, la heterogeneidad la debilita, limita sus potencialidades. En este sentido podemos

for counter-hegemony or alternative hegemony, the locus where subaltern classes can develop an independent praxis.

We maintain the idea of the existence of a fragmented or plural popular subject in Latin America. This shouldn't be confused with the weak anti-postmodernism that ends up dissolving the subject into a plurality of ‘positions’ or ‘habits of positions’. It should be even less confused with the futile pretension of serving two classes at the same time. In the Argentinean case the situation is novel, in a way, because of the loss (in relative terms) of the strategic centrality of the industrial working class as the privileged actor and social group that stimulated popular struggles during previous phases. The new situation demands original ways of political intervention which embrace the diversity and plural character of new subjects (and their class position).

It's worth remembering that the thesis of the working class centrality ended up favoring, in many instances, structuralist interpretations that understood social behaviors and practices as unilaterally determined by the position occupied by subjects in the sphere of production. These conceptions, together with those that support the notion of the externality of politics in relation to the working class, left the Left sharing axial notions with the dominant political culture.

In our country, and in the rest of Latin America, it is difficult to locate the labor force in rigid class terms. Capitalist development in our case does not necessarily make the labor force more homogeneous; on the contrary, it slowly produces a highly segmented social structure. We face a heterogeneous working class and not a process of

reconocer en las ‘nuevas organizaciones populares’ una nueva y distinta modalidad de expresión de la clase trabajadora que viene a complementarse con otras más tradicionales y no por eso menos necesarias.

Las luchas denominadas ‘sociales’ o ‘reivindicativas’ (y las experiencias organizativas que generan) impulsan el proceso de formación de conciencia y pueden operar como soportes identitarios, ya que expresan identidades colectivas con contenidos culturales y simbólicos objetivamente contrahegemónicos. Estas experiencias generan un contexto solidario que tiende a superar el dualismo y la enajenación. Se van recreando así espacios que favorecen la transformación de los individuos a nivel personal, requisito indispensable para lograr una percepción global. La transformación de las actitudes personales es inseparable de la transformación de la realidad. Estas experiencias deben ser reconocidas como el terreno de una praxis que puede garantizar el ascenso del sentido de la libertad real. Estas luchas, en ocasiones, ofrecen el marco adecuado para la reconstrucción de subjetividades organizadas alrededor de intereses emancipatorios y para superar la identidad prevaleciente, estructurada alrededor de la derrota. No debemos olvidar algunos principios básicos: que las condiciones de la transformación revolucionaria se encuentran en germen dentro de la acción cotidiana y que una ‘mentalidad revolucionaria’ es el resultado de una larga práctica. Los nuevos sujetos sociales están buscando (y construyendo) su identidad (su autoreconocimiento como categoría) y su espacio (su territorio social) en el marco de las actuales relaciones de poder. Estamos ante una de las formas que asume la lucha de clases en la Argentina de principios de siglo XXI.

Estas experiencias nos obligan a pensar en

reduction or dissolution of the working class. Of course, that heterogeneity weakens it, limits its potentialities. In this sense, we can recognize in the ‘new popular organizations’ a new and different form of expression of the working class that complements other more traditional – but not less necessary – forms.

The so-called ‘social’ or ‘demanding’ struggles (and the organizational experiences they generate) foster the process of consciousness formation and can operate as identity supports, expressing collective identities with objectively counter-hegemonic cultural and symbolic contents. These experiences generate a solidary context that tends to overcome dualism and alienation. Thus, spaces are created that enable individuals’ transformation at a personal level, which is an indispensable requirement to achieve global perception. The transformation of personal attitudes cannot be detached from the transformation of reality. These experiences must be recognized as the terrain of a praxis that can guarantee the rise of the meaning of real freedom. At times these struggles offer an adequate framework for the reconstruction of subjectivities, organized around emancipatory interests and for overcoming the prevailing identity structured around defeat. We shouldn’t forget some basic principles: that the conditions for revolutionary transformation are potentially present in everyday action and that a ‘revolutionary mentality’ is the result of a long practice. The new social subjects are looking for (and constructing) their identity (their self-recognition as a category) and their space (their social territory) in the framework of current power relations. We are facing one of the forms assumed by class struggle in Argentina at the

las múltiples dimensiones del ‘ser social’. Esta noción no debe remitirnos pura y exclusivamente a las identidades de clase. ‘Otras’ identidades, sin dudas afectadas por la posición de clase, son constitutivas de los sujetos. Negarlas o no asignarles ningún rol en la formación de la conciencia constituye un gesto autoritario y castrador.

Las dificultades con las que tropieza cualquier proyecto de transformación en las actuales condiciones están basadas muchas veces en la ausencia de nexos entre lo social y lo político. Lo político entendido como la instancia que encausa las luchas particulares y las prácticas objetivamente contrahegemónicas hacia un horizonte trascendente y evita que la lucha reivindicativa se convierta en un objetivo per se. Lo político como el acto de desmalezar el camino de la realidad. Lo político, sencillamente, como los ‘propósitos comunes’ o las ‘ceremonias unánimes’, como lo que pone en movimiento al conjunto más allá de las luchas aisladas, como las ‘luchas generalizadas’. Al igual que Rosa Luxemburgo entendemos a la crisis política de la izquierda como una consecuencia de la ruptura del vínculo dialéctico entre la praxis cotidiana y la meta futura final, entre el sujeto y el destino. Ruptura a la que podemos agregar una ausencia: la de la conciencia y la voluntad necesarias para resolver la conflictividad objetiva.

La relación entre organizaciones sociales de base y las organizaciones políticas (o la política a secas, por qué no) tal vez constituya una de las temáticas destinadas a convertirse en la problemática central de los debates en los próximos años. Como respuesta casi refleja a las viejas concepciones *aparatistas*, *pseudo-vanguardistas* y *elitistas* que partían (y parten) de la noción de externalidad de la política en relación a los sujetos de la transformación (clase obrera, campesinado)

beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

These experiences force us to think about the multiple dimensions of ‘social being’. This notion shouldn’t refer to pure and exclusive class identities. ‘Other’ identities, certainly affected by class position, are constitutive of subjects. To deny them, or not to assign them a role in the formation of consciousness, represents an authoritarian and castrating gesture.

Difficulties faced by any transformation project in the present conditions are often based on the absence of links between the social and the political: the political understood as the dimension that channels particular struggles and objectively counter-hegemonic practices towards a transcending horizon, avoiding that the demanding struggle becomes a goal per se; the political as the act of clearing the path of reality; the political as simply the ‘common purposes’ or the ‘unanimous ceremonies’, which set into motion ‘generalized struggles’ beyond isolated ones. As Rosa Luxemburg does, we understand the political crisis of the Left as a consequence of the rupture of the dialectic link between everyday praxis and the future final goal, between the subject and the destiny; a rupture to which we can add an absence: that of the necessary consciousness and the will to resolve the objective field of conflicts.

The relationship between grassroots social organizations and political organizations (or just politics) may represent one of the issues destined to become the central debate in coming years. As an almost reflex response to the old *apparatist*, *pseudo-vanguardist* and *elitist* conceptions that were based (and still are) on the notion of the externality of politics in relation to the subjects of the transformation (working class, peasants),

se terminó planteando que en la relación entre organizaciones sociales y organizaciones políticas indefectiblemente terminan perjudicadas las primeras. ¿La presencia de organizaciones (no nos referimos específicamente a los partidos tradicionales de la izquierda) o a grupos políticos en la organización y en las luchas de los ‘movimientos y redes sociales’ implica siempre un intento por imponer objetivos en última instancia son ajenos a estos últimos? ¿O por el contrario existe, aunque sólo hipotéticamente, la posibilidad de una relación *dialéctica* entre las organizaciones sociales y políticas, una relación que transformando a cada parte de origen a algo distinto y superior?

Muchas veces las posiciones *basistas* a ultranza que reivindican una autonomía tan absoluta como abstracta para las organizaciones populares se olvidan de un dato tan contundente como ineludible: la ideología dominante es la ideología de la clase dominante. Es decir, mientras rechazan por principio la presencia de grupos, de concepciones y de ideas supuestamente ‘ajenas’ a las organizaciones de base, aceptan –pasiva e inconscientemente– la imposición de la ideología de la clase dominante.

¿Cuál es la forma organizativa capaz de generar hegemonía de masas e integrar a las organizaciones de base en un proyecto político de dimensiones estatales? ¿El partido revolucionario? Creemos que no. Hay que superar la que ha sido denominada como ‘ortodoxia de la esencialidad del partido revolucionario’, forma que históricamente tendió a sustituir a las masas y a atribuirse sus tareas. También hay que precaverse de las concepciones ‘optimalistas’, de crecimiento vegetativo (de embrión). La tradición política argentina no se caracteriza por la presencia de partidos de izquierda fuertes. El movimiento parece la forma más adecuada.

we ended up posing that in the relationship between social organizations and political organizations the latter inevitably damage the former. Does the presence of organizations (we don't specifically refer to traditional left-wing parties) or political groups in the organization and the struggles of ‘social networks and movements’ always imply an attempt to impose goals that are, in the end, alien to the latter? Or, is there, in contrast, the possibility – although hypothetical – of a *dialectical* relationship between social and political organizations, a relationship that transforms each part giving rise to something different and better?

Many times extreme *grassroots* positions, which claim an as much absolute as abstract autonomy for popular organizations, forget a conclusive and unavoidable fact: the prevailing ideology is the ideology of the dominant class. That is, while they refuse on principle the presence of groups, conceptions and ideas supposedly ‘alien’ to grassroots organizations, they accept – passively and unconsciously – the imposition of the ideology of the dominant class.

What is the organizational form capable of generating hegemony of the masses and integrating grassroots organizations in a political project of State dimensions? The revolutionary party? We don't think so. We have to overcome what has been called the ‘orthodoxy of the essentiality of the revolutionary party’, a form that historically tended to substitute masses and assume their tasks. We also have to be cautious with ‘optimum’ conceptions of vegetative growth. The Argentinean political tradition is not characterized by the presence of strong left-wing parties. The movement seems to be the most suitable form. Traditional left-wing parties in Argentina, according to Fredric

Los partidos tradicionales de izquierda en la Argentina, al decir de Fredric Jameson,<sup>6</sup> remiten a la *cinta de Möbius*: flotan en el vacío, se caracterizan por su absoluta autoreferencialidad y autocirculatoriedad, no tienen puntos de referencia, no tienen exterioridad. Conciben a la organización más como forma exterior que como herramienta e identidad. La vida grupúscular de algunas organizaciones las lleva a dirigir su agresividad al grupo más cercano y no al enemigo real. El partido de izquierda en su formato tradicional es como un punto fijo, o, en el mejor de los casos, como un conjunto de puntos definidos. El movimiento puede y debe concebirse como la praxis que interviene en la construcción del camino y a la vez vomo el ideal del trayecto.

Los que deifican desde la izquierda al partido o la ‘orga’ deberían tener presente al Marx del *Manifiesto* que señalaba que un partido con cierto grado de influencia social constituye un elemento mucho más ocasional que el proceso de construcción de los actores sociales revolucionarios (Marx se refería a la clase obrera en particular, claro está). Desde esta perspectiva el partido o la ‘orga’ aparecen subordinados a una estrategia central y global que los excede. Concretamente: Marx considera al partido y la ‘orga’ siempre en el marco de un movimiento y va más allá: afirma que su rol principal pasa por ‘defender’ el porvenir de ese movimiento y por ‘apoyar’ todo movimiento revolucionario contra el régimen político y social existente. De este modo la organización no opera como frontera, se concibe como un *locus* que aporta a una causa y no como la causa misma. Marx también decía en el *Manifiesto* que los comunistas “no proclaman principios especiales a los que quisieran amoldar el movimiento proletario”.<sup>7</sup>

Jameson,<sup>6</sup> remind us of a *Möbius strip*: they float in the void, they are characterized by their absolute self-referentiality and self-circularity, they have no points of reference, and have no exteriority. They understand the organization more as an external form rather than as a tool and identity. The group life of some of those organizations leads them to direct their aggressiveness towards the nearest group and not towards the real enemy. The left-wing party in its traditional format is like a fixed point, or, in the best case, like a set of defined points. The movement can and must be understood as the praxis that intervenes in the construction of the path and, at the same time, as the ideal of the path.

Those from the Left who deify the party or the organization should keep in mind the Marx of the *Manifesto*, who pointed out that a party with a certain degree of social influence constitutes a much more occasional element than the process of the construction of revolutionary social actors (Marx referred to the working class in particular, of course). From this perspective the party or the organization become subordinated to a central and global strategy that exceeds them. Concretely, Marx considers the party and the organization as always being part of the framework of a movement; but he goes further: he states that their main role is ‘to defend’ the movement’s future and ‘support’ any revolutionary movement against the existing social and political regime. In this way the organization does not operate as a border; it is understood as a *locus* that contributes to a cause and not as the cause itself. Marx also said in the *Manifesto* that the communists “do not proclaim special principles to which they want to frame the proletarian movement”.<sup>7</sup>

Para Marx, cualquier organización era una secta si convertía en frontera organizativa cualquier conjunto de opiniones particulares (incluyendo las opiniones de Marx), si hacía de ese conjunto de opiniones particulares el elemento determinante de su forma organizativa... nunca Marx creó su organización. Se asociaba con organizaciones realmente existentes, tratando de influir en ellas y, ante todo, de influir, a través de ellas, sobre el movimiento social. La prioridad que daban a su actividad en estas organizaciones no derivaba de la afinidad ideológica con ellas, sino de la importancia que pudieran tener de cara a la transformación social.<sup>8</sup>

La construcción de un movimiento político revolucionario implica un proceso colectivo de reflexión y de acción conjunta en el cual se acumula fuerza social y moral, se consolida una posición y se ocupa un territorio social y un espacio político. Exige instituir un continente de destinos basado en la solidaridad práctica y no una unidad de destinos por falta de solidaridad. Como la lucha de clases no depende de ninguna voluntad subjetiva, la unidad real nunca puede ser el resultado del gesto voluntarista de las superestructuras. La relación entre organizaciones políticas y sociales debe ser entendida como un momento de construcción de una nueva identidad y de una nueva cultura política.

En cuanto a la relación entre el movimiento político y las organizaciones sociales vemos cuatro posibilidades: a) que las demandas de los distintos sectores sociales sean canalizadas a partir del movimiento político por la vía de la incorporación de sus reivindicaciones al ‘programa’; b) que el movimiento integre representaciones sociales y las incorpore al nivel de decisión ‘duro’; c) que se produzca una especie de simbiosis entre las expresiones políticas y los movimientos sociales; y d) todas las deformaciones clásicas pseudo vanguardistas y manipuladoras. Las dos primeras posibilidades parecen las más adecuadas, las otras cuestionan

For Marx, any organization was a sect if it turned any set of particular opinions (including Marx's opinions) into an organizational boundary, if it turned that set of particular opinions into the determinant element of its organizational form... Marx never created his own organization. He used to work in association with existing organizations, trying to influence them and, above all, to influence, through them, the social movement. The priority he gave to his activity in these organizations did not stem from his ideological affinity with them, but from the importance they could have for social transformation.<sup>8</sup>

The construction of a revolutionary political movement involves a collective process of reflection and joint action through which social and moral strength is accumulated, a position is consolidated, as well as a social territory and a political space are occupied. Its demands create a continent of destinies based on practical solidarity and not a unification of destinies because of a lack of solidarity. Since class struggle does not depend on any subjective will, the real unification can never be the result of the voluntaristic gesture of superstructures. The relationship between political and social organizations must be understood as a moment of the construction of a new identity and political culture.

Regarding the relationship between the political movement and social organizations we consider four possibilities: a) that the demands from different social groups are channeled by the political movement through the incorporation of their demands into the ‘program’; b) that the movement integrates social representations and incorporates them into the level of decision-making; c) that a kind of symbiosis is produced between political expressions and social movements; and d) that the classical pseudo-vanguardist and manipulatory distortions occur. The two

abiertamente la autonomía de las organizaciones de base. La autoorganización del campo popular es la preconditione de su poder y el movimiento debe contribuir con ella.

Si consideramos que en el proceso de conformación de un movimiento político revolucionario la relación dialéctica con las organizaciones de base es estratégica, debemos reconocer que sería sumamente contradictorio pensar al primero como estructura vertical y centralizada. Dos elementos caracterizan a muchas de estas organizaciones: la heterogeneidad y la flexibilidad y no se puede negar que explican buena parte de su fuerza y su vitalidad. El movimiento político tiene que reconocer como uno de sus componentes fundamentales a colectivos no partidarios. No debería existir una relación de subordinación entre los 'núcleos de base' y el nivel de dirección. Es decir: no debemos situarnos en el lugar de las vanguardias clásicas. Hay que asumir lugares más dialécticos que nos permitan aprender y crecer junto al movimiento social.<sup>9</sup> Hay que impulsar una metodología 'anticupular'.

La actual fragilidad del lazo que une a organizaciones sociales y políticas puede verse como reflejo de la debilidad de los trabajadores y de los actuales niveles de dispersión de las masas populares en general. La ausencia de lazos orgánicos con las masas explica también las dificultades que surgen a la hora de unificar a organizaciones que teóricamente tienen acuerdos estratégicos o visiones similares.<sup>10</sup>

Se torna necesario repensar la relación entre el movimiento 'espontáneo' y la 'conciencia revolucionaria'. Ya es hora de abandonar la concepción que niega de plano la posibilidad de una 'ideología independiente' elaborada por las masas en el curso de su movimiento. En el mismo sentido es necesario repensar el rol de las

first possibilities seem to be the most suitable; the other ones clearly question the autonomy of grassroots organizations. Self-organization in the popular field is the precondition for its power, and the movement must contribute to it.

If we consider that in the process of shaping a revolutionary political movement the dialectical relationship with grassroots organizations is strategic, we must recognize that it would be extremely contradictory to think of the former as a vertical and centralized structure. Two elements characterize many of these organizations: heterogeneity and flexibility, and we cannot deny that they explain a large part of their strength and vitality. The political movement has to recognize non-party groups as one of their fundamental components. There should not be a subordinate relationship between 'grassroots groups' and the level of direction. In other words, we should not situate ourselves in the place of classical vanguards. We should assume more dialectical places that allow us to learn and grow together with the social movement.<sup>9</sup> We should instigate a methodology that is not top-down.

The current weakness of the link that connects social and political organizations can be seen as a reflection of the weakness of workers and of the current level of dispersion of popular masses in general. The absence of organic links with the masses also explains the difficulties to unify organizations that, in theory, have strategic agreements or similar views.<sup>10</sup>

It is necessary to reconsider the relationship between the 'spontaneous' movement and 'revolutionary consciousness'. It is time to withdraw the conception that denies the possibility of

vanguardias y comenzar a considerar que las que son realmente ‘auténticas’ tienden a expresarse como un sector social concreto que por su situación objetiva está en condiciones de influir en el resto de la sociedad, es decir, la vanguardia como un sector dinamizador de luchas, no como un club de superdotados, como ya se ha dicho.

Desde el emplazamiento leninista tradicional el ‘forzamiento’ de la realidad, de la historia, deviene siempre necesario frente al ‘atraso’ de la conciencia. La conciencia de clase ‘para sí’ se introduce invariablemente desde el exterior. El partido se siente llamado a cubrir el hueco de la conciencia (en lugar de favorecer los procesos de su desarrollo y de trabajar para despertar la autoconciencia) y a obligar los acontecimientos. El forzamiento es resultado de una polarización entre la clase y el partido, de una escisión que lleva a confundir las necesidades propias de la dirección política con las necesidades de las masas y las necesidades de un proceso genuino de transformación. El partido de esta manera ‘trasciende’ la historia, propone una racionalidad por fuera de la misma.

El movimiento de la sociedad civil, la praxis social concreta tiene una importancia que excede la sola influencia de la teoría, “pues la teoría sólo puede intervenir con éxito en la práctica si despierta los indicios de autocomprendión que la práctica ya tiene”.<sup>11</sup> Un saber práctico-político entra en crisis cuando no logra encarnarse en una fuerza social concreta. En este aspecto vale recordar que Marx consideraba que “la teoría se transforma en fuerza material desde el momento en que penetra en las masas.” Estos planteos resultan fundamentales al momento de pensar en el movimiento político. Desde una noción que sostenga la externalidad de la conciencia revolucionaria, el supuesto movimiento político correría el riesgo del desarraigó,

an ‘independent ideology’ elaborated by the masses in the course of their movement. In this sense, there is a need to reconsider the role of vanguards and to begin to consider that those that are really ‘authentic’ tend to express themselves as a concrete social sector that, because of their objective situation, are in a position to influence the rest of the society; that is, the vanguard as a group that articulates struggles, not as a club of extremely gifted people, as it has already been said.

From the traditional Leninist position the ‘forceful bringing about’ of reality, of history, becomes necessary in the face of the ‘delay’ of consciousness. Class consciousness ‘for itself’ is invariably introduced from the outside. The party feels obliged to fill the gap of consciousness (instead of helping the processes for its development and working to awake self-consciousness) and ‘bring about’ the events. The ‘bringing about’ is the result of a polarization between the class and the party; of a split that leads to the confusion of the needs of political direction with those of the masses, and with the needs of an authentic process of transformation. This way, the party ‘transcends’ history, because it proposes a rationality from the outside.

The movement of civil society – the concrete social praxis – has an importance that exceeds the pure influence of theory, “because theory can only intervene successfully in practice if it awakens the traces of self-understanding that practice *already* has”.<sup>11</sup> A practical-political knowledge enters into a crisis when it does not succeed in connecting to a concrete social force. From this point of view it is worth remembering that Marx considered that “theory becomes material strength from the moment it penetrates the masses”.

podría convertirse en una estructura hueca y superestructural –y –posiblemente– verticalista y jerárquica. De una relación de exterioridad a una relación coercitiva hay un solo paso. Al decir de John William Cooke, estaríamos ante una superestructura que “solo serviría para beneficio de políticos burgueses con veleidades progresistas”. Se caería en las redes de la “ley de hierro de la oligarquía” de la que hablaba Roberto Michels.

Sucede que el movimiento político no debe pensarse como la condición de la recomposición del campo popular, sino a la inversa. En esta coyuntura los esfuerzos militantes deben estar orientados hacia esa tarea de recomposición social, ideológica y política. Es que, por otra parte, la tarea de recomposición implica la transformación de los que intervienen. La ‘ideología independiente’ se desarrolla al calor de un movimiento que altera la ‘espontaneidad’ y también las ‘conciencias externas’. La insistencia con respecto al movimiento político se relaciona con la necesidad de no perder de vista el desafío global y la existencia de un campo de lucha específicamente político: lo global relacionado con la necesidad de contar con una estrategia a largo plazo para la edificación de un orden alternativo.

La fragmentación es una realidad generada por el sistema. La lucha contra el sistema es una lucha política e implica homogeneización y algún nivel de centralización preferentemente instrumental y efímera. Si consideramos que la organización política siempre es nociva para las organizaciones populares y reivindicamos su particularismo ¿no terminamos confundiendo la fragmentación con el pluralismo, es decir no terminamos aceptando críticamente la fragmentación? “Contraponer simplemente la diferencia a la identidad, la pluralidad a la unidad, lo marginal a lo central, es caer en la

These approaches are essential when thinking about the political movement. From a perspective that maintains the externality of revolutionary consciousness, the hypothetical political movement would run the risk of disconnection; it could become an empty and superstructural and – possibly – a verticalist and hierarchical structure. From a relationship of externality to a coercive relationship there is just one step. In John William Cooke’s words, we would be facing a superstructure that “would only serve bourgeois politicians with progressive whims”. It would fall into the nets of ‘the iron law of oligarchy’, talked about by Robert Michels.

The political movement cannot be thought of as the condition for the recomposition of the popular field; it is the opposite. In these circumstances militant efforts must be oriented to the task of social, ideological and political recomposition. But the task of recomposition also involves the transformation of those who participate. An ‘independent ideology’ develops in the heat of a movement that alters its ‘spontaneity’ and also the ‘external consciousnesses’. Our insistence with regards to the political movement is related to the need not to lose sight of the global challenge and of the existence of a specific political field of struggle; that is, the global that is related to the need to rely on a long-term strategy for the construction of an alternative order.

Fragmentation is a reality generated by the system. The struggle against the system is a political struggle and involves homogenization and a certain level of centralization, preferably instrumental as well as ephemeral. If we consider political organization always to be harmful for popular organizations, and if

oposición binaria, como saben perfectamente los más sutiles destructores. Es puro formalismo imaginar que la ‘otredad’, la heterogeneidad y la marginalidad son beneficios políticos absolutos al margen de su contenido social concreto”.<sup>12</sup>

Para la lucha integral (y la lucha contra el sistema debe serlo) es necesario lo que Gramsci denominaba hombre colectivo. Ahora bien, ¿puede haber hombre colectivo en el terreno de la no producción, de la exclusión y la fragmentación? La clase obrera ocupa una situación dual: está dentro de la sociedad civil porque sigue siendo imprescindible como objeto, no como sujeto y, por lo tanto, también está fuera de ella. ¿Cuál es la situación del excluido? ¿Pueden los nuevos sectores sociales subalternos aspirar a dirigir la sociedad a partir del lugar que hoy ocupan en el terreno de la producción? Más allá de los interrogantes, lo que queda claro es que el hombre colectivo sigue siendo la condición de los cambios radicales.

Uno de los riesgos que corren las organizaciones y grupos políticos populistas o de izquierda consiste en concebir a la fuerza propia como un principio unificador del todo social y plantear un tipo de relación trascendental con las bases. La rearticulación de la sociedad civil no depende de la voluntad de un grupo. Estamos de acuerdo con Terry Eagleton cuando afirma que “si los diversos elementos de la vida social –por así decirlo, aquellos grupos que esperan ser hegemónizados en una estrategia política radical– no conservan una cierta contingencia e identidad propias, la práctica de la hegemonía significa simplemente fusionarlos en un nuevo tipo de totalidad cerrada”.<sup>13</sup> La tarea va mucho más allá de la conformación de un colectivo y del esfuerzo por mantenerlo unido por la

we defend their particularity, will we not end up confusing fragmentation with pluralism; in other words, do we not end up accepting fragmentation without critique? “Simply contrasting difference and identity, plurality and unity, the marginal and the central, is to repeat the binary opposition again, as the most subtle destructive person perfectly knows. It is pure formalism to imagine that ‘otherness’, heterogeneity and marginality are absolute political benefits apart from their specific social content.”<sup>12</sup>

For a total struggle (and the struggle against the system must be so) we need what Gramsci called ‘the collective man’. Now, can the collective man exist in the field of non-production, of exclusion and fragmentation? The working class holds a dual situation: it is within civil society, because it keeps on being indispensable as an object, not as a subject, and therefore it is also outside of it. What is the situation of the excluded? Can the new subaltern social sectors aim to direct society departing from the place they occupy nowadays in the sphere of production? Beyond these questionings what is clear is that the collective man is still the condition for radical changes.

One of the risks run by populist or left-wing political organizations and groups is to conceive their own strength as a principle that unifies the whole social and poses a transcendental relationship with the grassroots. The reorganization of civil society does not depend on the will of a group. We agree with Terry Eagleton when he states that “if social life’s various elements – so to speak, those groups that hope to be hegemonized in a radical political strategy – don’t keep a certain contingency and identity of their own, the hegemonic practice means simply merging them in a new type of closed totality”.<sup>13</sup> The task goes far

solidaridad y la entrega.

En síntesis: imaginamos al movimiento político como una organización de organizaciones que debe asumir la doble tarea de promover el protagonismo popular y contribuir efectivamente a crear las condiciones para que ese protagonismo sea posible, que integre una diversidad de actores con sus subculturas propias y que, como instancia de contención amplia, potencie estas subculturas en lugar de anularlas. Se trata de consolidar un bloque cultural y social que una, de manera orgánica, al movimiento con las bases. Sin bloques sociales constituidos no existen posibilidades de cambios radicales, todas las opciones políticas serán coyunturales, efímeras. Una propuesta política vale en tanto se enuncia desde un lugar socialmente legítimo, un lugar de organización, de lucha, de praxis significante (a través de la praxis se consolidan los lazos sociales y se definen las identidades, a través de la praxis se cuestionan las relaciones de poder vigentes). La tarea pasa por aportar a la construcción de ese lugar. Más importante que tener políticas públicas para la coyuntura es crear las condiciones sociales de aplicación y recepción de esas políticas. No se construye desde definiciones o posicionamientos teóricos sino desde prácticas. No se acumula con ‘demostraciones pedagógicas’ (vamos a demostrar que el Estado es represor) tampoco confundiendo la revolución con la travesura. Las ideologías con contenidos unívocos y exigencias sintácticas fuertes tienden a ocupar las franjas más marginales del espectro político. En ciertos grupos y organizaciones está muy arraigada la costumbre de llevar definiciones políticas e ideológicas cerradas a los denominados ‘frentes de masas’, de este modo el componente doctrinario funciona como un obstáculo, la ideología se convierte en una toxina y la izquierda se perpetúa como

beyond the conformation of a collective and the effort to keep it united by means of solidarity and dedication.

To sum up: we imagine the political movement as an organization of organizations that should assume the double task of promoting popular protagonism and effectively contributing to create the conditions for that protagonism to be possible. The political movement, as a body of wide inclusion, should integrate a diversity of actors with their own subcultures, fostering these subcultures instead of subjecting them. It is a question of consolidating a cultural and social block that unites the movement with the grassroots in an organic way. Without constituted social blocks there are no possibilities for radical changes; every political option will be contextual and ephemeral. A political proposal is worth as much as it is stated from a socially legitimate place; a place of organization, of struggle, and of significant praxis (through praxis social links are consolidated and identities are defined; through praxis prevailing power relations are questioned). The task involves contributing to the construction of that place. More relevant than having public policies for the situation is to create the social conditions for the application and reception of those policies. It is not from definitions or theoretical positions that we construct, but from practices. We do not accumulate with ‘pedagogical demonstrations’ (let’s demonstrate that the State is repressive), nor confuse revolution with pranks. Ideologies with univocal contents and strong syntactic requirements tend to occupy the most marginal strips of the political spectrum. In certain groups and organizations the habit of taking closed political and ideological definitions to the so-called ‘frontlines of the masses’ is deeply rooted; this way the doctrine

factor inerte.

works as an obstacle, ideology becomes a toxin and the Left is perpetuated as an inert factor.

**notas**  
**notes**

- \* Este artículo ha sido publicado en Mazzeo, M. (2005) *¿Que [no] hacer?* Buenos Aires: Antropofagia.  
This article was published in Mazzeo, M. (2005) *¿Que [no] hacer?* Buenos Aires: Antropofagia.
- 1 Según Daniel Guérin, Max Stirner “sólo se uniría a un partido si éste no tuviera ‘nada de obligatorio’. La única condición para su eventual adhesión sería la posibilidad de que ‘el partido no se apoderara de él’” (Guerín, 1968: 36). Este autor también plantea que Bakunin, “ya anarquista, sigue convencido de la necesidad de una vanguardia consciente” y cita pasajes donde el anarquista se muestra partidario de los cuerpos unificadores, de los grupos de individuos unidos por ideales que ejercen una “acción natural sobre las masas” y de los estados mayors (*ibid.*: 42-43).  
According to Daniel Guérin, Max Stirner “would only join a party that did not involve anything compulsory. The only condition for his eventual adhesion would be the possibility that the party would not take control of him (Guerín, 1968: 36). This author also states that Bakunin, “already an anarchist, was still convinced of the need of a conscious vanguard” and quotes passages where the anarchist presents himself as favouring unified bodies of groups of individuals united by ideals and exercising a “natural action over the masses” (*ibid.*: 42-43).
- 2 Rey (2004: 23-24).
- 3 Los enfoques coercitivos, predominantes en las organizaciones tradicionales de la izquierda, reflejan las jerarquías de nuestras sociedades desiguales, se caracterizan por considerar a los sujetos como subordinados, por no tomar en cuenta las situaciones concretas y por impulsar un sistema de promociones y sanciones individuales. En el enfoque coercitivo la información verticalmente genera desconfianza. Una “red vertical” no puede sostener la confianza social. La alternativa son los enfoques cooperativos que desarrollan algunas organizaciones sociales y políticas, que presentan un amplio frente de lucha contra la burocracia, el autoritarismo y la desconfianza.  
Cohesive approaches, predominant in the traditional organizations of the Left, reflect the hierarchies of our unequal societies and are characterized by considering the subjects as subordinates, by not taking into account concrete situations and by establishing a system of individual promotions and sanctions. In this cohesive approach vertical information generates mistrust. A ‘vertical network’ cannot sustain social trust. The alternative is a co-operative approach, developed by some social and political organizations, presenting a wide front of struggle against bureaucracy, authoritarianism and mistrust.
- 4 Freire (1986: 43).
- 5 Holloway (2004).
- 6 Jameson (1997: 56-57).
- 7 Cabe recordar que en la edición inglesa de 1888 en lugar de decir ‘principios especiales’ decía ‘principios sectarios’.  
We must remember that in the English edition of 1888, instead of ‘special principle’, it was written ‘sectarian principles’.
- 8 Sanz (1998: 51). En el mismo artículo el autor sostiene que: “La lealtad a los partidos en tanto que aparatos deriva siempre en deslealtad respecto al propio pensamiento y respecto al sector social que se pretende representar, pues los intereses de los aparatos coinciden punto por punto con los intereses individuales de quienes los dominan” (*ibid.*: 52).  
Sanz (1998: 51). In the same article the author maintains that “the loyalty to the parties as apparatus has always its origin in the betrayal of one’s own beliefs and the social sector that one claims to represent, as the interest of the apparatus coincides, point by point, with the individual interest of those that dominate the party” (*ibid.*: 52).
- 9 Proponemos recuperar el desusado concepto de la organización como proceso o como producto de la lucha, propuesto por Anton Pannekoek y por Rosa Luxemburgo.

We would like to recuperate the unused concept of organization as process or as product of the struggle, as proposed by Anton Pannekoek and Rosa Luxemburg.

- 10 ¿Cuánto tiempo hemos perdido en dilatadas reuniones con supuestos (y declamatorios) ‘compañeros estratégicos’ que no condujeron a nada?  
How much time have we wasted in long meetings with pretentious ‘strategic comrades’, which led nowhere?
- 11 Eagleton (1997: 231).
- 12 Eagleton (*ibid.*: 166-167).
- 13 Eagleton (*ibid.*: 269).

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# Territorio y Estructuras de Acción Colectiva: Microgobiernos Barriales\*

Pablo Mamani Ramirez

# Territory and Structures of Collective Action: Neighborhood Micro-Governments\*

translated by Miguel Imas

Bolivia es el espacio-territorio de un conjunto dinámico de movimientos sociales indígenas. Recorren su superficie diversos proyectos sociales que tienden a territorializarse en distintas regiones (Mamani, 2004). La estructura estatal y social por este hecho es tan endeble y frágil, que al parecer sólo depende de la violencia física. Tiene una lógica más autoritaria, y hasta militar, que propiamente una lógica social e indígena. En pocas palabras, el Estado republicano de Bolivia, es la síntesis de las históricas dominaciones monoétnicas frente a la diversidad sociológica de su espacio-territorio.

El levantamiento indígena-popular de septiembre y octubre de 2003, conocido como la Guerra del Gas, es la manifestación de este hecho. Cuadra a cuadra, barrio a barrio y distrito a distrito, la ciudad aymara de El Alto ha sido recorrida por dos lógicas contrapuestas. Una, aquella forma indígena de articularse en *ayni* (ayuda mutua) y por turnos mediados por las cotidianas relaciones sociales urbanas-rurales, y la otra, la

Bolivia can be interpreted as the territory-space formed by a dynamic net of social indigenous movements. They are composed of different social projects expressed in the territories of different regions of the country (Mamani, 2004). As a consequence of this diversity, social and public structures are very feeble and fragile, depending in large part on physical violence. It has an authoritarian logic, even a military one, instead of a social and indigenous logic. In short, the republican State of Bolivia is a synthesis of mono-ethnic historical dominations of the social diversity of its space-territory.

The indigenous popular uprising of September and October 2003, known as the Gas War, is a clear expression of this fact. Each street, neighborhood and district of the Aymara city of El Alto experienced the following opposite logics: on one hand, the indigenous form of articulation as *ayni* (mutual help), mediated by ongoing urban-rural relationships; and, on the other, the State, as logic of pure violence with an extraordinary capacity to bleed society from time to time. October

estatal, una lógica de pura violencia como una capacidad extraordinaria de desangrar de tiempo en tiempo a la sociedad. Entonces, octubre es un momento extraordinario donde se devela la condición ‘natural’ de la dominación estatal en Bolivia. Es el resumen de su recorrido histórico. Es la manifestación tácita de un racismo de Estado. Pero, al mismo tiempo, es el momento en que este Estado, aunque en pequeño, es anulado por la constitución de los microgobiernos barriales similares o iguales a los ‘cuarteles indígenas’ de Qalachaka de Achakachi o del Omayusus.<sup>1</sup>

Durante el mes que duró el levantamiento en el altiplano-valle aymara norte de La Paz se articuló un complejo de prácticas y formas de acción colectiva. Unos y otros se movilizan como si fueran serpientes o Kataris y Bartolinás<sup>2</sup> frente a la sistematicidad de la violencia estatal. Cada barrio había constituido sus propios gobiernos territoriales donde era difícil el ingreso de los agentes del Estado-gobierno. Así en cada barrio se erigen los microgobiernos barriales. Hay decisiones políticas que se manifiestan y deciden en estos gobiernos territoriales. La ciudad de El Alto tiene entre 500 a 520 juntas vecinales, de todas ellas, fácilmente se han articulado unos cuatrocientos juntas vecinales como microgobiernos barriales organizados en comités de movilización y las juntas vecinales y otras formas de organización territorial. En cada espacio se han estructurado profusas auto-organizaciones locales o barriales que se mueven como cuerpos políticos alternos al orden dominante. Incluso la propia Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto (FEJUVE), la Central Obrera Regional de El Alto (COR) no gobernaba este territorio sino las propias juntas vecinales. Esto es así porque cada barrio ha organizado sus propios sistemas de acción y control y decisiones autónomas sin perder de vista el

2003 was an extraordinary moment that revealed the ‘natural’ condition of domination by the State in Bolivia. It is the synthesis of a historical trajectory. It is the tacit manifestation of the racism of the State. However, at the same time it is the moment in which this State is annulled – on however small a scale – by the constitution of neighborhood micro-governments, which are similar to, or the same as, the ‘indigenous barracks’ of Qalachaka de Achakachi or Omayusus.<sup>1</sup>

During the month of the uprising in the north of the Aymara highland valley, north of La Paz, people articulated a complex set of collective practices and forms of collective action. They mobilized themselves as if they were serpents, or *Kataris* and *Bartolinás*,<sup>2</sup> in order to face the systematic violence of the State. Each neighborhood constituted its own territorial government, where it was difficult for the agents of the State-government to enter. Hence, each neighborhood built its own government; and each government made its own political decisions. The city of El Alto had between 500 and 520 communal assemblies; among them were around 400 constituted neighborhood micro-governments, organized as mobilization committees, communal assemblies and other forms of territorial organization. In each space local or neighborhood self-organizations were established, which acted as alternative political bodies to the dominant order. Even the Federation of Neighborhood Assemblies of El Alto (FEJUVE) and the Federation of Workers of the Region of El Alto (COR) did not govern this territory; only the communal assemblies did. Each neighborhood organized its own system of action and control, taking autonomous decisions without losing sight of their common referent: No to the export of gas through Chilean ports! Nationalization of all

referente común como es la no exportación del gas por puertos chilenos, la nacionalización de los hidrocarburos y la renuncia del presidente Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. Mujeres cargados de sus wawas (niños/as), jóvenes con la dinamicidad de su edad, los hombres y ancianos han constituido este cuerpo social politizado. Desde el interior de la ciudad, es decir, desde los microgobiernos barriales, estos hombres y mujeres difuminan poderes difusos, intermitentes, quasi microbianas, alternas y mortíferas hacia fuera, particularmente para el gobierno. Cada milímetro de la ciudad ha sido parte de este escenario. Hasta las zonas no indígenas han tendido alambres de púa para autodefenderse de los ladrones como la ciudad Satélite.

En esa relación se han multiplicado cavados de zanjas sobre las calles y avenidas, se ha organizado vigilias día y noche y se ha recolectado llantas viejas, palos y petardos para movilizar las estructuras de la vida social cotidiana. Así la ciudad de El Alto es una ciudad minada para el movimiento y la legitimidad del Estado-gobierno. Cada espacio del Estado-gobierno y las instalaciones de las transnacionales como la Coca Cola, Aguas del Illimani, Electropaz han sido sistemáticamente cercados y destruidos. El Estado ha dejado de existir por el vaciamiento de su legitimidad; ha sido disuelto de facto para sólo constituirse los mencionados microgobiernos territoriales. Por esto es pertinente hablar de los microgobiernos barriales porque estos se yerguen como poderes alternos al poder constituido. Un vacío de poder dejado por el Estado es inmediatamente rellenado por estos mecanismos de acción colectiva que es fácilmente observable por la contundencia de sus actos tanto políticos como morales. Ejemplo. Ningún ladrón se atrevería abiertamente robar o entrar a las casas. De hacerlo la multitud se hacia

hydrocarbons!, and, Resignation of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada! Women carrying their *wawas* (boys/girls), young people with the dynamism of their age, men and the elderly – all constituted this social, politicized body. From inside the city, that is, from the neighborhood micro-governments, these men and women disseminated powers – powers that are diffused, sporadic, quasi-microbic, alternative and deadly – to the exterior, aiming particularly at the government. Each millimeter of the city was part of this scenario. Even the areas without indigenous population built defenses to protect themselves.

Actions like the destruction of roads, night and day vigils and the collection of pieces of wood, tires, and stones, multiplied and mobilized the structure of daily social life. El Alto was a city contaminated by a movement that questioned the legitimacy of the State-government. Each space of the State-government, as well as the installations of global corporations, such as Coca Cola, Aguas del Illimani, and Electropaz, were systematically blockaded and destroyed. As a result, the State lost legitimacy and therefore ceased to exist, effectively leaving only these territorial micro-governments in power. For this reason it is relevant to discuss the neighborhood micro-governments, because they have established themselves as an alternative to the constituted power. The power vacuum left by the State was immediately filled by these mechanisms of collective action, easily observable by the bluntness of political, as well as moral, actions. For example, no thief would dare to rob or enter a house. If they did, the multitude would deal with them. This is because the moral referent of the State disappeared, which was replaced by the power of the multitude. This incubated power produced meaning for the proposal of the nationalization of political power

cargo de ellos. Esto es así porque el referente moral del Estado se hace trizas para sólo encumbrarse el poder de la multitud que irradia sentidos de acción nacionalizadora del poder político y de su espacio-territorio.

Miles y miles al hacerse en multitud politizada piden en forma de gritos, actos, y con escrituras como ‘el gas no se vende, carajo’, ‘si Goni quiere plata que venda su mujer’ para exigir de hecho la nacionalización del poder económico y político. Es más, los aymaras gritan en una sola voz la reconstitución del histórico *Qullasuyu* como una patria propia frente a la presencia opresora del Estado republicano boliviano. Incluso se puede hablar de que se ha gestado de forma práctica un miniestado dentro de un mismo Estado que con el pasar de las horas y días se agigantaba. Es en ese sentido el Estado productor de las relaciones étnicas dominantes colapsa para dar pie a sistemas de autoorganización local y barrial. En esas condiciones la credibilidad en los gobernantes blanco-mestizos se hace ilegitima, no creíble dada principalmente en la figura de Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada además de las experiencias históricas de su ensangrentamiento con la sangre india o indígena. Por esto el Estado boliviano además de tener una deuda externa que es económica tiene una gran deuda política y económica interna con los pueblos indígenas; ésta es una deuda sangrienta. Octubre no es más que una manifestación de ésta genealogía de la violencia estatal en Bolivia.

Por este hecho, la multitud se autorganiza para articular acciones colectivas beligerantes donde se elaboran las estrategias de acción y sistemas de movilización colectiva. Y, nuevamente, el referente fáctico o directo del mismo son los microgobiernos barriales. Es en estos espacios-territorios donde se velan a los

and its space-territory.

Thousands and thousands of people belonging to this politicized multitude demanded actions with sentences like ‘gas is not for sale, asshole’, ‘if Goni wants money, he should sell his wife’, demanding the nationalization of economic and political power. Furthermore, the Aymaras shouted with one voice for the reconstitution of their historic *Qullasuyu*, i.e., their own territory, their own government, free from the oppression of the Bolivian republican State. It is possible, then, to talk about the practical establishment of a mini-state within a State. This mini-state was growing day by day. In this sense, the State, which produced the dominant ethnic relations, was collapsing to give space to a system of local and neighborhood self-organization. Under these conditions the credibility of the white-*mestizos* governors became illegitimate. They were not credible mainly because of the figure of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, but also because of the historical experiences of bloodshed, in which indigenous people were the victims. This is why the Bolivian State, despite having external economic debt, also has a big internal political and economic debt to the indigenous people; this is a debt of blood. That October was nothing more than the manifestation of the genealogy of State violence in Bolivia.

For this reason the multitude became self-organized, in order to articulate collective belligerent actions through which the strategies of action and systems of collective mobilization could be elaborated. Again, the concrete and direct referent is the micro-governments. It is in this space-territory where people watch over their dead and treat the wounded. Just as the State-government did, hospitals also collapsed and people started to look for cures with traditional indigenous herbs and

muertos y además se curan a los heridos. Al igual que el Estado-gobierno, los hospitales también han colapsado y la gente ha empezado a acudir a las curas indígenas con yerbas y mates y las q'uwas (sahumerios). Las prácticas de cura indígena se hacen imprescindibles. Los niños/as asustados por los disparos indiscriminados de las armas fuego que no pueden dormir durante las noches son curados por los yatiris (sabios). Ellos o ellas acuden a los saberes y conocimientos indígenas. Estos saberes subordinados en lo cotidiano se hacen públicos como un poder médico alterno a la medicina clínica. Por estos mecanismos sociales, el dolor colectivo sufrido por la masacre del 12 y 13, de alguna manera es alivianado porque cargan este dolor miles y cientos de familias. La multitud cura el dolor de las familias ensangrentadas con los deseos profundos que se acuden a las fuerzas del mundo indígena definido en que ‘todos aquellos que hayan ordenado matar deben morir en vida’. Así, las condolencias se hacen colectivas porque van de barrio en barrio y de casa en casa. Por esto, muchas víctimas no sienten estar solos sino como parte de esos miles y millones de hombres y mujeres que cargan el dolor, aunque después no haya tenido continuidad.

## La legitimidad de los gobiernos locales

Sin duda, el levantamiento alteño mostró que tiene capacidad para destruir los referentes de la legitimidad del Estado, fundado en los saberes colectivos que permiten organizarse en comités de vigilancia, grupos de control y seguridad de los movilizados. Cada miembro de familia es parte de esta estructura de organización y movilización social. Unos cuidan la casa y el resto está sobre las calles y marchando en la Ceja o en la hoyada de la ciudad de

teas, such as *q'uwas* (*sahumarios*). These indigenous practices of healing became indispensable. The children, who were scared by the indiscriminate gunshots of firearms, and who could not sleep during the nights, were treated by *yatiris* (wisdom men). People resorted to indigenous skills and knowledges. These knowledges, subordinated in daily life, created an alternative public medical power, an alternative to clinical medicine. Through these social mechanisms the collective pain, which was suffered because of the massacre on 12 and 13 October, was alleviated, as the collective carried and supported the pain of hundreds and thousands of families. The multitude healed the pain of the affected families with deep desires, inspired by the forces of the indigenous world and defined by the belief that ‘all of those who have ordered murder should die in life’. Thus, bereavements became collective experiences, as people moved from one neighborhood to the other, from house to house. Because of this, many victims did not feel alone but part of those thousands and millions of men and women who carried the burden of the pain – even if after that this did not continue.

## The legitimacy of local governments

Without a doubt, the uprising of El Alto demonstrated the people’s capacity to destroy the referents of the State’s legitimacy, a capacity based on collective knowledges that allowed the mobilizing people to organize in committees of vigilance and groups of control and security. Each member of a family is part of this structure of organization and social mobilization. Some take care of the house, while others are in the streets, marching in the Ceja and Hoyada neighborhoods of the

La Paz. El resto cocina y lleva un poco de mate y los que tiene medicinas llevan para curar a los heridos. Se teje una compleja solidaridad colectiva no vista desde la fundación de esta ciudad. Por esto es una multitud hecha cuerpo político que tiene la capacidad de traspasar fácilmente las fronteras del poder constituido y las fronteras de la tolerancia social en la que se crispan los sentimientos antiq'aras (antiblancos). Hecho muy notorio por la idea creciente de la toma de la zona sur de La Paz (los barrios donde viven las élites) y el palacio de gobierno.

Bajo estas condiciones, se hacen legítimos los microgobiernos barriales. Primero, por la contundencia de su acción y organización colectiva y segundo por ser el referente de la seguridad de la vida social de los barrios. Ésta legitimidad quiere decir que hay una aceptación total de sus miembros a esta forma de organización barrial. Además éste es uno de los únicos referentes de la defensa de la vida porque el Estado se ha convertido abiertamente ahora en el inmediato referente de la inseguridad y la muerte. Esto es que el Estado-gobierno deja de ser el garante de la vida para convertirse por el contrario en el garante de la muerte. El gobierno como el referente político del Estado tiene el derecho ahora de matar o dejar vivir, un derecho no legítimo.

Por esto el sector norte y sector sur de la ciudad se cubre de un poder territorial alterno al poder del gobierno. Así las cosas, esta violencia física poco a poco se hace también parte de la sociedad. La sociedad misma se hace Estado por la anulación del Estado. Y los microgobiernos barriales convertida en un potencial del nuevo micro Estado se convierte ahora poco en poco en el referente inmediato de un nuevo proyecto social aunque muy difusa y poco clara por la falta de una dirección de un liderazgo

city of La Paz. Some cook and prepare the tea; some prepare medicines to treat the ill and wounded. It reflects a well knitted and complex web of solidarity among the movements not seen since the foundation of the city. That is why this is a multitude transformed into a political body. It has the capacity to easily transcend the frontiers of constituted power and social tolerance, spurring sentiments against white people (*antiq'aras*). This was evident by the growing interest in taking over the southern zone of La Paz (where the white elites live) and the government palace.

Under these conditions the communal micro-governments became legitimized: first, as a consequence of the effectiveness of their action and collective organization, and, secondly, by becoming the referent for security of social life in the neighborhoods. This legitimacy meant that there was a general acceptance among their members of this form of neighborhood organization. In fact, this local organization was one of the only referents for the defense of life, as the State was now openly converted into an immediate referent for insecurity and death. This is why the State-government ceased to be the guarantor of life, becoming, instead, the guarantor of insecurity and death. The government, as the political referent of the State, now had the right to kill or let live – an illegitimate right.

Therefore, the northern and southern sectors of the city were covered by an alternative territorial power to the power of the government. Thus, this physical violence also became, little by little, part of society. Society itself became the State through the annulation of the State. The neighborhood micro-governments became the potential of a new micro-State by becoming, little by little, the immediate referent of a new social project, however

articulado.

Por ello en la ciudad de El Alto, el Estado ha muerto por lo menos durante los diez días que ha durado el levantamiento social para resucitar después de la mano de Carlos Mesa con el eslogan ‘ni perdón ni venganza, justicia’. Por esto es un momento dramático como cuando surge en 1825. El Estado-gobierno no controla el sustento de su tiempo-espacio como es el territorio y la vida social. La ciudad de El Alto se hace un territorio alterno al territorio del Estado. Hay una posesión colectiva sobre los espacios urbanos y rurales porque aquí llegan miles y miles más de las áreas rurales y los mineros para articular este poder alterno. Por esto, sin bien, después de 17 de octubre resucitó el Estado republicano, murió un gobierno y junto a él un sistema económico y político neoliberal. Ésta es la importancia sociológica y política del levantamiento de la ciudad aymara o indígena-popular de El Alto anclada en su fuerza de la acción colectiva desparramada como montañas infranqueables.

Los sistemas de organización por sectores, barrios, familias y distritos ha tenido la capacidad de inmovilizar al Estado y provocar la caída de uno de los gobiernos que ha sabido ganarse la simpatía de la gente para imponer un sistema de gobierno neoliberal en Bolivia. Cada casa y cada calle es pues el referente de este hecho político pese a que el Estado ha ingresado vía violencia allí. Hay un articulamiento interbarrial que deja estela de polvo para inmovilizar por la fuerza a las fuerzas del Estado-gobierno. Dentro de estas relaciones, la presencia de las fuerzas militares es considerada como la presencia de las ‘fuerzas chilenas’ sobre un territorio propio y como tal se hace insoportable su actuación. Pasado diez meses de aquel hecho, el 7 agosto de 2004, se vuelve a manifestar el mismo hecho cuando los

diffuse and unclear this project was, as it lacked direction and an articulated leadership.

This is why in the city of El Alto the State had died, at least during the ten days of the social uprising. It only returned after Carlos Mesa assumed the Presidency with his message of ‘neither pardon nor revenge, but justice’. This was a dramatic moment, similar to 1825 when the State was formed. The State-government was not in control of maintaining its time-space, its territory and social life. The city of El Alto became an alternative territory to the territory of the State. There was collective ownership of all urban and rural spaces, because thousands and thousands of rural workers and miners arrived to help with the articulation of this alternative power. Hence, after 17 October the republican State was revived; a government had died and with it an economic and political neoliberal system. This is the sociological and political importance of the uprising of the Aymara city, the popular-indigenous El Alto. It was anchored in its strength of broad collective action, which was as strong as mountains.

The systems of organization in the sectors, neighborhoods, families and districts had the capacity to immobilize the State and provoke the fall of one of the governments that wanted to gain the support of the people in order to impose a system of neoliberal government in Bolivia. Each house and street was, hence, the referent of this political event, despite the State’s violent invasion of these areas. There was an inter-neighborhood articulation that enabled the forceful immobilization of the forces of the State-government. Within these relations the presence of military forces was considered to be an unbearable situation; it was deemed to be like the presence of foreign forces inside our own

militares toman la avenida Juan Pablo II para un ejercicio militar de jura a la bandera. Allí muchos vecinos vuelven aunque en silencio repudiar el acto de cierre de la avenida que comunica entre el Río Seco y la Ceja de El Alto.

Bajo este nutrido sistema de acción colectiva barrial, finalmente el viernes 17 de octubre, Sánchez de Lozada deja la presidencia para ‘refugiarse’ en los Estados Unidos. Cae dramáticamente un gobierno soberbio y autoritario. Es el final del liderazgo neoliberal en Bolivia. Es el momento crucial para la posibilidad de cambio. La historia se parte en miles de pedazos porque colisionan el sistema liberal del poder y el sistema colectivo indígena de la vida social.

Enteradas de la dramática caída de Sánchez de Lozada, las multitudes en la Ceja de El Alto y los barrios de pronto hacen correr ríos de llanto, uno, por el dolor causado y otro por la alegría de haber logrado derrotar a un gobierno y una coalición blanca-mestiza.

Bajo esas condiciones se han hecho visibles las relaciones constitutivas del poder racial que sufre Bolivia. En dos ciudades fundamentales de la república como son La Paz y El Alto<sup>3</sup> se han abierto profundas fronteras étnicas. Los indios y los q’aras (blanco pelado) mutuamente se hacen intolerables. Unos y otros cierran sus fronteras para abrir profundas fisuras en el poder. Los indígenas urbanos-rurales constituyen como ya dijimos sus propios autogobiernos barriales y los q’aras fortalecen pese a su desmoronamiento en El Alto, el poder de su dominación. Los primeros levantan la cabeza para volver a bajar inmediatamente y los segundos levantan para seguir manteniendo las dominaciones étnicas en un país que es indígena en un 70%.

territory. On 7 August 2004, ten months after that event, the same thing happened again, as the military took Juan Pablo II Avenue for a military exercise to honor the flag. At that moment many people from the neighborhoods came out – even if in silence – to repudiate the act of closing the avenue that links the Rio Seco to the Ceja neighborhood of El Alto.

Under the weight of this rich system of collective neighborhood action, Sanchez de Lozada finally stepped down as President on 17 October to ‘find refuge’ in the United States. An arrogant and authoritarian government fell dramatically, ending the neoliberal leadership in Bolivia. This marks the crucial moment for the possibility of change. History breaks down into thousands of pieces as the liberal system of power collides with the indigenous collective system of social life.

When they found out about the dramatic fall of Sanches de Lozada, the multitudes of La Ceja and the other neighborhoods of El Alto cried rivers of tears: on one hand, because of the pain caused, and, on the other, because of the joy to have achieved the defeat of the government and the coalition of whites and *mestizos*.

These conditions made visible the constituting relations of racial power suffered by Bolivia. In two such prime cities of the Republic as La Paz and El Alto<sup>3</sup> profound ethnic frontiers were open. The indigenous and the *q’aras* (white) became mutually intolerant of each other. They were both locked inside their frontiers, opening deep holes in the structure of power. The urban and rural indigenous people have constituted, as we have already said, their own neighborhood self-governments, and the *q’aras*, despite their collapse in El Alto, are strengthening the power of their domination. The former raised their heads only to bow them again

Si bien ahora el país ha vuelto a la normalidad, es una normalidad perversa porque mediante ella se mantiene la continuidad de la dominación y explotación étnica. Se ha cambiado de gobierno para mantener lo mismo. Pese a esta paradoja, ha quedado claro, sin embargo, que cuando miles de hombres y mujeres se empoderan y se movilizan, articulan identidades colectivas son capaces de corroer hasta el poder más absoluto como ha sido el de Sánchez de Lozada. Son capaces de destruir el monopoder del Estado. Octubre es el momento de este hecho por el articulamiento de los micropoderes difusos frente a un poder totalitario del gobierno-Estado. Ésta es la forma concreta en que se ha manifestado el poder alterno porque se erigen poderes sustituyentes al poder constituido.

A casi un año de este hecho, el reaparecimiento de Sánchez de Lozada desde Estados Unidos en las pantallas de televisión, ha vuelto nuevamente a despertar el furor aún contenido en la ciudad de El Alto y el país. Por esto en muchos sectores se reflexiona que la lógica de cambiar presidentes no es suficiente porque se reproduce lo mismo. Se mueve tenuemente por esto debajo de cada casa y cada barrio un anuncio inquietante: 'volveremos a tomar la ciudad para cambiar todo' (este anuncio se hace efectiva nuevamente en mayo-junio de 2005). ¿Octubre será el principio de este cambio o será parte simplemente para mantener lo mismo? Después de octubre ¿qué significa la ciudad de El Alto? y ¿cómo se lo trata?

Octubre 2003

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immediately, while the latter have risen again to maintain their ethnic dominance in a country where around 70% of the population is indigenous.

The country has now gone back to normality; it is a perverse normality because the continuity of the domination and exploitation of the indigenous population is maintained. The Bolivian government has changed, but fundamentally nothing has changed. Despite this paradox, however, it has become clear that when thousands of women and men empower and mobilize themselves – articulating collective identities – they are able to weaken even the most absolute power, as was Sanchez de Lozada's. They can destroy the mono-power of the State. October 2003 was an event of the articulation of diffuse micro-powers that confronted the totalitarian power of the State-government. This was the concrete form through which the alternative power was manifested: the building of powers that substitute the constituted power.

Almost a year after this event Sanchez de Lozada reappeared on the TV screens. Speaking from the United States, his reappearance awoke the furor caused in the city El Alto and the rest of the country. Therefore, people from many sectors of the community think that the logic of changing presidents is not enough because, in the end, the same is reproduced. As this debate has slowly moved on, involving each house and neighborhood, a warning announcement has appeared: 'We will be back to take the city to change everything' (it appeared again in May-June 2005). Did October 2003 mark the beginning of a change, or will the status quo be maintained? And beyond October 2003, what is the meaning of El Alto? How do we treat it?

notas  
notes

- \* Este artículo es parte del estudio de Los Microgobiernos Barriales en el levantamiento de la Ciudad de El Alto que el autor ha realizado con la Carrera de Sociología de la UMSA. en 2004. Este trabajo ha sido publicado en la *Revista Barataria* No. 1, año 1, 2004.

This article is part of the communal micro-government study conducted by the author during the uprising of El Alto with the support of UMSA in 2004. It has previously been published in *Revista Barataria*, 1(1), 2004.

- 1 Se refiere al movimiento indígena aymara, particularmente de la región de Omasuyus. Chepare es una región central de Bolivia y Omasuyus o los aymaras de la región Norte de Bolivia es otra región importantísima con larga historia de luchas y levantamientos indígenas. El 9 de Abril de 2000 allí se producen los primeros enfrentamientos con la policía y el ejército con el saldo de un militar y dos jóvenes indígenas aymaras muertos. Es el primer escenario de un levantamiento aymara-quechua en la región donde se van a constituir después los cuarteles indígenas y la constitución del Estado mayor indígena de Qalachaka y, donde además de este cuartel, se articulaba el Estado mayor indígena de Calachaka y se articulaban otros cuarteles en otras comunidades y en otras regiones, incluso cuarteles móviles difusos que aparecían y desaparecían en el escenario de la lucha. Allí se declara y allí se produce la declaración de Achakachi y el manifiesto de Achakachi, que son declaraciones de un auto gobierno indígena en la región (Mamani, 2006: 4).

This refers to the Aymara indigenous movement, mainly in the region of Omasuyus. Chepare is a central region of Bolivia; Omasuyus, or the Aymaras of Northern Bolivia, is another important region, which is marked by a long history of struggles and indigenous uprisings. On 9 April 2000 the first confrontations with the police and the Bolivian army took place in this region with the death of a military man and two young Aymara. This was the first stage of an Aymara-Quecha uprising that later constituted the indigenous quarters (*cuarteros*) and the indigenous high command of Qalachaka. It also constituted other indigenous quarters (*cuarteros*) in different communities; the uprising was articulated among them and with the indigenous high command of Calachaka. At that moment, the Declaration and the Manifesto of Achakachi were produced. These documents state indigenous self-government in the region (Mamani, 2006: 4).

- 2 Líderes aymaras en el gran levantamiento anticolonial de 1781 en La Paz.

This refers to the Aymara's native uprising in 1781 against the Spanish crown in La Paz.

- 3 El Alto es, junto a Santa Cruz de la Sierra, la ciudad con mayor crecimiento demográfico de Bolivia: de 13.000 habitantes en la década del cincuenta, cuando era un barrio marginal de La Paz, ha pasado a más de 700.000 habitantes, según el censo de 2001. El 75 % se autoidentifica como indígenas, fundamentalmente aymara.

El Alto, together with Santa Cruz de la Sierra, is the city with the biggest demographic growth. From 13,000 inhabitants in the 1950s, when it was considered a marginal suburb of La Paz, El Alto has become an area of more than 700,000 inhabitants (2001 census). 75% of the population consider themselves indigenous, principally of Aymara origin.

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# **Las Batallas de la Globalización: Resistencia Indígena al TLC en Ecuador**

Pablo Dávalos

# **Globalization Battles: Indigenous Resistance to the FTA in Ecuador**

translated by María de la O López Abeledo

En 1990 se produce el primer levantamiento indígena en el Ecuador contemporáneo, desde la fecha, el tiempo político del Ecuador ha estado signado por la presencia y constitución del Movimiento Indígena Ecuatoriano (MIE) como sujeto político. Desde mediados de la década de los noventa, en los cuales el MIE se incorpora al sistema político a través del movimiento Pachakutik, el MIE se ha convertido también en el objeto de intervención desde el poder con el propósito de restarle fuerza política, capacidad organizativa y de movilización.

Desde mediados de los noventa, todos los gobiernos intentaron manipular, intervenir y desarticular al MIE, pero el gobierno que se reveló más nefasto para el MIE fue, sin duda, el de Lucio Gutiérrez. Durante ese periodo, la persecución, que llegó incluso al intento de asesinato al presidente de la CONAIE, fue la más feroz, la más implacable.

De ahí que en el transcurso de la destitución de Gutiérrez, hasta noviembre de 2005, el MIE haya entrado en un proceso de reconstitución organizativa interna, que

In 1990 the first indigenous uprising in contemporary Ecuador took place. Since then Ecuador's political scene has been marked by the constitution and presence of the Ecuadorian Indigenous Movement (MIE, Movimiento Indígena Ecuatoriano) as a political subject. From the mid-1990s, when it joined the political system through the *Pachakutik* (Our Land) movement, the MIE has also become the object of intervention by positions of power with the purpose of draining its political strength and capacity for organization and mobilization.

From the mid-1990s all governments tried to manipulate, intervene against and dismantle the MIE. However, the worst government for the MIE was, without a doubt, that of Lucio Gutiérrez. During that period the persecution, which even led to an assassination attempt against CONAIE's (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) president, was the fiercest and the most implacable.

This is the reason why, during the course

contemplaba la restauración de sus estructuras organizativas, la reelaboración de sus discursos, la redefinición de sus prioridades políticas, y la renovación de sus cuadros dirigenciales, una recomposición cuya fuerza y alcances se evidenciarían en las movilizaciones de marzo de 2006, cuando en el MIE se opera uno de los cambios fundamentales de su proyecto político, al centrarse toda su plataforma de movilización sobre las negociaciones que el Ecuador establecía con EEUU para firmar un Tratado de Libre Comercio (TLC), la elaboración de esta agenda le pone al MIE en una línea de confrontación directa en contra del proyecto estratégico de las élites, a saber, el desmantelamiento del Estado de bienestar por el Estado neoliberal.

of the removal of President Gutiérrez in the period up to November 2005, the MIE entered a process of internal organizational reconstruction, which included the restoration of its organizational structures, the re-elaboration of its discourses, the new definition of its political priorities and the renewal of its leadership. The strength and reach of this recomposition became evident in the mobilizations of March 2006 when the MIE carried out one of the fundamental changes of its political project, focusing its mobilization platform on the negotiations that Ecuador had established with the US to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The development of this agenda placed the MIE in direct confrontation with the strategic project of the elites, which is the dismantling of the Welfare State in favor of a neoliberal State.



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En noviembre de 2005 se produce una importante marcha en contra del TLC, y en el mes de marzo de 2006, se da una movilización que paralizó al país durante dos semanas, y que demuestra que el MIE es, a no dudarlo, el actor social y sujeto político más importante que tiene el Ecuador.

El MIE, en esta coyuntura, demuestra su comprensión de los territorios políticos en los que opera el poder y traslada la confrontación hacia lo que ellos perciben como el núcleo neurálgico del poder, aquel de reformar al Estado por la vía de un Tratado de Libre Comercio con Estados Unidos. El MIE, con estas acciones, evita pasar por el sistema político, a diferencia de su estrategia de mediados de la década de los noventa en donde busca ingresar directamente al sistema político, y confronta de manera directa a las élites y al gobierno afectando uno de los procesos más fundamentales del Ecuador contemporáneo, y es aquel de la transformación radical de su Estado por la vía del TLC.

El presente texto explora y analiza este proceso a partir de una lectura comprensiva que permite la evaluación política del MIE definiendo un espacio político en el que se sitúa la movilización indígena: aquel de la transformación del Estado industrializante y de bienestar que fue construido en la década de los años setenta, por el Estado neoliberal, privatizado y vinculado de manera subordinada al mercado mundial capitalista, un mercado, además, controlado por las corporaciones transnacionales. El Estado neoliberal no comparte los supuestos de base del Estado de bienestar. Es un Estado con una institucionalidad mínima, en el cual las principales decisiones son adoptadas desde el mercado y por las corporaciones.

Esta transformación política-jurídica del Estado, es también una transformación

In November 2005 an important march against the FTA took place, and March 2006 saw a mobilization that paralyzed the whole country for two weeks, which shows that the MIE is undoubtedly the most important social actor and political subject in Ecuador.

With this the MIE demonstrated its comprehension of the political territories in which power operates and moved the confrontation towards what they consider the nerve centre of power: that which reforms the State by way of a Free Trade Agreement with the United States. With these actions the MIE avoided going through the political system; a difference from their strategy in the mid-1990s when they tried to enter the political system directly. Now they confront the élites and the government directly affecting one of the most important processes of contemporary Ecuador, that of the radical transformation of its State by way of the FTA.

This text explores and analyzes this process from a comprehensive reading that allows a political evaluation of the MIE, defining a political space in which indigenous mobilization can be located: a space that is characterized by the transformation of the industrialized Welfare State, which was constructed in the 1960s, into a neoliberal State, which is privatized and subordinated to the global capitalist market, a market that is controlled by transnational corporations. The neoliberal State does not share the basic assumptions of the Welfare State. It is a State with minimal institutionality, where the main decisions are made by the market and corporations.

This political-legal transformation of the State is also an economic transformation of the élites, who have compromised

económica de las élites, que transaron su proyecto de industrializar al país, por aquel de la especulación, la administración monopólica de los mercados y una relación subordinada con las corporaciones transnacionales.

Sin embargo, para construir ese Estado neoliberal era necesario que las élites generen un consenso sobre la necesidad de legitimarlo históricamente, porque desmantelar al Estado industrializante y de bienestar significaba alterar profundamente las relaciones de poder, cambiando la correlación de fuerzas en beneficio de una burguesía financiera, rentista y monopólica, es justamente esta burguesía financiera el núcleo sobre el cual se articularán otros sectores, como la burguesía comercial, las oligarquías agroexportadoras, la tecnoburocracia vinculada a la banca multilateral, y sobre el que gravitará la responsabilidad de deconstruir la institucionalidad del Estado de bienestar, y convertirse en el núcleo político desde el cual constituir el Estado mínimo neoliberal. Este núcleo dominado por la racionalidad de la burguesía financiera serán las élites que otorgarán sentido histórico, coherencia programática y racionalidad política, a procesos fundamentales como las políticas de ajuste macroeconómico del FMI, o a la firma del TLC con EEUU.

Son estas élites las que fueron generando ese consenso social sobre la necesidad del Estado mínimo neoliberal, a través de una serie de discursos legitimadores que se transmitieron a la sociedad como conceptos necesarios y validados históricamente. De ahí, por ejemplo, tenemos a conceptos como la eficiencia del sector privado opuesta a la corrupción del sector público; o el concepto de disciplina fiscal como requisito para controlar la inflación; estos discursos permitían construir el consenso y administrar los disensos en esta conflictiva tarea de desmantelar toda la

their project of industrializing the country in favor of speculation, the monopolistic management of markets and a subordinate relationship with transnational corporations.

However, in order to construct the neoliberal State it has been necessary for the élites to generate a consensus about the historical legitimization for that kind of State. Abandoning the industrialized, Welfare State has involved a profound altering of relations of power, changing the correlation of forces for the benefit of the financial, stockholder and monopolistic bourgeoisie. This financial bourgeoisie is exactly the core through which other groups, like the commercial bourgeoisie, the oligarchies of agro-exporters and the techno-bureaucracy linked to multilateral banking, articulate themselves. It is also the core responsible for deconstructing the institutions of the Welfare State and for becoming the political center from which a minimum neoliberal State is constituted. This core, dominated by the rationality of the financial bourgeoisie, will be the élite that will give historical meaning, programmatic coherence and political rationality to fundamental processes like the macroeconomic adjustment policies of the IMF or the signing of the FTA with the US.

These élites are the ones who have slowly generated a social consensus about the need of a minimum, neoliberal State. This has been done through a series of legitimizing discourses transmitted to society as necessary and historically validated concepts. We have, for example, the idea of the efficiency of the private sector as opposed to the corruption of the public sector; or the idea of fiscal discipline as a requirement for the control of inflation. These discourses have allowed the construction

institucionalidad de un Estado para reconstruir otra.

Pero al mismo tiempo que se ideologizaba a la sociedad sobre esta supuesta necesidad de un Estado mínimo, era necesario neutralizar, desarticular e incluso destruir las resistencias sociales a esa edificación del Estado neoliberal, de hecho, en los años ochenta el principal núcleo de resistencia estuvo en el sindicalismo agrupado en el Frente Unitario de Trabajadores, FUT. Pero fueron precisamente los trabajadores los más afectados por la transformación del Estado, ellos sufrieron los impactos de las políticas de flexibilización laboral que implicaban la precarización del empleo, la pérdida del poder adquisitivo del salario y la anulación de la capacidad de negociación sindical.

Mientras que antes de las políticas de ajuste en 1983, el salario mínimo cubría la totalidad de la canasta básica familiar, veinte años después, el salario mínimo alcanza a cubrir solamente una tercera parte de esa canasta básica familiar, de manera inversa, los beneficios del capital que antes de las políticas de ajuste participaban de menos de la mitad de la renta nacional, veinte años después controlan dos tercios de la renta nacional. La mayoría de derechos sindicales fueron abolidos en función de la tercerización laboral, es decir, la flexibilización. Este proceso condujo a un debilitamiento orgánico del sindicalismo, y a una derrota estratégica de la clase obrera como sujeto político.

Curiosamente, fue el gobierno de la socialdemocracia ecuatoriana, la Izquierda Democrática (ID), quien más contribuyó a la derrota estratégica al movimiento obrero ecuatoriano. Resquebrajada la capacidad del movimiento obrero de oponerse a la construcción del Estado neoliberal, las élites pasaron a la etapa más agresiva del neoliberalismo que se expresó en el

of a consensus and the management of dissent in this conflict-ridden job of dismantling all institutions of the State in order to construct another one.

However, as society became ideologized about this supposed need of a minimum State, it was also necessary to neutralize, disarticulate and even destroy social resistance against the construction of such a neoliberal State. In fact, in the 1980s the main center of resistance was the trade unionism of the United Front of Workers (FUT, Frente Unitario de Trabajadores). It was precisely the workers who were the most affected by the transformation of the State, as they suffered the impact of labor flexibilization policies that led to the precarization of employment, the loss of the purchasing power of their salaries, and the end of the negotiation capacity of trade unions.

While before the adjustment policies of 1983 a basic salary covered the basic basket (of goods) of a family entirely, it only covered one third of the basic basket twenty years later. In contrast, capital gains, which before the adjustment policies accounted for less than half of the national income, controlled two thirds of the national income twenty years later. Most union rights were abolished in favor of labor outsourcing, that is, flexibilization. This process led to an organic weakening of trade unionism and to a strategic defeat of the working class as a political subject.

Curiously, it was the government of Ecuadorian social democracy, Izquierda Democrática (ID), which most contributed to the strategic defeat of the Ecuadorian working class movement. Once the working class movement's capability to oppose the construction of

gobierno de Sixto Durán Ballén (1992-1996).

Es en este gobierno que se desarticula al Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo, CONADE y se lo reemplaza por el Consejo Nacional de Modernización, CONAM, como institución encargado de la privatización del sector público; se privatizan varias empresas públicas, se desarticula, y debilita aquella institucionalidad creada para proteger la seguridad alimentaria (ENAC, ENPROVIT, INERHI, INIAP, IERAC), en un país en el cual más de la mitad de la población es rural; se intenta la privatización de las tierras comunales y del agua de riego a través de una Ley de Desarrollo Agrario; se liberalizan los mercados financieros; se desarticula al Estado a través de las políticas de descentralización, etc.

the neoliberal State was destroyed, the elites started the most aggressive phase of neoliberalism, expressed by the government of Sixto Durán Ballén (1992-1996).

During this government, the National Development Council (CONADE, Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo) was dismantled and replaced by the National Modernization Council (CONAM, Consejo Nacional de Modernización), an institution in charge of public sector privatization; several public companies were privatized; the institutions created to protect food security (ENAC, ENPROVIT, INERHI, INIAP, IERAC) were dismantled and weakened – in a country where more than a half of the population is rural; the privatization of communal lands and irrigation water was attempted through a Law for Rural Development; financial markets were liberalized; the State was dismantled by means of decentralization policies, etc.



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Pero es justamente en la transición del gobierno de la socialdemocracia y el gobierno de Durán Ballén que emerge con fuerza el MIE. El MIE se involucra en una disputa política en la que estaba en juego el carácter del Estado. Para las élites estaba claro que había que clausurar el Estado de bienestar y reemplazarlo por el Estado neoliberal; para el movimiento indígena, el Estado neoliberal era una amenaza a su propia pervivencia, y lo pudieron comprobar en 1994 cuando tuvieron que realizar un levantamiento indígena para evitar la aprobación de la Ley de Desarrollo Agrario que destruía de manera explícita las formas comunitarias de propiedad.

En efecto, las políticas de libre mercado, que están detrás del proyecto del Estado neoliberal, y que garantizan en realidad el dominio de los monopolios, son fatales para la vida comunitaria, de la misma manera que las políticas de flexibilización laboral impuestas por el gobierno de la Izquierda Democrática (1988-1992), fueron fatales para el empleo, el ingreso y la organización sindical.

El MIE comprendió rápidamente que el territorio de disputa era el Estado, pero no era una disputa en términos jurídicos ni contractuales, a pesar de que el MIE haya planteado la necesidad de una reforma política para crear el Estado Plurinacional, era, y es en realidad, una disputa política cuya definición, paradójicamente, estaba en el campo de la economía, y era así porque las transformaciones que las élites estaban llevando a cabo se articulaban desde las políticas de ajuste estructural del FMI y de reforma estructural del Banco Mundial.

En otros términos, el campo de disputa política era aquella conflictividad que la economía política clásica describía como lucha de clases, es decir, como un campo de conflictividad histórica, en el que se enfrentaban dos proyectos históricos

It was exactly during the transition from the social democratic government to Durán Ballén's government that the MIE emerged with strength. The MIE became involved in a political dispute in which the character of the State was brought into question. For the élites it was clear that the Welfare State had to end and be replaced by the neoliberal State. For the indigenous movement the neoliberal State was a threat for its own survival, as was proven in 1994 when it had to organize an indigenous uprising to avoid the approval of the Law for Rural Development, which explicitly destroyed communal forms of property.

Indeed, free market policies underlying the neoliberal State project, which guarantee, in fact, the control by monopolies, are fatal for communal life. Equally, the labor flexibilization policies imposed by Izquierda Democrática's government (1988-1992) were fatal for employment, incomes and trade union organizations.

The MIE quickly understood that the territory of dispute was the State and that it was not a dispute in legal or contractual terms – although the MIE had proposed the need for a political reform in order to create a Plurinational State. It was and, in fact, it is a political dispute whose definition was, paradoxically, in the field of economy. This was so because the transformations carried out by the élites were articulated through the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and the structural reform policies of the World Bank.

In other words, the field of political dispute was a conflict that is described by classical political economy as class struggle; that is, a field of historical conflict where two contradictory historical projects confront each other,

contradictorios y en el que el rol que debía asumir el proletariado era asumido por los movimientos sociales, y fundamentalmente, el movimiento indígena.

Es una situación *sui generis* porque el movimiento indígena no comparte los mismos supuestos epistemológicos que la clase obrera, pero que al entrar en conflicto con las élites asume un rol histórico de resistencia a esas élites (la teoría clásica diría que los movimientos sociales, y el MIE, eran el otro polo de la contradicción del capitalismo). Pero al no compartir esos supuestos de clase que identifican al proletariado, es más difícil para las élites enfrentarlos y neutralizarlos políticamente, de ahí que desde la emergencia política del MIE, las élites hayan utilizado los mismos mecanismos que utilizaron para dividir, cooptar y destruir la organización sindical, pero sin éxito.

Del levantamiento de 1990, hasta los levantamientos indígenas de 1999, es la resistencia al ajuste y reforma estructural, el eje político sobre el cual se moviliza el MIE y que provocan su transformación de actor social en sujeto político. La conflictividad está en la disputa del carácter económico que asume la construcción del Estado neoliberal.

Sin embargo, los momentos más álgidos de esa conflictividad expresan y evidencian un territorio conquistado por las élites. El Estado de 1990, no existe más a mediados de la primera década del año 2000. Las resistencias y movilizaciones sociales inauguran un periodo de crisis institucional, e interrumpen al proyecto de las élites, y eso se expresa de manera nítida en la coyuntura de fines del año 1995, cuando el MIE con varias organizaciones sociales derrotan al gobierno de Sixto Durán Ballén en la consulta popular que se había planteado para legitimar la privatización de la seguridad social, entre otros aspectos.

and where the role, which should have been played by the proletariat, was assumed by the social movements and, essentially, by the indigenous movement.

This is a unique situation, as the indigenous movement does not share the same epistemological assumptions of the working class. But, as it enters into a conflict with the elites, it assumes a historical role of resistance against those elites (classical theory would state that social movements, and the MIE, were the other pole of capitalism's contradiction). As the indigenous movement does not share the class assumptions that identify the proletariat, it is more difficult for the elites to fight them and neutralize them politically. Since the MIE's political appearance the elites have used the same mechanisms for dividing, taking over and destroying trade unions, but without success.

From the uprising in 1990 until the indigenous uprisings in 1999, the MIE mobilized itself around a political axis of the resistance against structural adjustments and reforms, which led to its transformation from a social actor into a political subject. The conflict was an economic dispute posed by the construction of the neoliberal State.

However, the climax of this conflict expressed and made evident a territory conquered by the elites. The State of 1990 did not exist anymore in the middle of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The resistances and social mobilizations inaugurated a period of institutional crisis to interrupt the elites' project. This was clearly expressed at the end of 1995 when the MIE, together with several social organizations, defeated Sixto Durán Ballén's government in a referendum posed to legitimize Social Security's privatization, among other

El Estado industrializante y de bienestar social no existe más, pero tampoco existe el Estado neoliberal. Lo que existe es una amalgama contradictoria y conflictiva de un Estado represivo, autoritario, vertical y jerárquico, que conserva algunas de las instituciones del Estado de bienestar y algunas parcelas que se resisten a la privatización, que políticamente se expresa en el régimen presidencialista, y en una institucionalidad atravesada de una profunda conflictividad.

Es decir, veinte años después del experimento neoliberal se constata su fracaso en toda la línea. Había entonces que articular, desde las élites, una estrategia que permita salvar el proyecto del Estado neoliberal incluso al costo de una permanente crisis política. En efecto, ante las resistencias sociales a las políticas de ajuste, las élites utilizan al sistema político para proteger, conformar y consolidar su proyecto de Estado neoliberal, y a medida que las resistencias sociales impiden esa construcción neoliberal, las élites comprenden que tienen que sacrificar al sistema político para salvar al Estado neoliberal, y para ello realizan una maniobra decisiva: separan la política de la economía.

Con esta maniobra, transfieren la conflictividad que se genera al desmantelar al Estado de bienestar al territorio de la política, entendida ésta en su sentido más restringido, esto es, como el ámbito de acción del sistema político, es decir, los partidos políticos, las elecciones y la institucionalidad electoral.

Al tiempo que transfieren la conflictividad hacia el sistema político, intentan proteger su proyecto del Estado neoliberal convirtiéndolo en un asunto técnico y económico. Gracias a ello, logran, por ejemplo, la independencia del Banco Central, la aprobación de leyes

issues.

The industrialized Welfare State does not exist anymore, but the neoliberal State does not exist either. What exists is a contradictory and conflicting mixture of a repressive, authoritarian, vertical and hierarchical State that has kept some of the institutions of the Welfare State, and some areas have escaped privatization. Politically this is expressed by a presidential regime and institutions that are traversed with profound conflicts.

This is to say that twenty years after the neoliberal experiment its failure has been completely confirmed. The elites had to develop a strategy that allowed them to save the project of the neoliberal State even at the cost of a permanent political crisis. In fact, faced with social resistance against adjustment policies, the elites used the political system to protect, shape and consolidate their project of the neoliberal State. When social resistance prevented this neoliberal construction, the elites understood that they had to sacrifice the political system to save the neoliberal State. In order to achieve this, they carried out a decisive maneuver: they separated politics from the economy.

With this maneuver, they transferred the conflicts, created by the dismantling of the Welfare State, to the field of politics, understood in its strictest sense, that is, as the area of action of the political system, which is to say, political parties, elections and electoral institutions.

At the time when they transferred the conflicts to the political system, they tried to protect their project of the neoliberal State by turning it into a technical and economic issue. Thanks to this strategy, they achieved, for example,

fundamentales para el estado neoliberal, como la Ley para la Transformación Económica del Ecuador, conocida como Trole I, y que garantiza, entre otros aspectos, el funcionamiento de la dolarización de la economía, la Ley Para la Promoción de la Inversión y la Participación Ciudadana, conocida como Trole II, que crea un marco jurídico para la privatización de sectores públicos, como el energético; la Ley de Responsabilidad, Estabilidad, y Transparencia Fiscal, que establece un fondo de recursos petroleros para la recompra de la deuda externa, y que limita la inversión pública, etc.

Esta maniobra de separar artificialmente la economía de la política, se revela políticamente eficaz, porque, de una parte, otorga un blindaje a las leyes que definen y codifican al Estado neoliberal, tecnificando los discursos que permiten su constitución; y, de otra, metaboliza en función propia las conflictividades sociales y las resistencias, neutralizándolas. Los discursos técnicos no se discuten desde la política sino desde la técnica, pero ese es un territorio dominado por una tecnoburocracia que es precisamente la encargada de diseñar los mecanismos institucionales del Estado neoliberal, y que ejerce un control hegemónico sobre los discursos económicos y de desarrollo.

De esta manera, la movilización social puede generar inestabilidad al sistema político, pero no afecta al Estado neoliberal. Gracias a esta maniobra se pudo dolarizar a la economía, sin que las conflictividades sociales puedan alterar la imposición del nuevo sistema monetario. De esta manera, se pudo imponer la disciplina fiscal que implica la reducción del gasto público en las áreas sociales con pretexto de combatir la inflación y provocar una grave desinversión interna sin que exista una presión social en contra; de esta manera, se pudo destruir la escasa capacidad de negociación sindical

the independence of the Central Bank and the approval of important laws for the neoliberal State, such as: the Law for the Economic Transformation of Ecuador, known as Trole I, which guaranteed, among other matters, the functioning of the Dollarization of the economy; the Law for the Promotion of Investment and Civic Participation, known as Trole II, which created a legal framework for the privatization of public sectors, such as the energy sector; the Law for Fiscal Responsibility, Stability and Transparency, which established a fund of petrol resources for the buy-back of foreign debt, and which limited public investment, etc.

The maneuver of artificially separating economy from politics is politically efficient because, on the one hand, it provides bullet-proof laws that define and codify the neoliberal State, technifying the discourses that allow its construction. On the other hand, it metabolizes, in its own way, social conflicts and resistances, neutralizing them. Technical discourses are not discussed through politics but through technics; but this is a territory controlled precisely by a techno-bureaucracy that is in charge of designing the institutional mechanisms of the neoliberal State and that has the hegemonic control over economic and development discourses.

In this way, the social mobilization may have generated instability for the political system, but it did not affect the neoliberal State. Thanks to this maneuver, the economy could be Dollarized and social conflicts could not disturb the imposition of the new monetary system. In this way, the fiscal discipline, which led to the reduction of public expenditure in social areas, with the pretext of fighting inflation and causing a serious internal divestiture,

existente en el sector público aprobando la Ley de flexibilización laboral con el pretexto de salvaguardar la propiedad pública, criminalizando incluso a los sindicatos públicos y sin generar solidaridades de clase; de esta manera, se posibilitó la privatización de sectores estratégicos como el petróleo, el agua, la energía, las telecomunicaciones, la seguridad social, los servicios públicos.

De esta manera, se pudo desmantelar la capacidad regulatoria del Estado a través de las políticas de descentralización con el consenso social generado a través de las políticas de participación local. Esto permite explicar que las movilizaciones sociales, durante las décadas de los ochenta y noventa, a pesar de su enorme capacidad de convocatoria, hayan sido neutralizadas en sus efectos prácticos de detener el avance del proyecto neoliberal. La conflictividad del sistema político nunca atravesó aquellas murallas que se habían construido en torno a la edificación del Estado neoliberal.

La inestabilidad política no significó que se haya detenido en algún momento la constitución del Estado neoliberal. Esto significó un verdadero hallazgo para las élites, mas, a decir verdad, no se trató de una estrategia pensada y asumida por las élites ecuatorianas, sino de un formato que vino desde las multilaterales, fundamentalmente el Banco Mundial, y que las élites lo adoptaron hábilmente.

En efecto, esa ruptura entre economía y política, y posteriormente esa transferencia de la conflictividad social hacia el sistema político, fue concebida e instrumentalizada desde el Banco Mundial. No se trata de una reflexión hecha *ex professo* para el caso ecuatoriano, sino de la necesidad de dar una respuesta histórica al fracaso político que representaban las imposiciones del FMI en todas partes del mundo.

could be imposed without any social pressure against it. In this way, the limited capability of union negotiations that existed in the public sector could be destroyed, which led to the approval of the Law for labor flexibilization. The pretext was to protect public property and criminalize public trade unions without generating class solidarity. In this way, it was possible to privatize strategic sectors, like oil, water, energy, telecommunications, social security and public services.

In this way, the regulatory capability of the State could be dismantled through policies of decentralization, while social consensus was generated by means of local participation policies. These facts can explain how social mobilizations, despite their remarkable capacity to gather people, were neutralized in their practical effects of stopping the advance of the neoliberal project during the 1980s and 1990s. The conflicts in the political system never crossed those walls that had been built around the construction of the neoliberal State.

Political instability never meant that the constitution of the neoliberal State has ever stopped. This was a real finding for the elites, but, to tell the truth, it was not a strategy thought out and assumed by Ecuadorian elites, but a format derived from multilateral elites, essentially from the World Bank, and wisely adopted by the local elites.

Indeed, the division between economy and politics and, later, the transfer of social conflicts to the political system, was conceived and instrumentalized by the World Bank. This is not an *ex professo* reflection about the Ecuadorian case only; on the contrary, there is a need to give a historical explanation of the political failure that represents the

La crítica a esa vertiente ortodoxa y fundamentalista del FMI, que a la postre estaba minando la posibilidad de que se construya el Estado neoliberal, provino justamente desde el mismo Banco Mundial. Con más lucidez y con más trayectoria en la política, el Banco Mundial comprendió que aquellas políticas definidas en el Consenso de Washington, necesitaban del consenso social para tener éxito.

impositions of the IMF everywhere in the world.

Criticism of the orthodox and fundamentalist policies of the IMF, which were, in the end, undermining the possibility of constructing the neoliberal State, came exactly from the World Bank itself. More clear-sighted and with a longer trajectory in politics, the World Bank understood that the policies defined in the Washington Consensus needed social consensus to succeed.



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Y ese consenso social podía ser construido desde un ámbito en el cual el Banco Mundial tenía amplia experiencia, aquel del desarrollo. El Estado neoliberal se propuso, entonces, como una nueva visión de desarrollo, y el desarrollo es, sobre todo desde el Banco Mundial, una cuestión eminentemente técnica. Por lo tanto, había que ubicar los nudos críticos que impedían ese desarrollo, entendiendo, claro está, que por desarrollo ahora había que considerar a

And such a social consensus could have been constructed in a field where the World Bank had ample experience, the field of development. The neoliberal State proposed a new idea of development and, from the World Bank's point of view, development is basically a technical issue. It was necessary to localize the critical nodes that hindered development, understanding, of course, that

los mercados como eficientes mecanismos asignadores de recursos y como óptimos espacios de la regulación social. En esa nueva visión del desarrollo no hay espacio para el Estado y para lo público.

En otras palabras, la retórica liberal expresada como discurso del desarrollo podía lograr el consenso social ahí donde había fracasado el FMI. Esos nudos críticos que impedían la transición a la modernidad y al desarrollo estaban, según la nueva concepción del Banco Mundial, en aquellas instituciones que aún regulaban los mercados y que aún pretendían regular a las sociedades, es decir, en esos rezagos del Estado de bienestar que resistían los embates de la privatización.

Por lo tanto, había que realizar cambios institucionales que permitan a los mercados operar en condiciones de transparencia y eficacia suplantando al Estado en esos espacios. Esos cambios institucionales fueron asumidos y propuestos por el Banco Mundial como cambios o reformas estructurales. Es más, para ayudar a los países a que lleven adelante las reformas estructurales, el Banco Mundial creó una metodología denominada ‘Estrategia de Asistencia País’. El Ecuador, será sujeto de una Estrategia de Asistencia País, por parte del Banco Mundial, en dos oportunidades, en junio de 1993, en el contexto del gobierno más agresivamente neoliberal, y en abril de 2003, cuando la alianza del MIE con Lucio Gutiérrez gana las elecciones, y el Banco Mundial considera fundamental institucionalizar al MIE comprometiéndolo con la reforma estructural.

La reforma estructural identifica los sectores a ser intervenidos dentro del sector público, para debilitarlos y luego posibilitar la transferencia de esas competencias al sector privado. Como metodología, la reforma estructural permite a las élites, en el caso ecuatoriano, provocar una bilocación

development now consisted of considering markets as efficient mechanisms for allocating resources and as optimum spaces for social regulation. In this new vision of development there is no room for the State and the public sphere.

In other words, the liberal rhetoric expressed as a development discourse could have achieved social consensus where the IMF had failed. Those critical nodes that hindered the transition to modernity and development were, according to the new concept of the World Bank, in those institutions that still regulated the markets and that still meant to regulate societies; that is, in those residues of the Welfare State which resisted the onslaughts of privatization.

Therefore, it was necessary to carry out institutional changes which allowed markets to operate in transparent and efficient conditions replacing the State in those spaces. These institutional changes were assumed and proposed by the World Bank as structural changes or reforms. Furthermore, in order to help those countries that carried out these structural reforms, the World Bank created a methodology called ‘Country Assistance Strategy’. Ecuador was subject to a Country Assistance Strategy by the World Bank on two occasions: in June 1993, in the context of a most aggressive neoliberal government, and in April 2003, when the alliance of the MIE with Lucio Gutiérrez won the elections, and the World Bank considered it essential to institutionalize the MIE, involving it in the structural reform.

The structural reform identified the areas within the public sector that must be intervened with, in order to weaken them, and then allow the transfer of these

en las relaciones de poder, de una parte, aparentan disputar el poder en el territorio del sistema de partidos y de elecciones, y, de otra, continúan su tarea de desmantelar al Estado de bienestar y proponer en su lugar al Estado neoliberal.

Las élites comprenden que es necesario rearticular su estrategia gracias a un acontecimiento político clave que es la consulta popular de fines de 1995, en los que la movilización social derrota al proyecto neoliberal. Nunca más las élites acudirán al expediente de la consulta popular para definir los temas claves de la reforma estructural del Estado neoliberal, y, en lo posible, la rehuirán como a la peste.

De otra parte, es el mismo Banco Mundial, quien en su panoplia de conceptos generadores de consenso, posiciona discursos como aquel de la participación local para consolidar la descentralización y por tanto el debilitamiento del Estado; ese mismo discurso de la participación local, es utilizado en una versión de desarrollo étnico para tratar de convertir al MIE de sujeto político en actor de desarrollo, y, por tanto, a la dirigencia política del MIE en tecnoburocracia del etno-desarrollo, y a las organizaciones indígenas en ONG's de desarrollo, tal fue el objetivo que tuvo el Banco Mundial cuando generó el Proyecto de Desarrollo para los Pueblos Indígenas y Negros del Ecuador, PRODEPINE. Donde fracasaron las élites para cooptar, dividir y desarticular al MIE, tomó la posta el Banco Mundial.

Entonces, al producirse esa bilocación del poder entre política y economía, era natural que el MIE sienta que se estrella contra un muro, cuando a pesar de sus levantamientos y movilizaciones no logra cambios sustanciales en las relaciones de poder.

El Estado de bienestar sigue en pleno proceso de desmantelamiento, las élites

competencies to the private sector. As methodology, the structural reform allowed the élites, as in the Ecuadorian case, to cause a split power relation: on the one hand, they seem to compete for power in the territory of the system of parties and elections; and on the other hand, they continue their task of dismantling the Welfare State and proposing the neoliberal State instead.

The élites realized the need to rearticulate their strategy thanks to a key political event: the popular referendum at the end of 1995, in which the social mobilization defeated the neoliberal project. Never again will the élites resort to the referendum to define key issues of structural reform of the neoliberal State, and, where possible, they will run away from it like a plague.

Moreover, it is the World Bank itself that, with its array of concepts for generating consensus, positioned discourses like 'local participation' in order to consolidate decentralization and thus the weakening of the State. That very discourse of local participation was used in its version of ethnic development to try to transform the MIE from a political subject into a development actor and, therefore, indigenous organizations into development NGOs. That was the World Bank's goal when they created the 'Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples Development Project' (PRODEPINE). Where the élites failed to take over, divide and destroy the MIE, the World Bank stepped in.

When this split power between politics and economy came about, it was natural for the MIE to feel that their efforts were going nowhere, because, despite their uprisings and mobilizations, they did not achieve important changes in power relations.

acumulan más poder, y la economía ecuatoriana entra en uno de sus procesos de privatización más radicales cuando se desterritorializa la capacidad soberana del Estado en beneficio de las corporaciones transnacionales, conforme consta en el Convenio de Protección a las Inversiones firmado con el gobierno norteamericano a mediados de los años noventa. La firma de este convenio da cuenta que las élites ecuatorianas estaban dispuestas a negociar la soberanía en función de sus propios intereses. El TLC con EEUU que intentarán suscribir más tarde es, para las élites ecuatorianas, un escalón más en su camino de desmantelar al Estado de bienestar, incluso al precio de la soberanía nacional.

Ahora bien, el MIE, en una estrategia que a la postre lo debilita, decide, a mediados de la década de los noventa, entrar en el sistema político y con esta decisión a la larga legitima los mecanismos de poder que han generado las mismas élites. Su participación dentro del sistema político está desconectada de sus estructuras organizativas y aparece de manera fragmentada, unilateral y formando parte del desgaste que sufre todo el sistema político.

La autonomización de la economía de la política que operan las élites ecuatorianas, ni es total, ni es perfecta, ni tampoco es ideal, es simplemente una estrategia política que tiene sus límites y sus posibilidades, fuera de ellas se hacen necesarios otros mecanismos. Finalmente, las decisiones que se necesitan para construir al Estado neoliberal siempre tienen que pasar por las aduanas del sistema político, siempre tienen que ser legitimadas por ese sistema político, porque es el formato del Estado liberal el que sustenta la toma de decisiones en la contractualidad, y el sistema político, con todos los defectos que puedan atribuirsele, expresa esa contractualidad, ese pacto social; pero desde que las élites decidieron

The Welfare State was in the middle of a process of dismantling; the élites were accumulating more power; and the Ecuadorian economy entered one of its most radical privatization processes. These events deterritorialized the sovereign capacity of the State for the benefit of transnational corporations, in accordance with the Investment Protection Agreement signed with the US government in the middle of the 1990s. The signing of this agreement shows that the Ecuadorian élites were willing to negotiate sovereignty in favor of their own interests. The FTA with the US, which they will try to sign in due course, is, for the Ecuadorian élites, a further step on their way to dismantling the Welfare State, even at the cost of national sovereignty.

However, the MIE, with a strategy that weakened it later on, decided in the middle of the 1990s to enter the political system. In the long run this decision legitimized the power mechanisms generated by the élites themselves. Its participation in the political system was disconnected from its organizational structures and appeared in a fragmented and unilateral way, as it took part in a system that was worn out.

The autonomization of the economy from politics operated by Ecuadorian élites was not total nor perfect, not even ideal; it was simply a political strategy with its limits and possibilities. There is no doubt that, in the end, the decisions needed to construct the neoliberal State always have to pass through this political system; they have to be legitimized by it, because it is the format of the neoliberal State that maintains the power to make binding decisions. It is the political system, with all its defects, that expresses this power, this social pact. However, since the élites decided to go

pagar la factura de esta autonomización de la economía de la política, el sistema político está en crisis permanente, y lo está porque las élites sobrecargaron al sistema político.

El sistema político pierde legitimidad social. La corrupción, las prácticas clientelares, las prácticas patrimonialistas, a la larga terminan por deslegitimar al sistema político, y si el sistema político pierde legitimidad no puede procesar las reformas económicas que son necesarias para construir al Estado neoliberal. Las leyes que tienen que legitimar al Estado neoliberal, muchas veces no podían ser aprobadas por la crisis institucional del sistema político.

Las reformas institucionales no podían ser procesadas por el sistema político, justamente por su crisis, provocando serios impasses en la construcción del Estado neoliberal. Por ejemplo, el sistema de pensiones no puede ser privatizado, tanto por la resistencia de los actores sociales, en la ocurrencia el fuerte movimiento de jubilados, cuanto por la oposición de los partidos políticos a desgastar su imagen aprobando leyes que implicarían la erosión de su perfil social. O el caso del petróleo, que habida cuenta del sindicato público de los trabajadores del petróleo, habían evitado con relativo éxito el desmantelamiento de la empresa estatal y la transferencia de los principales campos petroleros a las corporaciones transnacionales.

Es en ese contexto, de agotamiento de una estrategia que se había revelado bastante útil, es decir, aquella de separar lo político de lo económico, y que había generado una profunda crisis institucional, cuando las élites reciben la boya del Tratado de Libre Comercio (TLC) con EEUU. Este tratado se revela a las élites como el mecanismo más eficaz para provocar aquellos cambios fundamentales para su proyecto del Estado neoliberal.

with this autonomization of the economy from politics, the political system was in a permanent crisis, as the élites overloaded it.

The political system lost its social legitimacy. Corruption, ‘clientelist’ [see footnote 20 of Mazzeo’s ‘The limits of structural unemployment’, this issue] and patrimonial practices ended up delegitimizing the political system, and, as it lost its legitimacy, it was not possible to realize the economic reforms necessary for the construction of the neoliberal State. Often the laws necessary to legitimize the neoliberal State could not be approved because of the institutional crisis of the political system.

Institutional reforms could not be processed by the political system, exactly because of its crisis, causing serious impasses in the construction of the neoliberal State. For example, the pension system could not be privatized, both because of the resistance of social actors – in this case, the strong movement of pensioners – and the opposition of political parties, as approving these laws would weaken their image and damage their social profile. Regarding the case of oil, the oil workers union had quite successfully avoided the dismantling of the State company and the transfer of the main oil fields to transnational corporations.

It is in this context of the exhaustion of a strategy that had proved quite useful – the strategy of separating political from economic issues, which had caused a deep institutional crisis – that the élites received the lifeline of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US. For the élites this agreement revealed itself to be the most efficient mechanism to realize those fundamental changes for their

El Tratado de Libre Comercio con EEUU es el dispositivo ideal porque se inserta en un ámbito técnico para provocar los cambios políticos que no habían sido procesados por el sistema político ecuatoriano. Hay que recordar que las negociaciones del TLC implican a todos los ámbitos del Estado, de hecho comprenden 19 mesas, de las cuales solamente 5 atañen a mecanismos compensatorios de aduanas, aranceles e impuestos al comercio, todas las demás afectan profundamente a la institucionalidad misma del Estado, y atraviesan el ámbito financiero, laboral, de medio ambiente, de servicios, de resolución de conflictos, de tribunales de arbitraje, propiedad intelectual, etc.

project of the neoliberal State.

The FTA with the US was the perfect device because it was inserted in a technical field to bring about the political changes that had not been processed by the Ecuadorian political system. We should recall that the FTA negotiations involved all areas of the State; in fact, they comprised 19 committees, out of which only 5 dealt with mechanisms for customs, tariffs and trade taxes, and the rest of them profoundly affected the State institutions themselves, including the following fields: finances, labor, environment, services, conflict resolution, arbitration tribunals, intellectual property, etc.



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Las élites comprenden que una vez suscrito el TLC, no queda otra opción que armonizar las leyes ecuatorianas a este tratado y con ello terminar de construir al Estado neoliberal. Se trata de una oportunidad de

The elites understood that, once the FTA had been signed, there would be no alternative but to harmonize Ecuadorian laws with this agreement and thus finish the construction of the neoliberal State.

oro que no puede ser desperdiciada.

Ahora bien, hay que recordar que los EEUU optan por el bilateralismo una vez que fracasó su estrategia multilateral de liberalización comercial tanto en la ronda Cancún de la OMC, cuanto en la ronda Miami del ALCA, efectuadas ambas a fines del año 2003. El fracaso del multilateralismo implica el paso al bilateralismo en el que las asimetrías de poder son tan grandes que los países que entran en la órbita de EEUU no tienen ninguna posibilidad de negociar sus posiciones, en efecto, se limitan a aceptar las propuestas hechas por EEUU o a ser excluidos y reemplazados por otros países.

La política exterior de EEUU en realidad es geopolítica y está pensada, estructurada e impuesta en función de los requerimientos de hegemonía mundial que tienen los EEUU. No se puede deslindar la visión geopolítica y geoestratégica que tienen los EEUU en cualquier tipo de negociación. En el caso del área andina, los EEUU visualizan a la región como un espacio conflictivo y que amerita estrategias de intervención.

Es pensando en esas estrategias de intervención que se diseñó y se financió el Plan Colombia, y es desde esa lógica de intervención que se establecen las negociaciones de los tratados de libre comercio con Colombia, luego con Perú y, finalmente, con Ecuador. Las élites ecuatorianas están conscientes de que el ‘cupo’ que EEUU les otorgó se debió a la coyuntura de la conflictividad de la región andina, en el que el Ecuador tendrá que jugar un rol clave habida cuenta de su posición geográfica. Pero no les importó involucrar a su país en la conflictividad regional a cambio de que el TLC les ayude en su tarea de desmantelar el Estado de bienestar y finalizar la construcción de su Estado neoliberal.

It was a golden chance that could not be wasted.

We have to also recall that the US opted for bilateralism when their multilateral strategy for trade liberalization failed both in the Cancun meeting of the WTO and in the Miami meeting of the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas), both at the end of 2003. The failure of multilateralism implied the passage to bilateralism in which power asymmetries are so big that those countries that enter the US orbit have no possibility of negotiating their positions. In fact, they have to limit themselves to accept the US proposals or they are excluded and replaced by other countries.

In reality the US foreign policy is geopolitical, and it is thought out, structured and imposed depending on the US requirements for global hegemony. It is not possible to keep the geopolitical and geostrategic views of the US apart from any kind of negotiation. In the case of the Andean area, the US sees the region as a space of conflict that requires strategies of intervention.

The Colombia Plan was designed and financed having these intervention strategies in mind. From this intervention logic the negotiations for free trade agreements with Colombia, then Peru and finally Ecuador were established. The Ecuadorian elites were conscious of the fact that the ‘rates’ they were granted by the US were motivated by the conflictual circumstances in the Andean region, in which Ecuador would have to play a key role, given its geographical location. But they did not mind involving their country in these regional conflicts as long as the FTA helped them in their aim of dismantling the Welfare State and finalizing the construction of their neoliberal State.

Las élites saben que la situación política ecuatoriana está en un impasse de difícil resolución. El sistema político ha perdido legitimidad, y la aprobación de las leyes que hagan factible al Estado neoliberal generan más conflictividad aún, que a la postre terminan acotando los espacios de acción y decisión del sistema político ecuatoriano.

Al abrirse las negociaciones del TLC, las élites pueden insertar en ellas, todas las reformas pendientes. Por ello, no es de extrañar la posición inicial del ex Presidente Lucio Gutiérrez de que el TLC ‘va porque va’. No era solo un acuerdo comercial el que se estaba negociando, en realidad, eran las reformas estructurales que permitían la vigencia del Estado neoliberal, lo que está en juego.

Estas negociaciones del TLC tenían, además, la virtud de presentarse como un asunto eminentemente técnico y exclusivamente comercial. Para blindar esas negociaciones se acudió al expediente del secretismo y se suscribió una cláusula de confidencialidad que hacía imposible cualquier tipo de discusión sobre los temas tratados al interior del TLC, por la carencia de información.

Estas negociaciones tenían otra virtud y es que se negocianaban en un espacio libre de toda conflictividad política. En las negociaciones nunca estuvieron representantes de los movimientos sociales, o de los partidos políticos y tampoco se abrieron los espacios de comunicación a la ciudadanía para transparentar sus negociaciones. De hecho, incluso el sistema político había sido puesto entre paréntesis por el TLC, el rol que jugaría el Congreso ecuatoriano sería solamente el de aprobarlo por mayoría simple y en una sola discusión parlamentaria.

Por ello, desde fines del año 2003 en el que EEUU propone al Ecuador firmar el TLC, y

The elites knew that the Ecuadorian political situation was in an impasse that was difficult to resolve. The political system had lost its legitimacy and the approval of laws that could make the neoliberal State feasible generated even more conflicts, which in the long run ended up reducing the spaces for action and decision making within the Ecuadorian political system.

The opening of the FTA negotiations gave the elites an opportunity to conclude all unsettled reforms. Thus, the initial position of ex-President Lucio Gutiérrez, that the FTA ‘works because it works’, was not surprising. Not only a trade agreement was being negotiated, but, in fact, the structural reforms that permitted the validity of the neoliberal State were at stake.

The negotiations of the FTA also had the virtue of appearing like a technical and exclusively commercial issue. In order to shield these negotiations, they resorted to secretism and signed a confidentiality clause, which, due to the lack of information, made it impossible to discuss any of the issues being agreed on inside the FTA.

These negotiations had another virtue; that of being held in a space free from any political conflicts. Representatives of social movements or political parties were never present in the negotiations, nor were there open spaces for communication with the citizens, in order to make the dealings of the negotiations transparent. In fact, the political system itself was minimized by the FTA: the role to be played by the Ecuadorian Congress would only be that of approving the agreement by simple majority in a single parliamentary discussion.

desde inicios de 2004 en el que se nombra al primer negociador oficial, las élites tratan de otorgar una cobertura de protección política a este espacio de negociación, abstrayéndolo de los conflictos que rodean al sistema político.

De hecho, es de resaltar que durante ese periodo existe un fuerte debate nacional alrededor de la necesidad de la reforma política, el mismo Presidente transitorio Alfredo Palacio, propone varias veces al Congreso Nacional, tramitar la reforma política, los movimientos ciudadanos se involucran de lleno en las discusiones de la reforma política, los partidos políticos de su parte tratan de bloquear o neutralizar los alcances de la reforma política, los medios de comunicación se convierten en cajas de resonancia de la reforma política, pero en todo este debate jamás se propuso en la agenda de la reforma política discutir y transparentar las negociaciones del TLC, es decir, mientras más hablaba la sociedad ecuatoriana de reforma política, más se alejaba de los temas centrales que implicaban la transformación de su propio Estado y que estaban siendo negociados en el TLC.

El debate político servía como un simulacro para que el verdadero trabajo lo hagan los equipos negociadores del TLC. En efecto, los equipos negociadores del TLC tenían una cobertura de legitimidad que se expresaba en su lenguaje técnico y economicista, exactamente como fueron el inicio de las negociaciones de las Cartas de Intención con el FMI, en el que el lenguaje técnico escondía los cambios en las relaciones de poder.

De ahí que todas las rondas de negociación que se abrieron desde el año 2004 hayan tenido una especie de impunidad política. Nunca se rindió cuentas a nadie, y el sistema político entraba en el debate electoral olvidando convenientemente los

Thus, from the end of 2003, when the US proposed the FTA to Ecuador, and from the beginning of 2004, when the first official negotiator was appointed, the élites tried to give political protection to this space of negotiation, abstracting it from the conflicts related to the political system.

We should emphasize that during this period there was an important national debate about the need for political reform. The transition President, Alfredo Palacio, himself proposed to the National Congress the processing of the political reform several times. The civic movements were fully involved in the discussions about this political reform. For their part, the political parties tried to block or neutralize the scope of the reform. Yet, the mass media converted itself into ‘echo chambers’ for the political reforms. In the middle of all this debate, however, it was never proposed that the agenda of the reform should discuss the FTA negotiations and make them transparent. That is, the more the Ecuadorian society talked about the political reforms, the more it was removed from the central issues that implied the transformation of its own State, which was being negotiated in the FTA.

The political debate served as a simulacrum so that the real work could be carried out by the FTA negotiation teams. In fact, the FTA negotiation teams had a legitimacy cover, which was expressed in their technical and economic language, exactly as in the initial negotiations about the Charter of Intent with the IMF, in which the technical language was hiding the changes to the power relations.

This is the reason why all the negotiation rounds opened since 2004 have had a

temas conflictivos, sobre todo el TLC, y el espacio electoral tiene la virtud de despolitizar el debate poniendo entre paréntesis los problemas más candentes y generando un escenario de espectáculo y banalización de la política.

Cuando el gobierno de Perú firma el TLC con EEUU, y luego lo firma Colombia, las élites ecuatorianas comprenden que están en la recta final y que su siguiente paso en realidad será más fácil y de tipo más operativo. Una vez firmado el TLC, el sistema político tendrá que armonizar el sistema jurídico vigente al TLC, y se habrá dado un paso fundamental en la construcción del Estado neoliberal.

El idilio de las élites con el TLC tiene su primer susto en noviembre de 2005 cuando el MIE se moviliza centrando su agenda precisamente en las negociaciones del TLC. Esta movilización indígena, trata de ser invisibilizada y relativizada. Después de todo, el MIE luego de su paso por el sistema político está tan cuestionado y tan desestructurado, según las élites, que sus movilizaciones de fines del año 2005 bien pueden ser asumidas como un intento desesperado de recomponerse habida cuenta que el año 2006 es un año electoral.

Para inicios del año 2006, y una vez cerradas las negociaciones de Perú y Colombia, las élites ecuatorianas entran de lleno en las negociaciones finales para suscribir a su turno el TLC con EEUU, pero es justamente en ese momento que reaparecen las movilizaciones indígenas y esta vez con una fuerza y una contundencia que desarmen al sistema político y a las élites.

Es todo su proyecto de modernización neoliberal el que corre el riesgo de venirse abajo con las movilizaciones indígenas del mes de marzo de 2006. Las élites que no saben cómo asumir estas movilizaciones,

kind of political impunity. No accounts were made available to anyone, and the political system entered the election debate conveniently forgetting conflict issues, more than anything the FTA. The election space depoliticized the debate, putting into parenthesis the burning issues, while generating a spectacle-scenario that trivialized politics.

When the government of Peru signed the FTA with the US – and then Colombia signed too – the Ecuadorian elites thought that they were in the final stages and that their next step would be easier and more operative. Once the FTA is signed, the political system would have to harmonize the current legal system with the FTA, and a fundamental step would thus be made in the construction of the neoliberal State.

The romance of the elites with the FTA suffered its first shock in November 2005 when the MIE mobilized itself focusing its agenda precisely on the FTA negotiations. They tried to relativize this indigenous mobilization and make it invisible. After all, having gone through the political system, the MIE was, according to the elites, so compromised and disorganized that their mobilizations at the end of 2005 could be summarized as a desperate attempt to recompose, considering that 2006 was an election year.

At the beginning of 2006, once the negotiations with Peru and Colombia were closed, the Ecuadorian elites fully entered the final negotiations to sign the FTA with the US. But it was exactly at this moment that the indigenous mobilizations reappeared, and this time with such strength and forcefulness that they disarmed the political system and the elites.

intentan mecanismos desesperados de salvar el proceso del TLC. En primer lugar, se resisten a las presiones por la democratización de las negociaciones del TLC.

Se produce una estrategia en dos frentes, en el primer frente está el gobierno y su equipo político y militar que se enfrentan a las movilizaciones desde la manipulación del discurso y la violencia. Las movilizaciones indígenas son reprimidas ferozmente, y el discurso oficial trata de deslegitimar a la dirigencia indígena acusándola de desestabilizar al país.

No solo ello, es desde el discurso oficial, que se acuden a discursos racistas que disparan aquellos resortes reprimidos de exclusión y discriminación que son inherentes a una sociedad tan racista como la ecuatoriana, y que generan una separación real entre las movilizaciones indígenas y el resto de la sociedad. Sobre esta separación provocada por el discurso racista opera el segundo frente, tratando de evitar las solidaridades sociales y las posibles alianzas que puedan proyectar las movilizaciones indígenas a un ámbito nacional y poner en riesgo incluso la estabilidad del régimen.

En este segundo frente están las cámaras empresariales y la mayoría de los medios de comunicación. Sobre la violencia física, simbólica y semiótica que ejerció el gobierno en contra del movimiento indígena, se inscribe la estrategia de este segundo frente que trata de acotar el alcance político de las movilizaciones indígenas generando tres ideas fundamentales, que también serán recogidas por el gobierno: la primera es que se está en pleno proceso de negociación y mientras no se haya suscrito el TLC nada está negociado, la segunda es que el TLC es un asunto técnico y estrictamente comercial, ocultando el hecho de que el TLC va a transformar

Their neoliberal modernization project now runs the risk of collapsing because of the indigenous mobilizations of March 2006. The elites do not know how to face these mobilizations and they revert to desperate measures to save the FTA process. In the first instance, they are resisting pressures for the democratization of the FTA negotiations.

They have created a two-front strategy: first, the government and its political and military team face the mobilizations with violence and the manipulation of discourse. Indigenous mobilizations are fiercely repressed, and the official discourse manages to delegitimize the indigenous leadership accusing it of destabilizing the country.

This official discourse appeals to racist discourses that reactivate those repressive fountains of exclusion and discrimination inherent to a society as racist as the Ecuadorian; this generates a real split between indigenous mobilizations and the rest of society. The second front operates through the split caused by the racist discourse, trying to avoid social solidarity and possible alliances that the indigenous mobilizations could project onto a national level, which could put the regime's stability at risk.

At this second front we can find the business chambers and most of the mass media. The strategy at this second front operates through physical, symbolic and semiotic violence exerted by the government against the indigenous movement, which tries to delimit their political reach creating three fundamental notions (that are also used by the government): The first one is that we are in the middle of the negotiation process and that, until the FTA is signed, nothing can be renegotiated. The second

radicalmente al Estado; y, tercero, de que el punto central del conflicto del TLC es la mesa agraria por cuanto son campesinos indígenas de la sierra los que se movilizan en contra del TLC, pero que en la mesa agraria los principales perjudicados no serían los campesinos de la sierra, sino los campesinos de la costa, que no están movilizados, mientras que los campesinos de la sierra tendrían la oportunidad de exportar su producción a EEUU, escamoteando el debate sobre el agua, biodiversidad, conocimiento ancestral y territorialidad.

Sobre esta discursividad, se instala otra y es aquella de que el TLC es una oportunidad que el país no puede perderse, para posicionar y reforzar esta idea, se acude al terrorismo económico: las élites declaran que si no se firma el TLC las consecuencias para el país son graves, por las pérdidas de empleos, de ingresos y de oportunidades.

Las élites llegan incluso a disputar el espacio de la movilización social organizando ellas sus propias marchas. En su lógica empresarial, sus marchas tuvieron un alto costo económico y nulo beneficio político, de ahí que se hayan preguntado que si una marcha de tres horas tuvo un costo determinado, cuánto podrían costar las movilizaciones indígenas que ya estaban en su segunda semana, y, por tanto, quiénes las estaban financiando.

El gobierno recoge esa argumentación y declara que son ONG's las que estarían detrás de las movilizaciones indígenas e insinúa incluso la participación del gobierno de Venezuela generando roces diplomáticos con el vecino país. Es decir, las élites cometen el error de sobrecargar políticamente al TLC en su afán desesperado de salvar a las negociaciones y ceden la iniciativa estratégica al MIE. No tienen estrategia. No tienen agenda. No saben cómo resolver la crisis. Empiezan una

notion is that the FTA is a technical and strictly commercial issue, hiding the fact that the FTA will radically transform the State. The third notion is that the central point of the conflict over the FTA concerns the agricultural committee, since the indigenous peasants from the mountains are the ones who mobilized against the FTA. The notion is that it is not the peasants from the mountains that would be harmed most, but those from the coast, who are not mobilized. In any case, the peasants from the mountains would have the opportunity to export their products to the US, which avoids the debate about water, biodiversity, ancestral knowledge and territoriality.

Part of this discourse is another one, which states that the FTA is an opportunity that the country cannot miss. In order to position and reinforce this notion, they turn to economic terrorism: the élites declare that, in the case that the FTA is not signed, there would be serious consequences for the country, because of the loss of employment, income and opportunities.

The élites even compete for the space of social mobilization themselves, organizing their own marches. According to their business logic, their marches bear a high economic cost and no political profit. This is why they wonder – considering that a three hour march of theirs involved a specific cost – how much the indigenous mobilizations cost, since they are in their second week; and they ask who might be financing them.

The government adopts this line of argument and declares that NGOs are behind the indigenous mobilizations. They even hint at the participation of the government of Venezuela, creating diplomatic tension with the neighbor

fuga hacia delante que termina comprometiendo más aún su proyecto. Las respuestas que las élites y el gobierno producen frente a la movilización del MIE son primarias y evidencian que fueron sorprendidos y rebasados en su capacidad de análisis y de procesamiento del conflicto.

country. That is, the élites make the mistake of politically overloading the FTA in their desperate effort to save the negotiations, and hence they leave the strategic initiative to the MIE. They have no strategy. They have no agenda. They do not know how to resolve the crisis. They are pressing forward, which ends up endangering their project even more. The responses produced by the élites and the government in the face of the MIE mobilization are primitive, and it is evident that they have been surprised and surpassed in their capacity to analyze and deal with the conflict.



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Las movilizaciones indígenas tuvieron el acierto de ir al núcleo fuerte de la conflictividad social: el Estado neoliberal. La demanda indígena, además, es inapelable: que se democratizan las negociaciones del TLC llamando a una consulta popular. Para llamar a una consulta nacional se deben cumplir dos pasos

It has been a wise move by the indigenous mobilizations to attack the core of the social conflicts: the neoliberal State. Moreover, the indigenous demand, that the FTA negotiations should be democratized by calling for a public consultation, cannot be appealed against. To call for a nationwide consultation,

previos, primero, suspender las negociaciones; y, segundo, transparentar el proceso.

Con esta agenda, el MIE llega al centro neurálgico de todo un proceso que atañe a la conformación del Estado, y lo desarticula. Gana un espacio político y obliga al poder a ceder posiciones. El MIE revela al país que está en juego el proyecto de un Estado neoliberal detrás del TLC, y que no es solamente un asunto comercial de preferencias arancelarias, de haber sido ese el caso, no se habría explicado la presencia de 19 mesas de negociación, en ámbitos tan disímiles y alejados del libre comercio.

Las élites, incluido el gobierno, en esta coyuntura tendrían que revelar todo lo que había sido negociado hasta ese momento, lo que demanda una voluntad de transparentar y poner a discusión esa agenda oculta que implicaba la transformación del Estado, y la de posponer la decisión e incluso transferirla a que esa decisión sea tomada democráticamente. Una alternativa imposible para las élites y que estaba excluida del horizonte de sus expectativas. Ya se habían tardado casi una década en procesar los cambios jurídicos para desmantelar al Estado de bienestar, no podían poner en juego todo su proyecto histórico en esta coyuntura. Para las élites no había y no hay elección posible, el TLC ‘se firma porque se firma’.

Luego de la experiencia de 1995, las élites tienen terror a todo lo que implique consulta, referéndum o plebiscito. Entonces, ¿cómo enfrentar el pedido de democracia y de transparencia hecho desde el MIE? ¿Cómo deslegitimar a la democracia si es parte fundamental del procesamiento de conflictos que legitiman a la estructura del poder? Las élites estaban prisioneras de su propio laberinto. Habían utilizado el discurso de la democracia para legitimar sus relaciones de poder, y ahora tenían que

two steps have to be taken first: postponing the negotiations and making the process transparent.

With this agenda the MIE reaches the nerve centre of the whole process that concerns the shaping of the State; it dismantles it. It wins a political space and forces the power to surrender their positions. The MIE reveals to the country that behind the FTA the project of a neoliberal State is at play, and that it is not just a commercial issue about preferential tariffs. If this were the case, the existence of 19 negotiation committees, in areas so diverging and distant from free trade, would be very hard to explain.

Faced with this juncture of demands, the élites, including the government, would have to reveal everything that has been negotiated until this moment, which requires a will to make transparent and discuss the hidden agenda that implies the transformation of the State, as well as postponing the decision and even devolving that decision, so that it can be made democratically. This is an impossible alternative for the élites, and it has been excluded from the horizon of their imagination. They have already delayed the legal changes required to dismantle the Welfare State for almost a decade. They cannot gamble with their whole historical project in this situation. For the élites there has not been and there is no other possible choice: the FTA ‘is signed because it is signed’.

After the 1995 experience the élites are terrified of anything that involves consultation, referendum or plebiscite. Therefore, how to confront the MIE’s demand for democracy and transparency? How to delegitimize democracy, if this is a fundamental part of how the conflicts that legitimize the

responder con violencia y autoritarismo a los pedidos de democracia y de transparencia, demostrando que, en realidad, la democracia es más un recurso estratégico del poder, que una opción de participación social.

La posición de las élites y del gobierno es clara: el TLC no se transparenta, ni se democratiza, ‘se firma porque se firma’. Al no poder contestar a los pedidos de democracia y de transparencia, el mecanismo es el de deslegitimar al MIE. La confrontación a las demandas del MIE también son evidentes: las movilizaciones, según las élites y el gobierno, son desestabilizadoras y corresponderían a un ‘plan oscuro’, con esta argumentación se quiere eludir el plano de la confrontación y descalificar el pedido del MIE. La intención es que descalificando al MIE quizás puedan evitar responder a sus demandas de democracia y de transparencia.

Las élites, incluso, creen haber descubierto el *leti motiv* de las movilizaciones indígenas: su dirigencia quiere, en realidad, catapultarse para las elecciones, y no se dan cuenta que con esta maniobra corren el riesgo de sobrecargar el próximo escenario electoral y convertir a las elecciones en un plebiscito alrededor del TLC.

Como puede verse, ni el gobierno ni las élites tenían una agenda política para enfrentarse al MIE en esta coyuntura. Su única propuesta política fue la represión. El recurso a la violencia lo que en realidad significa es la pérdida de poder. La movilización indígena los había rebasado y había agotado los repertorios de las élites y del Estado para procesar este conflicto y había puesto en riesgo el ejercicio del poder.

La cuestión es que el MIE logra, con su movilización, posicionar con tal fuerza el TLC que la sociedad en su conjunto es

power structure are dealt with? The elites are caught in their own labyrinth. They have used the discourse of democracy to legitimize their power relations, and now they have to reply with violence and authoritarianism against those demands for democracy and transparency, showing that, in fact, democracy is more a strategic resource for power than an option for social participation.

The position of the élites and the government is clear: the FTA is not democratized or made transparent; ‘it is signed because it is signed’. As they cannot contest the demands for democracy and transparency, the mechanism used is the delegitimization of the MIE. The way the MIE’s demands are confronted is also obvious: according to the élites and the government, the mobilizations are destabilizing and part of an ‘obscure plan’. With this line of argument they want to avoid a direct confrontation and disqualify the MIE demands. The intention is that disqualifying the MIE might avoid responding to the demands for democracy and transparency.

The élites even believe that they have discovered the *leitmotiv* of indigenous mobilizations: their leadership wants to promote itself for the elections. They do not realize that with this maneuver they run the risk of overloading the close election scene, transforming the elections into a plebiscite about the FTA.

It is noticeable that neither the government nor the élites have a political agenda to confront the MIE under these circumstances. Their only political proposal is repression. The resort to violence means, in fact, the loss of power. The indigenous mobilization has exceeded and exhausted the repertoires of the élites and the State to deal with

obligada a reflexionar, discutir, debatir y exigir transparencia en el proceso. La movilización indígena obliga a que la agenda de las élites y del gobierno converjan hacia la necesidad de salvar al TLC.

Ello desnuda los simulacros de la reforma política y muestra de manera fehaciente el carácter de clase que siempre tuvo el gobierno transitorio de Alfredo Palacio. Ello implica también que el TLC se traslade del ámbito técnico hacia el político, algo que las élites habían evitado a toda costa desde el inicio de las negociaciones. Pero el espacio ha sido abierto, el TLC se ha convertido, para pesadilla de las élites, en un asunto político, el debate nacional gira alrededor del TLC, pero en términos políticos.

De ahí que se insista a través de todos los mecanismos posibles de que el TLC es en realidad un asunto técnico y comercial. En el supuesto de que el espacio abierto por el MIE se resista a aceptar los contenidos impuestos desde las élites, los medios de comunicación cambian el locus de discusión, y lo centralizan en el MIE. La intención es sobreexponer al MIE para convertirlo en blanco de posteriores ataques. Pero es difícil cambiar los sentidos del debate político cuando el MIE ha logrado posicionar con la fuerza de dos semanas de movilizaciones al TLC como el asunto políticamente más crucial que debe resolver la sociedad ecuatoriana.

Ahora bien, la primera tarea de las élites y del gobierno será la de cerrar el espacio abierto por la movilización indígena. La segunda es la de acotar políticamente al MIE, y la tercera es articular una estrategia que permita su neutralización. Luego de dos semanas de movilización, el MIE realiza un repliegue estratégico con la amenaza de retomar las movilizaciones declarando un levantamiento general, y, además, con una

this conflict, and it has managed to put the exercise of power at risk.

The point is that the MIE's mobilization has managed to expose the FTA so vigorously that the whole society is forced to reflect, discuss, debate and demand transparency of the process. The indigenous mobilization forces the agenda of the elites and the government to focus on the need to save the FTA.

This reveals the simulacrum of the political reform and irrefutably shows the class character Alfredo Palacio's temporary government always had. This also means that the FTA is transferred from the technical to the political field, something the elites wanted to avoid at all cost right from the beginning of the negotiations. Finally, this space has been opened; the FTA has become a political issue, and this is a nightmare for the elites. The national debate now revolves around the FTA, but in political terms.

This is why they insist, by all possible means, that the FTA is in fact a technical and commercial issue. As the space opened by the MIE resists to accept the contents imposed by the elites, the media has changed the locus of discussion to concentrate on the MIE. The intention is to overexpose the MIE to turn it into a target for later attacks. Nevertheless, it is difficult to change the direction of the political debate when the MIE has managed, with the strength of two weeks of mobilizations, to turn the FTA into the most important political issue that the Ecuadorian society must resolve.

The first task for the elites and the government will be to close the space opened by the indigenous mobilization. The second task is to politically exhaust the MIE, and the third one is to articulate a strategy that allows its neutralization.

declaración que da cuenta de los niveles de conflicto y de la crisis del sistema político ecuatoriano: el desconocimiento al gobierno transitorio de Alfredo Palacio, es decir, la declaratoria de desobediencia civil. Esta declaratoria tiene como objetivo impedir los acercamientos que el régimen puede realizar a los gobiernos seccionales manejados por el movimiento indígena, con la intención de comprar con recursos fiscales adhesiones en las bases del MIE y romper la unidad organizativa demostrada en las movilizaciones.

Ahora bien, es necesario indicar que el MIE demostró mucha sagacidad en esta coyuntura porque si bien su movilización se centró en el TLC, el segundo punto de su agenda es tan conflictivo como el TLC, y hace referencia a la decisión de declarar la caducidad de contrato entre el Estado y la petrolera norteamericana Oxy.

Si el gobierno transitorio de Alfredo Palacio, acoge el pedido del Procurador del Estado y declara la caducidad de ese contrato, la firma del TLC con EEUU es imposible. En varias declaraciones públicas, personeros del gobierno americano advirtieron sobre los peligros de que el Estado ecuatoriano correría si declara la caducidad del contrato con Oxy, uno de esos peligros es que el Ecuador no sería parte de las negociaciones del TLC y que además perdería las preferencias arancelarias que EEUU había entregado a los países andinos, el ATPDEA.

Entonces, si el gobierno decidía no dar paso a la primera propuesta de no suscribir el TLC, la segunda era menos factible aún de cumplirse, porque entraba en directa contradicción con la intención del gobierno de que el TLC ‘se firma porque se firma’. Pero en algún momento el gobierno tendrá que dar salida al impasse provocado por la petrolera Oxy. Si la salida del gobierno favorece a la petrolera, sus márgenes de

After two weeks of mobilizations, the MIE has accomplished a strategic fold threatening to restart the mobilizations with a general uprising. In addition, it has published a declaration that recognizes the conflict levels and the crisis of the Ecuadorian political system by demanding the non-recognition of the temporary government of Alfredo Palacio; it is a declaration of civil disobedience. The goal of this declaration is to stop the regime's attempts to divide the governments controlled by the indigenous movement. The State's division strategy has the purpose of buying out the base of the MIE with fiscal resources, thus attempting to break the organizational unity shown in the mobilizations.

It is important to point out that the MIE was very astute in this situation, because, although its mobilization was focused on the FTA, the second issue of its agenda, which is as conflictive as the FTA, concerns the decision of expiring the contract between the State and the North American oil company Oxy.

If Alfredo Pacheco's temporary government accepts the request of the government attorney and declares the expiry of that contract, the signing of the FTA is impossible. Representatives of the US government have warned in several public statements about the risks the Ecuadorian State would run if it declared the expiry of the contract with Oxy. One of those risks is that Ecuador would not be part of the FTA negotiations and that it would also lose the tariff priorities that the US had conceded to the Andean countries, the ATPDEA.

If the government decides not to accept the first proposal of not signing the FTA, the second one becomes even less

gobernabilidad se acotarán aún más. En otras palabras, el régimen transitorio de Alfredo Palacio, no tiene espacios políticos de acción, no tiene capacidad de generar iniciativas de gobernabilidad, y tampoco tiene posibilidades de lograr consensos sociales para procesar los conflictos. Es un régimen liquidado políticamente, y cuya vigencia como gobierno depende más de factores aleatorios que de su propia dinámica. El régimen de Palacio recuerda al gobierno de Mahuad en la coyuntura de julio de 1999, cuando el levantamiento indígena impidió la imposición de un paquete de ajuste y liquidó las posibilidades políticas de Mahuad. Meses después Mahuad sería derrocado por otro levantamiento indígena.

Si el régimen decide firmar el TLC con EEUU, y en concordancia con ello, renegocia los contratos petroleros favoreciendo a la petrolera norteamericana Oxy, el espacio político para defender estas decisiones es inexistente. La presión social que puede originarse en contra de esas decisiones, va a encontrar a un régimen tan debilitado que no tiene capacidad de enfrentar a esa presión social, amén del uso de la fuerza que será proporcional a su debilidad, y que no tiene espacios de maniobra incluso para sostenerse. El gobierno transitorio, tendría, entonces, los días contados. Tal es la consecuencia de la movilización indígena.

Ahora bien, surgen varias cuestiones relativas a la dinámica interna del MIE que posibilitaron tanto la elaboración de sus discursos cuanto de sus movilizaciones: ¿cuál fue el proceso que permitió que el MIE traslade el *focus* de su atención hacia el TLC? ¿Porqué de todas las demandas del MIE fue justamente aquella de oponerse al TLC la que se privilegió y la que sirvió de elemento estructurador de su movilización? ¿Cómo descubrió el MIE que detrás de la firma del TLC en realidad estaba todo un

feasible, because it directly contradicts the government's idea that the FTA 'is signed because it is signed'. However, some day the government will have to find a way out of the impasse caused by the oil company Oxy. If the government's solution benefits the company, its margins of governability will be more and more limited. In other words, Alfredo Palacio's temporary government does not have any political spaces for action, it does not have the capacity to generate initiatives of governability, nor does it have possibilities to achieve social consensus to deal with the conflicts. It is a politically liquidated regime whose validity as a government depends more on random factors than on its own dynamism. Palacio's regime resembles Mahuad's government in July 1999 when the indigenous uprising stopped the imposition of an adjustment plan, eliminating Mahuad's political possibilities. Months later Mahuad would be defeated by another indigenous uprising.

If the regime decides to sign the FTA with the US and, in accordance with this, renegotiates the petrol contracts benefiting the North American petrol company Oxy, the political space to defend these decisions is non-existent. The social pressure that may arise against these decisions will find such a weakened regime that has no capacity to confront social pressure – other than the use of force, which will be proportional to its weakness – and that has no room to maneuver, even to support itself. The days of the temporary government would thus be numbered. Such are the consequences of the indigenous mobilization.

Now, several questions arise regarding the internal dynamics of the MIE, which

proyecto de constitución del Estado neoliberal?

Existe evidentemente una transformación cualitativa de la agenda del MIE desde el levantamiento de 1990, hasta las movilizaciones de marzo de 2006 en contra del TLC. Habría que recordar que los puntos centrales de la agenda de 1990 tenían que ver con la conflictividad agraria y la disputa de tierras. Meses antes del levantamiento de 1990, se había producido el secuestro de algunos directivos del Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agrario, INDA (antes IERAC), en virtud del cual se habían suscrito varios ofrecimientos para solucionar la presión por la tierra. Se trataban de los ‘Acuerdos de Sarayacu’, que el gobierno de la Izquierda Democrática, jamás tuvo la intención de cumplir. El levantamiento indígena de 1990, tuvo entonces una dinámica en la cual la lucha por la tierra era el elemento fundamental.

Cuatro años después, el movimiento indígena tendría que cambiar las prioridades de su agenda por aquellas de oponerse de manera radical al neoliberalismo. El gobierno de Durán Ballén, al proponer la conformación de los mercados de tierras y de agua, estaba liquidando las formas comunitarias de tenencia de la tierra. El movimiento indígena en esta coyuntura descubre el alcance real que tiene la propuesta neoliberal y cambia en consecuencia el eje de su discurso de movilización.

Durante la década de los noventa, la plataforma del movimiento indígena se irá transformando en conformidad de su transformación política y su involucramiento en ese campo de conflictividades que se había definido como lucha de clases, de ahí que los ejes de las movilizaciones sean siempre la resistencia y la oposición a las políticas de ajuste del FMI. El punto más alto de esas

have allowed the development of both its discourses and mobilizations: What was the process that allowed the MIE to change the focus of its attention towards the FTA? Why, amongst all the MIE's demands, was it precisely the opposition to the FTA that was privileged, serving as structuring element for the mobilization? How did the MIE realize that behind the signing of the FTA there was, in fact, an entire project of constituting the neoliberal State?

There is obviously a qualitative transformation of the MIE agenda from the 1990 uprising to the mobilizations of March 2006 against the FTA. We should recall that the main issues of the 1990 agenda were related to rural conflicts and land disputes. Months before the 1990 uprising some directors of the National Institute of Rural Development (INDA, formerly IERAC), who were the ones who had endorsed several proposals to resolve the pressure for land, were kidnapped. They were working on the ‘Sarayacu Agreement’, which the Izquierda Democrática government never had the intention to comply with. Thus, the indigenous uprising of 1990 had a dynamic in which the struggle for land was its main factor.

Four years later the indigenous movement had to change the priorities of its agenda to a radical opposition of neoliberalism. Duran Ballen's government, which proposed to establish markets for land and water, was destroying communal forms of land possession. In this situation the indigenous movement realized the real scope of the neoliberal proposal and, consequently, changed the axis of its discourse for mobilization.

During the 1990s the platform of the indigenous movement changed in

movilizaciones está en el levantamiento de julio de 1999, cuando se enfrentan de manera exitosa al paquete de ajuste que el gobierno de ese entonces había decretado, y, de paso, liquidan políticamente a ese régimen.

Pero en las movilizaciones de 2006, el movimiento indígena se confronta de manera directa contra el proyecto de las élites de reconstruir el Estado hacia un formato neoliberal, y en contra del diseño de EEUU para el área andina, que busca involucrar al país en el Plan Colombia. En esta confrontación, el MIE rodea al sistema político; no lo utiliza porque su experiencia política le demuestra que el sistema político, con toda su institucionalidad, está hecho más bien para neutralizar la lucha social que para potencializar las resistencias sociales.

Ahora bien, de la misma manera que en 1994 el MIE comprendió la real implicación que tiene el neoliberalismo para las comunidades indígenas, con la Ley de Desarrollo Agrario, para el año 2006, el MIE había procesado las implicaciones que tendría la globalización neoliberal desde una transición de su eje conceptual de la lucha por la tierra, a la defensa del territorio.

Es esta categoría de territorio, la que le permite al MIE comprender las reales implicaciones de la globalización neoliberal. Las comunidades indígenas y las nacionalidades que habitan sobre todo en territorios ricos en biodiversidad, petróleo, agua y madera, empiezan a sufrir el asedio de las corporaciones transnacionales, que hacen *tabula rasa* de la legislación vigente, incluido el convenio 169 de la OIT y ratificado por el Congreso ecuatoriano en 1998, y que buscan la cooptación, o expulsión de estas nacionalidades indígenas de sus territorios ancestrales.

La aprobación de leyes que reconocen los

accordance with its political transformation and its commitment to that field of conflicts which was defined as class struggle. This is why the axis for mobilizations was always one of resistance and opposition against the adjustment policies of the IMF. The highest point of these mobilizations was the uprising of July 1999 when the adjustment package, which was decreed by the government of that time, was successfully resisted, politically liquidating that regime.

However, in the 2006 mobilizations the indigenous movement directly opposes the elites' project of reconstructing the State with a neoliberal format, going against the US design for the Andean region, which attempts to involve the country in the Colombia Plan. In this confrontation the MIE dodges the political system; it does not make use of it because its political experience shows that the political system, with all its institutionality, is made to neutralize social struggle more than fomenting social resistance.

Just as in 1994, the MIE has understood the real implications of neoliberalism for indigenous communities. With the 2006 Law for Rural Development the MIE dealt with the implications neoliberal globalization would have by transforming its conceptual axis from the struggle for land to the defense of territory.

It is this category of territory that enables the MIE to understand the real implications of neoliberal globalization. Indigenous communities and nationalities that live on territories rich in biodiversity, oil, water and wood, start to suffer the siege of transnational corporations, which have erased the current legislation – including the Pact

derechos indígenas, entre ellos los derechos colectivos codificados en la Constitución de la república, y en el Convenio 169 de la OIT (Organización Internacional del Trabajo), en vez de garantizar la vigencia de los derechos de los pueblos indígenas, generan un espacio de conflicto entre las nacionalidades indígenas, y las corporaciones y un Estado hecho más para defender a estas corporaciones que a su propia población. Se trata de un efecto no deseado, pero inherente a la dinámica de la globalización neoliberal. Al extender varios derechos a las nacionalidades indígenas, como por ejemplo el derecho a la consulta previa y acuerdo de la organización comunitaria para el desarrollo de actividades extractivas por parte de las corporaciones transnacionales, se le reconoce a la comunidad un status jurídico que genera un campo de conflicto de intereses.

Las corporaciones transnacionales que acceden a los derechos de explotación, sea de petróleo, de biodiversidad, de madera, o de agua, tienen que necesariamente negociar con las organizaciones indígenas. Es justamente en virtud de este proceso que las corporaciones crean los departamentos de relaciones comunitarias, o también denominados de responsabilidad social. Estos departamentos son los encargados de negociar con las comunidades y nacionalidades indígenas y de crear prácticas clientelares en virtud de las cuales las poblaciones de las nacionalidades indígenas se convierten en dependientes, incluso para su sobrevivencia alimentaria, de los departamentos de relaciones comunitarias de las corporaciones transnacionales.

Detrás de estas dinámicas está la lucha por el control de los recursos estratégicos que están en los territorios indígenas. Ya no es solamente la tierra como factor económico y vinculado a la producción agraria aquello

169 of the ILO (International Labor Organization), ratified by the Ecuadorian Congress in 1998 – and have attempted to co-opt or expel these indigenous nationalities from their ancestral territories.

Instead of guaranteeing the rights of indigenous people, the laws that are meant to recognize these rights – among them the collective rights codified in the Constitution of the Republic and the Pact 169 of the ILO – generate a space for conflict between indigenous nationalities, the corporations and a State which protects these corporations more than its own population. This is not a desired effect, but inherent in the dynamics of neoliberal globalization. By extending various rights to indigenous nationalities – for example, the right of prior consultation and the right of communal organizations to agree to the development of mining activities by transnational corporations – a legal status is accredited to the communities, which generates a field where there is a conflict of interests.

Thus, it is necessary for transnational corporations, which gain access to rights to exploit oil, biodiversity, wood or water, to negotiate with indigenous organizations. By virtue of this process the corporations create departments for communal relations, also called social responsibility. These departments are in charge of negotiating with indigenous communities and nationalities, creating practices of ‘clientelism’ through which the population of indigenous nationalities become dependent, even for alimentary survival, on the departments of communal relations of the transnational corporations.

Behind these dynamics there is the struggle for control over strategic

que está en juego en el neoliberalismo, ahora es el territorio como espacio de vivencia de las nacionalidades indígenas el objeto de disputa.

Neoliberalismo y derechos comunitarios son incompatibles. Los casos de conflicto por la lucha territorial se multiplican en la amazonía ecuatoriana y en la costa. En la amazonía, los pueblos de la comunidad kichwa de Sarayacu se enfrentan, tanto a la petrolera CGC cuanto al Estado que en su afán de obtener recursos fiscales ha entregado a la explotación petrolera vastas regiones habitadas por pueblos y naciones indígenas. Es el caso también de la nación Huao que se enfrenta a la petrolera Petrobras en la región del Yasuní, o es el caso de los pueblos Chachis, en la costa ecuatoriana, que se enfrentan a las empresas madereras. Las presiones para que las comunidades y nacionalidades firmen contratos de servicios ambientales, como paso previo para la biopiratería, o a la explotación de la biodiversidad, se multiplican. El territorio es el nuevo punto de conflicto y el espacio de convergencia de las corporaciones, el Estado, y las élites.

El MIE cambia los ejes de su agenda en virtud del aparecimiento de este nuevo escenario de confrontación. A medida que avanza la globalización neoliberal, más vulnerables son los pueblos y las nacionalidades indígenas que habitan en territorios de alta biodiversidad, cuencas acuíferas, bosques primarios. A mediados del año 2003, el MIE tiene que enfrentarse a un proyecto de Ley de Biodiversidad, realizado por las agencias transnacionales de la ecología, como Conservation International, y WWF, y que atenta directamente en contra de los territorios de las comunidades y nacionalidades indígenas.

La propuesta de Ley de Biodiversidad es el equivalente de aquella propuesta de

resources, which are on indigenous territories. What is at stake with neoliberalism is not only the land as an economic factor linked to agrarian production; now, the object of the dispute is the territory that is the living space of indigenous nationalities.

Neoliberalism and communal rights are incompatible. The cases of conflict for territorial struggle multiply in Ecuadorian Amazonia and at the coast. In the Amazon the people of the Kichwa community of Saracayu face both the oil company CGC and the State, which in its urge to generate fiscal resources has handed over vast areas inhabited by indigenous people and nations for oil exploitation. This is also the case with the Huao nation, which confronts the petrol company Petrobras in the region of Yasuni, and there are also the Chachis people at the Ecuadorian coast who confront the timber companies. The pressures are growing for the communities and nationalities to sign contracts for environmental services, which is a first step towards biopiracy or the exploitation of biodiversity. The territory is the new point of conflict and the space where corporations, the State and the elites converge.

The MIE has changed the axis of its agenda by appreciating this new scenario of confrontation. As neoliberal globalization advances, the indigenous peoples and nationalities that live in territories with rich biodiversity, aquiferous valleys and primary forests, become more vulnerable. In mid-2003 the MIE had to oppose the project of a Biodiversity Law, created by transnational ecology agencies, like Conservation International and WWF, which went directly against the territories of indigenous communities and nationalities.

Desarrollo Agrario, hecha en 1994 por el gobierno neoliberal de Durán Ballén, una ley que motivó uno de los levantamientos indígenas más fuertes. De esta misma manera, esta propuesta de Ley de Biodiversidad pone en alerta al MIE, que comprende que el espacio de disputa política ahora se traslada a la defensa del territorio.

Durante los años 2003 y 2004, a pesar de sufrir el embate represivo del gobierno de Lucio Gutiérrez, y de las estrategias de división hechas por ese gobierno con la ayuda del Banco Mundial, el MIE empieza un proceso de discusión, análisis y procesamiento de la información existente sobre la globalización de la biodiversidad, el agua, los conocimientos ancestrales y los patrimonios genéticos. En estos debates que se realizan en las comunidades y en las organizaciones de base, el MIE va comprendiendo y descifrando los alcances que tiene el discurso de los servicios ambientales, como mecanismo de puesta en valor de la naturaleza, y comprende que la disputa ahora será por el agua, la biodiversidad, y los conocimientos ancestrales.

De hecho, para mediados del año 2004, la CONAIE con sus equipos de trabajo tiene listo el proyecto de ‘Ley para la protección y uso sustentable de la Biodiversidad’, que es el producto de talleres de trabajo con las organizaciones de base, y que presenta al Congreso ecuatoriano como ley alternativa a aquella que se había presentado anteriormente.

Este proyecto de Ley trata de confrontar el proyecto de Ley de Biodiversidad que había sido tratado en una primera discusión por el Congreso ecuatoriano en el año 2003. La organización indígena sustenta con los criterios de ancestralidad la noción de soberanía sobre los territorios indígenas, y propone mecanismos de objeción cultural

The Biodiversity Law proposal was the equivalent to the proposal for Rural Development, made in 1994 by Duran Ballen's neoliberal government, which motivated one of the strongest indigenous uprisings. In the same way the proposal for the Biodiversity Law put the MIE on alert, as they understood that the space for political dispute was now moving towards the defense of territory.

During 2003 and 2004, despite suffering from the repressive onslaught of Lucio Gutiérrez government and the division strategies carried out by this government with the help of the World Bank, the MIE started a process of discussion, analysis and processing of the existing information about the globalization of biodiversity, water, ancestral knowledge and genetic heritage. In these debates, which took place in grassroots communities and organizations, the MIE began to understand and unravel the extent of the discourse on environmental services as a mechanism to value nature, realizing that the struggle would now be for water, biodiversity and ancestral knowledge.

In fact, in mid-2004 the CONAIE prepared, with its working teams, a project for the ‘Law for the protection and sustainable use of Biodiversity’. This was the product of workshops with grassroots organizations and which was offered to the Ecuadorian Congress as an alternative to the law that had been previously proposed.

This project tried to confront the Biodiversity Law that had been considered in a primary discussion in the Ecuadorian Congress in 2003. Using the criteria of their ancestors, the indigenous organization supported the notion of sovereignty over indigenous territories and proposed mechanisms for the

para defenderse de las estrategias de intervención tanto del Estado cuanto de las corporaciones transnacionales, son los principios de diversidad cultural, sacralidad del territorio, integralidad del territorio con la población como sujetos culturales y políticos, los que permiten al MIE avanzar en su conceptualización del territorio como locus político.

Cuando las élites ecuatorianas proponen el TLC con EEUU, el MIE comprende que más allá de la mesa agrícola, lo que está en juego es el territorio, y está en juego porque lo que se va a transformar con el TLC, no son los aranceles ni las salvaguardas ni los impuestos, es el Estado. Y ante un Estado neoliberal los territorios indígenas son vulnerables. Si en la actual legislación no existen mecanismos jurídicos de protección a los territorios indígenas, peor aún en el Estado neoliberal, en el que el sujeto de derecho no son las personas sino las corporaciones.

La defensa del territorio es la defensa de la cultura, es la defensa de la historia, de la memoria y del futuro. Los pueblos indígenas comprenden que si Ecuador firma el TLC con EEUU, ellos están condenados a desaparecer, y como aquellas estirpes de Cien Años de Soledad, no tendrán una segunda oportunidad sobre la tierra.

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cultural objection of such laws to defend themselves from intervention strategies both of the State and transnational corporations. The principles of cultural diversity, the sacredness of the territory and the integrality of the territory with the population as cultural and political subjects, allowed the MIE to advance in their conceptualization of the territory as a political locus.

When the Ecuadorian elites proposed the FTA with the US, the MIE understood that, beyond the agricultural committee, what was at stake was the territory, because what the FTA would transform was neither the tariffs nor the safeguards nor the taxes, but the State. Facing a neoliberal State the indigenous territories are vulnerable. If in the current legislation there are no legal mechanisms for the protection of indigenous territories, it will be even worse in the neoliberal State, in which the legal subjects are not the people but the corporations.

The defense of the territory is the defense of culture, the defense of history, memory and the defense of the future. The indigenous peoples understand that, if Ecuador signs the FTA with the US, they will be condemned to disappear and, like those strains of One Hundred Years of Solitude (by Gabriel García Márquez), they will have no second opportunity on earth.

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# Evo Morales y la Descolonización Fálica del Estado Boliviano\*

Un análisis feminista sobre el proceso a la Asamblea Constituyente en Bolivia

# Evo Morales and the Phallic Decolonization of the Bolivian State

A feminist analysis of the process for the Constituent Assembly in Bolivia

María Galindo / Mujeres Creando

translated by María de la O López Abeledo

## La Ley de convocatoria a la Asamblea Constituyente: no era un cambio de gobierno lo que la sociedad se había planteado

En Bolivia hay cientos de miles de Evos, en cada escuela secundaria pública, en cada equipo barrial de fútbol, en cada sindicato pequeño desde los taxistas hasta los heladeros. Hay Evos intuitivos, hermosamente morenos, despreocupados y poco ortodoxos en lo de las identidades culturales. Son Evos tan modernos como autóctonos pero sobretodo audaces en el uso de la palabra y despreocupados y machistas en el sexo y el amor. Ellos usan poncho, traje o chamarra y escogen su ropa con la libertad que las sociedades patriarcales prohíben a las mujeres y sobretodo a aquellas que son nombradas como 'indígenas' y que por eso tienen que cargar con la identidad cultural en las caderas y las espaldas, desdibujando sus curvas al uso de los mandatos masculinos.

## The Law for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly: it was not a change of government that society had planned

In Bolivia there are hundreds of thousands of Evos, in every public high school, in every neighborhood football team, in every small labor union, from taxi drivers to ice-cream sellers. There are intuitive Evos, beautifully dark-skinned, unconcerned and not very orthodox with regard to cultural identities. They are Evos as modern as they are autochthon, but, above all, they are audacious in the use of words, careless and male chauvinists in sex and love. They wear a poncho, suit or *chamarra* (sheepskin jacket), and they choose their clothes with the freedom patriarchal societies forbid to women, especially those who are called 'indigenous' and who, for this reason, have to carry their cultural identity with their hips and backs, blurring their curves accustomed to masculine orders.

Ese Evo cuyo rostro es un espejo social mágico e inmediato no recibió tan sólo un mandato presidencial en las elecciones pasadas, recibió un mandato histórico que consistía además de la nacionalización de los hidrocarburos y el juicio contra Sánchez de Lozada en la convocatoria a una asamblea constituyente que permitiese replantear el sistema político boliviano. Una asamblea que fue parte de una agenda instalada por los movimientos sociales y no por los partidos políticos, una asamblea que marcaba la necesidad de que no era un cambio de gobierno lo que la sociedad boliviana necesitaba, sino una cita histórica consigo misma para replantear las bases que habían hecho crisis junto al modelo neoliberal.

Por esa responsabilidad tan nítida y por su condición de ‘indígena’ es que se esperaba que Evo convocara a una asamblea abierta a todas las formas de participación posible.

Sin embargo, a través de la ley de convocatoria el gobierno de Evo Morales y con la responsabilidad directa de Alvaro García Linera promulga una ley que:

- Restituye la legitimidad a los partidos políticos derrotados con la revuelta de octubre del 2003, inclusive aquellos que cometieron genocidio contra el pueblo alteño.
- Cierra toda posibilidad de representación directa de los movimientos sociales, lo cual ha obligado a muchísimos movimientos a buscar alianzas con el MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) para poder postular candidaturas u optar por quedar fuera de la asamblea y por ende de la discusión socio-política que ésta ha desatado en la sociedad boliviana.
- Ratifica el criterio neoliberal tecnocrático de representación de las mujeres como cuota biológica dentro de los partidos, con

This Evo, whose face is a magic and immediate social mirror, didn't just receive a presidential mandate in the last election; he received a historical mandate that also consisted of the nationalization of hydrocarbons and the trial against Sánchez de Lozada in a Constituent Assembly that allowed revising the Bolivian political system. An assembly that was once part of an agenda installed by social movements and not by political parties; an assembly marked by the necessity that it was not simply a change of government that the Bolivian society needed, but a historic event to reinstate the grassroots that have gone into crisis together with the neoliberal model.

Because of this clear responsibility and because of his ‘indigenous’ condition everyone expected that Evo would call for an assembly open to all possible forms of participation.

However, by means of a law of the convocation, Evo Morales’ government, together with Álvaro García Linera’s direct responsibility, enacted a law that:

- Restores the legitimacy of the political parties that had been defeated in the revolt of October, even those who committed genocide against the *Alteño* people.
- Refuses any possibility of direct representation of social movements, which has forced many movements to look for alliances with the MAS (Socialist Movement) to be able to nominate candidates or, instead, to stay outside the assembly and, therefore, outside the socio-political discussion it has unleashed in Bolivian society.
- Ratifies the neoliberal, technocratic criterion for the representation of women as a biological quota inside parties, with the addition of alterity, which inhibits any

el aditamento de la alteridad lo cual inhibe toda forma de alianza entre mujeres debiendo alternarse cada mujer con un hombre.

- Deja fuera a la importante cantidad de 'exiliadas y exiliados del neoliberalismo' que son la población migrante a países como Argentina, Brasil, EEUU y España. Población que ha crecido vertiginosamente en estos últimos años y que constituye actualmente el cuarto sostén económico de nuestra sociedad.

- Cierra las atribuciones de la asamblea constituyente a sesionar durante un año en el marco del respeto de los poderes ya constituidos con lo cual la asamblea se convierte en una mera reforma constitucional.

Con esta exclusión y debilitamiento de los movimientos Evo Morales y su gobierno izquierdo-indigenista tiene la seguridad de obtener una mayoría absoluta dentro de la asamblea lo cual le permita cooptar a los sectores sociales como clientes del partido, realizar un plebiscito en lugar de unas elecciones asambleísticas y reescribir el texto de la constitución desde el poder ejecutivo. El proyecto es entonces aniquilar los espacios de disidencia y de autonomía política respecto del partido de gobierno.

Asistimos pues con la asamblea al enmudecimiento de los movimientos sociales en nuestra sociedad. Asistimos también a un reacomodo de los movimientos sociales que de ser las fuerzas del voto y la movilización social boliviana, de ser los clientes baratos de un estado liberal, pasan a ser el ratón atontado por el poder estatal. No es un enmudecimiento a bala, no es un enmudecimiento por la vía de la censura, sino de la exclusión cínica. Un enmudecimiento como sólo podía venir de uno de 'los nuestros' (eso entre comillas): un ex preso por alzamiento

form of alliance among women, having to rotate every woman with a man.

- Leaves aside the important number of 'women and men exiled because of neoliberalism', that is, those who migrated to countries like Argentina, Brazil, the US and Spain. In fact, that population, which has grown rapidly in recent years, constitutes a quarter of the economically active population in our society.

- Limits the Constituent Assembly to operate for one year in the framework of the respect for the already established powers, so that the assembly becomes a mere constitutional reform.

With this exclusion and weakening of the movements Evo Morales and his leftist indigenous government is certain of obtaining an absolute majority in the assembly, which will allow him to: co-opt social groups as clients of the party, organize a plebiscite instead of assembly elections, and rewrite the text of the constitution with executive powers. Thus, the project consists of destroying all spaces of dissent and political autonomy concerning the governing party.

We are witnessing, therefore, by means of the assembly, the silencing of social movements in our society. We are also witnessing the rearrangement of social movements from being the forces of veto and the forces of the Bolivian social mobilization, from being cheap clients of a liberal state, to becoming the mouse bewildered by State power. It is not a silencing through bullets; it is not a silencing by way of censorship, but of cynical exclusion. A silencing that could only come from one of 'ours' (in inverted commas): an ex-prisoner because of armed uprising, as is Álvaro García Linera, and an indigenous unionist, as is

armado como es Alvaro García Linera y un sindicalista indígena como es Evo.

La asamblea se convierte así en el escenario para sustituir la democracia liberal representativa que derrotamos en las calles cientos de miles sin caudillos ni partidos en movilizaciones inéditas, sustituir eso por la democracia monopartidaria que nos ofrece el MAS como alternativa sin alternativa. El Evo mágico, el Evo que despierta identidades puede convertirse así en el antídoto identitario que inaugure un régimen cerrado en torno de sus cúpulas.

### **'No quiero candidatear, quiero vomitar': la campaña electoral**

No es casual entonces que los sectores más conservadores hayan tomado con entusiasmo la campaña electoral para hacer reapariciones ridículas que les permitan prolongar su agónica mediocridad exponiendo gigantografías de sus retratos que invitan sin duda ninguna al vómito.

Otros sectores que aprovechan la ocasión son la gran proliferación de *Iglesias y sectas Evangélicas*. Ellos han presentado candidaturas propias gracias a cientos de miles de firmas de sus fieles para defender en la constituyente intereses y como toda iglesia, para irse comiendo pedazos de la vida social.

*Los militares* que hoy gozan de importantes atribuciones en la actual constitución y que no están dispuestos a perder ni siquiera el servicio militar obligatorio con el cual instalan su modelo de virilidad chauvinista en los jóvenes, han postulado también candidaturas propias, prestadas y alquiladas en todas sus variantes. Las hay desde pro-gubernamentales hasta de extrema derecha, todas en la coincidencia de la defensa de sus intereses corporativos.

In this way the Assembly becomes the stage for replacing representative, liberal democracy, which hundreds of thousands of us defeated in the streets without any leaders or parties, with a one-party democracy, which offers us the MAS as the alternative without an alternative. The magical Evo, that Evo who awakes identities, can thus become the identity antidote that inaugurates a closed regime around its leaders.

### **'I don't want to stand as candidate, I want to vomit': the election campaign**

It is not accidental, then, that the most conservative sectors had taken to the election campaign with enthusiasm. They made ridiculous reappearances that allowed them to prolong their agonizing mediocrity, exposing their gigantic portraits that, without a doubt, make us want to vomit.

The other sectors that make the most of this occasion are the proliferating *Evangelic churches and sects*. They have put forward their own candidates thanks to thousands of signatures from their faithful followers in order to defend their interests in the Assembly and, like every church, to slowly consume social life.

*The military forces*, which today enjoy important powers attributed to them in the current constitution, and which are not even prepared to give up the compulsory military service, through which they instill their model of chauvinist virility in the youth, have also put forward their own candidates. These come in all sorts of variations. They range from pro-governmentals to the extreme right, all of them agreeing in the defense of their corporate interests.

Hasta la *Iglesia Católica* en uso de su instinto de poder ha sufrido un repentino enamoramiento del MAS para frenar el proceso hacia un Estado Laico. La campaña se caracteriza por postergar, frenar y confundir los procesos de recreación política que una sociedad tan dinámica como la boliviana se había propuesto.

Nosotras, las *Mujeres Creando*, agitadoras callejeras, autónomas, autoconvocadas de toda la vida. Mujeres que hemos cuestionado la democracia representativa y la visión de igualdad postulada por la tecnocracia de género hemos postulado una candidatura, entrando así con nuestra locura a un terreno que es el de la farsa de la representación. Es una candidatura casi diminuta que ha entrado por una rajadura de la ley, de la institución y del sistema, como el agua de la lluvia que se filtra buscando y creando al mismo tiempo goteras. Rajadura en el techo de las casas, del Palacio y de las instituciones desde donde dejamos gotear nuestra disidencia.

Para decir que las mujeres somos un sujeto político al cual por siglos se nos niega el derecho a hablar, al cual se nos vacía de contenidos propios sea con argumentos de complementariedad, de sometimiento, de exclusión o de inclusión. Todas equivalen al final al mismo resultado, las mujeres son ahistoricas, apolíticas e invisibles. Y todo pacto social es un pacto entre categorías de hombres sea cual fuere la cultura a la que pertenecen, el color de piel que tengan, la clase social a la que pertenezcan o la ideología a la cual se adscriban; pacto social quiere decir pacto de convivencia a medida de los intereses de categorías de hombres en torno de proyectos hegemónicos de unos sobre otros.

Hoy en Bolivia tanto el indigenismo como el izquierdismo se repiten y se encuentran con el neoliberalismo en la misma postura

Using its power instinct, even the *Catholic Church* has suddenly fallen in love with the MAS in order to stop the process towards a Secular State. The campaign is characterized by the postponing, stopping and confusing of the political regeneration processes that such a dynamic society, as the Bolivian one, had proposed.

We, the *Mujeres Creando* (Creating Women), street agitators, autonomous, self-convoked for all our lives; we, the women who have questioned representative democracy and the vision of equal rights posed by gender technocracy, have put forward a candidate, entering in our madness into a terrain that is a farce of representation. It is an almost dwarfish candidate which has entered through a crack in the law, the institution and the system, just as rain water seeps through cracks creating leaks at the same time. A crack in the roofs of the houses, the Palace and the institutions, through which we let our dissent leak.

This is to say that we, the women, are a political subject who over the centuries have been denied the right to speak, who have been emptied of their own contents with arguments of complementarity, submission, exclusion or inclusion. In the end, all of these produce the same result: women are ahistorical, apolitical and invisible. Every social pact is a pact between categories of men, whatever the culture they belong to, their skin color, their social class or the ideology they subscribe to; social pact means a pact for living together, suited to the interests of categories of men, around hegemonic projects of some over others.

Today in Bolivia both indigenism and leftism repeat themselves and join neoliberalism in the same phallic and patriarchal posture; a posture that ratifies

fálica y patriarcal, postura que ratifica la confusión entre proyecto social y proyecto de ‘poder’, el control de la sociedad, el sometimiento del ‘otro’ y de la ‘otra’, como el único interés en torno del cual debe girar la historia y la política.

**‘No soy originaria, soy original’: El carácter colonial versus el carácter patriarcal del Estado boliviano**

Como feministas no queremos estar ni debajo, ni encima de nadie, por eso no hallamos un lugar propio en este proceso. Inquilinas cuasi indeseables de la candidatura que postulamos usamos ese espacio para afirmar que no es posible la descolonización del Estado sin su despatriarcalización.

Afirmamos que el ‘pacto social’ descansa sobre un contrato sexual que nos ha expropriado a las mujeres la soberanía sobre nuestros cuerpos. Y que ese es un fenómeno de todos los sistemas políticos, de todas las ideologías y de todas las culturas. La renovación de ese pacto social que no ponga en cuestión el contrato sexual que lo sostiene reitera formas de sometimiento colonial y patriarcal al mismo tiempo. Y no es la mirada sobre culturas ‘supuestamente’ originarias el mecanismo que nos permita descolonizar nuestra sociedad ni hacerla más plena, más vivible y más libre.

La reivindicación de ‘lo originario’ como lo puro, como la cultura que construye nación, proyecto de poder y luego nacionalismo nos conduce a la renovación patriarcal y colonial del poder. Donde el poder ejerce simplemente poder con un mero cambio de actores.

Una de esas muestras es hoy el andinocentrismo con el que se pretende reinterpretar la sociedad boliviana. Nuestra

the confusion between social project and ‘power’ project, the control of society, the submission of the ‘other’ and the ‘female other’, as the only interests around which history and politics must revolve.

**‘I am not an original person, I am original’: The colonial versus the patriarchal character of the Bolivian State**

As feminists, we don’t want to be under or over anyone; that’s why we can’t find our own place in this process. Presenting almost undesirable tenants for this candidature, we use this space to state that the decolonization of the State is not possible without its depatriarchalization.

We state that the ‘social pact’ rests on a sexual contract that has expropriated the sovereignty of women over our bodies. This is a phenomenon of all political systems, all ideologies and all cultures. Every restoration of this social pact that doesn’t question the sexual contract that supports it reaffirms forms of both colonial and patriarchal submission at the same time. The gaze at cultures that are ‘supposedly’ original is not the mechanism that will allow us to decolonize our society or to make it fuller, more livable and freer.

The recovery of ‘the original’ as the pure, as the culture that builds the nation, the power project and then nationalism, drives us towards a patriarchal and colonial renewal of power, where power simply exercises power with a mere change of actors.

An illustration of this is the ‘andinocentrism’ through which they try to reinterpret Bolivian society. Our society is not a society of pure, original, indigenous people versus undesirable

sociedad no es una sociedad de indígenas originarios puros versus mestizos blancoides indeseables. Es harto más compleja que eso, es una sociedad donde como en todas las sociedades del mundo no hay culturas puras, ni estáticas, ni territoriales. Es una sociedad como todas las sociedades del mundo de mezclas y mestizajes muchos de ellos inclusive mestizajes forzosos. Es una sociedad de desobediencias y mutaciones culturales donde la revolución tecnológica es uno de los almibares para todos los jóvenes y las jóvenes que gracias a la piratería la conquistan para su cotidiano chatear y navegar con el mundo. Es una sociedad como todas las sociedades del mundo donde también los y las actores sociales construimos cultura y podemos hablar así de una cultura de jóvenes, de una cultura urbana, de una y otra y otra cultura, de una cultura de maricones y de una cultura de la calle y las ambulantes que transforman culturalmente el sentido de la calle y del espacio público por ejemplo.

No somos ‘originarias obedientes’ y por eso y porque ponemos en cuestión los mandatos culturales empezando por la ropa y terminando en los placeres. Por eso y gracias a esa desobediencia que nos hace felices planteamos un proyecto societal descolonizador y despatriarcalizador que tiene como cuestionamiento principal el surgimiento de nacionalismos.

Quieren sustituir el proyecto de Estado Nación unitario por un proyecto de plurinacionalismos autónomos para abrir la pugna eterna por tierra, por recursos, por poder y por control. No queremos estar encima ni debajo y por eso impugnamos ese proyecto con nuestro cuerpo y nuestra piel sensible, sensual y abierta al pecado.

whitish *mestizos*. It is much more complex than that; it is a society where, like in every society in the world, there are no pure, nor static, nor territorial cultures. It is a society, like every society in the world, made of mixes and crossbreedings, many of them even forced crossbreedings. It is a society of disobedience and cultural mutations, where the technological revolution is one of the main attractions for all young men and women, who, thanks to piracy, have conquered chatting and navigating around the world for their daily lives. It is a society like every society in the world, where social actors and actresses also build cultures, and thus we can speak of a culture of youth, an urban culture, of a culture of one and another, of gay culture, and of street and walking cultures that culturally transform the meaning of the street and the public space for example.

As a result, we are not ‘obedient natives’, also because we question cultural mandates, starting with clothes and ending with pleasures. This is why, and thanks to this disobedience that makes us happy, we propose a social project for decolonization and depatriarchalization, which, first of all, has to question the rise of nationalisms.

They want to replace the project of a unitary Nation State with a project of multiple autonomous nationalisms, in order to open the door for the eternal struggle for land, resources, power and control. We don’t want to be over or under anyone, and that’s why we fight for this project with our body and our sensitive skin, sensual and open to sin.

**'La única lucha que se pierde es la que se abandona': la estrategia de las propuestas concretas**

Hemos desarrollado también un puñado de propuestas concretas que nacen desde nuestro cotidiano y por eso nos importan:

*Padre Nuestro si estas en los cielos libranos del poder de la Iglesia:*

Actualmente el Estado boliviano tiene una religión oficial que es la Católica, se garantiza la libertad de culto pero no se garantiza el carácter laico de los asuntos sociales. Es así que la Iglesia ha confabulado con el Poder Estatal en todo. Tenemos una clase de religión en todas las escuelas públicas, la Iglesia ejerce un montonazo de actividades no eclesiásticas y lo más grave es que hemos heredado en nuestra constitución y en todo el ordenamiento jurídico el concepto judeocristiano de familia.

Por eso plantear el Estado laico es recuperar la hora de religión de los colegios y ponerla por ejemplo al servicio de una educación sexual laica y al derecho de conocer nuestros cuerpos desde el colegio y en el aula. Y más allá de eso es desvincular el concepto de familia de la visión judeocristiana patriarcal. Reconceptualizar la familia, honrando todas las complejas formas que ésta tiene en nuestra sociedad. Devolviéndole derechos a todas esas familias a las que supuestamente les falta 'un padre' que las dignifique ante la ley y la sociedad. Es abrir las puertas al reconocimiento de todas las formas de 'unión libre' que se dan más allá y más acá del Estado, esas formas bellas e insólitas que hacen posible la libertad en el amor y en la construcción de convivencia afectiva y solidaria. Esto por supuesto que incluye las parejas entre hombres y entre mujeres, las uniones comunitarias, las convivencias madre hijas, hijos, madre, abuela, tía, tío

**'The only fight we lose is the one we give up': the strategy of concrete proposals**

We have also developed a handful of concrete proposals that arise from our daily life; and this is why for us it is important that:

*Our Father, if you are in Heaven, free us from the power of the Church:*

At present the Bolivian State has an official religion, which is Catholic; freedom of worship is guaranteed but not the secular character of social affairs. In this way the Church has conspired with State Power in everything. We have Religious Education in every public school; the Church exercises a lot of non-ecclesiastical activities, and the worst thing is that we have inherited the Judeo-Christian concept of family with our constitution and all legislation.

That's why posing a secular State is to rescue the hour of Religious Education in schools and use it, for example, for a secular sexual education and for the right to know our bodies in school and the classroom. To go further, there is a need to dissociate the concept of family from the Judeo-Christian patriarchal view. We need to reconceptualize the family, honoring all the complex shapes it has in our society, and restoring the rights of those families that supposedly lack 'a father', which dignifies them before the law and society. This opens the doors for the recognition of all forms of 'free bonds' that exist outside the State, those beautiful and uncommon forms that make possible freedom in love and the construction of affective and solidary togetherness. This includes, of course, partnerships between men and between women, communal bonds between mothers, daughters, sons, grandmother,

hasta donde la complejidad lo ensanche sin imposiciones, sin modelos y sobretodo sin imponer sufrimientos ni carencias, ni ausencias a quienes tienen derecho a crecer y vivir en afecto y libertad.

*El Che y el Evo son lo mismo Padres Irresponsables:*

La sociedad les ha expropiado a las mujeres su maternidad, se valora y protege la reproducción, al mismo tiempo que se impone la maternidad como sentido de vida a las mujeres. Sin embargo se subordina la maternidad a la existencia de un padre que le da legitimidad. Mientras las mujeres dan la vida, los padres tienen el poder de otorgar el lugar social convirtiendo así al hecho de dar la vida en un acto secundario. Allí es que surge el concepto de madre soltera al cual se le otorga una carga de condena en algunos casos, en otros una carga de una suerte de madre abandonada. La recuperación de las madres de su maternidad es un tema cultural, pero pasa también por el hecho jurídico del apellido paterno que en nuestra sociedad es el primero, es el que cuenta y es al mismo tiempo el mecanismo de reconocimiento o desconocimiento que tiene cada hombre respecto de los hijos y las hijas. Por ello proponemos la filiación materna, es decir que los niños y las niñas lleven por primero el apellido de sus madres. Esto recupera el lugar de las madres donde las mujeres pasamos de ser objetos de la reproducción a sujetos de la maternidad. Recupera también el lugar de las hijas en la familia, lugar que todas las cifras nos demuestran que es desvalorado respecto de sus hermanos varones.

Este hecho también tendría consecuencias en toda la jurisprudencia de familia en cuanto a lo que se llama la patria-potestad que es un concepto de autoridad patriarcal sobre los hijos y las hijas.

aunt, uncle; bonds whose complexity widens without impositions, without models, and, above all, without imposing sufferings, lacks or absences upon those who have the right to grow and live with affection and freedom.

*Che and Evo are both irresponsible Fathers:*

Society has expropriated from women their maternity. Reproduction is valued and protected, but at the same time maternity is imposed on women as the meaning for their lives. However, maternity is subordinated to the existence of a father who legitimizes it. While women give life, the fathers have the power to grant a place in society, thus turning the fact of giving life into a secondary matter. This is the origin of the concept of the single mother to which in some cases a weight of condemnation is attached, and in other cases the weight of the fate of the abandoned mother. The recovery of mothers' maternity is a cultural issue, but it also has to do with the legal fact that in our society the first surname is the father's; it is the one that counts, and, at the same time, it is the mechanism of recognition or ignorance that every father has with regard to his sons and daughters. That's why we propose maternal filiation, that is, children carry their mother's surname as their first surname. This reclaims a place for mothers where women stop being objects of reproduction, becoming subjects of maternity. It also rescues the place of daughters in the family, a place, as all figures show, that undervalues them in relation to their male brothers.

This fact would also have consequences for family jurisprudence, with regard to the so-called paternal authority, which is a concept of patriarchal authority over sons and daughters.

*Soberanía en mi país y en mi cuerpo:*

También a las mujeres se nos ha expropiado el derecho de decidir sobre nuestro cuerpo y esto se presenta en el ordenamiento jurídico en varios lugares, uno de ellos es la penalización del aborto. La recuperación de la soberanía del cuerpo de las mujeres es un concepto más amplio que la mera despenalización del aborto y por eso consideramos que es fundamental introducir dentro de los régímenes especiales, concretamente uno que lleve el título de régimen constitucional de las mujeres. Se trata de un capítulo que permitiría concentrar todos aquellos derechos fundamentales y como el principal de todos ellos el derecho de las mujeres de decidir sobre su cuerpo.

*Todos los partidos son un arma cargada de sangre, machismo y corrupción:*

Romper con el monopolio que tienen los partidos respecto de la representación política a través de la apertura al ejercicio de representación directa de todas las formas de organización social que hay en la sociedad boliviana. Respecto de la representación de las mujeres es para nosotras fundamental impugnar las cuotas introducidas durante el período neoliberal y ratificadas por la izquierda-indigenista. Esta cuota convierte la representación política de las mujeres en una cuota biológica vacía de contenido, donde cualquier mujer desde su condición biológica de mujer representa a las mujeres en una suerte de representación no ideológica. Esta cuota ha sido además reforzada en su desideologización a partir del concepto de alteridad, alteridad que tiene como efecto la negación de la alianza política entre mujeres. Ambos son mecanismos que niegan la autonomía política de las mujeres, es decir el sentido de organizarse desde sí mismas por fuera de los partidos políticos y de las

*Sovereignty in my country and my body:*

We, the women, have also been expropriated of the right to decide about our bodies, and this is visible in several points of judicial legislation, one of them being the penalization of abortion. The recovery of women's sovereignty over their bodies is a wider concept than the mere decriminalization of abortion. That's why we deem it fundamental to introduce a set of special regulations; concretely, one that carries the title of constitutional regulations for women. It should consist of a chapter that allows the collection of all those fundamental rights, including the most important one, the right for women to decide about their bodies.

*All the parties are a weapon loaded with blood, male chauvinism and corruption:*

We need to break the monopoly that parties have with regard to political representation by way of opening the exercise of direct representation for all forms of social organization existing in Bolivian society. With regard to women's representation, we think it is essential to contest the quotas introduced during the neoliberal period and ratified by the indigenous Left. This quota turns the political representation of women into a biological quota without content, in which any woman, because of her biological condition of being a woman, represents all women in a kind of non-ideological representation. Furthermore, this quota has had its deideologization reinforced by the concept of alterity; an alterity that has the effect of denying a political alliance among women. Both of them are mechanisms that deny the political autonomy of women, that is, the right to organize themselves for themselves outside political parties and mixed organizations.

organizaciones mixtas.

*Que vivan los desertores, los llamados cobardes y todos los jóvenes que objetan el uso de las armas:*

Actualmente el servicio militar es obligatorio para los varones y desde la tecnocracia de género se ha impulsado la creación del servicio militar voluntario para las mujeres potenciando uno de los núcleos más densos de la cultura patriarcal en nuestras sociedades. El servicio militar se ha constituido en Bolivia en la escuela de la virilidad machista y en el mecanismo de adquisición de hombría. Por eso en las comunidades los jóvenes que regresan del servicio militar adquieren autoridad y son festejados por ello.

La objeción de conciencia es la puerta que permite cuestionar el valor del uso de las armas y de la existencia misma de un ejército en una sociedad. Es un derecho fundamental para todos los jóvenes la objeción de ese sentido de virilidad y la posibilidad de sustitución de este servicio por un servicio social que nos permita replantear a los jóvenes el sentido del servicio a la sociedad y el lugar y sentido de la ‘masculinidad’.

*Devolverle a la sociedad la Asamblea Constituyente abriendo espacios deliberativos desde la propia Asamblea:*

La Asamblea está atravesada por una serie de temas ejes para la sociedad boliviana, es una irresponsabilidad histórica dejarla en manos de los partidos políticos que además han llenado las listas en su mayoría con personajes que en muchos casos ni siquiera responden a sectores sociales. Hay de todo hasta cuotas maritales como la de la esposa del Alcalde de la ciudad de La Paz.

En otros casos los candidatos y las candidatas hacen planteamientos que nada tienen que ver con el constituyente porque

*Long live the deserters, the so-called cowards, and all young men who object to the use of arms:*

At present the military service is compulsory for men, and the gender technocracy has encouraged the creation of a voluntary military service for women, promoting one of the most solid kernels of patriarchal culture in our societies. In Bolivia the military service has become the school of chauvinist virility, and the mechanism for the acquisition of manliness. For this reason, the communities of youth who return from the military service acquire authority and are celebrated for that.

A conscious objection is the standpoint that allows the questioning of the value of the use of arms and the very existence of an army in a society. It is a fundamental right for all youth to object to that meaning of virility and to have the possibility of replacing that service with a social service, which allows us to repose with the youth the meaning of serving society and the place and meaning of ‘masculinity’.

*Returning the Constituent Assembly to society, opening deliberative spaces from within the Assembly itself:*

The Assembly is affected by several issues central to Bolivian society; it is of historic irresponsibility to leave it in the hands of political parties that have filled their lists mostly with people who in many cases don't even represent social groups. There's everything, even marital quotas, like that of the wife of the Mayor of the city of La Paz.

In other cases candidates draw up proposals that have nothing to do with the scenario of the Assembly because, in the case that they are elected, they will

si llegan a ser elegidos simplemente responderán a posturas que serán trazadas en otros espacios. Por otro lado la complejidad de los temas se convierte en una especie de mosaico imposible de armar desde una sola perspectiva. Por eso consideramos que el escenario de la asamblea plantea sobretodo un desafío metodológico que pueda recoger los saberes y visiones desde los y las actores y protagonistas de cada uno de los temas.

Por eso es urgente que una vez realizadas las elecciones se abran Asambleas pre-constituyentes regionales, departamentales, temáticas y por actores sociales.

Nosotras nos hemos planteado el propósito de convocar a una pre-constituyente de mujeres bajo el concepto de las mujeres como sujeto político complejo.

PORQUE LAS MUJERES NO SOMOS  
CUOTA BIOLOGICA,  
NI COSTILLA DE ADAN,  
EVA A LA CONSTITUYENTE.

Junio 2006

simply respond to attitudes that can be traced to other spaces. On the other hand, the complexity of issues becomes a kind of mosaic impossible to assemble from a single perspective. That's why we deem it necessary that, above all, the Assembly poses a methodological defiance that could gather together all knowledges and visions of the actors/actresses and protagonists for each issue.

That's why it is urgent for the social actors, once the election is finished, to open regional, departmental and thematic pre-Constituent Assemblies.

We have thought about calling for a women's pre-Assembly under the concept of women as complex political subjects.

BECAUSE WOMEN ARE NOT A  
BIOLOGICAL QUOTA,  
OR ADAM'S RIB,  
EVE FOR THE ASSEMBLY.

June 2006

**notas**  
**notes**

\* Este artículo ha sido publicado en [http://mujeres.im-mi.com/pag/articulos/2006/arti\\_evodescolonizacion.htm](http://mujeres.im-mi.com/pag/articulos/2006/arti_evodescolonizacion.htm).

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## Feminicidio, Estado y Violencia en Ciudad Juárez

Servando Pineda Jaimes

## Feminicide, State and Violence in Juárez City

translated by María de la O López  
Abeledo



En Ciudad Juárez, desde 1993 a la fecha se ha presentado un permanente y sistemático asesinato de mujeres por diversas causas, y hasta el momento y pese a que existen más de 10 instancias de gobierno encargadas de atender los efectos de este fenómeno, y nueve informes sobre el tema por parte de instancias locales, nacionales e internacionales, no es posible conocer con precisión el número de víctimas a lo largo de todos estos años, a causa quizás, de la indiferencia por estos hechos, que la autoridad no se motivó a llevar un seguimiento puntual y ordenado, o a hacer un registro serio de estos crímenes.

Pero al margen de esta disputa por las cifras, que sólo ha dado pie a definir a quién se le escucha y a quién se le estigmatiza, un aspecto importante en todo caso es tratar de definir no sólo quién las asesina, pues esa es tarea de la justicia mexicana de acuerdo a nuestro sistema jurídico, sino hay un asunto altamente significativo: ¿por qué las matan? Y es aquí donde también aparecen variables

Since 1993 there has been a permanent and systematic murder of women in Juárez City for diverse reasons. Up to now, even though there have been more than 10 governmental institutions in charge of the effects of this phenomenon, and nine reports about this issue have been prepared by local, national and international institutions, it has not been possible to find out the exact number of victims throughout these years. This may be caused by indifference regarding these facts, or because the authorities are not motivated to make a detailed and organized enquiry, or to make a serious recording of these crimes.

Apart from this argument about figures, which has merely made clear who is listened to and who is stigmatized, an important aspect of this case is not only to find out who the murderers are, which is the task of the Mexican justice in accordance with our legal system, but there is an extremely significant

que si bien no definen en su totalidad el problema, al menos nos dan una pista de la dimensión y magnitud de esta tragedia.

## Antecedentes



Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua se localiza al norte de México y sólo el Río Bravo (Río Grande) la divide de El Paso, Texas y a unas cuantas millas se localiza también Las Cruces, Nuevo México, en su conjunto forman una región conocida antaño como Paso del Norte, integrada por estas tres localidades, tres estados (dos del lado estadounidense y uno del lado mexicano) y dos países.

Estas ciudades son el claro ejemplo de la mundialización. Tan cerca y tan distintas, tan próximas y tan olvidadas, tan juntas y tan contrastantes. Mientras del lado mexicano, Ciudad Juárez es considerada la quinta ciudad más importante del país, El Paso y Las Cruces son de las más pobres de los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, en términos reales, el nivel de vida en éstas es muy superior al de nosotros los juarenses. Dicho de otra manera, se vive mejor allá, que aquí. Los contrastes son muchos. Ciudad Juárez tiene altos niveles de criminalidad, pero El Paso está entre las 10 ciudades más seguras de los Estados Unidos. Mientras en Juárez se mata a cientos de mujeres, allá tienen los índices de homicidios más bajos del país. ¿Qué sucede

question: why have they been killed? It is here where some variables appear, which, even if not defining the problem entirely, at least give us some clues about the dimension and magnitude of this tragedy.

## Background



Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, is located in the north of Mexico, separated from El Paso (Texas) by the Rio Bravo (Río Grande), and some miles away is Las Cruces, New Mexico. Together they form the region long ago known as Paso del Norte, comprising these three localities, three states (two on the side of the United States and one on the Mexican side) and two countries.

These towns are a clear example of globalization. So near and so different, so close and so forgotten, so united and so full of contrasts. While, on the Mexican side, Juárez is considered to be the fifth most important city of the country, El Paso and Las Cruces are among the poorest cities in the United States. However, in real terms, the standard of living in these cities is much higher than ours in Juárez. In other words, people live better there than here. There are many contrasts. Juárez City has high levels of criminality, but El Paso is among the 10 safest cities in the United

entonces? Algunas otras pistas nos pueden ayudar a tratar de entender el problema.

## Las voces del silencio

Lo primero que vio la ciudad es un enfrentamiento cultural para el cual no estaba preparada. De ser una pacífica y minúscula villa a principios de 1900, a partir de la década de los cuarenta, comienza a experimentar un veloz incremento poblacional, producto de la constante y permanente migración hacia esta ciudad de la frontera mexicana, debido al establecimiento de la Industria Maquiladora de Exportación que comenzó a demandar mano de obra en grandes cantidades, producto de la firma del Tratado de Libre Comercio. Aunado al ciclo de crisis económicas por las que entró el país, lo anterior explica cómo es que Juárez y otras ciudades de la frontera se convirtieron en polos atractivos para vivir. Sin embargo, la ciudad no contaba con ninguna red de protección ciudadana y cultural para hacer frente a una situación de tales dimensiones.

De pronto, los roles sociales se ven trastocados. Los hombres comienzan a ser desplazados de su estatus como proveedores del sustento familiar y esos lugares los ocupan poco a poco y masivamente las mujeres,<sup>1</sup> quienes de esta manera y debido al tipo de industria que se establece en la ciudad, asumen papeles que antaño no tenían. Así, el hombre comienza a ser despojado de la dominación que ejercía dentro de los tradicionales papeles que asumía en una cultura como la mexicana, donde está tan arraigado el machismo.

Bajo este nuevo esquema de desarrollo económico, el hombre ya no es el único sostén de la familia, ahora este papel lo asumen con mayor frecuencia las mujeres, quienes comienzan a ganar su emancipación

States. While in Juárez hundreds of women are murdered, El Paso has the lowest murder rate of the country. So, what is happening? Some other routes of enquiry can help us to understand the problem.

## Voices of silence

The first thing faced by the city was a cultural clash for which it was not prepared. Being a peaceful and tiny village at the beginning of 1900, in the 1940s it started to experience a fast increase of population, as a result of the constant and permanent migration to this city at the Mexican border. This was due to the opening of the Export Assembly Plant, which started to demand a large amount of workers after the signing of the Free Market Agreement. The cycle of economic crises the country entered explains why Juárez and other cities at the frontier became attractive regions to live in. However, the city could not rely on any civic or cultural protection network to face a situation with such dimensions.

Suddenly, social roles were transformed. Men started to be displaced from their status as family providers and their place was occupied, little by little, but with force, by women<sup>1</sup> who, due to the type of industry established in the city, assumed roles they previously did not have. Hence, men started to be deprived of the domination they used to exercise through the traditional roles assigned to them in a culture like the Mexican one, in which male chauvinism is deeply rooted.

Under this new scheme of economic development, men were no longer the only family providers. This role was now more frequently assumed by women,

económica. Descubren que su lugar no sólo está en el hogar, sino también afuera, no únicamente en la planta sino también en los lugares de diversión. Se hacen conscientes del control de sus vidas. Y esto, para una sociedad dominada por el machismo, es demasiado.

Ahora es frecuente que el hombre se quede en casa a cuidar a la familia, y sea la mujer la que trabaje. Por tanto, los hombres han dejado de monopolizar el discurso de ser el único proveedor del sustento familiar, ese lugar lo ocupan ahora las mujeres. Pero este proceso tiene sus consecuencias. Los índices de violencia familiar se han incrementado considerablemente. Por ejemplo, de acuerdo con un reporte del Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres de México (INMUJERES) elaborado en 2003, en el estado de Chihuahua, el 46.28% de las mujeres sufre algún tipo de violencia, particularmente aquella de tipo emocional que llega al 31.6 por ciento.

who started to acquire their economic emancipation. They discovered that their place was not just at home, but outside as well; not only in the factory but also in places of entertainment. They became conscious of their control of their lives. This was too much for a society dominated by male chauvinism.

Now it is quite common for the man to stay at home to take care of the family, whilst the woman is the one who works. Men no longer monopolize the discourse of being the only family provider; that place is now occupied by women. However, this process has its consequences. Domestic violence has increased considerably. For example, according to a report from 2003 of the National Institute of the Mexican Women (INMUJERES), 46.28% of women suffered some type of violence in the state of Chihuahua; in particular types of emotional violence reached 31.6%.

## El proceso industrializador

Aunado a ello, no hay que olvidar el proceso de industrialización que vivió la ciudad, que se dio coincidentemente con el desplome de las actividades correspondientes al sector primario, fuente generadora de la riqueza de esta región en aquel momento. Por ejemplo, la participación de la Populación Económicamente Activa (PEA) de la ciudad en el sector primario<sup>2</sup> cayó del 16.3 por ciento en 1940 a 6.9 en 1960. A la par, el desarrollo del sector terciario,<sup>3</sup> experimentó un acelerado aumento del 57.4 por ciento en 1940 al 59.4 por ciento en 1960.<sup>4</sup> Cinco años más tarde es cuando, oficialmente, se instala la Industria Maquiladora en la ciudad. Estos acelerados cambios en las actividades económicas de la región vinieron a modificar la estructura no sólo

## The process of industrialization

In considering these facts, we should not forget the process of industrialization experienced by the city. This coincided with the collapse of the primary sector, which used to be the source of the region's wealth until that moment. For example, the participation of the city's active economic population in the primary sector<sup>2</sup> fell from 16.3% in 1940 to 6.9% in 1960. At the same time, the development of the tertiary sector<sup>3</sup> experienced an accelerating increase from 57.4% in 1940 to 59.4% in 1960.<sup>4</sup> It was five years later that the Assembly Plant was officially installed in the city. These accelerating changes in the region's economic activities led to the modification not only of the urban

urbana, sino en la composición demográfica. La llegada de maquiladoras requirió de gran cantidad de mano de obra, no necesariamente calificada, sino especializada en determinadas actividades repetitivas y en ocasiones incluso propias de alguno de los dos géneros (fundamentalmente el femenino), sino que también transformó el rostro de Ciudad Juárez. La mancha urbana se expandió, la demanda de servicios superó la capacidad de respuesta del gobierno local y como consecuencia, hubo un trastocamiento en la forma de desarrollo económico y social de la ciudad.

De esta manera, Chihuahua se ubica entre los cuatro estados del país con más alta tasa de mortalidad producto de los homicidios. En 2002, el porcentaje de muertes producto de lesiones era de 64%, y en mortalidad por agresiones, el estado se encontró entre los primeros siete al tener porcentajes entre 14 y 20 muertes por cada cien mil habitantes.

Respecto a los asesinatos que ocurren en la ciudad, por cada 10 que suceden, uno es en contra de mujeres y los nueve restantes son hombres, en su mayoría derivados de su relación con el narcotráfico. No obstante esta desproporción, el asesinato contra mujeres ha ido en aumento en los últimos 12 años. Así, en 1993, cuando se registraron los primeros crímenes, fueron 18. Dos años después la cifra se elevó hasta 37 por año y para 2005, el número total llega a 363 - según el Programa Integral de Seguridad Pública con datos de la Fiscalía Mixta. Las cifras, varían de acuerdo a quién las emita, pero van de esa cantidad a las 400 en algunos casos. Lo cierto es que esta disputa ha dado como resultado la aparición de discursos polarizantes en la ciudad y que tienden a ser hegemónicos. Por un lado se encuentran las y los familiares de las víctimas y las organizaciones no gubernamentales que mantienen una tenaz lucha por denunciar y hacer visibles estos

structure, but also the demographic composition. The arrival of the assembly plants required a large amount of workers, not necessarily qualified, but specialized in certain repetitive activities, usually easily performed by women. It also transformed the appearance of Juárez City. The urban area expanded and the demand for services exceeded the capacity of the local government. Consequently, the form of economic and social development of the city was a mistake.

Chihuahua is among the four states in the country with the highest mortality rate resulting from homicide. In 2002 the percentage of deaths provoked by injuries was 64%, and the state was among the first seven regarding mortality through aggressions, reaching between 14 and 20 deaths for every hundred thousand inhabitants.

Regarding murders occurring in the city, for every 10 taking place, one is of a woman. The remaining nine are men, mostly because of their connection to the drug trade. Despite this disproportion, the number of murders against women has increased in the last 12 years. In 1993, when the first murders were registered, there were 18. Two years later, the amount increased to 37, and in 2005 the total number reached 363, according to the Comprehensive Public Safety Program with data from the office of the District Attorney. The figures vary depending on who issues them, but they range from the number mentioned to 400 in some cases. The truth is that the dispute around the number of victims has resulted in polarized discourses in the city, which tend to be hegemonic. On the one hand, there are the relatives of the victims and non-governmental organizations who maintain a persistent struggle to report and make these facts

hechos y por el otro, los grupos empresariales y gubernamentales que tratan de minimizar el problema.

Producto de esta disputa, se dan movimientos de inclusión o exclusión. Se está a favor o se está en contra de la ciudad. Si se denuncian los hechos, de inmediato se le estigmatiza a la persona o a la organización que lo haga. Se les acusa de ‘manchar la imagen de la ciudad’, de ‘denigrarla’. Lo que menos importa atrás de estos discursos es la imagen, sino el que se afecte el modelo de desarrollo económico basado en la industria maquiladora. Lo que no se menciona, es que no es la ciudad la que mata a sus mujeres, sino se trata de personas con nombres y apellidos a quienes se debe responsabilizar de estos hechos. Nada de esto se podría lograr sin la complicidad de algunos medios de comunicación, quienes –como parte de ese gran capital– reproducen estos discursos hegemónicos de la clase<sup>5</sup> empresarial, que buscan preservar el *status quo* predominante.

visible. On the other hand, there are business and governmental groups that try to minimize the problem.

As a result of this dispute, movements of inclusion and exclusion have arisen. Either you are in favor or against the city. If the facts are reported, the person or organization responsible for the report is immediately stigmatized. They are accused of ‘damaging the image of the city’, of ‘denigrating it’. In fact, these discourses about the image are less important than the defense of the model of development based on assembly plants. What is never mentioned is that it is not the city which kills these women. People with name and surname must be held responsible for these facts. Nothing like this could take place without the complicity of some mass media, which –as they are part of big capital – reproduce these hegemonic discourses of the business class<sup>5</sup> and try to preserve the predominant *status quo*.

## El feminicidio en Juárez

La disputa se refleja claramente en la forma en que se conceptualiza este problema, donde incluso a la confusión –deliberada o por torpeza– se suman discursos con resabios del viejo machismo mexicano que intenta comparar la naturaleza de los crímenes contra mujeres y los de hombres.<sup>6</sup> Me explico. A la aparición de los primeros cuerpos en 1993, uno de los principales problemas que enfrentó la ciudad es cómo conceptualizar el fenómeno. Evidentemente se trataba de asesinatos, pero sus características y las condiciones en que ocurrían los hacían diferentes de lo que se conocía hasta el momento. Los motivos por los que se comenzó a asesinar mujeres en la ciudad, eran muy diferentes a los móviles de

## The femicide in Juárez

The dispute is clearly reflected in the way the problem is conceptualized: the confusion – deliberate or caused by stupidity – is aggravated by the discourses of unpleasant, traditional Mexican chauvinism, which intend to compare the nature of the crimes against women with those against men.<sup>6</sup> Let me explain. When the first bodies appeared in 1993, one of the main problems faced by the city was how to conceptualize the phenomenon. Obviously, they were murders, but their characteristics and the conditions in which they occurred made them different from what was known before. The reasons why women started to be murdered in the city were very different from the motives for the

los crímenes de hombres. No se trataba del despojo de bienes materiales o de ajustes de cuentas con el crimen organizado, sino que “se aproximan más a mecanismos simbólicos de poder contra las mujeres. Especialmente la crueldad sobre los cuerpos y la vida de las mujeres habla de nuevos componentes en la violencia de género”.<sup>7</sup>

Desde el punto de vista del género, esto nos lleva a diferenciar entre el homicidio que se refiere al asesinato de hombres y el feminicidio,<sup>8</sup> al asesinato de mujeres, como lo define la Dra. Julia Monárrez, del Colegio de la Frontera Norte, una de las pioneras en el estudio de este fenómeno social. Monárrez, incluso, ha diferenciado conceptualmente que dentro del feminicidio puede existir otra categoría que ella identifica como el ‘feminicidio serial sistémico’, para distinguir aquellos asesinatos que presentan características similares, entre ellas la violencia sexual a la que fue sometida la víctima antes de ser asesinada. No sólo podemos entenderlo como lo define Marcela Lagarde, otra estudiosa del tema, para quien el feminicidio, es el asesinato de una mujer ocurrido en un contexto de omisiones, negligencias o complicidades, sino que también existe el feminicidio íntimo – los crímenes de odio contra las mujeres por el simple hecho de ser mujeres, perpetrados por las parejas, sean producto de una relación ocasional o estable. Sin omitir que también se han registrado asesinatos por imitación y que un número indeterminado de ellos son producto de asesinos seriales, alentados por la impunidad en relación al asesinato de una mujer.<sup>9</sup>

El punto es importante, porque tiene que ver con la forma en que el Estado mexicano asume el problema, a través de sus distintas etapas: la negación de los hechos, el rechazo y minimización del fenómeno hasta llegar a su aceptación.

murders of men. They were not related to theft or organized crime; rather, “they seem to be symbolic mechanisms of power against women. Especially the cruelty against the bodies and lives of these women shows new aspects of the gender violence”.<sup>7</sup>

The point of view of gender leads us to differentiate between homicide, which refers to the murder of men, and feminicide,<sup>8</sup> the murder of women, as defined by Dr. Julia Monárrez from the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, one of the pioneers in the study of this social phenomenon. Monárrez has also conceptually differentiated another category included in feminicide, which she identifies as ‘serial systemic feminicide’, in order to distinguish those murders that present similar characteristics to the sexual violence victims are subjected to before the murder. We can not only understand feminicide as defined by Marcela Lagarde. Other studies of the topic see feminicide as the murder of a woman occurring in a context of omissions, negligence or complicity, but it can also exist as intimate feminicide – the hate crimes against woman for the simple fact of being a woman and committed by her occasional or stable partner. We can also not overlook the fact that imitation murders have been reported and that an uncertain number of them were committed by serial killers, encouraged by the impunity regarding the murder of women.<sup>9</sup>

This point is important, because it is related to the way the Mexican State has dealt with the problem across its different stages: denial of the facts, rejection and minimization of the phenomenon, and its mere acceptance.

Hence, in relation to the Mexican State,

Así, para el Estado mexicano no es una discusión sólo conceptual, sino tiene que ver con la forma en que enfrenta el problema, para evadir, por ejemplo, la reparación del daño, debido a su inefficiencia para resolver los crímenes por la vía de la localización y sentencia del o los homicidas responsables de estos delitos. Para ellos, la violencia familiar no es un ámbito de su competencia. De esta forma, si la mujer es asesinada por su pareja sentimental, corresponde al ámbito de lo privado y por tanto, el Estado se niega a intervenir y reserva para sí, aquellos donde puede asumir que ocurrieron en el ámbito de la esfera pública, pero olvida que es su obligación el garantizar el derecho a la vida, independientemente que un asesinato siempre será de interés público.

En ese sentido, podemos asumir que el Estado ha fracasado en Ciudad Juárez respecto a este tema, al no poder garantizar la vida de las mujeres, este elemental derecho humano, y que ha dado pauta a elevados niveles de impunidad, pues se tiene la certeza de que siempre y cuando ocurra en el ámbito privado se puede disponer de la vida de las mujeres.

## Reflexión final

En este sentido, el gobierno federal vio el problema de los asesinatos desde un punto de vista policiaco, y no como un problema social. Lo que está en disputa no es la competencia jurídica para ver quién investiga un delito, sino lo que se le exigía era su intervención para ir al fondo del asunto de manera integral. Porque insisto, el encontrar al o los asesinos, sólo es una parte del todo. Lo de fondo es: ¿por qué se asesina con tanta facilidad aquí a las mujeres? Y eso tiene repercusiones e implicaciones que van desde lo sociológico (la anomia social de la que habla Durkheim) hasta cuestiones de género (alteraciones en

this is not only a conceptual discussion. It is also a matter of how it faces up to the problem in order, for example, to escape paying reparation damages that could be due to its inefficiency to resolve the crimes and identify and sentence the murderer or murderers responsible for them. Domestic violence is not an area of competency for the Mexican State. If a woman is murdered by her partner, the case belongs to the private sphere and, therefore, the State refuses to intervene, reserving for itself the obligation to intervene only in the cases that happen in the public sphere. By adopting this position, the State ignores its duty to guarantee the right of life, meaning that a murder would always be a public interest.

In this sense we can assume that the State has failed in Juárez City regarding this issue. It has not been able to guarantee the life of the women, this elemental human right. Given the high levels of impunity, there is always the certainty that in the private sphere it is possible to have women's lives at one's disposal.

## Final reflections

The Federal Government has seen the problem of these murders from a police point of view, and not as a social problem. What is in dispute is not the jurisdictional competence to decide who should investigate a crime. What is expected, instead, is a thorough intervention of the Federal Government to confront the core of the problem. I thus insist that not finding the murderers is just part of a much larger problem. The core of it is: why are women murdered so easily here? This has repercussions and implications that include the sociological (Durkheim's social anomie), questions of

las relaciones entre hombres y mujeres) y económicas (la discusión a fondo del actual modelo maquilador, como motor del desarrollo de la ciudad, que tiene en los crímenes contra mujeres su rostro perverso); sin pasar por alto el aspecto político en torno a este grave problema. Incluso, por supuesto, la reparación del daño, que nos lleva a preguntarnos, ¿qué se ha hecho por los sobrevivientes de ese horror? Y entonces comenzaremos a redimensionar lo que se vive en Ciudad Juárez. La propuesta de este artículo es pues, redefinir el problema a partir de estos enfoques.

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gender (changes in the relationship between men and women), and the economy (the in-depth discussion of the current model of the assembly plant, as the engine of the development of the city, which shows its perverse face through the murders of women); not leaving aside the political aspect related to this serious problem. There is, of course, also the issue of reparation payments, which leads us to ask: what has been done for the survivors of this horror? Only then we will start to understand the dimension of what has been lived through in Juárez City. This article's proposal is, then, to redefine the problem departing from these foci.

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**notas**  
**notes**

- 1 Su incorporación masiva al mercado laboral se explica debido al tipo de industria que se estableció en la zona. No se trata de empresas que requieran mano de obra especializada, sino de mano de obra barata que realicen trabajos simples y repetitivos y en ocasiones de tales características que sólo las mujeres los pueden realizar incluso a veces, hasta por su constitución física.  
Their massive incorporation into the labor market is explained by the type of industry that was established in this area. These enterprises do not require specialised workers, but cheap ones, to perform simple and repetitive tasks. Some of these jobs only women can do, including sometimes because of their physical constitution.
- 2 Identificamos al sector primario como todas aquellas actividades que tienen que ver fundamentalmente con la agricultura, la ganadería y las actividades extractivas.  
By primary sector we mean those activities mainly related to agriculture, livestock and mining activities.
- 3 El sector terciario tiene que ver con el comercio, las comunicaciones y la prestación de servicios.  
The tertiary sector refers to commerce, communication and services in general.
- 4 Fuentes, C.M. (2003) 'Los cambios en la estructura intraurbana de Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua: de monocéntrica a multicéntrica', Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. En Plan Estratégico de Ciudad Juárez [www.planjuarez.org].
- 5 El concepto de clase, lo asumimos aquí desde el punto de vista de Gaetano Mosca.  
The concept of class assumed here follows the view of Gaetano Mosca.
- 6 Incluso hay editorialistas en los medios de comunicación, quienes sin ningún sustento ni rigor conceptual proponen que así como se habla de feminicidio, también se hable de 'hombricidio'.  
There are even mass media journalist who, without any support or conceptual rigor, propose the term 'hombricidio' (homicide of man).
- 7 Segundo Informe de Gestión de la Comisión para Prevenir y Erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres en Ciudad Juárez y los trabajos de Rita Segato: Territorio, soberanía y crímenes de Estado – "La escritura en el cuerpo de las mujeres asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez".

According to the Informe de Gestión de la Comisión para Prevenir y Erradicar violence against women in Ciudad Juárez; also according to the works of Rita Segato on territory, sovereignty and crimes of the state - “La escritura en el cuerpo de las mujeres asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez”.

- 8 El término feminicidio se debe a Diana E.H. Rusell, quien lo utilizó por primera vez en 1976. Victoria Sau lo incorpora en el idioma español y es Marcela Lagarde, quien lo aplica a la realidad mexicana y Julia Monárrez lo conceptualiza y lo introduce a la realidad de Juárez.

We owe the term femicide to Diane E.H. Rusell who used it for the first time in 1976. Victoria Sau incorporated the word into the Spanish language, and it is Marcela Lagarde who has used it in relation to the Mexican reality; Julia Monárrez has conceptualised and applied it to the reality of Juárez.

- 9 Segundo Informe de Gestión de la Comisión para Prevenir y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres en Ciudad Juárez. 2005.

According to the Report of the Commission for the Prevention and Erradication of Violence against Women in Juárez City, 2005.

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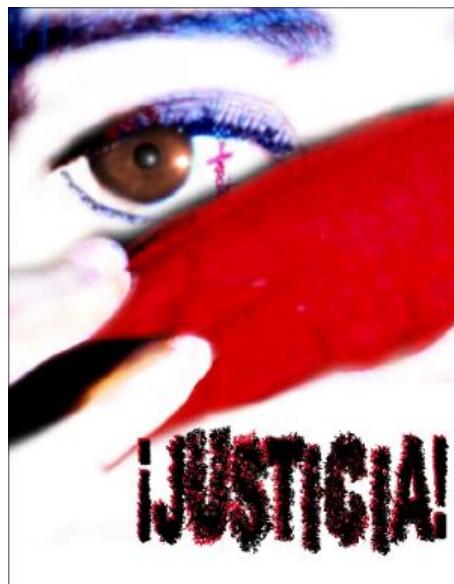
## Situación de los hijos e hijas de mujeres victimadas en Ciudad Juárez, México

Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa



## Situation of sons and daughters of murdered women in Juárez City, Mexico

May our Daughters Return Home



En Ciudad Juárez, ni el estado de Chihuahua ni las instancias federales se responsabilizan de la atención a las hijas y hijos, aún y cuando es evidente que han perdido sus derechos fundamentales después que su madre ha sido asesinada, toda vez que en muchos casos era ésta el único sostén de la familia, y pese a que algunas de ellas eran trabajadoras y aparentemente el sistema de seguridad social (Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, IMSS) debe pensionar a sus hijas y/o hijos garantizándoles la alimentación, educación, salud y vestido, esto sólo sucede cuando existe presión y mucha gestión, dado que la pensión en ocasiones suma los

In Juárez City neither the Chihuahua State nor the federal authorities accept responsibility for the care of daughters and sons, not even when it is evident that they have lost all their fundamental rights after their mothers were murdered. In many cases their mothers were the only supporters of the family, and, although some of them were workers and the social security system (Mexican Institute of Social Security, IMSS) is supposed to give a pension to their daughters and/or sons guaranteeing food, education, medical care and clothing, this only happens when there is a lot of pressure and action, bearing in mind that the

150 pesos mensuales por cada hija. En otros casos las mujeres a quienes se asesinó no tenían un trabajo, o al menos no con estos beneficios, y ahí los casos se tornan más difíciles, pues hay familias que tuvieron que regalar a los hijos, repartirlos y separarlos por la incapacidad económica para su sostén.

Entre estas criaturas existen hijas e hijos con necesidades fuertes de atención médica y psicológica, pero además económica, pues algunos quedaron al cuidado de sus abuelas y éstas no disponen de los recursos para sacarlos adelante. Algunas ya no trabajan debido a su edad, o bien. Otras vieron obligadas a regresar a la maquiladora para poder mantener a sus nietos. Algunos hijos simplemente quedaron solos. En algunos casos hay quienes han pasado su corta vida hasta en cinco hogares diferentes, para cuando alcanzan la adolescencia deseen independizarse, trayendo consecuencias graves, ya que en Ciudad Juárez la droga está al alcance de cualquiera y en cada esquina .

Podemos documentar algunos casos graves: los hijos de Lorenza Isela González (que uno de ellos vive actualmente en la calle, sosteniéndose solo), la hija de Perla Patricia Sáenz Díaz (que ha intentado suicidarse y que requiere de un apoyo psicológico sostenido), los hijos de Silvia Arce (uno de ellos estuvo en el tribunal para menores, otro en Estados Unidos, a cargo de gente amiga de la familia) los de Alejandra García, a cargo de su abuela (ahora enferma y cuyo esposo falleció el año pasado de cáncer; los niños han presentado enfermedades que pensábamos sólo las padecíamos la gente adulta, como la migraña), los tres hijos de Rebeca Contreras (separados y con miles de necesidades), los dos hijos de Erica Pérez Escobedo, que quedaron a cargo de su abuela materna, mujer que tuvo que ingeníárselas para generar recursos para sostenerlos y lucha

pension rarely amounts to 150 pesos per month for each child. In other cases, women who were murdered did not have a job or not one with these benefits. These cases turn out to be more difficult; there are families who have had to give their children away, distributing and separating them, because they were economically incapable to support them.

Among these children there are daughters and sons with strong needs for medical and psychological care, but also with financial needs, because some of them have stayed with their grandmothers who don't have the means to bring them up. Some of them don't work because of their age. Others felt obliged to go back to the assembly plant in order to be able to support their grandchildren. Some children are simply left on their own. In some cases there are those who have spent their short lives in up to five different homes, until they have reached adolescence and want to become independent. There are grave consequences, as drugs are within everyone's reach and on every corner in Juárez City.

We can report several serious cases: Lorenza Isela González's children (one of them living in the street at the moment, supporting himself on his own), Perla Patricia Sáenz Díaz's daughter (who has tried to commit suicide and requires sustained psychological support), Silvia Arce's sons (one of them was taken to the Juvenile Court, the other is in the United States with some family friends), Alejandra García's children, supported by their grandmother (now ill, and whose husband died of cancer last year; the children have suffered from diseases we thought only adults suffered from, for example migraines), Rebeca Contreras' children (separated and with a lot of needs), Erica Pérez Escobedo's two

por que las autoridades reconozcan que su hija fue asesinada (y no murió por sobredosis como las autoridades difundieron).

Cuando nuestra organización exige la atención para estos menores, se nos informa que es todo lo que se puede hacer por ellos (un apoyo quincenal de 900 pesos a cada familia que lo solicita, y el mismo gobierno decide quién si y quién no se hace acreedor de tal beneficio, con criterios muy diferentes en cada caso, una ayuda selectiva, pues).

Por otra parte, para los menores que están solos y en la calle no hay instancia alguna que pueda encargarse de ellos, según se nos informó, pues la única institución que había de este tipo fue cerrada en la actual administración municipal. Es desesperante cuando buscas una ayuda para resolver algunos de estos problemas, que ninguna puerta se te abre y te dejan sin opción para nada. Frustra el saber que esos niños tendrán que crecer en la calle y sin educación, porque no existe responsabilidad alguna para con ellos.

Esto es sólo una muestra de los casos que podemos documentar, pero existen más historias cuyas familias no pertenecen a nuestro grupo, y a esto habrá que agregarle cómo impactó la tragedia a otros niños y niñas familiares de las mujeres asesinadas, como hermanos y hermanas, sobrinas, etc.

En ese contexto, nuestra organización realiza diversas actividades: acompañar y orientar a las familias cuyas hijas han desaparecido; reclamar la justicia jurídica y social para las familias afectadas; promover programas de rehabilitación ocupacional para atender la salud física y afectiva de integrantes de las familias que lo soliciten; impulsar la modificación, elaboración y revisión de artículos de la ley contenidos en el Código Penal del Estado de Chihuahua que permiten estos y otros hechos violentos;

sons, who are in charge of their maternal grandmother, who had to somehow find resources to support them and, at the same time, fight the authorities to recognize that her daughter was murdered (and did not die of an overdose, as the authorities claimed).

When our organization demands attention for these juniors, we are informed that this is all they can do for them (a twice-monthly grant of 900 pesos for each family that applies for it, the government itself deciding who is and who is not worthy of the benefit, with very different criteria for each case; it is, therefore, a selective help).

Regarding the minors who are alone and in the street, we have been informed that there is not a single institution that can take care of them, since the only institution of this type was closed in the current municipal administration. It is despairing to look for help to solve some of these problems, to find all doors closed and be left with no options. It is frustrating to know that these children will have to grow up in the streets and without education, because no one is responsible for them.

This is only a sample of all the cases we can document, but there are other stories of families that are not part of our group. We should also think about how this tragedy affects other boys and girls who were relatives of these murdered women, brothers and sisters, nieces, etc.

In this context our organization realizes a diverse set of activities, including: accompanying and advising the families whose daughters have disappeared; demanding legal and social justice for the affected families; promoting programs for occupational rehabilitation to assist the physical and mental health with

informar oportunamente a la comunidad nacional e internacional acerca de los asesinatos, desapariciones y violaciones a los derechos humanos de mujeres en el Estado de Chihuahua; promover entre ciudadanos y ciudadanas de cualquier país, organismos internacionales, los gobiernos y las ONG's, que se pronuncien en contra de los asesinatos y desapariciones de mujeres y a favor de un alto a la impunidad de que gozan actualmente estos crímenes; demandar que desde la comunidad nacional e internacional se obligue a las autoridades locales, estatales y federales de México, a que destinen las personas y los recursos materiales necesarios para la búsqueda de la solución a esta problemática; difundir pronunciamientos, informes y diagnósticos que organizaciones e instituciones nacionales e internacionales hagan en relación con la situación que viven las mujeres en el Estado de Chihuahua.

requirements of the family members; exerting pressure for the modification, elaboration and revision of articles of the Criminal Code of the State of Chihuahua which permit these and other violent facts; informing the national and international community about these murders, disappearances and violations of women's human rights in the State of Chihuahua; promoting the idea that citizens of any country, international organizations, governments and NGOs declare themselves against the murders and disappearances of women and in favor of stopping the impunity these crimes enjoy today; demanding that the national and international communities pressure Mexico's local, state and federal authorities to assign the people and resources necessary to find a solution for these problems; disseminating declarations, reports and analyses by national and international organizations and institutions regarding the way women live in the State of Chihuahua.

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*Nuestras hijas de regreso a casa* (NHRC) es una asociación civil fundada por familiares y amistades de jovencitas desaparecidas o asesinadas en el Estado de Chihuahua. Para enfrentar esta situación de la pérdida de nuestras hijas adoptamos una actitud activa que nos permite salir de la impotencia al denunciar los hechos y exigir a las autoridades para que respondan a nuestra demanda de justicia. La organización surge a principios del 2001. NHRC integra a familias de Ciudad Juárez, sumándose desde entonces a nuestra labor cientos de personas: defensores de derechos humanos, profesionales, artistas, académicas, psicólogos, etc., de origen tanto nacional como internacional, y de manera lamentable, más familias afectadas por estos hechos.

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*May our daughters return home* (NHRC) is a civil association founded by relatives and friends of missing or assassinated young girls in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. In order to face this situation of the loss of our daughters, we adopt an active attitude that allows us to abandon impotence denouncing the facts and demanding responses from the authorities. The organization started at the beginning of 2001. NHRC brings together families of Juárez City and hundreds of people more: human rights activists, professionals, artists, academics, psychologists, etc., who come from Mexico and abroad, and lamentably, many more families affected by this situation.

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# **Los límites del desempleo estructural como disciplinador social**

Miguel Mazzeo

# **The limits of structural unemployment as a social discipliner**

translated by María de la O López Abeledo

Lo esencial no es lo que se ha hecho del hombre, sino lo que él hace con lo que se ha hecho de él. Lo que se ha hecho del hombre son las estructuras, los conjuntos significantes que estudian las ciencias humanas. Lo que él hace es la historia misma, la superación real de esas estructuras en una praxis totalizadora. (Jean Paul Sarte)

Desde la última dictadura militar (1976-1983), pero con más intensidad en los años 90, se desarrollaron las políticas que ‘exorcizaron’ al trabajo del cuerpo del capital y deconstruyeron la vieja centralidad del trabajo asalariado mientras que reificaban al capital. La política económica propiciada por la dictadura, basada en la desindustrialización sistemática del país, tenía horizontes políticos (sólo basta leer la entrelínea del ‘Plan Económico’ del ministro José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz), perseguía el objetivo de consolidar un nuevo bloque dominante y desestructurar el ‘mundo’ de los trabajadores, sus organizaciones, su identidad, su cultura para arrebatarles sus recursos políticos y conformar sujetos inactivos.

A diferencia de dictadura iniciada en 1966 (la autodenominada ‘Revolución Argentina’, 1966-1973), en la que la

The main point is not what has been done of man, but what he does with what has been done of him. What has been done of him are the structures, the significant sets studied by the human sciences. What he does is history itself, the real overcoming of these structures in a totalizing praxis. (Jean Paul Sarte)

Since the last Argentinean military dictatorship (1976-1983), but with much more intensity in the 1990s, policies have been developed that ‘exorcize’ work from the body of capital and deconstruct the old centrality of salaried work, while capital has been reified at the same time. The economic policy favored by the dictatorship was based on the systematic deindustrialization of the country and had political horizons (reading between the lines of the ‘Economic Plan’ of minister José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz made that clear). Its objective was to consolidate a new dominant bloc and destruct the ‘world’ of the workers – their organizations, identity and culture – in order to take away their political resources and form inactive subjects.

In contrast to the dictatorship initiated in 1966 (the self-designated ‘Argentinean

asociación entre desarrollo y seguridad nacional (orden social, lucha contra el ‘comunismo’) era evidente, la última dictadura concibe ese modelo de desarrollo (industrialización sustitutiva) como la fuente misma del ‘caos social’. Esto quiere decir que a partir de 1976 los mecanismos de control social asentados en el consumo de masas y en el Estado benefactor entran en crisis. De este modo el desmantelamiento del modelo de industrialización aparecía como un requerimiento básico para garantizar el orden social por vía de una desocialización que, se aspiraba, fuese irreversible y duradera. Así el capital financiero relanzaba el proceso de acumulación originaria, partiendo de la descolectivización y propiciando el desarraigo de los trabajadores.

A partir de 1976 el país vivió un proceso de cambios regresivos y de fragmentación social, de disolución de las clases sociales y de las tradicionales identidades colectivas. La dictadura creó las condiciones para la consolidación de un modelo de acumulación (en rigor de verdad de ‘desacumulación’ y de ‘saqueo’) basado en la valorización del capital financiero. El abandono de la matriz intervencionista se profundizó en las décadas posteriores, sobre todo en la del 90. El intervencionismo estatal dejó de ser parte del sentido común y la ausencia del Estado favoreció la disolución del tejido social.<sup>1</sup>

Los gobiernos democráticos neoliberales avanzaron en la supresión de las viejas formas de regulación, en la privatización de las empresas públicas, en la erosión de la soberanía del Estado que hipotecó sus funciones económicas y sociales y perdió capacidad de hacer frente a los ciclos económicos. Todo este proceso condujo a la descomposición institucional. La convertibilidad, con la renuncia del Estado a la regulación de la moneda, terminó de

Revolution’, 1966-1973), in which the connection between development and national security (social order and the fight against ‘communism’) was evident, the last dictatorship conceived that model of development (substitutive industrialization; i.e. developing here the industries of products that used to be imported) as the very source of ‘social chaos’. This is to say that in 1976 the mechanisms of social control, based on mass consumption and the Welfare State, entered into a crisis. Dismantling the industrialization model seemed to be a basic requirement to guarantee social order through a desocialization process that was intended to be irreversible and long-lasting. Thus, financial capital relaunched the process of primitive accumulation, starting from decollectivization, which led to the uprooting of workers.

Since 1976 the country has gone through a process of regressive changes and social fragmentation, dissolving social classes and traditional collective identities. The dictatorship created the conditions for the consolidation of a model of accumulation (in fact, ‘deaccumulation’ and ‘looting’) based on the valorization of financial capital. The abandonment of the interventionist matrix has become more profound over the last decades, above all in the 1990s. State interventionism is not part of common sense anymore, and the absence of the State has favored the dissolution of the social web.<sup>1</sup>

Neoliberal democratic governments advanced the suppression of the old ways of regulation by privatizing public enterprises and eroding the sovereignty of the State, which abandoned its economic and social functions and lost its capacity to deal with economic cycles. This process has led to an institutional decomposition. Convertibility, with

concederle la potestad a los grupos locales más concentrados y al capital financiero. Estos gobiernos también debilitaron al pueblo y consolidaron a los grupos dominantes. Nada hicieron para contrarrestar las fuerzas centrífugas y los factores de disgregación.

De esta manera el desempleo estructural, acompañado de la expulsión de los trabajadores hacia periferias sociales y políticas cada vez más apartadas, aparecía para las clases dominantes como la precondición necesaria del disciplinamiento de un actor social que en la etapa histórica anterior se había caracterizado por su notable capacidad de resistencia y que en algunas coyunturas hasta fue capaz de asumir iniciativas sociales y políticas (disputar poder).

El movimiento piquetero muestra los límites del desempleo estructural como disciplinador social. Es un emergente de la destrucción de puestos de trabajo por la privatizaciones de las empresas del Estado y por la ‘reconversión’ de las empresas privadas. Surge de la destrucción y el debilitamiento de las fuerzas productivas, de la realidad de hombres y mujeres (jóvenes en su mayoría) que no consiguen vender su fuerza de trabajo en el mercado. Surge de la crisis de la denominada ‘sociedad salarial’ y de una situación de vulnerabilidad de masas que solo se comprende teniendo en cuenta que el concepto de trabajador en la sociedad salarial remitía a un sujeto receptor de salarios pero fundamentalmente a una condición que implicaba el respeto de ciertos derechos. Surge como respuesta al trabajo como hecho cada vez más escaso. Los movimientos de desocupados surgen del abismo de la inequidad y expresan la negativa a asumir el rol que el sistema le asigna a la parte más castigada del pueblo: ser ejemplo que aterre y discipline al

which the State resigned from the regulation of the currency, ended up conceding authority to the most powerful local groups and to financial capital. These governments also weakened the people and consolidated the dominant groups. They did nothing to counteract the centrifugal forces and disintegration factors.

In this way structural unemployment, accompanied by the expulsion of workers to isolated social and political peripheries, seemed to be, for the dominant classes, the necessary precondition for the disciplinization of a social actor. In previous historical phases this social actor was characterized by its notable capacity of resistance, which in some situations was even able to assume social and political initiatives (to dispute power).

The *piquetero* movement shows the limits of structural unemployment as a social discipliner. It emerges because of the destruction of jobs due to the privatization of State-owned companies and the ‘restructuring’ of private companies. It arises because of the destruction and weakening of the productive forces and the reality of women and men (most of them young) who are not able to sell their labor force in the market. It arises because of the crisis of the so-called ‘salaried society’ and a situation of vulnerability of the masses, which cannot only be understood by taking into account that the concept of the worker in the ‘salaried society’ refers to a subject receiving a salary. It also fundamentally refers to a condition that used to include the respect of certain rights. The movement of the unemployed arises as a response to the fact that having a job is becoming increasingly rare. It arises from the abyss of inequity and expresses the denial to assume the role that the system has assigned to the most

conjunto de la clase obrera.

Los movimientos instituyen una esperanza y una posibilidad concreta para evitar un destino terrible. ¿Hasta qué punto los movimientos pueden contribuir a desbloquear la iniciativa de los trabajadores ocupados? Creemos que movimiento ha comenzado a plantear que la desocupación puede dejar de ser un dato de la debilidad de clase y alterar su configuración abriendo nuevas perspectivas para la organización sindical y política de los trabajadores. ¿Hasta qué punto el fracaso del sistema en disciplinar el cuerpo del trabajador desocupado no afecta los intentos por aumentar la productividad de los trabajadores ocupados?

En los proyectos productivos de la corriente autónoma,<sup>2</sup> e incluso de otros sectores del movimiento, se palpa el rechazo al trabajo como puro gasto de fuerza de trabajo desligado de las necesidades de la colectividad (trabajo abstracto y enajenado). Se rechaza el trabajo como principio abstracto regulador de las relaciones sociales. Lo que demuestra la crisis del trabajo como ‘la mejor policía’, en términos de Friedrich Nietzsche. Algunos de los movimientos de la corriente autónoma buscan superar la división social jerárquica del trabajo heredada, buscan que el trabajo mismo sirva para el desarrollo de la conciencia y el goce sensible. Basta con recorrer un taller, un obrador y conversar con los compañeros que allí desarrollan distintas tareas para confirmar esta afirmación. Ahora bien, el rechazo al trabajo abstracto y enajenado se puede percibir en las iniciativas de otros movimientos que en reiteradas ocasiones han exhibido públicamente el orgullo de contar con ‘fábricas’ sin patronos, insertas en un lógica alejada de lo mercantil. Por ejemplo en el caso de ‘La Fábrica’ creada por el MTD (Movimiento de Trabajadores Desempleados) Resistir y Vencer que

castigated section of the people, i.e. the role to be the example that terrifies and disciplines the whole working class.

The movements institute a hope and a concrete possibility of avoiding a terrible fate. How far can movements contribute to unblocking the initiative of employed workers? We believe that the movement has started to indicate that unemployment can stop being a fact related to class weakness, changing its configuration and opening new perspectives for union organization and workers' politics. Up to what point can the failure of the system to discipline the body of the unemployed worker not affect the attempts to increase the productivity of employed workers?

In the productive projects of the autonomous stream,<sup>2</sup> as well as other sectors of the movement, what is felt is a rejection of work as the pure consumption of the labor force, unconnected to collective needs (abstract and alienated work). Work is rejected as an abstract principle that regulates social relations. This is a demonstration of the crisis of work as ‘the best police’, in Friedrich Nietzsche’s terms. Some of the movements (of the autonomous part of the movement) try to overcome the inherited social and hierarchical division of labor, looking to work itself to serve the development of consciousness and sensible pleasure. Visiting a workshop and talking to the *compañeros*, who develop themselves there through distinct tasks, is enough to confirm this assertion. Nevertheless, the rejection of abstract and alienated work can also be seen in the initiatives of other movements, which have repeatedly exhibited in public their pride of having ‘factories’ without patrons; factories which are embedded in a non-mercantile logic. This is the case, for example, with ‘La Fábrica’ (The Factory), created by the MTD ‘Resistir y

cuenta con panificadora y afines, producción de indumentaria industrial de cuero, cerveza artesanal, taller textil, etc.. Se trata de un emprendimiento importante para el conjunto del campo popular.<sup>3</sup>

Los movimientos de trabajadores desocupados, no tienen ‘colchón’, parten de tan abajo (de los profundos abismos de la inequidad) que no tienen chance de defender una posición adquirida. Lo que asombra es que se haya planteado desde ese abismo social una respuesta organizada. Evidentemente una sociedad civil fragmentada, un modelo económico excluyente no ofrecen el contexto más propicio para la organización de los sectores socialmente más vulnerables. La exclusión es el no lugar, el no sitio, la no atribución de espacios en función de eventuales utilidades. El excluido no es masa consumidora, no es destinatario, ni siquiera es instrumento (no más que su propia pasividad). Su condición es la de lo superfluo. Lo primero que pierde el excluido es la posibilidad de reconocerse como categoría, y a partir de esa instancia, la de organizarse en función de sus intereses. El excluido no puede autonocerse y no puede conocer la totalidad que lo excluye. La exclusión no genera resistencia, la desalienta objetivamente.

Los márgenes, esos plus del espacio que se delimitaba, han servido históricamente para absorber lo que se desbordaba y para evitar las modificaciones márgenes adentro. Los márgenes eran así la representación de lo previsto y sistematizado. La implementación del proyecto neoliberal hizo que el desborde ya no fuera absorbido por los márgenes. Ya no había márgenes, sólo no lugares.

Las clases dominantes y la mayoría de los intelectuales argentinos suponían que desde la desintegración social, del espacio de los infraprivilegiados, del reino de atopía, no

Vecer’ (Unemployed Workers Movement Resist and Win), which consists of a bakery and also produces industrial leather clothing, beer, textiles, etc. It is seen as an important enterprise for the whole popular field.<sup>3</sup>

The unemployed workers movements have nothing; they start from so low (from the deep abyss of inequity) that they do not have the chance to defend an acquired position. What is astonishing is that from this social abyss an organized response has been posed. Obviously, a fragmented civil society and an excluding economic model do not offer the most favorable context for the organization of the most vulnerable social sectors. Exclusion is the non-place, the non-site, the non-attribution of spaces as function of eventual usefulness. The excluded are not the consumer mass; they are not the focus and not even an instrument (not more than their own passivity). Their condition is that of superfluous things. The first thing that the excluded lose is the possibility of recognizing themselves as a category, and, from that situation, they lose the possibility of organizing themselves according to their interests. The excluded cannot know themselves and cannot know the totality that excludes them. Exclusion does not create resistance; it objectively discourages it.

The margins, that surplus of the delimited space, have historically served to absorb that which exceeds and to avoid modifications in the space within the margins. The margins are in this way the representation of that which is expected and systematized. What the implementation of the neoliberal project had done is that the excess could no longer be contained by the margins. There are no margins any more, only non-places.

podía surgir ningún tipo de respuesta organizada que recurriera además a consignas potencialmente universalizables. Había un prejuicio arraigado, incluso en los sectores con vocación revolucionaria: al quedar fuera de las relaciones de trabajo el obrero pasaba a ser un ‘consumidor’, un sujeto pasivo. Los desocupados eran una figura no histórica (*lumpenproletariado*, *subproletariado*, *lazzaroni*<sup>4</sup>) la expresión de un estado de desintegración del sistema, un fenómeno carente de capacidad transformadora, creencia que engarzaba a la perfección con la modalidad de la escolástica marxista que deduce los hechos de resistencia de la categoría fuerza de trabajo y de su naturaleza mercantil. A este prejuicio se le sumaba un dato de la realidad incontrastable: la pérdida de capacidad defensiva de la clase obrera asalariada.

El sistema se despreocupó por garantizar un orden conectado a la producción en su conjunto para hacer previsibles los comportamientos. La calle pasó a ser el lugar privilegiado para el orden, puesto que era el lugar ocupado por quienes quedaron afuera del juego de los incentivos y con quienes no funcionaban las amenazas de desocupación porque ya estaban desocupados.

La insurrección de los años 60,<sup>5</sup> protagonizada por los obreros asalariados y los estudiantes de la clase media, demostraba que los cambios no son impulsados por los que nada tienen que perder, sino por los que tienen la fuerza y la confianza para ganar. La rebeldía aparecía vinculada a una cuota de bienestar y al contexto ofrecido por sociedades democráticas donde las distancias sociales eran más estrechas, y en las cuales los trabajadores contaban con una cuota de poder. Como tempranamente percibieron los ideólogos del capital (por ejemplo los hombres de la Comisión Trilateral<sup>6</sup>), la

The dominant classes and most of the Argentinean intellectuals thought that no organized response could emerge from social disintegration, from the space of the underprivileged, from the kingdom of utopia; no type of organized response could emerge that could potentially be universal. There was a deeply rooted prejudice, even in those sectors with revolutionary inclination: by being outside work relations, the worker becomes a ‘consumer’, a passive subject. The unemployed were non-historical figures (*lumpenproletariat*, *subproletariat*, *lazzaroni*<sup>4</sup>), the expression of a state of the disintegration of the system, a phenomenon devoid of transforming capacity. This belief perfectly matched the Marxist scholastic approach, which deducts the acts of resistance from the category of the labor force and its mercantile nature. To this prejudice an undeniable fact of reality was added: the loss of the capacity of the salaried working class to defend itself.

The system was not concerned with guaranteeing an order that was connected to production as a whole, in order to make behaviors predictable. The street became the privileged place for order, since it was the place occupied by those who stayed outside the game of incentives; those for whom the threat of unemployment did not work because they were already unemployed.

The insurrection of the 1960s,<sup>5</sup> supported by salaried workers and middle-class students, showed that changes are not produced by those who have nothing to loose, but by those who have the power and confidence to win. Rebelliousness seemed to be about how to share welfare in the context of democratic societies where social distances were narrower and workers could count on a share in power. As the ideologists of capital (for example,

insurrección se asociaba a los ‘excesos de demanda’. Por lo tanto la desestructuración del mundo material y simbólico de los trabajadores, las políticas de desigualdad, fueron concebidas como reaseguro del orden.

En esa encrucijada histórica pocos tuvieron en cuenta que alguna vez la izquierda radical había reflexionado sobre tópicos similares. Hacia los años 60<sup>7</sup>, para no ir más atrás, Herbert Marcuse entre otros intelectuales y militantes revolucionarios, había planteado que el estar al margen de las ‘dudosas bendiciones’ del sistema capitalista posibilitaba el desarrollo de “las necesidades capaces de sostener una sociedad libre”.<sup>7</sup> O también Franz Fanón,<sup>8</sup> quien reivindicó el carácter de sujetos (figuras históricas) de los ‘condenados de la tierra’. Más recientemente se ha planteado – Paolo Virno entre otros– que ‘la crisis de la sociedad del trabajo’ ha hecho que la condición tripartita de la masa de desocupados (Marx subdividió al ejército industrial de reserva en fluido, latente o estancado) sea hoy aplicable al conjunto de la fuerza de trabajo. O sea, toda la fuerza de trabajo se puede describir a partir de la categoría de desocupación: la desocupación como trabajo no remunerado y el trabajo como desocupación remunerada.<sup>9</sup> Lo que nos permite pensar en que cada vez más personas quedan al margen de las ‘bendiciones’ del sistema. Milton Santos, por su parte ha sostenido que “El hecho de que la producción limitada de racionalidad esté asociada a una producción amplia de escasez conduce a los actores que están fuera del círculo de la racionalidad hegemónica al descubrimiento de su exclusión y a la búsqueda de formas alternativas de racionalidad, indispensables para su supervivencia. La racionalidad dominante y ciega acaba produciendo sus propios límites”<sup>10</sup>. Evidentemente sigue siendo valedero pensar en que los más postergados son los que poseen mayor

the men of the Trilateral Commission<sup>6</sup>) realized early on, insurrection was associated with an ‘excess of demand’. Therefore, the destructure of the material and symbolic world of workers and the policies of inequality were conceived of as reassurance of order.

At these historical crossroads few take into account that the radical Left had, of course, already reflected about similar issues. In the 1960s, not to go back further, Herbert Marcuse, among other intellectuals and revolutionary militants, posed that being at margins of the so-called blessings of the capitalist system made it possible to develop “the requirements that could sustain a free society”.<sup>7</sup> Franz Fanón,<sup>8</sup> too, reclaimed the character of subjects (historical figures) of the ‘condemned of the earth’. More recently, Paolo Virno – among others – has suggested that the ‘crisis of the society of work’ has made the tripartite condition of the unemployed mass (Marx divided the reserve industrial army into fluid, latent or stagnant) applicable to the whole labor force today. In other words, the whole workforce can be described by starting with the category of unemployment: unemployment as non-remunerated work and work as remunerated unemployment.<sup>9</sup> This allows us to think that each time more and more people are left at the margins of the ‘blessings’ of the system. For his part, Milton Santos has stated that “the fact that the limited production of rationality is related to a broad production of shortages leads the actors, who are outside the circle of hegemonic rationality, to discover their exclusion and search for alternative forms of rationality, indispensable for their survival. Dominant and blind rationality ends up producing its own limits”.<sup>10</sup> Obviously, it is still valid to think that the most disregarded are the ones who have more

libertad para (re)moldear la arcilla de la convivencia social conforme a esquemas alternativos. Y que son los que pueden servir un proyecto de transformación más consecuentemente, sin ambigüedades ni medias tintas.

Pero aquí, en medio de la desolación del páramo ideológico-político, se conjeturaba que el poder incommensurable de los monopolios económicos y los mecanismos de control social habían conformado sujetos heterónomos, expropriados de todo saber y toda creatividad, desprovistos de recursos y de predisposición para la lucha, sujetos sin ninguna capacidad para cuestionar las relaciones impuestas y mucho menos en condiciones de construir un poder alternativo. La dimensión subjetiva del campo popular parecía radicar en el resentimiento, la apatía, la desesperación, la idea de inferioridad social, etc. Comenzaba a instalarse la idea de que los trabajadores habían sido conformados como no-sujetos que indirectamente iban a sostener la naturalización de la desigualdad e iban a ratificar con su pasividad la inmunidad de las estructuras. Tampoco fueron debidamente procesadas algunas experiencias de organización y lucha de masas desarrolladas durante la década del '80, ya en democracia, como las tomas de tierra en los partidos de Quilmes y La Matanza,<sup>11</sup> precursoras de la instalación de las reivindicaciones urbanas en el centro del conflicto social en nuestro país.

La mayoría de los intelectuales argentinos asumieron que un infierno jamás podía generar paraíso. Indirectamente aceptaron para estos espacios la competencia exclusiva de las sectas religiosas, la policía y los punteros. Se equivocaron, en vez del delito, la violencia horizontal, la angustia individual, apareció organización popular que esbozaba un proyecto de cambio. ¿Cómo se produjo entonces el 'milagro sociológico' del que hablaba Pierre

freedom to (re)mold the clay of social co-existence conforming to alternative schemes. They are the ones who can most consistently be involved in a transformation project without ambiguity or half-measures.

But here, in the middle of the desolation of the ideological-political field, it has been speculated that the power, which is incommensurable with the economic monopolies and mechanisms of social control, has created conform, heteronomous subjects, expropriated of any knowledge and creativity, lacking the resources and predisposition for struggle; subjects without any capacity for questioning the imposed relations and even less ready to construct an alternative power. The subjective dimension of the popular field seemed to be based on resentment, apathy, despair, the notion of social inferiority, etc. The idea began to be established that workers were conformist beings, non-subjects, who would indirectly support the naturalization of inequality and ratify, with their passiveness, the immunity of the structures. Some other experiences of mass organization and struggle, developed already under democratic rule during the 1980s, have also not been properly dealt with; such as the land invasions in Quilmes and La Matanza,<sup>11</sup> which were precursors of the positioning of urban demands in the center of social conflict in our country.

Most Argentinean intellectuals assumed that an underworld could never create paradise. They indirectly accepted that the religious sects, police and *punteros* (dealers of the government) had exclusive competencies in these spaces. They were wrong; instead of crime, horizontal violence and individual anguish, popular organization appeared, outlining a project of change. How was the 'sociological

Bourdieu? Siguiendo a Melucci, podríamos sostener que el caso del MTD se conjugaron la mayor opresión y disgregación social –que supuestamente no genera respuestas organizadas ni propuestas alternativas– con la experimentación de una contradicción entre una identidad colectiva existente (trabajadores) y las nuevas relaciones sociales impuestas por las políticas neoliberales y el desarrollo de nexos ajenos a la sociedad local. O sea, en algunos aspectos, habría que relativizar el carácter ‘marginal’ del actor social, su orfandad evidentemente no era absoluta. La acción piquetera, en el Gran Buenos Aires o en General Mosconi (Salta) nos habla del peso de experiencias previas de movilización y de lucha, del manejo por parte de los piqueteros de algunos recursos organizativos aportados muchas veces por militantes con experiencia sindical o política.<sup>12</sup> En fin, un proceso de maduración ‘táctica’ o ‘metodológica’. Boaventura de Sousa Santos reflexionando sobre las continuidades y las rupturas entre los viejos movimientos sociales (principalmente los sindicatos) y los nuevos, consideraba innegable que “sin la experiencia histórica de la dominación en la esfera de la producción, hoy no sería, social y culturalmente posible, pensar la reproducción social en términos de relaciones de dominación”. Agregaba como dato significativo el hecho de que los países con fuertes movimientos sociales “tienden a ser países donde fueron, y quizás todavía son fuertes los viejos movimientos sociales”.<sup>13</sup>

Como la historia parecía haberse convertido en un no lugar, o un espacio de desaparición, el movimiento piquetero le restituyó nada más y nada menos que un lugar a la historia, al concebirla como un lugar de apariciones, haciendo visible una realidad oculta. El cuerpo ‘comunitarizado’, en la ruta y en el barrio (recordemos que es siempre lucha de clases, lucha cuerpo a

miracle’, about which Pierre Bourdieu talks, produced? Following Melucci, we could maintain that, in the case of the MTD, the strongest social oppression and disintegration – which supposedly does not generate organized responses or alternative proposals – came together with the experience of a contradiction between an existing collective identity (workers), the new social relations imposed by neoliberal policies, and the development of links alien to local society. In other words, the ‘marginal’ nature of the social actor had to be relativized in some way; this actor was obviously not an absolute orphan. The *piquetero* actions in Greater Buenos Aires or General Mosconi (Salta) show us the impact of previous experiences of mobilization and struggle, as well as the handling by parts of the *piqueteros* of some organizational resources, which were frequently used by militants with trade union or political experience.<sup>12</sup> In short, a process of ‘tactical’ or ‘methodological’ maturing. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, reflecting on the continuities and ruptures between old (mainly trade unions) and new social movements, thought that it is undeniable that “without the historical experience of domination in the field of production, it would not be socially and culturally possible today to think of social reproduction in terms of relations of domination”. He added, as a significant fact, that countries with strong social movements “tend to be countries where the old social movements were strong and maybe still are”.<sup>13</sup>

As history seemed to have become a non-place, a space of disappearance, the *piquetero* movement has restored nothing more and nothing less than a place for history, conceiving it as a place for appearances, making a hidden reality visible. The ‘communalized’ body on the

cuerpo y cuerpo por cuerpo), y las subjetividades que contiene, es el cuerpo mismo en el que se inscribe la historia. Cuerpo que propone una legitimidad basada en lo real (por eso se arriesga) y no en lo virtual. En contra de lo que pensaban y piensan los constructores de armonías artificiales, la lucha de clases no se suprime. Nace del metabolismo del propio sistema. Sólo que la desestructuración social, el aumento del desempleo, la crisis del sindicalismo tradicional, el ‘transformismo’ de los intelectuales y la ausencia de una capa social con capacidad de ejercer la función de dirección del campo popular, hicieron que la contradicción de clase sufriera un desplazamiento hacia abajo: los piqueteros, los dirigentes o referentes barriales, etc. asumiendo múltiples funciones, se convirtieron en la vanguardia (en sentido social) de la lucha de clases. Un compañero del MTD de San Francisco Solano decía que “los piquetes hicieron estallar la apatía, (...) sacudimos al país de los dulces sueños que vendía Menem y toda esa política, y fuimos como el estallido de una nueva luz. Junto a otras luchas, hicimos despertar al país de los dulces sueños de la posmodernidad. Piqueteros fue el nombre que nos pusieron y para nosotros fue la forma que tuvimos de hablarle a la sociedad entera, que decirles que había otra forma de luchar, de sacar nuestra fuerza y nuestra dignidad”.<sup>14</sup>

Esos jóvenes sin horizontes de integración y sin experiencia de trabajo formal; esos veteranos proletarios cuyo modo de vida fue brutalmente agredido, trabajadores mancillados en su orgullo por un modelo de acumulación que desecha sus capacidades y sus cuerpos por obsoletos; esas mujeres que politicaron el hambre de sus hijos, que se rebelaron contra las estructuras de poder machista y que –como decía Alexandra Kollantai– liberaron una porción del ‘potencial amoroso’ de la sociedad, todos y

street and in the neighborhood (let us recall that it is always class struggle, bodily struggle, body against body), and the subjectivities it contains, is the same body in which history is inscribed. A body that suggests a legitimacy based on the real (that's why it takes risks) and not the virtual. In contrast to those who thought and still think about how to construct artificial harmonies, class struggle cannot be suppressed. It rises out of the metabolism of the same system. What happened was a downward displacement of class contradictions, as a consequence of social destructure, increase of unemployment, crisis of traditional unionism, ‘transformism’ of intellectuals and absence of a social strata with the capacity to function as the direction of the popular field. In this context the *piqueteros* – their neighborhood leaders or activists, etc., assuming multiple functions – became the vanguard (in the social sense) of class struggle. A *compañero* from the MTD of San Francisco Solano said that “the pickets shook off apathy; (...) we shook off from the country its sweet dreams, which Menem sold, and all that politics. We were like the outbreak of a new light. Together with other struggles, we woke the country from the sweet dreams of postmodernity. *Piqueteros* was the name they gave to us and this was how we had to talk to the whole society, to tell them that there was a different way of fighting, to show our strength and dignity”.<sup>14</sup>

These youths without horizons of integration and without the experience of formal work; these veteran proletarians whose way of life was brutally attacked, workers whose pride was hurt by an accumulation model that discarded their skills and their bodies as obsolete; these women who politicized their children’s hunger, who rebelled against the structures of chauvinist power and who –

cada uno asumieron a los golpes la imposibilidad de la inclusión en los marcos de un sistema que por naturaleza produce y reproduce la desigualdad. Emergieron del cataclismo social que los desarticulaba, excedieron un destino estrictamente estadístico y prefiguraron ‘el reino’, reformularon la Nación como espacio de identidad que se constituye a través de la lucha. Fundaron una verdad fulgurante: el objetivo debe ser una patria, un mundo de no-exclusión, una sociedad justa, igualitaria, distinta a la del capital. Fueron mucho más allá del reclamo en pos de la sobrevivida.

Para entender la dimensión compleja de tal práctica social es importante articularla con la categoría del territorio. En la parte siguiente deste artículo, la expresión del movimiento piquetero en su acción territorial, es presentada como una importante dimensión práctica del fracaso de la estrategia de las élites que fue analisada anteriormente.

## Territorio piquetero

El sujeto se constituye en un territorio social delimitable a la vez que constantemente transformado. Un ámbito de relaciones sociales. Relaciones de explotación – acentuaba Marx, relaciones de identificación ideológica – nos decía Althusser, relaciones siempre de poder – agregaba Foucault. (María Pía López)

La categoría de territorio fue tal vez, una de las más utilizadas y vapuleadas de los últimos años. Sus usos más corrientes han remitido a dominio, suelo, horizonte, archipiélago, geopolítica, región, paisaje, tamaño, volumen y posición. También a tensión, táctica y estrategia (guerra) y a poder. El territorio es, evidentemente, una metáfora geográfica<sup>15</sup> o si se prefiere ‘espacial’. Louis Althusser consideraba que la utilización de metáforas espaciales

as Alexandra Kollantai used to say – liberated a portion of the ‘potential love’ of society: each and every one of them suffered the shock of the impossibility of their inclusion in the framework of a system that naturally produces and reproduces inequality. They emerged from the social cataclysm that dislocated them; they exceeded a strictly statistical fate and prefigured ‘the kingdom’; they reformulated the Nation as a space of identity that is constituted by means of struggle. They established a dazzling truth: the objective must be a homeland, a world of non-exclusion, a fair and egalitarian society, different from that of capital. They went far beyond the demand for survival.

One possible way of understanding the complex dimension of this social practice is to articulate it as the category of territory. In the next part of this article the expression of the *piquetero* movement in its territorial action is taken as one important practical dimension of the failure of the elites’ strategy analyzed before.

## Piquetero territory

The subject is constituted in a delimited social territory that is constantly transformed. It is a field of social relations. Relations of exploitation, as Marx stressed, relations of ideological identification, as Althusser said, and always relations of power, as Foucault added. (María Pía López)

The category of territory has been perhaps one of the most used and criticized in recent years. Its most common uses have referred to domain, ground, horizon, archipelago, geopolitics, region, landscape, size, volume and position; but also to tension, tactic and strategy (war), and power. Territory is,

atentaba contra las pretensiones científicas de cierto tipo de discursos. La metáfora espacial tenía para él una matriz decididamente no científica. Otros han detectado en el recurso a la metáfora geográfica posiciones menos regresivas. Algunos –con los que estamos de acuerdo en líneas generales– llegaron a verlas como el síntoma de un pensamiento estratégico y combativo que considera al espacio del discurso como terreno y encrucijada de prácticas sociales y políticas. En los últimos tiempos ha sido común la sugerencia de reemplazar las metáforas espaciales por las cronológicas, se habla del ritmo vertiginoso o lento de las prácticas sociales. Lo cierto es que a cada territorio le corresponde un tiempo.

El ‘ser ahí’ o el ‘ser en el mundo’ para Martín Heidegger tenía un sentido no solo espacial sino sobre todo ‘ontológico’. El territorio asume, desde esta perspectiva un cariz antigeométrico, antiquantitativo y se convierte en espacio cualitativo, en un espacio fundamentalmente humano hecho de sitios y de direcciones (de relaciones) y no de líneas, planos y volúmenes. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, con trazos similares, diferenciaba el espacio geométrico del antropológico y ‘existencial’. Desde esta óptica concebimos al territorio y a la geografía, como verbo (acción de sujetos) y no como sustantivo.

De un tiempo a esta parte, desde distintos ámbitos y desde distintas concepciones, se vienen planteado estrategias basadas en el reforzamiento de los poderes locales con bases sociales consolidadas. La Central de Trabajadores Argentinos (CTA) ha planteado la consigna: ‘la nueva fábrica es el barrio’ y ha señalado que algunos de los inconvenientes de la construcción de un movimiento político social se vinculan con

la dificultad de entender y situar adecuadamente el desarrollo territorial como espacio privilegiado en el que se define hoy

obviously, a geographical metaphor,<sup>15</sup> or, if one prefers, a ‘spatial’ one. Louis Althusser considered the utilization of spatial metaphors to be against the scientific pretenses of certain types of discourses. For him, the spatial metaphor had a decidedly non-scientific root. Others have detected less regressive positions in the use of the geographical metaphor. Some – with whom we agree in general terms – came to see that metaphor as the symptom of a strategic and combative thought, which considers the space of discourse as the terrain and crossroads of social and political practices. It has lately been common to suggest the replacement of spatial metaphors by chronological ones, in order to talk about the quick or slow rhythm of social practices. The truth is that every territory corresponds to a time.

The ‘being there’ or the ‘being in the world’ had, for Martin Heidegger, not only spatial but mainly ‘ontological’ meaning. From this perspective territory assumes an anti-geometrical and anti-quantitative nature, becoming a qualitative space, a fundamentally human space made of places and directions (of relations) and not of lines, maps and volumes. With a similar reasoning Maurice Merleau-Ponty distinguished geometrical space from anthropological and ‘existential’ space. According to this viewpoint, we conceive territory and geography as verbs (actions of subjects) and not as nouns.

Arising from different spheres and conceptions, strategies have lately been put forward that are based on the reinforcement of local powers and consolidated social bases. The Federation of Argentinean Workers (CTA) has posed this slogan: ‘the new factory is the neighborhood’. It has signaled that some of the problems of constructing a social

la nueva unidad política de los trabajadores y su articulación con el conjunto de la comunidad. Para ser más precisos, en un contexto donde la ofensiva del capital ha transformado a la empresa en un espacio hostil para la organización del trabajo (...) el territorio es el espacio natural a ocupar y liberar para una nueva política.<sup>16</sup>

Según Artemio López, director de la consultora Equis,

la desarticulación de la estructura productiva y el marcado deterioro y estrechamiento del mercado de trabajo nacional acontecido durante la década de los años noventa, contribuyeron grandemente para desplazar al lugar de trabajo –el taller, la fábrica– y asignar al barrio una centralidad creciente en la organización y promoción de las demandas comunitarias.<sup>17</sup>

Para Maristella Svampa y Sebastián Pereyra

el *modelo de acción territorial* emerge como la contracara de aquel encarnado por el dirigente sindical y político tradicional quienes, más temprano que tarde, suelen aprovechar la mejora en términos de oportunidades de vida para dar el ‘salto’ y abandonar el barrio del cual son originarios; al tiempo que se construye a distancia de aquel otro modelo que plantea una instalación ‘desde afuera’, a partir de una militancia más política y/o universitaria.<sup>18</sup>

De todos modos hay que destacar la continuidad de las formas organizativas de la clase obrera e inclusive de algunas figuras gremiales como el convenio, que son adaptadas por las nuevas organizaciones a la base territorial.<sup>19</sup>

Lo territorial aparece vinculado con el concepto de descentralización y en particular con sus dimensiones políticas e institucionales. La descentralización nos remite a formas de organización político-territoriales y económico territoriales. En los marcos del sistema y en coincidencia con las propuestas neoliberales que promueven la prescindencia del Estado y la política, descentralización tiene como

political movement are linked to the

the difficulty of adequately understanding and situating territorial development as a privileged space in which the new political unity of workers and their articulation together with the whole community are defined today. To be more precise, in a context where the offensive of capital has transformed the company into a hostile space for the organization of work (...), the territory is the natural space to occupy and liberate for a new politics.<sup>16</sup>

According to Artemio López, director of the Equis consulting firm,

the disarticulation of the productive structure and the marked decline and narrowing of the national market of work, which occurred during the nineties, contributed greatly to the displacement of the workplace – the workshop, the factory – and the allocation of a growing centrality to the neighborhood, in order to organize and promote community demands.<sup>17</sup>

For Maristella Svampa and Sebastián Pereyra,

the *territorial action model* emerges as the opposite face to the model embodied by the traditional union leader and politician, who, sooner or later, would exploit the improvements obtained in terms of their own lives, taking them as opportunities to ‘jump’ and abandon their native neighborhood. Equally, the *territorial action model* is constructed far away from another model that proposes an installation ‘from the outside’, from a more political and/or scholarly militancy.<sup>18</sup>

In any way, we should emphasize the continuity of the organizational structures of the working class, including some of the guild structures, such as the collective agreement, which are adapted to the territorial basis by new organizations.<sup>19</sup>

The territorial appears to be linked to the concept of decentralization, in particular to its political and institutional dimensions. Decentralization reminds us

objetivo aliviar al Estado y garantizar la gobernabilidad local; sin alterar la cultura clientelista.<sup>20</sup> Desde una perspectiva distinta, el territorio remite tanto a la participación activa de los actores socio políticos a escala local y a la creación de redes cooperativas horizontales, como a la consolidación de relaciones sociales alternativas en espacios delimitados. También alude a sus riesgos: la revitalización de lo local puede generar distancia respecto de los problemas nacionales.

Asimismo, desde los márgenes de la matriz política dominante se viene produciendo una resignificación de ‘lo local’ que por lo general tiende a identificarse con el municipio, concebido como espacio principalmente administrativo (más que social-relacional). Desde esta concepción se considera que los espacios administrativos más reducidos son susceptibles de desarrollar ‘gestiones progresistas’ y ‘participativas’ con posibilidades de contrarrestar los constreñimientos que la globalización neoliberal impone al Estado nacional. En un contexto de fragmentación política y de crisis de los partidos políticos tradicionales, estos planteos, que reivindican la autonomía local, suelen ser funcionales a las necesidades de algunos intendentes o líderes locales.

El territorio como espacio históricamente constituido, remite a la organización social y conceptual de un espacio determinado, espacio entendido como una de las dimensiones de las relaciones sociales e instituido políticamente. Para los pueblos originarios de nuestra América el territorio suele ser concebido como el elemento esencial de una cultura y como el espacio de realización de una comunidad. Por esto, a lo largo de 500 años, los territorios fueron la base de la resistencia y la reconstrucción de los vínculos comunitarios y del sentido

of political-territorial and economic-territorial forms of organization. Within the frames of the system and in coincidence with neoliberal proposals that promote the dismissal of the State and politics, decentralization has the objective of relieving the State and guaranteeing local governability without changing the culture of ‘clientelism’.<sup>20</sup> However, from a different perspective, territory refers to the active participation of socio-political actors on a local scale and the creation of horizontal cooperative networks, as much as to the consolidation of alternative social relations in delimited spaces. It also alludes to its risks: the revitalization of local matters can generate distance with respect to national problems.

Likewise, from the margins of the dominant political matrix, a resignifying of ‘the local’ has occurred, which tends to be identified with the municipality, conceived as a mainly administrative space (instead of a social and relational space). From within this conception it is considered that much smaller administrative spaces are more sensitive to develop ‘progressive and participative management’, with possibilities of confronting the constraints that neoliberal globalization imposes on the national State. In a context of political fragmentation and the crisis of traditional political parties these approaches, which demand local autonomy, are usually functions of the interests of particular mayors or local leaders.

The territory, as a historically constituted space, refers to the social and conceptual organization of a specific space, a space understood as a politically instituted dimension of social relations. For the original peoples of our America territory is the essential element of their culture and the space for the realization of their community. Throughout the last 500

de la existencia en un contexto hostil.

En un territorio, se articulan relaciones sociales y se gestiona el poder. La territorialidad es básicamente un fenómeno social pero también económico (se vincula con el modelo de acumulación), jurídico, ideológico, y político.<sup>21</sup> En el capitalismo posindustrial existe una tendencia a maximizar las superficies privadas. La nueva vida social se caracteriza por una reducción al mínimo de los contactos sociales. El nuevo espacio fragmenta, parcializa, aisla, clasifica. Se fueron perdiendo así los espacios que operaban como condensadores sociales, los espacios que garantizaban una dialéctica entre el ámbito y la actividad. Se fue deteriorando el sentido de pertenencia colectiva de los espacios para las actividades (praxis) sociales.

La territorialidad ‘neoliberal’, articula territorios con la economía global y desarticula otros, se puede vincular tanto a las geografías de centralismo como a las de la marginalidad. Aunque suene a paradoja, es resultado de la desterritorialización del capital que afectó la densidad organizativa de los distintos barrios ex-industriales del Gran Buenos Aires convertidos en zonas excluidas de los circuitos de la economía global. Una fábrica abandonada, paisaje habitual en la periferia de la periferia, es una marca, una ‘grafía’, de los cambios en las relaciones de fuerza a nivel nacional e internacional que afectaron a los trabajadores. Esta territorialidad capitalista neoliberal en las zonas periféricas configura espacios del obedecer, alude a distintas formas de dominación y subordinación, al control social, a las peores versiones de la presencia estatal: la represión, el clientelismo y el patronazgo, en definitiva. Remite al poder pero también a las variadas formas de resistencia material y simbólica y a las modalidades de reconstrucción del tejido social; además confirma a la ciudad

years territories have therefore been the basis for resistance and the reconstruction of communal bonds, as well as the meaning of existence in a hostile context.

In a territory social relations are articulated and power is managed. Territoriality is essentially a social phenomenon, but it is also an economic (linked to the accumulation model), legal, ideological and political one.<sup>21</sup> There is a tendency in post-industrial capitalism to maximize private areas. The new social life is characterized by a reduction of social contacts to a minimum. The new space fragments, divides, isolates and classifies. The spaces that used to play the role of social unifiers, the spaces that guaranteed a dialectics between place and activity, have been lost. The sense of the collective ownership of spaces for social activities (praxis) has deteriorated.

Neoliberal ‘territoriality’ articulates some territories as the global economy and disarticulates others; it can be linked as much to the geography of centralism as to the geography of marginalization. However paradoxical it may sound, the organizational density of many former industrial neighborhoods of Greater Buenos Aires, which have become excluded from the circuits of global economy, is a consequence of the deterritorialization of capital. An abandoned factory, now a usual scene in the periphery of the periphery, is a mark, a ‘graph’, of the changes in the relations of power at national and international level that has affected workers. This neoliberal capitalist territoriality in the peripheries of the city configures spaces of obedience, referring to different configurations of domination and subordination, social control and to the worst versions of the presence of the State: repression, ‘clientelism’ and patronage. It refers to power but also to

como territorio abierto de las disputas. El territorio social siempre define el conflicto: antes la fábrica (donde los trabajadores sustentaban su unidad de clase y sus valores), ahora el barrio (reconstruido por el movimiento como condensador social). Además el territorio se conecta con la hegemonía.

Antes, en un contexto en el cual la vida misma de los trabajadores giraba en torno a la producción, la fábrica era el locus privilegiado de la lucha de clases y además era el ámbito de la hegemonía. Esta era una de las dimensiones más importantes del fordismo. Con la dislocación de este locus y la consolidación de la automatización flexible y programada que garantizaba una mayor fluidez del capital y consideraba al espacio como un todo a controlar, la fábrica dejó de ser un determinante y el barrio dejó de ser un lugar subordinado al orden que le imponía la primera como ámbito privilegiado de la intervención de la clase hace algunos años. El barrio es algo cualitativamente diferente a lo que era. Ha adquirido centralidad. Expresa de modo distinto (a la fábrica) los antagonismos de clase. El barrio, (o el territorio) a diferencia de la fábrica se convierte en espacio público.

El territorio es dinámico, dialéctico. La disputa por un territorio es entonces la disputa en torno a determinadas formas de relaciones sociales y entre cosmovisiones y racionalidades opuestas. Esta disputa puede expresarse en el enfrentamiento entre las normas de comportamiento espontáneamente producidas por las comunidades y las normas producidas por el Estado. Este comportamiento puede remitir tanto a la violencia horizontal como a las estrategias de subsistencia que favorecen la solidaridad y la organización popular. Cuando lo segundo ocurre, y nos parece que es el caso de un sector del movimiento piquetero, la disputa se plantea

various forms of material and symbolic resistance, to modalities of the reconstruction of the social fabric; it also confirms the city as a territory open to disputes. The social territory always defines the conflict: earlier it was the factory (where the workers maintained their class unity and their values), now it is the neighborhood (reconstructed by the movement as a social unifier). Moreover, the territory is connected to hegemony.

In the past, in the context in which the workers' life itself revolved around the production, the factory was the privileged locus for class struggle, and it was also the field of hegemony. This was one of the most important dimensions of Fordism. With the displacement of this locus and the consolidation of flexible and programmed production, guaranteeing an easier flow of capital and considering the whole space as something that must be controlled, the factory has ceased to be a determining factor. At the same time the neighborhood has ceased to be a place subordinated to the order imposed by the factory as the privileged field for class intervention in recent years. The neighborhood is something qualitatively different from what it was. It has acquired centrality. It expresses a distinct mode (compared to the factory) of class antagonisms. The neighborhood (or the territory), in contrast to the factory, becomes a public space.

The territory is dynamic, dialectical. The dispute for territory is therefore the dispute around certain forms of social relations and between opposing rationalities and world views. This dispute can express itself in the confrontation between norms of conduct spontaneously produced by communities and the norms produced by the State. This conduct can be as much related to horizontal violence as to subsistence

entre: el trabajo concreto y resocializador y el trabajo alienado y desocializador, la horizontalidad y el verticalismo, la autonomía y la heteronomía, la jerarquía y la igualdad, un ‘contrato’ basado en la fraternidad y otro basado en la sumisión.

La lucha por el territorio refleja este conflicto de fondo. La defensa del territorio es un conducta adquirida y tiene que ver con la estructura grupal. El territorio delimitado por el movimiento, y su conversión en un microcosmos reproductivo social es resultado de una lucha. La lucha marca el territorio y permite el contra-control del mismo. Los territorios no son fijos, justamente porque son expresión de fuerzas sociales en pugna. Por lo tanto están expuestos a reformulaciones constantes, a nuevos trazados y delimitaciones.<sup>22</sup>

La corriente autónoma del movimiento de trabajadores desocupados expresa una territorialidad distinta en el marco de la territorialidad capitalista dominante, territorialidad que expresa una contraracionalidad que se erige frente a la racionalidad hegemónica. Aquí vale citar en extenso a Milton Santos quien sosténía que:

frente a la racionalidad dominante, deseosa de conquistar todo, se puede, desde el punto de vista de los actores no beneficiados, hablar de irracionalidad, es decir, de producción deliberada de situaciones no razonables. Objetivamente se puede decir también que, a partir de esa racionalidad hegemónica, se instalan paralelamente contra-racionalidades (...) Esas contra-racionalidades se localizan, desde un punto de vista social, entre los pobres, los migrantes, los excluidos, las minorías; desde un punto de vista económico, entre las actividades marginales, tradicional o recientemente marginalizadas; y desde el punto de vista geográfico, en las áreas menos modernas y más ‘opacas’, convertidas en irracionales para los usos hegemónicos. Todas esas situaciones se definen por su incapacidad de subordinación completa a las racionalidades dominantes, ya que no

strategies favoring solidarity and popular organization. When the latter occurs, and we think that this is the case with parts of the *piquetero* movement, the dispute takes place between: concrete and resocializing work and alienated and desocializing work; horizontality and verticalism; autonomy and heteronomy; hierarchy and equality; a ‘contract’ based on fraternity and another one based on submission.

The struggle for territory reflects this underlying conflict. The defense of territory is an acquired conduct and depends on the group structure. The territory delimited by the movement and transformed into a social reproductive microcosm is the result of struggle. The struggle marks the territory and allows its counter-control. The territories are not fixed, precisely because they are the expression of social forces in conflict. Therefore, they are exposed to constant reformulations, new designs and definitions.<sup>22</sup>

The autonomous stream of the unemployed workers movement expresses a distinct territoriality within the framework of the dominant capitalist territoriality; a territoriality that expresses a counter-rationality arising from the opposition to the hegemonic rationality. It is worth quoting Milton Santos at some length; he maintains that:

in opposition to the dominant rationality, eager to conquer everything, we can, from the viewpoint of the actors who are not favored, talk about irrationality, that is, about the deliberate production of non-reasonable situations. Objectively, we can also say that, starting from that hegemonic rationality, parallel counter-rationalities are established (...) These counter-rationalities are located, from a social viewpoint, among the poor, migrants, the excluded, and minorities; from an economic viewpoint, they can be found among

disponen de los medios para tener acceso a la modernidad material contemporánea. Esa experiencia de la escasez es la base de una adaptación creadora a la realidad existente.<sup>23</sup>

La nueva territorialidad remite a espacios de vida colectiva permanente y a una experiencia vivida donde se forja la conciencia social, donde surge la disposición de actuar como una clase.<sup>24</sup> El territorio (como espacio social hecho propio) provee la base para la identidad colectiva fundada por los sujetos sociales que se personifican en cuerpos concretos. Se plantea una disputa por los cuerpos entre los punteros y el movimiento. El piquete puede verse en este contexto como un emergente de la crisis de la territorialidad caracterizada por las relaciones de poder instauradas por el modelo neoliberal. El piquete como herramienta, al ocupar espacios públicos masivamente, al poner en primer plano el protagonismo del militante, altera a la sociedad del espectáculo y de la diferenciación social, materializa la disputa hegemónica y recupera la centralidad del cuerpo en la lucha política (algo común en la etapa histórica previa a la Dictadura Militar).

Los punteros han expresado con claridad su voluntad por disputarle las calles, los barrios, a los piqueteros. Los primeros insisten en mantenerlos desestructurados; los segundos quieren ‘recuperarlos’, restituirles el ser y la dignidad, conciben al territorio como un espacio de aprendizaje. ¿Quiénes inician en los barrios el proceso de ruptura con la territorialidad anterior y la creación de alternativas? Los militantes o los ‘cuadros’ con algún tipo de experiencia sindical o política previa.

La configuración territorial de los movimientos, la intención de inscribir geográficamente relaciones sociales alternativas, el carácter ‘prefigurativo’ de la corriente autónoma del movimiento, hacen plausible –a pesar de las diferencias– la

marginal activities (traditionally or recently marginalized); and, from a geographical viewpoint, they are located in the less modern and more ‘opaque’ areas, transformed into something irrational for hegemonic uses. All these situations are defined by their incapacity for total subordination to dominant rationalities, as they do not possess the means to gain access to contemporary material modernity. This experience of shortage is the basis for a creative adaptation to the existing reality.<sup>23</sup>

The new territoriality refers to spaces of permanent collective life and to a living experience where social consciousness is forged, where the disposition to act as a class arises.<sup>24</sup> The territory (as appropriated social space) provides the basis for a collective identity based on social subjects and personified by concrete bodies. There is thus a dispute over bodies between the *punteros* and the movement. In this context the picket (*piquete*) can be seen as an emergent product of the crisis of territoriality, characterized by power relations established by the neoliberal model. The *piquete* is a tool for the massive occupation of public spaces, for putting the protagonism of the militant on the frontline. This alters the society of the spectacle and social differentiation; it materializes the hegemonic dispute and recuperates the centrality of the body in the political struggle (something that used to be common in the historical phase prior the Military Dictatorship).

The *punteros* have clearly expressed their will to dispute streets and neighborhoods with the *piqueteros*. The former insist on keeping these territories disorganized; the latter want to ‘recuperate’ them, returning them to existence and dignity, conceiving the territory as a learning space. Who initiates the process of rupture with the previous territoriality and creates alternatives in the neighborhoods? The

asociación con experiencias como las protagonizadas por el zapatismo, los indígenas bolivianos y ecuatorianos y los Sin Tierra del Brasil.

El territorio, lo ‘local’, se ha erigido en el espacio de cuestionamiento concreto y directo al modelo de dominación política y social. Lo que contribuye a corroborar la falsedad del dualismo sociedad civil-Estado. El territorio es el espacio en el que se define la unidad política de los trabajadores, es punto de articulación con otros sectores. Si uno de los pasos necesarios para construir una nueva sociedad pasa por aglutinar a la pluralidad de segmentos que componen la clase trabajadora, el territorio juega un papel central como elemento aglutinador.

Esta configuración territorial de los movimientos tiene conexiones con el protagonismo asumido por las mujeres. El rol significativo de la mujer ha sido destacado como uno de los rasgos más originales del movimiento piquetero. Samuel Benchimol nos brinda una pista para entender esta circunstancia: “la mujer siente más que nadie el cambio operado bruscamente en su vida. Por ser el elemento femenino más apegado a los *suyos*, por hacer de sus parientes, amigos, vecinos, de su tierra y de su casa su propio mundo, ella sentirá profundamente el dolor de que arranquen todo eso” (italicas del original).<sup>25</sup>

La mujer juega un papel clave en la articulación del microcosmos reproductivo social con lo político. En buena medida como consecuencia de un mandato cultural, el peso de las mujeres es determinante en las actividades cotidianas autoreproductivas a las que le imprimen una impronta de género. Contribuyen de este modo a la construcción de territorialidades alternativas. La mujer es la que garantiza los objetivos relacionados con la supervivencia social y política, y no solo

militants and the groups with some kind of previous trade unionist or political experience.

The territorial configuration of the movements, the intention of geographically inscribing alternative social relations and the ‘prefigurative’ character of the autonomous stream of the movement all make it feasible – despite the differences – to establish an association with experiences advocated by Zapatism, Bolivian and Ecuadorian indigenous peoples and the Brazilian Movement of the Landless.

The territory, the ‘local’, has arisen as the space for concrete and direct questioning of the model of political and social domination. It contributes to affirming the falseness of the civil society-State dualism. The territory is the space in which the workers’ political unity is defined; it is the point of articulation with other sectors. If one of the necessary steps in constructing a new society is to string together the plurality of sectors that compose the working class, then territory plays a central role as a binding element.

This territorial configuration of the movements is connected to the central role assumed by women. The significant role of women has been emphasized as one of the most original features of the *piquetero* movement. Samuel Benchimol provides some clues to understand this circumstance: “women feel more than anyone the sudden changes that have occurred in their lives. As the feminine element is more rooted in *her* family – she considers her relatives, friends, neighbors, land and house as her own world – she deeply feels the pain when everything is taken away” (italics in the original).<sup>25</sup>

Women play a key role in the articulation

material, por lo tanto es la que impulsa las instancias de formación y las prácticas asamblearias. El componente subjetivo que incorporan se refleja fundamentalmente en la consolidación de los mecanismos de la democracia de base y en la prioridad otorgada a la práctica por sobre los discursos. Pero nada de esto ha sido sencillo y se las sigue marginando de los espacios de participación y decisión, de los espacios más públicos y de las instancias más políticas. Las mujeres han dado y siguen dando una sorda pelea en pos de la erradicación de las concepciones machistas-patriarcales al interior de los movimientos. En un documento reciente dicen: “ponemos el cuerpo y nos cuesta como mujeres poner la palabra en los espacios públicos y en los medios de comunicación / falta nuestra voz en los espacios de coordinación”<sup>26</sup>

El *pique* cuestiona el fundamento capitalista del movimiento intermitente. El *pique* objeta las regularidades que el capital impone. El *pique* contraría los fundamentos de la competitividad que impulsa la privatización del espacio. Nos instala la cuestión de las definiciones y los usos del tiempo social. En efecto, la globalización neoliberal hace que la fluidez del capital desborde la fábrica. En realidad el espacio para el capital aparece como un obstáculo y su herramienta para colmarlo es el tiempo. El capital se valoriza en el tiempo. Según Xavier Arakaki: “un *pique* es la interrupción de un flujo a través de cuerpos quietos que ocupan espacios de circulación, generando serios problemas cronométricos en la dinámica vehicular. Por eso decimos (...) que un *pique* es una crono-tecnología de resistencia.”<sup>27</sup> El *pique* es entonces una de las formas de detener el tiempo de rotación de la materia (mercancías), un palo en la rueda del capital.

El *pique*, además de una forma de acción colectiva y una metodología de acción

of the social reproductive microcosm together with the political one. Mainly as a consequence of a cultural mandate, the strength of women is a decisive factor in self-reproducing daily activities, where they imprint a gender mark. In this way they contribute to the construction of alternative territorialities. Women are the ones who guarantee the objectives related to social and political survival, not just material survival; they are the ones who initiate learning events and assembly practices. The subjective element they incorporate is mainly reflected in the consolidation of the mechanisms of grassroots democracy and the prioritization of practices over discourses. However, none of this has been easy, and women are still marginalized in the spaces of participation and decision making, in public spaces and political positions. Women have contributed and keep on contributing, often with a voice-less struggle in the background, for the eradication of male chauvinist and patriarchal conceptions within the movements. In a recent document, they say: “we expose our bodies and, as women, it is hard for us to place our words in public spaces and in the mass media / our voice is missing in the spaces of coordination”<sup>26</sup>.

The *pique* questions the capitalist principle of sporadic movement. The *pique* confronts the regularities imposed by the capital. The *pique* opposes the principles of competitiveness that cause the privatization of space. It poses the issue of definitions and uses of social time. Indeed, neoliberal globalization makes the fluidity of capital exceed the limits of the factory. In fact, space becomes an obstacle for capital, and the tool it employs to fill this space is time. Capital valorizes itself through time. According to Xavier Arakaki, “a *pique* is the interruption of the flow by means of

directa vinculada a las realidades impuestas por un modelo acumulación que favoreció la desterritorialización del capital, implica para algunas organizaciones la exposición pública de una territorialidad alternativa construida en los barrios (lo que está detrás del piquete). En este sentido el piquete, además de remitir a la ocupación simbólica (transitoria) de un territorio específico, además de reforzar la integración y el sentido de dignidad de los que en él participan, es la representación (escenificación) de la apropiación y el control real de otro territorio (el del barrio) para una relación social radicalmente nueva. Es también la exhibición pública de una potencialidad: la de extender ese control y esos vínculos a otros territorios. El piquete en algunos casos no es pura negatividad. Es propuesta positiva y universalizable. Es una instancia donde tiene lugar la democracia directa y participativa. Ni mera táctica, ni la manifestación desesperada que se aguarda de la ciudad prohibida y oculta. Creemos que es esto lo que preocupa a las autoridades que reflejan los temores de las clases dominantes.

Ocupar el territorio es un imperativo estratégico, ocuparlo con cuerpos vinculados solidariamente. Esta dimensión del territorio desdibuja el supuesto objetivo (que se le adjudica a los movimientos de desocupados) en pos de la re-inclusión en el mercado laboral capitalista, o sea, la crítica al desempleo (que suele favorecer prácticas clientelares y asistenciales) no es el eje, por lo menos para la corriente autónoma del movimiento, sino la crítica al trabajo capitalista y a la sociedad que lo sostiene. Esta dimensión del territorio es un elemento determinante para sostener el carácter ‘no residual’ (respecto de la clase obrera) de los desocupados y de su subjetividad.

De todos modos cabe una reflexión: construir nueva sociedad en los marcos de

silent bodies occupying spaces of circulation, generating serious chronometric problems for vehicular dynamics. That is why we say (...) that a *piquete* is a *chrono-technology* of resistance.”<sup>27</sup> The picket is, therefore, one of the strategies to stop the time of movement of materials (goods); a stick in the wheel of capital.

The picket, apart from being a form of collective action and a methodology of direct action, is founded on the realities imposed by a model of accumulation that favors the deterritorialization of capital. For some organizations it implies the public exposure of an alternative territoriality constructed in the neighborhoods (which are behind the *pickete*). In this sense, the *pickete* – apart from expressing the symbolic (transitional) occupation of a specific territory, and apart from reinforcing the integration and the sense of dignity of those who take part in it – is the representation (performance) of the appropriation and real control of another territory (the neighborhood) for a radically new social relation. It is the public exhibition of a potentiality: that of spreading that control and relationship to other territories. In some cases the *pickete* is not pure negativity. It is a positive proposal that can be made universal. It is an instance where direct and participative democracy takes place. It is neither mere tactics nor a desperate demonstration of the forbidden and hidden city. We believe that this is what worries the authorities, which reflects the fears of the dominant classes.

Occupying the territory with solidary bodies is a strategic imperative. This dimension of territory blurs the supposed objective (which is attributed to the movements of the unemployed) of a re-inclusion in the capitalist market of work.

la vieja, anticipar el socialismo o el ‘cambio social’ en las formas y en las relaciones cotidianas concretas son los pilares del camino más efectivo hacia la emancipación y hacia la utopía. Las utopías siempre fueron, curiosamente, metáforas espaciales. Todas las utopías han tenido una representación espacial. No siempre el sueño utópico remitía a la ‘ciudad ideal’ del Renacimiento,<sup>28</sup> por el contrario, muchas veces propiciaba la intervención en el acto, sin esperar un cambio integral de la sociedad, aunque siempre procurándolo, planteándolo como horizonte necesario. El cambio de una porción de un sistema determinado no lo confirma necesariamente. Así la utopía piquetera restituye un lugar en el margen, recupera una utilidad, una función, en síntesis: una posibilidad.

La corriente autónoma del movimiento piquetero nos propone un nuevo espacio político que excede al mundo ‘real’ y a las históricas clases sociales, pero este espacio está en concordancia con una prefiguración en pequeña escala de la transformación revolucionaria del mundo ‘real’. O sea: un espacio propiamente utópico, un hegeliano mundo invertido.

La sociedad nueva, la sociedad futura, debe estar presente hoy en la conciencia y en las prácticas de los sectores populares. Pero... ¿Cuánto tiempo pueden durar las disrupciones como estas (...) en los marcos de una sociedad nacional capitalista? ¿Cuáles son los límites del crecimiento acumulativo y de avance en base a hechos de territorialización organizada?<sup>29</sup> Consideramos que una nueva sociabilidad no solo no es contradictoria con la construcción de una herramienta política (o varias) sino que esta última resultará, en algún momento, necesaria.

Para terminar y parafraseando a Foucault: en un sector importante del movimiento

It means that the critique of unemployment (which usually favors ‘clientelist’ and assistance practices) is not the main axis, at least for the autonomous stream of the movement. Instead, it is the critique of capitalist work as such and the society that sustains it. This dimension of territory is a decisive element for sustaining the ‘non-residual’ character (with respect to the working class) of the unemployed and their subjectivity.

Considering all this, we can say: The construction of a new society within the frames of the old, and the anticipation of socialism or ‘social change’ through concrete daily forms and relations, are the pillars of the most effective path towards emancipation and utopia. Curiously, utopias have always had spatial metaphors. All utopias have had spatial representations. But the utopian dream has not always referred to the ‘ideal city’ of the Renaissance.<sup>28</sup> On the contrary, it has often favored immediate intervention, without waiting for a complete social change, though always looking for it, and posing it as a necessary horizon. Changing parts of a certain system does not necessarily guarantee that new horizon. Thus, the *piquetero* utopia restores a place at the margin; it recovers utility, a function; in sum: a possibility.

The autonomous stream of the piquetero movement poses a new political space that exceeds the ‘real’ world and the historical social classes. However, this space only corresponds to a small-scale prefiguration of the revolutionary transformation of the ‘real’ world. In other words, it is a properly utopian space, a Hegelian inverted world.

The new society, the future society, must be present today in the consciousness and practices of the popular fields. But... How

piquetero se ejerce una libertad que no proviene de la naturaleza de las estructuras. Esa libertad contradice de plano esas estructuras.

long can these kinds of disruptions last (...) within the frames of a national capitalist society? What are the limits of accumulative growth and progress on the basis of organized territorialization?<sup>29</sup> We think not only that a new sociability does not contradict the construction of a political tool (or several), but also that it will, at some point, be necessary.

To conclude and paraphrase Foucault: In an important sector of the *piquetero* movement a freedom is exercised that has not arisen from the nature of the structures. This freedom directly contradicts the plane of these structures.

**notas**  
**notes**

- 1 No se trata de deificar al Estado. Cabe aclarar que el mismo Estado, con sus modos de intervención y de gestión antisociales (impulsados por agentes directos de los sectores dominantes), favoreció el desarrollo de los procesos que condujeron a su debilitamiento.

Deifying the State is not the point. It is worth explaining that the State itself, with its anti-social ways of intervention and management (directly instigated by agents from the dominant sectors), favored the development of the processes that led to its weakening.

- 2 Se refiere a las organizaciones del movimiento piquetero que no fueron creadas por partidos políticos o sindicatos.

This refers to organizations in the *piquetero* movement that were not created by political parties or trade unions.

- 3 Emprendimiento empañado no tanto por la presencia de funcionarios del gobierno en la inauguración del establecimiento, que hasta podría resultar anecdótica, sino por la posición pro-gubernamental de la organización que asume tan interesante iniciativa.

Entrepreneurship that becomes devalued not so much by the presence of government civil servants in the inauguration ceremony, which could have been just another anecdote, but mainly by the pro-governmental position of the organization that directs this interesting initiative.

- 4 Termino utilizado en Italia (Gramsci) para hacer referencia al lumpen proletariado.

Term used in Italy (Gramsci) to refer to *lumpenproletariat*.

- 5 Se refiere a la rebeldía social y política característica de aquella década.

This refers to the social and political opposition typical of that decade.

- 6 La Comisión Trilateral es una organización privada, fundada en 1973 por ciudadanos privados de Japón, de Europa (países de la UE), y de Norteamérica (Estados Unidos y Canadá). Según su declaración oficial, su objetivo es fomentar una cooperación más cercana entre esas importantes áreas industrializadas democráticas. Fue una iniciativa de David Rockefeller. Establecida originalmente por tres años, todavía está en acción. La organización estuvo bajo mucho escrutinio y crítica por activistas políticos y académicos de las ciencias sociales y políticas.

The Trilateral Commission is a private organization, founded in 1973 by private citizens of Japan, Europe (European Union countries), and North America (United States and Canada). According to its official statement, the objective of The Trilateral Commission is to foster closer cooperation among these core democratic industrialized areas of the world. It was an initiative of David Rockefeller. Originally established for three years, it is still in place. The organization has come under much

scrutiny and criticism by political activists and academics working in the social and political sciences.

- 7 Marcuse, H. (1969) *El fin de la utopía*. Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, p. 23; Marcuse, H. (1970) ‘The End of Utopia’, in *Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia*, trans. J. Shapiro and S. Weber Boston: Beacon, p. 62-81.
- 8 Fanon, F. (2001) *Los condenados de la tierra*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- 9 Virno, P. (2003) *Gramática de la multitud: para un análisis de las formas de vida contemporáneas*. Buenos Aires: Clichue, p. 115; Virno, P. (2004) *The Grammar of the Multitude*, trans. S. Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e).
- 10 Santos, M. (2000) *La naturaza del espacio: Técnica y Tiempo*. Barcelona: Ariel, p. 263.
- 11 Barrios populares del Gran Buenos Aires / Popular neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Buenos Aires.
- 12 Melucci, A. (1977) *Sistema político, partiti e movimenti sociali*. Milán: Feltrinelli, p. 109.
- 13 De Sousa Santos, B. (2001) ‘Los nuevos movimientos sociales’, *OSAL* (Observatorio Social de América Latina), 5: 177.
- 14 Colectivo Situaciones (2001) *MTD Solano (Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de Solano)*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Mano a Mano, punto Nro. 5.
- 15 Foucault, M. (1979) *Microfísica del poder*. Madrid: Ediciones de La Piqueta, p. 116.
- 16 ‘Construir la Unidad del Campo Popular’, documento para el debate elaborado por la Mesa Nacional de la CTA, Hacia el IV Congreso de la CTA, 9 y 10 de diciembre de 2002, Buenos Aires, 13 de agosto de 2002, p. 13.  
‘Construir la Unidad del Campo Popular’, discussion document prepared by the Mesa Nacional de la CTA (CTA’s National Board), Hacia el IV Congreso de la CTA, 9-10 December, 2002, Buenos Aires, 13 August 2002, p. 13.
- 17 López, A. (2003) ‘La representación privilegiada del municipio’, *Revista Démos*, 1(1): 8.
- 18 Svampa, M. y S. Pereyra (2003) *Entre la ruta y el barrio: la experiencia de las organizaciones piqueteras*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, p. 46-47.
- 19 Izaguirre, Inés y Z. Aristizábal (1988) *Las tomas de tierra en la zona sur del Gran Buenos Aires. Un ejercicio de formación del poder en el campo popular*. Buenos Aires: CEAL.
- 20 “Clientelismo se refiere a la estructuración del poder político a través de redes de relaciones informales que ligan a individuos con poder desigual en relaciones de intercambio. En estructuras clientelísticas de autoridad, el poder se localiza en el individuo superior (el jefe, soberano, o la cabeza del clan) que decide personalmente cómo distribuir recursos según preferencias personales. [...] esta perspectiva representa el Estado como pirámide de arriba hacia abajo, dirigido por el jefe Ejecutivo, que directamente o indirectamente dispensa favores a éstos abajo, a través de relaciones complejas del tipo patrón-cliente, que ligan la tapa de la estructura social a la base. La sociedad civil, en contraste, es percibida como un sistema fragmentado de relaciones verticales que inhiben la formación de agrupaciones horizontales de interés, sean basadas en partidos o en clase social” Brachet-Marquez, V. (1992) ‘Explaining Sociopolitical Change in Latin America’, *Latin American Research Review*, 3: 94.  
“Clientelism refers to the structuring of political power through networks of informal dyadic relations that link individuals of unequal power in relationships of exchange. In clientelistic structures of authority, power is vested in the top individual (the boss, sovereign, or head of clan) who personally decides how to distribute resources according to personal preferences. [...] this perspective represents the state as a top-down pyramid headed by the chief of the executive branch, who directly or indirectly dispenses favors to those below through complex patron-client relations that link the top of the social structure to the base. Civil society, in contrast, is perceived as a fragmented set of vertical relationships inhibiting the formation of horizontal interest groupings, whether based on party or social class” Brachet-Marquez, V. (1992) ‘Explaining Sociopolitical Change in Latin America’, *Latin American Research Review*, 3: 94.
- 21 Según Michel Foucault, “territorio, es sin duda una noción geográfica, pero es en primer lugar una noción jurídico-política: lo que es controlado por un cierto tipo de poder” (Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 116).

According to Michel Foucault, “territory is, without a doubt, a geographical notion, but it is first of all a legal-political one: that which is controlled by a certain type of power” (Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 116).

- 22 Vale destacar que la importancia de los asentamientos y las experiencias desarrolladas en torno a ellos en la década del ‘80 y de los movimientos de vecinos autoconvocados (principalmente en torno a la cuestión de los servicios) en los 90’, como antecedentes de las nuevas formas de inscripción territorial de los sectores populares y de las nuevas funciones del barrio como eje de las luchas reivindicativas. Ver: Merklen, D. *Inscription territoriale et acción colective. Les occupations illégales de terres urbaines depuis les années 1980 en Argentine*, Tesis de doctorado, París, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, citado por Svampa, Maristella y Pereyra Sebastián, *op. cit.* p. 37., y también Zibechi, R. (2003) *Genealogía de la revuelta. Argentina: la sociedad en movimiento*. Montevideo, Buenos Aires: Nordán - Comunidad - Letra libre.

It is worth recalling the importance of the community settlements and the experiences developed around them in the 1980s. There were also the self-organized neighborhood movements (mainly in relation to the issue of services) in the 1990s. They serve as background for the new forms of territorial inscription of popular sectors; and, for the new functions of the neighborhood, as an axis for the reclaiming struggles. See: Merklen, D. *Inscription territoriale et acción colective. Les occupations illégales de terres urbaines depuis les années 1980 en Argentine*, Ph.D. Thesis, París, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, quoted by Svampa, M. and S. Pereyra, *op. cit.* p. 37., and also Zibechi, R. (2003) *Genealogía de la revuelta. Argentina: la sociedad en movimiento*. Montevideo, Buenos Aires: Nordán - Comunidad - Letra libre.

- 23 Santos, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
- 24 Lo territorial se entrelaza con lo cotidiano. Esta convivencia coloca en un lugar relevante una dimensión de la política hasta ahora olvidada, cuando no despreciada, por la izquierda.  
The territorial is interwoven with the day to day. This togetherness puts an aspect of politics in a relevant place, which so far has been forgotten, if not despised, by the Left.
- 25 Samuel Benchimol, citado por / quoted by: Gonçalves, P. y C. Walter (2001) *Geo-grafías. Movimientos Sociales, nuevas territorialidades y sustentabilidad*. México, Siglo XXI, p. 113.
- 26 Encuentro de Mujeres de la Verón (volante de noviembre de 2003).  
Meeting of Women of Verón (November 2003 leaflet).
- 27 Arakaki, X. (2003) *Piquetes. Una cronotecnología de resistencia en la ciudad posdisciplinaria*. Buenos Aires: Mimeo, p. 32.
- 28 Nótese la recia ligazón que existe entre ‘Renacimiento’ y utopía. En nuestro caso, la utopía es hija de la recomposición – renacimiento – del campo popular y del fracaso de los dioses del neoliberalismo.  
Note the strong link that exists between ‘Renaissance’ and utopia. In our case, utopia is the daughter of the reconstruction – renaissance – of the popular field and the failure of the gods of neoliberalism.
- 29 Mazzeo, M. (2002) ‘El “eje estatal”, el poder y el “sujeto posleninista”. Algunas reflexiones’, *Revista Periferias*, 7(10): 89.

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# **Uma Outra Linguagem: A *Mística* na produção da consciência dos integrantes do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)**

Joysinett Moraes da Silva  
e/and Rafael Vecchio

# **Another Language: *Mística* in the production of consciousness among members of the Landless Workers Movement (MST)**

translated by Clovis Belbute Peres

O sonho é como uma estrela em cuja direção somos chamados a caminhar, a dar passos que sustentem e concretizem nossa esperança levando mais pessoas a perceberem que o mundo pode ser diferente e que sua construção só depende de nós. O problema é que alguns só olham para a estrela e esperam chegar a ela sem dar passo algum, sem somar forças, sem transformar seu sonho numa forma de resistência invencível. Limitam-se a contemplar o céu, a ter saudades de momentos mais felizes, a esperar que alguém os leve até a estrela ou que ela, num passe de mágica, fique mais perto deles. Na longa espera, cansam, desanimam, chegam a perder sua dignidade, seu sentimento de rebeldia, sua vontade de reagir. A estrela parece estar cada vez mais distante e o seu brilho empalidece até desaparecer diante dos olhos que se tornam cegos de tanto e só olhar para a estrela. Sem rumo, permanecem sozinhos e se convencem de que tudo não passa de um sonho que se sonha só. *Enquanto isso, outros buscam transformar seu sonho em realidade num seguido levantar e baixar de olhares, estudando o terreno, estabelecendo metas,*

Dreams are like a star toward which we are summoned to walk, taking steps that maintain and concretize our hope, leading more people to realize that the world can be different and that its construction only depends on us. The problem is that some only look at the star and hope to get there without taking any steps, without joining forces, without changing their dream into an unbeatable form of resistance. They limit themselves to gazing at the sky, missing happier moments, waiting for someone to lead them to the star, or waiting for it to come closer to them as if by magic. During this long wait, they grow tired, get discouraged, even lose their dignity, their feeling of rebelliousness, their will to react. The star seems to be far away, its shine fading away until it disappears in front of their eyes, which have become blind by looking at the star for such a long time. With no direction they remain lonely and convince themselves that everything is only a dream that is dreamt alone. *Meanwhile, others try to continuously transform their dreams into reality by studying the terrain,*

*reunindo condições para atingi-las, percorrendo caminhos, enfrentando obstáculos e fazendo com que o amanhã seja, pelo menos, um passo mais próximo do presente de sofrimento que hoje vivenciam.* (Gennari, 2000: 1)

Essa tem sido a escolha dos trabalhadores rurais sem terra no Brasil que, reunidos no Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), através de lutas cotidianas, buscam transformar a própria realidade.

É desse sujeito coletivo que tratamos neste artigo, assim como, de forma mais específica, também abordamos um dos seus instrumentos político-pedagógicos de conscientização, ou seja, a *Mística*.<sup>1</sup>

A *Mística* é uma representação teatral onde a temática é sempre a vida dos militantes. Os rituais místicos só podem ser encenados por sujeitos que compõem a organização. O principal objetivo é conscientizar os que atuam e os que assistem, para que se reconheçam enquanto sujeitos construtores da própria realidade. Desse modo, a mística é a encenação da realidade. Os sujeitos interpretam o evento já ocorrido. Preferencialmente, os atores devem ter participado desse evento. Não há ensaio, ou uma preparação prévia. Os atores decidem quais papéis vão interpretar momentos antes da encenação. Por exemplo: no caso da retirada de militantes do MST de uma determinada área ocupada estão envolvidos policiais, militantes, agentes judiciais, imprensa etc. Os atores são voluntários e decidem quem vão interpretar, o roteiro é improvisado, a temática é o evento vivido. A *Mística* acontece, usualmente, no início e/ou no final de alguma atividade organizativa.

Para tanto, construímos o texto de modo a apresentar um pouco da história brasileira com relação à propriedade da terra que, inevitavelmente, se confunde com a história do Movimento dos Trabalhadores

*establishing goals, gathering conditions to reach them, walking paths, overcoming obstacles, and making tomorrow at least a step closer to the present in which they live now full of suffering.* (Gennari, 2000: 1)

This has been the choice of Brazilian rural workers who have formed the Landless Workers Movement (MST). They seek to change their own reality through daily struggles.

This article deals with this collective subject, and, more specifically, we approach one of its political-pedagogical instruments: *Mística*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Mística* is a theatrical representation in which the theme is always the life of the militants. The *Mística* can only be staged by subjects who are members of the organization. The main objective is to develop the consciousness of those who act and watch the *Mística*, so that they can recognize themselves as subjects who produce their reality. In this way the *Mística* is a representation of reality. The subjects always represent an event that has occurred in the past. Ideally, the actors have participated in that event. There is no rehearsal or prior preparation. The actors decide which role they are going to stage moments before the act. For example, the event of retreating MST militants from an invaded area involves the roles of policemen, militants, the judiciary, the press, etc. The actors are volunteers and they decide who to play. The script is improvised and the theme is an event experienced by them. The *Mística* is usually performed before and/or at the end of an organized activity of the MST.

To engage with this topic, our text will also present some Brazilian history that is related to land property, which is inevitably intermingled with the history of the MST and, in the end, with *Mística*.

### Rurais Sem Terra e, por fim, a *Mística*.

Salientamos que, assim como Gramsci, acreditamos que viver significa tomar partido, pois quem verdadeiramente vive não pode deixar de ser cidadão, e partidário, não pode ser indiferente. “Indiferença é abulia, parasitismo, covardia, não é vida. A indiferença atua poderosamente na história. Atua passivamente, mas atua. Odeio os indiferentes também, porque me provocam tédio as suas lamúrias de eternos inocentes. Odeio os indiferentes” (Gramsci, 1917: 1).

We stress that, as Gramsci, we believe that living means to take a stand, because those who are really alive cannot stop being citizens, partisans, and cannot be indifferent. “Indifference is abulia, parasitism, cowardice, it is not life. Indifference plays a powerful role in history. It acts in a passive manner, but it does act. I also hate indifferent people, because their complaints of eternal innocents bore me. I hate indifferent people” (Gramsci, 1917: 1).



*Mística*, IV Congresso Nacional MST, agosto 2000; Foto de Douglas Mansur, Paula Reis e João Zinclar, Arquivos do MST de São Paulo;

*Mística*, 4th National MST Congress, August 2000; Photo by Douglas Mansur, Paula Reis and João Zinclar, MST Archive, São Paulo; <http://www.landless-voices.org/vieira/>

Há que se saber, primeiro, que a história dos camponeses sem terra teve início em 1492 quando a América foi inserida no

Firstly, one should know that the history of landless peasants started in 1492, when America was inserted into the

contexto internacional do mercantilismo (Silva, 2004). Época em que nos informaram, e ao mundo, que havíamos sido descobertos e, portanto, chamados a nos tornarmos civilizados. É fundamental, também, o conhecimento de que “a questão agrária historicamente se faz presente nas principais lutas sociais latino-americanas” (Silva, 2004: 25). Desde o início, como ressalta Furtado (1968), a fazenda foi a unidade básica de produção agrícola brasileira, compreendida como propriedade de médio ou grande porte. A partir daí se faz menção à *massa rural dependente* que, sem acesso à propriedade da terra, fica à mercê dos latifundiários.

Na América Latina o sistema baseado no capital subjugou a sociedade e a economia local conforme as necessidades do capitalismo em mutação. Em meados do século XX é iniciado um processo de internacionalização da produção, sob a coordenação dos Estados Unidos e através de empresas transnacionais, que buscam novas áreas de produção para ampliar a acumulação capitalista (Silva, 2004). No Brasil, as condições sociais e políticas para a implementação do novo modelo foram forjadas durante a ditadura militar. As diferenças sociais foram acentuadas e a degradação da agricultura familiar em prol da monocultura suscita um clima de revolta e demandas por reforma agrária que são violentamente sufocadas.

Muitas das rituais místicos denunciam que, durante a ditadura militar, as lutas populares sofreram violenta repressão e que, embora em 1964 tenha sido decretada a primeira Lei de Reforma Agrária no Brasil, o Estatuto da Terra, ele jamais foi implantado. Na realidade, se configurou como um instrumento estratégico para controlar e desarticular as lutas sociais pela terra. As dramatizações feitas pelos componentes do MST mostram, também, que nos anos da ditadura, apesar das

international context of mercantilism (Silva, 2004). At that time we and the world were informed that we had been discovered and, therefore, we were summoned to become civilized. Knowing that “the agrarian issue is historically present in the main Latin American social struggles” (Silva, 2004: 25) is also crucial. From the beginning, as highlighted by Furtado (1968), farms have been the basic unit of Brazilian agricultural production, comprising of medium or large estates. From that point on, authors mention a *dependent rural mass*, which is at the mercy of large landowners for not having access to land.

In Latin America the system based on capital subdued society and the local economy according to the needs of a mutating capitalism. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century a process of internationalization of production was started under the coordination of the United States and through transnational enterprises, which seek new production areas to increase capitalist accumulation (Silva, 2004). In Brazil social and political conditions to implement this new model were forged during the military dictatorship (1964-1983). Social differences became more marked and the degradation of family agriculture in favor of monoculture generated a feeling of rebelliousness and demands for agrarian reform, which were violently repressed.

Several mystical rituals show that during the military dictatorship popular struggles were violently repressed, and, although the first Brazilian Agrarian Reform Law – the Land Statute – had been enacted in 1964, it was never implemented. It was actually a strategic instrument to control and disarticulate social struggles for land. The plays performed by MST members also show that during the dictatorship years, despite the persecution of

organizações que representavam as organizations that represented rural trabalhadoras e trabalhadores rurais serem workers, the struggle for land continued perseguidas, a luta pela terra continuou to grow.<sup>2</sup> crescendo.<sup>2</sup>



*Mística*, IV Congresso Nacional MST, agosto 2000; Foto de Douglas Mansur, Paula Reis e João Zinclar, Arquivos do MST de São Paulo;

*Mística*, 4th National MST Congress, August 2000; Photo by Douglas Mansur, Paula Reis and João Zinclar, MST Archive, São Paulo; <http://www.landless-voices.org/vieira/>

A primeira constatação é que esse sujeito coletivo, o Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, tem origem nas lutas pela conquista da terra que, pelo menos no princípio, ocorreram com maior intensidade e de forma isolada nos estados do sul do Brasil, uma vez que nestes estados foi maior a expulsão das pessoas pobres da área rural, causada, principalmente, pela modernização da agricultura. Essa se acentuou a partir do final dos anos 70, época em que os trabalhadores rurais dessas regiões começaram a se reunir. Entretanto, na década de 1950, no nordeste, a despeito de qualquer modernização, os camponeses já eram tratados de modo violento, embora no sul não seja muito diferente, situação que ainda hoje perdura, como pode ser visto a seguir.

Em Pernambuco, 1955: Derrubam os casebres e arrancam, de trator, as fruteiras dos camponeses rebelados contra o aumento do foro, o cambão, o vale do barracão,<sup>3</sup> o capanga, o salário de fome. Arrastam-nos de jipe, deixando-os em carne viva. Amarram-nos sobre o caminhão como se faz com o gado e passeiam com eles até pela cidade. Com um ferro em brasa, marcam-lhes o peito e as nádegas. Um é posto lambuzado de mel sobre um formigueiro. Outro é metido numa cuba cheia d'água, permanecendo noite e dia a pão seco, servindo-se daquela mesma água contaminada pela urina e pelas fezes, onde fica mergulhado até a boca. Um terceiro é caçado como uma raposa e morto a tiros de revólver. E quando a família põe a cruz de madeira, a fúria do latifúndio se abate sobre a cruz, que é desfeita em pedaços. (Julião, 1962: 32)

Rio Grande do Sul, 1999: A ocupação da fazenda Santa Elmira em 1999, no município de Salto do Jacuí resultou no grande massacre de Santa Elmira, onde as pessoas foram humilhadas, espancadas, barbas arrancadas, jogados em caminhões, altas horas da noite e soltos nas estradas escuras e corridas a tiro pelo meio da escuridão, pessoas chegando no acampamento três dias depois, onde acabaram permanecendo acampadas em uma área cedida pelos

The first observation is that this collective subject, the Landless Workers Movement, has its origin in struggles for land. At least in the beginning such struggle took place more often and independently in southern Brazil, since the southern states had more poor people being expelled from rural areas, which was mainly caused by the modernization of agriculture. This modernization became more intense in the late 1970s when rural workers in that region started to gather in groups. However, in the 1950s in the Northeast of Brazil, in spite of any modernization, peasants were already treated violently. The situation was not different in the South. This violence still occurs today, as can be seen in the excerpts below:

In Pernambuco (Northeast of Brazil), 1955: They knock the hovels down and use a tractor to pull out the fruit trees of peasants who rebel against the increase in the *foro*, the *cambão*, the *vale do barracão*,<sup>3</sup> the thugs, the low wages. They are dragged by a jeep, leaving them with open flesh. They are tied onto the truck, as if they were cattle, and taken to town. They have their buttocks and chest marked with a hot iron. One is covered with honey and left on an ant hill. Another one is placed in a basin full of water, remaining there day and night only eating dry bread, and drinking the water contaminated with urine and feces, in which he is covered up to his mouth. A third one is hunted like a fox and shot to death. And when the family places a wooden cross, the landowner's wrath falls on the cross, breaking it into pieces. (Julião, 1962: 32)

Rio Grande do Sul (South of Brazil), 1999: The occupation of Santa Elmira farm in the town of Salto do Jacuí caused the massacre of Santa Elmira, in which people were humiliated, beaten, had their beards pulled out, were shot in darkness, thrown into trucks late at night and left in dark roads. Some people got to the camp three days later and stayed camping in an area granted to MST members by that town, so that they could remain a while longer. (Flores, 2003)

assentados do MST naquele município por mais um período. (Flores, 2003)

Não se trata de uma ilustração criativa e tampouco de exacerbar fatos ocorridos no lado sul do continente americano, especificamente, no Brasil. De fato, os crimes cometidos contra os camponeiros são hediondos. Todavia, ao invés de esquecidos, são trazidos para a rotina dos sujeitos que compõem o Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) através de encenações teatrais de cunho político, ou seja, através da *Mística*.

Assim, contra essa violência, contra essa lógica excludente e geradora de vítimas é que nasce o MST. A partir de um posicionamento, que podemos afirmar gramsciano, pois não foram indiferentes, tampouco apáticos, recusaram a passividade, tornaram-se militantes.

De acordo com Morigi (2003), o marco da fundação do MST, enquanto movimento organizado através desta sigla ocorreu em janeiro de 1984, no primeiro Encontro Nacional de Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, em Cascavel (Paraná), com a participação de 150 delegados, representantes de 12 estados (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo, Mato Grosso do Sul, Bahia, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Rondônia, Acre, Roraima e Pará). Além de reunir trabalhadores rurais que lutavam para obter terra para plantar, o principal objetivo era possibilitar a articulação destes para organizar a luta conjunta em defesa da conquista da terra por parte de quem produzisse e dela sobrevivesse.

Assim, abrigando homens e mulheres expulsos do campo, organizaram-se com objetivos bem definidos: lutar pela Reforma Agrária e pela transformação social do país. Dentre as suas diretrizes referentes à redistribuição da terra encontram-se a alteração do modelo de

This is not a creative illustration; neither are we trying to exaggerate the facts that took place in the south of the American continent, specifically in Brazil. In fact, these crimes committed against peasants are hideous. Instead of forgetting them, such crimes become part of the routine of those subjects that compose the membership of the MST through politico-theatrical plays, that is, through *Mística*.

Thus, the MST was born to be against this violence, against this excluding logic that generates victims. By taking a stand, which can be said to be Gramscian, they were neither indifferent nor apathetic; they refused passiveness and became militants.

According to Morigi (2003), the MST – as an organized movement using this abbreviation – was founded at the first National Meeting of Landless Workers in Cascavel (Paraná State) in January 1984, with the participation of 150 delegates representing 12 Brazilian states (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo, Mato Grosso do Sul, Bahia, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Rondônia, Acre, Roraima, and Pará). Besides gathering rural workers who were struggling to obtain land, the main objective was to enable the organization of an articulated struggle of those groups that defend the conquest of the land that they work and depend on for their survival.

Thus, by counting on the participation of men and women who had been expelled from their lands, they organized themselves with well-defined goals: fight for the Agrarian Reform and the social transformation of the country. In their directives related to land redistribution the following demands can be found: a different model of rural property; a fair use of the land, meeting demands of the people and society in general; a guarantee

propriedade rural; o uso da terra de forma justa, atendendo às demandas populares e da sociedade de um modo geral; a garantia do desenvolvimento dos trabalhadores, em âmbito social e econômico; o apoio à agricultura familiar e organizada de modo cooperativo; a condução da agroindústria ao interior, contribuindo para a prosperidade equânime em todas as regiões, proporcionando oportunidades de trabalho, sobretudo aos mais jovens; a atenção aos problemas referentes à região semi-árida do país; o desenvolvimento de tecnologias e o exercício de atividades que zelem pela sustentabilidade, preservando e recuperando os recursos naturais; proposição de um desenvolvimento rural que possibilite incrementos significativos na qualidade de vida de todos.<sup>4</sup>

Contra o discurso fatalista neoliberal, que insiste em nos convencer de que nada podemos contra a realidade social, naturalizada ideologicamente e impregnada de uma vontade imobilizadora das classes subalternas (Freire, 1996), os integrantes do Movimento propõem-se a elaborar um programa direcionado às questões do campo. A intenção é auxiliar na construção de um ‘Projeto Popular para o Brasil’, enaltecendo a solidariedade, organizando os pobres, intensificando as lutas sociais. Para tanto, são consideradas questões essenciais à garantia de trabalho, a justa distribuição de terra, renda e riquezas, a difusão de valores humanistas e socialistas, o combate a qualquer tipo de discriminação, a valorização da mulher, enfim, a construção de uma sociedade “sem exploradores e onde o trabalho tem supremacia sobre o capital”.

O MST também traz a público sua postura ecológica, ao manifestar respeito à natureza em seus ‘Compromissos com a terra e a vida’. A restrição à monocultura e à utilização de agrotóxicos, a atenção à preservação dos mananciais, o tratamento

of the involvement of workers, both social and economic; support of family agriculture, organized in a cooperative manner; establishment of agricultural industries in the countryside, thus contributing to equal prosperity for all regions and creating job opportunities, especially for younger people; attention to problems related to the semi-arid regions of the country; development of technologies and activities concerned with sustainability, preserving and recovering natural resources; and rural development that enables significant improvements in everyone's quality of life.<sup>4</sup>

Against the fatalist neoliberal speech, which insists on trying to convince us that there is nothing we can do against social reality – a neoliberalism that is naturalized ideologically and impregnated with a desire to immobilize the subaltern classes (Freire, 1996) – MST members proposed a program focused on rural issues. Their intention is to help build a ‘Popular Project for Brazil,’ stressing solidarity, organizing the poor, and intensifying social struggles. To do so, they consider crucial issues related to: the guarantee of work; fair distribution of land, income, and wealth; promotion of humanist and socialist values; fight against any type of discrimination; value of the importance of women; and finally, the construction of a society “with no exploiters and in which work has supremacy over capital.”

The MST also reveals its ecological attitude by manifesting respect for nature in its ‘Commitments to land and life.’ Restriction to monoculture and use of agro-chemicals, preservation of water sources, and waste treatment are amongst its topics. One should stress the MST’s intention to resume and increase debates on themes such as the environment, biodiversity and freshwater, by taking part

do lixo, aparecem dentre os tópicos. Sublinha-se a intenção do Movimento de resgatar e acentuar a difusão de debates acerca de temas como meio ambiente, biodiversidade, água doce, aliando-se a campanhas de preservação e conscientização ambiental.

Nas suas Linhas Políticas consta o repúdio à sistemática político-econômica dominante, colocando-se, assim, contra os produtos transgênicos e a importação de alimentos, além de declarar-se contrário às multinacionais. A Reforma Agrária, por outro lado, é vista como um processo solucionador dos problemas relacionados a trabalho, moradia, educação e saúde. Outro ponto destacado como condução política diz respeito à questão de gênero, uma vez que entendem que a valorização da mulher é elemento essencial das ações do Movimento.

Em suma, a generosidade e a solidariedade são valores destacados pelo MST, e a atenção a estes quesitos divide-se em diversas propostas, conduzidas pelos militantes, mas não somente no interior do Movimento. De fato, em se tratando de relações externas, esta é uma diretriz que se amplia em diversas ações, dentre elas a aproximação campo-cidade, a parceria com desempregados para ocupação produtiva de áreas urbanas ociosas, o auxílio na execução de atividades de formação política de jovens.

Há que se ressaltar, também, que tais valores são disseminados nas escolas do MST, que também tem na *Mística* um dos seus principais instrumentos pedagógicos. É, portanto, desde muito cedo ‘mostrado’ para as crianças que “não é no silêncio que os homens se fazem, mas na palavra, no trabalho, na ação-reflexão”, pois a reflexão sem ação não tem poder de mudar, de transformar algo, e a ação sem reflexão pode levar a consequências até indesejáveis

in campaigns related to environmental preservation and consciousness.

The MST's Political Guidelines mention the rejection of the predominant political-economic system, which positions them against genetically modified organisms and food importation and also declares their opposition to multinationals. The Agrarian Reform, on the other hand, is seen as a process able to solve problems related to work, housing, education and health. Another point that highlights their political conduct concerns the issue of gender: they understand that valuing the importance of women is a crucial element in MST actions.

In summary, generosity and solidarity are values stressed by the MST, and the attention given to these qualities is included in several proposals, brought forward by militants, not only within the MST. In fact, with regard to external relations, they are included in a directive that is put into practice through several actions; among them are: bringing countryside and city closer; partnership with unemployed people for the productive occupation of idle urban areas; help to create activities for the political education of the youth.

It should also be stressed that such values are disseminated at MST schools, which also have *Mística* as one of their main pedagogical instruments. Therefore, children are ‘shown’ since early age that “men do not become men through silence, but through words, work, and action-reflection,” as reflection without action has no power to change or transform, something, and action without reflection may lead to undesirable consequences (Freire, 2005: 78).

The MST is composed of social subjects whose first lesson to be learned and

(Freire, 2005: 78).

São esses os sujeitos sociais, cuja primeira lição a ser aprendida e ensinada diz respeito ao fato que só a luta pela terra não basta para a emancipação humana, que compõem o MST. Sujeitos que entendem que a realidade pode ser transformada e tentam concretizar essa transformação através da sua atuação cotidiana. Um sujeito coletivo que reclama resolutamente o direito de cometer ele mesmo os equívocos e de aprender por si só a dialética da história (Luxemburgo, 1985: 39). São esses sujeitos que, ao utilizarem a *Mística*, ou seja, ao dramatizar sua própria realidade, não apenas encenam, conscientizam a si próprios.

Como destaca Rauber (2003), uma vez que a conscientização não pode ser imposta instantaneamente ou por decreto, pelo menos dentro do MST é esse o papel da *Mística*: conscientizar. Ser consciente, acreditamos nós, “é a forma radical de ser dos seres humanos” (Freire, 1984: 93) e são esses seres humanos radicais que constroem o sujeito coletivo, que propõem uma outra forma de organização, cujo objetivo é, antes de tudo, a emancipação humana.

taught concerns the fact that the struggle for land alone is not enough for human emancipation. They are subjects who understand that reality can be changed and try to produce such changes through their daily actions. They are collective subjects who resolutely claim their right to make mistakes and to learn the dialectics of history by themselves (Luxemburg, 1985: 39). These are the subjects who, by using *Mística* – that is, by dramatizing their own reality – not only play a theatrical role but become conscious of themselves.

As Rauber (2003) points out, since consciousness cannot be imposed instantaneously or by law, at least within the MST the role of the *Mística* is to support the development of consciousness. We believe that being conscious “is the human beings’ radical form of being” (Freire, 1984: 93). These radical human beings, who build a collective subject, are those who propose another form of organization, whose purpose is, above all, human emancipation.



*Mística*;  
Foto de Araci Cachoeira;  
Photo by Araci Cachoeira  
<http://www.landless-voices.org/vieira/>

A Mística é a própria vida tomada em sua radicalidade e extrema densidade. Cultivada conscientemente confere à existência sentido de gravidade, leveza e profundidade. (Boff, 2000: 45)

À medida que cada sujeito percebe o potencial transformador que traz em si e disponibiliza-o ao coletivo, o ser humano se forma, se reconhece e, portanto, faz sua história na relação com o outro. Também é esse o papel da Mística. Na representação é exposto o caráter antidialógico no qual estão imersos os seres humanos, aonde a necessidade de conquista, da divisão, da opressão, da manipulação e da invasão cultural são condição sine qua non para manutenção da alienação e de uma ordem injusta e necrófila. Simultaneamente, é representada a possibilidade do caráter dialógico, ou seja, que os sujeitos podem se encontrar para transformar o mundo em ‘co-laboração’, através da união e da organização, uma vez que a emancipação também precisa ser organizada (Freire, 2005; Mazzeo, 2005).

Na representação, são os próprios sujeitos que compõem o MST que encenam ou reproduzem, diante de outros membros do movimento, as situações das quais são protagonistas. Tem-se, assim, a possibilidade de revisão crítica dos acontecimentos nos quais os integrantes se vêem inseridos. Busca-se resgatar a significação de cada ato.

Uma espécie de teatro do oprimido,<sup>5</sup> que resgata a construção histórica que marca os seres humanos. Um instrumento pedagógico utilizado na formação política dos militantes do MST. Uma celebração permeada por uma intencionalidade consciente, caracterizada por um processo que mobiliza, educa e politiza os sujeitos, contribuindo para a consolidação de uma identidade cultural e unidade ideológica entre os mesmos, sendo ainda um elemento enriquecedor de uma proposta de educação

Mística is life itself, taken in its radicalism and extreme density. When consciously cultivated, it gives existence a sense of gravity, lightness and deepness. (Boff, 2000: 45)

As each subject perceives his or her own transforming potential and offers it to the collective, the human being is formed, recognizes itself and, therefore, builds its history through the relation with the other. This is also the role of *Mística*. The representation exposes the anti-dialogic character in which humans are embedded. What is exposed is the need to conquer, divide, oppress, manipulate and invade culturally, which are the *sine qua non* conditions for the maintenance of alienation and an unfair, necrophile order. Simultaneously, there is the possibility of a dialogic character, i.e. that the subjects may gather to transform the world in ‘co-laboration’, through union and organization, since emancipation also needs to be organized (Freire, 2005; Mazzeo, 2005).

In the representation, the very subjects who compose the MST perform or reproduce – before other movement members – the situations in which they are the main characters. Thus, there is the possibility of a critical review of the happenings in which members are inserted. There is an attempt at rescuing the meaning of each action.

It is a type of oppressed theater performance,<sup>5</sup> which rescues the historical construction that marks human beings. It is a pedagogical instrument used for the political formation of MST militants; a celebration permeated by a conscious intentionalism, characterized by a process that mobilizes, educates and politicizes the subjects, contributing to the consolidation of a cultural identity and ideological unity among them, being also an enriching element in an educational

comprometida com a formação humana. A *Mística* expressa, portanto, um posicionarse criticamente diante do mundo (Medeiros, 2001) buscando construir a consciência e a organização dos sujeitos sobre o concreto e em cada momento.

É esse seu papel, colaborar para a mudança social, para a construção do poder desde baixo, para a autoconstrução dos sujeitos e sua organização, para o projeto de transformação. Nesse sentido, a *Mística*, mais do que colocar diante dos sujeitos a sua própria história, expressa a possibilidade de uma construção que não se inicia no momento de ruptura, de enfrentamento: ela apresenta possibilidades e não um futuro predeterminado, pois, ao mesmo tempo em que reproduz em cena as violências e os ataques à classe subalterna, expressa de forma imperiosa a resistência e a luta dessa mesma classe.

A lição é clara: mostra uma transformação que pode e deve ser gestada no território das classes subalternas, dos movimentos sociais, uma vez que, como já destacou Freire (1984: 89), seria na verdade uma atitude ingênua esperar que as classes dominantes desenvolvessem uma forma das classes dominadas perceberem as injustiças sociais a que são submetidas.

A fala de um sujeito ‘Sem Terra’ expressa bem o papel da mística: “Compreendemos que a prática da mística tem um papel fundamental, em termos individuais e coletivo, nas lutas de massa, nas comemorações e celebrações, nas alegrias, nas derrotas e nas vitórias. Tem o papel de nos animar, de nos revigorar para novas e maiores lutas. De nos unir e fortalecer. Tem o papel de nos dar consistência ideológica em nosso trabalho do dia-a-dia” (MST, 1998).

Desse modo, se a mística apresenta os substratos à ação protagonista e é dotada de

proposal committed to human formation. Thus, *Mística* expresses a critical positioning of the self before the world (Medeiros, 2001) attempting to develop consciousness and to continuously organize the subjects around concrete matters.

This is its very role: to collaborate for social change, the building of power from below, the self-construction of subjects and their organization, and for a project of transformation. In this sense, *Mística*, more than placing subjects before their history, expresses the possibility of a construction that does not begin at the moment of rupture, at confrontation: it presents possibilities and not a predetermined future. It reproduces violent scenes and the attacks against subaltern classes, but, at the same time, it expresses the imperative forms of struggle and resistance of these classes.

The lesson is clear: it shows a transformation that can and must be conceived in the territory of subaltern classes, of social movements, since, as already highlighted by Freire (1984: 89), it would be a naïve attitude to expect that dominant classes would develop a mechanism for the dominated classes to realize that they are subject to social unfairness.

The speech of a ‘Landless’ subject expresses very well the role of *Mística*: “We know that the practice of the *Mística* has a fundamental role, for individuals and for the collective: in mass struggles, in celebrations, in joy, in the defeats and in victory. It cheers us up, reinvigorates us for new and larger struggles. It unites us and strengthens us. It has the role of providing us with an ideological consistency in our daily labor” (MST, 1998).

sentido, é porque no seu exercício se pretende um oferecimento de forças, um alento ao corpo e ao espírito para que os militantes, os trabalhadores rurais, os homens e mulheres que compõem o MST se empenhem na busca dos objetivos do Movimento, na realização da concepção de mundo fundamentada na ‘prática da solidariedade’ (Peloso, 1998).

A *Mística*, como diria Paulo Freire (1979: 28), ao conscientizar, mostra que o ser humano não pode ser compreendido fora de suas relações com o mundo, de vez que é um ser do trabalho e da transformação do mundo. Um ser da ‘práxis’; da ação e da reflexão. Um ser que, nas relações com o mundo e, através de sua ação sobre ele, pode transformá-lo, pois atuando, transforma; transformando, cria uma realidade que, por sua vez, envolvendo-o, também condiciona sua forma de atuar. A *Mística*, ao conscientizar, evidencia que o homem se encontra marcado pelos resultados de sua própria ação. Evidencia que é possível lutar contra a dominação e transformá-la. A *Mística*, ao repousar no ideal de transformação das relações entre os seres humanos, contribui para a tomada de consciência de que o ser humano é uma presença no mundo e, como tal, manifestase, transforma, fala, sonha, pondera, questiona, toma decisões, estabelece rupturas, reconhece e responsabiliza-se pelo fato de que a História é tempo de possibilidade e o futuro, campo aberto (Freire, 2001).

*Mística* shows what is lying beneath protagonist actions. It is gifted by a sense of direction, and it is through its exercise that strength is built. It is a breath of fresh air for the body and the soul, so that the militants, the rural workers, the men and women who compose the MST, can pursue the Movement’s goals, through the creation of a world conception based on the ‘practice of solidarity’ (Peloso, 1998).

*Mística* shows through consciousness raising that, as Paulo Freire (1997: 28) puts it, humans cannot be understood outside their relations to the world, since they are beings associated to labor and world transformation. A human is a being of ‘praxis’; one of action and reflection; one that, in his or her relation to the world, and through action upon the world, can transform it. By acting, humans transform; by transforming, they create reality, which in its turn encompasses them, thus conditioning their way of acting. *Mística*, through the development of consciousness, stresses that people are marked by the results of their own actions. It stresses that it is possible to fight domination and transform it. *Mística*, while resting on the ideal of transforming human relationships, contributes to the becoming-conscious of the presence of these humans in the world. In this way they manifest themselves, transform, speak, dream, ponder, question, decide, rupture, recognize and take responsibility for the fact that History is the time of possibility and that the future is an open field (Freire, 2001).



Mística do MST na um conferência  
*Mística* of the MST at a conference  
<http://www.midiaindependente.org/pt/blue/2005/10/332511.shtml>

Em suma, a *Mística* no MST tem papel fundamental de conscientizar os sujeitos através do conhecimento da sua própria história, de buscar reafirmar continuamente entre os militantes os valores e objetivos que foram e são condição *sine qua non* para a criação e manutenção do próprio movimento, principalmente entre os novos membros. Além do seu caráter mobilizador, educador, político e humanizador, a *Mística* é “uma energia que busca não deixar homens e mulheres em sua vida cotidiana virarem *pedras* ou *máquinas*” (Medeiros, 2001: 4).

Daí a importância da *Mística* no processo de organização das lutas do MST. Mais do que uma celebração, é um rito a partir do qual se busca gerar coragem e revigorar as forças (Medeiros, 2001). Atuando na formação identitária dos sujeitos, proporciona o sentimento de pertença, de participação em um grupo, o que é oferecido pelo ritual onde os sujeitos se vêem quando representam suas histórias (Prado e Júnior, 2005). Além disso, o cultivo da utopia fortalece o grupo, revigora-os contra o discurso fatalista que anda à solta no mundo.

In sum, in the MST *Mística* has the fundamental role of raising consciousness through the knowledge of subjects' own history and continuously reminding the militants of the values and goals that were and are the *sine qua non* condition for the creation and strengthening of the very movement, particularly for new members. Besides its mobilizing, educational, political and humanizing character, *Mística* is “an energy that tries not to let men and women become *stones* or *machines* in their daily lives” (Medeiros, 2001: 4).

Hence, the importance of *Mística* for the process of organizing MST struggles. More than a celebration, it is a ritual attempting to generate courage and to reinvigorate forces (Medeiros, 2001). Acting as the identity formation of subjects, it allows a feeling of belonging, of group participation, which is created by a ritual in which subjects see themselves as they represent their histories (Prado and Júnior, 2005). Besides that, the cultivation of utopia strengthens the group, reinvigorating it against the fatalist speech that hovers over the world nowadays.

**notas**  
**notes**

- 1 *Mística* (lit. ‘misticismo’; ‘místico’). “Um ato político e cultural desenvolvido em vários rituais nos quais os Sem Terra expressam suas leituras da experiência vivida através da poesia, música, mímica, pintura, arte em geral. Também é uma forma de linguagem para a expressão dos analfabetos que expressam, comunicam e interagem na construção da consciência na luta pela terra” (Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, *Pequeno Dicionário da Luta Pela Terra*, citado por Vieira (s.d.)).  
*Mística* (lit. ‘mysticism’; ‘mystique’). “A cultural and political act developed in various rituals, in which the Sem Terra express their readings of lived experiences through poetry, music, mime, painting, art in general. It is also a form of language of the unlettered who express, communicate, and interact in the building of the consciousness of the land struggle” (Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, *Pequeno Vocabulário da Luta Pela Terra*, cited by Vieira, n.d.).
- 2 Informações obtidas no site / Information taken from this website: <http://www.mst.org.br/historico/sumario.html>.
- 3 O foro, o cambão e o vale do barracão são, respectivamente, o pagamento do lavrador ao proprietário pelo uso da terra, os dias de trabalho gratuito dados ao patrão e a moeda corrente nas fazendas e engenhos. No barracão era vendido desde a carne bovina a produtos farmacêuticos, ficando o camponês obrigado a consumir os produtos do barracão, uma vez que as propriedades rurais eram distantes das cidades e este ficava impossibilitado de mover-se até lá.  
*Foro, cambão, and vale do barracão* are, respectively, the peasant's payment to the landowner for using the land, the free working days given to the landowner, and the currency used in farms and mills. The *barracão* used to sell everything from beef to pharmaceutical products, obliging the peasant to consume its products, since rural properties were far away from cities and peasants had no means to get there.
- 4 Todas as informações sobre o MST foram trazidas de <http://www.mst.org.br> em 06/07/2006.  
All information about the MST was taken from <http://www.mst.org.br> on 07/06/2006.
- 5 De acordo com Boal (1983), trata-se de um ato necessariamente político que contempla no teatro uma ação libertadora, uma possibilidade efetiva de transformação, em que cada indivíduo, partindo de um exercício cênico, move-se conduzido por um desejo de autonomia, tornando-se um sujeito, um agente, reivindicando seu espaço, articulando-se para obter uma condição emancipada.  
According to Boal (1983), it is a necessarily political act that contemplates in theater a liberation action, a possibility of effective transformation, in which each individual, starting from an acting exercise, moves itself summoned by an autonomous desire, thus becoming a subject, an agent, who claims its own space, articulating itself in order to reach an emancipated condition.

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