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Argentina

The Argentinazo one year on

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"Without workers a factory does not function. But without bosses, yes, it functions â€” and very well indeed! With all the other comrades we are going to demonstrate that the nation functions with the hands of working people and not with the thieving hands of the politicians." - Raúl Godoy, worker at worker-controlled factory Cerámicas Zanón and secretary-general of ceramics workers union. [1]

On November 21, 2002, I concluded my hour-long interview with three woman workers at Brukman Confecciones, an historic worker-controlled textile factory in Buenos Aires' Neighbourhood Eleven. Realizing the threat their example posed to the capitalist system, I asked: "Are you afraid?" "No," they responded with broad smiles. "I was afraid at first," one added, referring to the scary night of December 18, 2001, when she and 19 others of the 115-person workforce, mostly women, stayed overnight in the owner-abandoned factory in order to preserve their jobs. "But after we consolidated our self-organization, I was no longer afraid."

Prior to that night, the Brukman brothers had run off with the workers' last three months of salaries and contributions to pension, unemployment, and health funds to stash them in foreign banks or in real estate. This is a common practice by Argentina's once affluent capitalists during the present depression.

The workers, whose numbers soon grew to 54 (of whom 10 were men), did not trust the garment workers union SOIVA, which was backing the Brukmans' request for a declaration of bankruptcy liquidation. Through internal democratic assemblies, they organized a worker-controlled factory - from purchase of inputs to production, wages, and sales - and had it up and running in a month's time. They even created classes to convert unemployed workers into skilled operators and started hiring them at wages like their own.

Twelve hundred kilometres to the southwest, a similar approach had become standard practice among 300 workers at the worker-controlled Zanón ceramics factory in Neuquén's industrial park, a large modern factory that once had produced porcelain products for the national and international markets. Backed by leftist parties and several other organizations, workers at Zanón, Brukman, and other seized factories now spearhead a national anti-capitalist movement, joined by workers seizing idle urban and rural lands.

These workers have placed production for social use above the 'normal' markets and production goals of their former bosses. As one woman told me, "the capitalist system is what ruined us. We prefer to sell here at our own store. The neighbourhood people and others come here to buy the clothes we make. We want to produce sheets for the hospitals too, for the people, you know?"

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16 November 2002 - potbanger mural commemorating fallen comrades. "Neither dictatorships nor corrupt politicians will do us in: for a people's participatory democracy" - in Chacarita neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, a few blocks from the worker controlled Grissinopoli factory

Some 150 of Argentina's 1,200 factories in bankrupt liquidation have been "recuperated" by 13,000 of their workers and are producing again, either as cooperatives or as 100-percent worker-controlled establishments like Zanón and Brukman. According to 'The Wall Street Journal', some financially strapped provincial governments have decided to encourage the trend in order to reactivate businesses shut down by the economic crisis. In the cases of some of the occupied factories, the federal government pays the rent and promises not to evict workers for one or two years.

The 'Journal' does not mention that the governments are trying to co-opt the growing workers' movement, while

simultaneously attacking its anti-capitalist wing led by workers at Zanón, Brukman, and other workplaces. These include: Pepsico Snacks (US); the industrial bakery co-op Aguante (ex-Bakery Five); the Chilavert Printing Press; Ghelco Foods; the RÃ-o Turbio coal mines; JunÃ-n Clinic of CÃrdoba; Tiger Supermarket in Rosario; and FrigorÃ-fico Fricader (meatpacking plant in RÃ-o Negro).

I visited the GrissinÃpoli bakery, occupied by sixteen workers since early June 2002, and interviewed a woman leader there as well as a ZanÃn worker also present to build solidarity. A typical poster stated: "Jaque al patrÃn, todo el poder al peÃn" - "Screw [literally checkmate] the boss, all power to the worker." I also visited the metallurgical and plastics factory IMPA, where 300 workers have introduced workers' control and express the same attitude.

The 'Wall Street Journal' does note that Argentina's "economic contraction" is "twice as severe as the one experienced during the great Depression" and that "Neither the government nor the Bush administration has offered significant ideas about how to revive Latin America's third-largest economy. Instead, Argentina has been saved, for now, by the resourcefulness of hundreds of grass-roots leaders in schools, factories and neighbourhood associations." [2]

I asked the women at Brukman: "What if you are attacked by the repressive forces?" They broke into a ripple of confident laughter. "Don't worry," one replied, "we are self-organized."

Three days later, in a pre-dawn Sunday raid, hundreds of Federal Police, some not in uniform, others hooded, with no judicial order, used axes to break through the Brukman factory doors. Armed with machine guns and cellular phones and backed up by assault vehicles, fire engines, moving vans, and civilian cars, they beat up the reduced night-shift staff and hauled six off to jail, including a nine-year-old daughter of a worker. From the street, Jacobo and Mario Brukman looked on approvingly, joined by several of their smiling former employees.

Children of the workers, including a three-year-old, rushed to establish an 'encampment' in front of the factory. One asked his mother in a taxi rushing to the scene, "Why are you crying out to the neighbours?" She replied, "Because it's our jobs, how I get the money to feed you when we go shopping these Sundays. Now they want to take away our work." The child then began yelling out the car window: "Neighbours, neighbours, come help us!"

Actually, help was already underway. Hundreds of workers, students, unemployed, and neighbourhood residents rose up as one to defend the factory and remove the police, just as they had done once before - on March 16, 2002, when they had turned back the police's first attempted eviction of the workers. By 11:30, the workers were back in their factory, cleaning up smashed machines and lockers. The police had known exactly where to search, remove, and destroy. Workers could not find a computer that contained the design for making moulds or another computer's hard disc or the documents held in a safe of the factory's secretariat.

By early afternoon, movement lawyers had gained the release of all the prisoners. Said the nine-year old girl: "I wasn't afraid, only angry."

A worker spokeswoman, Celia, told a press conference: "We demand expropriation of the company, with machinery and everything. Not with machinery simply in trusteeship. We must be guaranteed a minimum salary because the clothing we make is expensive and sales can go down [Brukman workers formerly had produced a dozen leading world labels, including Cristian Dior and Ralph Lauren]. That's why we also demand a subsidy of 150,000 pesos to produce things more accessible to the public...."

"Isn't that leftist?" someone asked. "If to be leftist is to want a decent salary for genuine work, to keep one's source of work and maintain that source for many more who come after us, then more than half of Argentina is leftist." When

asked if this was how she always spoke, Celia replied no, that prior to the takeover of Brukman, her normal way of speaking had been things like "What am I going to cook?" [3]

Women like those at Brukman have played a central role in the struggle to create 'a new Argentina,' both before and after the 'Argentinazo' (the popular uprising of December 19 and 20, 2001 that quickly got rid of four successive presidents). Since 1995, women have been in the front lines of the still expanding piquetero movement - organizations representing newly laid-off workers and millions of unemployed people from urban "villas de miseria" (slums) - known for their daring roadblocks. Without the piqueteros, there would have been no Argentinazo.

Women from the neighbourhoods of Argentina's working and middle classes have been very active in the 'popular assemblies' that continue implementing measures of material aid for the unemployed and worker-controlled enterprises, including hospitals and clinics experiencing staff cutbacks or facing shutdown. With 25 percent of the workforce unemployed and more layoffs threatened, the popular assemblies play a major role in the daily life of entire neighbourhoods, setting up community kitchens, day care facilities, health clinics, cultural centres, community organic gardens, and barter markets. They represent a notable continuation of human solidarity across class lines that first appeared during the Argentinazo when enraged elements of the middle classes who had seen their bank accounts frozen and devalued joined the six-year-old series of marches of the piqueteros shouting "Piquete y cacerola, la lucha es una sola" ("Unemployed and pot-banger, the fight is one and the same").

The widely respected Madres de Plaza de Mayo (and the abuelas, or grandmothers), who blocked the mounted police during the Argentinazo, also have played a major role. Their fearlessness is contagious. Ever since the torture and disappearance of an estimated 30,000 men, women, and children during the US-backed "dirty war" of the 1976-1983 military dictatorship, they have kept human rights issues in the forefront of all social struggles.

In addition, women's caucuses and commissions have sprung up in diverse social sectors. The three-day 17th National Meeting of Women held in Salta in August 2002 brought together women in struggle from all walks of life, including Brukman workers who declared:

"We women are the ones with a double workday...we receive lower wages for the same work that men do, we endure sexual harassment...we have less access to education. We are the ones who die from clandestine abortions or during pregnancy or child-birth because of inadequate health care, the ones most affected by malnutrition and AIDS. Since December [2001], however, something has changed in our country and in spite of our situation we have shown that we have the power and the courage to come out fighting decisively. With the same decisiveness we want to take on the task of coordinating the different sectors in struggle." [4]

Several other developments struck me during my two-week visit to Argentina, including:

– A continuation of the gradual economic genocide generated by 27 years of neo-liberalism's privatizations, IMF-sponsored "austerity programs," dollarization, and corruption.

Elaboration: The nation's average wage has fallen from first to last place in Latin America. Of 38 million Argentines, 60 percent live below the poverty line; 10 million are destitute. More than a third of all households are headed by women. In a country where giant agribusinesses export tons of foodstuffs, one of every five children suffers malnutrition, from which a hundred die each month. To the feminization of poverty we must add the infantilization of poverty. Meanwhile, during the first eleven months of 2002 Argentina used up 4.5 billion dollars of the nation's scarce foreign reserves to pay off the illegitimate foreign debt. It recently had to default on an \$805 million loan instalment owed the World Bank, saying it could resume payment only when the IMF restored its credit line suspended in 2001.

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– An extreme debilitation of the political system with its clientist labour-union structures, in part because the IMF-imposed privatization of state enterprises, government corruption, non-payment of taxes, and payments on the foreign debt have left the government with little money for social programs.

Elaboration: There is a marked falling out among the thieves, that is, the bourgeoisie, the politicians, and the labour bureaucrats. Even within bourgeois sectors - financial, industrial, commercial, agrarian - there occurs fierce infighting. A 'nationalist bourgeoisie' does not exist. Major Argentine capitalists and their technocrats in government have long since rushed to embrace foreign capital, converting the nation into the IMF's 'model student' - until the economic collapse of 2001-2002. The resultant economic crisis and fractionalization of the PJ, UCR, Frepaso, and other political organizations has contributed to the acceleration of public discontent with all political parties except some leftist ones. [5]

Meanwhile, the major labour confederations have divided time and again. Their leaders regularly mouth pro-worker rhetoric and even organize protest strikes and rallies. At the same time, however, most of them collaborate with the bourgeoisie and IMF in the rejection of workers' demands and the extension of privatization and austerity measures, adding to rank-and-file worker resentment. . President Eduardo Duhalde's social relief program for the unemployed consists of a paltry 150 pesos a month (40 euros or dollars). It reaches less than half the unemployed - and only after much of it has been siphoned off in the corrupt PJ patronage chain involved in its delivery.

– An expansion in the piquetero movements and their uniting with neighbourhood assemblies and other labour struggles (especially those among teachers, miners, health, food, and transport workers, and workers running seized factories).

Elaboration: With support from some of the left-wing parties, there have emerged regional alliances uniting piqueteros with segments of the working and middle classes into 'coordinadoras,' such as the Coordinating Committee of Alto Valle (Neuquén and RÃ-o Negro, sparked by the Zanón workers). These coordinadoras help supersede the bureaucratized trade-union structures held in such disrepute. The coordinadora in Alto Valle is anti-IMF, anti-capitalist, opposed to bourgeois elections, and for non-payment of the foreign debt. It looks toward a general strike or national workers' assembly "to impose a way out that is favourable to workers and the people." [6]

– A general agreement on the need to maintain the democratic and pluralistic character of the social movements and alliances, seen as necessary for building a powerful unified struggle.

Elaboration: To be sure, there often emerge two (or more) distinct approaches within any given sector or organization, but neither seems willing to break completely with the other. For example, the factory takeover movement has a reformist co-op wing that does not call for immediate rejection of capitalist ownership. This co-op wing has strength inside the MNER (National Movement of Recuperated Enterprises) and is backed by the Catholic Church's Pastoral Social, various PJ members, and one of three major labour-union groups, the CTA (Federation of Argentine Workers).

On the other hand, a growing number of occupied workplaces advocate direct workers' control, with proposed state or municipal expropriation to guarantee it. This camp includes not only workers like those at Brukman, Zanón, and the re-nationalized coal mines at RÃ-o Turbio, but also many of the self-organized factories presently using co-op forms. The workers' control wing has the active support of leftist parties and organizations, including the EDI (Economists of the Left active in helping workers plan production for social consumption), the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, and a recent substantial CTA split-off group called Sindicalist Current (CS).

The co-op wing, defined broadly, still has a majority influence among the hundreds of worker-organized enterprises,

but it is seen by the workers' control wing as trapped in self-exploitation and destined to drown in a capitalist sea. Yet the two wings maintain a dynamic dialogue.

– A certain political and ideological fragmentation almost inevitable in the early phases of so many different popular movements.

Elaboration: This has led people to ask how the massive unity behind the negative slogan of "Get rid of all of them [politicians], let not a single one remain!" can be transformed into a positive program for replacing bourgeois state power with a genuine working people's administration. Throughout the land, people debate alternatives to capitalism, as well as what tactics to use, innovate, or discard. For example, I attended a sub-regional Buenos Aires assembly of delegates from assemblies and organizations planning direct actions for the first anniversary of the Argentinazo. An intense debate occurred on a resolution to declare publicly there would be no violence by demonstrators. The overwhelming majority of delegates opted against the proposal on the grounds that it was not only a concession to the 'violence-baiting' lies of the mass media but an insult to all those who had died at the hands of state-sponsored violence in the struggles of the past 40 years.

– The multi-generational character of grass-roots social movements and important role of young people, even children, in their maintenance, defence, and expansion.

Elaboration: Initially, the only consistent youth presence in the popular resistance movements was among the unemployed. In recent months, students and young teachers at all levels of schooling have become much more active. In various neighbourhoods youths are participating in literacy campaigns and collective gardens (mainly organic) and eateries.

During my visit in November a group of sociology students were occupying the rector's office at the University of Buenos Aires. Their demands were: autonomy for the sociology career program; budget increases; more classroom space; an end to political persecution; and scholarships for the needy. Political and cultural meetings I attended normally involved three generations of Argentines, each of which was listening and learning from the others, reflecting a genuine solidarity.

On November 8, three hundred children from Misiones province on the border with Paraguay and Brazil, organized by the CTA-affiliated Movement of Children of the People, arrived in Buenos Aires after a lengthy 'March for Life and Against Hunger.' Accompanying them were members of HIJOS (children of the disappeared) and other groups.

– A rise in anti-capitalist sentiment behind the unifying slogan of "Get rid of all of them, let not a single one remain."

Elaboration: The slogan increasingly means throw out not only the politicians but also the corrupt labour bureaucrats and capitalism as well. Most Argentines may still think of themselves as 'Peronists' (a habit born of 60 years of political history glorifying Juan and Evita Perón) but they readily see through the kleptocracy of the PJ/UCR/Frepaso system of corporatist clientism. They distrust the endless false promises of 'jobs' and 'improvements in the economy.' As one Argentine quipped to me, "Guard your wallet, in case you meet a politician or a trade-union bureaucrat."

– The number of hard-core committed activists, always a minority, seems to be holding steady, if not increasing, while demands are becoming more inclusive and revolutionary.

Elaboration: One day after two piqueteros were killed on June 26, 2002, there was a huge outpouring of street

demonstrations. In August, a mobilization of labour and popular forces drew 80,000 in Buenos Aires alone. That same month, at a little-publicized four-day Argentina Social Forum, 10,000 persons showed up to call for defeating US imperialism's attempt to annex or re-colonize Latin America through the proposed FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) and US military control. The United States has been constructing several military bases all over Latin America. It has poured huge sums of money, armaments, and personnel into Plan Colombia, Plan Puebla-Panamá, Plan Dignidad in Bolivia, Operation Cabañas 2001 in Argentina, the Regional Andean Initiative, and similar operations that constitute FTAA's military arm.

In early September, at the worker-controlled Brukman factory, the Second National Meeting of Occupied Factories and Companies in Struggle drew 2000 delegates from workplaces, neighbourhood assemblies, piquetero organizations, and student, teacher, and professional groups. They set up a National Strike Fund to aid all workers in struggle. Under the banner "Si nos tocan a una, nos tocan a todos" ("An injury to one is an injury to all"), they passed resolutions of unity with neighbourhood assemblies and piquetero movements across the country.

As in the First National Meeting held at Brukman in April with less than half the number of delegates, they called for breaking the labour unions' truces with the government and replacing the unions' leadership with people who would fight for public works programs and the indexation of wages and retirement plans in line with the costs of minimal everyday needs. They called for equal pay for equal work; decriminalization of abortion; full reproductive and sexual rights; and provision of free contraceptives in hospitals and clinics. They also defended the rights of people with disabilities and of immigrant workers. The militant, anti-capitalist REDI (Disability Rights Network) has been active at many public rallies. For decades Argentine employers have been hiring and firing hundreds of thousands of Paraguayans and Bolivians with no respect for their human rights.

Finally, on December 20, the first anniversary of the Argentinazo, up to 100,000 people streamed into Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo to honour fallen comrades and call for the removal of President Duhalde. Many had walked many miles as part of the National Piquetero March that brought together such groups as the Movimiento Barrios de Pie (barefoot neighbourhoods movement), el Bloque Piquetero Nacional, el Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados (pensioners and unemployed), Polo Obrero (piquetero arm of the Trotskyist Partido Obrero), and the Coordinadora Anibal Verón (unemployed workers). Other organizations dispersed their actions around Buenos Aires' many neighbourhoods and the nation's cities and towns in order to make police repression more difficult. Consequently, untold numbers marched and protested throughout the nation.

– An elimination of the culture of fear that had been created during the years of the military dictatorship's dirty war (1976-1983) and persisted until the year leading up to the Argentinazo.

Elaboration: It is obvious that the Argentinazo, despite a savage repression taking the lives of 33 people, has radically changed everything. People in the streets, neighbourhoods, and workplaces have generated broad dynamic movements for creating 'a new Argentina,' one freed from the culture of fear, whether of the forces of repression or, in the case of the middle classes, of the unemployed (despite rising crime rates). For example, when authorities ordered trains carrying cartoneros (impoverished, self-organized cardboard collectors and recyclers claiming the right to go through city refuse) not to stop in one 'classy' Buenos Aires neighbourhood, the residents there blocked the tracks until the order was revoked.

Actually, the elites seem more afraid than the masses. Politicians still risk personal harassment when they appear at restaurants. Known torturers and unpopular politicians or their appointees continue to face escraches (loud mass protests) in front of their homes. Noisy escraches also haunt banks, stock markets, and utility companies after each new currency devaluation or IMF-imposed hike in utility prices.

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Some police and soldiers are bold enough to say they intend to refuse any orders to repress popular protests. More than 500 police in Buenos Aires, following the example set by the police union of Curaçao (Brazil), are trying to form a union based on the premise that police must not obey orders to repress social, political, religious, or human rights activities. The police recently laid down their arms rather than obey an order to remove 200 tons of wool from the Lavalán de Avellaneda factory, occupied by workers with whom they verbally declared their solidarity. Nonetheless, these multiple movements have faced intensified state harassment and repression, as Argentina's bourgeoisie scrambles to set up and win national elections in April 2003 in hopes of putting back together again the fallen edifice of a capitalism dominated by national monopolies allied with US and European imperialism's big banks and corporations.

This raises questions about the fragility of elections and what the Argentine military and imperialism will do, especially the dominant US imperialism. Voting is obligatory in Argentina, and the majority of votes cast in the last election, two months before the Argentinazo, were either leftist (25%) or blank, swear words, or nullified. Since then, new elections have been announced, cancelled, and postponed.

Leading the polls among presidential candidates is 'none of the above.' Three candidates vie for second place: two Peronists of the PJ and the very religious Catholic Elisa Carrió of the virtually divided centrist and 'socialist' Assembly for a Republic of Equals (ARI). All three run on populist platforms opposed to corruption but in favour of private property, the market, and 'free competition,' in other words, 'capitalism,' a word little in favour these days. Former Trotskyist and ex-political prisoner Luis Zamora of the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist AL (Self-Determination and Freedom) once led the polls but has now declared he will not run, using a Zapatista-style argument that 'taking power' is not what he or his organization is about.

Many activists are calling for a boycott of elections. Some favour voting for one of the many Trotskyist, Communist, and anarchist-oriented leftist and socialist parties or groups, or even ARI's Carrió. If a first round of elections is actually held, a second round between the two candidates obtaining the most votes will follow ('none of the above' or nullified votes may win both rounds).

The unpopular Armed Forces remain well armed to intervene, as they have done so often in the past. Yet most members of Argentina's military and police are aware of how difficult it would be to control hundreds of thousands of protesters in the streets, among whom are some of their own relatives who have fallen into the ranks of the poor or unemployed. Meanwhile, police and paramilitary goon-squads - mercenaries hired by the bosses and union bureaucrats - carry out Argentina's stepped-up repression. Also, death squads like the notorious 'Triple A' have reappeared.

In November, Carlos Menem, who as president in the 1990s had pardoned and freed the leaders of the dirty war, called for a state of siege and assignment of public security duties to the military. [7] President Duhalde loudly criticized Menem for this - then raised the possibility of reforming the Internal Security Law that prohibits the military from intervening in internal affairs.

The US military is present and ever more threatening, in not just Argentina but all Latin America. 'United States Space Command Vision for 2020,' released to the press in June 2002, discusses plans to intervene in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panamá and Peru, that is, 'failed States' whose 'viability' would depend on US 'aid.' This is a doctrine readily applicable to Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and other countries. In 2002, Green Beret instructors and elite US army units specializing in freeing hostages arrived in Buenos Aires to train special groups of Argentina's Federal Police. To the northwest, in Salta, Green Berets operate with no authorization from the Argentine Congress. On the island of Tolhuin in Tierra del Fuego a US military base is being set up to conduct "nuclear studies with peaceful goals."

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The remote 'tri-border area' of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, where a small Arab population resides, is crawling with CIA personnel and US military in the hypocritical 'war on terrorism,' an echo of the 'war on drugs' used in Plan Colombia to militarize a situation and use the army instead of the police to put down popular movements. Actually, this asserts imperialist pressure on the progressive movements in all three countries, plus Uruguay, Bolivia, and Peru, where leftist movements and/or presidential candidates have been gaining strength and blocking the IMF's and US Treasury Department's remaining privatization plans. Congressmen in Washington speak of a Latin American 'axis of evil': Presidents Castro (Cuba), Chávez (Venezuela), Lula da Silva (Brazil), and Gutiérrez (Ecuador), even though the last three have assured the IMF and Washington they will honor economic commitments made by the prior presidents (all neo-liberals). [8]

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Argentina is a perfect example of how imperialism's neo-liberal economic programs have dismantled or debilitated the nation state, drying up the spaces for so-called 'progressivism' or 'nationalism.' The failure of the De la Rúa center-left Alliance, 1999-2001, reflected that. In Argentina, as in the rest of Latin America, traditional class structures are nowhere to be found. The working classes are fractured by different levels of unionization and wages (lower each year), rising unemployment, and the flexibilization and precariousness of work. Most of the middle classes are racing toward the poverty line or already have fallen below it. Peasants are often proletarians, immigrant labour is widespread, slavery is being reintroduced, sex trade in women and children is booming, and most people, facing poverty, unemployment, or unavailability of jobs, work long days and nights in the 'informal economy.'

This helps explain the alliances between the unemployed and the working and middle classes that have sprung up in Argentina. Chaotic and uneven, they are opening the doors to potentially revolutionary changes unimaginable in the 1990s. They still lack detailed, cohesive programs, although an articulate minority of anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist activists are, when not arguing with one another, trying to come up with them. However, most employed and unionized workers are not fully involved in the popular movements yet, and the Duhalde government's limited social welfare program does rein in some of the unemployed.

One might say that the old Argentina is falling while the new one has barely begun to walk - but in a manner that clearly shows the failures of capitalism and does pose the great challenges ahead. Argentine activists are busily planting the seeds of what can grow into an original participatory socialism - or be crushed under the iron heel of military fascism or US economic and military intervention. What is taking place is nothing less than the fight for a second revolution for independence about which so many Argentines and Latin Americans speak today, 'the second revolution for economic independence' (the first revolution having been for political independence in the 19th century). [9] Class polarization is intensifying and self-organization is spreading, but there are not yet enough cohesive coalitions with a common vision capable of organizing all the popular forces newly committed to the fight for a different economy and society.

Besides a military coup or direct US annexation or occupation, there are only two likely possibilities in Argentina's future. On the one hand, an economic genocide may continue, managed by a corrupted kleptocratic capitalism and a state beholden to imperialism practicing increased repression. On the other hand, more factory occupations, nationwide strikes, protests, and national assemblies may take place, leading to a participatory democratic socialism based on expropriation of capitalist enterprises to be managed and controlled by working people themselves.

[1] 'Nuestra Lucha', Nov. 8, 2002, p. 3. For background on Zanón and Argentina's other worker-controlled factories, see IV October 2002, pp. 28-32; 'Against the Current', November/December 2002, pp. 27-29; and Eduardo Lucita, "[Fábricas ocupadas y gestión obrera en Argentina: ocupar, resistir, producir](#)" Revista Cuadernos del Sur

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[2] "Self-reliance helps Argentines endure nation's economic pain," by Matt Moffett, 'Wall Street Journal', December 20, 2002.

[3] CORREO DE PRENSA DE LA IV INTERNACIONAL 'Boletín Electrónico No. 485 - América Latina y el Caribe', Dec. 10, 2002, [germain@chasque.net], reprint of article by MarÃ-a Moreno in 'Página 12' supplement.

[4] 'Nuestra Lucha', Aug. 27, 2002, p. 12.

[5] PJ - Partido Justicialista (or Peronists); UCR - Unión CÃ-lica Radical (or Radicals); Frepaso - a centre-left coalition which put Fernando de la Rúa in office in 1999. Leftist parties and groups include: PC (Communist Party); MST (Socialist Workers Movement); IU (United Left, basically PC and MST); CCC (Combative Classist Current, rooted in Maoists who earlier broke with PC and now seek an alliance with select capitalist sectors); PO (Worker Party, Trotskyist); MAS (Movement to Socialism, Trotskyist); Por Masas (Trotskyist); UMS (Unión de Militantes Socialistas, Trotskyist); PTS (Workers for Socialism Party); LSR (Revolutionary Socialist League); MTD (Movement of Unemployed Workers); Socialismo Libertario (a non-party of the international current Utopia Socialista, feminist, anarchist, and neo-Trotskyist); various locals of the ATE (Association of State Workers) and other union federations, e.g., railroad, transport, shipyard, telephone, electrical, construction, education, and other workers.

[6] 'Nuestra Lucha', November 8, 2002, supplement on First Regional Plenary of Coordinadora del Alto Valle.

[7] Menem apparently thought this might improve his trailing position in the presidential election polls by winning over those elements of the middle classes who were participating less in the neighbourhood assemblies or might be nostalgic for the more prosperous days of his 1990s' administration. His idea was widely rejected, however, and he did not gain in the polls.

[8] Ernesto Herrera, "Entre el 'argentinazo' y el 'efecto Lula'," 'América del Sur', December 26, 2002; 'La Jornada', Sept. 1, 2002; James D. Cockcroft, "El imperialismo estadounidense en América Latina y los movimientos de resistencia y su inter-nacionalización," in press for journal of Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias of Mexico's National University (UNAM, Ciencias y Humanidades, 2003).

[9] James D. Cockcroft, 'Latin America: History, Politics, and US Policy' (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/International Thomson Publishing, Second edition, 1998), pp. 673-674.