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Argentina

National Assembly of "Piqueteros"

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On Tuesday July 24, 2001, the National Assembly of social, territorial and unemployed organizations took place in La Matanza, in the Province of Buenos Aires. The assembly had been planned for more than a year but the political crisis unleashed by the 7th adjustment undertaken by the government in only a year and a half precipitated its convocation.

More than 2,000 delegates from all over the country attended. Organisational responsibility fell to the piqueteros of La Matanza whose main leaders are members of the 'Federation of Land and Life' of the CTA (Central de Trabajadores Argentinos) and the CCC (Corriente Clasista y Combativa) influenced by the Partido Comunista Revolucionario (a Maoist group), but also there were smaller groups like the Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados -Teresa Rodríguez, the Polo Obrero and others. Not just the unemployed also there were trade union leaders, workers in education and universities; retired, neighbourhood leaders and associations, agricultural workers were also numerous, as well as others. The Secretary General of the CTA, Víctor De Gennaro was warmly received and applauded for his intervention while Hugo Moyano, Secretary General of the 'rebel' CGT was booed and practically was unable to speak.

The reaction was very marked when Carlos Giuliani was killed in Genoa. The Assembly rose for an ovation to his memory and he has taken his place in the gallery of martyrs that already includes the piqueteros killed by the Argentinian police.

The convocation of this national assembly had clear and precise objectives: to advance in the coordination of the struggles at national level; to improve levels of organization; and to confront a new adjustment. The debate was broad, democratic and open to all. Each speaker had 3 minutes, and thus followed the piqueteros from the north to the south of the country, leaders of neighbourhoods, associations, social organizations, and political parties, the deputies from the left parties: Patricio Etcheagaray, from the Partido Comunista, Vilma Ripoll of the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores and Jorge Altamira of the Partido Obrero.

The Assembly defined a Plan of Struggle national consistent including road blockades and paths of communication of the 50 main cities of the country with a duration escalating weakly from 24, 48 and 72 hours, to culminate in a national general strike convoked by the CTA and the 'rebel' CGT. The political objectives of the Plan of Struggle: a) freedom for social prisoners; b) dropping of charges against more than 2,500 social fighters; and c) that the government drops the adjustment and wage cuts as well as budget measures.

There was no shortage of dissident views and controversial proposals, on the other hand the leaders of the Assembly were clear and categorical that the barrages should meet four conditions: big, peaceful, multi-sectoral and be found near an alternative road so as not to affect the movement of workers. Thus, one will avoid the governmental accusation concerning freedom of circulation. In the midst of the assembly's debates a piquetero from the north of the country said: "we know that when we block a road it is as if we block an artery of a human being".

The piqueteros know, without too much theorization, that in the current relationship of forces there will be difficulties met in acting in the centres of production and accumulation of the capital. They carry then the confrontation at the level of the distribution and circulation of commodities and persons, thus affecting the realization of profits. [1]

[1] See "[Old and new forms of struggle](#)", IV 328, February 2001.