

Interventions

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Debating the Argentine Crisis: Replies to Ana Dinerstein

Editorial Introduction

At the time of writing (December 2005), Argentina seems to have recovered from what was one of the most prolonged political and economic crises in its history. The crisis seems to be a thing of the past.¹ Yet, the profundity of that crisis, and especially the turbulent political events of December 2001 and early 2002 (with hundreds of people taking to the streets, constitution of popular assemblies, looting of shops, brutal police repression, the successive fall of various presidents in an extremely short period of time and so forth), had made Argentina the focus of attention of observers all over the world in those years. Moreover, the need to come to grips with what has been experienced as a crucial moment of Argentine history was felt on all sides of the political spectrum. For those on the Right, the need to account for this situation was rather evident. After years of

¹ Yet, it remains to be seen whether the recent change of Ministry of Finance is a sign of difficulties to come.

hailing Argentina as the role model of successful neoliberal restructuring, they then needed to find a scapegoat to blame for its undeniable crisis. By contrast, for those on the Left, the magnitude of the economic collapse was seen as the most compelling evidence of the disastrous consequences that neoliberal economic policies had on the population. Furthermore, the novelty and peculiarity of the social movements that emerged out of the crisis was seen by many as signalling the consolidation and growth of the global struggles against neoliberalism.

Ana Dinerstein's paper on the 'Battle of Buenos Aires' in issue 10.4 of this journal could be seen as expressive of a widespread enthusiastic mood of the Left about both the nature and meaning of the crisis, and the transformative potentialities of social movements. However, even if undoubtedly hegemonic, that reading of the political and economic upheaval was not shared by everyone on the Left. Thus, the following articles by Alberto Bonnet, Juan Grigera and Juan Iñigo Carrera, written in reply to Dinerstein's contribution, question the pertinence of her interpretation of the genesis and significance of those political and economic events. In their own idiosyncratic way, each of these articles challenges many of the assumptions of Dinerstein's piece and provides an alternative account of the Argentine crisis. In publishing these articles, the editors of *Historical Materialism* express once again their commitment to pluralist debate in critical-Marxist theory.