



## **Contributions of Latin American revolutionary intellectuals for the study of the organization of liberating struggles**

*Maria Ceci Misoczky<sup>1</sup> e Rafael Kruter Flores<sup>2</sup>*

### **Abstract**

The purposes of this article are to establish a dialogue with the ideas of three revolutionary Latin American intellectuals – José Carlos Mariátegui, Ernesto Che Guevara and Paulo Freire -, in order to share, from our intellectual tradition, a different vision, from the US/European one, of what means to be critical; and to discuss possible inspirations for those of us working in Latin America and interested in contributing to the political processes of liberation which happen around us. We constructed this text in dialogue with the words of these three organic intellectuals which were able to engage creatively with the European thought, producing political appropriations and new theoretical developments informed by their praxis. These intellectuals produced worthy political theories based on their revolutionary praxis, offering ideas, insights and arguments for our analysis of the organization of social struggles and for social practices which confront our society in its imprisonment by the law of value. The particle implications of this paper are to produce counter-hegemonic knowledge in the space where the hegemonic managerial discourse is produced and reproduced, and to contribute for the emancipation of Organization Studies (or at least of the parts of OS which intend to be critical) from the hegemony of management.

**Keywords:** Revolutionary thought. Liberation struggles. Organization Studies.

## **Contribuição dos intelectuais revolucionários latino-americanos para o estudo da organização de lutas de libertação**

### **Resumo**

Os objetivos deste artigo são estabelecer um diálogo com as ideias de três intelectuais revolucionários da América Latina - José Carlos Mariátegui, Ernesto Che Guevara e Paulo Freire -, de modo a compartilhar, a partir da nossa tradição intelectual, uma visão diferente, da Europeia/Norte-Americana, sobre o que significa ser crítico; e discutir possíveis inspirações para aqueles que, coo nós, trabalham na América Latina e estão interessados em contribuir com os processos políticos de libertação que ocorrem à nossa volta. Construímos este texto em diálogo com as palavras de três intelectuais orgânicos que foram capazes de se engajar criativamente com o pensamento europeu, produzindo apropriações políticas e novos desenvolvimentos teóricos informados por sua práxis. Estes intelectuais produziram teorias valiosas baseadas em sua práxis revolucionária, ofereceram ideias, inspirações e argumentos para nossas análises da organização das lutas sociais, e para práticas sociais que confrontam nossa sociedade em seu aprisionamento pela lei do valor. As implicações práticas deste artigo são a construção de conhecimento contra-hegemônico no próprio espaço aonde o discurso

<sup>1</sup> Professora Adjunta no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (PPGA/EA/UFRGS). Coordenadora do grupo de pesquisa Organização e Práxis Libertadora. Correio eletrônico: [mcamisoczky@ea.ufrgs.br](mailto:mcamisoczky@ea.ufrgs.br).

<sup>2</sup> Doutorando em Administração no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (PPGA/EA/UFRGS). Mestre em Administração. Pesquisador do grupo de pesquisa Organização e Práxis Libertadora. Correio eletrônico: [rkflores@ea.ufrgs.br](mailto:rkflores@ea.ufrgs.br).

gerencial hegemônico é produzido e reproduzido, e contribuir para a emancipação dos Estudos Organizacionais (ou pelo menos das partes dos EOs que pretendem ser críticas) da hegemonia da gestão.

**Palavras-chave:** Pensamento revolucionário. Lutas de libertação. Estudos Organizacionais.

### **Contribuciones de Intelectuales Revolucionarios Latinoamericanos para el estudio de la organización de luchas de liberación**

#### **Resumen**

Los objetivos de ese artículo son establecer un diálogo con las ideas de tres intelectuales revolucionarios latinoamericanos - José Carlos Mariátegui, Ernesto Che Guevara y Paulo Freire, de modo a compartir, desde nuestra tradición intelectual, una visión diferente de aquella de los USA/Europa, acerca de lo que significa ser crítico; y discutir posibles inspiraciones para aquellos que trabajan en América Latina y están interesados en contribuir con los procesos políticos de liberación que ocurren alrededor. El texto fue construido en diálogo con las palabras de esos tres intelectuales orgánicos que pudieran encajarse críticamente con el pensamiento europeo, produciendo apropiaciones políticas y nuevos desarrollos teóricos informados por su praxis. Esos intelectuales han producido teorías valiosas desde su praxis revolucionaria, ofrecieron ideas, inspiraciones y argumentos para analizar la organización de las luchas sociales, y prácticas sociales que enfrenta nuestra sociedad en su encarcelamiento por la ley del valor. Las implicaciones prácticas del texto son la producción de conocimiento contra hegemónico en el espacio donde el discurso gerencial hegemónico es producido y reproducido y la contribución para la emancipación de los estudios organizacionales (o al menos de partes de esos estudios organizacionales que pretenden ser críticas) de la hegemonía de la gestión.

**Palabras clave:** Pensamiento revolucionario. Luchas de liberación. Estudios Organizacionales.

#### **Introduction**

We live and work in Southern Brazil. One of us is a teacher, the other a PhD student. In our researches we work with two main notions: organization – focusing on processes and practices oriented by a critical-strategic reason; and liberating praxis - actions oriented by the critical political principle of feasibility, by a possible which opposes apparent practical impossibilities that it must subvert. This definition, inspired in the works of Ernst Bloch (2005) and Enrique Dussel (2002), includes two moments: the negative moment of radical critique and the positive moment of constructing the new. In the words of Paulo Freire (2000), it includes two acts: to denounce and to announce. It is a praxis which demands a utopian horizon, a concrete hope, a transformative project elucidating the purposes of liberation in all spheres of life; it also demands organization.

We are committed to a conception of knowledge production which departs from the usual connection with institutionalized privileged elites castled in the isolation of academic campi. Inspired by Gramsci (1991), we recognize and value the knowledge produced in spaces of struggle and resistance by academics working shoulder to shoulder with social activists, as well as the knowledge produced by activists as part of their daily struggles.

From Paulo Freire (1984) we learned many lessons. One of them is to privilege the announcements of possible futures made by the organic intellectuals of social movements and popular struggles. This is not an easy practice: it demands the constant awareness against our assumptions of *knowing how to do*, of *knowing the answer*, which do not correspond neither to the experience of our time, nor to the needs of the subject-actors involved in social struggles (RAUBER, 2006).

Another feature of our work is related to our locus of enunciation: our belonging to the field of Latin American Studies<sup>3</sup>. Such belonging includes the recognition of the constitutive particularities inscribed in Latin America's<sup>4</sup> history since the colonial times and the politicized consideration of contemporary time.

By now it has become quite evident our affiliation to the Marxist tradition. This tradition has been very influential within Latin American Studies, including among others the critique of imperialism and a long reflection on colonial and neocolonial exploitation. As we

<sup>3</sup> The field of Latin American Studies includes a wide range of disciplines and authors sharing the critique of colonialism and coloniality in their diverse time-space manifestations. The term *coloniality* was coined by Quijano (1992) and has been used to name the structures of control and hegemony that have emerged during colonial times, stretching from the conquest of the Americas to the present. *Coloniality* is a neologism created to make sense of this constitutive feature of modernity, which cannot be thought outside the context of *Eurocentric hegemonic* patterns of knowledge and its claim of universality. Quijano (1992), as many other intellectuals from Latin America and the Caribbean, and also from the Arabic and African world, claims decolonization as a means for producing knowledge and thinking from the *epistemic colonial difference* - a privileged epistemological and political space. The colonial difference underlines power relations in the making of cultural differences; it reveals the underlying logic articulated by the *coloniality of power*, by *neocolonial practices* (MINGOLO, 2000). Latin American thought can be traced back to the late nineteenth century in the writings of José Martí - poet, essayist and journalist, symbol of Cuba's struggle for independence from Spain; as well as to the early twentieth century, when the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó published *Ariel* - a hermeneutic narrative which demarcates the cultural difference between Anglo-Saxon America and Latin America. According to Mendieta (2007), this first Latinamericanism descended from the era of the colonial and imperialistic expansion of the USA and Latin America's affirmation of its distinctive cultural tradition; it opposed the promise of a humanistic and pluralistic form of society to the spirit of an imperialistic modernity. After the Second World War the problematic of *Nuestra America* (Our America) gained a new momentum. Intellectuals from different disciplinary fields became interested in issues related to national and sub-national identities; discussed dependency and shared a key argument - development and underdevelopment are mutually dependent outcomes of capitalist accumulation on a world scale; produced an original intersection between Christianity and Marxism - the theology of liberation; enunciated a historical narrative from the colonial difference; experimented a pedagogical praxis directed towards the liberation of the oppressed.

<sup>4</sup> The expression Latin America was first used in the context of the confrontation between Hispanic American countries and the United States, in 1856. At that time, the Chilean Francisco Bilbao and the Colombian José María Torres Caicedo, both writers, were reacting against the annexation of Texas, the assault of Mexico City, the possession of Nicaragua by William Walker. This first manifestation of Latin Americanism did not express a new project of continental unity and identity. Its antecedents can be found in the idea of integration of the Hispano-America sustained by Simon Bolivar and Francisco de Miranda, as well as by San Martin and Artigas, during all their lives. This project was nurtured in the context of the struggles for independence, two hundred years ago (Roig, 2008). Both the denomination Latin America and Latin Americanism, as an anti-imperialist ideology which confronts Pan-Americanism - the official ideology disseminated from the USA and implemented by our elites since James Monroe declared that the American continent would not be a place for the colonization by European empires (America for the Americans) - cannot, since then, be considered the acceptance and reproduction of the name imputed by the colonizers - America. Since that moment, the expression Latin America started to represent a political identity. This recognition does not oppose the ideological symbolism of referring to Latin America as *Abya Yala*. *Abya Yala* in the language of the people Kuna (originated from Sierra Nevada - Northern Colombia) means *Mature Land* and has been used by the originary people indicating not only a name, but the presence of another enunciating subject (PORTO-GONÇALVES, 2010).

will discuss later on, in our context Marxism has been subject to a process of transculturation, instead of being mere copy or transplant.

Some may ask why is it that in Latin America we keep on working in terms of imperialism; why was it here that the theory of dependency (MARINI, 2005), the theology (GUTIÉRREZ, 1973) and the philosophy of liberation (DUSSEL, 2002), the pedagogy (FREIRE, 2005) and the theater of the oppressed (BOAL, 1985) were formulated and are still informing our researches and social struggles; why Marxism and specifically Latin American Marxism are not only alive but being constantly renewed? Let's answer with the help of Boron (2006, p. 13-14). According to him, "on one hand our proximity – geographical, political, economic and social – with the American Rome" (as José Martí<sup>5</sup> used to refer to USA); on the other hand because Cuba is in Latin America, and its struggle for half a century, "its persistence despite the blockage, aggressions and sabotages of all kind, constitute an example extraordinarily pedagogical and a constant source of inspiration for those interested in self-reflection". There is also the vitality of social movements which have been offering a growing resistance to the projects of imperialism.

We also have to say that our work is inscribed within the field of Organization Studies (OS) - a privileged space for the dispute of cultural struggles. As we all know, OS was born within the market and for the market, its mainstream and even some self-portrayed critical positions have at its origin and as its *raison d'être* the production of knowledge to perfect management as a tool for the system of capital. Therefore, the usual reference to *Organization and Management Studies* or to *Management and Organization Studies* is perfectly adequate to define the colonization of OS by Management. This colonization is so pervasive that it is central also to *Critical Management Studies* (CMS), where it has been present since the first writings which defined the field when it was emerging (an illustration can be found in ALVESSON and WILLMOTT, 1992).

In a different direction, we are convinced that the focus on the organization of social anti-capitalist struggles is a relevant academic praxis, because it opposes the hegemonic definition of organization (as a synonym of enterprise) in a context of worldwide dominance of the managerial discourse. The aim is to produce counter-hegemonic knowledge in the very space where the hegemonic managerial discourse is produced and reproduced, and to contribute for the emancipation of OS (or at least of the parts of OS which intend to be critical) from the hegemony of management. We believe, with Neuhaus and Calello (2006, p.

---

<sup>5</sup> José Martí (1853-1895) was a Cuban revolutionary, poet, and journalist. The principal organizer of Cuba's war against Spain, he is remembered as the apostle of Cuban independence; he was the main inspiration for the Cuban revolution, and a constant inspiration for contemporary resistance. *Selected Writings* of Martí were published by Penguin Books in 2002.

2), that researches may “be critical interventions, both in the spaces where they are done - where potential forces of resistance to the hegemonic power are concentrated; and in the researchers themselves”.

The first step to widen the ways in which we study requires the abandonment of restrictive understandings of organization as a unit of analysis (Cooke, 2004 and 2010; Dar, 2008). Cooper and Burrell (1988, p. 106) and Böhm (2005) had already indicated the direction of an expanded conception of organization as an ongoing process “that occurs within the wider ‘body’ of society”. In our research group, we have been exploring alternative ways of defining organization in order to deal with our focus of interest - the organization of social struggles. Organizations have been conceived as the collective inter-subjective act which is, simultaneously, a means for the praxis of liberation and a learning space for the experimentation of organizational practices compatible with liberating struggles (MISOCZKY, 2010).

As part of this research project we felt the need to engage with the thought of Latin American intellectuals. The fact that the development of OS in Latin America can be understood as a distorted version of the functionalist or the critical thought of the Centre has already been recognized. Despite such dominance scholars often express the uncomfortable sense that such approaches do not really explain what happens in their countries, while acknowledging that these frameworks give them recognition in the international arena, which is another way to say that to be allowed in you must deny your own identity (IBARRA-COLADO, 2006).

We can say, using the expression of Schwarz (1992), that the hegemonic version of Latin American and Brazilian OS is made of texts which do not express marks of location, which do not offer reflections about the peculiarities of our space of enunciation or about how social and institutional contexts limit and condition the production of ideas. But this is not truth concerning the wider critical (often revolutionary) intellectual Latin American production, marked by a vast and rich cultural tradition.

When we mention the Latin American cultural tradition or social thought we are opposing the construction of Latin America as an object of representation. This last expression means, for Moraña (1998), an image that defines its existence through the watching eyes, as the place of the other – an exotic pre-theoretical marginal place when confronted with metropolitan discourses. Instead, we are stating the existence of a creative, original and autonomous tradition, resulting from processes of transculturation.

The concept of transculturation was first formulated by Fernando Ortiz, in 1940, to account for the interpenetration of Spanish and African cultural influences in the Cuban

national identity, to express the combination of heterogeneous elements originated from different cultural dynamics which produced something new, different and original. The idea was further developed by Angel Rama (1982). For him, the process includes four concomitant operations: losses, selections, rediscoveries, and incorporations. “These four operations are concomitant and articulated within the total reconstruction of the cultural system, the most important creative function in a transcultural process.” For West (2005, p. 967), “transculturation, often under historical circumstances of brutal adversity, is a practice of cultural creativity, a performative philosophical reasoning, and an act of social resistance”.

Transculturation does not have the same meaning as hybridization. Bhaba (1995) defines hybridism as a third space of enunciation. He considers as untenable the claims to the inherent purity and originality of cultures and proposes, instead, an effort to open up the notion of an international culture which would not be based on exoticism neither on the multiculturalism of diverse cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridism. Transculturation does not refer to any kind of original purity neither to an undifferentiated hybrid space of enunciation which eludes politics and positions of power, which irresponsibly and playfully celebrates migracy and transnationalism pretending that imperialism, exploitation and dependency do not exist anymore.

Having presented our context of intellectual production, our locus of enunciation and the notion of transculturation, we can introduce the criterion we used to choose authors whom we engage in the writing of this article and in our researches, a criterion which has not been random or neutral. We have directed our studies to discourses produced at instants of danger, in the words of Walter Benjamin (1989). His notion of history allows us to build bridges across different periods of time and geographical locations.

Walter Benjamin (1989) conceived history as being crossed by two arrows always in tension. The first one is the historical time, continuous, empty, quantifiable, the eternal return of the same, of the mere survival, of progress, of the reproduction of the laws and myths of domination. The second transverses such order with the messianic time, which interrupts as creation and redemption. According to his critical thought the struggling class, the subjugated class, is the subject of historical knowledge. Therefore, in order to retell history we must take possession of remembrances as they happened in the moment of danger; it is an obligation to fix an image of the past as and when it was lived by the historical subject at the instant of danger.

For our purposes, this orientation induces the engagement with organic intellectuals committed to liberating struggles. This is the reason why we do not discriminate between intellectuals such as the ones involved in direct activism which produced testimonies of

political rebellion against external aggressions, discrimination, marginality, and social injustices; and intellectuals which produced knowledge in solidarity with these struggles.

Therefore, we construct this text in dialogue with the words of three organic intellectuals which were able to engage creatively with the European thought, producing political appropriations and new theoretical developments informed by their praxis:

- José Carlos Mariátegui – a Peruvian responsible for an original thought which connected Marxism and socialist traditions of the Andean indigenous peoples;
- Ernesto Che Guevara - a revolutionary humanist who develop proposals for the moment of transition to socialism;
- Paulo Freire - an educator with ethic-critical consciousness who dedicated his life and work for the politics of liberation.

In the following parts we establish a dialogue with their ideas in order to share, from our intellectual tradition, a different vision, from the US/UK/European one, of what means to be critical; and to discuss possible inspirations for those of us working in Latin America and interested in contributing to the political processes of liberation which happen around us.

**José Carlos Mariátegui** (born in 1895) is considered the founder of Latin American Marxism. He was responsible for the elaboration of an original thought which connected Marxism with the socialist traditions of the Andean indigenous peoples. His thought was also influenced by authors so distinct as Bergson, Nietzsche and Sorel.

Mariátegui (2005) declared himself a convinced and committed Marxist. However, this position did not prevent him from criticizing the Second International's version of Marxism and to defend, against it, his conviction that a revolutionary socialism must connect with local traditions and realities. Despite remaining emphatically internationalist, he defended and elaborated an adaptation of Marxism to the history of the Peruvian society. According to Mariátegui (2005, p. 23), “despite the fact that socialism was born in Europe, as capitalism also was, both are not specifically or particularly Europeans. It is a worldwide movement; there is no country within the Western civilization orbit which can be outside it”. However, at the same time, he insisted in the specificities of a Latin American socialism, “rooted in its own communist past”: “socialism is part of our tradition. The most advanced primitive communist organization registered in history is Inca. We certainly do not want that America's socialism becomes a copy. It must be a heroic creation. We must give life, with our own reality, our own language, to the Indo-American socialism”.

At the core of his reflections we find the effort of breaking with the Eurocentric conception of socialist politics and with the evolutionist linear conception of history signified by the positivist idea of progress. Instead, he is convinced that the future can only emerge from what the past has inscribed in the present in terms of unsolved problems. In Mariátegui's (2007, p. 20) words: "the capacity of understanding the past is in solidarity with the capacity of understanding the present and with the worries about the future". This process does not accept the abandonment of what once existed; at the same time it is selective of what to recover from the past, drawing only on elements in which the present is recognized. It is easy to hear resonances of Benjamin's (1989) conception of history as discontinuity; and his refusal of the blind faith in the future.

From the Inca culture Mariátegui (1972, p. 26) recovers the ruins of the *ayllu* – the basic organization of that society. The *ayllu* was formed by a group of families living, working and sharing the benefits of their work in the community. However, he never thought about the tradition in mythical terms: "nothing more sterile than reanimating an extinct myth". Instead, he suggested a utopian-revolutionary dialectics between the pre-capitalist past and the socialist future, valuing the spiritual and ethical dimension of the revolutionary combat (LÖWY, 2005).

From Mariátegui's writings we can have multiple inspirations, such as: the critique of progress, a myth still present in contemporary capitalism organized around the project of development as continued economic growth; the ability of drawing in our historical traditions to understand the actual struggles of indigenous peoples in defense of their culture and of the nature, as well as their organizational practices; and the re-enchantment of the world by means of the revolutionary action.

**Ernesto Che Guevara** is much more than an inoffensive image in a T-shirt. He is also much more than a revolutionary fighter frozen in the past. Che was part of a political generation which considered theory as a fundamental constitutive part of the practice of transformation (KOHAN, 2011). Therefore, his writings can be a fruitful source of inspiration. In this paper we will focus on Guevara's new man and the interconnected discussion of the methods of economic management, following Mariátegui's advice and avoiding mythical approaches: a difficult and necessary endeavor when we deal with this heroic revolutionary.

Che always had a critical and sometimes conflictive relationship with the communist apparatus. For him, the understanding of socialism can only be achieved in a personal scale,

taking into consideration the intimate thoughts and worries of each exploited person. For Besancenot and Löwy (2009), it was this revolutionary humanism which impelled Che in the direction of Marxism, and it was in the Marxist project that this initial humanist commitment found reciprocity: humanity and humankind are everything; they are the root and the objective of equalitarian projects. “A global political project which constitutes a chain in which the human, as the main actor and authentic revolutionary subject, becomes again the red wire connecting all stages of social transformation: from the revolt personally felt to the individual actualization favored by the new society” (BESANCENOT and LÖWY, 2009, p. 31).

For Che Guevara (1970), involved in the construction of socialism in Cuba and theorizing during that process, the revolutionary project demanded more than the transformation of the mode of production; it demanded a profound transformation of the individual, the birth of what he termed the *new man*. “His new man was a revolutionary and the revolution itself”, an individual reconciled with the conscience of his duties to the cause of the oppressed, of the community (MARTINEZ-SAENZ, 2004, p. 20).

However, there was a problem to be addressed: the tension between moral incentives as they were related to the new man and the material incentive that were an integral part of Cuba’s economic system. Che opposed the model of socialism with market, a model that was in place at the Soviet Union and at the Maoist China. He did not accept the permanence of the law of value, stating that the law of value and socialist planning were inherently contradictory. Coherently, he traced the troubles of the Soviet economy back to the introduction in 1921, under Lenin's leadership, of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which opened the door for old capitalist relations of production under the assumption that during the transitional period to socialism the law of value would be overcome (CHE GUEVERA, 2005a; KOHAN, 2011).

Che also opposed material incentives and defended a concept of workers' management based on revolutionary consciousness. If the new socialist society should be based on the values of equality, solidarity, collectivism, revolutionary altruism, free discussion and mass participation, to fight capitalism in its own ground and using its own weapons – the commodity form, competition, self-centered individualism – was doomed to failure (LÖWY, 2009). Instead, “the masses should be able to direct their fate, to decide which share of production should be assigned respectively to accumulation or consumption. Economic technique must operate within the limits of this information and the consciousness of the masses must ensure its implementation” (CHE GUEVERA, 2006: 132).

However, there was a contradictory feature on Che’s thought: his defense that in order to overcome underdevelopment and dependency the most advanced forms of technology and

management techniques should be borrowed from capitalist corporations without the fear of contamination. He advocated that the organization and accounting control of monopolist enterprises were clearly superior to the enterprises operating in Soviet countries (CHE GUEVERA, 1966). Later on he recognized that this superiority also operated in the technological aspects. The problem he wanted to deal with was the possibility of organizing the production incorporating centralized and efficient models of management. He intended to provide solutions presenting a model of economic management – the Budgetary Finance System (BFS), a kind of Cuban way to socialism.

Yaffe (2009, p. 53-54) provides a summary of the mains points of the BFS (presented by Che in 1964): finances should be centrally controlled; enterprises operate with a budget and hold no independent funds; money serves as a means of account not as means of payment or as a form of financial compulsion; there are no financial relations or commodity exchange between state-owned enterprises; education, training and salary structures foster a concept of work as a social duty; de-commodifying labor by gradually cutting the link between work and remuneration; “the plan is democratically formulated by workers, but its fulfillment is ensured by a system of supervision, inspection, and economic analysis in real time, inventory controls and annual reports” (the mains levers to increase efficiency are administrative mechanisms combined to appeals to consciousness); lowering production costs to increase productivity (not for profit), accompanied by quality control; “flexibility for decentralizing without losing control and centralizing without curbing initiative”; “workers must appropriate the production process, determining the plan and developing the productive forces for themselves as collective owners of the means of production”; “foster the application of science and technology to production without the profit motive”; focus on the full chain of production from raw material to electronics and automation; “material incentives should be gradually replaced by moral incentives and the concept of work as a social duty, replacing alienation and the antagonism generated by class struggle with integration and solidarity”.

Che Guevara (2005b) also manifested against the *evil of bureaucratism*. Of course he had no theorization on that issue and it seems that he had no contact with Weber’s ideas. Che tended to consider bureaucracy as a transitory deformation derived from the lack of revolutionary consciousness and resulting in lack of inner motivation and interest in solving problems. Another cause for the emergence of bureaucratism would be the lack of organization: “attempting to destroy “guerrillaism” without sufficient administrative experience has produced dislocations and bottlenecks that unnecessarily curb the flow of information from below, as well as the instructions or orders emanating from the central apparatus”. The third cause would be “the lack of sufficiently developed technical knowledge

to be able to make correct decisions on short notice”. It is evident the association of bureaucracy with the common sense of a dysfunctional administrative apparatus.

Having diagnosed the reasons of the *malady*, Che Guevara (2005b) recommendations to provide the cure were directed to overcome what he considered as the central problem: the need for organization. “To do so we must modify our style of work. We must prioritize problems, assigning each body and each decision-making level its particular task. We must establish the concrete relationships between each one of them and all the others, from the center of economic decision making to the last administrative unit, as well as the relationships among their different components — horizontally — until we establish all the interrelationships within the economy.” He also advocated for the development of a “political work with dogged determination to rid ourselves of the lack of internal motivation, that is, the lack of political clarity”. The means for achieving internal motivation would be “continuous education, through concrete explanations of the tasks, through instilling in administrative employees an interest in their work, and through the example set by the vanguard workers”; and “drastic measures to eliminate the parasites, whether it be those who conceal in their stance a deep enmity to socialist society, or those who are irremediably opposed to work”. Che also defended the need of correcting “the inferiority that comes from our lack of knowledge”, a goal to be achieved by means of concentrated and extensive educational efforts.

From the text above it is crystal clear the possible articulation between Che’s thoughts and OS. This connection includes not only an obvious agenda of studies and the inspiration we can have for thinking the relation between the individual and the collective in the organization of the struggles and in the transition for a new society, but also how we can contribute with social activists and organizations to overcome some of his misconceptions. It is very usual to hear activists, in Cuba and all around Latin American, reproducing that there is no risk of contamination when adopting managerial techniques typical of capitalist enterprises. In our studies we had contact with this proposition many times. At first we had problems in understanding how such naivety could be present in contexts where the understanding of capitalist relations and ideology were so competent. It was studying Che’s texts that we found the explanation for such widespread position. It becomes obvious the relevance of engaging critically with Che’s ideas, such engagement could contribute to overcome the mere reproduction of these ideas by social activists, alerting for their inevitable adverse consequences: to fight capitalism using its own instruments is doomed to failure.

**Paulo Freire** is widely known as an educator, but he was not just that. Inspired by the ideas of Hegel, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Mounier, Jaspers, Marx e Lucáks, among others, Freire learned from his experience of the reality of Northeast Brazil and Latin America. From this mix of influences concluded that as a condition for liberation the oppressed must first recognize himself as an oppressed; only then he can elaborate his critical consciousness and achieve, step by step, organization. It is a struggle at the same time subjective and collective: subjective because within the oppressed the oppressor lives; collective, because liberation cannot be an individual struggle, it is always social and political. It is also not a unilateral liberation: the liberation of the oppressed must happen simultaneously with the liberation of oppressor, otherwise it would be mere repetition of the same methods and procedures of domination (FREIRE, 2005).

The Freirean pedagogy of liberation always “attends dialectically to the specific or local act of knowing as a political process that takes place in the larger conflictive arena of capitalist relations of exploitation”; it involves not only a redistribution of material resources, but also “a struggle of cultural meanings in relation to the multiple social locations of students and teachers and their position within the division of labor” (MCLAREN, 1999, p. 51-52).

For Freire (2000, p. 119), there is no space in history for any inevitable future. On the contrary, the future is always problematic and can be disputed. However, to become a historical subject it is necessary more than the recognition of oppression; it is necessary to take a position expressing this recognition, to act: “a human being of intervention in the world [...] leaves the marks of a subject and not the footprints of pure object”. To adopt a position means to think the concreteness of reality, demands denouncing what we are living and announcing how we can live.

Regarding the approach the practice of research, when we read Paulo Freire we recognize that the starting point of his works was always the relations that people and human collectives establish with each other and with the world. Based on the work of Paulo Freire, Torres (2008, p. 45) identifies antidotes against domination in the production of knowledge: an epistemology of curiosity and an epistemology of suspicion. In the last one Freire follows Ricouer (1970) in the suspicion that all human experience involves relations of domination and, therefore, must be submitted to a systematic critique. The former, the epistemology of curiosity was defended by Freire himself and meant the constant questioning, the constant feeling of not being satisfied by the answers, the practice of not living anything outside the question, and using the simplicity of a child’s look to inspect even the more complex experiences and relations.

From the paragraphs above the contributions of Paulo Freire are quite evident: a pedagogy of liberation in the way we relate with theories and experiences in our context of academic practice; the refusal of conformism and, at the same time, of the critique that ends in itself, without practical consequences; the indication of how to study and the incentive for curiosity articulated with suspicion. But there is more than that. In Freire we found a direct inspiration for the analysis of organizational practices of social struggles.

In the study of a *piquetero* organization, located in Buenos Aires, we found the need to engage with Freire' (2005) theory of antidialogics and dialogics as matrices of opposing theories of action: the former as an instrument of oppression and the latter as an instrument of liberation. The theory of anti-dialogical action refers to a practice which includes the following characteristics: to conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion; the theory of dialogical action refers to: cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis. For Freire (2005, p. 126) “manipulation, sloganizing, ‘depositing,’ regimentation, and prescription cannot be components of a revolutionary praxis, precisely because they are components of the praxis of domination”. More than that, according to him the theory of antidialogics action has had its theoreticians and ideologues for a long time; instead, the theory of dialogics and the objective of human liberation need to be experienced and discussed in order to show its existence and viability (MORAES and MISOCZKY, 2010).

In our learning with the organizational practices of the *Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de La Matanza* (MTD's's La Matanza), a social movement which started to organize in 1995, in Argentina, we felt the need of reading again Paulo Freire (2005). In fact, he never used the expression antidialogics and dialogics organization. He always referred to action. However, considering that the issue of organization was central to his reflections about consciousness and education, we felt that the appropriation of his theory to analyze these organizational practices was respectful and coherent with his aim: the praxis of liberation.

The use of Freire's theory allowed many insights about the organizational practices of this MTD and opened o our perception to features that in the first analysis, using the notion of horizontal organization, we had missed. Following Paulo Freire we were able to go beyond the analysis of the opposition between vertical and horizontal organizations in terms of the theory of bureaucracy and to recognize distinct practices such as the existence of collective spaces for pronouncing (to problematize concrete situations) and transforming the word in collaboration – a dialogical action to change what has been previously conceived as natural. To organize themselves, the oppressed have to overcome their condition of quasi-things, they have to recognize themselves as producers of their own reality. In their process of self-organization we realized how the culture of silence was broken, as well as the pedagogical

moments of learning from their own practice of union as a means for their liberation (MORAES and MISOCZKY, 2010).

Freire (2004, p. 216, 191) was also an internationalist. First his internationalism was lived as an imposition during his exile – “I have been discovering that exile is not only painful uprooting, a being outside his world, it is one opportunity more for the ‘generic love’; after that, it became an option and he worked in many places of Latin America, Africa and Europe – “I have been an educator at the disposal of a dream: the utopia of liberation [...]; this dream is a natural part of my presence in the world”.

These organic intellectuals constitute illustrations of both transculturation, a creative engagement with the European thought, producing political appropriations and new theoretical developments informed by their praxis; and of a coherent and consequent articulation between national location and international belonging. These are examples of intellectuals speaking loudly by words and actions, struggling at their time and producing announcements for the future – memories of the future<sup>6</sup>.

These intellectuals produced worthy political theories based on their revolutionary praxis, offering ideas, insights and arguments for our analysis of the organization of social struggles and for social practices which confront our society in its imprisonment by the law of value. McLaren and Jaramillo (2010, p. 9) value Mariátegui’s writings because his “insights can lead us not to a sojourn into the past but as the founding moment of our exilic struggle out of the prehistory of the world, the capitalist world, into the historic present”. We can say the same about the writings and praxis of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire. In fact, we can say the same about many other Latin American revolutionary intellectuals not mentioned, but not forgotten.

Writing about the uneven development of radical imagination Paulson (2010, p. 34) defines it as an imagination that “negates the necessity of experience, and suggests as possible that which feels at some level unconceivable”. Reflecting on where to find actually existing radical imagination, he proposes that we can find it in creative acts but also in history: “it is especially powerful when we are able to look into history to conceptualize different social relations, not with the intention of returning to them, but because they put the social relations of the present in stark relief”. Paulson (2010, p. 36) adds that the contemporary exercise of

<sup>6</sup> In Alejo Carpentier’s (1985) novel *The Lost Steps*, the narrator recalls a tavern at the edge of the Latin American jungle called *Memories of the Future*, an epithet which synthesizes the utopian announcements based on concrete hope produced by these and so many other organic intellectuals.

radical imagination throughout Latin America is due to the fact that many people “continue to collectively experience capital as an imperialistic imposition, and have living practices, memories and histories of non-capitalist life”. “Popular movements in Latin America thus draw on history and imagination differently – at least, they have a more substantial ability to do so. The participants often have a collective historical memory that is already ‘negative’; movements are able to begin by saying ‘this isn’t progress, at least not for us’, which opens a space to imagine what real progress might look like. So radical imagination might spring from a reaction to something in the present, but it is rooted in a memory of difference that offers a set of resources for imagining the future”.

We share this understanding. More than that, we believe that working in cosmopolitan spaces of dialogue we can share our located histories, valuing their universal belongings in a truly internationalist attitude; an attitude which marked the praxis and ideas of Mariátegui, Che and Freire. In the words of Martí: *Pátria es Humanidad!*

## References

- ALVESSON, M.; WILLMOTT, H. On the idea of emancipation in Management and Organization Studies. *Academy of Management Review*, v. 17, n. 3, p. 432-454, 1992.
- BENJAMIN, W. *Discursos interrumpidos*. Madrid: Taurus, 1989.
- BESANCENOT, O.; LÖWY, M. *Che Guevara: uma chama que continua ardendo*. São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 2009.
- BHABHA, H. Cultural diversity and cultural differences. In: ASHCROFT, B.; GRIFFITHS, G.; TIFFIN, H. (Eds.) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1995. p. 206-209.
- BLOCH, E. *O princípio esperança*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 2005.
- BOAL, A. *Theater of the oppressed*. New York: Theater Communications Group, 1985.
- BÖHM, S. *Repositioning Organization Theory*. London. Palgrave, 2005.
- BORON, A. “Poder, “Contra-Poder” y “Anti-Poder”: Notas sobre un extravío teórico político en el pensamiento crítico contemporáneo”, paper presented at the *V Encuentro Internacional de Economistas sobre Globalización y Problemas del Desarrollo*, La Habana, Cuba, 2006
- CARPENTIER, A. *Obras Completas*. Ciudad de México: Siglo XXI Ed., 1985.
- CHE GUEVARA, E. *El Che en la Revolución Cubana*. La Habana: MINAZ, 1966
- CHE GUEVARA, E. *Obras 1956-1967*. La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1970.
- CHE GUEVARA, E. *Socialism and man in Cuba*. 2005a. Available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm>. Access: 21 April 2011.

- CHE GUEVARA, E. *Against bureaucracy*. 2005b. Available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1963/02/against-bureaucratism.htm>. Access: 21 April 2011.
- CHE GUEVARA, E. *Apuntes críticos a la Economía Política*. La Habana: Editoriales de Ciencias Sociales, 2006.
- COOKE, B. The managing of the (Third) World. *Organization*, v. 11, n. 5, p. 603-629, 2004.
- COOKE, B. Managerialism as knowing and making in Latin America: International development management and the World Bank interventions. In: GUEDES, A.; FARIA, A. (Eds.) *International Management and International Relations: a critical perspective from Latin America*. London: Routledge, 2010. p. 161-184.
- COOPWE, R.; BURRELL, G. Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: An introduction. *Organization Studies*, v. 9, p. 91-112, 1988.
- DAR, S. Re-connecting histories: modernity, managerialism and development. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, v. 22, n. 2, p. 93-110, 2008.
- DUSSEL, E. *Ética da libertação: na idade da globalização*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 2002.
- FREIRE, P. *Ação cultural para a liberdade*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paz e Terra, 1984.
- FREIRE, P. *Pedagogia da indignação: cartas pedagógicas e outros escritos*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2000.
- FREIRE, P. *Pedagogia da tolerância*. São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 2004.
- FREIRE, P. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- GRAMSCI, A. *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991.
- GUTIÉRREZ, G. *A theology of liberation: history, politics and salvation*. New York: Orbis Books, 1973.
- IBARRA-COLADO, E. Organization studies and epistemic coloniality: thinking otherness from the margin. *Organization*, v. 13, n. 4, p. 463-488, 2006.
- KOHAN, N. *En la Selva: Los estudios desconocidos del Che Guevara – A propósito de sus Cuadernos de Lectura en Bolivia*. Caracas: Misión Consciencia, 2011.
- LÖWY, M. Introdução. In: MARIÁTEGUI, J. C. *Por um Socialismo Indo-Americano*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. da UFRJ, 2005. p. 7-24.
- LÖWY, M. *Che Guevara in Search of a New Socialism*. Posted at 25 August 2009. Available at: [http://www.europesolidaire.org/spip.php?page=article\\_impr&id\\_article=14877](http://www.europesolidaire.org/spip.php?page=article_impr&id_article=14877). Access: 25 April 2011.
- MCLAREN, P. A pedagogy of possibility: reflecting upon Paulo Freire's politics of education. *Educational Research*, March 1999, p. 49-54.

- MCLAREN, P.; JARAMILLO, N. E. Not neo-Marxist, not post-Marxist, not Marxian, not Autonomist Marxism: Reflections on a Revolutionary (Marxist) Critical Pedagogy. *Cultural Studies*, v. XX, n. X, p. 1-12, 2010.
- MARIÁTEGUI, J. C. *El alma matinal y otras estaciones del hombre de hoy*. Lima: Biblioteca Amauta, 1972.
- MARIÁTEGUI, J. C. *Por um Socialismo Indo-Americano*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ, 2005.
- MARIÁTEGUI, J. C. *Peruanicemos el Perú*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Andariego, 2007.
- MARTINEZ-SAENZ, M. “Che Guevara”s new man: embodying a communitarian attitude. *Latin American Perspectives*, v. 31, n. 6, p. 15-30, 2004.
- MARINI, R. M. Dialética da dependência. In: TRANSPADINI, R.; STEDILE, J. P. (Eds.) *Ruy Mauro Marini: Vida e obra*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2005. p. 137-180.
- MENDIETA, E. *Global fragments: globalization, Latinamericanisms, and critical theory*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2007.
- MIGNOLO, W. *Local Histories/Global Designs: coloniality, subaltern knowledge, and border thinking*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- MISOCZKY, M. C. Das Práticas Não Gerenciais de organizar à Organização para a Práxis da Libertação. In: MISOCZKY, M. C., FLORES, R. K.; MORAES, J. (Eds.) *Organização e Práxis Libertadora*. Porto Alegre: Dacasa Editora, Porto Alegre, 2010. p. 13-56.
- MORAES, J.; MISOCZKY, M. C. A organização dialógica do *Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de La Matanza*. In: MISOCZKY, M. C., FLORES, R. K.; MORAES, J. (Eds.) *Organização e Práxis Libertadora*. Porto Alegre: Dacasa Editora, Porto Alegre, 2010.
- MORÑA, M. El boom del subalterno. In Castro-Gómez, S. and Mendieta, E. (Eds.) *Teorias sin disciplina*. Ciudad de México: Miguel Anges Porrúa, 1998. p. 161-183.
- NEUHAUS, S.; CALELLO, H. Emancipación y hegemonía: fabricas recuperadas y poder bolivariano. In: NEUHAUS, S. AND CALELLO, H. (Eds.) *Hegemonía y Emancipación: Fábricas Recuperadas, Movimientos Sociales y Poder Bolivariano*. Buenos Aires: Herramienta Ediciones, 2006. p. 1-7.
- ORTIZ, F. *Contrapunteo Cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. La Habana: Jesus Montero Editor, 1940.
- PAULSEN, J. The uneven development of radical imagination. *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture and Action*, v.4, n. 2, p. 33-38, 2010.
- PÉREZ, M. M. *Che Guevara: contribuições ao pensamento revolucionário*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2001.

- PORTO-GONÇALVES, C. W. *Entre América e Abya Yala: Tensões de territorialidades*. 2010. Available at: [www.geoplatica.ws/media\\_files/download/Wporto5.pdf](http://www.geoplatica.ws/media_files/download/Wporto5.pdf). Access: 10 June 2010.
- QUIJANO, A. Colonialidad y modernidad-racionalidad”, In: BONILLA, H. (Ed.) *Los conquistados: 1492 y la población indígena de las Américas*. Quito: Flacso-Tercer Mundo, 1992. p. 437-449.
- RAMA, A. *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*. Ciudad de México: Siglo XXI Ed, 1982.
- RAUBER, I. *Sujeitos políticos: rumbos estratégicos y tareas actuales de los Movimientos Sociales en América Latina*. Bogotá: Ediciones Desde Abajo, 2006.
- RICOEUR, P. *Freud and Philosophy: an essay on interpretation*, New York: Yale University Press, 1970.
- ROIG, A. A. *El pensamiento latinoamericano y su aventura*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Andariego, 2008.
- SCHWARZ, R. *O pai de família e outros estudos*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1992.
- TORRES, C. A. Novos pontos de partida da pedagogia = política de Paulo Freire. In: TORRES, C. A. (Ed.) *Reinventando Paulo Freire no Século 21*. São Paulo: Ed. L, São Paulo, 2008.
- YAFFE, H. “Che Guevara”’s enduring legacy: not the foco but the Theory of Socialist Construction. *Latin American Perspectives*, v. 36, n. 2, p. 49-65, 2009.
- WEST, A. Nancy Morejon: transculturation, translation and the poetics of the Caribbean. *Callaloo*, v. 28, n. 4, p. 967-976, 2005.