Anarchist Manifesto

Comrades of the Chaco

1892

Editor’s Note: Anarchist ideas were introduced into Latin America by European immigrants during the 1860’s. The anti-authoritarian International generated significant support in several Latin American countries, and anarchists helped organize some of the first trade unions. The two largest Latin American anarchist movements were in Argentina and Brazil, but anarchists were active throughout Latin America. The following manifesto was published in 1892 by a Paraguayan anarchist communist group calling itself “The Comrades of the Chaco” (reprinted in El Anarquismo en America Latina, Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1990, ed. A. J. Cappelletti and C. M. Rama). Paraguay was a particularly impoverished country plagued by seemingly interminable political conflict among its ruling classes and with neighbouring states. The translation is by Paul Sharkey.

WE ARE ANARCHIST-COMMUNISTS and, being such, mean to spread complete emancipation of the proletariat while fighting to abolish the iniquitous exploitation of man by his neighbour, and we pledge all our moral and material resources to the eradication
of all tyranny and the establishment of genuine liberty, equality
and fraternity in the family of man.

The essential reason for publication of this manifesto is to express
our malaise. For which the current (so mistakenly described as civil-
ized) social system is to blame; as well as to say what we are and
what we want, with revolutionary selflessness and the conviction
that our cries of indignation will rouse capital’s new slaves from
the languor of their slumbers. We are in an age of enlightenment
when we can see very clearly that everything in nature, such as
land, water, air, sunshine, moonlight and the other elements that
go to make up the Universe, belong to every being on this planet
of ours, since those elements created us and sustain our existence.

It is high time that it was acknowledged that everything arti-
ficial in our earthly home, like cities, vast tracts of uncultivated
land, canals, ports, sea lanes and land routes, instruments of labour
and all the advances of science, are the handiwork of many gener-
ations and of thousands upon thousands of workers and thus are
equally the property of all and not the sole preserve of a privileged
class, phoney politicians, swindlers, clericals, murderers of human-
ity who protect the big thieves and the murderers and butchers of
innocents and exploiters of the working man; in short, every thing
around us that exists belongs to all workers since we helped cre-
ate it with our sweat and our blood; we did, and not the band of
leeches who, with their constitutions, codes, imaginary gods and
holy madonnas have made themselves gods and governors so that
they might live off the backs of the producer and steal the gold that
we ourselves have extracted from the bowels of the earth ...

It is we workers, bricklayers, who erect magnificent, grand, airy
palaces and it is a crime if we allow others who command and kill
us in the name of fatherland and law to live there while we live in
a filthy hovel and, in most instances, do not even have a roof over
our heads.

It is we who produce the food and it is a crime for us to allow
our children to perish of hunger just so that those who do not lift
a finger, other than to turn our wives and children into prostitutes,
can stuff themselves until they die.

It is we that weave the rich tapestries and cashmere, make ele-
gant garments and go about in rags as a result of letting ourselves be
robbed without putting up any resistance, whereupon these thieves
treat us as filthy scoundrels on account of our craveness and we
find ourselves in the ranks of the degraded.

We are the ones who make picture books for our education and
then vegetate in the crassest ignorance because we let them be read
by those who think themselves superior to us, and who reward
our slavishness by calling us ignoramuses and brutes; rightly so,
because any man who does not bridle at a tyranny that diminishes
his human dignity, is a lesser animal than the rest, since they, who
have no capacity for reason, rebel against those who would enslave
them.

In short, we workers are the producers of all the wealth of so-
ciety and in repayment for so very many sacrifices, we find our-
selves enslaved, humiliated, oppressed and exploited; in short, we
are the victims of this struggle and warfare in the workers’ ranks, a
struggle and a war stoked by politicians who are driven to provoke
butchery in the family of man because of their ambition to rule and
rob.