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Comrades of the Chaco

Anarchist Manifesto

1892

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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. Cappel/etti 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 civilized) 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 artificial 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 generations 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 humanity 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 create 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 elegant 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 cravenness 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 ignorant 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 society and in repayment for so very many sacrifices, we find ourselves 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.