

That same Sunday, and every Sunday since December 20, thousands gathered for the *Asemblea Interbarrial* at *Parque Centenario*. The *asambleas* are neighborhood meetings held all over the country, in various cities, in multiple worker-controlled factories and in over 80 *barríos* in Buenos Aires alone. Each neighborhood meets weekly to agree on a list of demands and proposals for change, and then gather at the large *Asemblea Interbarrio* where a rotating spokesperson reads off that list of proposals to members of other *asambleas*, a number that reaches 4,000 or 5,000 on any given Sunday. They vote on the proposals by show of hand.

"Que se vayan todos" or, 'They must all leave' — best sums up the sentiment there. Seeing how the political class has completely failed them, Argentines are putting a lot more faith in the process of direct democracy as the tool to lift the country out of its crisis. No one believes political authority has rushed out of Congress and into the neighborhood gatherings, but everyone has heard a loud creak as it shifted slightly in that direction.

What is talked about is the cancellation of the illegitimate foreign debt, the complete rejection of the current political model, and the setting up of a new kind of democracy. They talk about the health crises and how they can replenish the shortage of medicines in hospitals; they vote on how they think the provincial and national budgets should be allocated; and they brainstorm new forms of organization to replace those of the crony capitalist politicians.

One of the assemblies we attended had about 40 people present, ranging from two mothers breast feeding to a lawyer in a suit, a skinny hippy in batik flares to an elderly taxi driver, a dread-locked bike messenger to a student nurse - a whole slice of the society, standing in a circle on a street corner, under the orange glow of sodium lights, passing around a brand new megaphone and discussing how to take back control of their lives. Every now and then a car would pass by and beep its horn in support, and this was all happening between 8pm and midnight on a Wednesday evening.

It all seemed so normal, and yet is perhaps the most truly radical element of the movement. Everyday people seriously discussing self-management, intuitively understanding direct democracy and beginning to try and put it into practice in their own neighborhoods. Multiply this by 200 in this city alone, and you have the makings of a popular rebellion. As Roli, an accountant, from the Almagro Assembly said "People reject the political parties...to get out of this crisis requires real politics. These meetings of common people on the street are the fundamental form of doing politics."

Outside of the weekly meetings, the assemblies meet in smaller committees; each one dedicated to a different local issue or problem. Committees of health are common, with many local hospital budgets slashed there is an urgent need to find a way to develop alternative support. Some are suggesting that people who own their own homes refuse to pay property tax, and instead hand over the revenue to the local hospitals so they can buy medical supplies. Many assemblies have Alternative Media committees, local assemblies are beginning to print their own news-sheets, broadcast updates on local radio stations and produce websites.