19 and 20:
NOTES FOR A NEW INSURRECTION
(UPDATED 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

by Colectivo Situaciones
with Marcello Tari, Liz Mason-Deese, Antonio Negri, and Michael Hardt
translated by Nate Holdren and Sebastian Touza

“If the insurrection in Argentina that began in December 2001 was our Paris Commune, then Colectivo Situaciones fits well in the position of Karl Marx. As Friedrich Engels was fond of saying, one of Marx’s many talents was to analyze the historical importance of political events as they took place. This book by Colectivo Situaciones, written in the heat of action, certainly demonstrates that same talent in full, delving into the complexity of concrete events while simultaneously stepping back to recognize how our political reality has changed.”

— Michael Hardt

19 and 20 tells the story of one of the most popular uprising against neoliberalism: on December 19th and 20th, 2001, amidst a financial crisis that tanked the economy, ordinary people in Argentina took to the streets shouting “¡Qué se vayan todos!” (They all must go!) Thousands of people went to their windows banging pots and pans, neighbors organized themselves into hundreds of popular assemblies, workers took over streets and factories. In those exhilarating days, government after government fell as people invented a new economy and a new way of governing themselves.

It was a defining moment of the antiglobalization movement and Colectivo Situaciones was there, thinking and engaging in the struggle. Their writings during the insurrection have since been passed hand to hand and their practice of militant research modelled widely as a way of thinking together in a time of rebellion. Today, as a staggering debt crisis deepens amidst an already COVID-shaken economy, we see the embers from that time twenty years ago in the mutual aid initiatives and new forms of solidarity amidst widespread vulnerability.

Revisiting the forms of counterpower that emerged from the shadow of neoliberal rule, Colectivo Situaciones reminds us that our potential is collective and ungovernable.

Colectivo Situaciones is a collective of militant researchers based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They have participated in numerous grassroots coresearch projects with unemployed workers, peasant movements, neighborhood assemblies, and alternative education experiments.

From a rebellion against neoliberalism’s miserable failures, notes for a new insurrection and a new society.
Praise for 19 and 20: Notes for a New Insurrection

“19 and 20 is a book-event that has become a key for social movements around the world. In it, Colectivo Situaciones practice militant research as an act of listen- ing (escucha) and experimentation that translates the powerful mobilizations that took the streets to end neoliberal plundering (sauco) into an inspiring and crucial praxis of thinking. Learning from the events instead of imposing old categories on their singularities, this book is a crucial source of inspiration on militant research and situated thinking. A singular work of pedagogy from below, this new edition comes in a timely moment where the deepening of the neoliberal expropriation of life that the pandemic has made so explicit meets with the tenth anniversary of the global uprisings of 201. Today, once again, 19 and 20 offers a crucial map for experimenting in the situated praxis of political thought.”

—Susana Draper, coeditor of Feminicide and Global Accumulation and author of Afterlives of Confinement and 1968 Mexico

“Assemblies may become thinking machines. And experiments of resistance may give rise to alternative experiences of sociability. Colectivo Situaciones develops out of these findings, that emerged within the 2001 resurrection in Argentina, a powerful reflexive research: a truly magnificent effort to explore the potentialities of a future beyond capitalism.”

—Stavros Stavrides, author of Towards the City of Thresholds

“This is a book born in the barricades, neighborhood assemblies, and factory occupations of Argentina’s 2001 uprising against neoliberalism. Written by movement participants, it’s an inspiring account of the rebellion and a grassroots model of how to research and theorize a movement that forged a new way of doing politics from below. The English translation of such a classic book that’s been passed around revolutionary circles for decades is a cause for celebration and hitting the streets!”

—Benjamin Dangl, author of The Five Hundred Year Rebellion: Indigenous Movements and the Decolonization of History in Bolivia and Dancing with Dynamite: Social Movements and States in Latin America

“Twenty years ago, Argentina erupted in blockades and assemblies, occupations, demonstrations, and communal kitchens. In both its circumstances and forms, the 2001 uprising presaged the protests of 2011 and the struggles of our time. Colectivo Situaciones’ 19 and 20 provided both the sharpest analysis of that moment and a model of theoretical practice: nimble, dialogical, embedded in the movements with whom it thought, made in common. To rediscover it today is to do more than reconnect with the recent past; it is inevitably also to ask how it illuminates what we have lived since, and how we can continue to extend its lessons into the future.”

—Rodrigo Nunes, author of Neither Vertical nor Horizontal: A Theory of Political Organization

“A long decade before Occupy Wall Street, Argentineans poured into the streets to reject austerity and short the circuits of neoliberal capitalism, proving that state violence was no match for popular refusal. But 19 and 20 is not a book about Argentina or even Latin America as a whole, a brutal laboratory where neoliberalism was imposed in blood and fire. It’s about a way of thinking that is also a doing, about what the concrete experience of rebellion teaches us about how the world moves, and how to turn that movement into thought. Find yourself in this book.”

—Geo Maher, author of A World Without Police, We Created Chávez, and Spirals of Revolt

“The 2001 uprising in Argentina is a major flashpoint in a wave of popular struggles that repudiated the neoliberal capitalist order and authored new forms of non-capitalist social construction. Colectivo Situaciones gives us important analyses of the uprising and its legacies, the roots of Argentina’s financial and political crisis, and changes in contemporary forms of anticapitalist mobilization and resistance. Their close attention to grassroots practices of resistance, political organizing, and world-making is emblematic of their method of militant research, which itself has been an inspiration to so many. Those interested in contemporary social move- ments, political theory, and the history of Argentina and the region will find much to appreciate in this wonderful new edition.”

—Jennifer S. Ponce de León, author of Another Aesthetics Is Possible: Arts of Rebellion in the Fourth World War

“Why, more than two decades later, does the shouting ‘¡Qué se vayan todos!’ still resonate in our minds and hearts? How did these new forms of organizing and organizations that emerged in the early 2000’s change the way we understood democracy and made us believe that everything is possible? This book is a must read for the ones who are trying to understand not only the new cycle of collective action driven by movements that started twenty years ago, but who are also looking at the long path that since then—social movements in Argentina in particular and Latin America in general—has been walked until today. Memory can also be a space for resistance.”

—Marcela Olivera, water commons organizer based in Cochabamba, Bolivia