The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America
The Art of Organising Hope
Ana Cecilia Dinerstein

With forewords by Werner Bonefeld and Gustavo Esteva

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About the book
Dinerstein offers a much-needed review of the concept and practice of autonomy. She argues that defining autonomy as either revolutionary or ineffective vis-à-vis the state does not fully grasp the commitment of Latin American movements to the creation of alternative practices and horizons beyond capitalism. By establishing an elective affinity between autonomy and Bloch’s principle of hope, the author defines autonomy as ‘the art of organizing hope’, that is, the art of shaping a reality which does not yet exist but can be anticipated by the movements’ collective actions. Drawing from the experience of autonomous resistance of four prominent indigenous and non-indigenous urban and rural movements, Dinerstein suggests that the politics of autonomy produce an excess that cannot be translated into the grammar of power. This involves an engagement with a reality that is not yet and, therefore, counters value with hope. The book also offers a new critique of political economy, reading Marx’s philosophy in key of hope, and emphasises the prefigurative features of autonomy at a time when utopia can no longer be objected.

‘Terrific and necessary. An excellent and informative account of the wonderful movements of revolt in Latin America in recent years.’
- John Holloway, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico

‘Ana Cecilia Dinerstein’s book is a major intervention, which reframes these questions fundamentally and places the hopes, experiments, contradictions and possibilities of social movements centre-stage while recognising the specificity of Latin American and indigenous experiences. Clear and powerful, this work is badly needed.’
- Laurence Cox, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ireland

‘The book is terrific. It is teeming with radical scholarship’
- Mike Neary, University of Lincoln, UK

‘What Ana Cecilia Dinerstein has done with this book is to demonstrate how the philosophy of Ernst Bloch cannot be said to exist in a purely abstract vacuum, as is often contended in western philosophical debate. She has pointed out here that the philosophy of hope, of the anticipated realisation of hope in social form, i.e. politically in the form of revolution and change, is central to his concerns and resonates in what were long seemed to be “peripheral” areas.’
- Peter Thompson, University of Sheffield, UK

Ana C. Dinerstein is Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Policy Sciences at the University of Bath, UK. She has published extensively on Argentine and Latin American politics, autonomy, subjectivity, labour, social and indigenous movements, emancipatory struggles and the politics of policy. Her main publications include The Labour Debate (2002), La Ruta de los Piqueteros. Luchas y Legados (2010) and La política de la Esperanza en América Latina (2013).

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