

His preferred emphasis correctly lies on “the cross-fertilization of ideas between Africa and the rest of the world” (28).

Thinking of Ibhawoh’s study in the context of the most comprehensive history of the human rights movement to date, Paul Gordon Lauren’s *The Evolution of International Human Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), reveals the tensions between the local and international narratives. Lauren’s is a progressive history in which empire created the international political stage for the emergence of a new dispensation of human rights. Lauren is at great pains to demonstrate that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the product of an international and hence multicultural political community. The smaller chapter of a local history as drawn by Ibhawoh disturbs the easy relation in Lauren’s study between the particular and the general. The international history is limited when it is told as the sum of the world’s parts, because, if Nigeria is one such part, then unambivalent progress is a difficult argument to make and the networks of negotiation which mark the “evolution” (Gordon’s word) of human rights merely shift from one interested party to another. But, if the emphasis on the international narrative flattens out detail, a comparative context could have usefully broadened Ibhawoh’s ultimately slim history. Since the title of the book suggests a continental perspective, one cannot help but wonder how different the nuances of this history would have been had Ibhawoh used some comparative analysis. One comparison which might have been particularly fruitful is a comparison with Kenya’s colonial political history especially given the striking difference in degrees of violent repression in the two colonies. Ibhawoh’s extensive discussion of land rights in Nigeria, moreover, could bear comparison to the central role that land rights played in Kenya’s struggles and their eloquent articulation in Jomo Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya*.

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Marina Sitrin, ed., *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006).

On the evening of 19 December 2001, soon after Argentine President Fernando de la Rúa had declared the state of siege, popular protest erupted on the streets of Buenos Aires and other major cities throughout the country. Banging pots and pans, Argentines marched towards downtown areas where they met with other groups demonstrating against the government. The following day, unable to control the situation, de la Rúa resigned. For the next two weeks, the country had four different nominal presidents until the situation stabilised with the appointment of Senator Eduardo Duhalde to serve the remainder of de la Rúa’s term. After the fall of the de la Rúa’s administration, violent protests and mass demonstrations dimin-

ished but Argentina was still to face one of its most profound economic and social crises. Unemployment skyrocketed, salaries went unpaid, thousands of people were unable to withdraw their savings from the banks, and the numbers of those living below the poverty line rose dramatically. The December events represented a dramatic turning point in Argentina's recent history. As such, they have attracted the attention of journalists, sociologists, economists, and historians alike. A relatively vast body of studies have examined the looting, the repression, the monetary devaluation, and the social movements that emerged during and after the crisis.

Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina by Marina Sitrin contributes to this literature although from a significantly different perspective. The book consists of a collection of interviews conducted by the author during 2003 and 2004 among members of neighbourhood assemblies, participants in the unemployed workers' movements, workers of recuperated workplaces and occupied factories, contributors to alternative media collectives, human rights organisations, and students and indigenous groups. The book documents the experiences of those directly affected by the crisis thus adding a critically important element to our understanding of the events and their aftermath. It is organized around ten different themes. Participants in the different movements that took shape after the December events are asked to discuss their opinions on the crisis, *horizontalidad*, *autogestión*, autonomy, creation, power, repression, women, protagonism, and dreams. Rather than being an impulsive selection, the book's topics clearly indicate a progression that begins during the moment of rupture that signalled the need to create alternative realities, moves to cover the actions of those involved in the process, underscores the challenges faced by the protagonists, and ends with accounts of their dreams and hopes for the future.

Through the direct voices of the participants, the reader is able to retrieve and recover the lives, collective actions and the new reality created by previously excluded and marginalised groups. The interviews reveal how, after decades of fear and social inaction, December 2001 represented one of the most significant ruptures in recent Argentine history. The political and economic crisis that followed gave large sectors of society an opportunity to reclaim spaces previously monopolized by the few and, in the process, to create alternative ones. Built upon consensus and direct democracy, these new social arrangements established horizontal relations among its members. *Horizontalidad* rejects the pyramidal and hierarchical system emanating from the state, unions, or political parties. For the participants in these social movements, *horizontalidad* is a goal as well as a means to create an alternative society built upon the principles of autonomy and self management. In the process of constructing this new reality, every individual is a protagonist and as such intervenes actively and creatively. During this process of constant creation, participants found new ways to interact with one another, redefined gender roles, and faced numerous challenges imposed from the outside. The book includes rich

accounts of workers who took over factories and put them back into operation, groups who occupied vacant buildings and transformed them into community centres, doctors and nurses who refused to stop providing health care services, neighbourhood assemblies that created popular kitchens, and members of community organisations who established barter networks and other collective activities. The collective actions that are the focus of the book transgressed the state's delineated space in the name of social justice thus, as the accounts clearly indicate, experiencing persecution and harassment from the authorities.

Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina is a powerful and inspirational book as it gives voices to the voiceless. The testimonies included uncover the strategies implemented by the participants to survive, challenge, and resist thus contributing an important element to our understanding of Argentina's recent past. Firsthand accounts from below, they reveal the day-to-day struggles involved in the construction of new social spaces and the creation of alternative forms of participation in an attempt to achieve a more loving, egalitarian and inclusive society. In a much broader sense, by bringing to the forefront the words and actions of the movements' protagonists this book not only uncovers the devastating effects of neo-liberal policies in Latin America but also provides strong evidence that an alternative world is not only possible but being constructed day by day.

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Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

Thirty years ago, Henry Rousso, then a young historian with a budding interest in France's Vichy regime, was contemplating how recently-opened World War II archives might throw light on economic policy during that period. But fascinated by the burgeoning public interest at the time in the Occupation years, he made his subject not the history of Vichy itself but rather how it was remembered in subsequent decades. His magisterial *Vichy Syndrome* (1987; English trans. 1991) and other publications have shown how a society's remembered past can shape its present and helped establish the flourishing field of social memory.

This wonderful book by Steve Stern is a major contribution to this field and a convincing demonstration of how social memory can illuminate fundamental aspects of a whole historical period. Like Rousso, Stern was impressed by how the conflictive recent past was expressed in irruptions of divided memories, in his case during a year of research in Chile in 1996-97, a time when the country's long 'transition' to democracy seemed stalled. He was also struck, like Rousso, by the moral dimension of these memories, which related to truth and justice and to both