

Editorial

WHOEVER LIVED in São Paulo in the middle of the last century probably remembers the sayings painted in huge letters on the Light trolleys: *São Paulo is the fastest growing city in the world. São Paulo is the largest industrial center in Latin America.* Those were sentences dictated by the naive pride of participating in a process of urban swelling that São Paulo residents mistook for development.

The population of the city had barely reached the two million mark. Half a century later the growth has turned into a nightmare. Today the Metropolitan Area is home to 19,672,582 souls, as it was said in more affable times. The fact is that there are nearly twenty million bodies. This issue of *Estudos Avançados* addresses precisely the hard life of this multitude of residents.

It is not by chance that the articles gathered here convert their topics into problems. The city is a chain of deadlocks. Strictly speaking, it should not grow any further, having exceeded the limits of civilized coexistence; but who will stop the capitalist impetus in its eagerness to occupy and exploit all possible spaces treated as raw material of investment and profit? The State, which should fulfill the duty of correcting the irrationalities of the market, works in collusion with the lobbies of developers and contractors. The pathology of the metropolis has roots in the segregation of social classes: there is no feasible urban planning where individual solutions to issues of housing, transportation, security, environment, and leisure prevail everywhere. What is the therapy once the diagnosis has been made?

Those who collaborated in this issue sought to stretch the limits of the existing scheme. To do so, they turn to community forums or, at the other extreme, to supranational ones. Neighborhood associations at one end; international forums at the other. The local experience enriches global discussions. And the realization that there are solutions at worldwide level stimulates the action of smaller groups. Hence the final call for militancy.