

Investigate, Compose, Continue

Common Space of Organizations

Introductory Note

The material we present here is the result of a long collective journey: an effort to elaborate, systematize, and disseminate the ideas that emerged from the militant experience of many people, groups, and situations scattered across the world over the past decade. However, our main goal is not to provide a retrospective balance of what has already happened, but to find in the lessons we have drawn from this path the means to take new steps forward.

That is why we chose to address ourselves primarily to collectives and political movements. On one hand, because we want to introduce ourselves to other organizations and militants, in the hope of creating new political connections. On the other, because we believe that the essential part of our proposal only truly makes sense from the perspective of the problems and challenges that militants collectively face. This is a principle that, after reading this book, we hope will become clearer: collective processes are better understood and transformed collectively.

This way of seeing things explains our decision to publish this book first on our website. We are interested in ensuring that the ideas presented here circulate among collectives and political militants, so they can be evaluated, analyzed, and debated in internal spaces—whether with us or within new political articulations that might be sparked by this discussion. In this way, we want to be able to engage in conversation without necessarily having to go through a “public debate space,” which can end up making our ideas—born of our practice—more rigid and inflexible than they really are. The theoretical elaboration developed here is not, therefore, an end in itself. This form of publication also makes it easier for groups interested in deepening their engagement with our practices and ideas to access CSO directly. In addition, as we will comment later, our website was designed to help mediate this relationship with those interested.

The presentation of our ideas in this book was conceived with this premise in mind. For example, we chose to divide the material into relatively short sections—even in the longer chapters—to facilitate the formation of study groups. We also preferred to avoid footnotes or traditional bibliographic references, since we want the validity of the argument to be judged by its usefulness

for militants, collectives, and movements, not by criteria of authority or authorship. We also decided to include, as the final chapter, a presentation and discussion of our own organization, the Common Space of Organizations, or CSO. Not only because one of the objectives of this book, as we said, is to serve as a “calling card” for the work we are doing and our way of thinking, but also because knowing a little about the political context in which this work emerged can help assess its merits and limitations.

As readers will quickly notice, although we seek to address militants and, as much as possible, to present our ideas didactically, this is also a very dense—and at times very abstract—book. We wrote an entire chapter, the fifth, to justify why we believe that a communist theory, precisely because of its commitment to investigating concretely the form and specificity of each struggle, sometimes needs to maintain an unusual distance from detailed descriptions and from the classic question of “what is to be done?”. But the side effect of this choice is that the conceptual argument often lacks specific examples and concrete analyses.

It is because of these difficulties that we decided it was not enough to simply publish our book on a website and let it circulate among militants. Our interest is not for it to be a balance sheet or an endpoint, but for it to serve as an occasion to construct devices similar to CSO, to bring together different practices from already existing collectives, or to stimulate new political articulations. The central idea of this text is that the content of a communist practice—its very substance—is the multiplicity of concrete forms of organization and struggle, and it is therefore impossible to bring this dimension to light without confronting a particular political position with others. It is almost certain that reading the book in isolation—or even discussing it collectively within a completely closed ideological context—will fail to make the most of what is important or relevant in the ideas we present, since it is all too easy to confuse this work with yet another theory seeking to judge which struggles and strategies are correct and which are not legitimate. It is only against the background of a series of different political experiences—and the need to, at the same time, take them all seriously while committing to only one of them—that the outlines of this proposal truly become clear.

The very process of collectively revising this publication demonstrated the necessity of taking this plurality of political experiences seriously. The book, therefore, is meant to be read collectively. Indeed, even if no reading or study group exists beforehand, we understand that this material can serve as an opportunity to gather together people interested in its questions, serving as a starting point for engagement with the practice we propose here. To address these concerns, we decided to accompany this publication with two resources that allow for deeper engagement with the text: (1) a website hosting the book and supporting material, and (2) a forum for exchange among readers interested in delving deeper into the text together with our comrades from CSO.

The book itself is divided into four major sections, which will be made available online serially as we finalize the revisions. The first part is dedicated to an analysis of the transformations of contemporary capitalism from the standpoint of the challenges these historical changes pose for communists. The guiding question for this section is: *what would communist practice need to be if we could not rely on any internal tendency within capital to facilitate the convergence of different fronts of struggle?*

The second part addresses this question from a theoretical perspective, introducing some ideas that might help us face this new historical context. Here, the central question is different: *is it possible to elaborate a theory of communist practice that provides us with useful tools to investigate contemporary struggles concretely, searching for points of articulation and composition, but without assuming we already know in advance how they are organized?*

Once this new theory of political organization is introduced, the third section builds tools for us to follow contemporary political struggles in their diversity of forms and strategies. The guiding question here is: *in what ways are struggles within the context of peripheralization becoming more diverse—and how does this heterogeneity allow us to reconstruct the key concepts such as organization, struggle, strategy, and political transformation?*

Finally, the fourth and last section focuses on communist practice, with particular emphasis on the role of collective investigation in cultivating a common ground shared by different struggles,

capable of serving as the basis for building a larger revolutionary movement. In this last part, we are guided by another question: *how can we describe the practice of investigation and its role in communist construction, knowing that the material, methods, and immediate objectives of each investigation must arise from within the political contexts in which they are embedded?* The final chapter concludes this last section with a description of our organization and the path we have taken so far.

In addition to the book, our site will feature bibliographies, exercises for collective reading groups, comments and notes of assistance, and reports of readers' experiences. Our expectation is that the circulation of this work will end up helping to build supplementary material that facilitates its understanding.

As we said, this text is intended for collective reading. We recommend that at least one person from each study group complete the full reading before the collective process begins, to help others distinguish between questions we could not address in this book and those that are answered in more advanced chapters.

Since we know that in this process of engaging with the material—whether totally, partially, individually in preparatory moments, or during group meetings—questions may arise, CSO has also created a discussion forum to help those interested in deeper engagement with the text. This forum is organized by CSO's theoretical practice group. It is the space where we have sought to work and develop the theoretical investigation connected to our investigations. Through the site, it is possible to access the "integration channel," where CSO comrades will be available to answer questions, talk about reading processes, help with specific difficulties that may arise, and support the organization of collective work around the book. In this way, the forum will not only serve conceptual deepening or clarification of exegetical and theoretical questions. The aim is to provide support for those interested in building a group around the text.

Today, most books of political theory position themselves outside the political processes they discuss. Whether by imagining that the theories and ideas they present will inspire future struggles,

by offering explanations for the failures of past struggles, or simply because it is easier to both mourn and celebrate struggles that are happening far away from us. But this book does not fit into any of those categories—and anyone expecting political direction, an explanation of the conjuncture, or praise for a particular model of struggle will surely be disappointed. The successes and failures of this work should be evaluated considering that it is a book positioned within an ongoing process. We want to insert ourselves into a conjuncture still without resolution, collectively waging that we are in need of better ways of thinking about what happens in our organizations. We want to facilitate the dissemination of practices of articulation among organizations—whether through direct articulation with the Common Space of Organizations, the creation of new similar experiments, or through the promotion of a new political sensibility within different existing fronts of struggle. And finally, we want to link the lessons of past political experiences to a new collective horizon, for only new political processes truly settle accounts with the history of struggles. Hence the three imperatives guiding us here: investigate, compose, continue.

It is because of the effort to find a place for this publication in a history that is still unfolding that we address ourselves here not to readers in general, but to our comrades—even if they do not yet know who they are.