

NOTES FOR A NEW INSUR- RECTION



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Colectivo Situaciones’ *19 and 20: Notes for a New Insurrection* remains a “classic” in the revolutionary literature of recent decades. What is a classic? It is many things, but especially it is a work that expresses a certain truth of the time and a truth, however small it may be, always contributes to changing reality. As far as the last twenty years are concerned, it seems to me that of the texts that have marked in depth an alternative interpretation of contemporary history and that have acted within movements as propellers of practical imagination, we can remember three: *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, which actually closes the decade of the 1990s and the parable of what was called the antiglobalization movement; *19 and 20* by Colectivo Situaciones, which was born from an insurrection that inaugurated a new cycle of world struggles whose motives have not yet been consummated; *The Coming Insurrection* of the Invisible Committee, which stands as the heir of the previous cycle and at the same time as its implacable critic, relaunching the conflict on a level as much material as metaphysical.

The fact that the last two books are signed not by their own names but by a collective or a committee is a first revealing sign of what had changed in the transition to the 2000s and had been preparing for some time, both as a way of doing theory and as a strategic indication. As far as the first question is concerned—theoretical reflection—that is, the “logical” conclusions of Foucauldian and Deleuzian propositions were being drawn, already developed by Maurice Blanchot and which, in reality, go back to the first romanticism of *Athenaeum*, on the problematic nature of the author’s function and on focusing on the event instead of the subject. In this case it means that a book that comes from within a movement, that reflects on the world from that position and succeeds in expressing a truth, is an event of thought that increases everyone’s power to act, therefore it is an impersonal force that interprets and crystallizes the intensities that circulate among people in a given historical moment, rather than the product of one or more individuals. I think this is particularly valid for periods in which there are great telluric movements at work in the world that require from those who think inside them particular forms of asceticism, including the renunciation of one’s name and face. Once the movement has passed or been reabsorbed, people generally return to producing their texts individually and signing them with their own names.

As far as strategy is concerned, proceeding without proper names or organizations but as lines of intensification of a collective process, this is an indication that came directly from the struggles and that Colectivo Situaciones was able to synthesize very effectively in their writing. It is not about anonymity as a reference to “clandestinity” but a gesture of deposition of the traditional figures of politics, even revolutionary

onically developed in our neighborhoods by the activities of collective care that have been unfolding in these months. It is very important that Tiqqun underlines that the “real war” is never the military confrontation, not only because by focusing only on that in the end we will always lose, that is we will lose the war and the soul, but because the spiritual, ethical, and material growth of the community is the only real way to oppose imperial colonization: the form of life of the commune is the form of combat. We need new examples, new inspirations, new words and gestures that communicate to the heart before the head and hands.

For this reason, it is urgent that transnational research, both practical and spiritual at the same time, be launched around the question of the commune. This research should be able to learn from the defeats, liberating the past, illuminate all that is powerful but hidden in the present, emancipating it from depression, and keep open the narrow door through which salvation comes. All power to the communes!

Cor unum et anima una

Marcello Tari
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for their part, are by now nothing more than the crystallization of private interests and their politics are synonymous with corruption and insensitivity. But the *commune*, precisely, can no longer be understood as “the finally discovered political form” of the government of the people or of the workers, as Marxism wanted, since it too functions first and foremost as a *situation*, territorial, cultural, existential and spiritual, expressing all that *is not governance*. Every commune is a tear in the nation, a secession from government, an exodus from the dominant value system.

The experiences of mutualism, which multiplied in different countries during the pandemic, were the only ones that practically challenged the so-called “social distancing,” which is a notion that is by no means innocent, given that it originated in American sociology to measure the relations between whites and other ethnic and racial groups. At their most advanced, these new experiences of mutualism insist on the fact that the real “cure” consists in the reconstruction of the community, of its internal relations and of those that can be entertained with other communities, beyond the state. Care that intervenes on multiple levels: health, economic, existential, and political.

Tiqqun, in the same period in which the text of *Situaciones* was written, wrote: “*How is it to be done?* They suggest that military confrontations with the Empire have to be subordinate to the intensification of the relationships inside our party. This means that politics is just a certain degree of intensity *within* an ethical element. Thus, revolutionary war must not be confused with its representation: the raw moment of combat.” A good example of the relationships inside our party, intended as “historical party,” are those potentials embry-

ones. Today it is something taken for granted that the great movements are “leaderless,” as for example we can easily see with regard to the Gilet Jaunes in France or #BlackLivesMatter in the United States, but during the antiglobalization movement it was not like that at all.

Colectivo Situaciones, from the materiality of the piqueteros’ organization, understood that the only way for a leadership to exist in the movement is in being something fleeting, anonymous, temporary and reversible—a radically *situational* leadership, thus allowing multiplicity, the quality that effectively defines a movement, to persist, spread and deepen, instead of being disciplined and emptied through centralized and personalized representation. From then on, no one can *represent* anyone else.

The other lesson of the Argentine insurrection that Colectivo Situaciones delivered to the movements is in fact the critique of centralization, which was one of the main legacies of Marxism and especially Leninism, preferring to it the notion of the “diffuse network,” which does not operate through a command from the center that goes to the other nodes but spreads by *resonance*—through events, meetings, and compositions of various kinds that allow the composition of the movement to go “from the dispersed to the multiple,” without the need to create a false organicity of the whole. I believe that these are irreversible acquisitions for movements, even if there is still a great need for experimentation in order to understand how to properly avoid the volatility that often afflicts the compositions that are created during periods of struggle and that often fail to last beyond it. And again, to experiment with how to recognize the authority of a situational or community leadership without ever confusing it with a power

structure, and on this point I believe that the reflections of Italian feminism of difference (from Carla Lonzi to Luisa Muraro) have developed some very interesting proposals. Unlike power, in fact, according to Muraro, authority is not based on the violence of law but on the strength of the symbolic, not on command but on relationship, it does not have an external but an internal foundation: authority as a “mystical force” that expresses itself through words and gestures. In order to give an archetypal example, Muraro points to the mother-child relationship, and it is inevitable to think of the role of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in the Argentina of those years, but we could also mention that of friendship. That which is created and binds us in a common truth.

At the heart of the elaboration of Colectivo Situaciones was the concept of “destituent insurrection” which, as I have already written, was not properly understood at the time of the book’s publication. It was only after the worldwide explosion of the 2007–2008 crisis and the subsequent uprisings that the paradigm of *destitution* reached its readability. Among the reasons for that prophetic anticipation there is the devastating financial crisis of Argentina in 2001. Argentina was the laboratory in which neoliberalism experimented on a local level what a few years later would differently affect our entire global space. At the same time, Argentina was also the laboratory of new forms of resistance and antagonism that over the years have emerged everywhere in the world. To give an example, the “flow blockade” would perhaps never have become a technique of global struggle if there had not been the example of the piqueteros. It is also very important that Colectivo Situaciones defines the destituent insurrection as the opening of a field of possibilities because it allows us to think

of destitution not so much as a new paradigm of “politics,” that is, as the management of the existing, but as a power that proceeds from the imagination of the masses, an imagination that operates by destructing the old forms of politics as well as of everyday existence, acting in particular on temporality, that is, transforming not only the present but also the past and the future.

In any case, the slogan of the Argentinean insurrection, ¡Qué se vayan todos, *que no quede ni uno solo!* has become in these twenty years the slogan of every revolt, of every insurrection, of every movement that has set itself as an interruption of the catastrophic course of the present state of affairs, and remains an exceptional document of the desire and determination that are proper to every people that finds their dignity.

“The unfolding of popular powers in the city actualized the recurrent image of the commune.” In this way Colectivo Situaciones, which reasoned from the popular practices that spread in those years in the Argentine metropolis, gave us a question that today is probably the most urgent, necessary, and strategic: namely, the question of the *commune*. It is wrong however to think of it as a simple and repeated citation of the Paris Commune and its theoretical interpretations: the current references of a commune are also multiple, both historically and geographically. But especially they respond to different existential needs.

I believe that the commune is *the* main theme today, since the global pandemic, among other things, has definitively shown how and to what extent “society” is something extremely abstract, incapable by definition of being a place of sharing, mutual aid, and popular organization. The “parties,”