

TESTIMONIAL: ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY AS VALID ACTION

Notes from a talk-discussion with Fernando García (GCCC13) at La Reja Park
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Introduction

This will be the testimony of a personal experience and, as such, it doesn't pretend to have universal validity. I'll tell you what I believe I lived, what I feel and what I think about all of this, and of course putting this on record does not disavow other experiences. My experience may or may not coincide with yours, and that is something upon which I'd like us to exchange.

And so I'm not concerned with whether the theme is perceived as something new, or rather is seen as trite, or if (paradoxically) it constitutes a novelty. The interest lies in communicating an experience in the hope that this communication may be useful for some. And as such, I assume the risk of boring everyone, talking about things that may seem obvious or already thoroughly well-known.

While talking, I will try to express an aspect of how I experienced structural work "from within," that is, my subjectivity regarding my work with and for others. Subjectivity or the "internal motor" is what counts most in structural work, but it's often what we discuss the least.

That said, it's clear that I will not deal with so-called "technical" aspects of structural work.¹ So everything is understood well, let me clarify that when I refer to "structures" and "structural work," I am referring to what was outlined by Silo in the semi-annual meeting of Council 1 in July 2000, in Rome, and ratified by the Assembly of General Coordinators – a common agreement that remains unchanged to this day. My joint contribution of January 2005 refers to that.

While Silo has told us everything fundamental that can be said on valid action, I don't think it would be excessive to share our inner experiences in the application of his teaching to a specific field of our activity as humanists; in this case, the formation of structures of humanist activists.

Although my specific experience is in the structural sector, I believe that the theme of valid action in structural work is related to all the sectors, in the measure that what is in play in any case is the formation and development of human groups. In other words: our active role in a human construction for social and individual liberation.

Why speak of this now? I could give various answers. Perhaps because my present condition as ex-orientor of a closed council gives me a perspective that I didn't have before. Perhaps because I hope that it might help others. Perhaps because my testimony goes along with the fall of self-censorship in these times... hoping that another fall accompanies this one: the fall of censorship, so that my testimony is considered kindly.

¹ That is, the Theory of Organization, composition, relation and process of the structures, structural tactics, etc.

The following presentation will be rather destructured. Rather than being a problem though, this might actually help to get a better grasp of what I want to transmit. Neither do I intend to make an exhaustive presentation of all my experiences of more than three decades, but I'll at least give a general idea of the point in question. Of course I must give personal and specific examples relating to how I thought, felt and acted, but I would like these to be left aside or considered as less important than the central experience: structural activity as a support for internal work, and vice versa.

I will cite some of the most important references that inspired and encouraged me to take on and maintain my structural activity from the point of view of valid action.

Lastly, I use a way of communicating that is agreeable to me, and for which I apologize in advance to those who may find it rather dry. I hope this will be compensated later by an informal interchange among us.

Can we speak of "the structural" in absolute and universal terms?

We can't speak of "the structural" in itself, independent of the one observing or practicing it. Like every activity, it can be loaded with very different intentions; it can be "looked at" in different ways. This intention or "look" will therefore be an integral part of what structural activity is for the person carrying it out.

It is obvious that we cannot consider as definitive a judgement on structural activity in universal and absolute terms solely based on our own individual experience and the particular knowledge gained in a limited environment (geographic, temporal, cultural, etc.), within the whole universe of joint experience in this field.

The "Theory of Organization" is only an organizational tool that helps the objective of humanization. But how is it used? How is it implemented? It is here where the subjectivity of those implementing it will load it as a tool for growing happiness and liberation, or less than that.

Looking back on the years when the cadres were formed, I can see how I coloured structural activity with things that do not belong to it, some positive and others less so. The environment also influenced the structural work through the people who joined the structures. There existed an historical moment and a psychosocial situation. Often the roles that we used in the structure were transfers of roles from other environments. And of course each one of us arrived with our landscape of formation, which was obviously not our own, but rather that of the environment.

And so it is that the load of subjectivity means that structural activities can be lived essentially as indifferent acts, as contradictory acts, or as valid acts. Beyond the external successes or failures, this inner experience will constitute the intimate register and memory of structural work within each of us. This will be what structural activity is for each of us.

And so, like all behaviour, structural construction can have a simple cathartic character (the simple release of tensions) or a transferential character, of integration and internal growth. If it is simply cathartic, it is probably not moved by much more than the well-known triad of sex, money and prestige, in their multicoloured variations and combinations. If the structural construction is transferential, then we can speak of valid action.

How can structural activity have a transferential value?

Repeatedly, and for a long time, we have said that the Movement proposes simultaneous individual and social transformation,² and so I have never understood those two terms as isolated but rather as tightly linked. It was explained that internal work was done as a function of social transformation; but it was also explained how social transformation could be a support for internal work:

On this point, I quote a few paragraphs from the old "Book of School"³:

"There is another case. The case in which activities are done in the world, because in doing these particular activities, a whole unity is being configured within the mental structure. That is, things are done in the world, also in this case, without worrying about the objects. Things are done in the world not in order to discharge tensions; in this case operations are made in the world because this is a way of integrating one's own contents. And this integrating of internal contents, and this continual perspective that one has on the different processes, they use the world as a reference, but in this case the valuation is not placed in the world."

"And so it's a way, this way of moving in the world, in which the psychism opens its way, and this psychism goes on constructing the world in its image and likeness. It's the advance of the consciousness and of the mind upon the world that leads to this activity, without being much concerned with the objects."

What is going on in the world, that the world is becoming more and more human, becomes humanized; this thing that the world reflects more and more the activity of the human mind shows us that it is the mind that considers the world as its point of application. And it shows us that it is the mind that does not consider values as being placed within objects, but rather that it is the mind that puts values into the world, that gives categories, that establishes relations, that furthers its expansion.

It is therefore the mind that uses the world as its point of application. And many human activities have to do, primarily, with the release of these tensions towards the world. But, at a deeper level, many human activities are explained by the internal configuration that the mind goes on making while applying itself in the world."⁴

Similarly, in *Psychology III*, in point 1, *Catharsis, Transference and Self-Transference. Action in the World as Transferential Form*, it says:

"We know that action, and not just the work of images that we have been mentioning, can bring about transferential phenomena and self-transferential phenomena. One type of action will not be the same as another. There will be actions that allow the integration of internal contents, and there will be tremendously disintegrative actions."

It is clear that it isn't a matter of indifference what actions one carries out in the world. There are actions that give one a register of internal unity, and actions that

² "Our permanent tasks are: wake up every day with our thoughts, feelings and actions more in harmony, and at the same time, awaken others through the teaching and practice of this, the most humble and simple of doctrines." *The Message*. 1964

³ *Book of School. Day 20. Suffering*. (August 1976)

⁴ *Book of School. Day 20. Suffering*. (August 1976)

*give a register of disintegration. If one studies this question of acting in the world in the light of what we know about cathartic and transference procedures, many things regarding the theme of integration and development of the contents of consciousness will be made considerably clearer."*⁵

And so, transference work is not only carried out "in the laboratory" (sessions of Operative, retreats, Centres of Work, etc.) but fundamentally by employing the world as a point of application for the integration of contents. It continues to be my firm conviction that internal or spiritual development does not exist without it being manifested in the world as valid action. If there is no such manifestation, the development does not exist. I have found and still find that for me, structural work is one of the best expressions of that application to the world with the perspective of internal work, as a kind and conscious work.

Structural activity as transference form: Valid Action

Reflecting on structural activity from the doctrinal point of view is unavoidable, since it is not conceived as separate from our doctrine and internal work but rather as its tool in the world. Let's quickly review, with the words of Silo, what we know about valid action:

"And what is the flavour of an act of unity? If you would recognise it, rely on that profound peace which, accompanied by a gentle joy, leads you into agreement with yourself. This act bears the sign of the most integral truth, for in it, thought, feeling, and action in the world are united in the most intimate friendship. Yes, valid action is unmistakable; you would affirm it a thousand times over should you live as many lives!

*Every phenomenon that makes suffering recede in others is registered as a valid action, as an act of unity, in the one who carries it out."*⁶

And also:

"But what is the basis of truly valid action? The basis of valid action is not given by ideologies or religious mandates or beliefs or laws or social regulations. Even though all of these things have great importance, none of them provides a basis for valid action. Instead, the basis of valid action is given by the inner register that an individual has of that action. There is a fundamental difference between the valuation of an action when that valuation is seen to come from the outside, and when it is based on the internal register that human beings have of the actions they carry out.

And what is the register of an action that is valid? A valid action is experienced as giving one greater unity. At the same time, this action gives one a feeling of inner

⁵ Silo. *Collected Works II. Psychology Notes, Psychology III. Catharsis, Transference and Self-Transference. Action in the world as Transference Form.* New Humanism Translation Committee. TWM. 2003

⁶ Silo. *Collected Works. Volume I. Humanize the Earth.* X. Valid Action. Paragraphs 4 and 5. New Humanism Translation Committee, TWM 1999.

*growth; it is something one desires to repeat because it has the flavor of continuity in time.*⁷

And so, from that point on, it seemed to me that the field of structural activity could not be exempted from or unrelated to valid action. Structural work as valid action is one of the best expressions of the "Golden Rule"⁸ in these times. No doubt I treat people the way I would like to be treated when I help them come closer our matters and create favourable conditions for their internal growth and disinterested giving.

Operative work as a reference for structural activity

It is here that, with a practical approach to the theme of Operative, I can have more references for the correct subjective treatment of structural activity, in light of the characteristics of transferential work. For example, and in brief:

1) The value of resistances as indicators of possibilities for development. Resistances show me my limitations in the work, and overcoming them offers me the possibility of expanding my capacity to humanize myself by humanizing. There I have my personality and that of others, the difficulties of working in a team, the question of how to deal with diversity within a common project, the need to give orientation to the process without inhibiting the expression of diversity but rather by giving it a framework of convergence, etc.

2) The value of persuasion in front of one's contents. Confrontation is not conducive to joint work. How to go from a leader to an orientor within your own head, in your own "look."

3) The difference between cathartic and transferential work. The difference between the compulsive or mechanical, and that which integrates, reconciles, and opens the future. Our way of acting is no dialectical (or reactive), but intentional.

4) The advantage to being relaxed and gentle with all these things. In processes, all forcing has a pendulum effect. The process of people and groups have their times and their rhythms. How to bring the characteristics of the internal guide (wisdom, kindness and strength) into the structural work.

The intention, sustained and applied effort to take on and overcome the resistances that arise in a transferential way, in order to achieve the structural objective as it has been proposed, creates conditions for us to identify, exercise and develop the best within ourselves.

When we propose to ourselves to take on and overcome resistances in a transferential way, we are placing our horizon of transformation beyond ourselves, because we overcome resistances by becoming someone different than who we are or how we are, by extending and improving what we are or how we are.

⁷ "Valid Action" (Las Palmas, Grand Canary Island, Spain, 29/09/78). Talk in a study group." *Silo. Collected Works. Volume I. Opinions, Comments and Speeches.* TWM 2000.

⁸ It is understood that I refer to the Principle "When you treat others as you would like to be treated, you liberate yourself," in *Silo. Collected Works. Volume I. Humanize the Earth. The Inner Look. XIII. The Principles.* New Humanism Translation Committee, TWM 1999.

It is thanks to the transferential overcoming of internal resistances and the extending of our own virtues and talents that our self-knowledge grows, as well as our internal and external coherence, and along with that, our internal force.

The relation with the participants in our structural work

In some old notes from 1974 (the end of the stage of individuals) – "*The Movement in the next 12-year stage, Compensation*" – the next stage of cadres that we were entering was proposed to us in terms of valid action.

*"In relation to the system, the Movement has to compensate and/or counterbalance the action of the system. So, if the system is violent, the Movement is non-violent. If the system is ideologically disjointed, the Movement is ideologically and doctrinally coherent. If the system divides, confronts, separates, etc. the Movement mixes and synthesizes. If the system creates conflicts and augments contradictions, the Movement overcomes pain, resolves conflicts. Here there is an interesting point and it is that the Movement can be more and more kind and caring: those are two very positive feelings that day by day are lost in the system; all the more reason to counteract this, and to be kind and caring within the Movement and with its members."*⁹

This feeling at the basis of valid action is reaffirmed in the seminar *The Inner Look and the Mission of 80's*, among other places.¹⁰

"The implementation of these activities may be clear; but the most important in all of this is: Who is going to produce this message?"

"That's why, before doing anything, it would be very good for each person to reflect and ask himself: do I care about people? Really do I care about people? Or do I say that I care about people? If I don't care about people, I had better go and find another activity because these are not good. That's the point."

Neither could we proclaim the humanist attitude to others, and then negate it with the pragmatic attitude by not practicing it ourselves within the structures that we build.

*"Referring to the attitude that I mention, and that is the common position of humanists of the different cultures, I should highlight the following characteristics: 1) placing the human being as the central value and concern; 2) affirming the equality of all human beings; 3) recognizing personal and cultural diversity; 4) tending to develop new knowledge beyond what is accepted as absolute truth; 5) affirming the freedom of ideas and beliefs; and 6) repudiating violence."*¹¹

Reflection on past, present and future action

⁹ Silo. *The Movement in the next 12-year stage. Compensation* – meeting with Silo in El Mirador, Cordoba, Argentina. 01/02/74.

¹⁰ Silo. Seminar on *The Inner Look and the Mission of 80's*. Third Day. Madrid, Spain 11/03/80 and Bombay, India, 1980.

¹¹ *What We Understand Today by Universal Humanism (24/11/94)*, in *Silo Speaks, Collected Works*, Vol. I. TWM 2003.

The difference between reflective action and unreflective action is obvious, as are the consequences that derive from each. And so for me, reflection (and "simple meditation") on my actions was always important, whether these actions were past, happening now or meant for the future. And not just from the purely organizational point of view, but rather from the point of view that our Doctrine proposes.

I give a few examples. For me, structural considerations in terms of "giving" and "receiving" as written in *The Inner Look of Humanize the Earth*, were important. And so was reflecting on the following quotations and their structural application:

XV. To Give and Receive

7. *Remember the best moments in your life and you will recognise that they were invariably accompanied by a disinterested giving. Reflecting on this should by itself be enough to change the direction of your existence—but it will not suffice.*

8. *Let us hope I have been speaking of someone else and not of you, since surely you have understood such sayings as "humanise the earth," "open the future," and "overcome suffering in the world around you," all of which are based on the capacity to give.*

9. *"To love the reality that you are building" does not mean to place the solution to your own problems as the key to the world.*

It has been very useful for me to reflect on each one of those phrases and how they relate to structural activity, and then to try to implement, in attitudes and actions, the conclusions of that reflection.

And I can say the same thing in terms of internal and external coherence, from the third letter of *Letters to My Friends*.¹²

More references and inspiration: the following paragraphs of "*The Internal Landscape*" seemed to me very pertinent to the structural.

II. Reality

10. *Therefore let your heart affirm, "I love the reality that I build!"*

VI. Centre and Reflection

2. *There is no learning, however small, that you achieve through contemplation alone. You learn because you do something with that which you contemplate. And the more you do the more you learn, for as you go forward your vision continues to change.*

3. *What have you learned of the world? You have learned what you have done. What is it that you want of the world? You have come to want according to what has happened to you. What is it that you do not want from the world? What you do not want also follows from what has happened to you.*

IX. Contradiction and Unity

10. *You will truly love only when you build with your gaze fixed on the future.*

¹² *Silo. Collected Works. Vol. I. Letters to My Friends. Third Letter to My Friends (17 December 1991) TWM 2003*

15. As for the building itself, where you put defective material, the defect will grow; where you put solid material, you increase the structure's solidity.
26. You may agree with me or not, but in any case I will affirm that this is the only way forward: If you want to grow, you will help those around you to grow.

XII. Compensation, Reflection and Future

5. If you affirm that which searches for itself and whose nature is to transform itself, that which is never complete in itself and whose essence opens to the future, then you love the reality you build. This, then, is your life: the reality that you build!

And finally, it was also inspiring to me to turn to "*The Internal States*"¹³ as a reference for the situation in which I found myself internally, as regards to my structural work.

Tangible and intangible indicators of the structural construction

As it says in *The Internal Landscape*: "Though you may be wise and powerful, if happiness and liberty do not grow in you and in those around you, I will reject your example."¹⁴ And therefore growing happiness and liberty should be the intangible indicators of the structural construction. Everything else should simply be the scaffolding that points to that.

In "*Regarding What is Human*"¹⁵ we read:

"Let's now consider the second question: one's own register of the humanity of others.

Insofar as one registers the presence of the other as "natural," then the other will be no more than an object-like, or perhaps animal presence. Insofar as one is anesthetized against perceiving the temporal horizon of the other, the other will have no meaning beyond a for-me. The nature of the other person will be a for-me. But when I constitute the other person as a for-me, I constitute and alienate myself in my own for-myself. I say, "I am for-me," and in saying that I close my horizon of transformation. People who make others into "things" make themselves into things, too, thereby closing off their own horizons."

And so there is a way of placing oneself before structural activity that resonates with this sensibility, and another way that is out of tune with it. Those who accompany me in the structural construction and those who I reach with it cannot have a meaning of "for-me," because like that I will be objectifying them and objectifying myself, closing my horizon of transformation. I may perhaps achieve big results in the world, but at the expense of the development of my internal unity and that of others.

¹³ "*The Internal States*," chapter XIX, paragraph 6, in *Silo. Collected Works. Vol.I. Humanize the Earth. The Internal Landscape. I. The Question.* Paragraph 2. TWM 2003.

¹⁴ *Silo. Collected Works. Vol. I. Humanize the Earth. The Human Landscape. I. The Question.* Paragraph 2. TWM 2003.

¹⁵ *Regarding What Is Human* (Tortuguitas. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 01/05/83). Talk with a study group, in *Silo, Collected Works. Vol. I* pp401-02, TWM 2003.

Let's continue: *"Insofar as I do not experience the other except as a for-me, my vital activity will not humanize the world."* I will build within myself a dehumanized reality, a reality that I will not be able to love, and my influence will be dehumanizing.

And then:

"The other must be an inner register for me, a warm sensation of an open future that does not end in the objectifying non-meaning of death.

To feel that which is human in the other is to feel the life of the other in a beautiful, multicolored rainbow that grows farther and farther away the more I try to stop, to seize, to capture its expression. You grow farther away, and I take comfort if I have helped you to break your chains, to overcome your pain and suffering. And if you accompany me, it is because in a free act you constitute yourself as a human being, and not simply because you were born "human." I sense in you the liberty and the possibility of your constituting yourself as a human being, and in you my acts find the liberty at which they aim. And so, not even your death can halt the actions you set in motion, because you are in essence time and liberty. What I love in the human being, then, is its growing humanization. And in these times of crisis, reification, and dehumanization, I love the possibility of the human being's future vindication."

Neither this did I take it simply as a poetic rapture uncommitted to action. At the moment of taking structural decisions or of carrying them forward, the path is split between the ethic mentioned above and, for example, the possessive reflex to control, manipulate, generate dependency, gain personally: in a word, objectification. I have been there countless times, in front of the dilemma: "either you choose the labyrinth of conscious life with Resolution"¹⁶ or I betray the intentions that I have proposed to myself and declared to others.

And how does one do to feel the human in the other? In my case, among other factors, I did this thanks to the exercise of making contact with the human in me and wanting to see it in the others around me in my structural construction. For example, as it says in the *The Internal Landscape*: *"It is important, then, to direct your attention to the best qualities in others, because you will project into the world those qualities you have managed to configure in yourself."*¹⁷

I told myself how little resonance these words of Silo's would have had if they had been confined to comfortable salon discussions on special occasions. I proposed to myself that these words would manifest daily in all my life and, particularly, in my structural activity. Obviously, as with everything that I'm saying today, there were times when I could do this and times when I could not, but nonetheless this proposal gave me a mental direction that was more convergent with our thing, and better results than if I had never proposed it at all.

Among others, there is an intangible indicator that also has to do with the structural activity taken as a whole. It is: *"Therefore let your heart affirm, "I love the reality that I build!"*¹⁸ This served me as an internal indicator for my structural activity, and for it I had not only in mind the development of the structure in itself, but also my internal relation with it, my way of "looking" at it and orienting it. For example, it was

¹⁶ Reference to "The Internal States," chapter XIX, paragraph 6, in *Silo. Collected Works. Vol I. Humanize the Earth. The Inner Look*. TWM 2003

¹⁷ From Chapter XVII. *The Internal Guide*, paragraph 11, in *Silo. Collected Works. Vol I. Humanize the Earth. The Internal Landscape*. TWM 2003.

¹⁸ From Chapter II. *Reality*, paragraph 10, in *Silo. Collected Works. Vol I. Humanize the Earth. The Internal Landscape*. TWM 2003.

not the same to consider the structure as a tool to achieve something that ended in me as it was to consider it as a point of application for my disinterested giving. And this did not happen through intellectual arguments, but through an intimate feeling by which I had to honestly evaluate from moment to moment.

The religious sentiment: the motor of structural endeavour as valid action

I cite the words of Silo on this theme from the stage of cadres, in 1977. They gave me much inspiration in that moment:

"... but with respect to the Order it will be different, since it will be formed by men and women capable of changing not only their personal destiny but also the destiny of humanity.

We need generous and big spirits. Spirits that are tenacious even when the world falls to pieces around them. People with a big religious spirit that allows them to feel this work within a larger process that transcends small, vacillating and petty individuality.

*We need mystics in the best sense of the word."*¹⁹

For decades, Silo has given us his personal example, showing as a structural orientor that the religious sentiment can accompany a structural construction based on a complex, precise and systematic plan.

Perhaps it's difficult to understand how a great emotional charge can accompany this sustained endeavour for years, against all kinds of internal and external difficulties. That is to say, to understand how in one person a rigorous adherence to the rationality of action based on a plan can be joined with the strong emotional charge of religious sentiment.

Nonetheless, it is valid action, both in its greatest expression and for its greatest reach, that aims for a large and lasting structural construction that can develop beyond the times of those who put it in motion.

Perhaps a long-term, planned structural construction can be sustained by other factors, but I testify that it is possible to do it motivated by a strong and profound sentiment, not only for the project but also for people. In my case, I could not have done it without this.

As it says in *The Message of Silo*: "If you are not indifferent to the pain and suffering of others, in order to help them you must bring your thoughts, feelings and actions into agreement."²⁰ And structural construction is a tool for helping others as suitable, or more suitable, than any other.

And also: "Through kindness, through the elimination of internal contradictions, through conscious acts and the genuine need to evolve, the human being can give birth to the spirit. Love and compassion are necessary for this evolution. Thanks to these, not only does internal cohesion become possible, but also that cohesion among beings which enables them to transmit the spirit to one another. The entire

¹⁹ Letter from Mario to Kurt, Mendoza, 21/08/1977, published in the Biweekly Contact of 25 August 1977.

²⁰ *Silo's Message. The Path.*

*human species evolves toward love and compassion. Whoever works for themselves with love and compassion also does so for other beings."*²¹

And so there is no intrinsic or congenital antagonism between valid action and structural activity, but rather a very tight relation of mutual reinforcement. Organizational activity with people who join our thing can be – for the one whose intent is this – an amplification of valid action, and it can be imbued with a profound and strong religious sentiment that finds its best expression in the construction and development of organized human groups that have a greater humanizing influence.

Among all the strange things of this world, we could not deny the possibility that there exists a percentage of people among the general population – although small – that has a great liking for being volunteers in a team that works in an organized way for others. We can't deny that there is a percentage of the population that takes commitments, that is permanent in the work, and who would like greater clarification on our themes. Why not? And that percentage will also grow when the empire of circumstances demands it. And so we will work with them, forming those cadres that launch strong joint actions for change in the environment, influencing millions.

On the other hand, other forms of work with people don't seem to impede valid action, and so each person will see how to do this in the way that is best for them.

Even for non-believers, structural work can be a form of immortality²² and, being a valid action, it certainly is for those who do believe, according to what is explained for example in *The Message of Silo Inspires a Profound Religiosity (The Human Spirit)*.

Using the tools of internal work as a daily support for structural activity

If we start from the register of internal unity or coherence as the reference, as our "centre of gravity," structural activity is experienced and implemented in another way, one that is more disposed to external coherence, in the sense of treating others as we'd like to be treated. And so it is that constantly and daily I used the tools of internal work as a support for my structural work.

The Principles of Valid Action. I found that, as an ethic, the Principles cannot be "complied with" (as is done when one follows an external morality). Rather, it is convenient to adopt a "look," a copresence, a mental direction conducive to valid action. I tried to act in my structural work searching for those registers of coherence. And likewise, they helped me to reflect upon my actions, and, through comprehension, to perfect and extend that action. Furthermore, I always tried to remember that the Principles – and by extension, valid action – are not proposed as "success-oriented," guaranteeing external "success," but rather in terms of growing happiness and liberty, internal liberation.

²¹ *Silo's Message inspires a profound religiosity, The Human Spirit.*

²² "May those of you who do not feel the presence here of another life, separate from the body, consider that although death has paralyzed this body, the actions he/she carried out will continue to act, and their influence will never end. This chain of actions that was set in motion in life cannot be stopped by death.

How profound it is to meditate on this truth, even though we may not completely comprehend the transformation of one action into another!" Silo's Message.

The Internal Guide. I have tried to achieve an agreement between my role as orientor and the reference of the Guide. I've asked the Internal Guide constantly in order to have the strength, kindness and wisdom necessary for each structural moment or event.

The Work with the Force helped me to regain the perspective and the strength necessary to reorient or redouble my structural efforts.

Directed attention (relaxed) has accompanied me as a daily style, increasing my lucidity and giving me an internal "centre of gravity" for the structural work.

The retreats, centres of work, personal weekly works, etc. recharged my internal batteries to return to the structural work with renewed force and inspiration.

All the other tools or practices of internal work that, although they were not applied directly to structural activity, nonetheless indirectly strengthened it and made it possible.

The living example of Silo

Having lived my structural life in the first instance of Council 1 oriented by Silo, I can say that as a structural orientor he has been the best living example of the inspirations that I put forward here. This has been a wonderful support, since he incarnated valid action perfectly in structural activity. And like this his image or memory were like guides for me on countless occasions. Together with all his Endeavour, I thank him profoundly for being the best example, and of course I discharge him of any responsibility for the breaches that existed between his example and my accomplishments.

Teamwork in structural activity

In the old "*Book of School*," in the chapter regarding teamwork,²³ it was recommended that our teamwork be based on the registers of relaxation, since easily one falls into trying to possess ideas, to control the situation, and all this works against good teamwork. That is, teamwork – a characteristic of organizational work – puts us in front of our possessiveness. Faced with it, we can respond in a cathartic way or in a transferential way. The action that is valid will be the transferential one, and a helpful support for me has been directed attention accompanied by registers of relaxation.

The structural as an activity for one's "free-time" or as the centre of gravity of one's life.

It's clear that structural activity as valid action will take on a different depth and reach depending on the position it occupies among our interests. This is a factor that was formulated in different ways and, as an example, I cite a text of *The Community*, from the time in which the Movement was known under this denomination.

²³ *Book of School. Day 14. Regarding Teamwork.* (August 1976)

"Placement of the Community in one's own life"

"The decisive point for every member of the Community is how to position their activities within the Community among their various personal interests. If they take the Community as just one more thing, interchangeable with others, the results they obtain will certainly only be incidental. If, on the other hand, they take the Community as a reference for their lives, their diverse personal interests will become ordered according to priorities and become coherent. Rather than limiting possibilities, taking The Community as a reference in a personal and social world that is in constant change gives our lives direction, concentrating disparate forces and fostering our development. Making the Community a reference helps us overcome disorientation.

"Some could understand the experiences that are carried out in the Community within a therapeutic framework. Reflecting with more precision they could come to understand that their balance and personal development is not something that can be achieved by a therapy but rather it is a deeper question referring to the meaning of life, to clear references and commitment to activities that transcend the personal. Nobody solves their problems by continually thinking about them. Rather, it is well-oriented activity that eventually overcomes these problems. But this is not so easily done on the basis of simple individual proposals. There has to be an organized activity that can function, as a reference for the particular activities and this is something that the Community can provide." ²⁴

Obviously the simple practice of activism is not enough for personal change, because valid action is valid because of the register of what is done, more than because of what is done. But putting our joint issues as a reference to which we aspire creates the best conditions for the treatment of personal matters; thus creating a framing that helps one achieve the right proportion between one's "I" and "We," all as a function of valid action in the world.

The internal and external look in structural activity.

The external look in the structural sees what is objective or tangible in the construction: number of members and their structuration, collection amount, number of copies of materials, communications, logistics, strength of the activity, mobility, etc.

The internal look attends to other aspects like the personal work of the members, their ideological and doctrinary clarification, the kind of relations among the members and between the structure and its environment; it attends to mental directions, to the coherence between the message given and what is later implemented, etc. That is, it attends to the subjectivity that is at play in all of this, since we are working with people and aim at a relation of mutual liberation, free from all objectification.

A mentality close to naive pragmatism might believe that results in the world (the tangible) can be dissociated from the subjective (the intangible), without perceiving the "lost profits and consequential damage" that the abuse of subjectivity produces in our advance through the world.

²⁴ I. General Explanations. *Placement in front of the Community. Book of the Community.* Silo. Rome, Italy, July 2000. Present already in the 1981 edition.

Both looks need to be properly joined together, as both are necessary for the construction since we are talking about a personal and social process of humanization. Our project is not just social, political, cultural, etc. but psychosocial.

Mental direction in structural activity

Mental direction gives a general orientation to one's behaviour. Our mental direction is established based on the image of the future towards which we aspire. This image, placed in the future, is the one that will go on orienting and knitting our specific options and actions every step of the way, toward achieving the general objective that is our aim. This is what is also explained by *"The Aphorisms,"*²⁵ in other words.

And so self-examination is important in order to understand the future image that is operating within us at every moment of the process, especially at its condition of origin.

The degree to which our image coincides or not with those proposed by the Doctrine will also give us a measure of the possible deviation or mismatch of our structural project in terms of the general plan.

Internal growth through valid action will also occur in the measure that the personal contributes or adjusts itself more and more to the not-personal, to that which transcends the personal. Conversely, the desire to force (in vain) the not-personal so that it suits the personal will produce different degrees of lack of adaptation to the whole and, therefore, of internal and external incoherence. The sustained intention to treat structural work as valid action gives a mental direction.

Presence and copresence in structural activity

The image of the future that we want to achieve acts copresently during each step of our structural activity.

But in the copresence there also other helpful copresent images and these are, for example, the ones that refer to the internal dimension of the people with whom we carry out our work. Subjectivity is the source of our achievements and the motor of our work.

For example, the process leading to a closed council already works in the copresence of every structure, and just that future image that impacts on the present should be a point of reflection on the adequacy of the orientation towards that future of dispossession.

This theme of copresence always seemed to me important because the same activity for me and for others varied if what was active in the copresence varied. Copresences are many and varied, for example, the example of Silo, the doctrinary references, the commitment to one's peers, the joint memory, etc.

²⁵ *The Aphorisms. II. Formative Themes. Book of the Community.* Silo. Rome, Italy. July 2000. Present already in the 1981 edition.

Structural work and one's structure as a mirror in which to look at oneself

Already way back in 1974, pulchritude, permanence and tone were proposed as integral aspects of those "Crafts" that served as an entry to the "Disciplines." The interesting relation between these things and structural activity was not overlooked by some of us. Pulchritude, permanence and the tone that corresponds to a good "structural craftsmanship" find in structural work an excellent field for their exercise. The greater or lesser degree of development in those aspects is manifested in the work, and one can look at it from that point of view.

As in the expression, "the nut doesn't fall far from the tree," some of us have noticed the correspondences that exist between orientors and the structures they orient. This is an interesting point for reflection, and as such, for perfecting the valid action.

Learning also what is not valid action in the structural activity

The subjectivity of the one carrying out the structural task can move away from valid action and give rise to behaviours that damage his own internal unity and the project itself. You are a humanist when you act like one, and you stop being a humanist when you no longer act like one.

In itself, the organizational model allows for many possibilities, but at times the personal implementation of that model is charged with connotations that are foreign to it.

So for example, things like authoritarianism, verticality, "following orders," exaggerated protagonism, acute or disloyal competitiveness, "professional jealousies," psychological manipulation for personal gain, and other such indignities are alien to our endeavour.

The hard but no less true words of Silo in the *Fifth Letter to My Friends*²⁶ allude to this, but citing them would make this too long, and our treatment of the theme would become disproportionate.²⁷

Short-term pragmatism, thinking in terms of "success," the justification of the means by the ends, the utilization of people, a deceptive gradualism, authoritarianisms, machievellianisms, personalisms, etc. are all attitudes that do not coincide with structural activity as a valid action. All of that is of the System, and what is "system" has no place in our thing.

A typical deviation arises when the particular becomes disproportionate with regards to the whole. That is why I think we must try to adjust the particular as much as possible to the whole, instead of trying to force (in vain) the whole to adjust to the particular.

That idea of "the ends justify the means" has no place in our thing. It would be morally repugnant to use forms of physical, economic or psychological violence, or

²⁶ Silo. *Collected Works. Vol I. Letters to My Friends. Fifth Letter to My Friends (4 June 1992)*, 6.-*Sacrificing One's Objectives for Circumstantial Success: Some Habitual Errors. TWM 2003*

²⁷ Attached as an Annex.

overt or covert discrimination to achieve our organizational objective. Our "non-violence" is defined precisely as intolerance to all forms of violence.

Our project is not simply one of success in the world, but rather an integral project that implies a new subjectivity, a new sensibility. And so, paradoxically, achieving that objective gets farther away in the measure that we betray that sensibility. The total revolution that we propose (social, cultural, and psychological) is not only in the future – it is also in the present intention to realize it our structural activity.

It would be incoherent to apply two different ways of measuring – one for the outside and another for the structure. And it would also be incoherent to proclaim to others what we do not practice among ourselves.

Of course I am not referring to errors made in good faith that can be rectified twice over, but rather to errors in mental direction that imply a cynical resignation before one's own compulsions.

All dramatics aside, these considerations on errors to be avoided and the errors that I have made have also oriented me in my structural work, and for me it was like a workshop on the humanist attitude where I learned by doing and reflecting on what I had done, as much on my achievements as on my mistakes.

The future of structural activity (or, "If I had to do it over again")

A long time ago it was explained that the organizational form of the Movement is a function of the task it has in this historical moment. That is, while the system remains organized, we also will continue getting organized.

In the measure that a humanized society does not exist, the organizational forms will continue to be a scaffolding useful for its construction. When the work is finished, perhaps we will be able to leave the organizational scaffolding aside, or change them.

Organizational forms are not opposed to our work in the world, but neither are they compulsory. They are not meant for those who don't feel comfortable with them. And that is why people who appreciate our thing and want to spread it without our organizational forms or with other forms, and people who do not want to take any commitments or do organized activities – all of them can contribute as adherents of the Humanist Movement.

The organizational issue is unavoidable, and it can only be neglected at the expense of the whole. All the great, strong actions and activities that we want to produce in the world need an effective organization. Organisms, action fronts, national coordination bodies, humanist regionals, etc. need to be organized so that they can accomplish their best work.

In any case, the great plans that we have require activists that carry them forward with a certain permanence, a certain commitment and a certain clarification: what we knew traditionally as a "member of the structure."

The great and good religious sentiment that stimulates us to humanize the earth can have an organizational expression. That expression could and should be imbued with the best sentiments and behaviours that befit the aim of such endeavour.

Today more than ever, and after the experience of so many years, I continue with the firm conviction that organized work with others is useful not only for oneself, but also that it is necessary, possible and desirable for millions of people in these times, and those that are coming.

The structural model proposed, developed and oriented by Silo, is a great tool so that our message and our proposal take shape in the world. For years that tool went on being perfected by the experience of the whole and with it we've achieved everything that we are and can do today.

Since the very beginning, our form of organization was defined as "structural." That is, neither vertical nor horizontal, but instead a dynamic structure in which energy does not flow simply in one direction, from top to bottom, in which the general orientation arises from the feedback between the levels of participation, the interchange from common experience, from the construction of joint agreements, etc. Our organizational model is not that of an NGO, or a cooperative, multinational, army (not even a "salvation army"). And like this our form is apt for what we are interested in. According to Silo, the organizational model common to all is a cohesive factor in a Movement which is very interested in diversity, but also in its convergence.

It's not at all bad that there exist a differentiation of functions and a differentiation of levels of participation (based on "effective work"), if this makes the common work easier and more effective in the world, and if it makes each member of the structure better off than if he/she were in a disorganized ambit where everything was dependent on personality and a spontaneity without intelligence. On the contrary: this organization would be a source of inspiration and personal and group satisfaction.

Within myself I have made and renewed an internal effort to achieve a kind of "jubilee" and reconcile with all the errors (mine and others) made in dancing, which do not take any value away from the dance itself. Today I continue doing it, and I would try to remove from the structural everything whose uselessness has been demonstrated and that does not belong to structural work in itself, but instead to the extra things I "added" to it.

On 4 May 2004, in Punta de Vacas, Silo declared:

"We have failed... but we keep insisting!"

We have failed but keep insisting with our project of humanizing the world.

We have failed and we will continue to fail not just once but a thousand times again, because we ride on the wings of a bird named Intent, that soars above frustration, weakness and pettiness."

I have the firm conviction that that "Intent" of which he spoke did not refer to everything the Movement has, but leaving aside the formation of large and influential structures.

How opportune it would be if the new sensibility that was announced there was manifested in structural activity:

"If I were pressed to be more specific I would simply reply, though it has been said time and again over the last three millennia, that today people are experiencing anew the need for and the true morality of treating others as they want to be treated. I could add to this, almost as general laws of conduct, that today people are aspiring

to: 1. A certain proportion, in which one tries to give order to the most important things in one's life, dealing with them as a whole and not allowing some aspects to move ahead while others fall too far behind; 2. A certain growing adaptation, in which one acts in favor of evolution rather than momentary concerns, turning away from the various forms of human involution; 3. A certain well-timed action, in which one retreats when facing a great force (not every little obstacle) and advances when that force weakens; 4. A certain coherence, in which one accumulates those actions that bring one a feeling of unity, of being in agreement with oneself, and reject those actions that generate contradiction, that are registered within oneself as disagreements among what one thinks, feels, and does.¹²⁸

The structural project is a project that can be taken on as a "workshop of love and compassion," in the sense of The Message of Silo – that is, as a valid action. That is, according to the original meaning that, from my point of view, it always had.

Structural work can be the workshop in which those carrying it out become humanized more and more by putting their look and their activity towards humanizing the environment in which they happen to live.

The structures can be defined or understood in many different ways, but the fact remains that for the activist who carries the structural work forward, it should be carried forward as a valid action or it will not have meaning for him/her. And, losing his/her meaning, he/she will contaminate others with his/her non-meaning.

The social environment is very deteriorated and people are in bad shape and destitute. Our organization can offer an environment in which people experience more and more the new civilization that is being born.

It would be good to provide the necessary environment, tools and skill so that people can humanize themselves while humanizing others.

It would be good to provide friendship, help and experience (as "The Community" proposed) so that people can humanize themselves while humanizing others.

That organization should give its participants the best treatment. We should compensate the environment in its deconstruction of interpersonal relations: ill-treatment, helplessness, the lack of communication, loneliness, objectification, the lack of dialogue, etc.

In the environment, where there is manipulation, here there will be persuasion and agreement. The environment's 'everyone for himself' will be compensated by help; unprotection with protection; ill-treatment with love and compassion; the lack of communication with direct communication; loneliness with company; objectification with the consideration of the existential living situation of each one; the lack of dialogue with a genuine approach to the other, etc. If the Humanist Movement is also a refuge, as Silo has said²⁹, then it should have the characteristics of one.

There could be a renewal of the organizational forms in such a way that they serve not only those who compose them, but also the environment at which it aims; that they serve not to build up the image of the protagonists, but rather the liberty and happiness of all its members; that the "We" where there are no bosses or

²⁸ *Letters to My Friends. First Letter. 7. Human Change.* (21/02/91), in *Silo. Collected Works. Vol. 1.* TWM 2003.

²⁹ In the message given by Silo (*What is the Humanist Movement today?*) during the meeting in the Public Works Stadium of Buenos Aires, 4 January 1998.

subordinates be the most important; that some not be below others; that there be no paternalism but rather solidarity and help towards the others so that they may grow and advance with their own means; where the respect for diversity be more than just a declaration, etc.

We need a new sensibility for the formation of structures that befits the new times. And they will be the ones that will be able to involve the multitudes.

We need to reflect and examine in order to pick the intangible elements with which we want to imbue the new structures, and leave aside all that that we recognize as obsolete, inadequate, etc.

For this we need to put the primary things where they've always been proposed: the structures are not tools for boosting the "I," but rather for elevating and proportioning it for the sake of a task that transcends the individual in a great valid action.

From my point of view, the best way to approach structural work is with the attitude of the one who carries out a long-term valid action that involves the present and future of millions of people. That valid action will be knitted by countless specific actions that will go on building a reality. And it will be that attitude that will, day by day, allow us to say: "I love the reality that I build."

With the structural model, we are not simply building "a successful and powerful organization," but rather the bridge that will unite human prehistory with a warmly human planetary civilization. In the implementation of the structural model, the characteristics of the universal human nation to which we aspire should be glimpsed.

Using the terms of Silo's "digression" in his conference last May 17, I believe that our organization should aim to be the standard-bearer of that structuration of non-violent consciousness, and that this form part of the psychosomatic and psychosocial makeup of the Movement.³⁰

It would be good to recognize the "failure" of the old attitudes and old procedures that tainted the structural activity, and stop attributing them hallucinatorily to structural work itself. And likewise, it would be very good to stop searching for blames and guilty ones, if this be the case, and retake the work with a new attitude.

Because if we dropped the organizational model or structural activity because of the errors committed in its name, we should also coherently drop the message with which our coherence at times has also faltered. Clearly, this would be an absurdity and, even worse, a big gain for the system.

Here it is appropriate to cite a few words of Silo's: *"This is why we need to understand processes that are more ample than simple immediate circumstance, and to support, even if we do not see immediate results, everything that goes in the direction of evolution. When courageous human beings who are moved by a spirit of solidarity become disheartened, this slows the march of history."*³¹

The phrases on *Contradiction and Unity*, chapter IX of *The Internal Landscape*³² seem to me very suitable as a support for a fruitful reflection on all things structural, from here on.

³⁰ Silo, *Psychology IV. Conference given by Silo in La Reja Park, Buenos Aires, around mid-May 2006*. d. Accidental and desired phenomena. 4. Structures of consciousness.

³¹ *Letters to My Friends. 4.- The Positive Aspects of Change* (5 December 1991), *Second Letter*, in *Silo. Collected Works Vol I*. TWM 2003.

³² Attached as an Annex.

To finish: my position is that today, more than ever, it is necessary, possible and desirable to renew enthusiasm for structural or organized work, but now imbuing it with that new sensibility that we feel within us and that we glimpse in others: the spirit of valid action, the sensibility that befits the future to which we aspire.

I hope you've enjoyed yourselves. Peace, Force and Joy for all!

Final note: After this testimonial there followed an interchange among everyone present. On the basis of this, in the following weeks there were similar interchanges in other groups.

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IX. Contradiction and Unity

1. Contradiction inverts life. The inversion of the growing stream of life is experienced as suffering. Thus, suffering is the signal that warns us of the need to change the direction of the opposing forces.
2. Those who through repeated frustration find themselves detained on their way only appear to be detained; in reality, they regress. Time and again their past failures close off their future. Those who feel frustrated see the future as a repetition of the past, even as they experience the need to distance themselves from that past.
3. Those who seize the future a prey to resentment, what intricate retaliation will they not attempt in order to avenge their past?
4. And in their frustration and resentment they do violence to the future, until it bends its back in suffering return.
5. At times, wise men have recommended love as a protective shield against the blows of suffering. But this deceptive word "love," what does it mean to you? Does it mean getting even for the past, or instead a fresh, new, untainted adventure launched toward an unknown future?
6. Just as I have seen solemnity grotesquely cloak the ridiculous, just as I have seen an empty seriousness cast its pall over the grace of talent, so have I recognized in many loves a vindictive self-affirmation.
7. What image have you of the wise? Is it not true that you conceive of them as solemn beings, slow of gesture; as beings who have suffered enormously and with this merit beckon you from on high with gentle phrases in which they repeat the word "love?"
8. I have seen in all the truly wise a child running playfully through the world of ideas and things, creating generous and brilliant bubbles, only to burst them. In the sparkling eyes of all who are truly wise I have seen "the light feet of joy, dancing toward the future." And very seldom have I heard them utter the word "love," for the truly wise never promise in vain.

³³ *Silo. Collected Works, Vol I. Humanize the Earth. The Internal Landscape. TWM 2003*

9. Do not believe that you will purify your suffering past through revenge, or by using “love” as an incantation or as the bait for a new trap.
10. You will truly love only when you build with your gaze fixed on the future. And if you remember a great love that is no more, let the memory be accompanied by a soft and silent nostalgia, with gratitude for all it has taught you until today.
11. You will not break with your past suffering by falsifying or degrading the future. You will break with it only by changing the direction of the forces that provoke contradiction in you.
12. I believe you will know how to distinguish a difficulty, which is welcome for you can leap over it, from a contradiction, that lonely labyrinth that has no exit.
13. Every contradictory action that you have done in your life, whatever the circumstances, has the unequivocal flavor of internal violence and betrayal of yourself. Why you found yourself in that situation will not matter, but only how—at that precise moment—you organized your reality, your landscape. Something shattered then, and changed your direction. And this, in turn, predisposed you to a new rupture. In this way, all contradictory actions orient you toward repeating them, just as all unitive actions seek to reemerge later on.
14. In daily actions difficulties are overcome, small objectives are achieved, little failures reaped. Whether pleasant or unpleasant, these acts accompany daily life like scaffolding accompanies a great building; it is not the structure itself, but it is necessary if it is to be built. It does not matter what material this scaffolding is made of, as long as it is suitable for its purpose.
15. As for the building itself, where you put defective material, the defect will grow; where you put solid material, you increase the structure’s solidity.
16. The essential construction of your life is built of contradictory or unifying actions. You must make no mistake at the moment you find yourself faced with your actions, for if you do you will jeopardize your future and invert the stream of your life—and how then will you end your suffering?
17. But it happens that at this very moment your contradictory actions are already many. And if everything from the foundation up is false, what can be done? Would you pull your whole life apart to begin anew? Let me tell you that I do not believe that everything you have built is false, and you should abandon any such drastic thoughts. They will only bring you greater misfortune than is already yours today.
18. A new life is not based upon destroying previous “sins” but upon recognizing them, so that from now on it will be clear how ill-advised are these mistakes.
19. A life begins when unifying actions start to multiply, so that by their virtue they compensate and finally favorably overbalance the previous relationship of forces.
20. You must be very clear about this: You are not at war with yourself. Rather, you must begin treating yourself like an old friend with whom you must now reconcile, for ignorance and life itself have driven you apart.
21. You must begin by making a decision to reconcile with yourself and to understand your previous contradictions. Then you need to make another decision—that you want to overcome these contradictions. Finally, you need to decide to build your life with acts of unity, rejecting those materials that until now have brought so much harm down upon your head.
22. Indeed, it is advisable that you clarify—in both your past and present situations—those contradictory acts that truly imprison you. To recognize them, you can rely on the suffering that is accompanied by internal violence and the sensation that you have betrayed yourself. These actions give clear signals.

23. I am not saying that you should mortify yourself in exhaustively recounting the present and the past. I am simply recommending that you consider everything that has changed your course in an unhappy direction and everything that keeps you fettered and tightly bound. Do not fool yourself once more by saying, "I have overcome these problems!" Nothing has been overcome or sufficiently understood that has not been weighed against a new force that compensates for and overcomes the previous influence.
24. All these suggestions will be of value if you are prepared to create a new landscape in your internal world. But you will be able to do nothing for yourself if you think only of yourself. If you want to move forward, you will one day have to accept that your mission is to humanize the world around you.
25. If you want to build a new life, free of contradictions, a life that increasingly overcomes suffering, you must be aware of two false arguments. The first holds that "I need to solve my personal problems before I can undertake any constructive action in the world." The second leads you to declare "I am committed to the world!" while forgetting yourself completely.
26. You may agree with me or not, but in any case I will affirm that this is the only way forward: If you want to grow, you will help those around you to grow.

Annex 2³⁴**6. Sacrificing One's Objectives for Circumstantial Success: Some Habitual Errors**

Everyone who is committed to collective action, every person who works with others toward meaningful social objectives, needs to be clear on the numerous errors that have in the past brought ruin upon the best of causes. Ridiculous Machiavellian schemes, personality clashes placed above mutually agreed upon goals, and authoritarian behavior of every stripe fill volumes of history books, as well as our personal memories.

By what right does anyone use a doctrine, a plan of action, a human organization, only to push aside the priorities they themselves have expressed? What right do we have to propose to others an objective and a destiny, only to later place as the primary value some supposed success or need of the moment? What would be the difference between this and the pragmatism we say we repudiate? In following that path, how could there be any coherence among what one thinks, feels, and does?

In every age, "instrumentalists" have committed the same moral fraud of presenting others with an inspiring image of the future, gaining for themselves an immediate image of success. In then sacrificing the intention agreed upon, however, they open the door to negotiating every sort of betrayal with the faction against which they claim to struggle. And this indecency is then justified by some supposed "need" concealed within the initial proposal.

It should be clear that I am not speaking of those changes of conditions and tactics in which all involved understand the connection to the agreed-upon objectives that mobilized them in the first place. Nor am I referring to those mistakes in evaluating situations that can occur in the process of carrying out concrete actions. These observations apply to the immorality that distorts intentions and against which it is indispensable to be alert. It is important to be attentive to ourselves as activists, and also to explain this to others so they understand beforehand that if they break their commitments this will leave our hands as free as theirs.

There is, of course, a whole range of clever tricks for using other people, and there is no way to catalogue them all. Nor will we become "moral censors," because it is clear that behind this attitude lies a repressive form of consciousness. The objective of such people is to sabotage any action they do not control, immobilizing their companions in struggle with mutual mistrust. And when they smuggle in as contraband from another field supposed values by which they judge our actions, it is good to remember that it is their "morality" that is in question, and that it is not the same as ours. Why, then, would such people choose to be with us?

Finally, it is important to be aware of a less-than-honest gradualism that is used to manipulate situations until in reality they come to oppose their stated objectives. It is in this position that we find all those who accompany us with motives different from those they express. Their mental direction is twisted from the beginning and awaits only the opportunity to manifest itself. In the meantime, they gradually expand their use of codes that, whether overtly or covertly, embody a system of double-speak. This attitude is almost always found among those people who, in the name of some militant organization, disorient activists of good faith, while at the same time they

³⁴ *Fifth Letter to My Friends* (04/06/92), in *Silb. Collected Works. Volume I*. TWM 2003.

endeavor to make responsibility for their abuses fall on the shoulders of authentic militants.

It is not my intention here to dwell on the familiar “internal problems” that affect every human organization, but it does seem useful to mention the opportunistic root that underlies this behavior, which involves introducing a mobilizing image of the future, gaining for oneself an immediate image of success.