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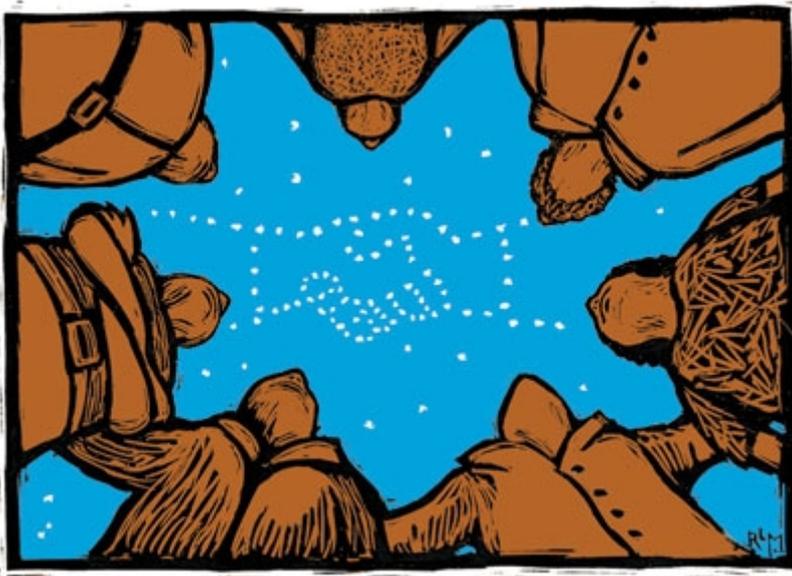
Cooperative Lingo

Issue:

Spring 2012 - Issue 16: Occupy the Economy [1]

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ACTIVIST SPEAK: a fascinating language used within activist communities that is tailored as a tool for successful organizing. In *Cooperation without Capital* [3], you will find some of these terms. Now, for your radical rabble-rousing pleasure, we define these terms here, as well as a few others that are handy to have up your sleeve.

COOPERATIVE/WORKER COOPERATIVE: a group of individuals who democratically control a business. Th is group either joins together to use or consume the business's services/goods (cooperative) and/or works there (worker cooperative). The two are not always mutually exclusive. While decision-making in cooperatives is organized democratically, there are usually levels of hierarchy. Diff erent co-op members may have varying levels of power based on anything from the amount of capital they give, to the amount of work that they do for the project. Also, in some cooperatives, workers' decision-making power may be modest, as cooperatives regularly function under the advisement of a board of directors, who work as representatives of the co-op. The worker cooperative model is the most common form of worker-ownership today.

COLLECTIVE: a project owned exclusively by the workers/organizers. In a collective business, all workers are owners. Collective members perpetually work to organize in an entirely egalitarian and democratic manner. Project decision-making is conducted horizontally, as is project management, which is organized along the principles of collective- and self-management. Most politicized folks

will argue that collectives are hands-down our most radical and visionary form of project organization.

SELF-MANAGEMENT: a form of decisionmaking in the workplace where workers collaboratively construct their projects and the choices that define it.

MUTUAL AID: voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit. Founded on the notion that communities are and should be inherently cooperative, rather than competitive.

AUTONOMY: the ability for individuals or individual communities to act on their own behalf and make decisions without undue influence or coercion from others.

CONSENSUS: a decision-making process that relies upon the formal consent/agreement of all parties. Consensus is often used as both verb and noun. As a noun, it describes the decision agreed upon by the group. As a verb, it describes the process used to reach the decision. Though unanimity is not always achieved or even desired, the intention behind consensus is that final decisions take into account all members' voices and aim to collectively reach the best possible decision to meet the group's diverse needs.

BLOCK: like consensus, "block/blocking" is used as both noun and verb in the consensus decision-making process to describe both the act and process of a block. When blocking, a project member states that they will leave the project if the presently discussed decision is agreed upon. In action, blocks serve as roadblocks to the decision-making process or to change the course of the process. To preserve its potency, blocking should be used as a last resort.

QUORUM: a chosen number/percentage/group of members required in order to meet collective consensus. Quorum usually constitutes a majority.

OPEN-VOTING: a decision-making process where all aspects of voting are transparent to the public and/or decision-making members.

SUPER-MAJORITY: an agreed upon percentage of voting threshold, that is at least over half of the project's members, that must be met in order for a decision to be passed. In consensus-based projects, super-majority voting is seen as hopefully a rare fall-back decision-making process, in the event that consensus decision-making cannot be achieved. For democratically-based projects less wedded to consensus, they tend to rely more heavily on super-majority and even simple majority voting procedures.

CO-OPTATION: for our organizing purposes, co-optation is the process of our movements being assimilated into dominant systems of power, in order to neutralize the threats we pose to the systems we struggle against.

PRE-FIGURATIVE: an actualization of politics where activists create their lived realities and organize based upon the future societies they wish to see.

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*These definitions run in conjunction with the larger article **Cooperation Without Capital: An Introduction [3]**, by: Blake Underwood.*

Source URL: <https://indyreader.org/content/cooperative-lingo>

Links:

[1] <https://indyreader.org/issues/spring-2012-issue-16-occupy-economy>

[2] <https://indyreader.org/contributor/corey-reidy>

[3] <http://indyreader.org/content/cooperation-without-capital-introduction>