

About the Platform

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The text itself, as we have seen before, was written in a period when the counter-revolution (after the abolition of the 1917–23 revolutionary wave) was in the full flush of health. So the most emphasized point of the text was to point out the disorganisation and confusion of the movement, the complete lack of centralization and united practice. It is doubtless that against the powers of the extremely centralized and at least against the proletarians unified capital one has to use similar methods in order to win. But pseudo-anarchism was attacking the anti-democratic and dictatorial essence of the proletarian struggle with full force. So the desired unity only without them and against them could be achieved.

The Platform correctly states that anarchism is “not a beautiful utopia, nor an abstract philosophical idea, it is a social movement of the labouring masses”. Instead of the bourgeois duality of practice and theory, this is an organic unity, the process of the abolition of capital in its every manifestation. The Platform always proceeds from the active reality and tries to react in accordance with this; it does not concern itself with the theoretical “problems” constantly debated by the “anarchologists” (Did Kropotkin wear flowered underpants? Will there be weather forecast in the anarchist society? etc.).

Above all, the text urges the creation of a powerful, all-in anarchist organization. Maybe today this seems to be obvious, but in that situation it was not. Many pseudo-anarchists denied even the necessity of organization itself. Others said if an organization exists, it must be something nominal, just for the purposes of coordination, within which the individual persons and subgroups have inner autonomy. This democratic pseudo-organization has in each case proven to be completely unable to produce any revolutionary activity.

Hence the creators of the Platform were for the unitary (revolutionary) tendency and for organized collective activity. This was a very important step for anarchists, because they challenged those taboos which were a real barrier for anarchism to really effective struggle. The Platform stresses the absurdity of the pseudo-organization established on the basis of such a synthesis.

The goal of the text is no other than to provide the programme for an international anarchist-revolutionary organisation in formation, namely the programme of the worldwide communist proletarian party – the programme of the proletariat organized into a class. This task was beyond the means of the text. In general, this is the revolutionary programme of the proletariat – though it is an existing and effective historical reality, it is no other than the revolutionary process: nobody, no group will ever be able to put them down exactly. But this is not necessary, because

in the course of the concretizations of the class struggle (which contains the written documents, too) this programme will always be realized to some extent.

From these events, and the lessons from them, one can abstract and deduce some of its characteristics. These are principally the break with democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the struggle against parliamentarianism and the trade unions, the struggle against political parties and the tasks of the anarcho-communist revolutionary core (with an inappropriate word, the “vanguard”). These points have no clear appearance in the Platform either.

The poorest parts of the text are those dealing with the concrete task which should be completed in the course of the revolution, which try to give a picture about the organization of the production, consumption, army etc. It must be laid down that the Platform (which went quite far in the break with pseudo-anarchism and in other crucial questions of the proletarian revolution) here falls into the trap of making up utopias. The main problem with these utopias is that they can be realised as well: they do not solve the antagonism between human activity and work, means and ware, use-value and exchange-value. The exchange between cities and villages (though with great simplification) nowadays goes the same way as well...

The platformists did not see the complete subversiveness of the proletarian revolution – its characteristics that must profoundly change the relations. The antagonisms mentioned before should be destroyed in the first minutes of the revolution, and there cannot be any transitional, half-capitalist/half-communist State.

Although the text itself lays this down in a whole chapter, exposing how counter-revolutionary the conceptions about transition are, however, the second part the text itself drafts such a state... The form of the dictatorship of the proletariat (which is not “the organ of the transition” but the nature of the revolutionary struggle, the proletarian class) is the counter-state, which is the complete and active negation of the existing order – just as the proletariat is the negation of the bourgeoisie in itself. The creators of the text fall into the error that they talk about the “freedom” and the “independence” of the proletarians (in their terminology, the workers – which means the same here).

Here are two anarchist fetishes which the text could not surpass. These two terms only have sense in capitalism. From what is a worker free and independent? From capitalism? It is obvious that this is not the case, because that determines his existence (as a worker and as a social creature, too). Thus it is his class that he is free and independent from, from the force whose goal is no other than the complete abolishment of this system – including the freedom and independence of the “worker”.

The interesting thing is that the text has many times settled its account with these illusions because it argues the necessity of centralization and a unified organization. It was attacked many times by the champions of freedom...

As we have mentioned before, its position on the trade unions is quite confused as well. While elsewhere it is clearly shown that the revolutionary struggle is no other than anarchist communism, in this question the authors draw several levels, and they indicate syndicalism as a means of struggle. On the one hand they see the counter-revolutionary role of the trade unions (which the majority of syndicalists saw too during the revolution), while on the other hand they believe in the possibility that they can be improved.

The anticipation explained here is in fact about a trade union under anarchist influence. This is a contradiction, though: an organization which tries to ameliorate (because it is a trade union) society which it wants to completely destroy (because it is anarchist).

The historical programme of the proletariat does not contain wage struggles (?), declared strikes (?), trade union maydays. Conversely, it does contain the abolition of wage labour, violent wildcat strikes, the ecstatic joy of struggle and the dictatorial oppression of hostile interests.

We do not want to deal with the part on production and distribution, the army etc. These are desipient, sometimes dangerous daydreaming about self-management and voluntariness etc. – a kind of a democratic heaven which is in complete discordance with the expectations of the general part. But we should add that anyone who tries to describe the communist society within the circumstances of the current society, cannot go further than daydreaming.

At the end of the text, the authors have to fight another pseudo-anarchist phantom, which seems to be quite dangerous: federalism. Although the text is, in fact, about organizing ourselves into a class and about centralizing the struggle (and this is obvious to the pseudo-anarchist whimperers), the authors are too shy to admit the necessity of centralization verbally. They try to avoid this by making difference between “bad” and “good” federalism. The “bad” one emphasizes the importance of the ego and it is the means of the individualist, while the “good” one is, as it is revealed, not federalism but centralism... Exactly the vagueness of the question, the lack of breaking-up in this question leads the authors to put down that entirely bourgeois rubbish about the Federal Executive Committee. Well, this is not the “organized vanguard”...

Shortly, we will mention another critical point: the text keeps separating the peasantry and the proletariat – though this latter does not only refer to the “oily-handed workers”. The peasantry is not a social class, it is a layer created by the division of labour. There are bourgeoisies as well in their ranks, not only proletarians (and this also refers to the workers, though there are obviously more peasant bourgeoisies...). But still, it is an important lesson that the peasantry in the modern revolutionary movement in Europe and in the areas where a real owner of its lands (unlike in Russia!) played a more counter-revolutionary role. The overestimating of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry is due to the group’s (a bit too over-emphasized) Russian point of view. The importance of labour is also over-emphasized. They fall into the old ouvrierist trap, which is the oldest weapon social democracy has against us: let’s be proud of our work, let’s be proud to be workers, unlike the bourgeois “drones”, let’s struggle for the “society of labour”...! But communism is no more than the complete negation of labour, every kind of work, the realisation of human activity against alienated activity. It is not just we are not proud to be workers, but that’s why we are revolting, we are revolting against labour!

“What is the difference between the social democrat and the communist?” – was the question posed by the Situationist International at the beginning of the seventies: “The social democrats want full employment, the communists want full unemployment.”

We want to stress once more that the Platform is not a holy text and it is not without errors. It wasn’t like that in 1926, either. But its goal was (as the authors claim) not to create a bible, but a way to start a debate which would result in common revolutionary activity among the really revolutionary elements. We cannot say anything more either but let it nowadays do a similar task as well.

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