

# Points of Unity

Black Rose Anarchist Federation

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## Revolution

Capitalism, the State and other systems of oppression cannot be voted or convinced out of existence. The oppressed classes must lead a revolutionary struggle against the systems of domination of the elite classes and their defenders. This struggle will involve the destruction of the state; the expropriation of all land, capital, social institutions and wealth from capital; the ending of class-based economic systems; and the elimination of all forms of oppression.

The old oppressive political, economic, and social orders must be replaced by directly-democratic, egalitarian, and self-organized decision-making institutions.

These popular institutions must be federally linked from the local level to the global level, in order to organize for common needs and around common issues.

We seek an economic system that will be controlled socially through these cooperative structures that distributes our social products according to need and desires. We thus call for a social revolution where our lives, work, and products themselves are transformed, rather than merely a political revolution where capitalist production is redistributed, rearranged, or repartitioned.

However, the elite classes will not give up their privileges without a fight and will use violence, lies, withholding of resources and whatever other means of maintaining the state, capitalism and other forms of privilege and oppression. There will also likely be various parties and organizations that may try to co-opt the broad struggle of the oppressed classes by trying to centralize power in their hands supposedly “on behalf of” the revolutionary struggle. The popular revolutionary struggle of the oppressed classes must defend its autonomy against both these elite classes and against any political groups trying to use a revolution for their narrow benefit.

The revolutionary struggle must be organized to defend itself. Popular self-defense groups should be formed accountable to and controlled directly by the democratic councils and assemblies of their communities. While defense of our struggle will likely necessitate violence; all violence must seek to end systems and manifestations of oppression, not violence that seeks to reintroduce or recreate systems of oppression with different oppressors. Our goal is the liberation of humanity, and the tactical use of violence that reproduces authoritarian relationships is its antipathy.

It’s impossible to know how such a system will come into being; whether it will arise in our area and spread, or emerge across a network of regions, or through a large collapse of established power. Despite this we affirm the need for world-wide revolution. We are convinced however for the need to both advocate and build our alternative, and that we cannot allow capitalism or statist systems to survive when popular power becomes dominant. Whatever shifts occur as the revolution is expanded and defended, it must always stay within our view that our task is to go as deep as possible in creating living breathing anarchist alternatives within the popular process.

The role of members of our revolutionary organization in this struggle is one of equals making arguments and seeking influence through participation within the popular revolutionary struggle; as active militants on behalf of the directly democratic revolutionary struggles; and trying to defend against those who would seek to dominate within these popular revolutionary struggles through coercion or by seeking to institute systems of control, domination or exploitation.

We seek to build horizontal movements that reflect the complexities inherent in a revolutionary struggle — open revolutionary movements that combat capitalist exploitation and interlinked systems of oppression. Consequently we seek to critically engage with the traditions of anar-

chism and communism, as well as feminism, queer liberation, and anti-racism, all of which offer important insights in the fight against capitalism.

## Capitalism

We are against all forms of capitalist exploitation whether private, state or self-managed. We wish to live according to the ideals of solidarity, mutual aid and free association in a classless, stateless and wage-free society – From each according to their ability, to each according to their need!

Capitalism is an economic system of organized class oppression and exploitation.

Capitalism is primarily a social relationship between classes that must work, and the classes that direct and employ. It is a relationship that is reproduced at every level of society by workers, managers, and bosses, within the workplace and everywhere else.

A class of capitalists own and control the factories, shops, apartment buildings, land, and other vital resources. Through direct control of all of society's resources and wealth, the capitalist class enforces its dictatorship upon us. Instead of free access to the resources of society, the vast majority of people are forced to bargain for them with our own bodies – we sell our time, labor, bodies and minds at a negotiated price, a wage, in exchange for a share of these resources. But the process of working for the capitalist is a process of value creation, thereby enhancing their wealth. We are only given a small portion of the value that we create for the capitalists in exchange the portions of our lives sacrificed. Often this is barely enough to access food, water, and housing, though even beyond the necessities the working class is robbed of the joys of life through the poverty of capitalism's offerings filtered through the dizzying array of profit-driven amusements. Our lives and time are used up reluctantly in the ebb and flow of capital's cycles.

Capitalism can only be sustained by increasing profit through increasing production and draining more wealth from the oppressed classes domestically and globally, as well as the Earth. This relentless drive for profits has caused capital to overlook human and environmental devastation in the pursuit of short term gains.

The capitalists' efforts to increase control over work to extract greater wealth as well as expanding the power of the state has led to the creation of various layers within the economy of managers and elite professionals who staff the hierarchies of the corporations and the institutions of the state. Management is a tool of repression and policing in the workplace, speeding up our work and keeping the interests of the owners as the driving force on the job. Elite professionals who dominate social institutions are the agents of ruling class hegemony. The subordination of the working class to the capitalists and their bureaucratic layers of functionaries is a system of exploitation because it denies us control over our lives and subordinates life to the meaningless drive for profit.

In the process of building a class that can only survive through selling its time and labor, capitalism locked others from the workforce. Some, who are overwhelmingly dominated peoples, are held in near permanent unemployment or swallowed by the prison system, which are overwhelmingly people of color, while others like housewives help contribute to society's wealth and the reproduction of the labor force, but aren't paid for it. Alongside the working class exist classes of people who either have been driven from the workplace, and pushed away from it by the misery of capitalism. Alongside the regular economy a grey economy of disenfranchised

workers exist, creating products and hawking them to get by. Whole towns of the US exist with generations of permanently unemployed workers, discarded by capitalism's thirst for profit and domination. Even within the workforce some have managed to escape wage labor, but continue to experience exploitation of their labor without being employers. We call these classes the dominated and exploited classes. There is a natural unity of these classes in their struggles against capitalism and the state, however this does not mean that there are no contradictions, enmities, or real conflicts between dominated class forces in society. Ultimately it is the working class who has the ability to create a freer society through its production of all the goods of society. Yet alongside the working class, must be the revolutionary forces of the dominated classes ravaged by alienation and capitalism, and uniting behind an increasingly isolated and disjointed North American working class. Globalized production, attacks on the power of the American working class, and anti-social elements of the working class itself have threatened a revolutionary movement. Our objective is to fight based on strategic assessments, social ruptures, and revolutionary potentials and not merely logical arguments based on structures, potentials, and aspirations.

Not everyone who is in a class is conscious of this. In fact the opposite is true.

There is a difference between the class you are in objectively, and how you perceive yourself and the way you behave. In practice, we see a world of infinite divisions, continuously blurred and reorganized by capitalists and the state, and oppressed classes divided for innumerable reasons. People of these classes often have contradictory ideas about themselves, their work, and their class. Ruling class ideas are reproduced and transmitted both through its institutions, and through the relationships and perpetuation of those ideas within families, communities, and between individuals. At the same time the struggles, organizations, and experiences of people as collectivities create and facilitate ideas which break from ruling class thinking. We recognize however that alongside progressive and even revolutionary thought in the dominated classes, other reactionary and repressive ideologies exist and can develop. The battle of ideas isn't simply between working class and ruling class ideas, but an open and contested field of potential consciousness amongst which anarchists must intervene. It is our goal to help build a conscious united class acting in its interest out of a class divided.

We organize to build class unity through struggle, and build a united working class movement for the abolition of classes altogether. We recognize that only through the unity of the dominated and exploited classes against capital and the state will the abolition of exploitation and oppression for all be possible, it is only through building common struggle and class organization that we will succeed.

## **The State**

The state is an institution of minority class rule reproduced as a social relationship throughout society. This power is maintained both by a monopoly of violence, and through the transmission and reproduction of statist power relationships throughout society. Though violence is the most obvious form of state power, we are closest to its power in our relationships to authority in our homes, workplaces, and schools where direct violence by the state plays a different role. The power of the state is maintained by systems and networks of consent more than by force. The modern capitalist state as we know it co-developed with capitalism in Western Europe and has spread to nearly everywhere across the globe, and in almost all instances sided with economic

power against the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population. Today, the state itself is one of the largest actors in a capitalist market. While the state expresses the interests of those controlling it, that does not mean that the ruling class is always unified. We see as various figures and groupings have taken the reigns of state apparatuses they have used the state to develop and transform some sectors of the economy often against the interests of other segments of capital and use the state as a vehicle to align and compete with other state actors. The ideologies and rhetoric that have accompanied these efforts have often had disorienting and debilitating effects on revolutionary and working class movements as well. But what should be clear is that both struggles within the ruling class, and the need for perpetual reformist cooptation to contain threats from struggles from below make the state a shifting and contested site of power. The ruling class and the state are therefore not identical.

We seek a social revolution that will overthrow the state and capitalism. Yet a society-wide transformation can't happen overnight, since we have seen that the state is inside us as well. Without an internal transformation, we will continue to reproduce the dominating and exploitative relations of the state and capital daily. It is only through the process of collective struggle that we can both draw out the potential for change and sow the seed of its realization.

To organize a revolutionary society, we must have working class institutions that replace the necessary functions which the state and capital distorted and monopolized.

Historically these have taken form in horizontally organized councils in the workplace and in communities. Rather than a coercive professional institution of class rule, we see the future of humanity in institutions of direct democracy organized without classes or institutionalized hierarchies. We think these forms have value, but we believe that the working class, being a creative and dynamic entity, will likely create new and innovative forms of self-activity and self-management.

While defending ourselves in revolution and achieving greater stability, the re-organization of society for human needs and desires rather than the profit-driven production of capitalism will increasingly become our task.

Although we support struggles for improvements in our situation, how changes are fought for makes a difference. We oppose a strategy for social change centered on elections and lobbying because it focuses on political leaders making decisions through the state rather than building mass movements, solidarity, and collective direct action. Because the state is an institution built to serve dominating, exploiting class, there is no hope for the liberation of the working class through the capture of the state or making new states.

## **Internationalism & Imperialism**

Imperialism is a system where the state and elite classes of some countries use their superior economic and military power to dominate and exploit the people and resources of other countries. The imperialist powers drain wealth from less powerful countries through debt, corporate investment, unequal power in trade, and military intervention. And while most of the world is nominally free from direct rule by imperialist nations, much of the same relations exist as neo-colonial relationships which are masked by local rule, as expressed by international domination implemented by local bourgeoisie to their benefit.

We support popular struggles against military, economic and cultural expressions of imperialism.

Today, modern warfare, combined with modern science, is used to pursue ever increasing means of torment for humanity. War is increasingly waged, not merely on bodies, but on the minds, hearts, and land of dominated people. Torture, rape, genocide, poisoning and destroying of land are the mark of our time. Only through eradicating the root cause which drives countries to imperialist aggression, will we see an end to limitless war.

Our fight is both internal and external. Internally we fight the foundations of the imperialist economy and state which provides the basis for imperialism. Externally we seek to build concrete unity, through action and solidarity with movements that struggle to end imperialism and capitalism. In countries with peoples resisting invasion or domination by the major capitalist powers, we support movements of the oppressed classes in these countries, not their local states or local elites. We don't support the national bourgeoisie and bureaucracies in their bid for power in these struggles. The history of the completed revolutions throughout Latin America, Africa, and the globe demonstrate the peril and vital mistake in supporting these forces.

In situations where a "national liberation movement" aims to oust a pro-imperialist leadership in a country or fight an occupation, we support movements of workers, peasants, and others of the popular classes in their struggle against imperialism, but not the state-building project of a "national liberation" political party. Self-determination requires the autonomy of the popular organizations from the ruling classes and party bureaucracies. Any liberation of a region must be based on the class struggle of the popular classes against capitalism itself, and not a recomposition of the ruling class within a territorial nation.

Imperialism can only be brought to an end by a social and economic transformation throughout the planet, which eliminates the system of competing states and exploitative class systems. Humanity needs to develop a new form of world association that respects the autonomy and differences of all communities or ethnic groups while allowing for democratic decision-making, rooted in grassroots institutions such as delegate congresses, to resolve global problems.

Economic interdependence and global capitalist power means that working people need solidarity across borders. A revolution that can liberate the working class from capitalist oppression needs to spread across national boundaries.

We develop and maintain international relationships, solidarity, and discussions to build a united revolutionary movement.

## **White Supremacy & Anti-Racism**

White supremacy has historically developed intertwined with capitalism and is reproduced in all social relationships and practiced by all institutions to differing degrees. The United States developed a system of capitalism constructed with racial domination of displaced, enslaved, colonized and oppressed peoples that today manifests itself as a set of complex hierarchical social relationships within the entire society. Whiteness, itself, was developed through this long history of oppression as a tool to justify the widespread theft of land and resources, the dehumanizing hyper exploitation of labor and destruction of the societies from which they were violently uprooted. Racist ideologies and policies continually develop not only to rationalize the injustices and horrors perpetrated; but also as an attempt to undermine the potential of inter-racial solidar-

ity among the popular classes against the common domination and exploitation that they face. This historically constructed and socially-maintained cross-class alliance of the white working classes and white elites is a key factor in upholding white supremacy and preventing the entire working class from collectively organizing to advance their larger interests and those of humanity.

We reject a class reductionist position that ignores the specific ways that racial oppression distinguishes the experiences of racially-oppressed peoples from whites regardless of other commonalities. We also reject the race reductionist position that ignores the ways that class, gender, sexuality and other forms of oppression distinguish experiences, and the many forms of racial oppression manifest in people's daily lives. While the larger structure and reality of white supremacy remains, we also see the emergence of an increasingly globalized and multiracial ruling class. In the face of this we see the need for new and deeper thinking and work from a revolutionary perspective which moves beyond the traditional black-white binary of race. We recognize the significant insights and contributions of identity-based theories and movements. However, we reject the individualistic, guilt-based interpretations and tendencies often found within antiracist work. Rather, we recognise the need for complete dismantling of the capitalistic hierarchical structures upon which white supremacy is based.

We believe that race, class and other forms of oppression in the United States are intrinsically connected to and interact with each other, and they effect different groups of people differently. We recognize that there are historically complex social relationships between and within communities of color and do not assume inevitable or inherent racial solidarity between people of color. These ongoing and evolving divisions, hierarchies and prejudices amongst racially-oppressed peoples were initiated by, and are fundamental to, the overall system of white supremacy. Further, the long history of betrayal, disrespect, hostility and conscious oppression by working class whites against racially-oppressed peoples reaffirm our respect and support for people of color who desire to struggle autonomously. However our support for self-determination will never be a compromising, tokenistic, patronizing or blind support that justifies and backs any actions of autonomous race-based formations; but rather should be supported based on common struggles and principles tied to a respect, humility and degree of deference in areas in which one is not directly affected. We believe that experimentation is needed to develop tools and practices which will aid in the development of a genuine multi-racial, working class movement in the US. We believe that building such a movement is the task of all serious anti-racist, anti-statist, and anti-capitalist revolutionaries.

## **Patriarchy & Queer Liberation**

Queer liberation is the struggle against queer oppression that manifests itself through homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and other forms of domination.

It intersects with other forms of oppression, as well as manifesting its own forms of systemic, cultural and personal oppression. We support the struggles of working class queers, especially LGBTQ youth, in their fight for free sexuality between consenting adults; free gender expression; equal and appropriate access to health care and other social institutions and other struggles for respect. We also support working class queers' opposition to "queer assimilation" – which is a cross-class alliance – and support the struggle for an autonomous movement that is not co-



opted by the state, capitalism and privileged classes that try to dominate the queer movement. We believe those who are privileged by patriarchy are still oppressed by it and will be liberated by working against it by supporting such autonomous movements.

We reject patriarchy: the system of male domination, heteronormativity, and gender oppression. Through our rejection of patriarchy we also reject the gender binary as well as any biological or social basis for sexism. The categories of man and woman are socially constructed gender roles that we reject because of their historical context has led to material realities of oppression that we define as heteronormativity. We intend to fight sexism both when it takes economic and non-economic form, such as through familial roles, rape culture, and unwaged labor. Systems of hierarchy reinforced through capitalism and the state make gender liberation impossible, and therefore we see issues of patriarchy as taking part in a larger system of socio-economic oppression, the most classic example being women often suffering under capitalism for working a “double day”. Both institutions require strict adherence to prescribed roles and inequality within those roles, and they include set gender, sexual, and behavioral norms.

Through this we challenge heteronormativity and the assumption of standardized expressions of sexuality and gender, and support the free development of people’s identity and relationships. Both queer and women’s oppression are part of the same system of male dominance, and as such we oppose the oppression of queer and transgender people. We do this by confronting patriarchy in social movement spaces, defending reproductive health for all genders.

We stand in solidarity with the autonomous organizations of women as a critical area of anti-capitalist struggle. The defeat of patriarchy is a victory for working class people of all genders and sexualities (or no gender/sexuality).

## **Ableism**

As “disability” and “ability” are often designations which can change depending on social context, we strive to make our and the other organizations with which we work maximally accessible for all people.

We oppose hierarchies and judgments of human worth based upon differences in physical or mental ability, structure or functioning. Everyone has the right to be accepted and understood on their own terms, and should not have to live with the labels imposed externally by others.

In relation to mental illness, we recognize that many mental differences cause significant impairment of life functioning and are experienced as illness, and we advocate support and treatment without stigma. Mental health services today are often dehumanizing and disempowering, and we seek a society in which those with mental health needs are cared for in a manner which respects their dignity.

As capitalism only values those who can help create a profit, those who cannot help make a profit due to physical or mental differences often are stigmatized, locked out of the workforce, impoverished, denied care and made homeless. We seek an Anarchist-Communist society where everyone is fully materially supported and free to contribute to society in their own way.

## Ecology

To achieve a healthy and sustainable relationship between humanity and the rest of the living world, we must create a society which, while based on the satisfaction of social needs such as food, shelter, water, and community, balances and reintegrates human desires and needs with the ecological imperatives of the rest of the biosphere. We recognize that the survival and well-being of humanity is dependent on the health and well-being of the Earth and its ecosystems of interconnected non-human life. We acknowledge humanity's responsibility to realize an ecological social revolution that would liberate both humanity and nature from capitalism and domination.

The current crisis of ecological disruption, species extinction and climate change that is reshaping the world is a crisis of capitalism – a system that depends on constant cycles of accumulation, expansion and destruction, prioritizing profit. Capitalism organizes Nature, both human and non-human life, to work for low expenditures of money and energy. It seeks to expand its frontiers towards commodification through the intertwined processes of accumulation of capital, the greater appropriation of labor, and the greater appropriation of nature. Capital mobilizes the work of nature, by simultaneously exploiting human work, structured between “paid” and “unpaid” labor, and by harnessing the “forces of nature” into production for profit. Human and non-human life alike suffer the exploitation, domination, and destruction this capital expansion entails. Capitalism maintains this through imposing social hierarchies which limit human freedom, violate human needs, and greatly diminish biodiversity.

Among humans, Indigenous groups, people of color, working-class populations, and women experience greater immediate impacts from environmental degradation and disaster. Throughout North America, this historic colonization has and continues to wreak ecological destruction, from the deforestation of the U.S. southeast for plantation agriculture and the decimation of 95% of old growth forests in the U.S., through uranium, coal, oil, and gas extraction on indigenous lands in the U.S. and Canada. In the U.S., this ecological destruction is reinforced through environmental racism, in which people of color and migrant workers are disproportionately affected by toxic contamination; where these communities are often historically segregated in Locally Unwanted Land Uses (LULUs) zones, set by State policies that determine zoning, land use, and environmental ‘regulations.’ These communities are located near coal-fired power plants, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, toxic waste sites, incinerators, refineries, or other highly polluting industries. People of color and migrants often work in unsafe conditions within these industries and are daily exposed to these hazardous materials. From lead poisoning and carcinogenic water contamination in Flint, Michigan (2014), the oil refinery toxins in Houston exacerbated by Hurricane Harvey (2017), the air-pollution disaster from Chevron’s refinery in Richmond, California (1989, 1999, 2012), to the petrochemical water pollution from Hurricane Katrina (2005) and the BP Deepwater Horizon Spill in the Gulf of Mexico (2010), communities of color located in these heavily industrialized zones are left without the toxic cleanup needed to restore public health and repair environmental damage. Accelerating climate change has further impacted these racialized communities, who are the first and hardest hit, as well as contributed to the dire situation of migrant laborers, many of whom are “climate refugees” fleeing ecological disasters. We support struggles within these communities for environmental and climate justice, including the need for urban and rural ecological policies to adapt to and mitigate climate change; to clean up and rebuild our urban and rural areas in balance with nature, while honoring the cultural integrity

of human society; and providing fair access for all to the full range of material and scientific resources.

Amidst the great unevenness of capitalist maldevelopment, we recognize that the core-industrial societies are responsible for ecological and social crimes against the people of the Global South, both historically and presently, due to ongoing relations of neo-colonialism and ecological extraction. Capitalist oppression and exploitation is at its starkest in the plundering of the resources of the global South by the wealthy economies of the global North, as seen in the Niger Delta, laid waste for petroleum extraction; the Amazonian and Indonesian rainforests, which have been largely deforested to make way for cattle and cash crops such as soy and palm oil; and the ports of Southern countries—such as the infamous ship-breaking yards of Chittagong, Bangladesh—through which flow vast quantities of electronic, chemical, radiological, and other hazardous wastes. Such boundless devastation echoes the historical capitalist practice of using African slave labor in Brazil and the Caribbean to clear rainforests to plant sugar cane, and the parallel clear-cutting of rainforests in Veracruz following the imposition of industrial capitalism in the last third of the nineteenth century.

We also note that the impacts of climate change have become increasingly acute, leading to greater climate disruption and increasing instances of extreme weather. As we see with the food crises in Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, and South Sudan, as well as recent mass-flooding events in South Asia and West Africa, such shifts have provoked famines, exacerbated disease, forced large populations into migration, and greatly disrupted public health conditions. We can only expect this to worsen under “business as usual.” While revolutionary forces can respond to the increased social and political instability and inequality that follows by raising deeper questions and making connections between social and ecological issues, capitalist forces can be expected to continue passing the misery and costs of the ecological crisis onto the most marginalized, including the oppressed of today and future generations.

Now that capitalist development has spread to all corners of the earth, it has precipitated multiple global environmental crises that are potentially so massive they threaten the long-term survival of humanity and the majority of biological life as we currently know it. This reality makes all the more important the global solidarity which we seek to nurture and advance between workers in industrial economies and urban regions and those of rural and agricultural-based regions.

We recognize that revolutionary social transformation is essential to creating ecological balance. To ensure that this transformation nourishes biodiversity and sustainability, we support the autonomy of the human and nonhuman world, including that of other species, entailing their liberation from labor exploitation and commodified resource extraction. This necessity of social transformation stands in opposition to ideologies based solely on volunteer-oriented lifestyle changes, such as recycling, consumer boycotts, and bicycling more; ideologies that romanticize pre-industrial societies; or pseudo-ecosocialist approaches such as those adopted by the “Pink Tide” governments of South America as cover for the extractivism they have greatly accelerated, from the Belo Monte megadam to Yasuní National Park. Furthermore, we express our rejection of the global non-governmental industry that has arisen to provide false solutions for the mitigation of and adaptation to the climate and environmental crises as well as of the mainstream scientific community’s reluctance to clearly communicate the urgency of the moment, though we acknowledge an increasingly vocal militant minority of concerned scientists.

Transforming social and ecological relations is interdependently linked with the ability to transform the production process. Workplaces are not divorced from communities, or from the Earth. Struggles for control within the workplace have the capacity to transform the production system. Instead of production geared towards profit, production can be organized according to human needs and ecological balance. Workers, especially in alliance with local communities, can decentralize exchange, production, and consumption in ways that are ecologically sustainable and non-exploitative. In decentralizing social production, workers can reorganize and coordinate these processes along bioregional lines through a global federation of ecological communities and self-managed workplaces. A crucial part of the required social transformation to a post-capitalist and ecological social order is the question of control over resources and land: by replacing private and state ownership over natural resources with forms of collective and social ownership, we will begin to have a say in how resources, land, and technology are used, and how they impact humans and the non-human world.

## Unionism

The working class does not develop the capacity to liberate itself overnight. Through a more or less protracted process, working people can break from fatalism and habits of going along with hierarchy, overcome divisions (such as along lines of race or gender), and develop the skills and self-confidence, solidarity, and organizational strength to challenge the capitalist regime.

The economy would grind to a halt without our work. This is the main source of the collective power of the working class. Large-scale actions such as general strikes builds in the working class a sense of our collective power. Self-management of struggles, unions and other mass organizations develops in the participants a sense of confidence in our abilities and of our capacity for running things ourselves.

Unionism has had two tendencies in history. At times workers have developed their own grassroots workplace unionism, where they act “in union” with each other, and control their own struggles with their employer – worker controlled unionism.

On the other hand, there has also been a tendency towards bureaucratic unionism, controlled by paid hierarchies who don’t work the job. The bureaucratic type of unionism became strongly entrenched in the US and elsewhere after World War 2. Unions limited their focus to narrow issues of pay and benefits, and routine bargaining, sector by sector. The general strikes and pitched battles of the years before World War 2 became a fading memory. The bureaucracy came to monopolize the negotiations with the employers, and encouraged workers to look to politicians for solutions to broader issues beyond narrow collective bargaining. Workers were encouraged to look at the union as a service agency.

The paid hierarchies tend to be allergic to militant action, wanting to minimize legal and financial risks to the union organization. They work to contain struggles within the framework of longstanding relationships with the employers.

The alternative to bureaucratic unionism is to rebuild worker counter-power through the assertion of the tendency to grassroots worker action and organization independent of the union bureaucracies and political parties.

The form of unionism that we advocate is worker controlled class unionism. Class unionism means organizing to unite all workers in a fight against the dominating classes. This form of

unionism is built up from below, but does not limit itself to fighting over the circumstances of life of the workers in a particular company or industry, but works to build links and solidarity with other working people.

Class unionism is particularly visible in mass actions such as general strikes against the state or all the employers. Worker controlled class unionism is self-managed by the members, is built on mass participation, and works to spread solidarity and link up across divisions of sector, income-level or across borders. Class unionism is based on class solidarity, which is encapsulated in the slogan An Injury to One is an Injury to All. This means that the injuries that are due to various forms of oppression (such as along lines of race, sex or immigration status) cannot be ignored.

Thus the type of unionism that we advocate is controlled by the members, works to spread solidarity and links between workers, bases itself on direct collective action, fights all forms of inequality and oppression, and rejects any idea of partnership with the bosses.

The working class cannot liberate itself unless workers take over the means of production and distribution. This presupposes the development of a worker mass movement that has a history and practice of self-managing struggles and their own organizations, and, along with it, the aspiration to replace the existing industrial autocracy with self-management in a free socialist society. The emergence of worker controlled class unionism on a wide scale creates the potential for this liberatory transformation of society.

To transform the labor movement, we support efforts to build worker controlled unions independent of the bureaucratic union federations. At the same time, the bureaucratic unions exist in a number of important industries. We can't ignore or remain aloof from the bureaucratic business unions as long as workers in fact use them as a means to self-defense against the employers. We have to participate in these unions and organize within them. To this end, we support the building of rank and file worker movements or tendencies in the context of these unions but independent of the bureaucracy. The sort of rank and file movement we favor should not aim to simply elect a different leadership of the business unions but should aim at changing the labor movement into a social movement based on mass participation, solidarity, member control, and the struggle for fundamental social change.

## Direct Action

Direct action simply means to act directly for yourself rather than having an intermediate perform the task for you, such as in the representative state. This will ultimately mean the expropriation of the current capitalist forms of property and government, and restructuring and redistributing resources based on the direct decision making of the people. We believe that collective direct action is the most potent force for social change as it bypasses institutional barriers and allows participants to take active control over their lives and communities, which genuinely empowers people and foreshadows the way in which a positive society will function. In this way we are opposed to electoral politics in principle as they maintain convention and class domination and do not inhabit the spirit of direct democracy.

Our position on direct action does not mean that we will not take on other tactics, or be accountable to other groups with whom we are working, but it does mean that we believe direct action is the most effective form of action and fundamental to the transformation of society and those involved.

## Federalism

We are committed to the organizational principles of federalism in that we support the free association of individuals and organizations, as well as the balance between autonomy and unity. This freedom to associate between individuals and groups will also mean the freedom to disassociate at will, allowing communities and organizations to understand their own needs and meet these according to their own character. This is different than organizations that use centralism, where a centralized group dictates for a range of regional organization ideology and practices. We see this as unable to meet the needs of the community or represent the diversity that those communities may hold, and therefore centralism takes on authoritarian modes that we identify with statist politics. Instead we support direct democracy and decentralism in an effort to keep people as directly involved in the decision making process both in the organization and the larger socio-political landscape. A degree of unity among anarchists is necessary in opposition to centralism. We favor accountability and compromise via voluntary association.

## Libertarian Socialism

To liberate itself from subordination to dominating classes, workers must seize control of the places where they work and directly manage all of the industries. Workers self-management needs to be part of a coordinated system of production geared to producing for direct human benefit, not private profit — self-managed socialism.

Self-management means that people control the decisions to the extent they are affected by them. The basic building blocks of a self-managed society would be assemblies of workers in workplaces and of residents in neighborhoods. A self-managing society needs a governance structure through which the people make and enforce the basic rules of the society and defend working class power.

Because the state is always an institution of class domination, self-emancipation requires that the working class replace the state with a governance structure rooted in the direct democracy of the assemblies and its extension in the delegate democracy of federations of the base organizations.

We envision congresses of delegates elected by the base assemblies that would have the basic power of making decisions about social rules and society-wide priorities. For important or controversial decisions, there should be a right of those at the base to force the proposal to be sent back to the base assemblies for decision.

The hierarchical professional military should be replaced by an egalitarian people's militia. During the process of social transformation, we are opposed to any armed bodies that are not under the direct control of the working class mass organizations. The working class needs to make sure that when the dust settles there's not some top-down armed power that can be used by an elite to defend some new system of boss power. The transformation of society that we seek isn't limited to breaking down the power of dominating classes. The revolution must also unravel the state, patriarchy, white supremacy, and imperialism.

Replacing jobs with socially useful labor and getting rid of dangerous or polluting technology will be priorities in a social transformation that aims at human liberation and ecological survival. Liberation from class domination means systematically developing the potential of all working

people, and dissolving the power of the bureaucratic managerial hierarchies. To ensure that everyone can effectively participate in decision-making, jobs need to be completely transformed so that conceptual and decision-making tasks are integrated with the tasks of doing the physical work.

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