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The April Document

from Militant Kindergarten

Center for Especifismo Studies

April 20, 2023

Political education provides the knowledge to understand an organization's political line. In Militant Kindergarten, we are not producing a political line. We are preparing ourselves to form and defend political lines. We do this by studying the political line of the FARJ, presented in *Social Anarchism and Organisation*. We benefit from the continuity of ideology in this text because it allows us to determine our relationship to it. Without that continuity of thought, Militant Kindergarten would just be another reading group trying to sort through any number of discordant ideas and texts. Instead, we have access to a movement with cumulative international force. For this reason, we see our own efforts as part of this especifismo current of anarchism.

To participate in this collective study, you don't have to consider yourself a militant. In fact, the concept itself may be completely new to you. The Center for Especifismo Studies aims to teach people about militancy and why it is necessary for revolutionary politics. In this way, people who have contact with our organization will be in a better position to choose their own relationship to militant action. Our collective study does not require

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supporters to assume a militant commitment but instead aims to better prepare the most active participants to support or militate for revolutionary class struggle in their own contexts.

Political education should be a constant task of any political organization because new militants will always need to be educated to fully participate in complex discussions. It takes time to learn how to use the relevant theory and terminology. As a unifying and communicative tool, theory allows an organization to be both secure and effective. It is secure because the study required to learn a collectively derived theory cannot be faked or skipped. And it is effective because it is formed not only in action and reflection but also in teaching and learning. So, our theory is itself formed through political education.

On the social level, political education can politicize a lot of people but does not guarantee the presence of a learning station in the struggle, a space explicitly maintained for continuing militant theoretical formation. On the political level, education can easily fall into sectarian patterns if it does not provide viable ways for new people to reinforce their affinity to the organization and learn about its political line. We think there are missing steps between the forms of education on the political and social levels, and Militant Kindergarten positions itself in this middle-ground.

Militant Kindergarten organizes a group of people, with different levels of political and theoretical experience, to interact with a text. Pedagogically, this guarantees possibilities for forming new connections to the text, to each other, and to our own knowledge and capacity. This organisation provides the continuity of structure necessary to develop practical relationships based on trust and respect. All the participants engaged in learning at this station take part in “holding the station”, allowing people the possibility of increasing their commitment freely.

The Center for Especificismo Studies uses a conception of class that is based on an analysis of power relations in overlapping spheres of social life. The fronts of struggle which may not

ping off when short- term wins are accomplished. An active political level permits supporters of the political organization to focus on struggles taking place on the social level, and the presence of the anarchist political line in mass movements and popular struggles keeps people who can't be openly out as anarchists from being cut off from organized anarchism. They may benefit from statements and analyses published by the political organization. They may be in need of solidarity from revolutionaries.

We aim to make the flows of social movements bigger and the ebbs smaller until a time when they form a popular power capable of transforming society through self-management, causing a rupture with class-based society. For this reason, during times of demobilization and depoliticization, we are against tactics that try to scoop people up to join a political party or sect that plans to only focus on its own project. Revolutionary militancy should not be removed from the popular manifestations of class struggle. The political organization is not a vanguard that considers itself a beam of light ready to illuminate the social level. In especificismo, the social level is not considered a dark space in need of torch bearers. The active minority is more like a small motor than a flashlight. It forms a locomotive force moving from station to station. This is why we need stations specifically for studying. It is not about convincing everybody of an idea but instead allowing people space and time to learn enough about an idea to determine their own relationship to it. This ensures anarchist ideas stay connected to and continue to be formed by real people and real struggles.

For us, mutual aid, like education and propaganda, is not sufficient on its own to systematically meet society's needs and produce a revolutionary rupture with the ruling class order. We consider the increasing presence of mutual aid, revolutionary propaganda, and militant educational efforts to be indicative of a strengthening desire for a popular organization capable of addressing the necessities which are particular to this historical moment.

Anarchism is a political practice that is made possible by the ideological unity of the specific anarchist organization. FARJ says that the characteristics of this organization are "force, class struggle perspective, combativeness, autonomy, direct action, direct democracy and revolutionary perspective". And the social transformation that we seek requires the generation, accumulation, and mobilization of a popular social force supported by a "tripod of factors": necessity, will, and organization. Today, when people in our communities are not getting their needs met to such an obvious degree, we see the potential for organized struggle and collective will. The destination of this struggle is libertarian socialism, a society organized around need, which will allow for the full realization of the will of individuals, where economic exploitation, political domination, and cultural oppression have been eliminated.

Forming different groupings of tendency can be an important tactic for organizing the active minority, but there is a difference between the accumulation of struggle and the generation of struggle. Such a tendency could certainly take a first step in organizing a social movement, but the accumulation of that movement isn't only produced by that first step. Only an ethical organisation practicing organizational dualism could create a social movement popular enough to become a transformative social force.

The unifying thing at the social level is the struggle for material needs. Unlike the political organization, the popular organisation cannot consist of a single ideological perspective. Nevertheless, on the political level, maintaining an ideologically informed long-term vision is essential to militancy. It prevents people drop-

appear revolutionary to a strictly economic understanding of class are viewed quite differently from an anarchist conception of class. Marxists tend to refer to scientific socialism, implying that effective theory and ideology will improve and change each other over time. But for anarchists, ideology is the set of values we hold, including utopian ideals, which stay mostly the same over time, though they are deepened and refined by practice. Theory, on the other hand, is the way we understand things, what kind of connections we draw, how we organize what we see. It is the tool we use to produce conjunctural political analysis so that we can understand the current moment and its composing elements.

In Militant Kindergarten we have continually returned to these points about theory:

- Theory organizes and defines.
- Theory cannot be imported.
- Theory should update obsolete ideological aspects.
- Theory should be produced and distributed.

We use theory to answer the question: where are we? And we use ideology to answer the question: where do we want to go? The "line" of the political organization is a path away from where we are toward where we want to be. Publicly articulating this line creates transparency to prospective supporters and communities with which the political organization is cooperating. This is important when interacting with reformists on the social level because it makes clear the militant priority of defending an explicitly revolutionary strategy and defends against the loss of anarchist militants to reformism.

Answering theoretical and strategic questions on the political level is not something that a single individual can do. The line of the political organization must be discussed and formed within the organization so as to maximize its usefulness for collective action. Militant Kindergarten is a rigorous study, done as a group, specifically to break away from the individualist practices that we tend to operate with in North America. However, getting people to this

station is not the solution; the effectiveness of our political education depends on how the practices influenced by it develop and whether they produce new theory or not.

Theory should be a reflection of practice, both because its content should mirror practical experience and because its objective should be to analyze and improve practice through reviewing the content of these experiences. However, this reflection isn't a priority of mass movements which mobilize around short cycles of struggle determined by need. On the social level, short-term objectives are winnable, but since they depend on popular unity, they allow less room for ideological development. The political level is the place for struggling to articulate and refine unified ideology as well as the place for theoretical reflection on practice. And through this process of reflection, revolutionary theory deepens revolutionary ideology. Therefore, theory is itself a cycle.

We consider anarchist militancy to be an ethical practice. The political organization should be aligned with social movements, not trying to gain control or instrumentalize them. Nevertheless, it should work towards the non-rejection, and ideally the acceptance, of its ideas in popular struggles. For us, anarchist propaganda is a practice of social influence through the diffusion of liberatory history, ideology, and methodology. This kind of social work consists of movement through contested spaces, from one station in the struggle to another, carefully navigating spaces that don't outright reject anarchist ideas while continuing to work toward broader acceptance.

Metaphorically, we can say that propaganda is a tool in the toolbox of theory. It is useful for some tasks and not for others, but it must always be paired with other actions. Like education, propaganda is not an end and will never lead to revolutionary rupture on its own. We use the verb "propagate" to help us understand propaganda as something we do, and not something we have. Propaganda work should uplift popular protagonism, not political protagonism. That is to say that it should popularize class struggle

and not just promote one brand, station, or organization to the exclusion of the masses. Propaganda needs to be recognizable on the social level in order to play an active role in defending and promoting the struggles of the dominated, exploited, and oppressed. If revolutionary ideas can effectively circulate in more places, they can progress real struggles in productive ways.

Documentation of struggle and public presentation of this history are forms of propaganda that can be produced by the political organization. In the flow of this information from the political to the social level, people can decide for themselves what to do with it and how to interact with the political organization. You need a good understanding of militant commitment to be able to recognize its importance and engage with it freely, not coercively or only out of fear. It is the ethical and organized qualities of this kind of political propaganda which distinguishes it from "hot takes".

Social work propagates revolutionary ideas. The political organization performs social work to gain social insertion which, in turn, makes propaganda more effective. Social insertion is not about ideologizing a movement but rather about ensuring that our revolutionary anarchist perspective is one of the ideological elements present in mass movements and local communities. Social insertion is a long process of engaging in struggle, meeting people, and forming trusting relationships. This is the opposite of manipulative strategies that avoid working on the social level with people of different ideologies. Especificismo is against sectarianism which only commits to working in already friendly spaces. Revolutionary ideas will not become more acceptable if they remain in non-contested stations away from the fronts of class struggle.

Mutual aid is an essential activity during revolutionary struggle, but this work should always be OF the people, not FOR the people, rejecting both the vanguardist and the charity approaches. And since unity of ideology isn't as important for achieving short term gains, a group that is formed to provide mutual aid needs to have a practical unity but not necessarily an ideological unity.