

This Is Common Struggle!

An Introduction To The Libertarian Communist Federation

Libertarian Communist Federation

2001

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Common Struggle / Lucha Común is a bi-lingual (English and Spanish) organization of revolutionaries from the northeastern region of North America who identify with the communist tradition within anarchism. We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation, and struggle for a classless, stateless, non-hierarchical society.

To achieve such a society, we must bring an end to patriarchy, white supremacy and class domination; smash State power; expropriate the wealth of the rich; abolish the wage system and market economy; and socialize the means of production and distribution for the benefit of society as a whole. This means nothing short of social revolution, which can only emerge from autonomous social movements and the revolutionary self-activity of the working class.

REVOLUTION REQUIRES ORGANIZATION

We believe that, if only to wage the ‘battle of ideas’, anarchist organizations are necessary. We reject the vision which reduces the idea of revolution to the authoritarian seizure of power by a centralized party which is believed to be acting in the name of the masses. We know that this vision has led to bloody dictatorships and has nothing to do with real socialism.

Common Struggle is not a party, or a self-proclaimed vanguard, and we do not see ourselves as an organization that will “lead” the anarchist movement, never mind “lead” the working class to social emancipation. We recognize that a successful revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, we believe this must be preceded by organizations able to radicalize mass movements and popular struggles, combat authoritarian and reformist tendencies, act as a forum where ideas and experiences between militants can be discussed, and provide a vehicle for the maximum political impact of anarcho-communist ideas within the working class.

In Common Struggle we think that this activity can be roughly divided into three different areas: study and theoretical development, anarchist agitation and propaganda, and intervention in the class struggle.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO?

Common Struggle was originally named the “Northeastern Federation of Anarchists Communists (NEFAC)”. NEFAC unofficially began over the summer of 1999 as a loose network between English-speaking anarcho-communists from New England and French-speaking anarcho-communists from Quebec who shared a mutual dissatisfaction with the state of the anarchist movement on both sides of the border. In April 2000, NEFAC was officially launched at a conference in Boston, MA. In September 2011, the name was changed to “Common Struggle – Libertarian Communist Federation”.

The federation is organized around the principles of theoretical coherence, tactical unity, collective responsibility and federalism. Our membership is composed of local groups and individuals throughout the region. Our activity (either directly through the federation, or autonomously through our participation within larger grassroots coalitions) has included work in the anti-globalization movement, anti-war activism, international solidarity, prisoner support, workplace and community organizing, anti-fascist struggles, and anti-poverty work. The purpose of the federation is to connect this local activity to a larger strategy of social revolution, and, ultimately, a vision of a libertarian communist future.

Common Struggle is a directly democratic and federalist organization. We are also a membership organization, with dues and certain obligations to one and other. We have a straightforward constitution and members are expected to abide by it. Major decisions are made at annual conferences where every member has one vote and no one has any more say than anyone else. Smaller decisions in between conferences are made by a Delegate Council, a delegate council composed of representatives from each Common Struggle member group (supporter groups are entitled an indicative vote). All delegates are directly accountable to their respective group. Open debate is encouraged; we have no party line or party bosses. We are organized in this way because we believe that the structure of our federation should reflect the kind of society we want to live in: democratic, participatory, accountable, and anti-authoritarian.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Common Struggle has two types of involvement: members and supporters.

A member is any group or individual that agrees with the politics of the federation, fulfills the expectations of membership, and has had their candidature accepted by an annual conference. The federation recognizes two types of membership — group and individual. However, because the libertarian communist vision of society and revolutionary activity is fundamentally collective, individual membership is seen as a temporary measure.

A supporter is any group or individual who agrees with the positions and orientations of the federation, but cannot or does not want to fulfill the membership expectations; supporter status is also a preliminary stage for groups and individuals who expect to eventually apply for full membership.

Whether applying for individual or group membership, the process is essentially the same. First, the interested group or individual needs to contact either the local group which is geographically closest to them or the National Secretary, informing the federation of their interest in joining. Either the closest local group or the Delegate Council can then immediately approve them for supporter status. If supporter status is approved, the group will then be expected to engage in a working relationship with the rest of the federation. If the group so desires, they can then apply for full membership at any subsequent conference. The purpose of the supporter status and the requirement that a supporter group wait until the following conference to apply for membership is to ensure that the groups who join the federation are stable.

Common Struggle is not a large organization, and we have no pretensions about our importance. However, we are convinced enough of our ideas to want to spread them as widely as possible, both by propaganda and involvement in social movements and popular struggles. If you agree with our politics and support our activity, please get in touch!

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