

Constitution of Prairie Struggle Organization

Prairie Struggle

2012

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Preamble

We identify ourselves as anarchists within the platformist tradition, anarchist-communist or es-pecifista tradition of anarchism. We broadly identify with the theoretical base of this tradition and the organizational practice it argues for, but not necessarily everything else it has done or said, so it is a starting point for our politics and not an end point.

The core ideas of this tradition that we identify with are the need for anarchist political organizations that seek to develop:

Theoretical Unity

Theory represents the force which directs the activity of persons and organizations along a defined path towards a determined goal in order to form a coherent political project that anarchists want to put in practice. Hence it needs to be formulated in a determined platform. What's more, to be efficient and to popularize this platform, it needs to be common to the whole of our group. This is theoretical coherence. All activity of the group, both overall and in its details, should be in perfect concord with the theoretical principles professed by our group.

This doesn't mean that everyone has to agree all the time (they won't) but there does need to be a certain amount of ideological unity.

Everyone being 'anarchists' or 'libertarian' isn't enough. If half the group believe in class struggle while the other half don't, then both

sides would benefit from having two smaller groups rather than one big group which spent all its time arguing.

Tactical Unity

A common platform is not enough. Indeed, to implement it, we need to use appropriate means. We believe that these means are not arbitrary; they are determined by the goal to achieve, and the circumstances of the struggle. Tactical Unity means that the members of an organization should struggle together as an organized force rather than as individuals. Once a strategy has been agreed by the collective, all members should work towards ensuring its success; saving resources and time concentrating in a common direction. A common tactical line is important for the existence of the organization and the whole movement. It avoids the disastrous effect of several tactics opposing each other; it concentrates the forces of the movement; and gives them a common direction leading to a fixed objective. The choice of the tactics is not neutral and without consequences. It flows from the goal we decide for ourselves and that's why we advocate tactical unity.

Collective Action and Responsibility

Practice has taught us that the logical consequence of these organizational principles is collective responsibility. The areas of revolutionary life, social and political, are above all profoundly collective by nature. Social revolutionary activity in these areas cannot be based on the personal responsibility of individual militants. Collective Responsibility means each member should take

part in the collective decision-making process and respect the decisions of the collective. If we collectively accept some political positions and a determined line of action, it is in order that each member implement it in their political work. What's more, if we agree on specific work to be done and a way to do it, then we become responsible to one and other for its execution. In the end, collective responsibility is nothing more than the collective method of action.

Federalism

Federalism is an organizational structure based on "the free agreement of individuals and organizations to work collectively towards a common objective". All decisions are made by those effected by them as opposed to centralism, where decisions are made by a central committee for those effected by them.

We recognize a need for anarchist organizations who agree with these principles to federate on an regional, national and international basis. However, we believe the degree of federation possible and the amount of effort put into it must be determined by success at building organizations capable of making such work a reality, rather than a matter of slogans.

Common position

We strive to articulate our position on areas of importance to our organization through detailed position papers. These form the collectively agreed positions of Prairie Struggle. Disagreement and debate around these papers is continuous and they are open to change so we do not expect members to agree with every detail. All members are, however, expected to broadly agree with Prairie Stuggle's constitution and political platform which outline the core of our anarchism;

Common strategies

A major focus of our activity is work at those crucial points where working class people are organizing together for control over their lives, the decisions affecting them, and against oppression. These areas stretch from workplace activity, to neighbourhood activism, an ecology movement that remembers class and in community resistance to forms of oppressions targeting particular identities.

We also see it as vital to work in struggles that happen outside the unions and the workplace. These include struggles against particular oppressions, colonialism, imperialism and indeed the struggles of the working class for a decent place and environment in which to live. Our general approach to these, like our approach to the unions, is to involve ourselves with mass movements and work within these movements in order to promote anarchist methods of organization involving direct democracy and direct action.

We actively oppose all manifestations of oppression such as racism, sexism, [religious] sectarianism and homophobia and we struggle against them. We see the success of a revolution and the successful elimination of these oppressions being determined by the building of such struggles in the pre-revolutionary period. The methods of struggle that we promote are a preparation for the running of society along anarchist and communist lines after the revolution.

1. Name

- a. The name of the group is Prairie Struggle Organization.

2. Membership

- a. To be a member or sympathizer a person can not be a member of the Police/RCMP and must abide by the following.

Full members:

- A full member has to agree with the constitution and platform of the organization
- A full member has to be present at one out of every four meetings at a minimum
- A full member has to pay dues
- A full member has to perform any tasks that he or she takes on within the group

Sympathizer: the basic requirements for sympathizers are:

- To show up for at least one meeting every four months
- Agrees with the basic direction of the group
- If a sympathizer has attended a minimum of four meetings and he or she wishes to become a full member then he or she is automatically eligible for membership
- Dues for a sympathizer are on a voluntary basis

Allies:

Any political organization or individuals with whom we work, whether they are aligned with our political platform and constitution or not

Members in bad standing:

Members that do not pay their dues and do not provide an explanation and/or participate in less than one of every four meetings and do not provide a valid explanation. A member in bad standing will not have their vote count until he or she addresses their situation (pay their dues or attends the necessary meetings).

Membership process:

- a. When people get in touch with us we refer them to our existing policy and ask them what is it about Prairie Struggle that interests them. This allows us at least some degree of knowledge of their politics, motivation, interests and willingness to engage.
- b. Should the potential new member respond to this, we will extend an open invitation to attend an educational discussion or a meeting at a time of their convenience.

- c. At the end of the educational session, candidates will be offered an explanation of the process through which the Organization works. After attending the educational discussion, contacts will be invited to the next general meeting.
- d. Should they accept this invite and attend 4 general meetings, any member of the organization can nominate them for membership. Membership shall not be denied unless there is a motion of objection put forward by a current member. Such a motion is subject to Article 4 of the constitution.
- e. People who live in an area where it is not feasible to attend meetings can be proposed for membership. Membership will be granted after payment of dues. Members will be part of the organization as individuals and will be able to fully participate in any working group of their choice as well as any activities/events.
- f. We recognize members of any affiliate organization of Anarkismo.net as qualified to apply for immediate full member status.

3. Organizational principles

- a. Voting and quorum:
Voting will be held if consensus can not be reached and is subject to the following conditions and exclusions:
 - Any vote to amend the constitution and/or platform needs a minimum 2/3 majority to pass
 - If a vote is being held to amend the constitution and/or platform a quorum of 75% must be achieved for the vote to take place
 - 50% quorum is necessary to hold an official meeting
 - Any vote taken at a official meeting must have 50% + 1 to pass
 - Voting to revoke a position held by a member (secretary, coordinator, treasurer) can be held at any regular meeting that has 50% quorum and needs a 50% + 1 to pass.
 - A sympathizer's vote will be taken into consideration but not counted as official
Votes can only be put forward by a full member and needs at least one more full member seconding the motion
- b. No position within the organization may be held by the same member for more than a term of 4 months, subject to a maximum of two terms in the same position. A person wishing to quit the position must give one month notice and show the tasks to do to the next person to hold that position.
- c. Minutes are kept of all meetings and are circulated to all members

4. Working Groups & Caucuses

- a. These Working Groups & Caucuses may be established by a group of at least 3 interested members (and may include sympathizers).
- b. Working Groups may develop draft policies to present to any official meeting but may not alter or delete any existing policy without the agreement of the organization.
- c. In order for a campaign or an issue to be considered by Prairie Struggle as a priority, a working group must be established to co-ordinate the organization's work on this issue.
- d. Any interested member or sympathizer may join a Working Group.
- e. A Caucus is a working body which is equity-seeking or based around identity. Caucuses have the right to limit their membership based on identity or other qualification which they set out. Caucuses are responsible for electing their own chair from the membership of that caucus. Caucus chairs are still responsible for submitting a report to each general meeting, but Prairie Struggle cannot mandate these bodies.

Internal Bulletin

- a. The IB will be produced at least once every quarter.
- b. It is sent to all members via email or if requested by postal mail.
- c. The IB contains reports from Working Groups, minutes from the general meetings as well as proposals and discussion articles submitted by members.

General Secretary

- a. To coordinate printing agendas and any other material for the general meeting, and act as defacto chair of all meetings unless another chair is elected by the membership.
- b. To coordinate the production of the IB and place a report in the IB.

Secretary

- a. To take minutes at each meetings.
- b. To forward the minutes to the General secretary.
- c. This position rotates at each meeting.

Treasurer

- a. To keep a record of all funds and financial transactions.
- b. To keep a record of all members' dues payments and inform the general membership if a member falls into bad standing.

- c. To keep and maintain a membership list for the organization and issue membership cards, copies of the constitution and political platforms to new members.
- d. To be responsible for the group account.
- e. To place in each IB a financial statement.

Internal and External Secretary(s)

- a. To establish and maintain contact with similar organizations abroad, and to send them our publications and news of our activities.
- b. To organize the translation of articles from foreign papers, and to be responsible for the writing of articles when requested by contacts abroad.
- c. To act as a delegate to anarkismo.net.
- d. To correspond and propose membership to contacts that live outside existing areas of activity as outlined in the membership section.
- e. To verify and maintain the organization's email and to give reports at general meetings of any incoming or outgoing mail.
- f. To place a report in each IB.

5. Finance

- a. Membership dues are a minimum of \$10, maximum \$40 per month taken out of members income.
- b. Dues can be waived if the person is not able to pay them.
- c. In the event that a person is not able to pay dues, there will be a form to be filled out explaining the reason why the person is not able to pay dues.
- d. Only the treasurer will have access to the above mentioned form, for reasons of privacy within the organization.
- e. Dues can be deferred when the person is not able to pay them on time, they can choose to pay the dues owed on the next month.
Dues default: in the event a person does not pay their dues for 60 days or more without filling out a form, their membership privileges will be suspended, and the member will default to supporter status.
- f. 40 per cent of this money is retained into the Contingency fund and 60 per cent is to be used for the organization.
- g. Income excludes;
 - Disability Support Program

- Canada Pension Plan
 - Old Age Security Related Income
 - Income earned by prisoners
 - Strike pay
 - Student loans (or any other type of loans)
 - Passport funding/direct funding (disability)
- h. Post-Secondary students who are supported financially are expected to pay the appropriate dues on this income. To exempt these individuals but expect payment from those students who work is to grant unfair privilege. Prairie Struggle opposes high tuition fees and private education.
- i. Monthly dues are payable at any meeting in said month, dues are deposited by the treasurer the last Saturday of every month.

6. Organization policy

- a. The policy of the organization is first and foremost the constitution, platform and the position papers as drawn up and amended by Prairie Struggle.
- b. Position papers are divided into a general section and a short term section. The general section contains the theoretical position of the organization on the question. The short term perspectives section outlines the organizations policy on immediate questions and the tactics we intend to implement.
- c. All members are required to implement policy where conditions allow. If members are delegates from the organization at external events they are expected to argue for policy.
- d. In Unions and campaign groups, while members are expected to support PSO policies, they can vote freely. And where they carry a mandate from a section of that group or union to put forward an argument against policy they may do so.
- e. Where members disagree with existing policy they are free to argue within the organization for a new policy. They are also free to express disagreement as part of public debates and informal discussions where they indicate they are speaking in an individual capacity.
- f. Members are free to engage in any political activity which does not contradict existing policy.

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