

Aims and principles of MACG

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

March 4, 2005

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Anarchism is a social philosophy based upon the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. Anarchists aim to create a society founded on this basis and operating by voluntary co-operation. An anarchist society can be achieved only by a social revolution, made by the working class of the world, which abolishes capitalism and the state. This revolution will require conscious and deliberate organisation to prepare for it and carry it out.

As anarchists, we believe that the means we use produce the ends we reach. We therefore organise according to principles we want to see operating in an anarchist society – federalism and processes open to inspection by all members of the organisation. This protects equality of participation in decisions and safeguards collective responsibility over their application.

This group aims to be an organisation of class struggle revolutionary anarchists who share political positions, articulated in theory, strategy and tactics. We envisage this to be part of a movement composed of many similar groups, some of them engaged in temporary federations for tactical ends, and an anarcho-syndicalist union federation, aiming to encompass the working class of the whole world.

THE AIMS OF THE GROUP

The group aims:

- a. To participate in the workers' revolution that will pave the way for the construction of an anarchist society; and
- b. To protect the living heritage of the working class, in both its intellectual and organisational forms.

The group develops its strategy and tactics in the world that exists rather than as it wishes it to be. It aims for the defence of the immediate interests of the working class and the development of the consciousness and organisation necessary for the workers' revolution.

THE WORK OF THE GROUP

The group uses anarchist principles in its operation. Internally, it practices:

- a. Real, functional equality amongst its members;
- b. Direct democracy;
- c. The use of mandated, recallable and rotatable delegates; and
- d. Federal relations in its affiliations.

In its external activities, it supports:

- a. Working class struggles in defence of living and working standards, democratic rights and working class organisations;

- b. Struggles against sexism, racism, nationalism and all forms of oppression and reactionary ideology;
- c. Direct action; and
- d. Workers' self-management as both a means and an end.

The group will thus practice:

- Theoretical Unity: A developing agreement on the overall ideas of the group, sufficient to enable the group to agree on its practical activities, and changing in the light of collective reflection on events and experience.
- Tactical unity: Collective implementation of group decisions and libertarian co-ordination of actions of group members.
- Collective responsibility: When speaking on behalf of the group, members advance its positions and take responsibility for its actions. The group also takes responsibility for the actions of its members taken in its name, provided they are in keeping with the general line of the group. If, for any reason, a member disagrees with the position of the group, they are free to discuss and advocate their ideas, provided:
 - a. It is not on an occasion where the group has decided to put its own position;
 - b. They make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the group; and
 - c. They do not misrepresent the group's position.
(Because of the group's commitment to consensus decision-making, it is not considered this provision will be often needed.)

The group rejects both pacifism and terrorism. Adopting pacifism would render us helpless before our enemies, while to use terrorism would be to join them. Instead, our principle is to recognise the right to use reasonable force in self-defence.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GROUP

Since any group is the sum, both of its members and the relationships between them, the group consciously embodies the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. The group reflects on its internal practices to ensure they are in keeping with anarchist principles:

- Liberty: With the single exception discussed in the section on membership below, decisions are made by consensus, not majority rule. The group recognises no limits on its autonomy. The group and its members accept responsibility for their actions.
- Equality: The group uses mandated, recallable and rotatable delegates rather than electing representatives. All members of the group have an equal space to speak and tendencies to monopolise speaking space are combated. Recognising "leadership" as a set of skills that can be learnt, the group encourages their learning by all members so that skills can be dispersed amongst the group rather than concentrated in an individual.

- **Solidarity:** Members of the group relate to each other as comrades and are committed to each other personally. Power in the group is shared and coercive tactics (whether physical, organisational, intellectual or emotional) are rejected. This principle is realised by developing strategies for effective challenge of authoritarian or competitive behaviour within the group, where necessary. All members contribute to group discussions and activities honestly and to the best of their abilities. The contributions of members are respected and, rather than being disrespectful, the group regards comradely criticism as being both a duty and a mark of respect. To prevent uncontrolled or hidden emotions interfering with the work of the group, the role of the feelings of members is openly discussed and dealt with collectively. Financial obligations are calculated on the basis of ability to pay.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

The group is composed of individuals and has a defined membership. Admission to the group is a decision of the members and by application. A joining procedure exists for making this decision.

- a. Membership is open to reliable, convinced revolutionary anarchists who accept the group's aims and principles and agree to abide by its rules, participate in its activities, and make financial contributions as decided by the group.
- b. The group has the power of expulsion. Due to the inherently divisive nature of this process, a decision to expel a member requires a two thirds majority rather than a consensus. The group has adopted procedures for use in the event that this becomes necessary.
- c. Membership is not open to employers (except of domestic staff solely on grounds of disability), to managers with the right to hire and fire, or to police, prison guards, security guards, or commissioned officers in the armed forces.

THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE GROUP

The group will maintain a regular exchange of information, analysis, news and views with the local, regional and global anarchist movement. It is open to co-operation for agreed goals with other anarchist groups and non-anarchist groups within the labour movement, provided that the form of co-operation is consistent with anarchist principles. One of the aims of co-operation with non-anarchist groups is winning new adherents to anarchism through the demonstration in practice of the validity of our ideas.

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