

The Anarchist Political Organisation and its Functioning

Organización Socialista Libertaria

May 31, 2009

In several past issues of *En la Calle*¹, we discussed diverse aspects of organisation. In an introductory form and superficially giving an account of what we think about these questions, we can say, together with Errico Malatesta, that “the question is threefold: organisation as principle and condition of social life, today and in the future society; organisation of the anarchist party; and organisation of the popular forces and, especially, of the working masses for the resistance against the government and capitalism.”²

So, if we anarchists want our participation in the revolutionary process to reach a new society based on socialism and freedom, it is necessary for us to organise around our revolutionary project, uniting our collective strength, planning, sharing and organising militant labor, using all the means at our disposal. That is, we meet in the libertarian political organisation in the “area of specific framework of the militant anarchist cadres who debate and agree on principles, programme, strategy and structure”³, “the proper and exclusive resort of anarchist militants.”⁴

We address the relationship between the political organisation of anarchists and the popular organisations understanding that as socialists and libertarians we organise ourselves politically for our revolutionary objectives, as exploited and oppressed we organise with our equals for the defense of our interests and to fight for them, “whether economic (unions, cooperatives, unions of peasants, unemployed, etc..) claimed (human rights groups, against repression, student, etc.) or social and community (neighborhood organisations, a committee of neighbors, help centres and cultural, etc.).”⁵. Acting within the popular organisations is essential to our project, and in that respect Malatesta affirmed that “to side with the popular organisations of all types is the logical consequence of our fundamental ideas, and should therefore be part of our programme”⁶.

¹ Journal of OSL Argentina (N. T.)

² “Organisation” in *Malatesta: Revolutionary Thought and Action* (Selection of Vernon Richards), Editorial Proyección, 1974 Buenos Aires).

³ “Anarquismo y Organización”, paper presented by the Organización Socialista Libertaria in the Jornadas Libertarias Libweek 2001, held in Madrid on 30 March and 1 April.

⁴ The political vs. the social, About the activities of anarchist organising in the class struggle, *En la Calle* 16, May 1999.

⁵ See footnote 3.

⁶ See footnote 2.

In these organisations, at the same time as we fight for our immediate interests, we anarchists work to develop and generalise the anti-capitalist elements – expressed in claims and methods of struggle – that we oppressed put into practice in the heat of the class struggle. It means that far from imposing some specific goals and means of struggle “invented” in intellectual laboratories, we do no more than claim that which the exploited and oppressed are already beginning to develop in the “social laboratory” of the confrontation with capital and the state.

Departing from the moment in which class society exists this leads us to the need to think of a libertarian and socialist revolutionary project, it is necessary that we endow the anarchist political organisation with a clear programme of action that reflects our strategy of rupture, which results in our ideological principles, of our objectives and methods of political practice, and of a correct analysis of the steps in which the society of exploitation and classes can be put behind us.

For all that we have said, we believe that the anarchist political organisation must have – internally and as a mode of operation for all its militants – some certain principles of organisation to ensure that what was established in the programme of action is carried out. We refer to: strategic and ideological unity; tactical and programmatic unity; collective and disciplined action; federal and democratic organisational forms⁷.

We talk about strategic and ideological unity, because we believe that the anarchist organisation “should not be a disjointed spontaneous union of diverse individuals that comprise and compose it, which are in agreement in vague and imprecise axes”⁸, but its ideological principles, the fundamentals of its action and its strategy must be the result of a profound discussion, leaving aside the superficial agreements that seek to be a “synthesis” of irreconcilable positions.

Tactical and programmatic unity of the anarchists is based on the necessity of the programme to be an expression of the tasks to realise in a determined step (tasks that must respond to the needs of the popular masses), the need for tactical unity in order to trigger the entire organisation.⁹ This unity of action will allow the anarchist militancy to act as one coordinated body, using the wealth that collective strength gives us, avoiding a wasting of capacity, both human and material.

This leads us to believe in the importance of collective action and discipline. By the notion of collective action we refer to the fact that, in the same way that the actions that the organisation undertakes are discussed and decided responsibly by its militants, the militant action of its members is the responsibility of the organisation and should be adjusted to what was agreed to collectively. When we refer to discipline, we say “certain discipline, not automatic, but voluntary and reflected and in perfect agreement with the freedom of individuals, is and always will be necessary each time that many individuals, freely united, undertake a job or a collective action, no matter what. In such a case, the discipline is nothing more than the voluntary agreement and reflected in all the individual efforts to a common end.”¹⁰ We speak here of strict compliance with freely established agreements.

⁷ “Anarquismo y Organización”, Organización Socialista Libertaria document, and Manifiesto of Libertarian Communism by George Fontenis, Ediciones Hombre y Sociedad, Chile, 1999.

⁸ See footnote 7.

⁹ See footnote 7.

¹⁰ Bakunin. “Tactics and discipline of the revolutionary party”, in *La Libertad* (Selection of Francois Muñoz), Editorial Proyección, 1975.

In order that agreements are freely reached, that they come from a thorough discussion and are reflective of the will of the entire organisation, democratic and federated organisational forms are necessary. At the same time as we discard sterile and diffuse assembly-ism as a way to act for anarchists, we discuss, decide and act from the practice of direct democracy and employ a federalist structure as a way to ensure a functioning that contemplates the different necessities of the anarchist political organisation, while an expression of a unique and collective revolutionary will.

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