

Continuing the task of building towards a working class revolution

Prairie Struggle

June 10, 2012

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The creation of Prairie Struggle Organization, its politics and its goals.

Dear comrades, in the last 5 months, some anarchists from Regina have been engaged in the difficult process of creating a revolutionary anarchist organization and debating its political influences. As a result of these meetings and debates, we are proud to finally announce the existence of Prairie Struggle Organization based in Regina. To hopefully start a dialogue with anarchists in the west of Canada and beyond, we feel it important to let you know why anarchist politics in Regina are taking this direction.

The west of Canada and the state of the anarchist movement

Before we explain to you the specific road we have chosen for our organization, we must first look at the state of the anarchist movement in Saskatchewan and in the west of Canada. Since the end of the 80's the majority of the broader anarchist movement has directed its energy in building counter culture movements based on life style politics and personal activism resembling more "responsible" consumerism(vegetarianism, veganism, straight edge, fare trade movements, dumpster diving ect.) than a mass class based resistance to capitalism. We acknowledge that there is no individual solution to a collective problem, and even if there were, abstaining from oppressive activities does nothing to replace the system and only reinforces it by our collective complacency.

Since the arrival of the individualist tendency within anarchism and the collapse of the broader left, the traditional areas of agitation and organizing like unions, social movements, communities and the work place have been abandoned and in some cases condemned. The organizational culture that brought workers so many victories in the past has been left behind in the face of movements focusing on identity, and ego. For some, anarchism has become a synonym for romanticized politics, and pleasure. Some comrades, fatigued and burned out by working class agitation, have turned to propagandist politics while neglecting action and movement building. While Prairie Struggle certainly internalizes some of the elements of these politics as vital to the struggle, we hold they cannot be the sole focus of a movement. Speaking specifically of the anarchist movement, which used to pose a well organized and formidable resistance to capitalism; in some areas, has been reduced to no more then a stereotyped image of rebellion that is used against the working class at times to characterize the politics of class antagonism.

Today we are told by the elite that there is no class war, or that our western culture is exceptional to such politics. Sadly, even within the broader anarchist movement we are seeing this capitalist influence attack class politics through primitivism, anarcho-capitalism, libertarianism and some forms of insurrectionism that deny class as a founding principle within anarchism. To further worsen the problem, these counter revolutionary tendencies within our movement attack one of the only weapons we still have to defeat capitalism, the power of the working class to mobilize within sustained organizations.

Movement building and a sustained organization

Over the past few years there have been various revolutionary groups that have been created and disbanded. Many other groups focus on only one issue. A majority of groups have been co-opted by electoral politics and other pro-capitalist, pro-reform groups. Thus, reflecting on our history and its consequences, with intention to avoid these setbacks, we wanted to organize in a way that would be based on class struggle and anti-capitalism in order to fight all oppressions that the working class is subject to. To this end, we organize as Anarchist-communists; a tradition that has always focused on organizing the working class into a revolutionary force. Anarchist-communism enables us to build sustained struggles and organizations rather than starting at ground zero and constantly having to resort to organization building at the arrival of new struggles. Part of this tradition we embrace is Platformism. It is founded on organizing as a union of anarchists with a common set of principles. Our platform is not a manifesto, nor a set of policies, but a toolbox we use to organize around so that the Prairie Struggle Organization can remain longstanding, proactive, and focused on expanding these struggles rather than constantly refocusing on our group. Typically, our platform focuses on organizing around the areas of theoretical unity, tactical unity, collective responsibility and federalism. People are not expected to agree on how we depart from these stances as that will likely never occur. These points simply allows us to build upon our victories, learn from our mistakes and build towards a revolutionary working class.

Federalism and the need to organize beyond our local cities

In the past year, the occupy movement has revealed many of our weaknesses and challenges to overcome. Between our individual cities, there are few radicals involved in anarchist politics, and when we try and build struggle, we often don't have the resources, experience and people power to win our battles, let alone be influential. In the areas where the situation is less dyer, we are often disconnected due to our isolation and never reach beyond our individual cities. Thus far, the anarchist movement in the prairies, due to its juvenile state in most areas, holds little opportunity for broader cooperation, coordination and networking. Funds, resources and experience are in short supply which leads to most of us in the long run burning out quick. This is a situation that is a barrier to building towards revolution, and especially to envisioning a better world on anarchist lines. We believe that the west of Canada would benefit greatly from some form of anarchist organization that spreads beyond the local sphere. Federalism aims to achieve this by allowing us to work together, build together and participate in each other's struggles in a way that overcomes the barriers geography presents. We may be few in our respective cities but we would be stronger under the same roof.

Our platform also focuses on federalist direct democracy, and aims to combat authoritarianism through the direct democratic principles of anarchism rather than subjecting those who participate in it. Also, a special note should be made on the point of federalist direct democracy. Federalism has been badly bastardized by states, NGOs and many others, so it is important to understand anarchist federalism as fundamentally different from these groups. Anarchist federalism is based on a free agreement to work collectively towards common goals, and depends on the strength of direct democratic organizing. Critics accuse anarchist federalism as being a form

a hierarchy but nothing can be further from the truth. Decision making power and free choice still lies in our own local groups, and communities; afterall, it is our local groups and community members organizing our local struggles. However, federalism is an acknowledgement that vast geographies have a disorganizing, and alienating effect. Federalism overcomes this by connecting struggles despite vast geography so that we can collectively fight common oppressions that know no boundaries. Many of the most productive anarchist groups today are founded upon federations. These include Common Cause based in Ontario, The Union of libertarian communists based in Quebec, Common Struggle based in the North eastern United states, The Workers' Solidarity Movement in Ireland, and the Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation in South Africa. These federations cooperate, coordinate, and support eachother's struggles through Anarchismo, a global network of Platformist organizations.

Conclusion

Our hope for Prairie Struggle is that something similar can be built in the prairie region, and potentially further west. This is our focus and we will strive for a closer collaboration with Common Cause in Ontario, UCL in Quebec, The IWW in Edmonton, and various radical groups and unions in the Canadian and American west. We also hope that the relationships that will come of this collaboration will spark willingness to move forward as a movement and possibly bring about the creation of a federation. One that we will build together.

We encourage everyone reading this who are interested or even intrigued by this introduction to learn more about our politics as stated in the Prairie Struggle principles and aims document, and our platform.

We believe that revolution in the west is possible, but only if we can escape the confines of our geographical prison. The time is ripe to organize a unified anarchist movement.

**In Solidarity,
The Prairie Struggle Organization**

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