Draft SFA Aims and Principles

Scottish Federation of Anarchists

1990

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The **Scottish Federation of Anarchists** (SFA) was a class struggle anarchist grouping of the early 1990s. It produced **Scottish Anarchist** magazine, a regular newsheet of the same name and had groups in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and elsewhere. It lasted a few years. Here is the draft of its *Aims and Principles*, which I wrote. The idea was to produce a basic statement of what we stood for to explain our ideas to others. It was accepted by the SFA, but with a different, and shorter, preamble.

Preamble

We fight for anarchism, a social system based on freedom, mutual aid and social justice. We are against all forms of state, economic exploitation and social oppression. Social wealth and the means to create it must be owned and controlled by society otherwise freedom and equality will never be realised.

Real change can only come through direct action. We need to organise and act together. Solidarity is strength! By resistance in our communities and workplaces we can change the world!

A new world can only be achieved by working class people, by our own actions and organisations. It can never be done be a political party acting for us. It must be decentralised and managed from below, directly by and for everyone without bosses, politicians, leaders and other parasites.

The movement to create such a free society must reflect its principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. We must build the ideas and structures of the new world today, in our struggles, not only in Scotland but across the globe.

The *Scottish Federation of Anarchists* is dedicated to this task. By our words and actions we try to spread the anarchist message and encourage the spirit of revolt.

For a socialism that liberates

SFA Aims and Principles

Under the present system we have no real say in the decisions that affect us, our communities or workplaces. Instead a minority has this power. This due to their ownership and control of social wealth and the means to create it. In Scotland, 7% of the population own 84% of the wealth. It's the interests of this elite that must be satisfied within "democracy", otherwise there is no investment, no production and no work.

Economically, capitalism results in power and privilege for the few, sacrifices and alienation for the rest of us. Continually we see the world we live in being destroyed, standardised and packaged so that this elite can make a few more pounds. Capitalism has turned every feeling and desire we have into an object to be bought and sold. Humanity and community have been replaced by price tags and commercials.

Politically, we live in a highly centralised state, over which we have little meaningful control. Every five years we get the chance to vote for a politician, a puppet for faceless bureaucrats and big business. A cross on a bit of paper for a state which treats us like children, telling us what we can and cannot do. A state that claims to know what's best for us regardless of what we actually think or want and which uses OUR money to subsidise capitalist firms and control us.

Not all working class people are oppressed in the same manner. We also see the domination of women, black people and homosexuals and the institutionalisation of sexism, racism and homophobia. Such authoritarian relationships cause needless suffering and repress all involved. Such social oppression is only useful to our bosses, as they divide us, getting us to blame other working class people for the problems we all face, drawing our anger away from the system and those who run it.

Every individual, group or people has the right to be itself and to self-determination. But capitalism, results in the standardisation of cultures. Neither cultural diversity nor popular self-determination can withstand market forces, the power of multi-national companies or the conformity created by state centralisation.

But it does not have to be like this! The problems that afflict us and the planet, and the system that causes them, are not only harmful, they are unnecessary. Society can be organised in a better, one that meets the needs of all and the environment. This society is anarchy (or libertarian communism/socialism).

Anarchism comes from our needs and desires for freedom, equality and solidarity. It is the means by which we, the working class, can win the class war and create the sort of world we want and need.

Anarchism is based on the free federation of autonomous groups, directly controlled from the bottom up by their members. In an anarchist society, self-management replaces government and bosses. This decentralisation ensures that we take control of our own fates, without leaders and led.

A free society can only be created and run from below, by and for everyone. No political party acting or seizing power on our behalf can do it for us. We reject the "would-be" rulers of left-wing parties and their politics. A free society can never come through Parliament or any other state. Parliament is organised to protect privilege and oppression, it cannot be reformed. States by their structure and internal workings, create bureaucracy, with its own interests, power and privileges. They can never be used to abolish inequality and injustice.

We are against all forms of imperialism, where one country imposes its wishes and values upon another by economic or political means. Such domination can only be resisted by class struggle, not nationalism. Nationalism, like all cross class movements, means only a change in rulers. There are no common interests between the classes. Our lives will be no better under Scottish bosses and politicians. We can only be free in a free world, a world without capitalism and states.

Meaningful change can only happen from the struggles of the powerless resisting the powerful. We in the SFA are involved in such struggles and aim to encourage tendencies in this resistance towards:

- self-organisation and equality, people controlling their own struggles and organisations, rather than dependence on and control by leaders.
- collective direct action, rather than ineffectual lobbying or letter writing.
- combining workplace and community struggles and organisation rather than their division into different "single-issue" campaigns.
- the revolution of everyday life, not the poverty of consumerism or the boredom of left-wing politics.

- changing the fundamental aspects of capitalism, rather than tinkering with minor changes.
- revolution, not reformism, the working class and ruling class have nothing in common.

We reject the dead end of electioneering. We must organise and fight where we have real power, in our communities and workplaces. From there we can impose by direct action that which politicians can never get in Parliament. Only this can create the spirit of revolt needed to resist oppression and get improvements in the here and now, as well as creating a new world.

This new world is not for the distant future. It exists now, in our hearts. By organising ourselves, using direct action and showing solidarity we create the ideas and structures of this new world within the present one. Only this will allow us to organise as a class and take-over our workplaces and communities, so winning the class war. Without this take-over we will struggle within the system, but never replace it.

Our goal is the creation of a global community where

- the worlds' resources are held in common and shared.
- people manage their own lives, work and communities.
- all have an equal say in decision making through decentralised forms of organisation and their federation.
- relationships in all areas of life being based on equality and mutual respect.
- People live in harmony with nature.
- Goods and services are produced directly for human needs in the widest sense, this will mean that the market, exchange and money are abolished.

The SFA is a federation of autonomous groups and individuals, co-operating without any central governing body. We reject centralisation, hierarchy and bureaucracy. We believe in organising ourselves so that we reflect the kind of society we want to achieve.

While our immediate focus is Scotland, we are committed internationalists and wish to develop links and joint activity with revolutionaries world-wide.

The SFA welcomes the involvement of all those in basic agreement with these principles, regardless of whether they describe themselves as anarchists, autonomists, libertarian socialists/communists or whatever.

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