

A FRAMEWORK FOR MASS ORGANIZATIONS

The following was written for the purposes of providing a framework and orientation for the expansion of political work into the stage of independent mass organizations and an elaboration on the progressing structure of our cadre organization. This is by no means exhaustive, and high individual agency is important in the success of the transition from general, day-to-day political work to the independent mass organization stage. However, this should not detract from the important of the guidelines and framework contained here. Discipline in organization is key, and this transition cannot be attempted lightly. Steps cannot be skipped in this process.

Function of Mass Organizations

1. Discipline

The first responsibility of all Mass Organizations should be to maintain a solid link between those who are participating in mass work and the revolutionary vanguard. They should be democratic in nature, but should be a source for the reproduction and development of communist discipline. Chances are these pre-institutional organs are not going to become central to the lives of the masses, they will not be able to provide a service or organize the people immediately in a way that a state or bourgeois organ does, so power is at this stage a secondary feature. Primarily, it should serve to create discipline in the unorganized and undisciplined ideas of those involved in the mass organization, an element which is necessary for the eventual acquisition of power. The vanguard must be able to depend on the mass organizations not only to organize the broad masses of people to accomplish a structured task, but to also apply their work in a way that contributes to the deconstruction of state power. Regimentation both in actions and ideas, and an understanding of responsibility to revolutionary structures is a necessary objective for mass organizations.

2. Education

Mass Organizations must be able to take the unsystematic ideas of those involved and those who require its services and transform them into systematic and materialist world outlooks. This is dependent, at least in part, on organizational discipline. Education is not a passive process, but also should not serve to gate-keep services made available to the masses. Those who work inside the mass organization are subject to its discipline, and therefore are a kind of captive audience. Rigorous ideological struggle and discussion should take place, within a principled and non-antagonistic environment, but must produce individuals who do not just accept, but understand and uphold the ideological foundations of their work. As for those who seek services,

they should be invited to participate, and to strengthen the organizational work, and only then should the education of those who participate be made mandatory, not before. Although propaganda should be ubiquitous in the organization's function.

3. Power

Power is ultimately the final goal of the mass organizations, they will not, for most of their primary existence, be able to really project power throughout the community it serves. Though its experience should be preparing it for the moment it is able to, by not only educating future cadre but also imbuing them with the discipline to make their ideas systematic and actionable, we obtain the building blocks of what can become an organization of power, democratic yet linked to the ideological vanguard that it exists in unity with. This power will be represented in the expanding responsibilities of the mass organization. For instance, once tasked with distributing food and clothing, a mass organization oriented toward "serving the people" can adopt quasi-paramilitary roles, training the people for collective community defense against racist and fascist violence. Once tasked primarily with the regimented goals of providing food and clothing for the community, now they must use the discipline and regimentation of the organization to conduct classes, to expand into other areas of service, and to explore new avenues of cooperation and development of the communities they serve. This is what separates the mass organization from the NGO, while the NGO seeks to serve only, we seek to lead. While they open up institutions which provide for the deficiencies of the capitalist system, we, like water in the cracks, seek to harden and displace capitalism. It's through the function of the mass organization that we can ascertain its other qualities and necessities.

Structure of Mass Organizations

1. Independence

Our mass organizations must navigate the difficult terrain between the larger organizations without being swallowed by them. In the beginning stages especially, collaboration with these larger parties and NGOs is made difficult, if not impossible, by the lack of resources and experience necessary to negotiate our own independence. They may have resources we need, such as money or space, yet it is important that especially in the beginning stages we remain aloof and disciplined regarding them. We must first develop our own capacities before we can depend on others to provide assistance to our project, primarily because our task is not simply to provide a service to the community, but to build an institution which itself must be capable of projecting power and discipline outside itself.

For this, we must focus on the development of cadre, as a sophisticated and disciplined core for the organization to grow around. As an example, if our mass organization, to begin with, is looking to set up a program with the assistance of the Greens or perhaps a local NGO on the basis of their larger size and greater access to resources, how could they possibly resist integration with those organizations? If they provide their resources, membership and space, how can we effectively enforce a discipline over them, or cope with any resistance to communist discipline and education? This could be described as biting off more than we could chew, and result in having to start over from the beginning, having contributed to a project that is now alien to the original function of the mass organization.

While looking to establish a mass organization, we must first always look inward for our own experience, discipline and resources to begin with. Where we are lacking we must expand, but we must never count on external sources to bring about an organization that can ultimately project our own power and discipline. When entering into agreements or negotiations to cooperate with other groups, we must always prioritize the function of our mass organizations, ensuring that our discipline, education and power are not threatened by the terms of whatever agreement we make. No increase in volume of resources can ever make up for the loss in discipline and education, because ultimately without these, the communist character and potential for power is fundamentally threatened.

It is good to look toward smaller organizations, and ones which share generally similar principles, for temporary agreements and cooperation, and never to extend ourselves beyond what we can internally control. If we find ourselves dependent upon another entity for all of our basic functions, then it will become difficult to enforce our discipline over theirs, and to expand our work beyond the confines of what they are willing to facilitate. Without the priority of discipline in these agreements, it becomes difficult to detach ourselves from these agreements and maintain our momentum.

2. Membership

The membership of the mass organizations is not necessarily the same as that of the vanguard organization, and is dependent upon its own points of unity. These are informed by, but are not identical with the cardinal principles of the vanguard, as it represents the fundamental positions of the mass organization as conditioned by its responsibilities. While [the cardinal principles of RAIM](#) are conditional to membership in cells, and drive the development of all theory relevant to them, agreement to them is not necessary to work within the mass organizations, instead we must propose basic points of unity that emphasize their orientation and discipline.

To begin with, we must identify three stages of membership within the mass organizations. Much like the “Serve the People” formations, we recognize the spheres of *volunteers*, *members* and *cadre*. The volunteers must not necessarily agree to our political line, but must accept the leadership of the organization while working with it. They are a transient category, which we encourage to become members and attend other educational functions. Members agree to the fundamental positions of the mass organization and take it upon themselves not only to lend a hand, but to engage deeply in the activity of the organization, including its educational and political work. These are the individuals which will be constructed into cadre, which are full members of RAIM and whose ideas are in line with those expressed by the cardinal principles of RAIM. The foundations of membership within the our mass organizations will be identical to RAIM’s points of unity and are as follows:

Revolutionary Socialism

It is the objective of any revolutionary socialist organization to make revolution. Our goal is not simply to alleviate the worst effects of capitalist accumulation or to beg that the authorities adopt a more humane face in the oppression of the masses. To unite with us is accepting that revolution against capitalism is our ultimate goal.

Internationalism

We reject any and all attempts to cultivate obscurantist romantic, patriotic, equivocal, or opportunist sympathies for one's country or imperial aggressors/oppressors. The opposite of jingoism and oppressor-nation nationalism is internationalism, to reserve our solidarity, cooperation and support for the oppressed and their mass movements worldwide. We do not resign ourselves or our work to purely local problems, but seek to constantly connect them to higher and more fundamental struggles to unite all oppressed peoples.

Anti-Imperialism

The principal enemies of our movements are those imperialist blocs to which our countries belong or are subjected to. In the 21st century, all western peoples’ first and foremost enemy should be u.\$ and european domination in the form of NATO and other imperialist organizations. This necessitates a program of principled revolutionary defeatism with regards to inter-imperialist rivalries involving our imperialist blocs and countries in particular, and a maintained opposition to their political, economic, and cultural world-hegemony; all of our time, energy and resources must be put towards the defeat of western imperialism. This includes not only the retreat of western imperialism in its conquests abroad, but the national liberation of those who have been conquered, annexed or occupied by the oppressor nations.

Revolutionary Feminism

We will not compromise our support for the gender/sexually oppressed people who suffer under the weight of patriarchal society. We cannot find unity with those who assist in or even deny the oppression of women and queer people, and who reject the existence of transgender people and their struggle. No common cause can be found with patriarchal oppressors.

Anti-Opportunism

We cannot unite with those who stand alongside the oppressors and the exploiters in the ranks of the military or the security forces (i.e. the pigs). Our struggle is against, not with, those who enforce the rule of the colonial and imperial states on the oppressed people of the world, and we make no exceptions. Unity with us means opposition to the oppressors and exploiters, nothing less.

3. Democracy

Democracy in the mass organizations is absolutely necessary to the co-development of our consciousness tied to the masses. If our intention is to investigate the contradictions among the people and between the people and their oppressors, and to act accordingly, we must necessarily take into consideration their thoughts on our work. This, however, cannot resemble the bourgeois and directionless democracy that pervades our society today. We can neither lift the commandist nature from bourgeois institutions for our purposes, nor can we succumb completely to the directionlessness of liberal “all-sides” argumentation. We are partisans, in that we are communists and revolutionaries bound to the program and principles of our movement and of the vanguard and mass organizations. This means that we have, already internal to our thought processes, a somewhat specific logic. However, to avoid commandist leadership “on-high” by either irresponsible or unaccountable leaders, we must work to deepen the democratic nature of our work.

Within the vanguard, this has taken the form of the rotating secretarial position. This is not necessarily something which is at all times necessary, but something we have learned from others and which continues to serve us well as it produces strong leaders and reinforces our politics in the work we do. First, it prepares all other comrades and full members for their roles in leadership, and does not allow individuals to shrink to the background of our democratic work; it prevents the creation of default leaders, who undemocratically hold power in an organization with only their ideas taking center stage in its politics. Secondly, the role of the secretary position is to guide discussion and democratic processes in accordance to the overall

political aims and general line of the organization. This requires a great familiarity with the general line and political direction of our organization, and subsequently reinforces it in our processes, and leads people in discussion to realizations they may not otherwise have had.

This general practice, with some modification, should definitely be applied within the mass organizations, as we make cadre of them. This practice helps to avoid the paralyzing helplessness of directionless democracy, to apply a kind of democratic centralism creatively to our underdeveloped situation, and to avoid the monolithic leadership of unaccountable personalities, whose individual interests become the interests of the organization. The secretaries consider the various axioms of our political movement, found mostly in the cardinal principles and points of unity of the vanguard and mass organizations, respectively, and promote ordered discussion and democracy on those bases. Further, it is through struggle and unity between the cardinal principles of the vanguard and the points of unity in the mass organizations that we create cadre and move members of one sphere into another.

4. Relationship to Vanguard

Mass organizations do not necessarily need to meet the same requirements of ideological rigor as the vanguard organizations, parties or pre-party formations they represent. Yet, they must be broadly compatible with them, and must answer, in some way, to the authority of the vanguard organization, although remaining an overall democratic institution, with its own independent leadership. This relationship must be principled, and it cannot be a simple remote command structure, but one that is mutually informing. The mass organization must in the end, create cadre who are able to contribute to the vanguard itself, and the vanguard must, itself be responsible to its mass organizations.

For our purposes, this means that the mass organizations need not carry the name “Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement” and should have democratic structures unto themselves, which are united by the Organizing Committee, and whose leadership is responsible to them. Our first task from the center, is to build and equip the cores of cadre who can successfully initiate these organizations, and around whom the democratic processes can be experimented with and solidified. Our ideological work, exemplified by our media organs, are the anchor point which hold every cell and mass organization together. These mass organizations grow the vanguard in their ability to produce experienced cadre who can effectively participate in the democratic functions of the vanguard organization, and promote the power of the vanguard that it grows.

Immediate Tasks in Constructing a Mass Organization

1. Funding

Resources, both financial and logistical, are vital to the operation of our mass organizations. They are not necessarily the most important, but our work definitely cannot be done without them. That said, we must set strict guidelines for the development of these resources, as stated before, we cannot afford to succumb to the dependency that relying on certain institutions and groups may cause. For that reason, we see fit to establish that no mass organization under RAIM should utilize official grants from either the state or other bourgeois institutions. There are two reasons for this: first of all, we lack the collective experience to navigate the legal and financial geography of accepting such grants and financial/material assistance from established organizations, and that approaching this question on a decentralized basis would encourage a poisonous separation in the unity of the vanguard and mass organizations.

Therefore all mass organizations associated with RAIM should first develop, with the help of the vanguard, the internal resources (experience, materials and working capacity) of the mass organizations, and only engage in the requisitioning of official grants and funding sources in a centralized manner when we collectively deem that such an option is viable and within our interests as an organization. This is not a final determination on whether or not we will or won't seek or accept such financial assistance in the future, as such a determination is completely circumstantial. However, in considering these options in the future we must remember our points of unity, and be clear that at no point can any hypothetical use of financial assistance come from, or include cooperation with the imperialist state. This is a matter of principle, and of keeping faith with the people we serve.

Instead we should become comfortable with the fact that our operation capacity will begin small, and even ineffectual to a large degree. Our purpose is not, as explained in the functions, to jump immediately from service to power, and of course we are not taking on this task with the belief we can or even should attempt to relieve all of the conditions of capitalism prior to its overthrow. Rather this must develop our political forces, to build faith between our political organs and the masses, and to equip us with the experience and discipline necessary to seek power. Rather than navigating this very dangerous road before we are prepared and have the necessary centralized strength to go about it, our primary focus should be on the principle of "from the people, to the people" as is the mantra of the "Serve the People" programs of the Red Guards. The most simple items to procure and transfer are clothing and simple household needs. Food and other items can be distributed as experience allows, but we should focus on what is most simple and most needed. Accountable donation drives and the sharing of resources through the central organizing apparatus is the most important first step.

2. Recruiting

Members and volunteers are yet another important element, and we must prioritize members over those who simply want to chip in here and there, without really absorbing the propaganda being conducted and political work that is associated. These things are simpler to create when viable candidates for members already exist, but finding those candidates can be a difficult task. There is an allure to the prospect of creating one of these projects with the members of other groups at your side. Certainly they can make the process much simpler. However, these must be assessed on an individual basis and we must ultimately look to build these mass organizations independent of other organizations, even when incorporating people who do work for them.

We cannot rush the development of these institutions, as skipping two or three steps and expecting to transition flawlessly from individual activity to organized and professional revolutionary work is idealistic at best and opportunist at worst. In constructing these organizations, the overall political homogeneity of its message is important, and they must conform to the points of unity in their construction. Study and ideological struggle are invaluable in this process, and we should not give ourselves over to liberalism in the hope to suppress contradiction and focus on the task at hand. That said, we should not make unnecessary enemies, and always remain principled in our political work and study, never giving ourselves over to commandist, arrogant or narcissistic behavior.

In recruiting, we must build bridges in our everyday political work and lives, and work toward the eventuality of building a real mass organization; studying with comrades, criticizing their ideas and receiving criticism from them. There is infinite work to be done within our cells and broader revolutionary networks which can precipitate in the necessary preconditions for a mass organization. Yet these steps cannot be skipped, and while we encourage comrades to work in a principled way within other organizations, when creating these mass organizations, they should be prepared and constructed as independent institutions that are a product of diligent political work, not the precursor to it.

3. Legality

Always we must be aware of, at very least, the legal geography that we are entering while building these mass organizations. Certain kinds of activities are only dubiously legal when they are, and others are equally dubious in their illegality. While we must not take extraordinary risk when the situation does not yet call for it, there is of course a general risk involved in the kind of work we do. Comrades involved should be aware of this and prepared for it, and make independent judgements on what is acceptable and what is not. For instance, some areas have loitering laws which could prevent us from conducting certain kinds of work, and yet there are also loopholes that can be exploited to circumvent these restrictions in many cases as well. Although, where there is no real way around it, we have to be prepared to make the choice on

whether or not to proceed with our work, and sometimes this includes more difficult decisions than whether or not to risk a fine for loitering or not. Some areas have outlawed feeding the homeless, or providing services for free without complicated permits.

Circumstance dictates how we respond to these questions, so we cannot always answer them once and for all, and we certainly cannot do so before these circumstances are experienced. No battle plan ever survives contact with the enemy, so ingenuity is of great value to all comrades engaged in this work. Yet, one thing is clear: we cannot give ourselves over in totality to the legality of the bourgeois state. Illegal work is as necessary as legal work, and sometimes this includes items as mundane as violating bans on serving the homeless and unemployed people of a community. Regardless, it is one of the many material conditions we must constantly grapple with, and adjust strategy in relation to. Therefore we must conduct investigation on this matter in every instance, as we must on all other material conditions in our struggle. Whether or not we want to consider legality in our work, ignorance to the law is not helpful to our movement.

4. Identifying the Masses

As important as the survey of the legal terrain is conducting a survey of social formations in an area, their political content and their interactions. Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? These questions must be answered through ongoing and deepening social investigation conducted before, during and after our mass organizations are developed.

Just as we reject charity, we also reject opportunism. The greater labor aristocracy, which comprises the majority of wage earners in the u.s., is beholden to a particularly vicious form of class politics characterized by opposition to the imperial bourgeoisie as well as the global proletariat. At this stage, the masses, or the potential groupings of the masses, are located beneath this stratum in the oppressed nations, marginalized communities, national exclaves, agricultural workers' and refugees' networks. On an individual basis, the oppressor nation may furnish individual cadre, volunteers, donors, or openings for propaganda. These are openings which must be taken piecemeal, and do not necessitate a "two-footed" approach of equal attention.

The masses can be identified by national character in some cases, but this form of identification is crude and not always helpful. Miami Cubans are not members of the oppressor nation, but they do not propend toward liberatory politics. The masses are identified, in the primary stage, by their struggles. The organic questions of everyday and political life are primary, contradictions among the people are secondary. To manage both, and to become indispensable to the people, requires cohabitation, study, humility, and a willingness to learn from the community. It also requires the political conviction and personal courage to struggle with the masses when they are

wrong, or to identify obscurantists and collaborators who wish to “solve” the problems of the masses by reconciling them with neoliberalism or comprador quick-fixes.

The masses do not necessarily comprise a proletariat beneath the overwhelmingly white greater labor aristocracy. Working professionals of the petty bourgeois stripe, semi-proletarians like day-laborers and minor sex-workers, and the unemployed, dependent, and lumpen all overlap. This is the reality of marginal communities in the north american empire. On this basis we do not refuse to work with anyone on a strictly class basis, nor unite with anyone on a strictly class basis. We enter, and shape, the struggles of the masses on the basis of broad support, or at very least a widespread yearning for answers. Police brutality, gentrification, lack of services and resources are all examples common to marginal communities. Unity with other organizations and tendencies, as well as sincere individuals of various class backgrounds, is possible on this basis.

Unity does not suffice unto itself. Often struggle within the community is necessary to achieve unity on a higher and different basis. For instance, if the petty bourgeois shop owners enlist the help of the masses or their organization to defeat measures imposed from above that are not amenable to small businesses in already strapped areas, the vanguard, its organizations, and the friends of the masses must also hold those owners to account, who, the other 364 days of the year, exploit the people, profit from them, distance themselves from them, and treat them with suspicion. They must be made responsible to the communities, but struggle ought not be carried out in a way that alienates the property owners and forces them into defensive positions that the police and the state look for in order to break unity and gain footholds in communities. Property owners who reject the masses, distance themselves, and rely on the state and armed police for their protection (gentrifiers, compradors and their ilk) ought to be isolated further, boycotted, and deprived of the sources of their income—unite with the advanced, win over the intermediate and isolate the backward.

The masses are a mosaic of marginal classes, declassed lumpen and classed workers and proprietors. This does not mean that we cannot introduce proletarian politics, through propaganda, internationalism and applied solidarity, to the masses. Indeed, it is the primary duty of our mass organizations to show the people that things can be done in a “communist” way, and that way is preferable to bourgeois policing, petty bourgeois suspicion and individualism. It is our duty to transform the masses as well as ourselves, into subjects worthy of taking power. Communist history is rife with examples of how non- and semi-proletarians were transformed, body and mind, into conscious agents of proletarian revolution. The proletariat, in the abstract, is the class capable of abolishing all others. It can be built, as well as found. But in all cases it must be won over, whether it is formed from many declassed and alter-class elements, or found on a factory floor. Serving and learning from the people, as well as teaching them, is one half of the

equation. Propaganda is the other.

5. Propaganda

Engaging in propaganda is a vital component for all political work and especially for mass organizations. We must agitate constantly not only on the basis of local conditions, but also on contradictions at a national and international level, constantly connecting struggles to higher and more fundamental contradictions. We must ultimately aim to connect all struggles thoroughly to the struggle against capitalism-imperialism, and underscore the parasitic relationship between the First and Third World in our propaganda. This means that we cannot just commit to political work and education for ourselves, but as well to the subsequent systematization of our experiences and analysis into materials which can aid the education and agitation we engage in. This includes writing and disseminating articles through our media organs, the creation of revolutionary art and development of slogans, all derived from, and designed to impact, the organic political lives of the masses and engage them in political practice.