

Libertarian Socialist Organization - Manifesto

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Founding Manifesto - OSL

// socialismolibertario.net // 12-01

FOUNDING MANIFESTO

Libertarian Socialist Organization (LSO)

Anarchism is not a beautiful fantasy taken from the imagination of a philosopher, but a social movement of the working masses. That is why it must gather its forces in a general organization that acts constantly, according to the needs of reality and strategy of the social class struggle.

Dielo Truda

Effective political practice therefore requires knowledge of reality (theory), the postulation in harmony with it of objective values of transformation (ideology) and means concrete policies to achieve it (political practice). The three elements merge into a dialectical unity which is an effort to transform that the party stands for.

Uruguayan Anarchist Federation

As a result of the first session of our Congress, held in July 2023 in the city of São Paulo, we declared the Libertarian Socialist Organization (OSL) founded.

The OSL is a Brazilian anarchist organization created by the group of nuclei that made up the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (FARJ, state of Rio de Janeiro), the Libertarian Socialism Anarchist Organization (OASL, state of São Paulo), the Libertarian Rusga (RL, state of Mato Grosso), the Popular Anarchist Collective of Minas Gerais (COMPA, state of Minas Gerais), as well as individuals from other places in Brazil. It aims to be a nationwide organization and therefore to foster new nuclei throughout Brazil.

The choice of this name is a tribute to what was the first national organization of Brazilian specificist anarchism: the former OSL, which operated between 1997 and 2000, and whose name was later used by the São Paulo militancy of the same current, in a process that ended more than 15 years ago. There are militants in the current OSL who were part of these two previous initiatives.

In this Manifesto, we present our references and origins, as well as our principles and conceptions.

OUR POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL REFERENCES

When we say that we are an anarchist organization, we have a very precise notion of what anarchism is, based on an analysis of its global history over the last 150 years.

Anarchism is a political ideology or doctrine, a libertarian, anti-authoritarian and revolutionary form of socialism, which aims to mobilize the oppressed classes - urban and rural wage earners, peasants, traditional and marginalized peoples - through a certain strategy, to carry out a social revolution that establishes a new society based on socialism, self-management, federalism, equality and freedom.

Based on an ethical conception, anarchism starts from a social critique of all forms of domination - economic, political, intellectual-moral and therefore class, but also gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, etc. Its aim is a socialist, self-managing, federalist, egalitarian and libertarian society - in which there are no more classes and domination, in which property is collectivized, the people themselves govern themselves, and a concordant culture serves as the foundation for this whole project of generalized socialization.

The means to achieve this imply the constitution of a classist and combative social force, which is based on this group of oppressed subjects, and which can intervene in the class struggle through processes that involve: increasing militant participation, grassroots construction, encouraging conscious struggle and voluntary engagement, independence from class enemies and their structures. [OSL, "Defining anarchism"]

Anarchism did not emerge from purely philosophical and intellectual reflections, but as the ideological and doctrinal expression (action and thought, practice and theory) of a sector of workers and popular movements engaged in the class struggle of the 19th century. It was consolidated with the founding of the Alliance, the first anarchist political organization in history, which, through secret and public bodies, acted and decisively influenced the International Workers' Association (AIT or "First International", 1864-1877).

The Alliance's main militant was Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), whose positions can be understood as a radicalization of the federalist socialism of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). By participating in these popular movements and struggles, Bakunin and other allianceists - such as James Guillaume (1844-1916), Adhémar Schwitzguébel (1844-1895) and Giuseppe Fanelli (1827-1877) - made a decisive contribution to shaping anarchism, both in theoretical and practical terms.

Throughout the 1870s and the following decades, anarchist positions spread to the five continents of the world. Both the influence of its two greatest classics, Mikhail Bakunin and Piotr

Kropotkin (1842-1921), and its revolutionary syndicalist experiences, which inspired the creation, strengthening and radicalization of trade unions and social movements, were important in this spread.

The significant participation of anarchists in popular movements took place in different countries, such as Russia, Ukraine, Spain, Bulgaria, the United States, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, South Africa, Egypt, China, Japan, Korea and Australia. It also took place in almost all Latin American countries: Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Colombia and Cuba.

Historically, anarchism has been maintained over time in different parts of the world, in more and less vigorous moments, between ebbs and flows, without ever disappearing. This ideology or doctrine has been a prominent part of trade unions and social movements, and has influenced them significantly [Corrêa, *Bandeira Negra*].

However, it's not enough to say that our organization is anarchist. Because throughout its long history, anarchism has coexisted internally with many debates and disagreements, which have even established its major currents: mass anarchism and insurrectionist anarchism.

In broader terms, we are affiliated with the historical current of mass anarchism, whose main strategy was revolutionary syndicalism. This affiliation is explained insofar as: we defend organization (organizational dualism) as opposed to anti-organizationalist positions, which oppose organization and call for action by individuals or small informal groups; we defend possibilism (struggles for reforms within certain strategic frameworks as a path to revolution) as opposed to anti-possibilist positions, which claim that struggles for reforms only reinforce capitalist society; we defend the need for violence (people in arms, insurrections, advanced struggle, etc.) linked to and concomitant with mass movements.) linked to and concomitant with mass movements, as opposed to positions that see violence as a trigger (propaganda by the fact), claiming that isolated and restricted acts of violence can produce mass and revolutionary movements.

In more specific terms, due to our organizational perspective, we are affiliated with organizational dualism, i.e. the historical expression of anarchism in which militants and organizations claimed the need for simultaneous organization at the political-anarchist level (political organization or party) and at the social-popular level (popular mass organization). This expression was echoed in different parts of the globe, including the global south, fostering the creation of anarchist organizations such as the Mexican Liberal Party (in 1906, in Mexico), the Society of Anarcho-Communist Companions (in 1914, in China), the Bulgarian Anarcho-Communist Federation (in 1919, in Bulgaria), the [Libertarian] Communist Party (in 1919, in Brazil) and the Argentine Anarcho-Communist Federation (in 1935, in Argentina).

In organizational dualism, our main historical references are among the militants who defended homogeneous and programmatic forms of anarchist organization (especially platformism and specificism), as opposed to heterogeneous and flexible forms (as in the case of synthetism).

Central references for us are: Bakunin, his reflections on organizational dualism, the experience of the Alliance from 1868 onwards, especially his work in the International; Errico Malatesta (1853-1932), his reflections on anarchist organization (called by him an "anarchist party"), on organized anarchist participation in trade union, anti-fascist or insurrectionary movements, as well as the experiences he built: Anarchist Socialist Revolutionary Party (1891); Ancona Anarchist Party (1913); Italian Anarchist (Communist) Union (1919/20).

Also central to our organization is the Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad - which included Nestor Makhno (1888-1934), Piotr Arshinov (1887-1937), Ida Mett (1901-1973), Jean Walecki (1905-?) and Maxime Ranko (1905-1952) - which edited the magazine *Dieło Truda* and, in 1926, published the "Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists".

We claim platformism, especially some of its expressions, such as the Federation of Anarcho-Communists of Bulgaria (FAKB), active between the 1920s and 1940s in Eastern Europe, and the "Libertarian Communist Manifesto", written in 1953 by Georges Fontenis in France. In the same way, we claim the Latin American specificism of the 1960s and 1970s: in Uruguay, with the experience of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU); in Argentina, with the experience of the Libertarian Resistance (RL) organization.

OUR TRAJECTORY IN BRAZIL AND SOME INDICATIONS

In Brazil, the trajectory of our militancy goes back to the process of political opening after the military dictatorship. In that context, anarchism was reorganizing itself, and some of our oldest militants were part of this process in the 1980s and 1990s, especially in Rio de Janeiro and later in Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo.

In addition to many activities in the popular field (community, student and trade union), these activists contributed to different initiatives in the anarchist field. Among others, we mention: in Rio de Janeiro, the *Círculo de Estudos Libertários* (CEL, 1985-1991), and its successor, the *Círculo de Estudos Libertários Ideal Peres* (CELIP, 1995-present) and the bulletin/journal *Libera* (from 1991 onwards) - the anarchist periodical with the longest uninterrupted run in Brazil's history.

This older militancy was directly involved in the first contacts with the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU), in the links between the FAU and Brazilian anarchism (in the mid-1990s), in the formation of the Brazilian Anarchist Construction (1995) and in the writing of the document "Struggle and Organization" (1996) - a process that founded especificist anarchism in Brazil.

She contributed to the construction of the Libertarian Socialist Organization (1997-2000), the aforementioned pioneering national organization of Brazilian speciesist anarchism, and the Popular Resistance tendency in different states (from 1999 onwards); she participated in the foundation and struggles of the Gaucho Anarchist Federation (FAG, from 1995 onwards), the Rio de Janeiro Anarchist Federation (FARJ, from 2003 onwards) and the Forum of Organized Anarchism (FAO, from 2002 onwards).

This militancy also made up anarchist organizations in São Paulo (Luta Libertária, Organização Socialista Libertária) and Mato Grosso (Rusga Libertária); it built the FARJ support network - which helped the articulations in various states and the founding or refounding of organizations in São Paulo, Ceará, Santa Catarina and Paraná (between 2008 and 2011); coordinated the approximation and entry of this network into the FAO (between 2009 and 2011); participated in the FAO and in the preparation of the foundation of the Brazilian Anarchist Coordination (CAB, 2012). [OASL/FARJ, "Elements for a Historical Reconstitution of Our Current"]

Between 2012 and 2022, the militants who are now part of the OSL made up different CAB state organizations, collaborated in the development of these organizations and the CAB itself.

Although all of these initiatives over the last few decades have been the work of a much larger group of militants, we can say without fear that we have played a significant role in all of them. So, modestly, we are proud to have contributed, in Brazil, to the successes and failures of the establishment, growth and development of anarchism in general, and specifist anarchism in particular.

At the OSL, we are already working to promote four objectives which, in our view, were fundamental to the construction of our anarchist current in Brazil:

Firstly, to expand its activities beyond the cultural field and invest, above all, in building and regularly and permanently participating in popular movements (trade union, community, student, agrarian, peasant, indigenous and others), seeking to influence mass social struggles from within, with a clear and defined program. Intervene in the Brazilian social reality and play a role in shaping a left, built from the movements and not from the traditional parties (especially the Workers' Party and its satellites), through a grassroots, classist, combative, direct action, independent, self-managing, federalist and revolutionary perspective.

Secondly, to form a real political force, which not only contributes to the struggles of the oppressed classes, but which is recognized by other political forces and in popular movements, which can develop alliance policies and attract workers to the struggle. In some way, working to return anarchism to its historic position as an active tool for intervention in workers' struggles, and to build a revolutionary project of popular power capable of transforming Brazilian society.

Thirdly, to break with principlism (purism that prevents us from acting in reality as it really is, and thus from properly articulating principles and political practice) and iconoclasm (focus on

aesthetically shocking society, rather than transforming it) and thus recognize that reality certainly has many problems, but it is reality that we must deal with concretely. Our principles need to guide our actions, but we have to know how to move politically in this concrete and material reality (which is not an idealized world). It is essential to put aside anarchism that is restricted to a "lifestyle" and act as a "fish in water" among workers, that is, as workers and among workers.

Fourth, definitively abandon synthesism in favor of a homogeneous and programmatic organizational position, with theoretical, ideological and practical unity, with collective responsibility and discipline. To do this, it is essential to separate ourselves from the individualists and focus on workers with a different militant profile. We want to build a profile of commitment to the struggle and collective demands, and to avoid proximity to ideas and practices that are often close to liberalism, even if they call themselves anarchist.

At the same time, we have incorporated into our organization five pointers which, for us, summarize the lessons learned over these almost 30 years of especificist anarchist activity in Brazil.

Firstly, since our creation, we have managed to move forward and accumulate, even if it is between ebbs and flows, even if we have to keep in mind that our project is long-term. Moving forward really does require accumulation, looking back over time and seeing that the strategy is moving forward. It also requires maturity, both individual and collective. Collective accumulations must be respected, as must the militancy that carries this accumulation.

Secondly, unity cannot be built with disrespect for collective accumulations; unity cannot be built with regional/state autonomism and exaggerated particularism in practice, nor with negligence and incoherent pluralism in theory. It is essential to build a political and organizational culture that is not one of conflict, distrust, disrespect, accusations, implicit threats of splits and unnecessary disputes, but at the same time does not encourage permissiveness, which accepts inconsistencies, problems and unethical attitudes. We must encourage freedom of thought, respect for minority positions and that education precedes punishment.

Thirdly, a national political organization can only be built by thinking nationally and in unity, and this organization can only promote a national project if it manages to grow and diversify in the regions and states. This requires overcoming the culture of small personal affinity groups and promoting a political and organizational culture that permanently seeks theoretical and strategic unity, based on grassroots self-management and federalist mechanisms that build the whole from the parts. The parts cannot be autonomous from each other and alienated from the construction of the whole; and this construction of the whole must be done from the bottom up.

Fourthly, growing and diversifying nationally requires creating the conditions for this. It requires an adequate entry process, without militants coming and going, and the logic of concentric

circles, allowing militants in different conditions to remain. It also requires adequate accompaniment and political training. It is essential to have the capacity to transmit practical accumulations and historical debates to new militants, and not to neglect training and practical orientation. We must not be guided only by the search for hasty numerical growth, without organicity.

Fifthly, no progress can be made on a national project without a critical assessment of the past and a plan for the present and future. You can't build popular power without work and social insertion - mass struggles and anarchist influence in those struggles - or without concrete analysis of reality and the application of theory in practice. Good practice requires good theory, and good theory requires good practice. This is because practice and theory are inseparable. Those who disdain practice don't change anything in the world. Those who disdain theory do it without knowing what they're doing, and are constantly used in other people's projects without even realizing it.

OUR PRINCIPLES: A BRIEF SUMMARY

The OSL is based on a set of principles - non-negotiable conceptions that permanently guide our political practice - which express our philosophical, theoretical, strategic, programmatic and organizational conceptions.

These principles and conceptions are explored in depth in the document "Our Principles and General Strategy: philosophical, theoretical, strategic, programmatic and organizational conceptions". This document can be read by anyone who wants to learn more about our positions. [\[Read this document\]](#)

Libertarian materialism/realism and libertarian social theory

In terms of the theoretical-methodological approach to the analysis of social reality, we have adopted what we are calling *libertarian materialism or realism* and *libertarian social theory*, drawn up mainly from anarchist classics. This approach differs from Marxist, postmodern, (neo)positivist and, obviously, liberal analytical assumptions; it is not synonymous with economic determinism, nor does it recommend any pragmatism of *realpolitik*, which implies abandoning our principles and our political identity.

In short, libertarian materialism/realism is a method of analysis that is at once naturalistic, realistic, experimental, comprehensive and critical. Libertarian social theory is a concrete application of this libertarian materialism for the analysis of society. This theory, as an articulated set of scientific conceptual tools for understanding reality, is linked to anarchist ideology or doctrine and has a structural/systemic focus, supporting analysis of the forces at play (social conflicts), the relations of power/domination and the scenarios in which these conflicts take place.

This approach reconciles theory and history, social structure and human action, reproduction and social transformation. It proposes to distinguish, as necessary, facts from ideas, concrete elements from abstract ones; structure, conjuncture, action and thought/discourse, prioritizing the former over the latter, according to their depth and influence on social reality.

Conception of a capitalist-statist system

Using this approach, we conceive of contemporary society as a *capitalist-statist system*, a historical mode of power/domination that can be analytically broken down into three inseparable and interdependent fields: economic, political and intellectual-moral (cultural).

Its structural logic is based on the permanent accumulation of economic, political and intellectual-moral capital; its social formation is the product of class struggle (social classes are not restricted to the economic field and relations of exploitation), conjunctural and structural changes and transformations. Capitalism-statism destroys the environment and natural resources; it also incorporates and modifies three other forms of structural domination: colonialism/imperialism, racism and patriarchy, which are structurally relevant to its reproduction.

Revolutionary transformation and libertarian socialism

We support a political practice that culminates in a *social revolution*, abolishing class society, ownership (private and national/state) of economic, political and intellectual/moral means, imperialism, racism and patriarchy. After a period of transition - without capitalism, the state and its legitimizing institutions - we advocate the establishment of *libertarian socialism or communism*, our ultimate goal, a mode or system of power that is not based on domination.

It will be an ecological society, based on equality, freedom and self-managed/federalist democracy. A society marked by the socialization of ownership of economic means (of production/distribution), political means (of administration and control) and intellectual-moral means (of production and dissemination of knowledge and beliefs); in which decisions will be made by the workers themselves in their councils and associations, in proportion to how much they are affected by the decisions.

Self-managed people's power project

We advocate the construction of *self-managed popular power*, the foundation of our general transformation strategy, as the path to this transformation. To achieve this, it is necessary to transform the capacity of the oppressed classes to achieve into a social force. The most appropriate way to do this is to organize and engage the proletariat, the peasantry and the other oppressed classes in popular movements (trade unions and social movements) and, together with this, to give these movements a strategic and programmatic direction.

In creating, strengthening and participating in these movements, we have to defend certain characteristics and ways of promoting the struggles, which involves: the breadth and massification of these movements; their classist and combative bases and perspectives; their class independence and direct action politics; their organizational and decision-making methods based on self-management and federalism; the construction of a transformative and revolutionary perspective, through the struggles for reforms and immediate conquests; the unification of the oppressed classes, crossing the class-based struggle with environmental, nationality, race-ethnicity and gender-sexuality issues.

Role of the anarchist organization

In this general strategy, the *role of the political organization or anarchist party* is central, as it focuses on the working masses (oppressed classes). It does this by mobilizing, organizing and engaging workers in popular movements, boosting and accelerating the conversion of their capacity for achievement into a social force. It also does this by influencing popular movements and promoting a strategic and programmatic direction (our project of self-managed popular power).

The anarchist organization leverages the social strength of anarchists in its action, and seeks to influence trade unions and social movements; in doing so, it confronts some of their tendencies, as well as enemies and adversaries. It promotes the need for social revolution and libertarian socialism, seeking to make the movements and the masses the great protagonists of this process; it discards vanguardist methods, as it considers that the relationship between anarchists/party and movements/masses must be complementary, interdependent and based on self-management (anti-authoritarian and non-hierarchical, therefore); it rejects "basist" perspectives and the role of rearguard.

Concept of anarchist organization

We claim a *conception of anarchist organization*: organizational dualism - anarchists organizing at the same time as workers, in popular movements, and as anarchists, in specific political organization. This means sustaining the differentiation between the social (mass) level and the political (cadre, anarchist) level, and the relationship described above between the two. On the social level, our proposal is close to the historical forms of revolutionary syndicalism; on the political level, it has reference to the historical forms of homogeneous and programmatic organizations: platformism and specifism.

We are an anarchist organization of cadres (active minority), which expresses, articulates, organizes and coordinates ideological and doctrinal (anarchist) positions of a sector of the oppressed classes. And it operates around four organizational principles: 1.) Self-management/Federalism: bottom-up decisions; delegations controlled by the base, rotating and revocable; concentric circles, consensus/vote; 2.) Theoretical and ideological unity: clear and

unitary political line, defended and promoted by the entire militancy; 3.) Strategic and tactical unity: clear and unified programmatic line (strategic and tactical), defended and promoted by the entire militancy; 4.) Collective responsibility: each militant is responsible for the organization and the organization is responsible for each militant.

OUR MILITANCY

We have encouraged a certain profile of militancy, both for those who are part of the organization and for those who want to join. They are militants (first and foremost, workers like others, who don't need to dedicate themselves to in-depth studies of anarchism or be intellectuals), who have the conditions and interest in organized anarchist militancy, and who are willing to participate in the anarchist struggle on a daily basis, with internal organizational work and social work in popular movements. In general, we welcome people who are already involved in trade unions, social movements and various struggles, but also those who are interested in starting work of this kind.

Our militancy is in accordance with the principles and conceptions of the organization; it develops and follows a militant style and a method of collective work. This requires adopting certain positions and discarding others. Among the attitudes to be adopted are: encouraging organicity, unity and self-discipline; focusing on constructive work (having an impact on reality and not just criticizing or self-discussing); practicing collective work; rationally engaging in debates; developing the capacity for criticism (respectful and constructive), self-criticism and constant learning; maintaining ethical, trusting and respectful relationships; promoting healthy relationships among militants and in work spaces.

Among the attitudes to be discarded are: informality, autonomy, individualism and lack of responsibility; debates based on subjectivism, disrespectful or destructive criticism; moral/moralistic disputes; promoting a climate of permanent conflict; arrogance, arrogance and self-proclamation; condoning unethical conduct; "lynchings" and judgments outside our libertarian criteria; permanent surveillance of the private lives of activists.

Ethics, commitment, freedom!

Fight, create, people power!

For the advancement of organized anarchism in Brazil!

Libertarian Socialist Organization (LSO)

July 2023