

Social Struggle in the Coming Period:

An Outlook/Action Framework
to Guide our Participation

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The following points represent a brief statement of priorities, an outline of some of the perspectives our organization has decided on to help guide our thinking and actions in the coming period. We do not want to overstate where our organization is at in our analysis and organizing, nor are these points a substitute for the hard discussions our organization still must have. These points developed out of reviews and discussions of the nature of the current period, the continuing wave of social protest domestically and abroad, and how we as a small and specific group of anarchist revolutionaries can participate in and help build those movements for dignity, justice and freedom.

1. **O**ur starting point in both our perspective and in our current work is the importance of organizing for the social self-defense of the working-class and oppressed communities.

Working class defense organizations are the best vehicle for combatting the system of white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism and the state, and must be central to how we participate in social struggles in our communities. They may take many forms, from small, local collectives and projects to mass formations. What they share in common is the determination and the capacity to fight back.

People and the earth are under attack from multiple directions, and in both isolated and structural forms:

- **Austerity** – low wages, social cuts, restricting unions, the assault on urban public school systems;
- **Displacement** – foreclosures and gentrification, corporate encroachment on Native and farm land;
- **Racist Repression and Criminalization** – police brutality, mass imprisonment, a militarized border and record deportations;
- **Backlash** – attacks on reproductive freedom, rape culture, violence aimed at queer and transfolk, fascist, fundamentalist, and far-right movements;
- **Empire** – An unending “war on terror”, high-tech militarization & surveillance, economic blackmail and proxy occupations;
- **Climate change** and ecological devastation brought on by industrial capitalism that threatens life on earth;
- And on and on and on . . .

M1's instinctual immersion in and building of working-class defense organizations ranging from eviction defense & tenants organizing to stewards councils & IWW organizing committees to antifa work, prison organizing and radical alternatives to 12-step programs have placed us shoulder to shoulder with those who have begun to question things and fight back.

These defense organizations are an essential foundation for developing the self-organization and strategy, rooted in the experience of the working-class and oppressed communities, both for immediate fights for survival and revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy and the state.

2. *The current period* has seen a renewal of popular opposition to police murder, white supremacy and racist reaction. These struggles have used mass action, disruption, physical occupation and at times dramatic direct action tactics, inspiring the emergence of new social movements, most notably the Black Lives Matter movement.



White supremacy has always been a key pillar of the system of rule here in the U.S., and despite the moves towards more integrated repressive forces, more representative political class, and a superficial official multiculturalism, this society remains deeply defined by its racism.

In all the work we do, M1 will organize to combat white supremacy, whether from the structural framework of capitalism and the state, against any right-wing or fascist movement, or within the social movements that we participate. As anarchists, we recognize that it is not possible to overthrow capitalism, patriarchy and the state without confronting white supremacy. By the same token, racism itself cannot be completely dismantled until capitalism and patriarchy are also destroyed and the state is abolished.

We do not arbitrarily elevate the struggle against white supremacy above those that combat patriarchy, capitalism, and the state; they comprise a complete framework for authoritarian rule and oppression. But we acknowledge that an important insurgent culture is developing today that centers on a shared opposition to white supremacy, while actively attending to the role of other forms of oppression. We are informed by this reality and it remains a crucial guide for our engagement with working class defense organizations.



3. *The national elections* of 2016 are on the horizon and it is guaranteed that the build up toward them will disrupt many of the movements and grass-roots campaigns we participate in. As in previous cycles, many liberal and left activists, the mainstream unions and other organizations will abandon important struggles in favor of phone-banking and door knocking for Bernie Sanders or Hillary Clinton or whoever else might overtake them and win the Democratic Party nomination. Others will support the supposedly more radical alternative of Green or socialist candidates. Many will attempt to coerce others to join them in this electoral circus. We want to make it clear that revolutionary and anarchist movements must counterpose alternative approaches to the elections and bourgeois politics in general, including in their left, Libertarian and “progressive” forms. Building working class defense organizations that are fully autonomous from and hostile to the electoral process and the Democratic Party apparatus is essential to limiting the damage in the coming months. M1 will continue to promote a politics and program that is centered on keeping the struggles in the streets, schools and workplaces (including prisons) – where our real power lies.

4. Working class defense organizations must fight against the continuous gravitational pull of the non-profit system in the US, where money and resources flow to groups and projects that accept the limits of reformism. An anarchist and revolutionary program must reject this model; we can't build effective revolutionary and working class solutions if we are funded by the bosses and government and are organized in ways that replicate their hierarchy. Non-profits can sometimes employ direct action and other militant tactics, pushing up against the boundaries of business and government. Thus they can present their work as progressive and even radical. But the central logic of non-profits is that they are, in the end, the loyal opposition within the framework of capitalism and the state, committed to reform but not to revolution. Whether they are partisan or politically independent, non-profits tied to "movement organizing" serve to contain and re-direct momentum from broader social struggles. They create deceptive alliances that obscure class contradictions and the actual antagonistic relationships between Power and the grassroots. The bureaucracy of the mainstream unions and civil rights groups play a similar role. A central aspect of First of May's politics is that anarchist militants must be partisans of the working classes and oppressed, working within the class as equals on the grassroots level. Thinking of non-profits as vehicles for insurgent and revolutionary class and social struggle is a political dead end. We need to raise this objection clearly within our mass work.





M1's affinity is built around four principles:

1) a commitment to revolution

2) a working class orientation

3) a non-doctrinaire anarchism

4) a non-sectarian and multi-layered approach to organization

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5. *Even with an understanding* that the ruling class is international and that the working class is global, and that what happens in other parts of the world can quickly impact circumstances here, it has been easy for First of May to have a narrowly pragmatic concentration on the Midwest region and only the movements and organizations we belong to. We now seek to develop a broader international analysis and links with the like-minded around the globe. The events in Kurdistan, Ukraine, Greece and elsewhere point to the need to understand revolutionary dynamics there and the real obstacles both external and internal to their development. M1 has created an International Committee for the first time to carry out international correspondence, coordinate our solidarity efforts, and provoke critical discussion.

In conclusion, while the points outlined here are helping to guide our current organizing, they are a small part of the conversations we want to have with allies, co-workers, neighbors and the broader movements of struggle we see ourselves a part of. We want to connect with others who identify with revolutionary and liberatory visions, especially anti-authoritarian and anarchist ideas and programs for action. We intend to dialogue, organize and build with all who believe in the need for mass, revolutionary action of this character and substance.