

Anarchist Federation Australia Proposed Constitution

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AIMS

Creation of an Anarchist Society

“Freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice; socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality.” ~ Mikhail Bakunin.

The ideal social and economic system, one that is consistent with the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity, is *anarchism* or *libertarian communism*. By this, anarchists mean the common ownership of the means of production and the free association of producers. The implementation of anarchism can only be through the free federation of productive and communal organisations.

Abolition of the State

“The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently.” ~ Gustav Landauer.

Anarchists regard the State as an oppressive institution, the abolition of which is necessary to human liberation. The destruction of the State is a collective responsibility which will be achieved through social revolution.

Social Revolution

“The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.” ~ Preamble to the IWW Constitution

Anarchists are working towards a social revolution in which the billions of working people take possession of the means of production, abolish capitalism and the State, and live in harmony with the Earth.

PRINCIPLES

Anarchism

The word *anarchy* is from the Greek, and literally means *the absence of rulers*. Anarchism is both a political philosophy and a social movement. As a social movement, anarchism aims to create a classless, non-hierarchical society. As a political philosophy, anarchism maintains that the creation of such a society is both *possible* and *desirable*. Anarchists are those who actively work towards realising this possibility.

Liberty

The concept of individual human freedom lies at the heart of anarchist philosophy. As such, anarchists seek to maximise the ability of individuals to live freely – in the absence of

the constraints, oppressions and terrors imposed by authority. Anarchists oppose all forms of domination and exploitation. This includes, but is not limited to, oppression based on class, gender (both trans and cis), race, ethnicity, colonialism, sexuality, appearance and ability. Capitalism and the State also threaten the entire planet through war and the destruction of the environment. Through both individual and collective struggle, anarchists work to overthrow the social structures based on these oppressive practices.

Equality

The anarchist concept of freedom is intrinsically linked to the notion of equality. That is, anarchists maintain that individuals are most free in a society in which there is economic, political and social equality. This society must be based on the principle: *From each according to their ability; to each according to their need.*

Solidarity

Anarchists believe that *an injury to one is an injury to all*. Anarchists oppose the false notion of survival of the fittest as a social principle, and believe that human survival and social development can best be secured through co-operation among individuals and groups to their mutual benefit. This is the principle of *mutual aid*.

Direct Action

Anarchists assert that *the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the workers themselves*. An anarchist society can only be achieved through *direct action*; that is, through forms of social struggle unmediated by political authorities such as governments, political parties, bureaucratic trade unions, etc. Similarly, anarchists support the right of all oppressed people to organise autonomously and lead their own struggles.

Direct Democracy

Anarchists advocate the creation of directly democratic forms of social organisation, in which individual members have an equal right to take part in decision-making processes. As such, anarchists oppose forms of representative democracy, and agitate for their replacement by directly democratic ones.

Federation

Anarchists advocate the establishment of *voluntary, non-hierarchical associations* between directly democratic organisations. By the same token, anarchists also maintain the right of members of federated bodies to leave such associations, if and when they deem them to be contrary to their interests.

Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

Anarchists in Australia acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land we live on. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and future. We support the ongoing struggle of Indigenous Peoples for land rights, self-determination, and justice.

STATUTES

1. NAME

This organisation shall be known as the Anarchist Federation Australia.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

- (a) The Anarchist Federation Australia (AFA) is a federation of Affiliates organised as autonomous groups.
- (b) All Affiliates shall be known by a name of their own choice.
- (c) All Affiliates have full freedom to initiate actions in their own name.
- (d) The decisions of Affiliates are made by Affiliate members, meeting in the duly constituted assembly of their Affiliate, using a process determined by that Affiliate.
- (e) No Delegated Limited Mandate Offices are to have any executive powers. All Delegated Limited Mandate Offices are to be elected and recallable at any time. The maximum term of tenure for all Delegated Limited Mandate Offices shall be two years, with the possibility of a second consecutive term of two years.

3. STRUCTURE

3.1 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Membership of AFA Affiliates shall be open to individual persons who agree with the AFA Aims and Principles, and who meet the other requirements for membership determined by that Affiliate.
- (b) All individual members shall have an equal voice and an equal part in decision-making within the Affiliate of which they are a member.

3.2 AFFILIATES

- (a) Individual persons are expected to organise themselves into Affiliates based on locality or affinity. These Affiliates are the main ongoing forum for debates and the major focus for agitation. In general, no individual person should be a member of more than one Affiliate. If this situation arises in existing Affiliates, the respective Affiliates must notify the AFA Secretariat, who may notify AFA Congress if there is a concern for the proper functioning of the AFA. AFA Congress may request that two groups operate as one AFA Affiliate, for AFA purposes, if they share a high proportion of individual members. Congress may also take into account shared members when deciding whether or not to accept new AFA Affiliates.
- (b) Affiliates must meet the following conditions for AFA membership:
 - i) Affiliates must contain at least three individual persons as members.
 - ii) Affiliates must meet in assembly regularly, at least once every two months.
 - iii) Affiliates must make available permanent and public postal and email addresses.
 - iv) Affiliates agree to pay AFA Affiliate dues on an annual basis.

(c) If an Affiliate fails to meet any of the above conditions, its membership of the AFA will be suspended. If, within 12 months, all conditions are still not met, the Affiliate's membership of the AFA will lapse. Any AFA supplies or funds entrusted to

the Affiliate, must be returned to the Secretariat.

(d) Affiliate dues shall be set by each AFA Congress.

(e) To be accepted as an AFA Affiliate, a group must be sponsored by another Affiliate on a provisional basis for at least 12 months. The Provisional Affiliate must then be accepted unanimously by an AFA Congress, in order to become an AFA Affiliate. This requirement to be sponsored will come into effect immediately after the first AFA Congress, and as such will not apply to the founding Affiliates who make up the first Congress.

(f) All Affiliates shall receive the help and support of the AFA in times of hardship and trouble, to the extent permitted by the circumstances and resources of the AFA.

(g) Affiliates who choose to leave the AFA are asked to notify the AFA Secretariat.

3.3 REGIONAL FEDERATIONS

(a) Affiliates may form Regional Federations of the AFA with other Affiliates of the AFA in their region.

(b) Regional Federations of the AFA will determine their own structure, meeting times, activities and tasks, delegation processes and finances.

(c) AFA Congress will decide on the nature of the relationship between the AFA and any AFA Regional Federations.

3.4 INDIVIDUAL OBSERVERS

(a) Individual persons who agree with the AFA Aims and Principles, but are not members of an Affiliate, may apply to the Secretariat or Congress for Observer status.

(b) Observers have the right to participate in the internal discussions of the AFA, including Congresses and Conferences, but have no vote. Observers are also authorised to distribute the literature of the AFA on its behalf.

(c) The AFA is not obliged to accept applications for Observer status. An applicant for Observer status who has previously been a member of an Affiliate will be asked to show cause why the application should be accepted. An applicant for Observer status who can conveniently belong to an existing Affiliate will be asked to show cause why they have not joined that Affiliate. Decisions of the AFA Secretariat to accept or reject an application can be appealed to the AFA Congress.

4. DELEGATED LIMITED MANDATE OFFICES

4.1 AFA SECRETARIAT

(a) Each AFA Congress will elect an Affiliate to be responsible for the function of AFA Secretariat, whose term shall run until the next Congress.

(b) The AFA Secretariat may at any time be recalled by an Extraordinary Congress. Such a recall may only be based upon a proven breach of duties as mandated by the AFA Statutes and Congress.

(c) In the event of an Affiliate being unable, for whatever reason, to carry out the functions and duties of the AFA Secretariat, a replacement may be appointed on a provisional basis by an Extraordinary Congress.

(d) The duties of the AFA Secretariat shall include:

- i) Responsibility for the general AFA finances and to issue a yearly financial report.
- ii) Co-ordination of communication between all AFA affiliates.
- iii) Responsibility for maintaining close contacts with all the overseas organisations with which the AFA has friendly relations.
- iv) Maintenance of the AFA website.
- v) Dispatch of special AFA communiques to overseas addresses as required.
- vi) The payment of international dues.

4.2 AFFILIATE SECRETARY

- (a) Each Affiliate shall elect an Affiliate Secretary, and notify the AFA Secretariat of that person's name.
- (b) The duties of the Affiliate Secretary shall include:
 - i) *AFA correspondence*. The Affiliate Secretary will collect, table in a duly constituted assembly, answer and file (as appropriate) all mail relating to the AFA (electronic or otherwise).
 - ii) *Payment of Affiliate dues*. The Affiliate Secretary will ensure that Affiliate dues are paid to the AFA Secretariat as required.

5. FINANCES

- (a) All AFA Affiliates shall pay annual dues. The dues rate will be set by each AFA Congress. Each Affiliate shall determine for themselves the amount (if any) of dues required from their individual members.
- (b) The AFA Congress shall decide on the proportional allocation of all funds collected for the forthcoming period. Financial reports on all money collected and its allocation will be the responsibility of the AFA Secretariat.

6. DECISION-MAKING

6.1 LOCAL

- (a) Affiliates make decisions in their own name by methods of their own choosing.

6.2 CONGRESS

- (b) The AFA Congress has responsibility for accepting new Affiliates; electing the Affiliate responsible for the AFA Secretariat; setting dues rates; initiating AFA publications; making amendments to the AFA Constitution; and other business as determined by the Congress.
- (c) Agenda items shall be proposed by Affiliates at least three months in advance of Congress. Late agenda items to be dealt with in the order received, time allowing.
- (d) Agendas, Congress materials, Reports and other relevant information shall be circulated to all Affiliates by the AFA Secretariat at least six weeks prior to the Congress.
- (e) Delegates to the AFA Congress must have written authorisation of their Delegate status from their Affiliate Secretary. The AFA Secretariat has the responsibility to confirm the identity and status of Delegates to Congress. In situations where people attending Congress have no written Delegate authorisation, the AFA Secretariat may take reasonable steps to ascertain their status and may decide to give them Delegate or Observer status, or to deny them

entry.

(f) Quorum for Congress requires the presence of Delegates from at least three different Affiliates, or from at least half the total number of Affiliates, whichever number is greater.

(g) Congress is open to all members of AFA Affiliates and accredited Observers. Only Congress Delegates from Affiliates may speak on behalf of those Affiliates.

(h) Congress proceeds according to the order in which items appear on the agenda with the first item being applications of Provisional Affiliates. This procedure will be altered only if there is an urgent matter which requires consideration or action by Congress and a motion to alter the agenda is agreed to by a majority of mandated Affiliate Delegates.

(i) AFA Congress shall attempt to make decisions by consensus. When decisions cannot be made by consensus a Resolution Group shall be chosen by Congress. The Resolution Group shall consist of at least three Delegates, from at least two different Affiliates. The Resolution Group shall also include representatives of different perspectives on the issue in question. The Resolution Group shall draw up a synthesis of the various positions for further discussion by the current Congress. The period of time given to the Resolution Group for this task will be specified by Congress.

(j) If consensus on the synthesis cannot be achieved, resolution shall be reached by simple majority vote on the basis of one vote per Affiliate.

(k) Each Congress shall set the date and place for the next Congress.

(l) All decisions and the full wording of resolutions to appear in the AFA Congress Report to be distributed by the AFA Secretariat to all Affiliates.

(m) All decisions to be ratified by Affiliates in duly constituted meetings of their assemblies. Ratification is a recognition that correct procedure has been followed.

(n) AFA Affiliates are expected to abide by the decisions of AFA Congress. This demonstrates a commitment to organisation, solidarity, and collective responsibility.

6.3 EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS

(a) If a decision, due to extenuating circumstances, must be made as quickly as possible, an Extraordinary Congress can be held.

(b) An Extraordinary Congress shall be called by the AFA Secretariat if requested by no less than three Affiliates.

(c) An Extraordinary Congress is to be convened at the earliest possible opportunity after all Affiliates have been informed of the issue, enabling them to call emergency meetings and choose Delegates.

(d) Extraordinary Congress decision-making process and quorum will be the same as Congress.

6.4 DECISIONS BETWEEN CONGRESSES

(a) If a decision needs to be made between Congresses and does not require an Extraordinary Congress the following procedure applies:

i) Affiliates send a dated proposal and reasons to the AFA Secretariat.

ii) The AFA Secretariat sends the proposal and reasons to all other Affiliates and issues a report.

- iii) The Affiliates must answer within one month of receiving the proposal.
- iv) The proposal is only accepted if all responding Affiliates agree. No response implies abstention.

7. CONFERENCES

- (a) An AFA Conference is a non-decision-making event and can be called by any AFA Affiliate.
- (b) Conferences are open to all members of AFA Affiliates and accredited Observers.
- (c) Conferences can pass resolutions that are recommendations to Congress.
- (d) Conferences shall be self-regulating regarding resolutions, structure, length of sessions and scope.

8. PUBLICATIONS

- (a) The AFA shall maintain a website. The AFA Secretariat shall be responsible for its maintenance.
- (b) The AFA Secretariat may use the name 'Anarchist Federation Australia', the AFA letterhead, logo and other symbols in publications. The AFA Secretariat is expected to use the name, logo and other symbols in keeping with the wishes of the the AFA as a whole, as articulated by the AFA Congress.
- (c) AFA Affiliates may issue in their own name papers, pamphlets, websites and any other publications. Affiliates may use words or symbols to indicate that they are AFA Affiliates, however Affiliates are expected to make it clear through the design of these materials, that they don't represent the AFA as a whole.
- (d) All publications shall clearly state who they are published by.

9. DISAFFILIATION & AFFILIATE RESPONSIBILITY

- (a) Affiliates shall be responsible for the behaviour and conduct of their individual members with regard to AFA matters as described in the Constitution.
- (b) Affiliates maintain the right and responsibility to expel individual members found contravening the Constitution of the AFA, or contravening other requirements for membership, as determined by that Affiliate.
- (c) Affiliates must keep a record of the reasons for expulsion of any individual members, in the minutes of a duly constituted assembly.
- (d) An Affiliate which fails to meet the conditions for AFA membership listed in 3.2(b) above, will have its membership of the AFA suspended as described in 3.2(c) above.
- (e) Affiliates can only be disaffiliated by an AFA Congress decision that they have contravened the AFA Constitution.
- (f) Individual members of Affiliates that have been disaffiliated may transfer their membership to another Affiliate, if they meet the requirements for membership as determined by that Affiliate.

10. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The first AFA Secretariat will prepare a review of options for international affiliation and

report to the second AFA Congress with a recommendation.

11. REVIEW OF THIS CONSTITUTION

This Constitution will be reviewed at the second, third and fourth AFA Congresses. Decisions about changes to this Constitution will follow the process as described in 6.2(i) and 6.2(j) above. Thereafter, the Constitution will be reviewed as required.