

## VERSION 1

### 14.3 3 Questions of Strategy

- Structurally interesting: devising our strategy of social transformation...
  - A macrostructure of the text, overarching theme. Could not be delivered earlier in the text without the context of what came before
- Question: how can we use the idea of “strategically” and apply it to other things
  - How can an org have a meeting strategically?
  - How can an org print, fold, and staple zines together strategically?
  - Example of consensus decision-making– how do we do that strategically?  
Instead of doing consensus to DO consensus. Doing the work of consensus just to do it becomes more bureaucratic and less strategic
  - complaint most have had experience with: meetings just to have meetings. Being more strategic with actions and people’s motivations and commitments to a long term goal helps to move it along
  - to help with strategy -- having list of goals to achieve during meeting
  - more strategy in local popular meetings -- e.g. housing meeting; anarchist meetings are more like, let’s catch up and see where you’re at, hard to discuss strategy
    - anarchists “strategically” checking in and connecting immediate action to long term goals
  - how to do something strategically? answer three questions
    - where are we?
    - where do we want to go?
    - how do we get there? (tactic)
    - Possible fourth question: what space do we have to produce evaluative feedback in order to determine if we are answering the other questions informing our goals.
      - Pg 66 has some evaluation and revising strategy to check into
        - “it is important to set deadlines for the accomplishment of actions, , with assessments of the results at the end of each period or cycle”
      - might want feedback from other org to evaluate process
      - Feedback from other org for ethics maintenance
  - strategizing at the diff levels
    - strategy at social level is based on need
    - longer-term strategizing happens at the political level
  - If ideological and theoretical unity not present can’t move forward
  - Using the three questions as strategy
    - Developing theory “strategically” what does that mean?
      - Developing theory that is contextual, can interact with applied or collective practice of the moment and situation; choosing what to focus on, what theory you need to produce in order to obtain results or understand a particular problem
      - Not wasting time on stuff that’s not helpful to the goal
      - Oppositional occurrence: writing a book about political theory that’s not anchored; producing theory that’s too abstract or open/ not strategic, so that folks are like “i’m not a theory person”
  - Checking in, so as not to assume unity in theory

- Not assuming unity across other orgs or anarchists, though difficult to discuss this with some folks. A problem of cultural unity but not political ideological unity
  - Different example: Carl's dad agreeing with some of the theory of the political podcast but had stark cultural ideological differences that made the cultural baggage of semantics triggering
  - People attached to certain ideologies that make them hesitant to consider certain ideas
- Sectarianism against organization due to marginalized groups getting more marginalized in those spaces
  - Possible difficulty with especificismo?
    - Any org that is self-reflective needs to acknowledge and address that peripheries can continue to be peripheries within anarchist spaces
    - and organizations of the oppressed contain centers and peripheries. Supporting rank and file members pushed to organizational peripheries and oppressed by leadership is also important social work

#### 14.2

- Gives timeframe for when to ask the three questions
  - "Shelf life of the responses [to the questions]"
- macro and micro
  - "each militant has a well-defined function and clear objectives to be achieved"
  - micro action items from each meeting flows into macro strategy
  - Bullet journaling parallel
    - bullet journals use strategy (i want to accomplish these tasks) and employ tactics (migrating) to carry it out
- anarchist political level is intentional, not reactionary -- can organize revolution based on our interests

#### 14.3

- "If objectives change, for example in a post-revolutionary situation"--> sticks out because when we ask the three questions, this possibility doesn't often come up
- Within the program-- wins can be defined contextually, by meeting the needs of the community
  - Not like political wins as in political parties
  - Mutual aid doesn't have a "win," it's a survival work, a thing that is part of daily life
    - MA can become politicized
    - MA as an anarchist aesthetic
      - How can we flip the cooptation of MA? (as in "mutual aid-mutual=aid)
      - How can we make it more political? How to throw back into the face of the system that is failing?
    - How do we put more MUTUAL into mutual aid?
      - maybe being strategic about supporting mutual aid is to see where is it already occurring? how can we support it and make it more autonomous?
      - can export aid logistics strategy to support other needs

- kropotkin's idea of mutual aid was about aid between species... anarchist mutual aid might be about challenging commodification, going towards anarchist ends.
- do people receiving mutual aid get opportunities to contribute? that is the line that needs to get blurred

#### 14.4

- strategy is what the organization is Not involved in
  - force of organization is to say that we are not going to do something for strategic reasons, and not ideological reasons
  - force of strategy can overcome force of moral guilt
  - how can mutual aid combat individual guilt?
- freedom to join is equal to the freedom to leave
  - org owes satisfaction to militant and militant owes satisfaction to org -- org should not push people out and try to make accommodations
  - if you are in a specific org though that level of trust is already somewhat established

## VERSION 2

- A. How can we use the idea of “strategically” and apply it to other things
- B. How can an org have a meeting strategically?
- C. To help with strategy -- having list of goals to achieve during meeting
- D. Anarchists “strategically” checking in and connecting immediate action to long term goals
- E. How to do something strategically? answer three questions
- F. Where are we?
- G. Where do we want to go?
- H. How do we get there? (tactic)
- I. “it is important to set deadlines for the accomplishment of actions, , with assessments of the results at the end of each period or cycle”
- J. Might want feedback from other org to evaluate process
- K. Feedback from other org for ethics maintenance
- L. Strategizing at the diff levels
- M. Strategy at social level is based on need
- N. Longer-term strategizing happens at the political level
- O. If ideological and theoretical unity not present can’t move forward
- P. Developing theory “strategically” what does that mean?
- Q. Developing theory that is contextual, can interact with applied or collective practice of the moment and situation; choosing what to focus on, what theory you need to produce in order to obtain results or understand a particular problem
- R. Not wasting time on stuff that’s not helpful to the goal
- S. Checking in, so as not to assume unity in theory
- T. Not assuming unity across other orgs or anarchists, though difficult to discuss this with some folks. A problem of cultural unity but not political ideological unity
- U. People attached to certain ideologies that make them hesitant to consider certain ideas
- V. Sectarianism against organization due to marginalized groups getting more marginalized in those spaces
- W. Any org that is self-reflective needs to acknowledge and address that peripheries can continue to be peripheries within anarchist spaces
- X. and organizations of the oppressed contain centers and peripheries. Supporting rank and file members pushed to organizational peripheries and oppressed by leadership is also important social work
- Y. Gives timeframe for when to ask the three questions
- Z. “Shelf life of the responses [to the questions]”
- AA. macro and micro
- BB. “each militant has a well-defined function and clear objectives to be achieved”
- CC. Anarchist political level is intentional, not reactionary
- DD. Within the program– wins can be defined contextually, by meeting the needs of the community
- EE. Not like political wins as in political parties
- FF. Mutual aid doesn’t have a “win,” it’s a survival work, a thing that is part of daily life
- GG. MA as an anarchist aesthetic
- HH. Strategy is what the organization is Not involved in
- II. Force of organization is to say that we are not going to do something for strategic reasons, and not ideological reasons
- JJ. Force of strategy can overcome force of moral guilt
- KK. How can mutual aid combat individual guilt?
- LL. Freedom to join is equal to the freedom to leave
- MM. Org owes satisfaction to militant and militant owes satisfaction to org -- org should not push people out and try to make accommodations
- NN. If you are in a specific org though that level of trust is already somewhat established

### **VERSION 3**

1. CC – BB – DD - EE
2. FF - GG
3. HH – II – JJ - KK
4. A - B
5. I – C – R - D
6. E – F – G - H
7. Z – Y - AA
8. L – M – J - K
9. U - V
10. N – O – S - T
11. W - X
12. LL – MM - NN
13. P - Q

## VERSION 4

1. The specific anarchist organization is intentional, not reactionary. As the FARJ says, “each militant has a well-defined function and clear objectives to be achieved”. Within the program of the organization, wins cannot be too narrowly defined because the success of its actions will need to be defined situationally, based on the specific context. However, regardless of context, “winning battles” will always be determined by whether something has been done to organize the class struggle and meet the material needs of the community. In especificismo, this has nothing to do with the typical “wins” of a political party or reformist movement.
2. When it comes to mutual aid, it is difficult to consider what this would mean since mutual aid is as related to survival and daily life as it is to revolutionary action. There is no way to win at mutual aid. For this reason, it can easily fall into edgy, counter-cultural aesthetics.
3. Strategy is as much about what an organization intentionally does NOT do as it is about what an organization does. An organization’s collective force is also found in its ability to say that it will not do something for strategic reasons, making clear that all decisions are not made based on ideology alone. In this way, the force of strategic action can overcome the force of moral guilt. This is especially necessary in mutual aid organizations which are often guided by a sense of guilt rather than a practical, collective strategy.
4. From a political perspective, everything can be thought of strategically. This could be something simple. An organization could ask itself about possible ways to have a meeting (more) strategically. Or a group of militants could meet before a larger assembly to prepare and ensure that everyone knows their roles and how to successfully realize them.
5. In *Social Anarchism and Organisation*, the FARJ adds that “it is important to set deadlines for the accomplishment of actions, with assessments of the results at the end of each period or cycle”. So, for a meeting, political strategy could consist of a list of goals to achieve frame AND a sequence of tactics that will lead toward an end that fits within a specific timeframe. This allows the militants of the political organization to have a strategically determined line that prevents deviations from the group’s objective. We think that when anarchists speak of “checking-in” in solidarity with each other and our communities, this too could be done strategically from a political perspective, connective immediately necessary actions and relationships to long-term objectives built on deeper foundations of trust.
6. We agree with the FARJ that for an organization to act strategically involves answering these three questions at specific intervals:
  1. Where is the organization going?
  2. Where does it want to go?
  3. Which way is it going to go to get there?
7. The “shelf-life” to these responses produces a cycle for both the more contextualized and responsive “micro” strategy and the more general and permanent “macro” strategy of the political organization.
8. The possibility of strategizing on the political level implies the parallel need to strategize on the social level, but unlike the political strategy that comes from ideological and theoretical unity, the strategy of social movements and mass organizations has to be based on a popular recognition of a common need and a shared antagonistic force to be confronted collectively. This does not prevent or discourage the political organization from seeking feedback from other organizations and militants from the social level. This input should also be factored into the evaluative processes of the political organization; it is an integral part of the ethical reflections which shape ethical interactions.

9. Some ideologies will always be more hesitant to consider certain parts of the political organization's program. This may lead to sectarianism which itself is anti-organizational in tendency but could be related to reoccurring patterns of marginalized groups finding themselves in marginalized spaces where they still have legitimate fears of being further marginalized.

10. As we have said, longer-term strategizing happens at the political level where it cannot continue to move forward without ideological and theoretical unity. This means politically "checking-in" may consist of not assuming unity of theory and ideology, but instead doing the work to formulate them, or to arrive at splits on a political basis and not on a personal basis. The specific anarchist organization should not assume unity with other anarchists or leftists; nor should it assume disunity with liberals, progressives, reformists, and Marxists in every context. This is difficult to discuss this with some people and organizations, but this is the force behind political organization. By presenting a well-articulated political line, people can learn about anarchist political strategy and determine their relationship to it as individuals isolated in struggle or as members of their own political organizations with their own strategically determined criteria for cooperating with others. We should not confuse a problem of cultural unity with a problem of political or ideological unity.

11. Because the political organization aims to be self-reflective and ethical, it needs to acknowledge that peripheries can continue to be peripheries within anarchist spaces. Even in organizations of the oppressed, centers and peripheries are often re-established. To defend against this occurrence, it is important to do social work that supports rank-and-file participants who are dominated and oppressed by leadership and dominant ideological forces respectively.

12. The freedom to join the specific anarchist organization should be equal to the freedom to leave it, and as has been stated before, the organization owes satisfaction to the militants and the militants owe satisfaction to the organization. It should serve as a body that pushes people out over time and should struggle, on the political level, to make accommodations to the specific needs of anyone who wants to put commit to the organization and put in the necessary work to militantly political line of the org. In especificismo, this is addressed through a high degree of trust established through the long process of integrating oneself and of being integrated into the org.

13. If we want our collective actions to have effects on the real world, we must reflect on our actions, and we must concern ourselves with what it means to develop theory strategically. This means determining what theory to use in understanding the context, and then continuing with a more specific theory that is contextually precise. All of this would be used to determine what to focus on when interacting with different practical elements in the moment. Finally, strategically developed theory would need to be attempting to understand a particular problem from a particular perspective, so it would be articulating a connection between a given situation and the analysis of the political organization.

## **VERSION 5**

### **The May Document from Militant Kindergarten by the Center for Especifismo Studies**

“Strategy determines what an organization should focus on when interacting with different practical elements in a given moment. So, strategically developed theory helps an organization understand a particular problem from a particular perspective by establishing a connection between a given situation and the analysis made by the political organization. In especificismo, this is done using a high degree of trust established through the long process of integrating oneself and of being integrated into the specific anarchist organization.”

If we want our collective actions to have effects on the real world, we must reflect on them, and we must concern ourselves with what it means to develop theory strategically. This means determining which theory to begin with for understanding our context, while continuing to develop a more specifically contextualized theory that is a product of this process. Strategy determines what an organization should focus on when interacting with different practical elements in a given moment. So, strategically developed theory helps an organization understand a particular problem from a particular perspective by establishing a connection between a given situation and the analysis of it.

The politics of the specific anarchist organization are intentional, not reactionary. As the FARJ says, “each militant has a well-defined function and clear objectives to be achieved”. However, within the broader program of the organization, roles cannot be too narrowly defined because specific actions will need to be determined situationally, based on context. In especificismo, effective action has nothing to do with the typical “wins” of a political party or reformist movement. A common problem for mutual aid organizations is that it is difficult to consider what a “win” would look like since mutual aid is as much a part of daily survival as it is revolutionary action. There is no inherent way to win at mutual aid. For this reason, efforts like this demand strategy, or else they can retreat into counter-cultural aesthetics.

Strategy is as much about what an organization intentionally does NOT do as it is about what an organization does. The collective force of an organization is also found in its ability to say that it will not do something for strategic reasons, making clear that not all decisions are made based on ideology alone. This is especially necessary in mutual aid efforts which are easily motivated by a sense of guilt rather than a practical, collective strategy. We think that the force of strategic action can help us overcome the force of moral guilt.

From a political perspective, everything can be thought of strategically. This could be something simple. An organization could ask itself about possible ways to have a meeting (more) strategically. Or



a group of militants could meet before a larger assembly to prepare and ensure that everyone knows their roles and how to successfully realize them. In *Social Anarchism and Organisation*, the FARJ adds that “it is important to set deadlines for the accomplishment of actions, with assessments of the results at the end of each period or cycle”. So, for a meeting, political strategy could consist of a list of goals to achieve as well as a sequence of tactics that will lead toward an end that fits within a specific timeframe. This allows the militants of the political organization to have a strategically determined line that prevents unintended deviations from the group’s objective.

When anarchists speak of solidarity with each other and their communities, this too could be done strategically from a political perspective, connecting immediately necessary actions and practical relationships to long-term objectives built on deeper foundations of trust. We agree with the FARJ that acting strategically involves an organization answering these three questions:

1. Where is the organization right now?
2. Where does it want to go?
3. How is it going to get there?

When an organization responds to these questions, the answers have a “shelf-life” forcing the regular reproduction of both the (more contextualized and responsive) “micro” forms of strategy and the (more general and permanent) “macro” strategy.

The importance of strategizing on the political level implies the parallel need to strategize on the social level, but unlike the political strategy that comes from ideological and theoretical unity, the strategy of social movements and mass organizations must be based on popular recognition of a shared need which can be addressed collectively. Social work should be done in an effort to continue working toward popular “wins”. It is an opportunity for the political organization to seek feedback from other organizations and militants from the social level. This input should be factored into the evaluative processes of the political organization as an integral part of the reflections that aim to shape ethical interactions.

Some ideological tendencies will always be less open to certain parts of the specific anarchist organization’s program, many of which may be sectarian. But the anti-organizational tendency to reject currents like *especifismo* may also be related to reoccurring patterns amongst marginalized groups. Within organizations of the oppressed, centers and peripheries are often re-established. Just participating in groups of marginalized people doesn’t eliminate the possibility of marginalization. Since the political organization aims to be self-reflective and ethical, it needs to acknowledge that peripheries can continue to be peripheries, even within anarchist spaces. To defend against this occurrence, it is important to do social work that supports rank-and-file participants who are placed on the peripheries of power both by leadership and by dominant ideological forces. Nevertheless, as we have said, longer-term strategizing necessarily happens at the political level and requires ideological and theoretical unity. This means that, politically speaking, “checking-in” consists, not of assuming unity, but instead, of doing the real work to form it. In this way, splits can occur on a political basis and not on a personal basis.

We should not confuse a problem of cultural unity with a problem of political or ideological unity. The specific anarchist organization should not assume unity with other anarchists or leftists on everything; nor should it assume disunity with liberals, progressives, reformists, and Marxists in every context either. These overlapping political lines can be difficult to discuss with some people and organizations, but the militant drive to do so is the political force behind *especifismo*. By presenting a well-articulated political line, people can learn about anarchist political strategy and determine their relationship to it as individuals isolated in struggle or as members of their own political organizations with their own strategically determined criteria for cooperating with others.

The freedom to join a specific organization should be equal to the freedom to leave it. As has been stated before: the organization owes satisfaction to the militants and the militants owe satisfaction to the organization. It should not serve as a body that pushes people out over time. It should struggle, on the political level, to make accommodations for the needs of anyone who wants to commit to the organization and put in the necessary work to militantly defend the political line. In *especifismo*, this is addressed through a high degree of trust established during the long process of integrating oneself and of being integrated into the specific anarchist organization.