

COUNTERFIRE

The Constitution of Counterfire - as adopted at National Conference 18 September 2011

1.0 Name, aims and objectives

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be “Counterfire”.
- 1.2 Counterfire is a revolutionary socialist organisation dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism by the working class. The political basis of the organisation is set out in the statement “What is Counterfire” (Appendix 1).

2.0 Membership

- 2.1 A member shall accept the aims and objectives of the organisation, make a financial contribution to it and abide by the Constitution.

3.0 Conference

- 3.1 The sovereign body of the organisation is the National Conference.
- 3.2 The National Conference shall be convened annually and happen no less often than every eighteen months.
- 3.3 All members may attend National Conference with speaking and voting rights.
- 3.4 The National Conference shall elect the Steering Committee.
- 3.5 The National Conference may be called by a majority vote of the National Meeting or Steering Committee.
- 3.6 Only the National Conference may alter the Constitution; this must be by a two thirds vote.

4.0 National Meeting

- 4.1 Between meetings of the National Conference the National Meeting shall be the sovereign body of the organisation exercising all powers except to alter the Constitution.
- 4.2 All members may attend the National Meeting with speaking and voting rights.
- 4.3 The National Meeting shall meet no less often than every four months.
- 4.4 The Steering Committee shall take appropriate measures to maximise attendance from all parts of the organisation.
- 4.5 The National Meeting must approve or reject the co-option of members to the Steering Committee.

5.0 Steering Committee

- 5.1 The Steering Committee shall lead the organisation between meetings of the National Conference and National Meeting.
- 5.2 The Steering Committee shall create and oversee bodies as appropriate to the needs of the organisation and may delegate any or all of its powers except those reserved in the Constitution to the Steering Committee alone.
- 5.3 The Steering Committee shall elect National Officers.
- 5.4 The number of members of the Steering Committee elected by the National Conference shall be decided by the National Conference.
- 5.5 Election of the Steering Committee shall be by secret ballot and conducted according to arrangements agreed by National Conference.

5.6 Additional members of the Steering Committee may be co-opted by that body. Such co-options must be approved or rejected by the following National Meeting.

6.0 Local groups, Committees and Working Groups

6.1 Local area groups shall be formed as appropriate to the needs of the organisation. Newly created groups must be approved by the following National Meeting.

6.2 Committees and working groups shall be formed by the Steering Committee as necessary. They may co-opt members. The convener should be a member of the Steering Committee. The name of the convener of each group shall be circulated to the membership.

7.0 Chairs, Conveners and Moderators

7.1 Each committee or other body should normally elect its own chair or convener.

7.2 Where a body of the organisation has a discussion list it may elect a moderator if necessary.

8.0 National Officers

8.1 The Steering Committee shall elect such National Officers as appropriate to the needs of the organisation. Any such appointments must be approved by the following National Meeting.

8.2 National Officers shall include a National Treasurer and National Secretary.

9.0 Organisers

9.1 The Steering Committee may appoint individuals to oversee and organise specific areas of work. They shall be appointed according to an agreed procedure.

9.2 Organisers shall report to the National Secretary.

10.0 Conference Arrangements Committee

10.1 Conference Arrangements Committee is responsible for the organisation of National Conference. It shall be elected by the Steering Committee. It must be approved by the National Conference at the start of proceedings.

10.2 Conference Arrangements Committee shall recommend to Conference the number of members of the Steering Committee. It shall organise all elections at National Conference.

11.0 Voting and Vacancies

11.1 All decisions are made by a majority vote unless otherwise stated.

11.2 Any vacancy which may arise on any elected body may be filled by means of an election at the next National Meeting or Conference.

12.0 Complaints and Disputes

12.1 Counterfire opposes sexism, racism, Islamophobia, homophobia and other forms of oppressive or discriminatory behaviour and therefore behaviour is not acceptable in the organisation.

12.2 Any complaints, breaches of the Constitution, unethical or unacceptable behaviour should be reported to the appropriate national officer as designated by the Steering Committee. A Committee of Enquiry shall then be appointed by the Steering Committee if necessary. Any action, if any, to be taken must be approved by the Steering Committee. Such decisions may be appealed to the following National Meeting.

What is Counterfire?

Counterfire is an organisation of revolutionary socialists. We work in the trade unions, student movement, and protest campaigns to link together different struggles, push them forwards, and build resistance to the system. Counterfire members have played a key role in the Coalition of Resistance, Stop the War, and the student revolt.

A world system in crisis

World capitalism today faces an intractable crisis. The financial crash is tipping Europe into depression and the Third World into starvation. The militarisation of relations between states is a clear and present danger to world peace. Uncontrolled global warming threatens climate catastrophe. These threats to the lives and wellbeing of the great majority of humanity are rooted in a system geared to production for profit and the enrichment of the few. Instead of the chaos, exploitation, and violence of competitive capital accumulation, we need a system based on democracy, equality, planning, and human need.

Change from below

Real change has to be fought for through action from below. We cannot rely on either politicians or bureaucrats to change things for us. We have to build broad, democratic organisations of mass resistance among workers, students, and the poor. We have to use the weapons of class struggle - demonstrations, strikes, occupations, and other direct action - to make real gains. The power of the banks, the corporations, and the state are ranged against us. To make permanent gains and bring about radical social transformation, revolution will be necessary, in which the repressive state, with its police, prisons, and armed forces, is replaced with a new order based on mass democratic assemblies.

United mass resistance

To prevent effective resistance, our rulers and their media attempt to divide us. We must stand together in solidarity. We must reject all forms of prejudice based on race, religion, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation. We must unite all working people in a single struggle against the rich and powerful. And we must build links between working people here in Britain and those fighting back around the world.

A revolutionary organisation

To do these things effectively, we need an organisation of revolutionary socialist activists committed to building and shaping mass organisations of struggle like the trade unions, the anti-war movement, and the Coalition of Resistance. Counterfire is such an organisation. Our aim is to build local groups rooted in workplaces, colleges, and communities across Britain. The historical stakes have never been higher. We have a world to win. We have a world we must win. Counterfire is at the heart of the resistance. Join us.

ENDS