

Ratified by the General Assembly, February 19, 2011:

Statement of Principles to Guide the Work of the Coordinating Committee:

The following is a Statement of Four Principles to Guide the Work of the Coordinating Committee. Each principle is elaborated to explain its meaning and application. These principles should form the basis on which the General Assembly, the Coordinating Committee, members of the Workers' Assembly and other Committees of the Workers' Assembly understand the work of the Coordinating Committee.

Preamble:

The Coordinating Committee recognizes that, because we are living under a capitalist, patriarchal, ableist, hetero-normative and racist set of social relations, the Workers' Assembly has to be vigilant to guard against reproducing these relationships within the organization. With this in mind, the Coordinating Committee and the Workers' Assembly have to work to ameliorate over time the under-representation in the Assembly of women, racialized members, and others experiencing systemic oppression. One of the barriers to the Coordinating Committee's capacity to address this situation has been uncertainty about the Coordinating Committee's role within the Workers' Assembly. Members of the Coordinating Committee have also identified an inequitable sharing of tasks as another barrier. The aim of this Statement of Principles is to clarify the sort of leadership role the Coordinating Committee must take in order to work against reproducing oppressive and inequitable relationships within our own organization. For example, the Coordinating Committee strongly supports the creation of a Feminist Action Caucus, and is committed to setting in motion mechanisms to foster a more equitable organization. This is no easy task as it requires the Coordinating Committee as a whole to take on the role of a leader, working to expand the Workers' Assembly project, while at the same time respecting, protecting and developing the role of the General Assembly as the highest authority of the Workers' Assembly. The Coordinating Committee needs to take direction from the Membership of the organization, while also realizing that we need to challenge our current composition and division of labour in order to expand and build the Assembly project.

Principle 1:

The highest authority in the Workers' Assembly is the General Assembly as a whole.

(i) Every decision the Coordinating Committee makes must be influenced by this principle. Thus, members of the Coordinating Committee must implement decisions made by the Assembly, respect their intention and meaning, and must seek to coordinate the activities of the Assembly in a way that is consistent with these decisions. The Coordinating Committee must work to protect and promote the ability of the General Assembly to make the final decision.

(ii) The Coordinating Committee must always consider whether the question before them is best put to the Assembly as a whole or another body of the Assembly. The Coordinating Committee should encourage Assembly Committees to submit proposals involving significant shifts in orientation and work to the General Assembly.

(iii) The General Assembly as a whole has the right to revisit, alter or abandon any decision made by the Coordinating Committee.

Principle 2:

The Coordinating Committee will serve as the Voice of the Workers' Assembly in the interim between meetings of the General Assembly.

(i) The Coordinating Committee serves as the elected representative of the General Assembly between its meetings. The Coordinating Committee will make endorsements of campaigns, projects, events and actions on behalf of the whole Assembly.

(ii) The Coordinating Committee will mediate conflicts over the Assembly's work, including, but not limited to, issues that involve the overlapping of capacities, events, space and so on between Committees or Members. The Coordinating Committee will only intervene in such a way as to respect the democratic participation of all members of the Assembly. If a dispute arises about a decision or work of a Committee, the Coordinating Committee must always favour allowing the decision to stand until the General Assembly can consider the question, unless in the rare circumstance where this would threaten the ability of the Assembly to meet the principles and goals of Workers' Assembly Vision Statement. The Coordinating Committee may engage with other Committees concerning decisions they have made or are about to make, but only if a dispute arises or the principles of the Workers' Assembly Vision Statement and respect for the General Assembly as the highest decision-making body are compromised

(iii) The Coordinating Committee is committed to an equitable distribution of tasks amongst its members. These tasks range from chairing meetings, taking notes and booking spaces for meetings and General Assemblies, ensuring proper Membership outreach is taking place, liaising between Committees and facilitating the functions of the Assembly as a whole and its component parts. Delegation of these tasks, on a rotating or permanent basis, is to be arranged by the Coordinating Committee. Members of the Coordinating Committee are expected to follow through with performing these tasks.

Principle 3:***The Coordinating Committee is the Leading Committee of the Workers' Assembly.***

(i) The general task of the Coordinating Committee is to direct the work of the Assembly as a whole between meetings of the General Assembly in a way that respects the General Assembly as the highest authority, the autonomy of each Committee and the principles of the Workers' Assembly Vision Statement. In upholding and furthering the principles of this Vision Statement, the Coordinating Committee should work to guarantee that the Assembly strives toward a common politics that synthesizes the various approaches that Assembly members have had toward radical politics. This may mean, for example, submitting programmatic questions and making programmatic proposals to the Membership at General Assemblies. In fighting for free and accessible transit and building a labour fight-back, the Workers' Assembly is already in practice building structures that go beyond demanding change within the current system. It is the Coordinating Committee's role to deepen this building process.

(ii) The Coordinating Committee needs to ensure the Workers' Assembly remains a decisive and responsive organization in the interim between meetings of the General Assembly. This sometimes may mean making decisions on behalf of the General Assembly, in a way that is consistent with previous decisions of the General Assembly and the Vision Statement. These decisions may always be reassessed and abandoned by the Membership at General Assemblies. It also may mean revisiting and concretizing decisions made by the General Assembly, but only to ensure that the intention of those decisions is carried out as events unfold, historical structures become more concrete, and details change. It is the role of the Coordinating Committee to balance respect for the General Assembly as the highest decision-making authority with the need to ensure concrete tasks and organizing is undertaken so that the Assembly remains responsive to outside political events.

(iii) It is a major task of the Coordinating Committee to ensure that we remain united by an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, feminist, queer-positive, and anti-oppression politics and responsive to issues of harassment and discrimination. We must continually concern ourselves with the question of whether the spaces we are creating for the activities of the Assembly are indeed equitable, and do not participate in the sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist, ableist, capitalist society. This means that the Coordinating Committee must work to ensure a critical and open recognition and interrogation of existing dynamics of oppression both internal and external to the Assembly.

(iv) It is the responsibility of all Coordinating Committee members to understand and apply the Assembly's policies on Discrimination and Harassment and on Participation, Voting and Disruption.

(v) Finally, the Coordinating Committee will plan all meetings of the General Assembly in a way that respects the Workers' Assembly Vision Statement and seeks to maintain the principles and achieve the goals there outlined. The Coordinating Committee must ensure the Assembly is an active, democratic, participatory organization, continually alive to the risk that structures of oppression and exploitation can be ratified by the spaces we create if their existence within our walls goes unnamed and unaddressed by us.

Principle 4:

The Coordinating Committee is the caretaker of the Workers' Assembly project as a whole.

(i) The Coordinating Committee has the responsibility to monitor and facilitate the functioning of the Committees and that the work of the Committees is directed toward expanding the Workers' Assembly project as a whole. The Coordinating Committee should assess Committee work to ensure it mobilizes and incorporates new Membership and improves the collective capacity of our current Membership.

(ii) The Coordinating Committee will monitor and work to guarantee that the Workers' Assembly has the appropriate Committees to carry out the necessary work, that the Committees are functioning, and that the work of the Committees is coordinated. This may mean that the Coordinating Committee will suggest tasks that the respective Committees would carry out, identify areas where work is overlapping, suggest priorities and suggest a new Committee be struck. The Coordinating Committee should also seek to support and facilitate members' proposals for new Committees and projects that are aligned with the Vision Statement.

(iii) The Coordinating Committee should have a clear sense of the objectives and tasks of each Committee over the short and medium term. One of the roles of the Committee representatives on the Coordinating Committee is to facilitate support for each Committee. If a Committee is not functioning, members from the Coordinating Committee should be identified to work with that Committee to develop a strategy to build.

(iv) One of the primary responsibilities of the Coordinating Committee is to make sure that members, both existing and new, are organized and supported to participate in meaningful ways in the Workers' Assembly. To this end, the Coordinating Committee should work to guarantee that all members are given enough information about the organization and the various ways to become involved in order that each member is able to contribute in and feel valued by the organization. The Coordinating Committee should have a sense of an overall strategic approach with respect to building each Committee and integrating new members into the Committee work such that the Workers' Assembly is working in some coordinated fashion to build our capacities in real terms.