

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

By the FRSO Media Work Team

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We're not here to curtail online activities, we're here to ensure that specific forms of engagement remain positive and reflect the organization we're trying to build. Below are the guidelines we're asking comrades to follow.

Post in Good Faith

When you create a post on your personal accounts, who is your audience and what kind of reaction are you trying to get out of them? If you're trying to rile up a certain group...why?

If you post carelessly and end up inadvertently attacking people we work with, potential comrades, etc., this could have long-standing consequences for our work—locally and nationally. Disrupting political relationships or our work is not worth a “hit” tweet with 20 likes.

Know When to End the Debate

From time to time, you will end up posting our line, an opinion, an article, etc that our friends disagree with and a debate may ensue. If you find yourself entering a debate that is getting heated, take it offline or away from a more public audience. Debates can be a useful tool of advancement. Heated debates where both parties feel like they aren't being heard and devolve into *ad-hominems* are not productive.

If you find yourself in a debate, know when to end it. If you've taken it to private messages or even in person, take a step back and realize that you will not come to a conclusion as you keep going over the same points. Acknowledge the differences and settle the debate amicably—especially if they're a political friend or ally. Our work will speak for itself and be better regarded than any sort of never ending online debate.

Don't Attack Other Parties or Socialist Organizations

The same way we don't like it when members of other organizations attack us online, they don't either. We should not engage in a petty back-and-forth, nor should we will make a petty post just to get in some edgy points. These types of activities are destructive and bring negative attention to the work and organization.

But what if an organization really deserves biting remarks? Make them offline or better yet, move past it and focus on your work. Our commentary will not improve the other organization and, if we're allied with them, it'll strain our relationship. If the organization doesn't like us, it will just lead to further back-and-forths and distract us from the tasks at hand.

The socialist left in the United States is already small. We shouldn't be spending our time alienating people who are ostensibly on our side, even if we disagree with some of their activities.

Hands Off Foreign Parties

One of the main ways our organization gets attacked online is questioning why we associate with different international parties, or why those parties associate with us. While you may engage in a friendly debate with someone asking in good faith, many times those questioning our politics are doing so from the standpoint of attacking us.

An example that has become far too recent is when U.S. Maoists see either our statement of support of the CPP or a statement of support for us from the CPP, and try to write various "hot takes" calling us revisionist on Twitter. This is not who we need to debate with. They're not looking to find a positive conclusion or conversation, but rather obfuscate the situation entirely. Many times comrades, regardless of their intentions, will use "Maoist" as an insult to fight back against these posts. However, the CPP considers themselves Marxists-Leninist-Maoist and by using Maoist derogatorily, the comrade inadvertently insults a great ally of ours.

Our organizational leadership has worked tirelessly to create and retain alliances between international organizations and parties. There is a balance that needs to be struck because there can be distinct political differences between us and these groups. Engaging in these back-and-forths with edgy personalities online is to ignore the scope of internationalism—which is vast in comparison to a thread that will be forgotten within a few hours.

Our work with foreign parties is keeping true to proletarian internationalism. Engaging in debates with keyboard warriors is not.

Don't Engage in Online Line Debates with Comrades

These debates should remain internal and disagreements belong in a formal setting. They will not be resolved online, especially with a popcorn gallery watching it play out. It's up to the comrades involved to recognize that their debate is no longer covering a straightforward issue and should take it offline immediately.

If comrades from outside cities see this behavior, raise the issue through appropriate channels with your District leadership, who will bring it to the Center, who will look into the matter and reach out to the other District as appropriate. This is not because you're snitching on comrades' behavior, but because cities or districts may need to have a local discussion to clarify line and ensure comrades understand it.

The route to true democratic centralism is when these discussions occur in formal settings.

If There Are Issues with the Organization, Take It Up the Appropriate Channels

If our leadership spent most of their time in online forums, the organization wouldn't be where it is today. If you have issues of leadership, line, the way a plan is playing out, etc., do not post about it online. Issues do not get resolved

through online forums—they get worse. If you care to resolve these issues, there is a formal way of doing so and the first thing you need to do is contact your Unit chair and start the process.

Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom—Post Our Line

The organization has worked tirelessly to produce new and exciting content that showcases our line. We have *Fight Back! News*, *Fight Back! Radio*, statements, pamphlets, live streams, graphics, etc., and more is being planned and created.

We take our cue from Lenin when we highlight the importance of our newspaper, and by extension the media we are producing. In *What Is To Be Done?*, under the heading "Can A Newspaper Be A Collective Organiser?", Lenin says:

"A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this respect it may be compared to the scaffolding erected round a building under construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour." Does this sound anything like the attempt of an armchair author to exaggerate his role? The scaffolding is not required at all for the dwelling; it is made of cheaper material, is put up only temporarily, and is scrapped for firewood as soon as the shell of the structure is completed. As for the building of revolutionary organisations, experience shows that sometimes they may be built without scaffolding, as the seventies showed. But at the present time we cannot even imagine the possibility of erecting the building we require without scaffolding."

We encourage our comrades to frequently post our media to their different accounts. When a new statement is posted to our website or social media accounts, it takes very little effort to like and share. Please do so!

You Are a Communist, Even on the Internet

"The 'employee' mentality. Some comrades do not understand that the Party and the Red Army, of which they are members, are both instruments for carrying out the tasks of the revolution. They do not realize that they themselves are makers of the revolution, but think that their responsibility is merely to their individual superiors and not to the revolution. This passive mentality of an 'employee' of the revolution is also a manifestation of individualism. It explains why there are not very many activists who work unconditionally for the revolution. Unless it is eliminated, the number of activists will not grow and the heavy burden of the revolution will remain on the shoulders of a small number of people, much to the detriment of the struggle."

—Mao Zedong, "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party"

As cadre of FRSO, you will be held to organizational discipline regardless of the space you're taking up. Your actions, behaviors, and general comportment is a reflection of the organization. You can't simply clock out of being part of the organization just because your profile picture is of an anime character. When you make a post, remember that the people who see it, will eventually connect it back to the organization. Even if you're not an open member of the org, it will reflect back to your work.

Be mindful of how you act online, engage in good-faith debates to move people closer to our line, and don't rile up bad faith actors for the sake of a quick laugh. We have a massive task ahead of us and we shouldn't be wasting our energies on nameless folks behind a screen. Onward!