Anarcho-Syndicalism in Melbourne and Sydney

By Conal Thwaite

This is an edited version of a thesis presented to The School of Historical Studies at The University of Melbourne in October 2010. The supervisor for the thesis was Professor Stuart Macintyre.

Contents

List of Acronyms

ABC	Anarchist Black Cross
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ASF	Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation
ASF-M	ASF-Melbourne
ATMOEA	Australian Tramways and Motor Omnibus Employees Association
BLF	Builders Labourers Federation
CNT	Spanish National Confederation of Labour
CNT-B	Bulgarian National Confederation of Labour
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
FAA	Federation of Australian Anarchists
FAKB	Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria
IRC	Industrial Relations Commission
IWA	International Workers Association
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
MAC	Melbourne Anarchist Club
MET	Metropolitan Transit Authority (Victoria)
PTWA	Public Transport Workers Association (an ASF Industrial Group)
SAG	Sydney Anarchist Group

Introduction

This thesis attempts to explain the origins of a small anarcho-syndicalist current that appeared in Australia by the 1980s. It is not a history of anarchism in Australia, a comprehensive version of which has not yet been written. Nor is it an attempt to analyse instances of rank-and-file activity within the Australian labour movement exhibiting libertarian socialist politics that could be described as anarcho-syndicalist.[1] Rather, it is an attempt to build an argument about explicit anarcho-syndicalist organisation in Australia. This thesis argues that such anarcho-syndicalism has a small, activist tradition in Australia, with relatively recent historical origins. It does so by examining three historical precursors to a small organisation called the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF), which operated in Melbourne and Sydney in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, before briefly examining the activity of the ASF in Melbourne.

The elusive presence of anarcho-syndicalism as an idea in Australian history is explained in three chapters. The first argues that activity in the labour movement, or syndicalism as it has been known in the anarchist tradition, is indispensable to the success of the anarchist project. Anarchism as a social movement is closely tied to the conditions of industrial capitalism that date from the 1860s in Europe.[2] Several concepts are briefly explained that situate anarchism within the intellectual development of Europe at this time, and that situate anarcho-syndicalism as a method within the broad anarchist tradition. Examples from anarchist movements overseas are employed to illuminate these concepts, while pointing out that anarchism has not had a large influence on the Australian labour movement.

The second chapter is concerned with the creation of a small, activist current of anarcho-syndicalism in Australia after the Second World War, assisted by the arrival of migrant anarchists. Two examples are selected: the Bulgarians and Spanish groups

---

1   Some anarchists have interpreted the IWW in Australia as anarcho-syndicalist; see, Mark McGuire, 'The I.W.W. in Australia', *Red and Black: an Anarchist Journal*, No. 8 (1978-79), pp. 32-35.
2   This approach follows that taken by Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (London: AK Press, 2009), p.14.

operating in Melbourne and Sydney. These groups interacted with libertarian elements within the emergent New Left. They rejected the right-wing ideas of individual freedom present in Sydney at the time, and sought to extend genuinely libertarian socialist ideas in Australia through projects with young Australian anarchists during the fifties, sixties and seventies. They provided rare examples within the Australian New Left of a shift away from a traditional form of Marxism towards anarchism. The anarcho-syndicalist current in Melbourne and Sydney that found expression later in the ASF had its origins within these interactions between young workers, students and migrant anarchists.

The third chapter analyses the activity of the ASF within the Melbourne tramways and a dispute that occurred in January 1990. ASF members produced propaganda that argued for a libertarian union structure, direct action, and ultimately, workers control. At the height of the campaign to save conductors jobs on Melbourne's trams, workers took direct action that was syndicalist in nature: they briefly implemented workers control in a day of protest against the Cain government's neoliberal reforms; depots were occupied for up to a month, and some workers proceeded to escalate and manage the dispute for themselves when the union leadership declared that it was lost. It is not intended to argue that the tiny ASF caused the radical action taken by some workers in the Melbourne tramways dispute of 1990. However, it is intended to argue that as late as 1990 the ASF was successful as a small activist group agitating for anarcho-syndicalism in an Australian workplace.

This thesis does not claim to be a full history of anarchism or anarcho-syndicalism in Australia, but an instalment in that history. There is not a large body of literature available on anarchism or anarcho-syndicalism in Australia. Labour historians have researched the syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in some detail.[3] Bob James has written about the Melbourne Anarchist Club (MAC) that existed in the 1880s and 1890s.[4] He has also produced a collection of writings by J.A Andrew, a member of the MAC, as well as numerous articles and an anthology of Australian

---

3   Verity Burgmann, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ian Turner, *Sydney's Burning (An Australian Political Conspiracy)* (Sydney: Alpha Books, 1969).

4   Bob James, *Anarchism and State Violence in Sydney and Melbourne 1886-1896: An argument about Australian Labour History* (Broadmeadow, NSW; Newey & Beath Printers, 1986).

anarchism produced in 1986.[5] In addition, there are a number of invaluable journals and websites maintained by anarchists in Australia.[6] Occasional book chapters and journal articles also broach the subject of Australian anarchism, as well as several recent theses at Australian universities.[7] However, most historical material on Australian anarchism focuses on the period before the Second World War. Material that deals with anarchism in Australia after the Second World War tends to approaches anarchism from the vantage point of the counter-cultural or student movements.[8] Although these movements are important to the history of anarchism in Australia, this thesis aims take a different approach, by examining how young workers, students and migrant anarchists created a small anarcho-syndicalist current in Australia. It does so by providing some historical context to the ideas of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, by examining how migrants arriving from large anarchist movements overseas reacted to the New Left in Australia, and by examining the activities of the ASF and an industrial dispute in which they found themselves in early 1990. The thesis uses both primary and secondary material, and draws on material held the Melbourne Anarchist Resource Centre, as well as the anarchist Jura Books in Sydney.

---

5   Bob James (ed.), *What is Communism? And Other Anarchist Essays by JA Andrews on 1889 Melbourne* (Prahran, Melbourne: Backyard Press); Bob James (ed.), 'Anarchism in Australia: An Anthology Prepared for the Australian Anarchist Centennial Celebration, 1-4 May 1986', available from <http://www.takver.com/history/aia/httoc.htm> [Accessed 12/4/2010].
6   These include <www.takver.com> [Accessed 5/10/2010]; <http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/> [Accessed 5/10/2010]; and *Rebel Worker,* available from <http://www.theztv.com/rebelworker//index_files/Page448.htm> [Accessed 5/10/2010].
7   David Faber, *FG Fantin: The Life and Times of an Italio-Australian Anarchist, 1901-42* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 2008); James Mason, 'Agitators and Patriots: Cultural and Political Identity in Queensland's Spanish Communities,1900-1975' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2008); For a chapter on Michael Matteson see Terry Irving and Rowan Cahill, 'Political Bolt-Cutting - Sydney University's Front Lawn,' in *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes* (Sydney: University of New South Whales Press, 2010), pp. 298-304
8   Anne Coombs, *Sex and Anarchy: The Life and Death of the Sydney Push,* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia, 1996); Lucy Katherine Nicholas, 'Australian Anacha-Punk Zines: Poststructuralism in contemporary anarchist and gender politics' (master's thesis, Griffith University, 2005); An example of interaction between anarchists and broader campaigns for social justice can be found in John Chesterman, *Poverty Law and Social Change: the Story of the Fitzroy Legal Service* (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996), pp. 26, 31

Chapter One:

Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism

Anarchism as political philosophy and movement is deeply rooted in the intellectual, economic and social rupture of industrialisation, which occurred in Western Europe during the nineteenth century. An earlier intellectual discourse of anarchy – as a society with no government – can be found during the Enlightenment period, but an intellectual discourse does not constitute a social movement. Anarchism as a popular movement with a degree of coherence between doctrine and organisation, or between a means and ends, began in Europe in the 1860s.[9] It was a mass movement, closely tied to the creation of workers syndicates and the activity of the First International in countries such as Spain, France, Portugal and Italy.[10] This movement reacted principally against the effects of industrial capitalism on the working and peasant classes, and sought to replace capitalism with a stateless, socialist order. This chapter will attempt to briefly summarise some of the intellectual and organisational premises of the anarchist movement. It is intended to clarify terms that will be used in subsequent chapters. It will also briefly explain that during the height of the anarchist movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, anarchism did not manage to establish itself significantly in Australia.

As a basic philosophical premise, anarchism proposes that there is no inherent contradiction between individual freedom and social cohesion, between freedom and equality, or between freedom and socialism. With such a minimalist, abstract definition, and imprecise definition of freedom, the earliest conceptions of anarchy are many and varied. They include ancient Chinese and Greek philosophers, early socialist, peasant

---

9 This approach follows that taken by Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (London: AK Press, 2009), p.14.

10 Vadim Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, Malcolm Archibold trans. (Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2009), p. 7; For a detailed look at how the establishment of an anarchist tradition in Spain paralleled the establishment of the libertarian section there of the First International see, Juan Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organisation: The History of the F.A.I.*, Abe Bluestein trans. (Québec: Black Rose Books, 1986).

commnes, and even religious conceptions.[11] During the Enlightenment, some advanced liberals such as William Godwin, and individualists such as Max Stirner, moved towards to a socialist conception of freedom.[12] This culminated in Proudhon, who declared himself an anarchist, and insisted that 'property is theft'.[13] Although so-called bourgeois conceptions of anarchy are often accused of being mere variants of liberalism, those that oppose private ownership of the means of production are, properly speaking, anarchist.[14] The denial of private property in the name of freedom is a basic way of distinguishing anarchism as a philosophical idea from liberalism, to which private property, and therefore class and the state, are essential concepts. These conceptions of anarchy may be, however, highly idealist in that they reflect bourgeois idealism as a method. Their strategies for social change did not necessarily recognise how material conditions, private property and the state, place physical limitations over some individuals while favouring the class interests of others. While asserting a less deterministic framework than Marxism, the anarchist movement recognised that individuals under capitalism are divided into classes, and that some of these classes are revolutionary and others are not. This made the social struggle more characteristic of social warfare than a moral debate. A major confusion about anarchism, however, has been to define it as a purely idealistic conception that does not take into account economic reality and therefore paves the way for a liberalistic path towards socialism.

By examining the anarchist movement from the 1860s, it can be seen that anarchism was no more inherently idealist than it was inherently materialist, and that it arose from specific conditions of class society under industrial capitalism. The anarchist movement oscillated between two doctrinal explanations of change within society, which paralleled the development of European intellectual thought at the time. These were, broadly speaking, a liberal belief in the ethical development of ideas represented by Hegel's dialectic, and the economic character of the emerging socialist movement, which appeared as material force ready to destroy the bourgeois order. Karl Marx

---

11   van der Walt and Schmidt, *Black Flame,* p. 17.
12   The socialist content of Stirner is indeed obscure, but present: Max Stirner, 'The Ego and Its Own', in Robert Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One: From Anarchy to Anarchism* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2005), p. 46.
13   Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 'What is Property?', in Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One*, p. 43.
14   On liberal anarchism see Toby Boraman, 'The New Left and Anarchism in New Zealand from 1956 to the Early 1980s (Ph.D. thesis, University of Otago, 2005), p. 567.

reconciled idealism and materialism through a theory of dialectical materialism, whereby the ideas of human beings were a reflection of a material, life-process, but that, in turn, these ideas could then affect the development of that process.[15] The anarchist movement, however, did not identify a definite theory of knowledge. While retaining an acknowledgement of the development of ethical ideas, its strategy emphasised the economic character of the revolution, stipulating with the statutes of the First International that, 'the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves... [and that] the enslavement of the workers to capital is the source of all servitude – political, moral and material'.[16] Michael Bakunin accused the Marxists of having invented a tautology of historical determinism, whereby the supposed historical necessity of state-socialism was justified only by their own interpretation of the historical facts, which was itself questionable.[17] The anarchists regarded Marx's proposals for the apparatus of government within the First International (a secretariat with executive powers, labour parties and participation in parliamentary politics) as clear evidence that Marxism was merely a left-wing ideology of the radical bourgeoisie, looking to govern the new socialist order.[18] It was the question of which groups and organisations – such as unions, political parties, the industrial-proletariat, the lumpen-proletariat, the radical intelligentsia, etc., – reflected the legitimate development of revolutionary ideas that separated the anarchists from the Marxists. Contrary to allegations that they were idealists, the anarchists applied a vigorous materialism, not just to economics but also to political hierarchy.

The anarchist movement retained an emphasis on the development of ethical ideas *and* the development of economic forces in society, and these two considerations informed the types of organisations that anarchists formed. Anarchism asserted itself through workers and peasants' movements in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Most anarchist programs can perhaps be situated on a spectrum between the two extremes of idealism and materialism. On the one hand anarchists saw a role for the development of a revolutionary consciousness to

---

15   Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, *The German Ideology*, S. Ryazanskaya trans. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 37.

16   Michael Bakunin, quoting the Preamble to the Statutes of the International adopted in Geneva 1866, 'The International and Karl Marx', in Sam Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 288.

17   Ibid., pp. 309-20.

18   Ibid., p. 290.

extend beyond the ethics of capitalism. On the other hand, the anarchist movement recognised a determinative role of the productive class in pursuing its own material interest leading to the overthrow of capitalism. Syndicalism was a means to unite the working class, not only in the hope for a more altruistic future, but in the daily struggle for higher living standards with the long-term objective of appropriating the means of production from the exploiting class. The period from the First International until the early twentieth century, saw the development of revolutionary syndicalism, later articulated as anarcho-syndicalism with the founding of the International Workingmens' Association (IWA) in 1923.[19] However, the end of the nineteenth century also saw the development of anarchist communist theory, most notably by Peter Kropotkin. While syndicalism was a method, by which principally the working-class could take possession of the means of production within industrial society, anarchist communism was a theory that argued for the immediate implementation of a communist distribution of goods and services, or, 'to put the *needs* above the *works* and first of all recognise the right to live'.[20] These two impulses of anarchism can be broadly identified as the collectivist and communist, and in order to avoid any confusion with liberal individualism, may be grouped together as communitarian anarchism.[21]

It would be naive to posit an absolute distinction between collectivism and communism as the distinction between anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist communism. The goal of anarcho-syndicalism is anarchist communism.[22] Both collectivist and communist ideas and methods have been present in all mass anarchist movements. Thus one practical assertion of anarchist communism within the IWA was that the units of administration under stateless socialism should be based on locality, not industry, as was the structure identified by the syndicalists. The majority of sections occupied a compromise position, recognising that industrial organisation was necessary in order to make the revolution and to take control of industry in the first place.[23] Resolutions by anarcho-syndicalist unions about how to achieve anarchist communism, were ratified by

---

19   Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, p. 82.
20   Peter Kropotkin, 'The Conquest of Bread,' in Graham, (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One*, p. 116.
21   As does Rob Knowles, 'Communitarian Anarchism 1840-1914: A Neglected Tradition in Economic Thought' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2002), p. 1.
22   IWA, *Goals & Statutes,* reaffirmed Paris Congress, 1979, p. 2.
23   Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, p. 209; IWA, *Goals & Statutes,* reaffirmed Paris Congress, 1979, p. 2

many thousands of workers, such as the resolutions from the Zaragoza Congress of the Spanish National Confederation of Labour (CNT) in 1936.[24] These are some of the most important documents in the history of anarchism. Even in relatively less industrialised countries, syndicalism played an important part in mass anarchist movements. For example in Bulgaria, both anarcho-syndicalists and anarchist communists came together to form the Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria (FAKB) in 1919, which led a movement of both peasants and workers.[25]

Syndicalism generally means the workers form a union independent from any political party, and anarcho-syndicalism is a method of organising the union in line with anarchist principles. Anarcho-syndicalist unions have a libertarian organising structure, reject participation in parliamentary politics in favour of direct action, and work towards the implementation of workers' control of industry from below without the state. Although methods have differed from place to place, this generally means that the basic organisational units, whether based on locality or industry, are united on the principle of federation rather than centralism.[26] Anarcho-syndicalist unions do use majority rule, but the decision making capacity is retained at the local level as much as possible. The secretariat of the federation is rotated between sections, and acts as a delegate rather than a representative, meaning that it has few if any executive powers. Importantly, delegates on committees or in a position to make decisions are recallable by the base that appointed them at any time, and are rotated often. In this sense, members do not vote. On principle, the union rejects participation in any state authority, instead relying on its own industrial strength to win concession from employers, or from the state. The union typically also includes rules that bar employers or paid officials of political parties and trade unions from becoming members.[27] All of these libertarian organisational methods are designed to ensure that the union remains a directly democratic voice of its members, and that autonomy within a given industry or locality prevails, meaning actions that affect them can only be taken with their consent. The

---

24   Robert Graham, 'Resolutions from the Zaragoza Congress', in Graham, (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One*, pp. 466-74.
25   Michael Schmidt, with the assistance of Jack Grancharoff, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line: Bulgarian Anarchism Armed', (2008), available from <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/9678> [2/10/10]
26   Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, (London: Phoenix Press, n.d.), p. 53.
27   Two examples are, ASF-IWA, *Principles Aims & Statutes of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation*, reaffirmed June, 1988; IWA, *Goals & Statutes,* reaffirmed Paris Congress, 1979.

accusation against this method of organising is that it will collapse.[28] However, anarcho-syndicailst unions have at times encompassed millions of members. At its foundation the IWA encompassed some two million workers.[29] The CNT was established in 1910 in Spain and on the eve of the Spanish Civil War numbered over 500,000.[30] It survives today with a membership of around 10,000.[31]

Few of these ideas have played an important role in the development of the Australian labour movement. In many ways they offer an alternative history to the international workers movement as is has been understood by the majority of radical socialists in Australia. Along with most of the anglophone world, before the First World War, Australia experienced a different version of revolutionary syndicalism than in Europe and elsewhere. Its syndicalism was that of the IWW, a movement that arose in North America and reached Australia in the early years of the twentieth century. However, the IWW remained a minority movement here and was suppressed by the Hughes government during the First World War. It was sceptical of anarchism, and in any case unable to surmount the ideological challenge of Bolshevism after 1917.[32] There have been groups of anarchists and individual activists in Australia. In the 1880s and 1890s, the MAC served as an intellectual hot-spot for radicals opposed to the conservatism of Trades Hall.[33] At the turn of the century, J.W. Fleming was a prominent trade unionist in Melbourne, who at times rallied crowds of thousands to his cause.[34] Spanish and Italian migrants also came to Australia and active anarchist groups were established, especially in Queensland. After the First World War, anarchists led the Italian anti-fascist movement in Australia until the mid-1930s.[35] Thus there is a history of anarchism in Australia but it is a limited one. In particular, there has been an absence of the syndicalist current, which formed mass anarchist movements in other similar (industrialised) societies. During the height of the anarchist movement during the

---

28   Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, p. 53.
29   Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, p. 82.
30   Robert Graham, 'Resolutions from the Zaragoza Congress', Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One*, pp. 466-67.
31   Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, p. 201.
32   For a detailed description of the activities of the IWW see Verity Burgmann, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
33   Verity Burgmann, 'One Hundred Years of Anarchism,' *Arena*, No. 74 (1986), p. 104.
34   Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 263.
35   Gianfranco Cresciani, 'The Proletarian Migrants: Fascism and Italian Anarchists in Australia', *The Australian Quarterly*, No. 51, (March, 1979), p. 15.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a significant anarchist tradition did not establish itself within the Australian working class.

Chapter Two:

Migrant Anarchists and the New Left

After the Second World War small numbers of European anarchists migrated to Australia. They were escaping waves of reaction and fascism that had continued virtually without interlude from the defeat of the republican forces in Spain early in 1939. After the peace settlement of 1945, anarchists in Eastern Europe were also forced to escape new communist dictatorships in the Soviet Bloc; hence anarchists from Russia, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain came to Australia.[36] During the 1950s and 1960s those from Bulgaria and Spain formed groups in Sydney and Melbourne. The Sydney Anarchist Group (SAG) was formed by Bulgarians with some local members in the 1950s, and became involved with the celebrated Sydney Push. The Spanish were involved in a range of projects in Melbourne and Sydney, including their own Spanish language newspapers as well as anarchist groups that involved students and young workers. Both the Bulgarians and Spanish were arriving from countries with strong anarchist movements, and many were anarcho-syndicalists. However, they found it difficult to advocate anarchism to workers in Australia, who had not shared their earlier experiences and who lacked the same political points of reference. This chapter will argue that through their organisations in Melbourne and Sydney, migrant anarchists helped establish a small, activist, anarcho-syndicalist current in Australia.

A number of Bulgarian anarchists began arriving as refugees in Sydney in the early 1950s. They included George Kristoff and Jack Grancharoff, who were two of the most active. Bulgarians formed only a small part of the wave of migration from war-torn Europe to Australia after the Second World War. Numbers rose from around 500 in 1947 to over 1,200 by 1954.[37] Like most other Bulgarians, the anarchists who arrived at this time were political refugees from communism. Some, like Kristoff, were veterans

---

36   Jack Grancharoff mentions several of these nationalities in an interview, Iain McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist: Troublemaking in the 1950s/60s,' an Interview with Jack Grancharoff, in *Disturbing the Peace: Tales from Australia's Rebel Histories*, *How to Make Trouble and Influence People,*Vol 1., (Melbourne: Homebrew Books, 2005), p. 101.

37   Stefan Kozuharov, 'Bulgarians', in, James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 188.

of the Bulgarian National Confederation of Labour (CNT-B).[38] With his brother he had been a part of an anarchist partisan group operating during the war against the Bulgarian government and the Nazis, but had to flee Bulgaria when the communists came to power with the aid of the Soviets.[39] Others came to anarchism directly through their experience of communism. This was the case with Grancharoff, who had first made contact with other anarchists while imprisoned in a concentration camp.[40] The Bulgarians first established an anarchist group of their own in Sydney made up of around twenty people.[41] In 1957 eight Bulgarians, five men and three women, as well as some non-Bulgarians making a total of around twelve people, formed the SAG.[42] Nevertheless, SAG became a recognised section of the CNT-B-in-exile, and as such was an affiliate of the anarcho-syndicalist IWA.[43] In 1968 responsibility for publishing *Our Path* for the CNT-B exiled groups was transferred from Paris to Sydney, with George Kristoff as editor.[44] This tiny group attempted to build in Sydney an equivalent of the movement they had left in Bulgaria.

The anarchists were a large political movement in Bulgaria at the time its war government was overthrown in September of 1944. Approximately the third largest group on the Bulgarian left in the thirties, they were one of several armed partisan groups that resisted fascism.[45] Libertarian socialist ideas had a long history in Bulgaria. The early independence struggle against the Ottoman Empire in the 1870s had involved high-profile anarchists, such as the poet and revolutionary Christo Botov.[46] Peasant revolts such as the 1903 Preobrasensko Vastanie revolt were associated with anarchist

---

38 The CNT-B, as it was known by its French initials; C. Longmore, *The IWA Today: A Short Account of the International Workers Association and its Sections* (South London: DAM-IWA, 1985), p. 27.
39 Jack Grancharoff, 'Death of an Old Militant: George Hristov (Kartalsky)', *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 27, No. 201, (October - November, 2008), pp. 17-20.
40 McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 94.
41 Ibid., p. 101.
42 Bob James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney', Notes from Interview with George H., 1985, in Bob James, (ed.), 'Anarchism in Australia: An Anthology Prepared for the Australian Anarchist Centennial Celebration, 1-4 May 1986', available from <http://www.takver.com/history/aia/httoc.htm> [accessed 12th April 2010]; McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 17.
43 'An affiliate of the International Working Men's Association', Sydney Anarchist Group, 'Aims and Principles', *Anarchist Review: Issued by Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 2, (September, 1959), p. 20; ASG-M', 'Report of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASG-M) to the IWA Plenary, Toulouse, November 1999', p. 1.
44 *Our Road: Bulgarian Monthly Review,* No. 22, (March, 1973).
45 Michael Schmidt, with the assistance of Jack Grancharoff, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line: Bulgarian Anarchism Armed', (2008), available at <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/9678> [2/10/10].
46 Vladimir Bojanev, 'The History of the Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', *The Raven: Anarchist Quarterly 13*, Vol. 4. No. 1, (January - March, 1991), p. 31.

communism.[47] Anarcho-syndicalism appeared in the 1920s, several groups forming in the thirties including the CNT-B, which remained reasonably strong until the 1940s.[48] Anarcho-syndicalists and anarchist communists established an Anarchist Federation (the FAKB) and participated in the broad cooperatives and workers committees movement.[49] The FAKB one of the few organisations with a large support base to embrace the Makhnovist Platform after 1926, which was a controversial document calling for a united organisation to lead the anarchist movement. Bulgaria and neighbouring Macedonia was also one of the few areas of Eastern Europe after the 1920s where anarchism established a mass movement.[50] When the Russians declared war on Bulgaria, the Nazi backed government was overthrown by the full spectrum of the anti-fascist and revolutionary movement.[51] A brief experiment in workers control ensued, which lasted about eight months and was implemented to varying degrees across the country.[52] An essay found in Kristoff's belongings after his death titled 'The Workers Committees in Bulgaria' states: 'I would like to point out that all the committees were libertarian and anarchists took part in them, but they were no anarchists. They were composed of all kinds of views.'[53] Gradually the Soviet-backed communists took power.[54] When ninety anarchists were arrested en masse at their first legal congress in years, this was a signal that the independence of the workers committees had ended.[55] In the years that followed, most anarchists were killed, went to prison, were forced underground or fled the country. The small number who eventually came to Australia found here a very different kind of libertarian movement.

From the late fifties to the early seventies, radical politics in Australia took a libertarian turn. A major contributing factor was the increasing disillusionment of

---

47   Ibid., p. 33.
48   Vadim Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, Malcolm Archibold, trans., (Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2009), p. 89; Lucien van der Walt & Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (London: AK Press, 2009), p. 169.
49   Jack Grancharoff, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part One, in *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 28, No. 3, (September - October, 2009), p. 18.
50   Schmidt, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line'.
51   Schmidt, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line'.
52   Robert Graham, 'Bulgarian Anarchist Federation (1945)', in Robert Graham, (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism, (1939-1977)*, (Montéal: Black Rose Books, 2009), p. 29.
53   'Workers Committees in Bulgaria', (George Kristoff Archive, n.d.), p. 4.
54   Jack Grancharoff, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part Three, *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (April - May, 2010), p. 18.
55   'Workers Committees in Bulgaria', p. 4.

socialists with the politics of the Soviet Union, and locally with the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). One of the earliest benefactors of this new dissent, and one of the most obvious libertarian precursors to the New Left, was the Libertarian Push in Sydney. It drew heavily on the individualism of the Sydney philosopher John Anderson. Anderson was a communist who later turned to Trotskyism, but by the forties his libertarianism had shifted towards a right-wing, anti-communism, mistrustful of any kind of progressive politics.[56] Although it was more of a political scene than a formal organisation as such, The Push grew up out of a split from Anderson's Freethought Society.[57] Its members stylised themselves as freethinkers, but were more sympathetic to the left. An important influence on the Push was the influx of dissident communists who had left or were expelled by the CPA, especially after demoralising episodes like Khrushchev's so called, 'secret speech', in which he denounced the crimes of Stalin, and after the invasion of Hungary in 1956. In Sydney, intellectuals of this vein congregated around Helen Palmer's journal *Outlook,* and in Melbourne around the journal *Overland*.[58] Some of those influenced by these circles became interested in libertarian socialist ideas. Germaine Greer would later describe herself as an anarchist communist, while in Melbourne Ian Turner helped to revive the memory of the Australian IWW.[59] However, the Push itself remained localised in Sydney and while explicitly libertarian, it was not explicitly left-wing. It was also a predominantly middle-class phenomenon. Many Push intellectuals ended their intellectual journey as right-wing, liberal individualists, as Anderson had done. Nevertheless, in the fifties the Push was a kind of preliminary version of the counter-cultural and student movements that would take hold in the sixties.

---

56   See A.J. Baker, *Anderson's social philosophy* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1979), pp. 79, 101, 130-133.

57   A. J. Baker, 'Sydney Libertarianism and the Push' *Broadsheet*, No. 81 (March, 1975) p. 3.

58   A collection of essays exploring the ideas of Palmer can be found in, Doreen Bridges (ed.), *Helen Palmer's Outlook* (Sydney: Helen Palmer Memorial Committee, 1982). The New Left in Australia has been the subject of a number of studies including; Richard Gordon, (ed.), *The Australian New Left: Critical Essays and Strategies,* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1970), and more recently, John McLaren, *Free Radicals of the Left in Postwar Melbourne*, (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2003).

59   'Greer on Revolution; Greer on Love', A discussion between Germaine Greer, Ian Turner and Chris Hector, recorded in Melbourne, February 1972, *Overland*, Nos. 50-51, (Autumn, 1972), pp. 44-55; for Turners work on the IWW see Ian Turner, *Sydney's Burning (An Australian Political Conspiracy)* (Sydney: Alpha Books, 1969).

In the late fifties and sixties the Bulgarians in SAG became involved with the Push. In 1958 the two groups rented a space together, Liberty Hall, at 727 George Street near Haymarket. Here meetings were held two to three times a week. However, the Bulgarians later claimed that the bond of ninety pounds was lost because the 'crazy libertarians' left rubbish in the rooms and the street outside, and threw bottles.[60] In her history of the Push, Anne Coombs mentions the Bulgarians but not in relation to Liberty Hall. She postulates that the space was either given up or the landlord kicked the tenants out.[61] The relation between the Bulgarians and the Push was cordial, although there was a rift between the Bulgarians' 'European style anarchism' and Sydney libertarianism.[62] Grancharoff was most friendly with members of the Push, attending their regular discussion circles. He became known to them as, 'Jack the Anarchist'.[63] Grancharoff later stated that 'I left [the SAG] because they would not try to work with the Sydney Libertarians, pessimistic anarchists who considered anarchism as an ideology if not a utopia'.[64] Grancharoff was critical of the Push, but wanted to branch out to the locals. Others stayed in SAG, which continued to argue for communitarian anarchism.

The publications of SAG in the late 1950s expressed a discourse of communitarian anarchism, oscillating between anarcho-syndicalist and anarchist communist notions of how to build a social movement and make a revolution. Some philosophical articles were from a decidedly anarchist-communist point of view. For example the article 'Ownership and Function' in an issue of *Anarchist Review* published by the SAG in 1960 argued against a notion of collectivist property in favour of free access to the means of production by all.[65] However, many articles also expressed a concern to underline the importance of syndicalism to the anarchist project. An earlier issue of *Anarchist Review* published in 1959 contained a review of the Australian labour movement by Norman Rancie, an Australian member of the IWW and former editor of *Direct Action*, who was also probably a member of the SAG. In a language more

---

60   James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'; Grancharoff also confirms this, Grancharoff, 'Death of an Old Militant', p. 17.
61   Anne Coombs, *Sex and Anarchy: The Life and Death of the Sydney Push* (Ringwood, Victoria; Penguin Books Australia, 1996), p. 104.
62   Ibid., p. 102.
63   Ibid., p. 101.
64   McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 101.
65   D.J., 'Ownership and Function', in *Anarchist Review: Published by The Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 3, (June, 1960), pp. 13-14.

familiar to Australia than anarchist communism, Rancie expounded the IWW's revolutionary industrial unionism, as anarchism: 'Anarchists are realists and men of action, no mere dreamers. They are materialists, and want no truck with those who wish to... preach morality to the master class.'[66] The third and last edition of *Anarchist Review*, published in 1960, also begins with an exposition of anarchism and syndicalism reproduced from the UK journal *Freedom*.[67] At least until this time the SAG existed as an affiliate of the IWA.[68]

However, in the 1950s and 1960s, the SAG had little success in advancing anarchism to workers in Sydney. Kristoff worked in the transport industry but had little faith in trade union officials.[69] Gransharoff also felt similarly working for the Water Board.[70] The SAG attempted to proselytise on May Days. In 1959 their pamphlet proclaimed: 'The workers of the western world are marching behind their trade-union bosses and politicians, betrayed and disunited, misinformed about the real meaning of 1st of May'.[71] Such efforts came to little avail. The Bulgarians even claimed later that at a May Day rally in 1956 their pamphlets had provoked Trades Hall officials to notify the police that there were anarchists in the crowd.[72]

By the late 1960s SAG had merged more closely with libertarian elements in Sydney, but had some trouble relating to the new counter culture and student movement. In 1966 SAG opened a space called The Cellar in Oxford Street, Paddington. Bulgarian migrants remained involved in the project, chiefly Kristoff and another named Chris who were especially active.[73] Meetings about workers control and other topics were regularly held there.[74] Younger types became involved, including Bill

---

66   An interview with Kristoff in 1985 indicates the group had contact with Norman Rancie; James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'. Grancharoff also remembers the group involved one member of the IWW, McIntyre; 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 103. The article mentioned is signed only as N.R., 'An Anarchist Looks at the Labour Movement', *Anarchist Review: Issued by Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 2, (September, 1959), p. 14.
67   P.S., 'Anarchism and Syndicalism', in, *Anarchist Review: Published by The Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 3, (June, 1960), p. 14.
68   Sydney Anarchist Group, 'Aims and Principles,' *Anarchist Review: Published by Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 3, (June, 1960), p. 21.
69   Grancharoff, 'Death of an Old Militant', p. 17.
70   McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 103.
71   *May Day 1959* (Printed for the Sydney Anarchist Group by Edna Dash, 1959).
72   ASF-M, 'History of the ASF', p. 1.
73   James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'.
74   'In the Cellar', *The Anarchist*, No. 2, (July, 1966), p. 6.

Dwyer who had arrived from New Zealand and was a charismatic speaker. Soon the Cellar was a hang-out for a scene of young, counter-cultural hippies. Kristoff assisted Dwyer to produce his magazine, *Anarchy Now.*[75] However, Dwyer soon became enamoured with the revolutionary potential of LSD, later stating, 'I believe LSD is the most revolutionary weapon in the world'.[76] The Cellar soon became more famous for the parties held there than for anarcho-syndicalism. The Bulgarians were against drug use in the space, and became increasingly critical of Dwyer's erratic behaviour. The Cellar finally came to a spectacular end when it was raided by police, which caused a small media sensation in Sydney and ended in twelve months incarceration for Dwyer.[77] Throughout this period, SAG had put out a publication called *The Anarchist.* It included many contributions from Dwyer, Grancharoff, and Kristoff. Although the friction between traditional anarchism and the new libertarianism had become more evident, the Bulgarian migrants and SAG had managed to have an impact on the discourse going on around them. In reference to the several incarnations of the group, a later summary written in an anarchist bulletin said, 'Today's anarchist movement developed chiefly from the Sydney Anarchist Group'.[78]

Another influence on young anarchists in Australia was the presence of Spanish migrants. The Spanish anarchists had far more intergenerational interaction than the Bulgarians, as there had been a higher number of Spanish migrants come to Australia since the early twentieth century. An early pioneer was Salvador Torrents, a worker from Catalonia who escaped Spain after taking part in the revolutionary movement of 1909.[79] Spanish anarchists were most active in north Queensland, where Basques and Catalans had settled in the area around Ingham during the first half of the century. After the Civil War, although there was an exodus of some 600,000 from Spain, numbers coming to Australia remained low until assisted migration in the fifties and sixties. Most of these newcomers could be characterised as economic migrants.[80] Few of the

---

75   James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'.
76   Bill Dwyer, 'Bill Dwyer's Defence Notes', in Bob James (ed.), 'Anarchism in Australia'.
77   James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'.
78   FAAB, New Series, No. 1, cited in, John Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981', originally published in *Freedom*, (June 1981), available at, <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/syd7581.htm> [1/10/2010].
79   James Mason, 'Salvador Torrents: A Case Study', in 'Agitators and Patriots: Cultural and Political Identity in Queensland's Spanish Communities,1900-1975' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2008), pp. 42-7.
80   Barry York, 'Spanish', in, James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation,*

anarchists who escaped repression after Franco's victory in April 1939 came to Australia. Australian immigration policy was highly concerned to exclude left-wing radicals, and the Spanish were not even recognised in the Australian government's Displaced Persons scheme in 1947.[81] Therefore by the 1960s Spanish anarchists in Australia were made up of some veterans of the Civil War, some second-generation migrants, and some recent economic migrants who were influenced by the Spanish anarchist community in Australia.

The best known Civil War anarchist in Australia was Vicente Ruiz, and his generation attempted to proselytise to the younger, mainly economic migrants. Ruiz had been a secretary of his local branch of the CNT in the railways of Málaga, and begun a militia with his brother upon the outbreak of Civil War. He did not arrive in Australia until 1965, and was involved in a range of projects, including establishing the Fitzroy Legal Service and the Tenants Union of Victoria.[82] Vicente Ruiz's sone, Vicente Ruiz Jnr was also involved in the more adventurous anarchist 'Free Store' project in Collingwood, where one could take what one needed and gave what one could.[83] By the early 1970s anarchists in Melbourne and Sydney published magazines in Spanish called *Nosotros* and *Acracia*. Migrant anarchists of Ruiz's generation, who often spoke bad English, were activists in their communities. An article in *Nosotros* argued that Spanish economic migrants arriving from the intellectually stifling conditions in Franco's Spain could be converted to anarchism.[84] Antonio Jimenez was a child during the Civil War, and was schooled properly in anarchism after his arrival in Australia in 1960 by an older Spaniard named Quevos.[85] Jorge Garcia was also born to anarchist parents inside Spain after the Civil War, but became an anarchist in Australia. Along with the aging CNT militants, younger Spaniards such as these interacted with the local anarchists in sixties

     Its People and Their Origins, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 691.

81   Mason, 'Agitators and Patriots', p. 176.

82   Vicente Ruiz Foundation, 'Vicente Ruiz Biography', available from <http://flag.blackened.net/vrf/biog.htm> [Accessed, 12/9/2010].

83   'Carnival anarchism in Melbourne 1970-1975', available from <http://www.takver.com/history/melb/carnival1970_75.htm> [Accessed 5/10/10]; Chesterman, John, *Poverty Law and Social Change: the Story of the Fitzroy Legal Service* (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996), pp. 26, 31.

84   The article is signed, J. Jimenez, 'Sobre la España emigrante obrera', *Nostotros*, No. 8 (July, 1973), pp. 10-12.

85   A biography of Jimenez was written by the Jura Books collective, Susi Russell and Jura Books Collective, 'Antonio (Tony) Jimenez (1935-1990)', originally published in, *Rebel Worker*, (1990), available at <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/jimenez_a.htm> [Accessed 5/10/2010].

and seventies.

Towards the end of 1973, some migrant Spanish, students and young worker activists in Melbourne formed the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), and began publishing *Acracia* in English.[86] ABC groups existed around the world and aimed at prisoner solidarity with a focus on anarchist class struggle. The ABC project therefore combined the strong interest of the Spanish in conditions in Spain, with the local anarchist project. The ABC operated mainly in Melbourne but was also present in Sydney, listing a contract address for both cities. Subsequent editions of *Acracia* were published in the name of the ABC.[87]

The English editions of *Acracia* were a fusion of traditional anarchism with an emphasis on how the new social movements of the sixties and seventies affected working-class people. An article on 'Ecology Conference' called for anarchists to attend, even though, 'The environmental movement has mostly been middle class, reformist, with little political awareness or wide perspective.'[88] 'Feminism and the Working Woman' argued for a feminism that looked away from well-educated women in wealthy suburbs, towards the needs of working women.[89] *Acracia* was very interested in the local labour movement. Articles such as 'Builders' Labourers in Struggle', 'Latrobe Solidarity', and 'Metal Campaign '75', commented on contemporary developments.[90] These articles sometimes came close to condemning the progressive struggle of reformist unions seeking wage increases, as detracting from the revolutionary potential of the labour movement. However, in general they sought to argue for the unions to adopt a revolutionary perspective on the wage system, to end practices such as wage differentials between industries and to reject wage indexation. *Acracia* also contained articles about international political prisoners, particularly in Spain.[91] Although they were generally unsigned, the student activists probably wrote many of the articles. They saw the development of feminism, environmentalism, and the resurgence of rank-and-

---

86   *Melbourne Anarchist Archives: Development of Melbourne Anarchism, 1973-1976,* Vol. 2, (Brunswick, Victoria: Melbourne Anarchist Archives, 1979), p. III; 'Towards the end of 1973 the Anarchist Black Cross was formed', *Acracia,* No. 38, (May, 1975), p. 1.
87   ASF-M, 'History of the ASF-IWA', p. 1.
88   *Acracia*, No. 37, (1975), p. 14.
89   *Acracia*, No. 35, (1975), p. 14.
90   *Acracia*, No. 35, (1975), pp. 16-18; *Acracia*, No. 38, (May, 1975), pp. 13-14; *Acracia*, No. 39, (1975), pp. 2-4.
91   'Same Dog Different Colours', *Acracia*, No. 35, (1975), pp. 2-5.

file unionism and the discourse of workers control in the seventies, as conducive to anarchism.

By the mid-1970s, the diverse elements of Australian anarchism were coming together. The number of anarchist groups in Australia grew and culminated in the formation of the Federation of Australian Anarchists (FAA) in 1975. The ABC joined this loose coalition of mainly student groups, and published the FAA's Aims and Principles in its subsequent editions.[92] The FAA also involved a Sydney Anarchist Group, although this was very different organisation from the one founded by the Bulgarians. The record of the FAA shows an Australian milieu of socialist libertarianism, with reference points ranging from IWW syndicalism to feminist struggle, and from traditional figures like Bakunin and Kropotkin to libertarians such as Daniel Cohn Bendit and the sexual liberationist William Reich.[93] However, the organisation was also afflicted by similar conflicts as those that had occurred between the Bulgarians and the early New Left. All parts of the FAA were libertarian, and socialist in the sense that they opposed private ownership of the means of production.[94] However, they held very different perspectives on how to achieve an anarchist society, and what an anarchist movement would look like. A new brand of 'carnival' anarchism influenced by situationalism had become popular in some groups, including the SAG in Sydney. These groups focused on spontaneity and the revolutionary consciousness of the individual.[95] On the other hand, collectivist ideas like syndicalism that aimed to ground anarchist praxis in the economic structure of capitalist society were the subject of controversy. As one observer put it, 'the economic role of anarchists... became the scene of some of the bitterest debate'.[96] The FAA lasted only two years before falling apart. 'The Split', as it became known, had its origins in the syndicalist orientated part of the FAA deciding that, 'the FAA was far too broad, incorporating people with conflicting ideologies (individualism, carnival anarchism, syndicalism and so on); and that opposition to the state is not a sufficient basis for a united anarchist movement'.[97]

---

92   'FAA Statement of Principles,' *Acracia,* No. 38, (May, 1975), p. 1.
93   See *Melbourne Anarchist Archives.*
94   'FAA Statement of Principles,' *Acracia,* No. 38, (May, 1975), p. 1.
95   Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981'.
96   'The Split: a Monash Anarchist Perspective,' FAAB, Monash Edition, 1976, in, *Melbourne Anarchist Archives*, pp. 81-3.
97   'Statement by Seven Participants on the Formation of the LSF', *Libertarian Socialist Bulletin* (July 1976), cited in, John Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981', originally published in *Freedom,*

Some parts of this faction had started work on a book distribution network, which in Sydney culminated in the purchasing of a property to house Jura Books in 1977.[98]

By this time in the late seventies, most of the Spanish and Bulgarians migrants were ageing and their active numbers were reduced to a few individuals. Some projects continued, like the Bulgarian's CNT-B newspaper *Our Path*, which Kristoff continued to publish from Sydney until the late 1980s.[99] Spanish editions of *Acracia* were also published in Australia as late as 1991.[100] In Sydney the remaining Bulgarian and Spanish anarchists continued to be involved in Jura Books. A Melbourne Anarcho-Syndicalist Group, which involved some ex-CNT members, was formed in 1983.[101]

The interaction between anarchist migrants and the young libertarians in Australia was at times contradictory. However it also produced rare instances within the New Left, whereby the shift away from the authoritarian left was articulated as a clear and definite turn towards the anarchism. The anarchist migrants expressed a clear continuity between the 'old' class analysis and the new social movements. However, the discourse of Australian anarchism remained generally confused and relatively isolated. Anarchism was only a radical fringe of the New Left. Explicitly anarchist groups remained, if not rare, then still relatively small. Although the New Left involved definite, libertarian-socialist elements, it did not produce a large anarchist movement in Australia.

(June 1981) available at <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/syd7581.htm> [Accessed, 1/10/2010].

98   Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981'.

99   *Our Road: Bulgarian Monthly Review,* No. 37, (1988).

100   *Acracia: Publicación Anarquista de Habla Hispana en Australia,* Vol. 2, No. 6, (June 1991).

101   ASG-M', 'Report of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASG-M) to the IWA Plenary, Toulouse, November 1999,' p.1.

Chapter 3:

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation and the 1990 Tramway Dispute

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation was formed in January 1986 at a conference in Sydney. The two small groups of activists, one in Sydney, one in Melbourne, agreed to form a federation on a provisional basis for twelve months.[102] The Sydney group had formally been an IWW branch in Sydney organising out of Jura Books and the migrant anarcho-syndicalists, George Kristoff and Antonio Jimenez, both became members of the ASF in Sydney. The Sydney group had published the newspaper *Rebel Worker* since the early eighties.[103] *Rebel Worker* was now to become the official publication of the ASF. The Melbourne group had operated as the Melbourne Anarcho-Syndicalist Group from the early eighties. However, by the late eighties an elderly Spaniard called Mariano was the only ASF member in Melbourne from the previous generation of migrant anarchists.[104] The ASF argued for anarcho-syndicaism on the grounds; that it was possible to establish an anarcho-syndicalist union movement in Australia. It had the objective of affiliation to the IWA, which was accepted in 1988.[105]

From 1986 the ASF in Melbourne (ASF-M) constituted an anarcho-syndicalist current within the broad spectrum of anarchist groups in the city. In May 1986 a conference was held that involved a range of groups to mark 100 years of anarchism in Australia (since the founding of the original MAC). It had been organised in the preceding years by a group called Libertarian Workers For a Self Managed Society, and was successful in attracting some 3,000 participants over four days including many overseas guests.[106] A May Day demonstration in the city ended at the eight hour monument on Victoria St.[107] However, the eighties also saw the division between

---

102   ASF-M, 'A History of the ASF-IWA,' p. 1.
103   *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 1, No.1, (February - March, 1982), p.1.
104   ASF-M, 'Minutes', 12/3/1987.
105   ASF, 'Minutes of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation's 2nd Congress', 1/6/1988, p. 3.
106   *Anarchy is Order - Government is Chaos: Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebrations, Melbourne, Australia, 1st - 4th May 1986*, (Parkville, Victoria: Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebration Collective, 1988), pp. 3, 21.
107   Images of the conference and parade can be found in, *Anarchy is Order - Government is Chaos,* pp. 59-93.

traditionally class-conscious anarchism and the new, by now postmodern version of libertarianism, become even more marked than in the seventies. The new anarchism was advocated by the anarchist author Bob James:

> 'I hold no antagonism for "class-analysis", I simply feel that it has served its purpose, and must be replaced with, or extended into, what I'm calling power-analysis. Such an extension is indicated by the evolution of the idea of revolution from an event to a process, and by the philosophies or empowerment which underpin the radical elements of feminism, environmentalism and so on'.[108]

In the 1980s, Australian anarchism experienced its own version of the left's identity crisis of postmodernity, which centred on the perceived redundancy of class analysis given the decline of the labour movement. Other anarchist groups did not necessarily reject the class struggle, but many were focused on aspects of working-class or community activism outside of the workplace. One example was the Squatters Union (who were mainly anarchists) with whom the ASF interacted.[109] The ASF was one of the few anarchist groups with an explicit intention to organise an anarchist union movement.

The union movement in the 1980s was undergoing a deep structural crisis. Faced with persistent unemployment after the radicalism of the seventies, the mainstream of the union movement underwent a significant ideological shift. Out of the union campaigns for increased wages and shorter hours there emerged the Accord, whereby the unions undertook to accept wage restraint in return for greater influence within the Hawke Labor government. Under the leadership of Laurie Carmichael, militant unions like the Australian Metal Workers Union (AMWU) shifted from strategies whereby the working class would extend its control over the means of production towards tripartite arrangements with employers and government, whereby unions would contribute to the restoration of profitability in return for protection of the social wage and a voice in the

---

108   Bob James, 'A New Anarchism?' 1986, available from <http://www.takver.com/history/aia/httoc.htm>, [Accessed 5/10/2010].

109   Iain McIntyre, 'A History of Squatting Campaigns in Melbourne' an edited version of a talk given by Iain McIntyre at Camp Eureka, 26 April 2010, *Melbourne Black,* Vol. 1 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 8; ASG-M, 'Minutes,' 16/7/1987, p. 2.

restructuring process.[110] Alongside this process, the Hawke government deregulated the Australian economy and accelerated the process of cutting tariff protection that had begun under Whitlam and Fraser.[111] Unions such as the AMWU were thus hit by competition from emerging capitalist economies in Asia. The manufacturing sector of Australian capital, which had long benefitted from tariff protection, was undercut by imports, so that jobs went offshore. The long-established settlement between Australian capital and labour, which provided industrial protection in return for wage regulation, became unhinged. In its place was a new political consensus, based on the Accord between the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Now the labour movement was to trade industrial peace and a decline in real wages, for an increase in state services or the 'social wage'.[112] The result was a massive redistribution of the wage and profit shares of GPD in favour of capital.[113]

Because the ACTU had essentially entered into a no-strike agreement, this meant that class conflict was now likely to occur within unions: between union leaders and the ACTU, between state and federal officials, and very often between rank-and-file workers and their own union leadership. Some unions broke with the new consensus by striking for higher wages. The pilots' dispute and the de-registration of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) are two good examples of the role of the ACTU and ALP governments as labour disciplinarians under the Accord.[114] A new generation of union leaders had emerged, technocratic and highly educated, but who no longer came from the shop floor. The ACTU also began a campaign to further centralise the union movement, with smaller unions forced to either amalgamate or be de-registered.[115] This

---

110   The AMWU's policy of 'intervention' in the 1970s was even syndicalist in nature. It favoured the direct intervention of workers in management at the point of production rather than state nationalisation. An examination of the intellectual development of the AMWU can be found in Sean Scalmer and Terry Irving, 'The Rise of the Modern Labour Technocrat: Intellectual Labour and the Transformation of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union, 1973-85,' *Labour History*, No. 77 (Nov., 1999), pp. 64-82; Tom Bramble, 'The Rise of the Modern Labour Technocrat: Response,' *Labour History*, No. 79 (Nov., 2000), pp. 179-184.
111   Andrew Leigh, 'Trade Liberalisation and the Australian Labor Party', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol. 48, No. 4, (2002), p. 491.
112   Tom Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia: A History from Flood to Ebb Tide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 116.
113   ABS, *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product*, September 2007, cat. no. 5206.0, reproduced in, Tom Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia: A History from Flood to Ebb Tide*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 64.
114   Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia*, p. 135, 156.
115   Drew Cottle, Angela Keys & Kristie Martin, 'End of the Line: An examination of the 1990 Victorian

was a dramatic shift in the politics of the union movement.

To anarchists in the ASF, the collaboration of the unions in these economic reforms was not just an outcome of structural changes in the economy, or the inherent disposition of unions towards economism. On the contrary, they saw it as caused by the politics of the Australian labour movement since the early twentieth century, with its hierarchical organisational structure, its reliance on state institutions such as arbitration, and the involvement of political parties. For anarchists, the structural problem lay in the trade union bureaucracy, which had become a part of capitalism, and needed to be replaced with anarcho-syndicalist methods. Another critical problem was the belief of Australian trade unionists, that the state could be trusted as a means to reform capitalism. The Accord was seen as a logical outcome of the state-centric history of the Australian labour movement, which only made the need for a union movement independent of the state all the more evident. As an ASF publication argued audaciously:

> 'Since World War One the Labor Party has consistently and repeatedly shown that if it comes down to choosing between bosses and workers it chooses bosses. Various left-wing and loony trot groups belief that workers need to be led by a "vanguard party". A middle-class notion particular to intellectual elements who have failed to make it in the straight corporate world and look to the workers upon whose backs they hope to ride to power. Workers Government is a contradiction in terms – once you are part of the government you are no longer a worker.'[116]

Within this context, the Melbourne tramways dispute of January 1990 occurred. It was an outcome of a longer struggle between workers and the government over application of neoliberal strategy to public transport in Melbourne. The issue at the centre of the dispute, the removal of conductors and introduction of driver-only-operation of trams, had been an industrial relations issue in the public transport industry

---

Tram Dispute', (2005), University of Western Sydney, available at
<http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/asslh/cottle.html> [Accessed, 25/07/2010]
116 'Labour Attacked Transport', *Sparks*, No. 19, (Spring, 1989), p. 10.

in Victoria since at least 1930.[117] However, in the 1980s the State Labor government was faced by a spiralling debt crisis and looked to rationalise public services to cut costs. Tram workers represented by the Australian Tramways and Motor Omnibus Employees Association (ATMOEA) were an easy target for a number of reasons. Tram services affected a relatively small proportion of voters in Victoria, while the small ATMOEA would soon face amalgamation and had little clout with the government.[118] The dispute involved two main areas of conflict. First, management wanted to convert trams to driver-only-operation, in order to remove conductors and thereby reduce costs. Second, this goal required a new ticketing system, whereby so-called 'scratch tickets' could be bought at retail stores. The plan was announced in the State budget in August 1989, and the new ticketing system was partially implemented late that year.[119]

The involvement of the ASF-M in the tramways had begun in May 1986 with the first edition of the industrial journal, *Sparks*.[120] ASF members working in the public transport industry put out this publication. Bus, rail and tram services were at the time owned as a public utility operated by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (the MET). Sparks argued for the take over of the public transport industry by the workers without the government; hence the insistence, that, 'WE DO NOT NEED bosses or managers', and, 'the alternative is workers control of industry'.[121] In January 1987, these members formed an 'industrial affiliate' group called the Public Transport Workers Association (PTWA).[122] By 1987 there were some 25 members of the ASF-M, although only six were members of the PTWA. They worked in the railways, and in the tramways, at Brunswick, Preston and South Melbourne depots. One member, Leigh Kendal, was also an assistant delegate and then delegate within the ATMOEA at South Melbourne depot between 1987 and 1989. The PTWA was surprised by the extent of the positive response to *Sparks*. Through a friend in the internal mail the PTWA was able to distribute copies of Sparks to virtually every railway station in Victoria. They regularly printed runs of 1,500 and by September 1987 Kendal could claim that they 'regularly receive submissions from workers in the industry not in the PTWA... almost every

117   Friends of the Hawthorn Depot, 'Melbourne tramways: union vs management', available at <http://www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/papers/union.htm> [Accessed 5/10/2010]
118   Cottle et al., 'End of the Line'
119   Ibid.
120   ASF-M, 'History of the ASF-IWA', n.d., p. 1.
121   *Sparks*, No. 1, (May, 1986), p. 1; *Sparks*, No. 19, (Spring, 1989), p. 10.
122   ASF-M, 'History of the ASF-IWA', p. 1.

Station, yard, depot, workshop, etc. in Metropolitan Melbourne receives copies'.[123]

While the ASF built up a degree of visibility in the tramways through *Sparks*, its influence was most visible at the depots where PTWA members worked. The campaign to save the conductors involved instances whereby tram depots took their own actions independently of the union. In August 1988, the South Melbourne depot took 'wildcat' action by stopping work and marching to the opening of the first MET shop, which threatened the conductors jobs.[124] The ASF members encouraged and took part such actions, carrying a large PTWA banner throughout the event. The union had refused to endorse this action, and no officials were present at the protest.[125] It was in the aftermath of this event that a non-ASF member put a motion to a meeting of the South Melbourne depot to disaffiliate from the ATMOEA, and join the ASF. The motion was lost by around fourteen votes in a meeting of around fifty workers, but the fact that it had been seriously considered was striking. In such depots, the PTWA's anarcho-syndicalism competed for influence with other groups, including the ALP. In 1989 Kendal lost the position of delegate to the ALP candidate Alf Debakker. Nevertheless, by the time the campaign to save Melbourne's tram conductors really started to flare up in August of 1989, the tiny number of ASF members working in the industry were clearly identifiable as a militant and organised group.

During December 1989, an industrial campaign was led by the union leadership to save the conductors jobs. The union leadership sanctioned some quite radical actions to disrupt the implementation of the new ticketing system, including stop work rallies and attempts to occupy government offices. When workers were sacked for their participation in these actions the union sanctioned the non-collection of fares.[126] The radical fringe made stronger proposals, such as striking during the Christmas period, but they did not gain the necessary support.[127] In November 1989 elections were also held within the ATMOEA.[128] Both candidates promised to fight to save the conductors jobs,

123 Kendal, Leigh, 'Which way forward comrade?', IWA English Language Bulletin, (September 1987), p. 1.
124 Dick Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', in Mark McGuire, (ed.) *Anarcho-Syndicalism in Practice: Melbourne Tramways Dispute & Lockout* (Sydney: Jura Media Publications, 1997), p. 5.
125 *Sparks*, No. 19, (Spring, 1989), pp. 12-16.
126 Cottle et al., 'End of the Line'; Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 5.
127 Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 5.
128 Ibid., p. 5.

with the ALP candidate Lou Di Gregorio emerging victorious. There was a militant atmosphere in the union. In late December 1989 a union official even announced that they would run the system themselves during January if the government persisted.[129] Nevertheless, friction developed between the new union leadership and the rank-and-file because the official campaign did not go far enough to satisfy the militants. The Brunswick and Essendon depots had held their own, joint stop work actions without notice to management.[130]

On Monday 1 January 1990 the MET attempted to put the tram drivers on a new contract, which would convert them to driver-only-operation.[131] Management made a blunder in attempting to require staff to sign an agreement that stated, 'no work as directed, no pay'.[132] The indignant reaction was unprecedented. Workers refused to sign, and in protest took the trams out without uniforms or tickets.[133] The trams ran for free that day.[134] This occurred in so many depots that the Assistant Secretary of the union Tony Martin could announce; 'We are now running the tram system without the MET'.[135] On Sydney Road there were trams with signs in the windows saying 'Under Workers Control'.[136] With the stakes significantly raised, late on Monday night, the MET decided to cut power to system in order to circumvent the free public transport. Upon discovering they were about to be effectively 'locked out', workers at the depots organised for trams to be driven to CBD to blockade the city streets.[137] When the power was cut, trams blocked the full length of Elizabeth Street up to the Victoria Market, and from the pedestrian mall on Bourke Street to Spring Street.[138] That night workers also barricaded themselves in the many depots to avoid eviction.[139] Where management has

129   Cottle et al., 'End of the Line'.
130   Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 5.
131   Jeff Sparrow and Jill Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn: Brunswick Tram Depot, 807 Sydney Road, Brunswick', *Radical Melbourne 2: The Enemy Within* (Carlton North, Victoria: Vulgar Press, 2004) p. 216.
132   'Public Transport Corporation - Met, Notice to Employees, Confirmation to Work as Directed', 29 December 1989, in 'Do you remember the Fitzmaurice Contract?' *Sparks*, No. 25 (November, 1990), p. 12.
133   Sparrow and Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn', p. 216.
134   Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 6.
135   Sparrow and Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn', p. 216.
136   Ibid., p. 217.
137   Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 6.
138   Sparrow and Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn', p. 216.
139   Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 6.

not already left, they were asked to leave.[140] By Tuesday 2 January the tram system was inoperable. There was no power, the city streets were blockaded, and Brunswick, Essendon, Kew, North Fitzroy, Preston, and South Melbourne depots were occupied.

From the beginning of January the depots progressively became the real organising centres of the dispute, and built strong links with local communities. Brunswick, in particular, became a centre for organising community support. ASF members not in the PTWA and some Melbourne squatters were first to initiate the passenger support groups, the first meeting of which was held on Wednesday 3 January.[141] These included members of other socialist groups and individuals from the community. Support groups were sustained at Brunswick and Preston, and were able to participate in the workers' assemblies inside the depots. Workers and the support groups collected food and money from local shopkeepers.[142] Meanwhile, workers at Brunswick placed a banner out on Sydney Road proclaiming, 'This Depot Under Workers Control'.[143] However, while the depots were experimenting in rank-and-file democracy, negotiations were continuing between the union executive and the government.

By late January the pressure was mounting. Initially, the cutting of power to the system had provoked bus drivers to also walk off the job, and buses were added to the blockade in the city.[144] However, on Thursday 4 January some bus depots had voted for a return to work and Di Gregorio pulled them off the strike action.[145] On 19 January a meeting was held at Brunswick Town Hall, at which a deal to allow for the introduction of driver-only-operation and gradual removal of conductors was rejected.[146] Ostensibly the executive also opposed the deal.[147] It was after this meeting that Di Gregorio put out a defiant statement against the government, stating that 'Tramways workers will not be

---

140 Sparrow and Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn', p. 218.
141 Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 7.
142 Ibid., p. 8.
143 Ibid., p. 6.
144 Sparrow and Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn', p. 218.
145 Cottle et al., 'End of the Line'.
146 'Secret Talks Over Trams' *The Age*, 23 January, 1990, p. 1; Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout,' p. 8.
147 'Resolution...carried (sic) UNANIMOUSLY at A.T.M.O.E.A Executive Meeting held on 17 January 1990' The Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees Association (Victorian Branch), photocopy.

stood over and intimidated by Cain and Kennan'.[148] However, in the days that followed the mass meeting, Di Gregorio and the executive held meetings with the government.[149] On 22 January the deal that had been rejected three days earlier was signed by the acting Federal President of the union.[150] This decision was not supported by all members of the Victorian executive, but from that point on the majority of the executive attempted to sell the deal to the rank-and-file and eventually put an end to the dispute.[151]

On 25 January the Brunswick depot voted 109 to one not to accept the decision of the union executive.[152] The Preston depot and groups from other depots also remained defiant and came to the organising meetings at Brunswick. The last week of January saw an extremely bitter dispute between the union leadership and workers who felt they were now being sold out. It was during the final week, that the dispute was most clearly articulated as a struggle between parts of the rank-and-file and their own leadership. Numerous strategic pickets were organised by the rank-and-file without the consent of the union leadership.[153] On one day tramworkers organised a picket at the Jolimont Railway Yards, which railworkers then refused to cross. This provoked a strong condemnation of Di Gregorio. The Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) was also picketed when union officials met there with the MET. Tramworkers even picketed the ATMOEA's own headquarters in King St.[154] However, while militant actions continued to be organised by some workers, they were not enough to win the dispute. Another part of the rank-and-file wanted the dispute to end, especially those not affected by the reforms to the tramways.[155] Brunswick sent delegates to other depots to argue that they continue agitating.[156] They found them generally demoralised and not willing to continue without the support of the executive.

---

148 'A message from Lou DiGregorio', The Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees Association (Victorian Branch), 19/01/1990, photocopy.
149 'Secret Talks Over Trams' The Age, 23 January, 1990, p. 1.
150 Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 8; Mark Davis, 'Rebels to Picket Met Headquarters', The Age, 31 January, 1990, p. 5.
151 Mark Davis, 'Trams May Move Today', The Age, 2 February, 1990, p. 1.
152 Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 8.
153 Sally Heath, 'Rebels Waging Guerilla War, Says Government', The Age, 31 January 1990, p. 5.
154 Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 9.
155 Cottle et al., 'End of the Line'.
156 Curlewis, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', p. 9.

Finally, on 3 February, a mass meeting was held. The union had rallied bus workers in particular to vote for the ratification of the agreement.[157] Di Gregorio argued that the union would be sued if the dispute continued, and that the IRC would offer a worse deal if this one were rejected.[158] Passions ran high and at one point Di Gregorio was chased out of Brunswick Town Hall. However, in the end the vote was won by the executive. The actions of the workers had achieved a better deal, in the form of a substantial pay rise and that conductors would now be phased off trams over time instead of immediately.[159] However, the dispute had failed to prevent the neoliberal reforms from going ahead. Despite some memorable experiments in working-class democracy, the rank-and-file initiative had not been strong enough challenge executive's decision in the last week of the dispute.

By necessity, some of the changes in the politics of the union movement in the 1980s meant that class conflict was likely to manifest inside unions when major industrial dispute did occurred. The unity in action shown at the beginning of January showed that a militant atmosphere had developed inside the ATMOEA in the campaign to save the conductors. A union implementing self-described workers control, within a state owned industry, against the wishes of the governing labour party, has clear syndicalist connotations. However, these early events occurred with at least tacit cooperation between the most militant elements of the rank-and-file, the executive, and most moderate elements. The unwillingness of most of the militant depots to continue the dispute in the last week of the campaign showed that they were still highly dependent on the union executive for leadership and had not embarked on program to radically alter the goals or structure of their union. Nevertheless, some workers, particularly at Brunswick, did lead a campaign to take power away from the executive and to make decisions at the local level.

That parts of the dispute expressed syndicalist ideas, and that the PTWA had campaigned for anarcho-syndicalism in the industry, does not mean that the events were caused by the ASF. It does, however, lend credibility to the ASF's argument that it was possible to build an anarchist current within the labour movement using syndicalist

---

157   Ibid.
158   Sparrow & Sparrow, 'Revolution at Dawn', p. 220.
159   Cottle et al, 'End of the Line'.

methods of organising. The PTWA had a presence in the public transport industry completely disproportionate to its size. Several years and thousands of copies of *Sparks* had helped to popularise the concept of workers' control within the tramways. Through *Sparks* and through other initiatives such as the passenger support groups, the ASF offered a demonstration of anarchist politics to a large group of workers inside the union. The ASF showed that in the late eighties and early nineties it was quite possible to argue for a consciously libertarian form of socialism within an Australian workplace.

The biggest limitation of the ASF project remained its inability to sign up new members to their organisation. While *Sparks* was popular, few workers were willing to sign themselves up as 'anarcho-syndicalists'. PTWA members complained that they were still seen 'as a political group'.[160] Only one person joined the PTWA who had not previously been a member of the ASF or was not previously an anarchist. The ASF grew in the late eighties, but the relatively small size of both the Melbourne and Sydney locals (there were at most some 15 members in Sydney) significantly contributed to the organisation's collapse. In 1992 the ASF underwent a demoralising internal dispute that centred on the Sydney group's mandate to publish *Rebel Worker* on behalf of the federation. In October the Melbourne ASF held an 'Extraordinary Congress' where the Sydney group was expelled for breach of the statutes.[161] Internal disputes of this nature often plague small anarchist groups, and the dispute itself had very little to do with the successes or failures of their activism in the workplace. Neither group was able to rebuild numbers after this point, in part because of the demoralising experience of the altercation. The Melbourne group continues to exist in a diminished form and it has not been involved so heavily in a particular industry or dispute as it was in 1990. A version of *Sparks* and *Rebel Worker* are still published in NSW by an original member of the ASF Sydney. Briefly, the ASF appeared to have overcome the key weakness of anarchism in Australia: its alienation from the labour movement. Yet its demise repeated a familiar theme in Australian anarchism: a small and relatively isolated group, which collapsed because of internal politics.

---

160   Kendal, 'Which way forward comrade?', p. 2.
161   'History of the ASF-IWA,' p. 1.

Conclusion

Drawing on a history of anarchist movement overseas, I have argued that syndicalism has been an indispensable part of the anarchist movement. While this anarcho-syndicalist tradition did not manage to establish itself in Australia during the height of the international anarchist movement, a small band of anarcho-syndicalist activists did emerge in some Australian cities after the Second World War. This process was assisted by migrant anarchists arriving from Europe. While there are few instances of explicitly anarchist groups playing a practical role in a major industrial dispute in Australia, the ASF showed in the early 1990s that it was possible to do so. The thesis has thus argued that while anarcho-syndicalism has its origins in the international labour movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its history in Australia is more recent. It has also manifested itself explicitly during the neoliberal period of Australian capitalism, when the politics of the labour movement changed in such a way as to cause class conflict within the traditional structures of Australian unions.

It has been shown that anarcho-syndicalism in Australia has a complex history. This history contradicts the conventional belief that anarchism was strong up to the First World War before dying out completely. My own history of anarcho-syndicalism in Australia could also be cast as the interaction between anarchism and the labour movement, whether or not this interaction took on an explicitly anarcho-syndicalist form. I have not pursued that interpretation, and accordingly have not dwelt on the IWW, or numerous other lesser instance when sections of the Australian working-class demanded a more libertarian structure in their unions or expressed anti-state sentiments in their pursuit of workers' control.[162] Those episodes would need to be incorporated in any full account of the history of the Australian labour movement from an anarchist point of view. It would also be necessary to elaborate on the interaction between the labour movement and explicitly anarchist groups, some examples of which have been examined here. While such a project would yield a greater understanding of the history of the Australian labour movement, it is nevertheless unlikely to explain the renewed

---

162   Examples to consider include, Julie Kimber, 'A Case of Mild Anarchy?: Job Committees in the Broken Hill Mines, c. 1930 to c. 1954', *Labour History*, No. 80 (May, 2001), pp. 41-64; Meredith Burgmann and Verity Burgmann, *Green Bans, Red Union: Environmental Activism and the New South Wales Builders Labourers' Federation,* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1998).

interest in anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism found in Australia today.

The relevance of the small history of anarcho-syndicalism in Australian stems from the resurgence of interest in both anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism here and overseas. Despite Australian unionism having entered into a deep structural crisis since the 1980s, no alternative has been able to seriously challenge the dominant, social-democratic politics of the ALP. Internationally, anarchism has re-established itself in a number of countries. The most obvious example is that of Greece, where a young anarchist movement has emerged.[163] However, Spain has also seen a resurgence of anarcho-sydicalism, with the growth of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), which has become the third largest union in Spain.[164] Anarchism is becoming increasingly important within diverse contexts, from the student movements in Chile to the re-establishment of some sections of the IWA.[165] Anarcho-syndicalism plays a greater or lesser role in each of these examples, and the debate continues between what I have called here, collectivist and communist ideas within the anarchist tradition. I have argued that an activist current of anarcho-syndicalism has been present in Australia since end of the Second World War. The revival of the anarchist movement calls for further re-examination of what anarchism has meant historically, as a social movement, and what it could mean within the Australian context.

---

163   For example see, John Hadoulis & Ingrid Bazinet, 'Greece warns against default as EU finance chiefs meet' *The Age*, 10th May 2010.

164   'Spain: CGT is now the Third Biggest Union', N. Phebus (trans.), in *Alternative Libertaire*, (November, 2004), cited in, Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (London: AK Press, 2009), p. 14.

165   See for example, Local Coordination Council-FeL Concepción, 'Three Years of Struggle for Libertarian and Popular Education in Chile: the Record of the Libertarian Students Front', (10 October 2005), available from <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/1613> [Accessed, 5/10/2010]; Damier, Vadim., *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, Malcolm Archibold, trans., (Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2009), p. 200.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Jura Books, 440 Parramatta Rd, Petersham, Sydney:

    The Anarchist, No. 2, (July, 1966)

    Anarchist Review: Issued by Sydney Anarchist Group, No. 2, (September 1959)

    Anarchist Review: Published by Sydney Anarchist Group, No. 3, (June 1960)

    May Day 1959, (Printed for the Sydney Anarchist Group by Edna Dash, 1959)

    ASF, 'Minutes of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation's 2nd Congress', 1/6/1988

    Our Road: Bulgarian Monthly Review, No. 22, (March 1973)

    Our Road: Bulgarian Monthly Review, No. 37, (1988)

    'Workers Committees in Bulgaria', George Kristoff Archive, n.d.

Melbourne Anarchist Resource Centre, 62 St Georges Rd Northcote:

    'A message from Lou DiGregorio', The Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees Association (Victorian Branch), 19/01/1990, photocopy

    Acracia, Nos. 35-9, (1975)

    Acracia: Publicación Anarquista de Habla Hispana en Australia, Vol. 2, No. 6, (June, 1991)

    Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne, 'Report of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASG-M) to the IWA Plenary, Toulouse, November 1999'

    ASF-IWA, *Principles Aims & Statutes of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation*, reaffirmed June, 1988

    ASF-M, 'A History of the ASF', n.d.

    ASF-M, 'History of the ASF-IWA', n.d.

    ASF-M, Minutes, 12/3/1987

    ASF-M, 'Minutes,' 16/7/1987

    IWA, *Goals & Statutes,* reaffirmed Paris Congress, 1979

Kendal, Leigh, 'Which way forward comrade?', IWA English Language Bulletin, (September 1987)

Melbourne Anarchist Archives: Development of Melbourne Anarchism, 1973-1976, Vol. 2, Brunswick, Victoria: Melbourne Anarchist Archives, 1979

Nosotros, No. 8, (July, 1973)

Rebel Worker, Vol. 1, No.1, (February - March, 1982)

'Resolution...carried UNANIMOUSLY (sic) at A.T.M.O.E.A Executive Meeting held on 17 January 1990', photocopy

Sparks, Nos. 1-25, (May, 1986 - November, 1990)

The Age, January - February 1990

Anarchy is Order - Government is Chaos: Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebrations, *Melbourne, Australia, 1st - 4th May 1986,* Parkville, Victoria: Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebration Collective, 1988

Bakunin, Michael, 'The International and Karl Marx', in Sam Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchy,* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973, pp. 268-320

Bridges, Doreen, (ed.), *Helen Palmer's Outlook,* Sydney: Helen Palmer Memorial Committee, 1982

Gordon, Richard, (ed.), *The Australian New Left: Critical Essays and Strategies*, Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1970

Graham, Robert, (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One: From Anarchy to Anarchism,* Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2005

Graham, Robert, (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism (1939-1977),* Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2009

James, Bob, 'A New Anarchism?', (1986), available from, <http://www.takver.com/history/aia/httoc.htm>, [Accessed 5/10/2010]

James, Bob, (ed.), *What is Communism? And Other Anarchist Essays by JA Andrews on 1889 Melbourne,* Prahran, Melbourne: Backyard Press

James, Bob, (ed.), 'Anarchism in Australia: An Anthology Prepared for the Australian Anarchist Centennial Celebration, 1-4 May 1986', available from <http://www.takver.com/history/aia/httoc.htm> [Accessed 12/4/2010]

Local Coordination Council-FeL Concepción, 'Three Years of Struggle for Libertarian and Popular Education in Chile: the Record of the Libertarian Students Front', (10 October, 2005) available from <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/1613>, [Accessed, 5/10/2010]

McIntyre, Iain, 'Jack the Anarchist: Troublemaking in the 1950s/60s,' an Interview with Jack Grancharoff, in *Disturbing the Peace: Tales from Australia's Rebel Histories*, *How to Make Trouble and Influence People,* Vol. 1, Melbourne: Homebrew Books, 2005, pp. 93-105

Marx, Karl, and Engels, Frederic, *The German Ideology*, S. Ryazanskaya trans., Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964

Secondary Sources

Avrich, Paul., 'An Anarchist Portrait: J.W. Fleming', in *Anarchist Portraits,* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 260-268

Baker, A.J., *Anderson's social philosophy,* Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1979

Baker, A. J., 'Sydney Libertarianism and the Push', *Broadsheet*, No. 81 (March 1975) pp. 5-10

Boraman, Toby, 'The New Left and Anarchism in New Zealand from 1956 to the Early 1980s', Ph.D. thesis, University of Otago, 2005

Burgmann, Meredith, and Burgmann, Verity, *Green Bans, Red Union: Environmental Activism and the New South Wales Builders Labourers' Federation,* Sydney: UNSW Press, 1998

Burgmann, Verity, 'One Hundred Years of Anarchism', *Arena*, No. 74 (1986), pp. 104-14

Burgmann, Verity., *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995

Bojanev, Vladimir, 'The History of the Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', *The Raven: Anarchist Quarterly 13*, Vol. 4. No. 1, (January - March, 1991), pp. 31-5

Bramble, Tom, 'The Rise of the Modern Labour Technocrat: Response,' *Labour History*, No. 79 (Nov., 2000), pp. 179-184

Bramble, Tom, *Trade Unionism in Australia: A History from Flood to Ebb Tide*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008

'Carnival anarchism in Melbourne 1970-1975', available from <http://www.takver.com/history/melb/carnival1970_75.htm> [Accessed 5/10/10]

Casas, Juan Gómez, *Anarchist Organisation: The History of the F.A.I.*, Abe Bluestein trans., Québec: Black Rose Books, 1986

Chesterman, John, *Poverty Law and Social Change: the Story of the Fitzroy Legal Service,*

Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996

Cresciani, Gianfranco, 'The Proletarian Migrants: Fascism and Italian Anarchists in Australia', *The Australian Quarterly*, No. 51 (March, 1979), pp. 4-19

Coombs, Anne, *Sex and Anarchy: The Life and Death of the Sydney Push,* Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia, 1996

Cottle, Drew, Keys, Angela, and Martin, Kristie, 'End of the Line: An examination of the 1990 Victorian Tram Dispute', (2005), University of Western Sydney, available from <http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/asslh/cottle.html> [Accessed 25/7/2010]

Curlewis, Dick, 'The Tramways Dispute and Lockout', in Mark McGuire (ed.), *Anarcho-Syndicalism in Practice: Melbourne Tramways Dispute & Lockout,* Sydney: Jura Media Publications, 1997

Damier, Vadim, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, Malcolm Archibold trans., Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2009

Englart, John, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981', originally published in *Freedom,* (June 1981), available from <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/syd7581.htm> [Accessed 1/10/2010]

Friends of the Hawthorn Depot, 'Melbourne tramways: union vs management', available from <http://www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/papers/union.htm> [Accessed 5/10/2010]

Grancharoff, Jack, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part One, *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (September - October 2009), pp. 17-18

Grancharoff, Jack, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part Two, *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January - February 2010), pp. 17-18

Grancharoff, Jack, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part Three, *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (April - May 2010), pp. 17-18

Grancharoff, Jack, 'Death of an Old Militant: George Hristov (Kartalsky)', *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 27, No. 201 (October – November 2008), pp. 17-20

'Greer on Revolution; Greer on Love', A discussion between Germaine Greer, Ian Turner and Chris Hector, recorded in Melbourne, February 1972, *Overland*, Nos. 50-51, (Autumn, 1972), pp. 44-55

Hadoulis, John, and Bazinet, Ingrid, 'Greece warns against default as EU finance chiefs meet' *The Age*, 10 May 2010

Irving, Terry, and Cahill, Rowan, 'Political Bolt-Cutting - Sydney University's Front Lawn,' in *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes,* Sydney: University of New South Whales Press, 2010, pp. 298-304

James, Bob, *Anarchism and State Violence in Sydney and Melbourne 1886-1896: An*

argument about Australian Labour History, Broadmeadow, NSW; Newey & Beath Printers, 1986

Jupp, James, (ed.), *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins,* 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001

Kimber, Julie, 'A Case of Mild Anarchy?: Job Committees in the Broken Hill Mines, c. 1930 to c. 1954', *Labour History*, No. 80 (May, 2001), pp. 41-64

Knowles, Rob, 'Communitarian Anarchism 1840-1914: A Neglected Tradition in Economic Thought', Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2002

Leigh, Andrew, 'Trade Liberalisation and the Australian Labor Party', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol. 48, No. 4, (2002), pp. 487-508

Longmore, C, *The IWA Today: A Short Account of the International Workers Association and its Sections,* South London: DAM-IWA, 1985

Mason, James, 'Agitators and Patriots: Cultural and Political Identity in Queensland's Spanish Communities,1900-1975', Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2008

McGuire, Mark, 'The I.W.W. in Australia', *Red and Black: an Anarchist Journal*, No. 8 (1978-79), pp. 32-5.

McIntyre, Iain, 'A History of Squatting Campaigns in Melbourne', an edited version of a talk given by Iain McIntyre at Camp Eureka, 26 April 2010, *Melbourne Black,* Vol. 1 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 8

McLaren, John, *Free Radicals of the Left in Postwar Melbourne,* Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2003

Nicholas, Lucy Katherine, 'Australian Anacha-Punk Zines: Poststructuralism in contemporary anarchist and gender politics', master's thesis, Griffith University, 2005

Rocker, Rudolf., *Anarcho-Syndicalism,* London: Phoenix Press, n.d.

Russell, Susi, and Jura Books Collective, 'Antonio (Tony) Jimenez (1935-1990)', originally published in, *Rebel Worker*, (1990), available from <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/jimenez_a.htm> [Accessed 5/10/2010]

Scalmer, Sean, and Irving, Terry, 'The Rise of the Modern Labour Technocrat: Intellectual Labour and the Transformation of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union, 1973-85', Labour History, No. 77 (November 1999), pp. 64-82

Schmidt, Michael, with the assistance of Grancharoff, Jack, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line: Bulgarian Anarchism Armed', (2008), available from <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/9678> [Accessed 2/10/10]

Sparrow, Jeff, and Sparrow, Jill, 'Revolution at Dawn: Brunswick Tram Depot, 807 Sydney Road, Brunswick', *Radical Melbourne 2: The Enemy Within*, Carlton North, Victoria: Vulgar

Press, 2004, pp. 216-21

Turner, Ian, *Sydney's Burning (An Australian Political Conspiracy),* Sydney: Alpha Books, 1969

van der Walt, Lucien, and Schmidt, Michael, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism,* London: AK Press, 2009

Vicente Ruiz Foundation, 'Vicente Ruiz Biography', available from <http://flag.blackened.net/vrf/biog.htm>, [Accessed, 12/9/2010]

<http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/> [Accessed 5/10/2010]