

**BLACK**

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**LIGHT**

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**ANARCHIST JOURNAL**

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**ISSUE ZERO**

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BLACK LIGHT is a publication of the Melbourne Anarchist Club. This is issue zero: a test edition for us to work out the bugs, develop editorial policy and to see if we can keep going. It was launched on the 140th anniversary of the Paris Commune, Saturday, 19th of March, 2011.

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## MYTHS ABOUT ANARCHISM #1:

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# IS ANARCHISM

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## ANTI-

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# SOCIALIST?

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BY ALICE BARRICADAS

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The Commune and its council were reluctant to give up all the old ideas of representative government. Direct democracy was ignored as the interests of the people were pushed aside in the interests of the council. The council became more concerned with defending Paris from the coming invasion by Thiers's soldiers rather than building the social revolution. This is the main anarchist criticism of the Commune – it did not go far enough. Instead of abolishing government, the Commune set up a new one. The council ended up as the 'state within the Commune'. Anarchists within the Commune argued for organising democratic mass assemblies, without the interference of any form of statist control. This was not to be. Thiers soldiers entered Paris on May 21 and, after a week of heavy street fighting, on May 28 the Commune was lost. Thirty-thousand communards were massacred in the weeks afterward. Their blood still stains the red of the tricolore, and stands as a reminder of the violence and repression of the state.

This article is in no way a detailed account of the events of the Commune nor is it an apt analysis of why the Commune failed. Those books already exist. Peter Kropotkin's *The Commune of Paris* and Mikhail Bakunin's *The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State* are two important anarchist commentaries that deserve a wider audience. Instead, this article has been written to re-establish the Commune in anarchist

organising. Start reading about the Commune, start arguing with others about its success and failures – we must be clear on the lessons of the past.

With that said, the best way we can show solidarity with those who built, fought and died for the Commune is to build an anarchist movement that not only strikes fear into the hearts of the ruling class, but tears away at the world they have forced us to live in. We can turn our attention to Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and feel inspired by their revolutionary actions but watching and waiting will not get us anywhere. We must return to organising in our own communities against the oppression we suffer everyday. Let these examples teach us and inspire us.

*Vive la commune!*



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**Image on page 28:** Michel Louise, anarchist and participant in the Paris commune.

**M**ARCH 18 MARKS THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY of the Paris Commune. One of the most important events in revolutionary history, the Commune was an example of the working class organising for themselves, in an attempt to establish a free, progressive and democratic society. It was an important event for Paris and France (although it is still largely ignored in French schoolbooks) and for the working class the world over. It was also an important event for the development of anarchist ideas and tactics that should be remembered and learnt from.

As France saw defeat by Prussia in the Franco-Prussian War, regular French troops were sent to Paris to recover the Parisian National Guard's cannons before it was taken by the people. They were too late. When ordered by their officers to fire on the people, the soldiers refused and instead turned their weapons on their officers. The National Guard, a citizen's militia initially formed during the French Revolution, then held free elections where a council was elected by the citizens of Paris. The council members, who were instantly recallable, paid an average wage and had equal status with all communards, declared Paris an independent commune and desired that the rest of France should follow to become a confederation of communes.

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Predictably, this infuriated Thiers, head of the new provisional government after the Prussian victory. However, he ordered all French troops out of Paris in an attempt to stop more of them from deserting and joining the Commune. Soon the people of the Commune began to initiate reforms to their way of life. The separation of church and state was declared and all church property became public property. Workers went about setting up many of their workplaces as co-operatives run by workers' councils – by the end of May, they numbered at least 40, including the Louvre as a munitions factory. The Women's Union was formed, demanding gender equality, equal pay and the right to professional education for girls. Soon Thiers ordered troops back to Paris to bring an end to the Commune. The council, initially set up to represent the communards became caught up in fighting a new war against their old oppressors. With this, the Commune committed massive mistakes that ultimately led to its downfall.

**I**T IS NO SECRET THAT WITHIN activist circles in Melbourne, or other cities in Australia I have visited, that anarchism can be a confused idea. Sometimes this reaches extreme dimensions. There is probably no greater myth about anarchism, sometimes circulating within so-called libertarian circles, but usually an aspersion cast from without, that anarchism can somehow be anti-socialist, or right wing.

Without a clear distinction between liberalism and anarchism, the latter loses any meaning whatsoever. For anarchists there is no contradiction between individual freedom and socialism (or equality, society, the collective). The so-called freedom of one individual to persecute another is not freedom, but arbitrary and illegitimate authority. Anarchism is not liberalism, which places the authority of one individual or class of people above the rest in the name of liberty (private property). Anarchism argues for equality in the name of freedom and the individual, and rejects a false dichotomy between the two.

Anarchism is confused with the liberal-individualist tradition by state-socialists. The latter essentially has no discourse of individuality within socialism, and in practice labels as bourgeois any desire by working-class for autonomy from the state. Bakunin, widely recognised as the leading figure

when anarchism first emerged in Europe, famously articulated the broad position:

“Freedom without Socialism is privilege and injustice... Socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality.” Bakunin, *Stateless Socialism: Anarchism*

Anarchism without socialism is also an historical anomaly. There will always be people who will make use of popular rhetoric to try to lend credence to their ideas (just think of 'national-socialism'). However, to claim that anarchism is simply the war of the individual against everybody else, is to pluck a word out of its social context, away from the millions of participants past and present in a long historical movement, for whom anarchism has been a socialist idea.

I am not claiming that all anarchists have always known with clarity their own ideas. The confusion has sometimes been sown by anarchists themselves, with attempts to write individualists such as the nineteenth century philosopher Stirner into the anarchist tradition. These attempts are essentially revisionist, and have been made by activists such as Emma Goldman and many insurrectionary anarchists today. These may provide some confusing explanation as to how Stirner's war of the self against all else can relate to the communitarian impulse of the anarchist movement. Or they may simply ignore the

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## **ANARCHISM WITHOUT SOCIALISM IS ALSO AN HISTORICAL ANOMALY.**

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contradiction altogether. However, the attempt is doubly ironic because no one would have been more appalled at the egalitarian and revolutionary aims of either Goldman or insurrectionary anarchists today, than Stirner himself.

‘All anarchists are socialists, but not all socialists are anarchists’ said Labadie, an individualist anarchist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> The point should be drilled in: even the so-called individualist tradition within anarchism is socialist. The point is illustrative, even though ‘mutualists’ such as Labadie and Tucker stood apart from the mass movement of anarchism at the end of the nineteenth century. That is to say, even though these individualists may have been utopian and had very abstract ideas, without some notion of equality in the ownership of wealth (the means of production or property) ‘anarchism’ becomes a completely useless term.

Being the term for a socialist discourse of freedom, anarchism is necessarily broad; it may not adequately describe how mass anarchist movements have operated in detail (anarcho-syndicalist,

platformist, insurrectionaries and others?). We could no more expect this than to expect ‘Marxism’ to adequately describe the differences between Leninists, mensheviks or autonomists. However, those who move away from the basic idea, that the freedom of one depends on the freedom of all, and which translates politically into common ownership of wealth, are moving far away from the anarchist ideal.



# **THE PARIS COMMUNE**

**BY BUDDY HOLLY**

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<sup>1</sup> Anarchist FAQ: <http://bit.ly/bv7kz3>



**VOINA**  
**(ВОЙНА)**

**BY BUDDY HOLLY**

**I**F YOU'VE HEARD OF VOINA AT ALL, you've probably heard that Banksy is their biggest fan. He's even giving them money. They fuck in museums, tip over police cars and draw dicks on bridges. It all sounds a bit crazy, really. But Voina are activists with their collective bile aimed firmly at the Russian state and it's all getting a little bit uncomfortable.

Voina (Russian for war) was started in 2007 by two philosophy students, Oleg Votronikov and Natalia Sokol. Leonid Nikolayev and Alex Plutser-Sarno make up the main group, and they are joined by dozens of others to perform their 'art actions'. From absurdist beginnings their actions are started to create trouble in Russia. Fueled by their hatred for the Russian state, Voina's actions have aimed, in particular, at the police, the clergy, and current Prime Minister Dimitri Medvedev. The state has now resorted to violence, censorship and even praise, recently nominating the group for a national art prize (something the group has rejected outright).

To demonstrate their methods, here are some of their most notable actions to date:

▲ *Fuck for the Heir – Medved's Little Bear!* – the group organised an orgy in the State Biological Museum to commiserate the inauguration of

Dimitri Medvedev. [see image on the facing page]

▲ *Decemberists commemoration* – the group staged a hanging of three illegal migrant workers, a gay man and LGBT Jewish activist in a Moscow supermarket on Moscow City Day in protest to the Moscow Mayor's openly racist and homophobic remarks (views shared by the majority of Russia's ruling class).

▲ *Dick Captured by KGB!* – in protest to the IEF being held in Saint Petersburg, the group managed to paint a massive 65m phallus on the Liteyny drawbridge before it rose. As the bridge opened up, the 'Cosmic Dick' stood opposite the KGB building.

In November of last year, two of Voina's members, Leonid and Oleg, were arrested following their art action, Palace Revolution, which saw the group tipping over 7 police cars in the centre of Saint Petersburg. They were thrown in prison, enduring some pretty terrible conditions, and are awaiting trial on charges associated with the action. This is where Banksy's money comes in. He put up the bail money for Leonid and Oleg and has donated a whole wad of money for their legal costs.

The latest news to come from the group follows a press conference held by Leonid and Oleg after their release.

munitions and foodstuffs on a large scale, collectivising all undertakings of essential interest to the people in pursuance of that end, these, self-evidently, are the tasks of the hour. Thus far, they have been carried out by non-governmental, non-centralistic, non-militaristic procedures."

It must be acknowledged, that unlike the Red Army of the Russian Revolution, the CNT-FAI forces were volunteer militias, run on democratic lines, with officers elected and subject to recall. These anti-fascist militias were co-ordinated at a higher level via the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias, which delegated different commissions and committees with varying tasks, related to both revolutionary and military matters. In fact, these institutions were the organisational descendants of those similarly created during the Paris Commune, which were, ironically, lauded by Marx and Bakunin alike as the democratic organisms of a future socialist society. These organisations and their federated institutions organised and administered to such a remarkable degree that their greatest accomplishment, according to anarchist historian and theorist Rudolf Rocker, was in the field of industry. Prior to the conflict, Catalonia possessed not a single factory manufacturing munitions; by 1938, 283 plants were operable. Hardly the work of disorganised

utopians. It is of no surprise that Barcelona was the last place to fall in the Spanish Civil War.

The most important fact to emphasise in this discussion, is that in anarchist controlled areas during the revolution, the collectives were not only highly organised, as demonstrated, but they achieved this without vanguards or Blanquist conspirators. They were, rather, spontaneously constructed and self-administered by the will and accord of free individuals and associations. The working class of Spain did not require being "thrown here and there, appointed, commanded just like soldiers" as Trotsky would have us believe, nor did it necessitate "thousands subordinating their will to the will of one" as Lenin argued during the early days of the Russian Revolution. In much the same sense as Proudhon's seemingly paradoxical tenet, that Anarchy *is* order, Anarchism, by its nature, is philosophically geared toward organisation, not the converse. It is the State, and its counterpart Capital, that breed turmoil, disarray and disorder.





of anarchist initiative, solidarity and most importantly, organisation. We could of course, recite and regurgitate all the anarchist accounts of the revolution, one after another. However, as the contemporary theoretician Rudolf Rocker noted at the time, even bourgeois sources were compelled to praise the organisational capacities of the anarchist movement in Spain:

“In the midst of the Civil War the anarchists have proved themselves to be political organisers of the first rank... the anti-capitalist transformation took place without having to resort to a dictatorship. The members of the syndicates are their own masters [authors emphasis] and carry on the production and distribution of the products of their labour under their own management.”

Equally persuasive is the account of Italian anti-fascist Carlo Rosselli: “In three months Catalonia has been able to set up a new social order on the ruins of an ancient system. This is chiefly due to the anarchists, who have revealed a remarkable sense of proportion, realistic understanding, and organising ability.” If indeed Lenin was correct, that “the history of all countries, shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness” then that trade-union consciousness in Spain was of a bold, revolutionary and historic complexion: in Catalonia – the

anarchist industrial heartland – three-fourths of industry was collectivised under workers’ self-management. In rural areas like Aragon, also organised by the FAI-CNT, the figure was at least 60%, with over 400 co-operative farms established, according to Sam Dolgoff. In their tangible realisation of the dreams of Bakunin, Kropotkin and others, in certain areas the anarchists demonstrated (and in the process settled the historic debate between anarcho-collectivists and anarcho-communists) that federated communes organised upon principles of mutual exchange could exist without resort to wage-work or money. Equally established, is that to the extent that the state was destroyed during the Spanish Revolution, there did not emerge barbarism as is often levelled at “utopian dreamers” such as ourselves, but a highly complex and organised society.

Of similar import is that not only was a highly co-ordinated social revolution taking place in anarchist dominated areas, without rulers, State administration and on a completely libertarian basis, but at the same, the CNT-FAI was involved in massive personnel and logistical operations as they conducted their war effort against a well-armed and well-financed opponent. According to the CNT’s adopted manifesto of July 1936:

“Co-ordinating the forces of the anti-fascist front, organising supplies of



As they left the press conference, Leonid, Oleg, Natalia and Kasper (Oleg and Natalia’s two year old son) were set upon by seven plainclothes police. Attacked from behind, the three activists suffered head and hand injuries. Kasper also suffered bruises on his head. Clearly, the Russian state has been offended!

Criticism of the group is aimed at their politics. From the content of their actions to their ‘anti-manifesto’ (you would be stupid to take it all seriously), some of their politics are indeed questionable. Are they anarchists? I don’t know, but they are anti-capitalist activists, who have chosen art as their form of resistance. They manipulate the media, the artworld and fuck with liberalism not only in Russia, but worldwide. Their art actions are not going to bring about a revolution, but

they serve the purpose of highlighting what is truly wretched in this world – capitalism. Voina deserve your support. But there is more than that. We should go further and organise a direct action movement against the state.

If you want more information on Voina, their livejournal account seems to be the group’s main mouthpiece. They have an entry with English overviews (including photos and videos) of their actions from 2007 to present, as well as their ‘anti-manifesto’ and links to English news and interviewers. Go to <http://bit.ly/d10NCi>

Also, Free Voina was set up after Leonid and Oleg were arrested and also hosts a lot of information on the group in English (<http://en.free-voina.org>).



# THE

# NECESSARY

# CONDITION:

# ANARCHISM

# IN INDONESIA

**T**HIS MYTH, LIKE SO MANY OF the pervasive misnomers directed at the Left-libertarian/anarchist school(s), finds itself accused from both Left and Right, primarily on differing grounds, both being equally misinformed and ideologically motivated. In the case of the Right-wing argument, the explanations are manifestly self-evident: without the State – upon which, not incidentally, capitalist exploitation relies for its continued plunder – human society would veer towards barbarism; the basic rationale being that without the various State-enforced sanctions – prisons, courts and the like, human beings lack the fundamental decency to treat their kind in a just and humane manner. Accordingly, State power is a must, lest we collectively revert to rape, murder and common banditry.

Conversely, and far more interestingly, is the contention from the Marxist-Leninist/Stalinist/Trotskyist authoritarian-Left: that anarchism by its nature lacks organisation, presumably through a lack of doctrinal coherence, and an unwillingness to wield State power in defence of proletarian insurrection and revolution. This being the oft-cited assertion regarding revolutionary Spain, and its subsequent defeat at the hand of Fascist armies; all other historic, social, political or economic justifications being superfluous, given the demonstrative clarity of this line

of reasoning. Again, within this perspective – much like the argument from the Right – the State is paramount in ensuring both order and organisation. Considering the extensive literature within Libertarian-socialist thought dealing with conservative depictions of anarchism and their notions of the imperative nature of the State, this article will deal solely with the inaccurate allegations of Leninist doctrines, and will discuss primarily examples of a historic nature.

As aforementioned, the authoritarian-Left's arguments against anarchism, principally concerning itself with anarchism's greatest accomplishment and historic period – that of revolutionary Spain – contends that anarchist failures are due chiefly to the nature of anarchism itself: diverse and disparate in creed, and ostensibly unwilling to demand uniformity – both ideological and practical – for the sake of collective advances. Let us deal then, with the idea that anarchism historically has lacked sufficient unity and coherence, using Spain as an example.

What has been described – not by anarchist literature but rather the BBC – as “the greatest experiment in workers’ self-management Western Europe has ever seen,” (and I think we could argue, without much controversy, the greatest the *world* has ever seen) was a product, as Orwell describes so vividly in his timeless recollection,

## MYTHS ABOUT ANARCHISM #2:

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# ANARCHISM IS INHERENTLY DISORGANISED

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BY BRENDAN

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This essay is the outcome of a  
month-long trip in Indonesia  
and a subsequent workshop  
on Indonesian Anarchism at  
the Sydney Anarchist Summer  
School.

**T**HIS HISTORY WILL START FROM 1998 for the reason that two important events at that time reshaped the condition of Indonesian society and a new “normalcy” in power relations was created. The first event was the downfall of General Soeharto, who had ruled Indonesia with an iron fist for 32 years. This event unearthed the highly corrupt organism of Indonesian government, which had been perfectly covered by a façade of national development and normalcy.

The second event was the Asian financial crisis that hit the country hard. Major inflation caused the price hike of basic amenities had a huge impact on already poor Indonesians.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> During the peak of the crisis, inflation caused Indonesian Rupiah to be priced at Rp 15,000 to USD\$1 (previously until early 1998 it was Rp 2,500). This obviously affected price of food and other basic amenities, which was made worse due to price fluctuation and the uncertainty in the market.

These two events coincided with the rise of a new leftism, and anti-authoritarianism (anarchism) to an extent. Socialist ideas had been brutally banned since the ascension of Soeharto in 1965 and the purge of the communists in the late 1960s. In the late nineties, the people’s resistance against Soeharto’s rule, helped by the military’s somewhat reluctant support, made the *Reformasi* (Reformation) movement possible. The reform was applied across the board of the government, from national down to the city and village levels. Although, one could argue about its effectiveness.

This new freedom to express leftist ideas brought about a new generation of youth who associate themselves with socialism in its broadest sense, including anarchism.

Anarchism, or at least in the form of its symbols and images, rose in the early to mid 1990s through the spread of punk music.<sup>2</sup> The anarchistic and defiant style of punk music had a large appeal to Indonesian youth who were very accustomed to a life of obedience and normalcy. At the same time, there was also a number of intellectual anarchists but with no record (at least that can be studied) of any collectives or movements. The events in 1998 gave a reason to start collectives in order to engage with what was happening.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview by Sebastian Kalicha & Gabriel Kuhn, see *Von Jakarta bis Johannesburg*, Unrast Verlag 2001.

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## Local movements

Due to the internet and the relative ease in traveling around the country, there exists a strong bond between [kinship means blood-relation] anarchists in Indonesia (this is also likely due to their status as a minority).<sup>3</sup> This situation allows for a greater sense of inter-province coordination, as evident in Mayday 2007 and 2008 protests when anarchists from around the country protested together in Jakarta. These groupshare information about local struggles and movements. However, as they are spread quite far apart geographically, from Sumatera to Java (where most anarchists are concentrated) and Makassar, each collective runs their own projects, which relate to the specific context that they are in.

In the urban cities of Jakarta and Bandung, for example, there is a tendency to create projects that are directly aimed at the government, and at the development of anarchist discourse. Actions such as Food not Bombs, film screenings, discussion nights with topics such as racism and sexism, are a few examples.

On the other hand, in cities that are still populated with traditional villages and large farm areas such as Yogyakarta, the anarchists are more likely to work with local struggles that face direct

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**SURPRISINGLY, THE LOCAL CHILDREN LOVE TO COME AND PLAY AT THIS SPACE. THE ANARCHISTS ARE ONLY HAPPY TO HAVE THEM AROUND. "WITH ONE CONDITION" AS ONE OF THEM SAID, "THEY MUST AT LEAST LEARN SOMETHING WHEN THEY ARE HERE."**

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confrontation against both the state and corporations. The Yogyakarta-based Alexis collective spends most, if not all, of their energy with the farmers at Kulon Progo on the coast. They do actions aimed at the building of solidarity networks locally and internationally, the creation and distribution of propaganda, and at supporting the actions carried out by the farmers themselves. Often these anarchists are the only "outsiders" who have been allowed to work with the farmers, while other groups (mostly NGOs) have been expelled for their incompetence. This is largely because of the other groups' "moderation" which, as one of the farmers said, only brought down the fire to resist!

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## LESSONS LEARNED

There is often a sense of naivety, and at the same time jadedness, that is caused by the daily nature of struggle and the uncertainty of the future. Although most of these collectives in Indonesia are less than a few years old, many of

handful of angry youth, its future would appear to be rather bleak.

Thus far, it would appear that serious challenges to established political institutions emanating from the populist Right have been either successfully integrated or diverted into more properly 'cultural' channels. In the absence of a broader counter-cultural milieu which might support ongoing organisational efforts to revitalize a populist, right-wing social movement, those wanting to purge and to rejuvenate the Australian nation may be forced to continue to wait for some sudden crisis to provide them a political opening.



"Social-democratic governments across the world must rise to the further challenge of developing a practical policy response to the crisis that rebuilds shattered economic growth, while also devising a new regulatory regime for the financial markets of the future. This is our immediate challenge. But if we fail, there is a grave danger that new political voices of the extreme Left and the nationalist Right will begin to achieve a legitimacy hitherto denied them. Again, history is replete with the most disturbing of precedents."  
**'The Global Financial Crisis',  
The Monthly, February 2009.**

For further discussion on the ideological flavour of the Party, see Murray Goot, 'Pauline Hanson's One Nation: Extreme Right, Centre Party or Extreme Left?', *Labour History*, No.89, September 2005.

A recent personal and political profile of Saleam is available in Greg Bearup's 'The audacity of hate', *Good Weekend magazine*, September 26, 2009.

Ian Traynor, 'Sweden joins Europe-wide backlash against immigration', *The Guardian*, September 24, 2010.

Nathalie Rotschild, 'After that election, Sweden is in denial', *Spiked*, September 20, 2010.

See ABC TV's Liz Jackson's *4 Corners* report 'Riot and Revenge', broadcast March 13, 2006.

Ghassan Hage, *Against Paranoid Nationalism*, Pluto Press, 2002.

James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Chris Griffith, 'Did They Have To Shoot My Boy?', *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, August 8/9, 2009.

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<sup>3</sup> Von Jakarta bis Johannesburg 2001

Post-9/11, an increased media focus upon Muslim Australia as a potential source of terrorism has generated localised opposition to the construction of new Islamic schools and mosques. Thus far these localised campaigns have failed to generate an autonomous political framework capable of coordinating efforts across the country. Again, this is not the case in the UK or Western Europe, where organisations such as ‘Stop the Islamisation of Europe’ and others have emerged as part of Continent-wide efforts to mobilise opposition, both on the streets and in the Parliaments, to a supposed Islamic takeover.

The ‘English Defence League’ (EDL) is perhaps the most notorious of these efforts. Sparked by the actions of a handful of Islamists in demonstrating against returning British soldiers in Luton in March 2009, the EDL has adopted a highly combative attitude towards British Muslims, having organised a series of increasingly large and often bloody clashes over the course of the following year.<sup>1</sup> Crucially, the League has been able to successfully tap into existing social networks among football hooligans. As a result of its success, but also because of the involvement of a number of fascist militants in key organisational

roles, the EDL has also naturally drawn towards it a range of figures from the nationalist Right. This has resulted in internal conflict over the future direction of the League; the EDL has also run into difficulties extending its activities into Scotland and Wales. In its rapid expansion and predilection for street clashes with police and ‘anti-fascist’ opposition, the EDL has provided inspiration to Rightists elsewhere, including Australia.

The Australian Defence League has organised one rally, which took place in Melbourne in April 2010. Or rather, an abortive attempt to hold a rally occurred, following the organisation of a counter-rally which, by occupying its starting point (the steps of Flinders Street station) effectively prevented the ADL rally from going ahead. Undeterred, the ADL has declared its intention to organise another rally in Sydney in October, and presumably hopes for further rallies in the future. As in the case of the EDL, the ADL has attracted the attention of local nationalists and the support of some nationalist youth formations, including the ‘Southern Cross Soldiers’ (a group which came to brief prominence as a result of the police shooting of one its teenage supporters in Melbourne, coincidentally on the third anniversary of the Cronulla ‘riot’). Being unable to draw upon the same resources as its English parent, however, and seemingly relying on a small expatriate community, and a

the anarchists involved have previously been involved with other work and long struggles. It is their association with those who are oppressed but still fighting that gives them courage to continue doing what they do.

Sometimes the anarchists get a share of the mundane life: as in the case of Alexis collective, where they are now farming vegetables and fruits to help themselves pay for their daily need. Similarly the Jakarta-based Institut A started as an infoshop to fill the need of a physical space in which to organise. Surprisingly, the local children love to come and play at this space. The anarchists are only happy to have them around. “With one condition” as one of them said, “they must at least learn something when they are here.”

It is hard to gauge the level of success of these actions; especially when the definition of success itself is unclear. Has the revolution come or at least has loomed its shadow? No, not yet. But have these actions brought attention to and helped to invigorate struggles faced by the anarchists and the oppressed? Yes. Perhaps if the aim is the stars, we have at least reached a definite moon. At least for the moment.



*The Melbourne Anarchist Club is currently organising an action in support of the peasants struggle in Kulon Progo along with the anarchists to fight against the occupation and replacement of their land into an iron mine. If you would like to get involved, please email [melbourneanarchistclub@gmail.com](mailto:melbourneanarchistclub@gmail.com)*

<sup>1</sup> An EDL rally in Bradford in August 2010 was relatively small and easily contained by police, causing some speculation that the group's strategy of holding rowdy public assemblies may have run its course. For an overview see Matthew Taylor, ‘English Defence League: Inside the violent world of Britain's Far Right’, *The Guardian*, May 28, 2010.

# WHAT IS

# ANARCHA-

# FEMINISM?

BY REBECCA

populism's attempts to salvage a sense of national integrity.

Secondly, the difficulties minor political parties face in gaining office can prevent a foothold by any burgeoning party, whether left, right or centre. The Australian (preferential) voting system functions in such a way as to allow established parties to effectively exclude third parties if they so choose. Where far right parties have been able to establish themselves in Europe, it has been thanks to systems of proportional representation simply not present in Australia.

Perhaps the next best opportunity for the (re-)emergence of a right-wing social movement occurred when on December 11, 2005 a few thousand mostly White, but certainly angry, upset and not uncommonly drunken beachgoers declared Cronulla beach to be a "Wog-free zone". The event elicited international media attention, nationalist rejoicing, and while the nationalist Right – which hailed Cronulla as a 'White civil uprising' – failed to spin the blood-spattered sandy beaches into political gold, the incident has been widely interpreted as symptomatic of a more general breakdown in the multicultural order. A number of commentators have viewed the racist outburst as evidence of a shift in underlying cultural attitudes on the part of White Australian youth. Public holidays and other cultural

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POLITICAL GOLD...**

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and sporting events which attract youthful participation frequently bring with them a deluge of nationalist symbols, flag-wavers and declarations of authentically Aussie pride: 'We grew here, you flew here' is a common refrain. This 'new', paranoid nationalism has a wide audience but it has not to this point, generated much in the way of new forms of political organisation. Boasting that "I'm the person that's led this charge", shock-jock Alan Jones directed his followers not into some new political formation but, as ever, into the safe and welcoming arms of the Coalition.

Pioneering efforts to promote 'multiculturalism' as state policy have been matched by later efforts to curb the arrival of asylum seekers: the institution of mandatory detention, introduced by Labor in 1992, has won enthusiastic bi-partisan support, and been further supplemented by various Pacific, if not especially peaceful, solutions.

majorities in many countries simply not bothering to vote. For many, non-participation is viewed as being an alternative more appealing than voting for candidates of any political stripe. Most recently, the Swedish national election brought the 'Sweden Democrats', a party with its origins in a far-right campaign titled 'Keep Sweden Swedish', into office for the first time. A comparison of the Australian and Swedish election results suggests that Sweden may be undergoing a similar process of political recomposition as Australia did following the end of the Hawke-Keating era, as 'social democracy' struggles to re-invent itself as a progressive movement capable of retaining the loyalties of its traditional working class support base.

In the UK, the British National Party (BNP) has, under the leadership of Nick Griffin, been able to build its membership, to broaden its appeal, and develop a significant presence on local councils. In 2009, Nick Griffin and fellow fascist veteran Andrew Brons were elected to the European Parliament. The success of the party has been based on its ability to modernise its image and to moderate its policies, to exchange "suits for boots" (a strategy based in turn upon the success of the French National Front). Despite not winning any seats, following the 2010 national election Griffin felt comfortable enough to declare that the BNP was now the fourth political

party in the UK. The veracity of this claim is highly dubious and subsequent developments point to the existence of serious internal problems, but given the already exceedingly rocky path trod by the BNP, and notwithstanding its Euro-skeptic rivals in the 'United Kingdom Independence Party', the future of the party may see it continue to circle the majors as it feeds on popular resentments.

**R**ETURNING TO THE FORMER BRITISH PENAL colony now known as Australia, there are a number of complicating factors in explaining the apparent failure of right-wing populism to constitute itself as a permanent fixture on the political landscape – to find a home among the gum trees. The first is the extent to which the ideas and emotions which might otherwise animate such a movement are already present within and given expression by the existing political structure. Thus Pauline Hanson argued, with some degree of justification (as well as a sense of partial vindication), that the Howard Government had distanced itself from Hansonism while simultaneously embracing a number of its major policies. The abolition of ATSIC and the creation of migratory 'exclusion zones' were two specific policies the adoption of which gave symbolic meaning and practical significance to right-wing

"Anarcha-feminism is about women being true equals with men, and refusing to oppress others. It is not the kind of feminism that wants to be a bank manager and fight the glass ceiling. It might throw a brick through the glass ceiling and climb out of that tower into the juicy purple evening sky."  
– Sandra Jeppesen.

**A**NARCHA-FEMINISM (ALSO CALLED ANARCHO-FEMINISM OR ANARCHIST feminism) is an attempt to examine the anarchist ideas in feminism and the feminist ideas in anarchism. Anarcha-feminists also often seek to highlight issues of gender within an anarchist context and challenge feminists to address class and economic based oppressions along with those associated with gender.

Anarchists seek a society founded on cooperation, self-management, common ownership of capital, democracy-from-below and production for the sake of need rather than profit. Instead of society based on political exploitation of the many by the few and economic exploitation of the many by the few, anarchists envision a socialist society in which hierarchical relationships of power and all forms of domination are avoided.

As such, anarchism is inherently concerned with feminism and the

domination and subjection of women in modern society. In Australian society, women are discriminated against as workers (earning on average 16% less than their male counterparts), perform the majority of unpaid caring work in society (such as housework and childcare) and at least 1 in 3 Australian women at some stage experiences violence at the hands of a man. Violence outstrips obesity, smoking, drink-driving and breast cancer as the leading contributor to death, disability and illness for women in the prime of life. These facts clearly illustrate that men and women are not equal in society and women are, in many ways, systematically disadvantaged.

However, anarcha-feminists do not see women's oppression as the only form of exploitation that must be resisted. Anarchists seek to oppose all systems of domination, such as sexism, classism, racism, homophobia and many other forms of discrimination. The capitalist system and the authoritarian and hierarchical way of organising seen in the state are seen as equally pressing injustices, to anarcha-feminists. It is not enough to achieve gender equality – women will not be free while such systems of oppression continue.

Similarly, anarchists cannot simply focus on economic oppressions. Anarcha-feminists insist that gender oppression is a fundamental injustice which must be actively confronted

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both in society and within anarchist groups and organisations. An important anarchist principle is that the means of reaching an anarchist society must be consistent with the end desired. Thus, anarchist organising must confront sexism in all its forms in order to create the desired equal society.

As American anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre put it:

“You can have no free, or just, or equal society, nor anything approaching it, so long as womanhood is bought, sold, housed, clothed, fed, and protected, as a chattel.”

Many notable anarchist theorists have opposed women’s oppression and described it as a key struggle for anarchists. Mikhail Bakunin, for example, argued that men and women must possess equal rights in order for women to be able to “become independent and be free to forge their own way of life.” Bakunin also linked

the issue of women’s liberation with that of class struggle, stating that women’s interests were “indissolubly tied to the common cause of all exploited workers – men and women”.

Anarchists have also noted that the emphasis on capitalist and authoritarian values, such as competition, aggression, greed and exploitation, is a gendered one. Such values are often typically seen as ‘male’ traits and valorised, while traditionally ‘female’ traits such as caring, cooperation and compassion are devalued.

Italian anarchist Ana Maria Mozzoni explored the intersection between state oppression, economic oppression and patriarchal oppression when she noted that women

“...will find that the priest who damns you is a man; that the legislator who oppresses you is a man, that the husband who reduces you to an object is a man; that the libertine who harasses you is a man; that the capitalist who enriches himself with your ill-paid work and the speculator who calmly pockets the price of your body, are men.”

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**HOW IS ANARCHA-FEMINISM  
DIFFERENT FROM OTHER TYPES OF  
FEMINISM?**

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What distinguishes anarcha-feminists from other types of feminism, such as liberal feminism, is that

ineptitude by way of tapping into widespread popular resentment at cultural and political elites. These internal difficulties were further compounded by alternating waves of political co-option and opposition. Thus, in the 1998 Queensland state election, one in four Queenslanders voted for One Nation, while one in ten voted for it in the Federal contest. In the 2010 Federal election, however, the three Queensland Lower House candidates received just under 4,000 votes, while the party’s Senate ticket received a little over 22,000 (less than 1%). This slide in popularity has been constant, national, and now places the party in danger of disappearing altogether; as the Queensland branch’s website states, “One Nation needs friends”.

Outside of One Nation there are few serious alternative political formations espousing nationalist or populist right-wing policies, or to have obtained anything like its prominence. Two minor political parties nevertheless warrant some mention. The first is the ‘Australia First Party’ (AF). Founded in 1996 by former Labor MP Graeme Campbell, his attempt to capture the political terrain vacated by post-‘White Australia Policy’ Labor was eclipsed by the rise of One Nation. Beginning in the early 2000s, AF came under the leadership of veteran fascist agitator Dr James Saleam. In 2007, Australia First split to produce the ‘Australian Protectionist Party’. Unlike AF, which invokes the

National Democratic Party of Germany as a model, the APP consciously seeks to emulate the success of the British National Party, and to distance itself from the anti-Semitism with which AF, and the NPD, is more closely associated. Outside of these parties there are a scattering of other Australian groups including older formations such as the League of Rights and newer projects which seek to draw upon the ideas of the Nouvelle Droit. Thus far, none have managed to break out of the nationalist Right ghetto or to successfully transform their core values into a political program capable of commanding more than token support.

In Western Europe, the 2009 EU and subsequent national elections have brought significant gains for the Right. The Freedom Party and the Alliance for the Future of Austria in Austria, National Front in France, (Geert Wilder’s) Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Swiss People’s Party in Switzerland and parties elsewhere (especially Finland, Hungary and Italy) have succeeded in translating popular concerns over (non-White) immigration and Islam into the common language of political power. The trend is not uniform and the same elections have also brought gains for the Left in some countries (and regions), but overall the trend Right is fairly clear. Of course, it must also be acknowledged that the 2009 EU election in particular saw widespread abstentionism, with



“Respect for authority is now a joke among some sections of our community. A society where the basic family unit becomes dysfunctional, where it can no longer survive on a single wage, where children are encouraged to disrespect their elders and teachers, where there is no punishment for breaking the rules, where children live on the streets, where we cannot access reasonable health care, where we cannot reasonably defend our homes, will eventually lead to a dysfunctional nation, a weaker nation and one without the moral leadership we should expect and deserve for our children and our nation’s future. One Nation is not politically correct; we are not afraid of taking the supposed unpopular decisions and will work to reverse this abnormal and unnatural perversion being inflicted on our communities.” – Jim Savage, One Nation Queensland State President

**I****N EARLY 2009, FORMER AUSTRALIAN PRIME** Minister Kevin Rudd argued that the failure of social democratic governments to adequately respond to the problems thrown up by the global financial crisis carried with it grave political risks; among them, giving added legitimacy to ‘new political voices’ on the ‘nationalist Right’. However his government’s response may be judged, if the results of the 2010 Federal election are any guide, the GFC does not appear to have given the nationalist Right any added credibility in Australia at least. Nor does

the GFC appear to have produced any ‘new’ political voices to lead a populist reaction – certainly, none capable of reaching a mass audience, or of mobilising any significant new political forces. (On the contrary, the election saw a significant increase in support for the Greens.) In this regard, Australia may be considered as being somewhat exceptional to the general trend in Western countries, where right-wing populism has undergone something of a Renaissance in recent years, both as a result of economic crisis, but also as a response to public anxieties regarding immigration, multiculturalism, and – especially post-9/11 – Islam.

The most recent, sustained, and politically-significant expression of right-wing populism was Pauline Hanson’s ‘One Nation Party’. Finding its initial support among discontented White Australians in regional and rural Queensland, for a short period in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it appeared possible that ‘Hansonism’ would be able to extend its reach much further and secure a solid foundation for future growth in towns and cities across the country. Despite auspicious beginnings, the attempt to assemble alienated Whites (“mainstream Australians”) behind the banner of ‘One Nation’ proved to be unsustainable, the Party unable to reconcile a sudden surge in popular support with a tiny and highly paranoid leadership or to compensate for its general political

anarcha-feminists acknowledge that women’s oppression occurs in a context of economic and political exploitation caused by the capitalist state system. While some elements in feminism have a tendency to focus on gender discrimination while ignoring class oppression, anarchists and anarcha-feminists deny that gender can be viewed in isolation from the vast series of other oppressions that operate in society.

“What anarchists “mean by equality between the sexes is not just that the men will no longer oppress women. We also want men to no longer to be oppressed by other men, and women no longer to be oppressed by other women.” Thus women should “completely overthrow rulership, force men to abandon all their special privileges and become equal to women, and make a world with neither the oppression of women nor the oppression of men”  
– **Chinese anarchist He Zhen.**

“Feminism doesn’t mean female corporate power or a woman President; it means no corporate power and no Presidents. The Equal Rights Amendment will not transform society; it only gives women the ‘right’ to plug into a hierarchical economy. Challenging sexism means challenging all hierarchy – economic, political,

and personal. And that means an anarcha-feminist revolution”

– **Peggy Kornegger.**

“Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women – as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism”

– **Barbara Smith.**

#### **AN EXAMPLE OF ANARCHA-FEMINISM IN ACTION: MUJERES LIBRES.**

Mujeres Libres or ‘Free Women’ were an anarcha-feminist group active during the Spanish Revolution, who aimed to provide a space to address what they called “women’s triple enslavement: to ignorance, to capital, and to men.” Between 1936 and 1939, the group grew to encompass 27,000 mostly working class women. The aim of Mujeres Libres was to empower women in order to allow them to fully participate in the revolutionary struggle and society. Recognising that women’s liberation and women’s empowerment was not given the same attention by the major revolutionary organisations, those involved in founding Mujeres Libres saw the need for the group to run autonomously (separate from the male comrades), whilst still fully engaging with the broader anarchist movement. Mujeres Libres attempted to

achieve this change in consciousness by organising various activities. These included:

- ▲ Networks of women anarchists who would discuss methods of resolving sexist behaviour within anarchist groups.
- ▲ Schools and cultural centres aimed at educating women.
- ▲ Flying day-care centres were set up in an effort to involve more women in union activities.
- ▲ The dissemination of propaganda about women's liberation through creating a journal, radio broadcasts, travelling libraries and propaganda tours.
- ▲ Setting up literacy classes to deal with high levels of illiteracy among women. These classes were attended by 600-800 women each day in Barcelona in December 1938.
- ▲ Supporting women's involvement in revolutionary militias by organising target practice classes.
- ▲ In Barcelona they ran a lying-in hospital, which provided birth and post-natal care for women as well as classes on child and maternal health, birth control and sexuality.



# **A HOME**

# **FOR THE**

# **FAR RIGHT**

## **BY SLACKBASTARD**