

The Wolves At The Door

ANARCHIST IDEAS & THEORY.
AN IRREGULAR JOURNAL.
FIRST ISSUE.
SOMETIME IN AUTUMN 2011.



To begin with...

The strategy is suffocation. A slow squeeze of all our senses, smothering our cognitive capacity to perceive any way our actions might effect the crumbling of all systems of domination. Any way out of this social charade.

Instead that smooth and grotesquely, expressionless mask of capitalist, social democracy is pulled even tighter. Tighter here than maybe anywhere else in the world. Its accusatory eyes narrowed and peering outwards, mouth twitching, ever-ready to proclaim the next gathering storm to divert attention from the present condition.

That the individual 'choice' of work to consume to die is really an act of coercion. An attempt to remove us from our truly social desires. Entrapping us into upholding the very means of our subjugation in the spectacle of our 'living' within capitalism.

But moments of subversion and whispers of insurrection are enough to keep alive the desire to tear that mask away. They occur all the time,



everywhere – on the streets of our neighbourhoods, in our workplaces and schools, at home and out for fun.

How these might coalesce to amplify their impact is a conversation worth having. This journal will attempt to provide another kind of space for that to occur. Discussing ways to be more effective in our attack(s) against capital and the state and theorising our activity is not synonymous with proclaiming a linear path. There is no single way to social insurrection and revolution.

Yes, we are the wolves at the door. Seemingly tamed, domesticated into servitude - compartmentalised. Yet a lingering hope of running wild remains. The threat of which instills a permanent fear into the political, economic and social classes who have the most invested in our subordination. They give their lives to building and reinforcing the structures that keep us in our place.

Often we gnash our teeth and lash out, but too often we do this in isolation, in a way where we can easily be beaten back. But even at those times we are

testing the waters, finding potential weak points – because when we really attack it won't be as just one, singular group. It will come in absolute solidarity with each other and from all directions – until we completely overrun this place.

Contents:

p.1 - To begin with...

An introduction.

p.3 - Anarchists Lost in Space

The relationship between social movements and anarchist spaces.

p.10 - Cake or Death

On the gap between how we talk about politics with each other and how we talk to other people.

p.15 - Signs of the Defeat of the Libyan Revolution

A Libyan anarchist against Western intervention.

p.17 - An interview with the *Mutiny* zine collective

Some hard questions for the editors of another local anarcho-publication.

p.25 - Sectarianism and Solidarity

A review of Anarchist Summer School.

p.29 - From the Streets of Athens

Two statements responding to recent events in Greece.

p.33 - Untangling the Knots

To identify and expel liberal ideology from revolutionary practice.

p.42 - A Last Call



This is the first issue of *The Wolves at the Door*. There are not necessarily any plans for a second issue. It was put together by one person (me!) who doesn't think working on political projects alone is the best way to do things. I'm all for collectives and affinity groups and those sort of things. So if you're interested in being involved in a second issue please get in touch.

Almost as importantly, even if you're not interested in ever working on this journal, all feedback would still be heaps appreciated. I really want to know what place this has amongst anarchist publishing here when thinking about whether it is worth continuing.

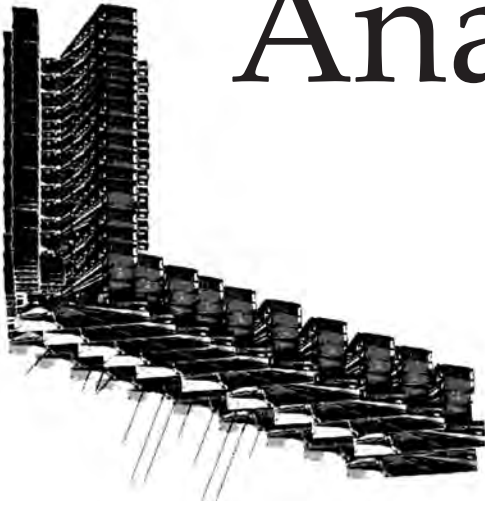
Of course, in saying only one person put this together I'm not including the folk who wrote the articles. Cheers y'all! And if you think you have an article that you want to write (or have written) that might suit this journal, also please get in touch.

In solidarity and revolt!

thewolvesatthedoor

@riseup.net

(all one word)



Anarchists Lost In Space

What are we doing here? Why doesn't anyone ever come and visit?

Anarchists often put a lot of energy into creating spaces – squats, social centres, infoshops, bookshops. Why? We know that social movements and social spaces are absolutely necessary to each other.

Without alternative spaces our movements will never succeed in changing the world. But without movements and organisations our spaces remain isolated, clique-ish, boring and/or self-indulgent. In this article I want to focus on the relationship between social movements and social spaces. In particular, I'm thinking of squatted social centres, and anarchist bookshops / libraries / cafes. But hopefully these ideas are relevant to other spaces too. I'll offer some arguments about what

makes these spaces succeed or fail, and how we can improve them.

What is social 'space'? What is its connection to power?

The word 'space' often gets used as a metaphor for everything from a culture to a language to an idea. But for me, the most exciting thing about talking about space is its *concreteness*.

Space is where abstract notions like 'community' and 'power' actually become real – in the shape of buildings, the rules about how you move in it, and spatial routines of everyday life for example. When I use the term 'space' I'm talking about the most grounded, material aspects of society. Space is the product of social processes; space is created by our practices and our representations. The space of a city, for example, is the built environment,

but also the way we are channelled through it and the way we think about it. Space is not an empty container, it is a social artefact, produced by social relations. And this means that space can be changed.

Capitalism, patriarchy and the State become real in space. The coming anarchist society will also become real in space. Spaces show quite clearly that we are constrained and shaped by society, but also that we can change our spaces, and we can change our society.

Social movements and space.

Social movements use space in at least four ways:

- > *Contesting dominant spaces* - occupying a train line to stop the transportation of coal.
- > *Disrupting the usual routines and meanings of spaces* – rallies, pickets, occupations etc.
- > *Detournement*– revolutionary re-use of spaces, giving them new meanings. Reclaim the Streets turns the street into a space for a party. An established forest blockade might change a logging road into a community.
- > *Creating alternative spaces* – appropriating and building new spaces, which are in some way outside of dominant capitalist space: eg squats, social centres, workers organising centres, climate camp.

All of these strategies are important. This article focuses more on the last one, because I believe it offers the potential

to really nourish social movements and cultural/political alternatives, and it offers transformative possibilities in the present moment. However my conclusions lead me to think if we want anarchism to be more successful in Australia, we may need to develop our use of contestation, disruption and detournment.

The good things about anarchist spaces.

Why do anarchists appropriate spaces at all? Why do we set up squats and social centres and bookshops, when it's so difficult and time-consuming, and sometimes dangerous?

In some ways we do it as a partial response to the difficult questions of 'How do we build a movement?', 'How do people discover hope?' and 'How do social movements win?' Making anarchist spaces also allows us to move beyond being purely oppositional/reactive. At a basic level, there are at least three good reasons for creating anarchist spaces:

> *Safety.*

Movements need safe spaces in order to exist. We need to control spaces where we can organise ourselves and involve more people, where we can escape (at least partially) from the surveillance, repression and confinement of the State and capital. Where we can exist without having to pay by the minute.

> *Social interaction.*

In anarchist spaces, we can meet each other and turn strangers into communities. In anarchist spaces, people have meaningful encounters

which change their ideas and their selves. People can come together in a space even if they have different ideas – in a space there can be community and difference at the same time. And gathering people together creates a certain energy and momentum that is essential to social change.

> *Autonomy.*

Autonomy is about political self-determination, but also about controlling our own identities, cultures and agency. And it's also about rejecting engagement with the State.

Anarchists sometimes propose fighting for ever-widening spaces of autonomy as an alternative to fighting for state power. Autonomy also means doing-it-yourself – often in relation to practical everyday things like housing and food. Clearly if you want to create any of these aspects of autonomy, you need a place to do it in.

The problems with anarchist spaces.

But despite these good things, anarchist spaces often fall victim to a quick or lingering death. They can be under-used and lifeless, or uncomfortably sectarian and clique-ish or just plain boring. Squats are often shut down by police. These various deaths can't be blamed entirely on capitalism, the State or other people's apathy. Often the problems are a result of our own politics or strategy.

Let me describe what I see as the 4 biggest stumbling blocks for our spaces: instrumentalism, fetishizing a certain form, localism and romanticising 'openness'.

> *Instrumentalism.*

Instrumentalism means thinking of the space purely as a tool or resource. Think of trade union offices, political party headquarters or university student associations – they are seen by their occupiers as nothing more than a means to an abstract political end.

The problem with this is that the space becomes dominated – just like a road or office block – and is treated as if it were an empty container instead of a socially produced set of relationships. Because the instrumentalist approach sees the ends as more important than the means, it can result in spaces which are ugly and unexciting, or even oppressive and authoritarian. Spaces that are unpleasant to be in.

I'd argue that anarchists are guilty of this when we don't clean our spaces and they become dirty and filled with junk. We might think 'it doesn't matter, the main point is the politics' but other people will immediately recognise the social dynamic that produces mess – a dynamic that invariably has a patriarchal component.

> *Fetishizing a certain spatial form.* This means seeing a certain type of space (such as a squat or bookshop) as an end in itself. I would say it's defeatist to see the value of our spaces purely in themselves. Creating spaces just because they are experimental, fun or illegal is giving up on the possibility of creating a real anarchist society.

Part of the problem is that fetishizing a certain spatial form can divide us from our context. Spatial forms such as the rally, the bookshop or the squatted social centre are only appropriate to

certain social contexts. At other times and places they are simply not relevant.

We need to be honest with ourselves, and choose a spatial form that makes sense here and now. We need to openly ask ourselves, 'Is a bookshop still relevant in the age of Amazon and the iPad? Are squats relevant in a county where there is little history of squatting and the laws don't allow us any foothold? Is an anarchist café relevant in a suburb containing hundreds of cafés?'

The other part of the problem is that focussing mostly on what we enjoy can translate to an apolitical and individualistic approach to pleasure. If we make a certain type of space just because we like it, then what's the difference between it and a capitalist or patriarchal space like your local pub? Is the only difference that our space is illegal, or caters to a certain small subculture? Just because a spatial form is fun, does not mean it will produce social change. Similarly, if we spend all our time cleaning and doing renovations, we've probably lost sight of the real goal.

> *Localism.*

Anarchist squats and bookshops etc can all too easily become isolated, sectarian ghettos, as our critics frequently point out. Localism is

tempting in the face of capitalist globalisation, but the basic problem is that the local scale is no less oppressive and capitalist than the global. Local residents groups can be racist. Local struggles can be easily crushed. We need to be able to engage with the wider society and other struggles. We need to be able to connect spaces, scales, and political struggles.

> *Romanticising 'openness'.*

Sometimes we also romanticise 'openness'. Calling a space 'open' suggests that people and ideas can move in and out, and that everyone's welcome. But this raises issues: 'openness' often clashes with safety, and when people enter a space they don't necessarily form a community. Worst of all, glorifying openness often means

refusing to define the politics of a space. And if our 'open' spaces have no defined politics then they can end up accepting damaging behaviour such as hierarchy, oppression, drug abuse, or violence.

Retreating to 'openness' allows some activists and theorists (like Foucault and Hakim Bey) to avoid presenting any actual alternative to capitalist space. Think about bourgeois spaces like the SMH letters page, or a pub that is full of drunk older men – these spaces are often described as open but this is just a disguise for bourgeois privilege.



'Openness' can work the same way in our spaces.

Instead of 'openness' our spaces' politics must be concretely defined, and defined as opposed to capitalism and other forms of oppression. This is not just about the ideology 'in' the space, but also the spatial practices, and conceptions that create the space. Safer spaces policies are a great example of doing this. Perhaps we could use similar structures to help define other aspects of a space's politics, while still keeping the process accessible, creative and positive?

> *Waiting for people to come to us.*

Perhaps the biggest problem with anarchists pouring our energy into appropriating a spaces is that we have no time left for going out and telling people about them. As anarchists, we claim to respect people's intelligence and autonomy, and yet we refuse to go and engage with them where they're at. And where they're at is in their workplaces, schools, shopping centres and looking at facebook.

If we don't go into those capitalist spaces and contest, disrupt, or detourn them, then even our most perfect space is just a ghetto. At the very least we need to get out into capitalist space and tell people about our anarchist spaces. We also need to listen carefully to people and respond to what they say they want and need.

We need to make our spaces relevant to them and meet their needs – for example for cheap food or language classes. And when people do take the time out of their difficult lives to visit us, we have to be consciously

welcoming, friendly and patient – not suspicious, aloof or hostile.

Space and time.

Part of the solution to these problems can be found in the relationship between time and space. Another way to understand the problems I've mentioned so far (particularly the last four) is as a focus on space to the exclusion of time.

When we accept the temporariness of our spaces we may also be rejecting long-term struggle for change – a rejection of time. There's often more than a hint of defeatism in the anarchist demand for 'freedom in the present' – it's as if we accept that the world will never truly be free, so we must settle now for a few hours or weeks of freedom.

In our appropriated spaces the question of future revolution and of engagement with the state is often pushed aside (even at the very moment that our space is being crushed by the state). I don't believe in Hakim Bey's 'temporary autonomous zone' – if we want real autonomy we can't settle for temporariness. The revolution must be built over time.

However the prioritisation of space over time is no less problematic than the Marxist privileging of time over space. According to some Marxists all forms of spatial appropriation are utopian, and the only valid strategy is to build a state-focussed-revolutionary-Party. In fact, this strategy is often about idealising temporal processes such as History and Revolution in an attempt to control space. If we accept

that space has an interdependent relationship with social change, then this approach to space and time is also wrong, and cannot succeed. The revolution must be built in real spaces.

If we think about time and space like this, then what we need to do is connect time and space in a constructive way. We need to connect form and politics; present means and future ends. One useful key to this juggling act is the anarchist idea of pre-figuration. Another key is organisation. If we can make these connections, then we can realise the powerful potential of our appropriated spaces.

Pre-figurative politics.

‘Pre-figuration’ is a term used by anarchists to mean modelling in the present a future alternative to capitalism. Grubacic defines pre-figuration as ‘modes of organization that deliberately demonstrate the world you want to create’. And pre-figuration has an intrinsic connection to appropriated space: a person or group can propose an alternative system, but a space can materially show that alternative.

Pre-figurative politics is also bound up with the anarchist concern with means and ends. Anarchists have consistently argued that means of the struggle shape its ends, and therefore that the means should not be cruel or authoritarian. But the difficulty is to avoid conflating means and ends: means are not the same as ends, even though means are ‘ends-in-the-making’.

The task is therefore to adopt

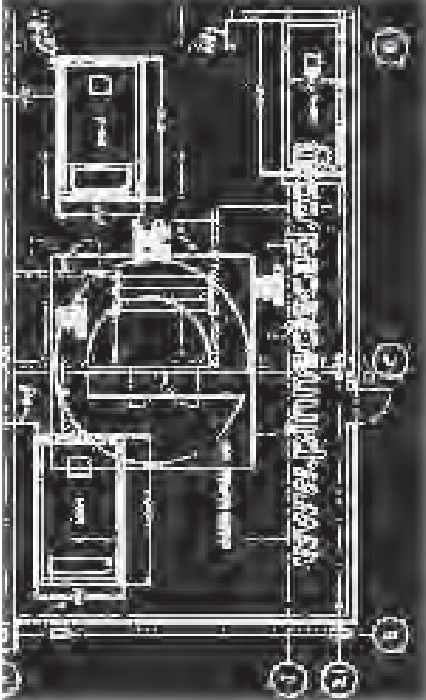
methods which match the vision of a free and equal society (eg squatting, collectivising our possessions, being non-violent), but without losing sight of the revolutionary goal of actually getting to that society (which might require owning property, or taking up arms, and will certainly require handing out leaflets and talking to strangers in capitalist spaces). Pre-figurative politics is about getting this balance. Pre-figuration shows how we can combine making spaces with struggling for social change; how we can combine a material alternative with a transformative agenda. Pre-figuration brings together means and ends, present and future.

Social and spatial.

We sometimes treat our spaces either as an inferior instrument of revolutionary struggle, or as a substitute for that struggle. What we really need is both social struggle and political spaces. Part of our pre-figurative agenda must be about achieving this double act. We need to combine a material alternative with a transformative agenda. Organisations can help make this connection.

Tranby college provides one example of a space successfully connected with a social movement. Tranby was started up with funds from unions and churches for the purpose of Aboriginal education, but over the years became a meeting point for indigenous activists from around the world, as well as the starting point of the ‘Survival’ concerts and of the movement against Aboriginal deaths in custody.

Alternative spaces must be embedded in social struggle, and at the same time social movements must take seriously the project of creating alternative spaces.



Spaces and organisations are different but equally necessary entities. In a space there can be sociability with difference. People come together but they don't necessarily have a common purpose as they would in an organisation. Spaces can help us to negotiate unity without erasing difference, and thus create a broad (but weak) sense of solidarity. Organisations on the other hand, can create the stronger connections between people and a unity of purpose that is required to actually achieve political and social change.

Geographies of power.

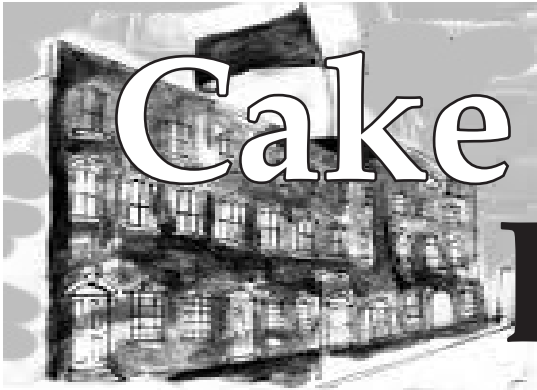
When places are part of a broader social movement they can transcend their local point in space and time. We need to take advantage of this and work to connect the different sites, different scales (local, regional, global etc), and different types of space (web, real, legal, illegal) that we operate in. The Zapatistas have shown us a brilliant example of how to struggle in this way – in the mountains of Chiapas, in the streets of Mexico city and on the web.

When we create anarchist spaces, whether they're squats, social centres, bookshops, or whatever, we need to put energy into more than one strategy at once. We need to bring together (but not confuse) spaces and movements, the local and the global, present survival and future revolution. A politics based in pre-figuration can be useful – as theory and practice, and as ethics.

Our appropriated spaces can become nodes in a web of power – nodes where different movements and sorts of power can aggregate, grow and ultimately win.

I originally wrote this article in 2005, but have updated it and added to it for anarchist summer school in 2011. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Jeremy.
jeremyk@bluebottle.com



Cake or Death

(or, the gap between theory and practice in the Factory)

An Introduction

This piece was written primarily for other participants in the project discussed. It's being reprinted here because some of the questions asked about how we present and enact our politics might be relevant for readers in Australia (or wherever), despite the differences in circumstances.

Social centres, both occupied & owned/rented, are a significant part of anarchist practice in England. Whether they deserve as much of our energy as they get is another question outside of the scope of this article. One reason that these projects are possible is because, unlike in Australia, squatting has a certain amount of legal protection. Owners generally have to go through court to evict, though this varies in practice from place to place, depending on local council/police policy and the relative strength

of the squatting movement. These protections – and the space they open for both housing and social projects – are under attack from 'intentional trespass' legislation being proposed by the current government.

The Factory is a big squatted building. The top two floors are home to about 14 people; the two ground floors are what we sometimes call a social centre and sometimes call something else. The building was bare when it was occupied. A lot of work was needed to fix the roof, install electricity and water and to build bathrooms, a kitchen, bedrooms and everything else. This meant a lot of focus on the physical space. At the moment, the Factory regularly hosts people's kitchen and a film night weekly, a number of meetings and shiatsu by donation. There's a gym, pool table, herbal medicine workroom, internet café, art room and a small infoshop in the process of expanding.

Some of this has developed since this article was written.

If nothing else, this article is a contribution towards the idea that we need to examine our practice and think about where the projects we're involved in are going, what we're saying and to whom.

Dear Factory,

I'm writing this as a participant in the project, as responsible as anyone else for the problems that I see. I'm writing it for myself as well as to share – I want to try and think my ideas through. I know that there isn't one opinion shared by everyone who works on the Factory, or even a simple split between two sides. Really, I just want us to discuss things more and I'm curious to know what you all think.

I'm not interested here in trying to evaluate how successful our project has been so far or trying to balance our achievements against our problems. I am also not exploring the use of the building as a household, which is a very important aspect of the project and one that we discuss the politics of even less than we discuss other aspects. What I've been thinking about is what we tell ourselves and what we tell other people about what we're doing and what ideas we promote.

Cake or Death

I can't remember which of the residents coined the phrase "cake or death," but I think it first came up during the St Paul's Carnival. It was a beautiful

sunny day and we were out on Portland Square giving away skipped vegetables and flowers and homemade cakes. And we were also giving out material from the infoshop: *325* and *Fire to the Prisons* and other insurrectionary anarchist pamphlets about prison and flames and attack.

So the phrase has become a bit of a joke for us, and an exaggeration, but I think it also points to something of a problem. There's an uncanny gap: what we do and how we talk about the Factory as a project is nearly all about "cake", while the posters we have on the walls and the zines we offer to people who enter the building promote something that seems very different.

"Cake" is about far more than cake. It's about the side of our project that is about trying to be friendly and welcoming to neighbours and strangers, the generosity of sharing vegetables that we rescue from the waste and meals we make from them, the idea that sharing food can bring people together, the idea that we can put into practice positive alternatives to the things we oppose. It's about herbal medicine and art and growing vegetables on the roof and trying to turn an abandoned building into a space that's welcoming and becomes used and owned by people outside of the existing squatter/anarchist/punk milieu.

When it comes to promoting the Factory on our flyers and posters, this is what we talk about. We promote ourselves almost solely as simply an open space and the project as simply about renovating and opening a

building for people to use. Beyond that we don't talk much about what we're doing and how it might fit a revolutionary strategy. We don't mention anarchism or any political beliefs beyond a vague sense of being not-for-profit. We generally don't even mention the fact that we're squatting the place, let alone that, if it came to it, we would fight to defend what we've created.

We seem to worry that if we mention any of this that people won't come – that any mention of our political beliefs would be intimidating and alienating. That we just need to get people – any people – using the building that we've put so much work into. I think to people who know our codes ('social centre', for example) what we're doing is clear, but I worry that for people who only read what we say about ourselves we could be anything – a government-funded youth centre, a christian charity, part of 'the big society'.

Then, if people who come along are interested in what we're doing and why, what do we have to give them to explain ourselves? Posters of burning cop cars, zines and pamphlets that promotes attack and confrontation with everything that restricts our freedom. The rhetoric is often very general, not wanting to narrow to single-issues - and when it relates to more specific situations, it's usually someone else's situation elsewhere. The question is, how does this material relate to our lives? How does it relate to our project? How does it relate to the lives of the visitors who use the building?

There's a line between frightening people (with heavy complex rhetoric and/or with the idea of extreme confrontation) and not being honest (by hiding our broader agenda, not being clear where we stand). In what we say about the project, we head towards deception. In the politics put forward in the building, we head towards frightening.

To take the piss a bit: what is our plan – invite people in, never mentioning that we have political motivations beyond wanting to use and preserve an empty building, then give them a zine full of news about explosions and translated prison communiques? What exactly are we hoping will happen?

Why don't we talk more explicitly – I'd argue more honestly – about our politics and the politics of the project? Or, why is there such a big gap between the politics of the project and the politics expressed in material inside the building?

A few reasons

– Part of the problem when it comes to explaining why we're doing this is that we don't really have a collective answer. Different people in the project have different answers and different motivations. There's almost a fear of talking this out – of finding out where we disagree. Or maybe we're just worried that it will be another boring meeting. Still, it's odd to put a lot of effort and to work beside each other for so long without ever being sure why we're all engaged in what often seems

a crazy plan. It's a big project and a big building – there's room for us to disagree.

– There's a fear that to talk about our politics or our ideas is going to frighten people. That it is impossible to talk about what we believe without lapsing into jargon or specialised language that would automatically exclude anyone who wasn't already used to this language. It's hard, that's true, but it's not impossible.

– There's a belief that if we say who we are or why we're doing this that we'll exclude people who don't already share our views or our language. I think this is the biggest problem and I don't think it's true. I think if I saw the project as an outsider, I'd want to know *why*. I also think people will continue to judge us on our actions rather than our rhetoric – but our actions make more sense with some context.

In other words, people who already appreciate the meal on Tuesday nights are unlikely to run away if we explain that we're anarchists. People who might see it in passing and be curious but unsure whether or not to come in might be more interested if we explain, for example, that it's a free meal people make from food that would otherwise be wasted, and that we're trying to take care of each other because we don't want the government to control our lives. And that it's free because we want to get away from a system where everything is bought and sold, and most of our time is spent working to someone else's orders for someone else's profit. Or however we choose to explain ourselves.



– Stating our politics – our strategy – doesn't have to be a list of rules, a list of principles that we require people to agree with before they set foot in the building. I also think it's very easy for people to feel excluded already – in some ways, the lack of explicit political identification makes it even easier, as it becomes a matter of codes and insinuations.

– I think part of the problem is that we sometimes view 'the public' as a homogenous mass that is not already in conflict. We have the idea that 'other people' like cake but that they'd be turned away by talk of politics. That all we can really offer people is nice things and space. Whereas, surely, if anarchist ideas have any real meaning – and any chance of actually contributing to significant change – they are actually shared by more than a sect of 'revolutionaries'. If the idea of attack is actually so unattractive, so removed from the daily life we share with others, then we're wrong.

I don't believe that 'we' have the answers, that we have some way of living that can be an example to 'other people' who are trapped in dull consumer lives. I believe that tension and rebellion – against work, against social control, against the dead-

end of capitalist recreation – arise everywhere. That the answer is not to show the way, or spread the word, or any such missionary tactic, but to recognise and try to connect with what subversion occurs while creating our own. This means communicating with people.

– On the other hand, I think we need to remember that our ideas are *meant* to be threatening to some people (or at least to certain social positions). All the welcoming community spirit and bright curtains in the world aren't going to convince a property developer that fighting to defend a squat is a good thing. No matter how nicely we cook up the food, a supermarket manager would rather we paid for it. If our function room gets used for subversive gatherings, cops and university administrations and bosses will want the space shut down. Fascists are never going to like us.

– I also think we have to be honest, if only with ourselves and say that for many of us (for me at least) the fact that we're outside the law (if not specifically illegal) is an aspect of the project's appeal.

I guess what I'm proposing is shifts on both sides – not to an imaginary middle ground, but towards a greater sense of a holistic project. That while we give away cake we talk more about why we're doing it – first to each other, then to everyone else. That while we talk about confrontation and rebellion we think more about what it actually means in practice, in the lives we're living. That if the texts we're distributing and the posters on

our walls don't actually reflect enough aspects of our lives and our rebellions, then that we find – or create – others to complement them. Or, that if we want our lives to be differently rebellious that we start being honest about what that will actually mean.

Perhaps it's more simple: that it goes without saying, for us, that the anarchist project involves both cake and attack, creation and destruction. I think we need to be clearer – perhaps it's better to say more honest – about the fact that the nice things we do are rooted in a radical critique.

I spent the time writing this and then found out that someone else already said it much more concisely:

"The anarchists must simultaneously be those who are blamed for acts of startling indecency, of inappropriate extremism in all the right causes ('they burned four police cars at our peaceful march!) & those who are around town cooking & sharing free communal meals, holding street parties, projecting pirated movies on the sides of buildings, running libraries & bicycle repair shops, & appearing at protests ('oh look, it's those lovely anarchists again!')."

We will be safest from the right hand of repression & the left hand of recuperation when everyone is thoroughly confused as to whether we are frightening or loveable."

A.G. Schwartz

Sowing anarchy in the metropolis

Signs of the defeat of the Libyan revolution

Once again the apostles of “liberal interventionism” are filling the newspapers and airwaves with their apologies for Western imperialism dressed up as humanitarian mercy missions. Last Friday’s UN resolution 1973 is being touted as why this latest military incursion into a middle eastern oil producing land “has nothing to do with Iraq”.

Yet North African and Middle Eastern voices of scepticism regarding French, UK and US motives are being systematically ignored. Here is the perspective of a Libyan anarchist, calling for support of the struggle against the tyrannical Gaddhafi regime, but fearing the Western military intervention is dividing the insurgents and burying the revolution.

taken from:

<http://derryanarchists.blogspot.com/>

In a few hours, the UN Security Council will decide to start air strikes against Libya. France has said that it is ready to start the bombardment from tonight.

We condemn this international resolution, if it is realised. And we totally reject any foreign intervention in Libya, whatever shape it may take, especially a French one. France, that sold Qaddafi weapons worth billions, weapons that he is using today to blow up Libyans, the same France that didn’t stop such deals until 3 weeks back.

We condemn this intervention that will transform Libya into a real hell, even more than now. That intervention will also steal the revolution from the Libyans, a revolution that has cost them thousands of dead women and men so far. An intervention that will also divide the Libyan resistance.

And even if these operations do succeed and Qaddafi falls (or dies) like Saddam Hussein, it will mean that we were liberated by Americans and French, and I can assure you that they will keep reminding us of that every minute. How we can stand this later? How we can explain all these casualties to the coming generations, all those dead bodies that will be everywhere? To be liberated from Qaddafi just to become slaves to those who armed him and empowered him during all those years of authoritarian violence and repression.

After the first mistake – the militarisation of the popular revolution – here we are committing our second mistake – the establishment of a new leadership of figures arising out of the remnants of the Libyan Jamahiriya regime. And our third mistake is coming inevitably, which will be to ask for help from our enemies. I only hope

we will not reach the fourth one: that is, occupation and the arrival of the marines.

Sarkozy and France are our enemies; they are also enemies of the whole Third World. They don't hide their contempt of us. All that Sarkozy cares about is to be re-elected next year.

The man who organized the meeting between Sarkozy and the representatives of the interim national council is none other than Bernard-Henri Lévy, a quack philosopher, and for those who don't know him, a French Zionist activist who concentrates all his efforts on supporting Israel and defending its interests. We saw him lately in Tahrir Square just to make sure that the revolting youth there would not chant against Israel.

What can be said while waiting for the bombs?

Because bombs will not differentiate between those who are pro-Qaddafi and who are against him.

Colonialist bombs, as you know, have only one objective: to defend the interests of arms traders. They sold Qaddafi arms worth billions and then we ask them to destroy them now... Then we will buy new arms through the new government – it is an old, well-known story. But there are people who cannot learn except through committing old mistakes, made long before.

I say this very clearly: this is a very dangerous strategic mistake, one that the Libyan people will pay for, maybe

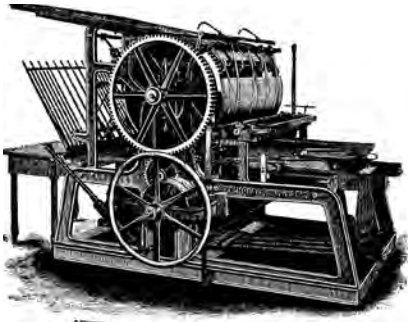
for many years to come. More than the years of the rule of Qaddafi and his family.

I call today, and now, just hours before the burning of Libya and before it is made into another Baghdad, I call on all Libyans, all intellectuals, artists, university graduates, everyone, those who can write and those who cannot, every female and male citizen, to reject this military intervention by the US, France and Britain, and the Arab regimes that they support. At the same time, I call on all the peoples to support us, the Egyptians, Tunisians, French, even Chinese, all the peoples of the world, we welcome their support and sympathy.

But as for governments, whatever government, we will not ask anything from them, but to leave us alone, to let us finish the problem of Qaddafi by ourselves.

Saoud Salem
Libyan anarchist
17 March 2011





an interview with **Mutiny Zine Collective**

For 5 years *Mutiny* zine has been a regular outlet of revolutionary news and analysis in Sydney and across Australia. Here the current editing collective answer some hard questions.

Q: In terms of anarchism and revolutionary struggle in Australia, what do y'all see as your political objectives in being a collective of anarchists putting out a regular, anarchist publication?

BB: The zine contributes to building local revolutionary solidarity and mutual aid through the dissemination of the ideas and projects of local collectives. It also points out revolutionary struggle elsewhere on the planet purely for whatever good that may do. Inspiration, ideas? There's got to be something good in having regular anarchist publications, in just knowing that its always there and it's kind of like a backbone if I was arrogant enough to think that...

LD: I agree with BB and I also think the

'zine encourages political discussion, which is always a good thing.

SZ: It might help to more clearly illustrate what I mean by answering in the negative to begin with. I don't think we're particularly interested in propagandising for 'anarchism' as a kind of overarching ideology that we want people to adhere too, that provides answers to questions about how to struggle and organise ourselves, how to conceptualise capitalism and the state, how to relate to other groups, etc. Some people call this approach 'capital A anarchist'. One recent manifestation of this tendency might be the new publication from the Melbourne Anarchist Club, *Black Light*. In the first issue, a number of articles try to either specifically respond to critiques of anarchism or define aspects of anarchist ideology.

I reckon the basic problem with this approach is that it can lead to quite abstract discussions about anarchism in general, like thinking about 'what would a future anarchist society look like', fetishising particular episodes in anarchist history like the Spanish Civil War and Kronstadt or studying an 'anarchist canon' of authors like Bakunin, Kropotkin, etc. For me focusing on carefully examining the changing and varied conditions that exist in Australia and worldwide, and the radical possibilities that might emerge out of them is much more interesting and exciting.

Since you asked though, I think the fact that we use the term 'anarchistic' to describe our publication does signify that we're interested in articulating a different type of politics to what you'd find the socialist newspapers arguing for or, in general, what broader things like *Overland* or *Arena* would support. Often our articles could be described as 'ultra-left'. Obviously I don't mean that pejoratively. Instead, writers for *Mutiny* tend to be more honest about their revolutionary politics rather than moderating their message to appeal to a broader public, as well as being a bit more critical of existing campaigns and strategies. At the same time, we don't want to dismiss movements out of 'revolutionary purity', so we've published lots of reportbacks and analyses from people involved in various campaigns.

Finally though, one more reason why I'm downplaying the significance of the relationship between anarchism and *Mutiny* is as I think it's important that we don't primarily justify our

existence because we are 'one of the only anarchist publications in Australia', or something like that, rather than *Mutiny* being worth putting out on its own merits. I feel like that kind of attitude is really limiting for radical groups (of whatever politics), because it stops us from critically evaluating ourselves. Instead it's good enough to simply do something - regardless of its quality - or even just exist.

I'd like to think that we don't want to just maintain a tiny bit of anarchist ideological territory, we want to, in a very small way, help create something that's new and powerful, and that something, while it would probably resonate with the historical traditions of radicalism, might not call itself anarchist or communist or any of the names used to describe left-wing ideologies from the past.

BFG: I disagree with SZ. I think by publishing varied anarchist analyses of stuff happening on the continent and elsewhere, we are propagandising. And I think this is a good thing. An objective of the zine in this regard is to provide a space and wide readership for articles such as our recent series debating syndicalism and the role of unions, which deal with anarchist politics, but are grounded in work that people are doing here and now, rather than in an abstract way.

Q: In producing the zine does the collective function generally along anarchist lines and how so? And following from this, what do the folk involved place more political importance on

in this project – that *Mutiny* zine is a functioning, solid anarchist collective or in the production and distribution of the publication?

LD: It's difficult to divorce the functioning of the collective from putting out the publication! Being a strong functioning collective happens because we are regularly working on a project together. Being project-oriented can be a weakness – focusing on the day-to-day tasks (editing, layout) rather than the political discussion of articles – but it can also be a strength. We are always working towards something. We don't become solid comrades through discussion only, we do it by working together.

The decision to move to publishing an issue every two months will hopefully also work to give us more time to focus on other elements of the zine, like ensuring Sydney distribution happens and having more collective discussion of articles. We can always be better, more anti-hierarchical, in more equally distributing tasks and the financial burden of putting out the zine.

BB: What's anarchist lines? In terms of non-hierarchically, we don't have headkickers or shitkickers although we've joked about it a lot. Decisions are made at collective meetings, by whoever can make it to them. This means that sometimes decisions are made that effect the zine by not everyone involved in that issue. Sometimes a lot of work falls on just one or two people who just happen to have the energy to put into it.

We barely hold our shit together, sometimes we fuck up. But through this, if someone's got an argument to make it gets listened too. Each issue, work comes from anarchists who want the zine to happen. That kind of makes the zine our master, doesn't it? I guess that answers the second part of this question as well. I think we're more a fluid group of anarchist workers than a solid anarchist collective.

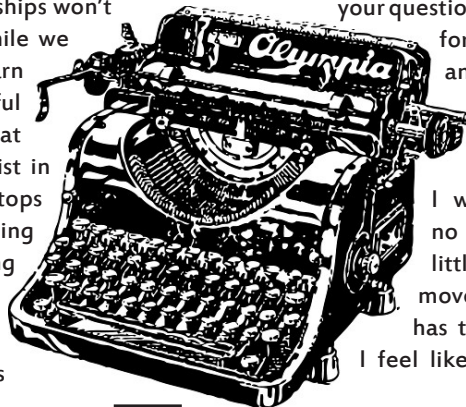
SZ: You asked about whether the collective functions on anarchist lines, by which I guess you mean whether or not it is non-hierarchical, directly democratic, etc. That's an interesting question. Honestly I don't think it is non-hierarchical - but I don't think any other group, whether it calls itself anarchist or not, is either. Clearly, sometimes particular editors have more power in determining what happens than others, if only because they have more time to work on the zine. To some extent this power gets rotated around, as people have more or less time for different issues, but this process isn't perfect.

There is also a certain level of specialisation - some editors focus more on the 'look of the zine', others on finding and reading possible content. We've occasionally tried to undermine this by doing things like InDesign skillshares so people can learn how to do lay-out, with mixed success. But I actually don't think this specialisation is entirely a bad thing - for instance I'm incredibly inartistic and if I had too much control over what images we use it would probably be a complete disaster! Of course we should try and share skills and work collectively

when possible, but to some extent specialisation only arises because people focus on what they are good at and what they enjoy, which I think is ok.

But to return more specifically to the question of hierarchy, I think it's actually a problem when anarchist/near anarchist groups refer to themselves as 'non-hierarchical', because this serves to conceal real divisions in power amongst different members of the organisation. Moreover, the idea that groups can be or are non-hierarchical is based on a notion that you can create a 'pure space', outside of capitalism. I think this incorrectly conceptualises capitalism as basically a kind of top-down command structure – with the ruling class at the top – that you can escape from and create entirely leaderless organisations. There are certainly command centres to capitalism, as well as various ruling classes across the globe. But capitalism also consists of a series of social relationships – like the division between worker and boss, and sexist and racist attitudes towards people – that have been naturalised, and that we're socialised to accept as well. We can't just construct a community where these social relationships won't have an impact. While we can try and unlearn them, it's harmful to pretend that hierarchies don't exist in activist spaces, as it stops us from recognising them and breaking them down when we can.

My position on this



issue makes me generally inclined to reject elaborate processes that claim to be creating non-hierarchical spaces (such as some types of consensus decision-making), and favour a more ad-hoc, open approach, which I find more fun. It depends on context though - a group which (unlike *Mutiny*) has a large membership and a lot of people that don't know one another might well function better with a more defined process that makes it very clear what's going on. But I think what this issue comes down to is just for people to try and actively be good comrades: for instance by treating others with respect, by trying to encourage collective and democratic decision-making, by supporting a culture of free-flowing and open debate.

Q: What changes have you seen locally in the nature / trajectory / momentum of anarchist activity in the era of *Mutiny* zine and what implications have these had practically on the content, production and distribution of the zine?

BFG: I think the 'momentum' part of your question has a lot of resonance for the zine. Well, for me, anyway. I feel like there's an attitude within the collective, and outside of it when I wasn't an editor, that no matter how much or little is going on in the movement locally, the zine has to come out regularly. I feel like it's flag in the good

times, and a (sometimes dim and fog-shrouded) beacon in the bad times.

This means that the focus of the zine can fluctuate between lots of local articles, news and analysis, to being all about what's going on 'over there'. The 'over there-edness' hits hardest every Mayday when we collate pages and pages of news of amazing things going on around the world while it's all quiet on the homefront.

This fluctuation also occurs with editor numbers that reflect emotional exhaustion in bad times meaning that we lose people, but also gain others, as people look for something to fill the void.

LD: I'm newest to the zine collective but I've seen more collaboration between the 'capital A' anarchists and the 'small a' anarchists, especially from the environment movement. This is evident in something like Anarchist Summer School and TPK (The Peoples' Kitchen).

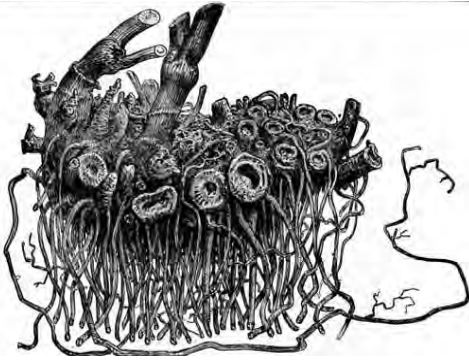
SZ: Well, I think it's pretty clear that the resurgence of anarchism in the late 1990's/early 2000's was strongly related to the anti-capitalist summit protests like Seattle in 1999 and S11 in Melbourne in 2000. To some extent, the first two years of the zine (in 2006 and 2007) reflect this: we had quite a few articles around the 2006 G20 summit and the 2007 APEC protests in Sydney. Our coverage was marked by a healthy scepticism about the value of activism at these events though, such as around the heavily policed APEC summit where we argued that the protests ran the risk of trying to ineffectively confront the state on its own terrain.

More recently, we've run a few articles on local, community protests around racism and anti-fascism that have been organised by people with politics similar to ours. Maybe this reflects a shift in activists' thinking: away from spectacular interventions and towards trying to win victories in local campaigns.

Q: How have y'all seen the continued publication of *Mutiny* zine contribute to building a stronger anarchist political culture in Sydney? Do you think what is published in the zine has encouraged more debate and analysis of these issues?

SZ: I think in general people in the Sydney 'scene' aren't very dogmatic and are interested in experimenting with different activist strategies. I think *Mutiny* both reflects this and, to some extent, has also helped to foster such a culture.

More specifically, we did take quite clear positions in which *Mutiny* critiqued both the 'ideology of non-violence' (specifically in terms of how it manifested around the G20 and APEC summit protests), and, in the context of anti-fascist campaigning, the notion of free speech. Some people basically argued that preventing fascists from meeting via a blockade violated their right to free speech, and was therefore reactionary, which we disagreed with. I think we were able to clarify our own ideas and make our views more widespread. Moreover, our interventions meant that there were



contending positions that activists could consider - instead of say, there being an unquestioning acceptance of 'Non-Violent' ideology.

However, it's also interesting to note that our position on these issues isn't actually particularly anarchist. Although the majority of people in the Sydney 'scene' would probably agree with us, lots of anarchists believe in 'non-violence', and people like Chomsky disagree with us about free speech. So, considering this, I'm not sure that it would be entirely accurate to say that we've always propagated a political culture that was anarchist, first and foremost.

BFG: Just because some anarchists believe in 'non-violence' and Chomsky disagrees with us about free speech doesn't mean that we're not a, first and foremost, anarchist zine. I think disabusing people of the idea that 'non-violence' is ethically correct, or that fascists have some inalienable right to 'freedom of speech' is contributing to building a stronger anarchist culture.

By engaging with these ideas and trying to expose them as the socialised myths of the capitalist State that they are often results in knee-jerk reactions but hopefully also encourages debate.

BB: I certainly fucking hope so. What is the damned point of doing it if this wasn't the case. I don't want recognition though, I want everything to spark debate and through analysis form a stronger anarchist political culture.

Q: *Mutiny* tends to publish a fairly pluralistic and broad range of articles. This has positives in that a broad range of issues and ideas are voiced within its pages and it cannot ever be accused of dogmatically forcing ideological positions down the readers' throat. This does raise the question of how the editing collective sees its politics (anarchist/anarchistic) reflected in the zine?

LD: I do feel like the zine reflects anarchist politics. Sometimes it's a very simplistic relation in that we go 'oh ok, we need an anarchist analysis of Wikileaks because no one else is doing that'. Obviously we are anarchists and we believe people should be able to access anarchist positions on current events. In doing this, hopefully anarchist politics will speak to people and their experiences and this builds a stronger anarchist political culture.

We also have a focus on direct action, people taking action against capital and the state, and social oppression.

BB: I don't think my politics get reflected in the zine - it's like I'm reading the articles and learning from them heaps. I think my politics get reflected in my actions, which putting effort into making the zine is part of.

I suppose there is a level of reflection there. I think I took it for granted that I wouldn't want racist, fascist, sexist, etc shit in the zine. But yeah, not being capable of putting that in is a reflection of politics.

SZ: Most of the articles written for the zine are actively solicited by us and, in general, we do consciously ask people who are on a similar political wavelength to us, though of course we might disagree with them around certain points.

Q: In keeping with this pluralistic approach there have been occasions where articles have been published that, while potentially reporting back usefully on particular actions, issues or campaigns, have also tended more towards statism or reformism. What is the filtering process for what content gets published? What

sort of questions or issues politically inform the editing collectives' decisions about what content is most useful to publish?

BB: I don't think there's been a zine published in ages where I've had the chance to read all the articles before it is done. I guess it's a matter of trusting each others politics (and trust that we won't completely agree on everything as well) because we don't have time to nut them out together. And whilst we won't publish just anything, we will sometimes publish some stuff that maybe we don't agree with wholeheartedly, maybe even when everyone doesn't agree with it.

Sometimes we only have this one contact with what is happening at an event and we ask them to write something and well fuck they do! So we just publish it anyway. If it's statist then we're less likely to publish



something from them in the future. We are probably going to spend more time looking for someone else to write us an article.

SZ: I think these reformist articles are pretty rare - people are aware of our politics and what wouldn't be appropriate to submit. The last few pieces that we've rejected have had poor writing, strange leaps of logic and lots of over-the-top rhetoric, although they did have nominally radical politics (in that the authors were very clearly opposed to the state and capital). So it's sometimes a matter of quality rather than what views the author has.

BFG: As to what questions or issues inform our decision about what to publish, I think it's most useful to think of this the other way around. Except in the cases where we seek someone out to write an article on a specific issue (such as LD wrote earlier regarding Wikileaks), we usually find ourselves responding to what's going on.

People will send us articles about struggles they're involved in, or about happenings around the world, and then we publish them. Sometimes we'll receive an article from someone and then have an idea to ask someone else to write an accompanying piece on the same issue. So I guess our selection process can be seen as a being a conduit for the movement, while sometimes trying to direct the flow with editorial decisions.

Mostly it's just a race against time to get the bloody thing out.

Anarchist / anti-authoritarian journals & zines in our region:

- *Black Kite*

A quarterly periodical with themed issues. The last one from summer 2011 was themed around 'making the world safer for wimmin'. Available at <http://zinelibrary.info/black-kite-quarterly>

- *Black Light*

New publication of the Melbourne Anarchist Club. Their first 'test' issue came out in March 2011. Regularity unknown.

<http://mac.anarchobase.com/>

- *Facta Non Verba*

'To inform and connect the anarchist space in Australia with the international struggle against domination and authority.' First issue was in November 2010. Next one?

<http://factanon.blogspot.com/>

- *Imminent Rebellion*

Probably the most aesthetically beautiful anarchist journal in the world. From Aoteroa with no regular release date.

Issue 10 came out late 2010.

- *Melbourne Black*

'A Melbourne journal of libertarian communism.' The last issue from January 2011 was their fifth but it too comes under regularity unknown.

<http://melbourneblack.wordpress.com/>

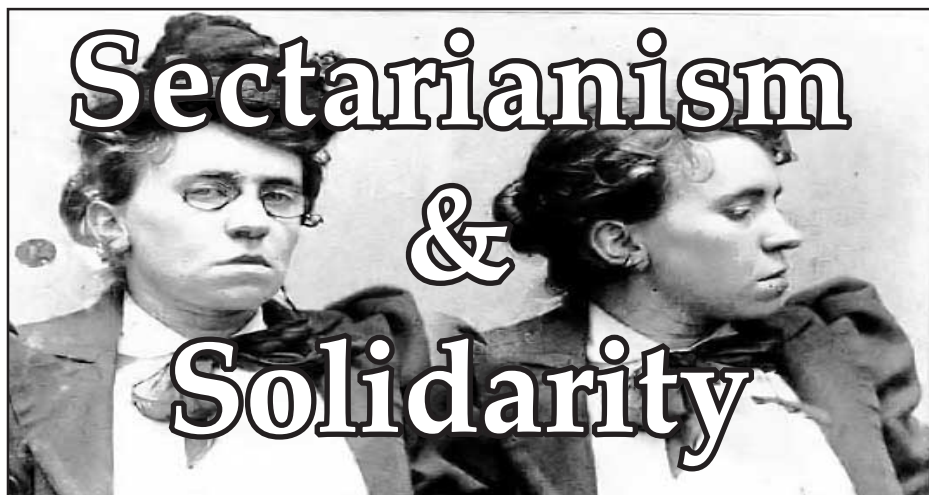
- *Mutiny*

Now coming out once every 2 months. Read the interview!

<http://jura.org.au/mutiny>

- *The Wolves at the Door*

Note: Try your friendly local anarcho-space to pick up any of these.



A Review of Anarchist Summer School

At the end of 2010 I travelled to Europe and had my first taste of radical-tourism, what I refer to, self deprecatingly, as 'anarchist flaneurism': hopping from infoshop to social centre to people's kitchen to occupied lecture theatres. We'd landed in the middle of the UK and Italian militant student mobilisations as well as the 'precar' mobilisations of the unemployed and under-employed, which had gained momentum in the wake of the GFC. In the midst of all this, I was feverishly checking my emails, following what was happening on various e-lists back home. A couple of folks from the reading group had decided to plan a conference called 'Anarchist Summer School', an experiment in self-education and knowledge sharing, perhaps in the tradition of the free schools.

Anarchist Summer School was the brainchild of a couple of friends of mine. We'd started a radical reading

group called 'riotous assembly', which had been meeting for about a year. We were mostly uni students who had been involved in grassroots environment activism and indigenous solidarity, looking to develop a broader radical politic. Some of us identified as anarchists, a few as autonomous marxists. We read critiques of non-violence, Kropotkin on mutual aid, we read about radical education, whiteness, feminism and heaps of other stuff. It was a little undirected, often we just picked topics out of the air, and looked for interesting readings after the fact. It's my understanding that the Summer School sought to direct and expand this learning, focusing specifically on anarchism.

What were the intentions of this conference? What was it meant to be? I can't speak for the organisers, and I'm not sure it's all that important that these questions be answered by me in this review. This review won't

be interested in what the organisers did right or wrong, or whether the event was successful or unsuccessful. This is something that has been dealt with in other reviews and various debriefs. Instead, I want to talk about what 'the conference' does, what it creates, what it begins, what it leads to. I dispute the idea that a conference is only the creation and responsibility of the organising collective, that as participants, our only task is to go along with expectations and come away with judgements. 'The Conference' is a collaborative event, we *make it* when we submit workshops, when we engage in discussions, debates and arguments, when we propose ideas, when we critique, when we listen to each other. I also want to address specific concerns of mine, arising from the conference, regarding sectarianism, solidarity, and the possibilities for good faith discussions, despite difference in analysis or chosen tactics.

During the conference, we had 50 to 80 people in one space, talking about Anarchism. The project grew much larger than any of the organisers expected, with groups from interstate making the trip to Sydney from Melbourne and Adelaide. I remember one of my friends joking that it had 'become a monster', and feeling a little intimidated that this project, initiated by relative 'outsiders', was attracting organised anarchists from all over the country. So, what came of this? We didn't all decide on a 'way forward', we didn't all agree on one 'sweet analysis', we didn't plan a big action or project together. But did we really expect or desire any of these things to come from

it? There are three concrete projects that came from this conference (or were helped along by it) that I know of: a group of Sydney University students and workers have been organising together to oppose neo-liberal restructuring at the university, a feminist reading group has been meeting at Black Rose and a new inter-city publication is in the works. People were introduced to the Jura and Black Rose spaces, and perhaps got a better idea of how they can be involved and organise in these spaces. Conversations have been continuing around the identity politics issues raised in the Peter Gelderloos article, about what solidarity means and how we can enact it, about whether or not collaboration across cities or groups is really possible, and if it is, why it is desirable and what would it look like.

If anything was made clear by the conference, it is that anarchists do not always agree with each other. There were many instances where broad labelling of others as organisationalists, insurrectionaries, lifestyleists, identity politicians, environmentalists or individualists proved to be stumbling blocks to any sort of honest and open discussion and debate, conducted in good faith. These straw-man categories were mobilised against the complex and nuanced content of other people's ideas, in order to dismiss them entirely, i.e. all insurrectionists are individualists who couldn't raffle a chook in a pub, enviros who are used to structured meetings must be middle class and have no critique of capitalism, organisationalists are softcore and conditioned by capitalism. We find



ourselves not really listening to what people are saying, dismissing their words and actions by reading into them some imagined and simplified set of ideas and practices that ALL people of a certain group MUST have.

I'm not arguing that this is stereotyping is malicious and intentional, or that everyone engaged like this. Nor am I arguing that these sorts of critiques have no basis. We shouldn't all simply agree with each other, accepting ideas and tactics without challenge. We need to find ways to have these conversations and debates *without* completely dismissing, ignoring, stereotyping and simplifying other people's politics and practice. When our hearts are coming from the same place, we need to figure out how to talk

to each other and be in solidarity with each other *across* minor disagreements over tactics and analysis. As anarchists, often there is nothing dearer to us than our analysis and our struggle. But, are we really so arrogant as to think that everyone should arrive at the same ideas and modes of struggle as us, and that if they haven't, it's because something has gone wrong in their thinking? That our own analysis as the most comprehensive and totalising, our specific tactics and modes of struggle as the only one's that could ever lead to revolution? This smacks of the authoritarian Left's historical materialism.

Capitalism and the State are not homogenous systematic entities, imposing their authority on us through easily discernible and unilinear tactics. Rather, the power of these systems is enacted at the level of our everyday social relations, employing a variety of tactics and strategies through a variety of different agents and structures. Capitalism and the State do not exist as empty formal systems somewhere outside of life, yet it is not good enough to theorise these systems as merely the sum of their parts. Rather, these systems arise out of a common logic, which is instantiated across the *specific* material relations of our lives. This is why it doesn't make sense to argue that we should only engage in tactics that confront capitalism or the state as a *whole*. I'm sure many readers will think this is pretty obvious. Why then do we insist on critiquing *other* people's tactics on the basis that they do not apprehend these systems in their entirety, that they do not spark

mass revolution on their own? No, putting up propaganda in public space doesn't bring down *the system*, but it *does* disrupt the sterilisation, privatisation and commercialisation of public space in a particular street. No, the Workers Solidarity Network doesn't create communism, but it *does* challenge the wage relation in specific work places.

Why do we read blogs about what other anarchists are getting up to in other parts of the world? Why do we produce our own material for people to read? Why do travel to see other places where struggle is happening, and seek to meet other people who struggle? I think we do this because we want to find ways to link these struggles, to show that there is a common logic and a broader goal behind all of these separate attempts to disrupt and recreate particular social relations. Perhaps this is one way of thinking about solidarity. We can theorise 'the conference' in a similar way, as an opportunity to build links between different struggles, and solidarity between the groups and people engaged in these struggles.

The communicative stumbling blocks I mentioned above can certainly get in the way of this, but at the same time, it's not surprising that there would be suspicion and misunderstandings between a group of strangers that come into a space, assuming that they ought to agree because 'we're all anarchists, aren't we?' Yes, we are. Solidarity needs to mean something other than agreeing. Different anarchist analyses and tactics should be able to exist side by side, rather than in a false and

simplified opposition, in a way that recognises that no *one* theory is able to apprehend the totality of exploitative relations, and no one struggle is directly attacking the *totality* of the system. To reiterate, I'm not saying that we should never disagree, question each other, critique and offer suggestions. I am suggesting that, to get more out of the form of 'the conference' it is important to approach the space in good faith, to be open to listening and learning from others, to be open to changing our minds, to engage with people on the nuances of what they say, rather than stereotyping through the filter of our own ideological arrogance.

'The conference' can be seen as a site of collaborative production, we each bring to it the stuff we have done and the stuff we know, but, like any other social relation, it is more than the sum of its parts. We want 'the conference' to go somewhere, to produce something new, to act as some sort of synthesising space, where tensions and disagreements can be aired, from which projects can be embarked upon. In this way, the conference is one strategy that we use to frame our specific struggles in a systematic way, as comprising a network of oppositions to capitalism and the state. This sort of solidarity would recognise that, just as capitalism arises through a powerful network of specificities, so must our struggle.

- Bulldawg

From the Streets of Athens

An Introduction

In Athens, Greece, during a general strike on May 11th against extensive economic restructuring led by the IMF, the repressive forces of the Greek state brutally attacked the strike demo. Dozens were hospitalized and one man was so severely beaten he fell into a deep coma and is on life support.

In addition, a Greek man was killed on May 10th in a largely immigrant district, triggering a police-sponsored fascist pogrom that is still taking place in the immigrant neighborhoods. Immigrants had their car windows smashed out while they were driving, many have been beaten on the street, a Pakistani family had their house fire-bombed, and a 21 year old immigrant was murdered by fascists. The police have been directly sponsoring and protecting this racist terror and have also cooperatively attacked anarchist social spaces which have been showing direct solidarity to the migrants by

physically confronting this fascist pogrom in the streets.

*- taken from a solidarity flyer from
Montreal, Canada.*

Barbarity Spreads: Solidarity or Fear

It is incomprehensible to hold your breath from the moment you step out of your front door, to have to look behind your back to walk through your neighbourhood and to be slaughtered for a camera. The degradation that has amassed in a tiny stretch of land is incomprehensible. It is incomprehensible to be lynched, stabbed, to have your door kicked in, to be murdered because you happen to have dark skin and to be born a few thousand kilometres away from here.

It is incomprehensible, yet true. The racist pogrom launched under the pretext of the cold-blooded assassination of the 44-year old man was carried out with the harmonious

cooperation of police and the well-known para-statists of the golden dawn, with the tolerance of a part of the residents of the area. As extreme as it may sound, in its essence this condenses the migration policy of the last twenty years, with the thousands of assassinated migrants at the borders, the “cleansing operations” [in cities], the subjugations and rapes in the euphemistically named ‘hospitality centres’ [the migrant detention camps — trans.] and in police stations, the forced labour camps in Manolada and elsewhere, and the social racism of deprecatory gazes on the street, social exclusion and the fascists’ knives.

The problems faced by locals and migrants have a common uterus in the strategy of the state and the bosses who organise the devaluation of our lives and of everyone’s labour, who intensify exploitation and asphyxiating social control, who spread division and reciprocal extermination between the exploited. For as long as we do not see the common historical and class thread that unites locals and migrants, for as long as we turn our gaze away from our common present and future, for as long as constructed divisions are not replaced by solidarity, kindness, understanding, discussion, relationships of community, common struggles, for as long as we do not recognise that the ongoing attack is a threat for us all, for as long as we do not realise that the depreciation of the person next to us will not end there but will crash upon us in full force, until then, barbarity and cannibalism will disguise themselves as life.

- *squat of Patision 61 and Skaramanga*

From the Social Trench of Villa Amalias

For the past three days the wider area around Villa Amalias has seen events that any intelligent being living in the year 2011 would have thought to come out of a science fiction scenario. But this is not the case. This has been the reality for the past three years more or less: some have not experienced it, some do not want to see it, some are in stupor and refuse to see it, some become complacent — and yet some seem to seek it.

Under the pretext of the condemnable —by all of us— murder of the 44 year old Manolis Kantaris on the junction of Tritis Septemvriou and Ipirou street, some people decided the time had come for them to cleanse the area from those strange and grubby creatures (according to them), the migrants, launching an indiscriminate pogrom.

From the very first moment TV stations stepped into a dance around the dead body, ballooning all the wrongdoings of this case, and our well-known ‘neighbours’ made an appearance once again to help the scared residents step out of their doorsteps. Could it be that ‘golden dawn’ is the new name of an entire area of Athens, not yet set because of some bureaucratic issues with its naming? All of a sudden, the death of a man by persons unknown with robbery as its motivation turned into the murder of an entire ‘nation’ by ‘illegal migrants who act uncontrollably’. The ideal story for the fascist TV scenario writers who long for a Greek purity they have lost for



at least half a millennium (if it ever existed at the first place that is) in order to organise feasts, with their trophy being any migrant that would happen to cross their way.

In a blink, the rules of the game are overturned and from the point where all enraged Greeks would condemn criminality and uncontrollable violence in their neighbourhoods, we now have reached the point where anything is allowed as long as it is committed by Greeks. Mobbing is allowed and so are mass beatings, stabbings, exemplary and throughout likeliness, murders — like the one of the 21 year old Bangladeshi migrant [in the neighbourhood of Kato Patisia, trans]. Everything is allowed in the name of fear, survival, imposition and revenge. Cannibalism is allowed, too.

Social cannibalism. The result of a dissolved society which refuses, whether willingly or not, to acknowledge the source of all this. To understand that the poverty and squalor never came, nor will it ever come from those from below in this world. Those from below are the

recipients of a situation that is eternally fed by those above, those holding capital and power, because this is how they safeguard their continuity. The manipulation and subjugation of the world, with social, economic and class criteria, holds for them the balance of the base of the capitalist pyramid.

By beating, stabbing or imposing yourself on whoever you consider to be inferior to you, without any specific logic, based on the colour of their skin or the country of their origin, no financial troubles of yours will be resolved. This, unless we all dream of working day and night at traffic lights, brothels, as street traders, builders, or cleaners for a crust of bread. Neither will your social troubles be resolved, since you will always have an inferiority complex —since you have it now too— inferiority and depreciation of your life by someone you consider to be your anterior.

The solution will always come through the social awareness and collective nuclei of resistance against those who truly suck away our lives. Those who convict in absentia those from below in terms of class, condemning them to a total, reciprocal extermination under the veil of order, security and prosperity. The same order and security that sent the young demonstrator Y.K. to the intensive care unit (and another 70 demonstrators to the hospital), following the consecutive murderous blows he received by the uniformed pigs, the executing force of their junto-democracy.

For the past 3 days and continuing on from the turmoil that followed

the murder of M.K., the squats of the Plateia Victorias area saw some attempts of organised attacks by golden dawn members, so-called “indignant residents” [the term often used in mass media as a euphemism for fascists/racists — trans.] —and don’t you ever dare call them racists!— and cops. Chronologically, the first such attempt happened on May 10th at the squat of Patision and Skaramaga, with the fascists trying to attack the squat aided by cops who threw tear gas at the squatters to force them retreat inside the building.

Immediately afterwards was the turn of Villa Amalias. In all these three days the aforementioned fascists tried to attack the squat but they were unsuccessful, as the crouching together and solidarity of those who see part of their self in Villa prevented this aim. In their attempt they found a helping hand, as in all their actions up to date, in the police. Sometimes hand by hand and lined up together, sometimes with the cops in the front and their fascist poodles following behind, sometimes the other way round. In any case this illegal relationship of affection and passion between the Greek police and fascists has started to become legalised a long while ago, and it has been blatantly covered up not only by the state (that is, the employer of both) but by the media as well (a faithful contractor and associate of the state in dealing with tasks of social stupor and distortion of events). Or, with the narration of history either cut in half, or distorted. The truth in just three lines is that they came, they got their response —and not only that— and they bolted,

because their procurers threw us tear gas. End of the story.

All these “gentlemen” should make clear in their minds that for us, people and ideas are not disposable products or part of some trend that we would change or bin at the first instance. Our responses, from whatever post they are given, will always be collective, dynamic and unabridged — they will not be supported or manipulated by anyone who wants to gain from bodies, whether metaphorically or literally. For us life has no “price tag” to negotiate in the markets of nationalities and their falsified national pride.

We have written this in the past but we do not tire ourselves in repeating it: we consciously find ourselves facing and against any exploiter, procurer and heroin dealer, regardless of nationality. Yet we also know that what is lacking is neither more police (there is an excess of that), the demand for order and security, nor of course the racist propaganda and fascist violence. What is lacking is the courage of the contact and association with what is different, the mutual self respect and dignity, the attempts for cross-cultural coexistence and the (substantial, not para-statist) self-organising, which can heal many of the wounds of our multicultural/ proletarian neighbourhoods.

A HUMAN’S BLOOD SHALL NOT BECOME A SEA THAT THE FASCISTS CAN FISH OUT FROM.

- *a statement by the Villas Amalias squat regarding the events of the past few days..*

Untangling the Knots



To identify and expel liberal ideology from revolutionary practice.

A collectivised muscle-memory

The most recent demonstration at Villawood Detention Centre in April once more displayed the level of torpor and ingrained passivity that restrains social movements in Australia from reaching any level of radical militancy that they might actually become threatening to the state. In a remarkable act of self-policing, reflecting some bizarre collectivised version of muscle memory, the demonstration automatically stopped at a one metre high brick wall that surrounds Villawood so as to gather around the area where the endless line of speakers were to be presented.

Despite the lack of police presence and just 2 security guards and 50 metres separating us from the first row

of proper fences, when a couple of us crossed that imaginary line there was no inclination to follow from the mass of this demo. Just a few days after the detainees that we were acting in solidarity with had burnt their confines to the ground, and embarrassingly within sight of those still occupying the roof, the rally just stopped dead. It was another indication that a reactionary, conservative instinct has impressed itself on any potential for action here.

The purpose of this article is to identify the source of that reactive, conservative instinct as the ideology of liberalism, which has become the framework through which dissent to the status quo in Australia must always pass. It is a framework from which anarchists and other anti-authoritarian revolutionaries must detach ourselves so as to create alternative ways of

expressing our disaffection with the capitalist, social democratic system we live under and our absolute rebellion against it. While I am not specifically attempting to define the entirety of liberal ideology, I will attempt to identify the ways in which this ideology manifests itself amongst revolutionary spaces and afflicts the potential of our action.

Liberal neutrality?

While starting from the specific point of the occurrence of a protest or demonstration, it is important to recognise that the negative impacts of liberalism extend far beyond the particular material or physical space where protest occurs. It's most significant impact is discursive – it dominates the language of any oppositional politics to such an extent that it can become difficult to even imagine, let alone express a more radical vision. And it does so all the while claiming a position of neutrality, a supposed moral high-ground of non-politics. If it's not seen as ideological it is because it dominates political discourse so thoroughly.

It's really important here not to fall into the habit of speaking as if radicals and revolutionaries have politics and that liberals don't, that they just need an injection of politics. Liberalism is very much an ideological vision – it is a way of seeing and interpreting the world and seeking change in it. The key defining feature of this ideology is the sense that society is an organisation of individuals and the state, with the state playing the role of mediating those

relationships. In *How Non-Violence Protects the State*, Peter Gelderloos explains that:

“In this analysis, government is a neutral and passive decision-making authority that responds to public pressures. It is at best fair and at worst beset by a culture of conservatism and ignorance. But it is not structurally oppressive.”

It is accepted then, that there might be 'injustices', but that they can be reconciled. For liberals, it is ultimately both in ours and the state's interests to reconcile those differences and have everything run smoothly. As citizens in the nation-state, we all ultimately have the same interests and where we do have opposing interests or opinions, we can settle them through the mediation of democracy. In other words, we can have nice capitalism.

Stage-managing the 'right to protest'

Liberal ideology around the assumption of the freedom to protest constructs protest as an event that should happen in a certain form and look a certain way. It is viewed as the right of citizens in a democracy and plays the part of being the most visual element in a broader societal discussion around particular 'progressive' issues (eg, anti-war, pro-refugee, gay marriage). It is very much *an event* to be planned and stage-managed in minute detail so that it doesn't step out of bounds from the 'legitimate' confines of mainstream discourse. The right people from the right political organisations will have to be on the speaker's list and their

supporters will carry placards that say little more than the name of that organisation (or in the case of The Greens at Villawood, no more).

This view of protest as a 'right' underlines how liberalism ties dissent to the functioning of the state. In *Pacifism as Pathology*, Ward Churchill describes the effect of this relationship:

"This comfortable scenario is enhanced by the mutual understanding that certain levels of "appropriate" (symbolic) protest of given policies will result in the "oppositional victory" of their modification (i.e., really a "tuning" of policy by which it may be rendered more functional and efficient, never an abandonment of fundamental policy thrusts), while efforts to move beyond this metaphorical medium of dissent will be squelched "by any means necessary" and by all parties concerned."

This is basically a description of the idea of the 'spectacle of opposition', where the occurrence of a certain amount of unthreatening protest allows the state to uphold the mirage that dissent is allowed.

The rights-based idea of protest that is dependent on a relationship with the state has defined how asylum seekers have been viewed within the 'refugee movement' – as they are not citizens and therefore have no rights or agency, it is us, as good liberal citizens, that must raise our voices on their behalf. It was noticeable at the Villawood rally that, despite occurring just a few days after detainees had burnt a few of the detention centre's buildings

to the ground in an extraordinarily defiant act of resistance, few speakers really referred to these actions. Further to this, a number of speakers focused particularly on the psychological effects of being kept in detention limbo. Without doubt such a situation would have damaging mental consequences for many people, however, in the context of the riot and the burning of the buildings, it seemed like some speakers had a specific agenda of pathologising militancy. The gist being that these were good people who had gone 'mad' inside.

Pathologising militancy

Pathologising or otherwise 'othering' those who partake in militant action is a typical response when liberalism is the main framework through which dissent is legitimised. How this works is best expressed in a text written by Gertrude and Fuschia responding to the (liberal and authoritarian socialist) left's outrage that the neatly stage-managed protest they had organised against the G20 meeting in Melbourne in 2006 had turned into a riot:

"A false dichotomy is set up between the role of the "disciplined", politically mature protester and the inarticulate other. The other is positioned as a person or a group too worn out by oppression to resist tactically. This other is protested for, or on behalf of, but we must never indulge in their tactics. Both property damage and any spontaneous, emotional embodiment of resistance are seen as apolitical, as reactions to be left (pun intended)

behind as we attain proper political maturity. 'Oppressed others' (in Redfern, Macquarie Fields, Palm Island, Lakemba) who are perhaps never expected by those who call for disciplined protest to reach the requisite levels of political maturity have been rhetorically defended for their "justified" anger. But those who set Macquarie Fields on fire are never presumed to be part of a mass resistance to capitalism."

The thing about all this of course is that we should have no interest in having our resistance 'legitimised'. In fact we should consider it extremely important that the idea of militant resistance is part of the everyday spaces and experiences of our lives so as to subvert that very idea that dissent can only occur in the narrowly defined 'political' spaces created to be separate from that.

The potential of militant spontaneity within protest is written out of the liberal idea of how change occurs, but then that shouldn't be a surprise if we see liberalism as about changing government policy instead of changing society. Revolutionary militancy is uncontrollable and threatening. As much as it can directly confront capitalist social relations and the functioning of the state, it also challenges the comfortable view that capitalist social relations and the functioning of the state can be made 'nicer' through particular stage-managed types of opposition.

This is not to say that all people who partake in such demonstrations do

not *want* real systemic change. Just that liberalism has such a monopoly on the discourse through which change is talked about in Australia – it is the canvas on which every sketch of dissent is etched. It is up to us to make a complete break from this by removing our implicit support of such scenarios – to stop thinking that it's always better that at least *something* is happening. Sometimes it *is* better to just stand back and consider what is necessary to enact actual solidarity. Just as liberal forms of protest prop up the status quo by participating within the accepted confines of discussion around particular issues, we prop up liberal forms of dissent when we organise our actions and energy to participate within this framework.

Disrupting the spectacle of dissent

A revolutionary view of protest should not see it as participating in a broader societal discourse of rights, reforms and 'having our say', but as entirely disrupting that discourse. It should remove itself from any idea of a 'right to protest', specifically because of how this affirms the concept of citizenship, and from that, tying ourselves to the interests and functioning of the state. The spectacle of a conformist, disempowered demonstration pleading to a higher authority must be negated. While often that negation will involve focusing our energies anywhere but those very demonstrations, there is also the potential to change the script within the physical space created by these.

Being even a little organised beforehand can do a lot to break the feeling of alienation and disempowerment that these rallies often engender. While it is completely understandable that people are skeptical about the purpose of these events it is also possible to push at the edges of these rallies and increase the level of struggle. So many other people who go to these are also looking for a way to increase the threat on the state and feel more empowered beyond pleading to higher authorities to change policy. We don't have to be a vanguard or look to recruit them, we just need to use our methods to present alternative ways to behave beyond the 'civilised' walk around the block followed by speeches. Organising as a solid group that will look out for each other can lead us to having propaganda that expresses a more revolutionary politic, chants that go beyond empty sloganeering and, most importantly of course, a plan or idea about what action we are willing

to take that breaks the usual codes and hopefully challenges the authority of the state a bit.

To further begin to really disrupt this dominant liberal paradigm we must be confident and assertive in organising in different forms and taking risks. A few days after the rally that has been the basis of this article, a small group of people self-organised to occupy the roof of the office of immigration minister, Chris Bowen, in solidarity with the detainees on the roof in Villawood. Apart from being a direct act of solidarity, an action like this had the effect of injecting a bit of militancy and vibrancy into an otherwise stagnant campaign around asylum seekers that had too easily fallen back onto a disempowering, 'humanitarian' discourse. Even the speeches from supporters on the ground that day were suddenly fiery and revolutionary.

While we are unfortunately not at a point where we can say a roof

occupation can move us beyond the level of the symbolic – it occurred not because of the existence of a movement ready to fundamentally change society, but in spite of – it does immediately shift people's concept of what is possible away from the alienating, dead-end liberalism of the usual protest. As well as taking risks with our actions, it is also important to



take risks with how we articulate those actions. With the roof occupation, apart from the important secondary function of pushing the boundaries of what might be possible (assuming that its primary function was as an act of solidarity), it is additionally important to articulate its purpose in revolutionary terms so that it does not simply fall into being categorised by the standards of liberalism.

This was a lesson learnt after the protests against the G20, when what had looked like simply being just another summit protest had become a militant anti-police riot. As many people were being arrested in house raids in the months after, there was a real problem of articulating those actions in a radical way. While this problem revolved around a number of issues, its most obvious manifestation was in how even some revolutionaries who were attempting to show solidarity with arrestees constantly felt it was necessary to justify the riot within the discourse of a 'right to protest'. A large part of why this occurred was in an attempt to win liberal-types to the solidarity campaign. However, this was only marginally successful and it might well have been more interesting and worthwhile to make the argument that people attacked the cops because, well, people don't like the police. To see if that approach would have any broad value in building solidarity with the many people who might also have similar feelings. While a few people did try to express the politics of the protest in this way, the discursive space had once again been so thoroughly dominated by liberal rhetoric that

it was hard to work out how to say something different without feeling completely off the wall.

The ceaseless knots of reformism

In relation to Australia's particularly conservative version of capitalist democracy, liberal forms of oppositional politics are reified as the legitimate forms. Legitimised, not just legally, but in a very psychological way so that passive rallies, petitions, lobbying, voting, posters in windows, etc carried out in the name of particular organisations (unions, The Greens, NGO's, religious groups) compromise the scope of most people's idea of dissent. These forms of dissent, needless to say, have no effect on the functioning of capitalist society and are nearly always reformist.

It is important to see the form as inherently containing the politics by which they are created. A more exciting, revolutionary approach will not suddenly explode from a series of boring rallies because their very occurrence is a sign of the embedded psychological stains of liberalism that serves to restrict the scope of dissent beyond those passive rallies. This leaves anarchists no option but to politically remove ourselves from such a framework – to start again. Hopefully we will be untangling ourselves from the ceaseless knots of reformist politics.

There are numerous examples of ways in which anarchists have become overly concerned and tangled within structures and campaigns that have



no intention of moving beyond liberal reformism. While potentially controversial, it is worth naming these, although it is important to point out here that I am not absolutely arguing that engagement with these things *must* never happen. I am willing to accept there might be particular situational instances that makes such engagement necessary, however the problem arises when liberal reformism is seen as a strategic step towards a more revolutionary approach.

The most obvious example here, is that of choosing to constantly participate in the campaigns and structures of mainstream unions and their hierarchies in the hope that organising workers in this way will eventually empower them enough that they begin to self-organise in non-bureaucratized, non-statist forms. The recent history of unions suggests the exact opposite – that instead they disempower and

pacify workers struggle. The campaign against *Workchoices* exemplified this in its extremely conservative rhetorical focus on ‘working families’ and in how the Unions stopped it cold when it became clear the ALP had the momentum to win the forthcoming election.

A further example is in how Greens politicians and members are seen as okay people to have alliances with or to garner support from for things that we are doing. To do this is to give tacit support to the electoral politics they are tied into and to add a particular cred to their attempts to be seen as some oppositional, ‘activist’ party. These ties exist particularly in environmentalist circles where ‘alliance-building’ of this kind is particularly entrenched. The inherent contradictions of this style of political practice are shown up in the odd alliances that have come to exist in the campaign against climate change,

with revolutionaries and strident reformists often working hand in hand. It is a problem to keep choosing to partake in these liberal alliances, when so much of the remaining terrain for potentially building real revolutionary solidarity goes ignored.

Attacking the roots at the bottom

Liberalism is not merely propagating a few reformist steps on the road to revolution but is instead an inversion of revolutionary practice. Even when not being practised in an ideological fashion, liberal tendencies within radical movements act as a tourniquet to all social tension by always holding back, always aiming for the reformist solution first. This is a critical issue in the Australian context. Many revolutionaries here will argue that there is nothing wrong with winning a few policy reforms in the context of a more radical movement. This position is possibly reasonable except that it is usually articulated in a simplistic, matter-of-fact kind of way without the many clauses to it being thoroughly interrogated.

The main issue is one of focus – when the main objective becomes to change government policy, to count those changes as victories and to hope these ‘victories’ are enough to pull more people into a more radical movement, the revolutionary potential ceases to exist. There is no such thing as winning enough reforms – of layering them on top of each other until some magical point where this top-heavy mass succeeds in pulling the roots out

of this society. This is very different to attacking the roots at the bottom, to the existence of a revolutionary movement which through the power it builds can force the state and capital on the defensive to where they make reforms in an attempt to soothe social unrest (obviously then, there is a further question of how to take reforms ‘won’ this way to ensure they do not have that soothing function). A few victories of this sort in such a context can help strengthen solidarity between people and build an even stronger sense of empowerment.

Where there seems to be a general lack of hope that revolutionary ideas can have any purchase in the actual, grounded functioning of our day to day lives, it’s no wonder that many revolutionaries are constantly choosing to participate in broad, ‘big-issue’ campaigns. These are usually dominated by liberals and more often than not they take the form of a humanitarian-style struggling on behalf of others. Here the cliched language of ‘humanitarian emergency’ serves to hide any attempt to expose the structural causes of such an emergency or to argue for radical solutions, instead liberal tactics are once again the only non-partisan, non-ideological ones. As Slavoj Zizek argues in the book *Violence*:

“It is precisely the neutralisation of some features into a spontaneously accepted background that marks out ideology at its purest and at its most effective. This is the dialectical ‘coincidence of opposites’: the actualisation of a notion or an ideology at its purest

coincides with, or, more precisely, appears as its opposite, as non-ideology.”

So instead government is seen as the most likely and least ideological source of a change and so the campaign is reduced to pleading for policy reforms. Apply this analysis to campaigns against the Northern Territory intervention, refugees being locked up in detention centres or the campaign against climate change and I would argue it generally holds true.

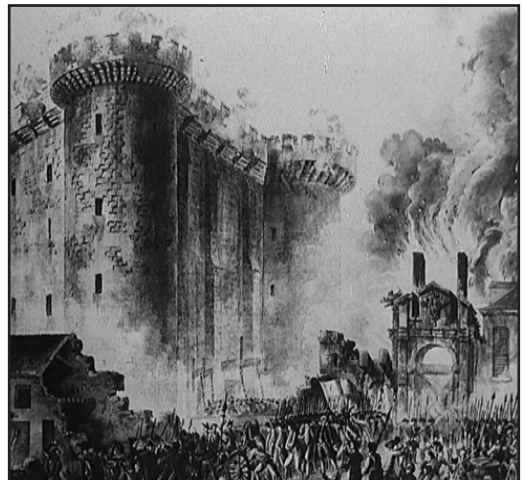
Amongst the problems with trying to win reforms in the hope of building a bigger, more radical movement is that this style of politics invariably leads to building alliances with liberals when our energies could be better spent building solidarity with the many more people antagonistically struggling against the oppressive impositions of capital and the state on their lives. And the first step in building that solidarity is recognising the points of friction and antagonism in our own lives and treating those as the most important ‘campaigns’ we could be involved in. From there we can find where our struggles intersect with those of other people. Even in simple terms, an anarchist analysis of the the structures and functioning of capitalism suggests those intersections are numerous.

Everything is possible

It is possible to find more inspiring methods and in doing so we should seek to reflect whatever disillusionment and antagonism exists towards mainstream political operations rather than try and ‘politicise’ that disillusionment by

recuperating it into the mainstream discourse. While such recuperation would never be the explicit purpose of anarchism, when we constantly align ourselves with reformists and liberals in campaigns and ‘movements’ we are inevitably playing into this process.

Even if actual revolution in Australia seems inconceivable (and as an aside, I don’t believe in a set formula for how to predict if revolt is likely), a position of uncompromising resistance to the systems that oppress us all and of building solidarity with others in struggle seems to be a more worthwhile and dignified way to live than to constantly employ a strategy of trying to make small improvements that really only serve the functioning of capital and the state. Anarchists should not be watering down our politics at this time, assuming that people are only ready to hear something else – that something else, liberal reformism, has had its chance. When nothing more seems likely, everything is possible.



A Final Call

“Hurry up and say no, before a new repression convinces you that to say no is nonsensical and crazy and that you should accept the hospitality of an asylum. Hurry up and attack the capital, before a new ideology makes it sacred for you. Hurry up and refuse work, before a new sophist tells you: Work makes you free. Hurry up and play. Hurry up and arm yourself.”



