

Sedition



A JOURNAL OF
AUSTRALIAN ANARCHIST THOUGHT

NUMBER 2, MARCH 2014

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

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Sedition Number Two is a mutual collaboration between two geographically disparate Australian anarchist collectives, **Melbourne Anarchist Club** and the **Jura** collective from Sydney. This project is an irregular publication for discussing the way forward for anarchist groups and anarchism in Australia, both in theory and praxis. We aim to establish better communication and organisational networks between our groups and to produce thought provoking literature. The groups involved in creating *Sedition* do not necessarily agree with the articles published in this journal.

If you'd like to contribute with an article, art or respond to an article in this edition, or if you have any queries, please contact us at seditionjournal@gmail.com.

Responses may be published on www.anarchy.org.au.

This edition was edited by delegates Benjamin Smith (MAC) and Jeremy Kay (*Jura*).

Printed March 2014.

MEET THE ANARCHISTS

Jura

JURA ANARCHIST BOOKSHOP, LIBRARY AND ORGANISING space is a collectively owned and run space, which exists primarily to further progressive, anarchist change in society. We do this by running a physical space where people can organise, by distributing anarchist material, and by organising talks and other events. At Jura Books, we are working to create a radically different world: one based on freedom, equality and justice for everyone, as well as environmental sustainability for all life on the planet. We believe this can only be achieved by an organised and politically conscious social movement, based on participatory democracy and workers control. Our collective aims to help to build this movement. We seek to bring the ideas of anarchism to ever-widening circles of people. We operate as an organised, participatory democratic, volunteer collective. We send out a monthly email newsletter full of upcoming events and anarchist ideas. Subscribe at our website.

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Melbourne Anarchist Club

“ANARCHISM IS BOTH A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND a social movement. As a social movement, anarchism aims to create a classless, non-hierarchical society; that is, a society ‘without rulers’ (anarchy). As a political philosophy, anarchism maintains that the creation of such a society is both possible and desirable. Anarchists are those who actively work towards realising this possibility.”

—MAC Aims & Principles

MAC collectively owns and manages a building that houses an anarchist library, holds regular meetings, reading groups, film screenings and social events. We seek to engage society to promote anarchist ideas and organising. The club supports other projects such as:

- ▼ Anarres Books (an anarchist book service),
- ▼ the offices of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation.

We are open to the public just about every Sunday afternoon, with events held throughout the week.

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THE POSITIVE CONTENT OF ANARCHISM

by Benjamin Smith (MAC)

Anarchism is a revolutionary social movement through which common people organise together in an attempt to exert greater control over their lives. It is committed to the idea that “man [sic.] is not only the most individual being on earth; he is also the most social being” (Bakunin), and contends that individual freedom can only be achieved through the active support of other people, and requires assisting others in turn.

THROUGHOUT ITS 141-YEAR HISTORY, the philosophy and practice of the anarchist movement has emerged through an unceasing unfolding and elaboration of a single idea: autonomy.

Autonomy is not the freedom to do whatever one wants whenever one wants. Autonomy [*auto* self, *nomos* law] is the act of giving the law to oneself, both individually and collectively, and it requires thinking critically about the type of society one wants to live in, and applying those ideas consistently in order to bring that society into being.

Unlike liberals – who mistakenly tend to see the freedom of the individual and the claims of the collective as irreconcilably opposed, and who therefore seek to limit society’s claims on the individual via the promotion of exclusive property rights – anarchists understand that individual freedom and collective freedom are mutually reinforcing, and that no individual can be truly free unless he or she is free to participate equally, directly and collectively in all decisions that affect him or her. For this reason, anarchism can be understood as the extension of democracy to every institution of society. Anarchist practice is constituted by the search for creative ways to realise this

democratic commitment.

Anarchism’s commitment to democracy means it is opposed to all forms of power that prevent individuals controlling their own lives through collective participation in the decisions of society:

- ▼ Anarchists seek to overthrow capitalism, because they understand that private property means privatised control of the means of production, distribution, exchange and communication, and that this privatisation of control prevents the great majority of people from participating in the decisions that affect them.

That capitalism is essentially and necessarily exploitative is an important reason for anarchist resistance to it, however, anarchists are not merely interested in alleviating poverty via the implementation of an economic socialism. Anarchists understand that the capacity of capitalists to exploit workers is predicated on the decision-making power that private ownership confers.

Anarchists desire libertarian socialism, which is socialism of a particularly political nature: a political socialism orientated not just to equality of wealth but equal participation in social deliberation. In place of capitalism, anarchists seek to establish collective ownership in the form of democratic self-management by workers over industry.

- ▼ Anarchists seek a reformed union movement, because they know that the rotation of members through union posts subject to limited mandate and immediate recall is the only way to stimulate an active membership and to foster fighting spirit; whereas electing officials to the comforts of paid office reduces members to a passive clientele, and leads office bearers toward stagnation, corruption and collusion with the interests of capital. Only a fully democratic and active participation in union activities can achieve the self-organisation of workers into a mass movement capable of ending capitalism. Only a fully democratic and active participation in union activities can cultivate the spontaneity and responsibility required to ensure the democratic provision of society's needs.
- ▼ Anarchists seek to destroy the state, because they know that its centralisation of power can only result in a self-perpetuating class of professional politicians, who identify with and serve the capitalist and rent-seeking classes that finance their election campaigns, and whose only interest is ensuring the continued oppression and exploitation of urban and rural labour. In place of the state anarchists seek a de-centralisation of power, and the state's replacement by democratic industrial- and community-based communes, free to associate into federative structures of mutual co-operation and exchange, whilst protecting the democratic autonomy of local groups. By preserving the right not to implement initiatives they

refuse to ratify, and to secede from federations that no longer promote their interests, anarchist groups compel each other to respect the autonomy of their fellows and to associate under terms of mutual reciprocity. It is by compelling mutual respect that stable, lasting and complex modes of communication, exchange and support will be created, and from which all members of society may benefit.

Anarchism is frequently characterised as being non-political. In reality it is hyper-political and refuses, totally, any participation in that pseudo-democratic travesty that is representative parliamentarianism, which is a fraud enacted on working masses to ensure oligarchical regimes in the service of capital perpetuate themselves as the illusion of democracy. To participate in the election of representatives, whose very being is the negation of universal political equality, not only constitutes an implicit endorsement of a regime intended to de-politicise the masses by eliciting their passive acquiescence to being ruled over by a minority clique, it entails, via its suppression of the creative and self-legislating spontaneity of the wider population, all the irrationality of self-castration.

DEMOCRATIC POLITICS,
LIKE ALL POLITICS, IS A
SITE OF AGON.

For all their sincerely held belief in social co-operation and mutual aid, anarchists are neither pacifists nor hippies, and anarchism is not, nor has ever been, a vision of political harmony. Political harmony is the illusion of totalitarians, and both Mussolini and Lenin, for all their differences regarding the ultimate fate of the state, were united in their shared belief in a utopia in which the political sphere would cease to exist.

Democratic politics, like all politics, is a site of *agon*. But only democratic politics, in which deliberation is open to the direct participation of all, is truly committed to "the unforced force of the better argument" and a genuine contest of ideas. Anarchy means universal and direct participation in argument and decision-making becomes the norm.

Anarchy is autonomy, individual and

collective. And anarchism seeks to extend this democratic vision of a universal, direct, participatory and egalitarian politics to every institution of society.

Postscript

The text printed above was conceived with dual purposes. The first, plainly enough, was to provide a succinct summary of anarchism, so that its essential nature could be grasped by those unfamiliar with it. The second was to write this summary from a perspective, and using a conceptual repertoire, I'd found personally useful, but which I'd also found to be somewhat foreign to many long-time anarchists with whom I'd been conversing here in Melbourne. Some will no doubt have found the ideas expressed here congenial. Others less so. And perhaps this is as it should be.

The idea of putting pen to paper in this way came in June 2013 as a response to the discussions held at the "Towards Federation Anarchist Conference" held at the Melbourne Anarchist Club on June 8 and 9, 2013. The conference's open forum, held on Saturday June 8th, was structured around four questions which were intended to assay whether sufficient agreement about the nature of anarchism existed among the individuals present, many of whom were members of established anarchist groups, to think seriously about federating. It also provided opportunity for definitional issues to be thrashed out prior to the plenary session the following day, at which delegates from four groups debated the terms of draft constitution, before taking it back to their respective groups for further debate.

During the open forum four questions were used to sequence and give structure to the debate: *What is anarchism? What is an anarchist? What is an anarchist group? and What is an anarchist federation?* It was an extremely productive discussion to have participated in, and demonstrated that, despite some clear differences of emphasis and preferred idiom, there was greater agreement among those present than we had initially anticipated about the concepts and value orientations that, woven together, constitute the fabric of anarchist philosophy and practice.

During these discussions some of the following thoughts occurred to me; the first being that many of the positive values nominated – such as *freedom, equality, liberty and solidarity* – are

extremely abstract, and therefore admit the possibility of people projecting onto them diverse and frequently contradictory content. It is for this reason that they are also laid claim to by rival ideologies, and so must be honed through elaboration and example before they take on a specifically anarchist edge. Simply listing them is not sufficient. Others values – such as *direct action*, *direct democracy*, *federalism* and *social revolution* – whilst expressing anarchism’s sceptical and cautious attitude towards power invested in representatives and intermediaries, also require substantial elaboration to explain how they are best realised through practice. This is no small task, and, needless to say, the devil is always to be found in the detail.

Given these terminological issues, I was also struck by how frequently those assembled resorted to articulating their thoughts in negative terms, defining anarchism in contradistinction to that which it is not, and especially to those things to which anarchism stands vigorously opposed: *capitalism*, *the state*, social hierarchy, *racism*, *sexism*... in short oppression and exploitation in all its forms, and which rival ideologies have either failed to tackle effectively, or, indeed, have imposed or harnessed for their own ends. It is these observations that compelled me to make an attempt at setting out my own approach to anarchism, an approach conceived in unambiguously positive terms, the results of which are contained in the above text, which was approved from printing and distribution as a pocket book under the aegis of the Melbourne Anarchist Club in September 2013.

Yet, the necessity of articulating what I understand to be the positive content of anarchism, also demands that account of anarchism’s negativity be given. The assertion alone is insufficient and ought convince no one.

The act of defining anarchism in negative terms has a long and venerable history within the anarchist tradition, and need not be rejected outright. Indeed, Proudhon’s original embrace of the title “anarchist” in his 1840 essay “What is property?” is itself an act of negative definition [*an-* without; *archē* power, domination, rulers], an act later given symbolic representation during the early 1880s when French anarchists adopted the black flag as their own,

seeing in its negation of colour a physical representation of the spirit of opposition in which they shared. In the words of Louise Michel, the “black flag is the flag of strikes and the flag of those who are hungry”, and who would stand up and fight against the sources of their hunger. It is fitting that hunger and anger should be represented in this way.

The act of negation also has a rich philosophical pedigree courtesy of Hegelian philosophy, which both Proudhon and Baukunin had each studied independently of the other during the 1830s. Hegel’s philosophy is premised on the utterly modern idea that rational concepts, far from being timeless and universal, have a history that must be traced if the underlying truth of things – humanity’s potential for freedom – is to be grasped and made real. In this context, the negative is that which represents potentialities yet-to-be-realised, and which stand in opposition to the positivity of contemporary institutions. This philosophically-rich vein of negation – which in both the Marxist and anarchist traditions stands for utopian potential of revolution – continues to exist as part of the anarchist conceptual universe, the most recent local example of which was the December 2013 re-publication by the Grupo Cultural de Estudios Sociales de Melbourne of David Thoreau Wieck’s 1976 essay “The Negativity of Anarchism” in *Libertarian Anthology IV*. Negativity is therefore a means of conceptualising the commitment to struggle which anarchists adopt.

Yet, while the re-publication of Wieck’s essay is both timely and thought provoking, it is precisely this instinctive resort to the Hegelian concept of negativity that the above text reacts against. While intransigent negativity in the face of modern barbarism is one of the wellsprings from which anarchist militancy draws nourishment, we cannot expect that those new to anarchism will have been exposed to the cultural and philosophical currents that serve to make its traditional idiom intelligible. In addition to making ourselves clearer and spreading our ideas more effectively, mastering other idioms also means increasing our mental and linguistic dexterity, making us capable of articulating the concepts that motivate our actions in a variety of ways, and allowing us to adapt our modes of expression to a variety of interlocutors

and contexts. For this reason, we should not be afraid of critically adopting positive terms, albeit ones that are 'positive' in an explicitly non-Hegelian sense. The above text seeks to do this via a critical appropriation of the concept of autonomy.

There are reasons (mistaken in my opinion) why anarchists have traditionally refrained from fully embracing the language of autonomy, tending to limit its expression to the prerogative of federated groups not to be obligated by decisions they refuse to ratify. One of these reasons is that *nomos* denotes law, and thus has the (superficial) appearance of endorsing abstract legalism, and, with it, forms of domination enforced by state power. Yet, the real meaning of *nomos* is much broader, comprehending all things constituted by the act of arranging, including norms, social conventions, and those things defined by acts of *nomination*; hence the sense of nominating how things are arranged which invests cognate terms as *astronomy*, *economy*, *taxonomy*. The second is that *auto*, denoting the self, has to the ears of many anarchists the unacceptable ring of individualism, and thus seems to have overtones consonant with liberalism's pursuit of selfish ends. However, the self which *auto* denotes can also be a collective self: a community, a society, a *polis*. An autonomous society is one that puts its current institutions in question and seeks to consciously and rationally redefine itself; and the collective expression of this autonomy is direct, democratic participation in decision making. It is this conception of autonomy – rarely so named, yet skirted around using other terms – that strikes me as central to anarchism as a form of post-Enlightenment social and political thought opposed to forms of domination imposed by capitalism and the state.

This use of the term is not original to myself, but has been appropriated from the writings of Cornelius Castoriadis, a figure usually considered to be a libertarian socialist, and therefore outside the traditional canon of anarchist thinkers, but who is nonetheless a philosopher whose writings ought to be of interest to anarchists, not least due to his counter-intuitive, yet (in my opinion) persuasive, insistence that there are ways in which de-centralised and direct democratic forms of deliberation can be coupled within modern, mass-industrial societies organised through central economic

planning. No doubt this apparently paradoxical claim will be met with scepticism, especially by anarchists, who may be forgiven for detecting in it shades of bolshevism, Leninist "democratic centralism", and the much hated state. There is not enough space here for me to do justice to Castoriadis' argument, I strongly urge those interested in pursuing such lines of inquiry to access those texts by Castoriadis tackled in September and August 2013 by Melbourne's Fantin Reading Group, and which are available for download at fantinreadinggroup.wordpress.com. I hope *Sedition* may provide a vehicle in which these ideas may be debated.

To conclude, perhaps the most important lesson to be taken from Castoriadis writings is his contention that autonomy has both individual and collective aspects which are mutually reinforcing and must be asserted simultaneously. The idea that anyone can attain individual autonomy in a society that suppresses his full and direct participation in democratic decision-making is one that Castoriadis attacks vigorously, and anarchists should recognise in this Castoriadis' own debt to Mikhail Bakunin's anthropological claim that humans are not only the most individual of animals, but also the most social.

HOW I BECAME AN ANARCHIST

by Nic, Jay & Stuart (Jura)

Three members of the Jura Collective tell their stories of politicisation.

Nic Neven

LIKE MANY COMRADES, MY ROAD to anarchism was a long, circuitous one. A commitment to anarchism, or indeed any philosophy is the culmination of many small internal and external events, disappointments, realisations, books read and people met along the way.

My journey began as a teenager, when I became absorbed with certain questions I had about life, such as why it was that people were born free but seemed to become less and less so as they got older? Why were some people less free than others? Why was power and authority invested in those who seemed the least deserving and the most unwilling to create real social change?

I bothered my parents, teachers and friends with these questions constantly.

I was particularly concerned about the prevalence of social and environmental injustice. I could see it everywhere, yet to my surprise and disappointment, the majority of people I knew barely acknowledged this state of affairs and tolerated it as just the Way Things Are. Eventually, like many idealistic young people I was recruited to join Resistance, the youth chapter of the Socialist Alliance,

on a street corner by one of their paper-sellers. Soon I was also standing on street corners around the city, attempting to flog *Direct Action* (now *Green Left Weekly*) to uninterested passers-by. It was hard work, but I was thrilled that I had found a group who seemed to have answers to some of my questions.

Unfortunately, I found the meetings a bit of a chore, mainly because they were consumed by discussions that were barely relevant to current social issues. Two themes predominated: which of the two Great Men was the Greatest – Lenin or Trotsky; and, Trotsky, was he Good or Bad? The majority who thought Trotsky was Good, attempted to convince those

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who thought he was Bad for the sake of ideological accord. Somehow, the urgency to create social change was lost in all this talk and I started to feel that my socialism was just an intellectual bauble. In addition, the structure of the meetings was quite authoritarian, and we younger members felt alienated because our contribution was limited.

During this time I picked up a copy of Emma Goldman's, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, probably because it reflected my own feelings on the subject. In it, she criticised the Bolsheviks from a non-statist perspective. The Bolsheviks had repeated many of the mistakes of the capitalist social order by creating a hierarchical, centralised, communist state. I was impressed by this book and discussed it with some comrades. They conceded that

...IT WAS BOREDOM THAT
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the Bolshevik revolution had failed in its revolutionary aims in Russia, but were at pains to point out that communism had 'succeeded' in Cuba.

They also told me that Emma Goldman was an anarchist and that anarchists were a sloppy, lazy lot who couldn't organise their way out of a paper bag. Moreover, Goldman was an opponent of the Great Man, Trotsky (gasp)! In spite of this, I was excited that I had found one more way to make sense of the world. Surreptitiously, I continued to read up about anarchism as I fell deeper and deeper into ennui with socialism. Yes, it was boredom that finally drove me from the Resistance League.

For many years afterward, I passively objected to the system by refusing to exercise my 'right' to vote, but didn't engage in radical political activism, reasoning that most forms of resistance were ineffectual if not futile. If anyone mentioned politics to me, my eyes would glaze over. Over these years, I barely came into contact with anarchism, largely because anarchists don't normally stand on street corners and proselytise to the public. The few individuals I met who styled themselves as anarchists were non-affiliated and as disengaged as I was.

Then one day, I was walking down Parramatta Road and a beautiful rainbow appeared over one of the shops, (trumpets blare). I had found Jura, a group of real, live, sweaty anarchists! Just kidding.

On a more serious note, however, I want to stress the importance of spaces such as Black Rose and Jura for providing physical contact points for those interested to get involved in anarchism, and as centres to organise from. Without them, anarchist culture will not flourish!

To cut a long story shorter, I found a genuine willingness to engage in social

change and to revise old ideological dogmas at Jura, and for that I am grateful.

Jay Kerr

AS A TWELVE YEAR OLD WANNABE PUNK who had just discovered The Sex Pistols, I asked my father, 'Dad, what is anarchy?' after hearing *Anarchy in the UK*. 'It means no government' he replied, 'but that's impossible. You can't have a world without any government, there has to be *something*'. 'Oh', I said, and fell silent, pondering his answer, feeling unconvinced that this could be the case, that what Jonny Rotten was singing about was impossible, there had to be more to it than that.

I never pursued the question further back then, I went onto other interests and other punk bands as music came to be a major part of my life. But a seed had been planted.

Six years later I went off to college, an optional post-school pit stop in the Britain before going on to university or employment. In studying politics I soon rediscovered that question from years before, but now framed, 'what is anarchism?'

I found another unsatisfactory answer as my teacher explained anarchism in a little more detail, saying that 'the anarchist believes that if all government was abolished tomorrow the world would be a better place, we would all just go on living our lives and things would work themselves out', and he gestured sweepingly with his arm across the fifth floor window, out over the landscape below. A vision of chaos came to the minds of everyone in the class as we contemplated what the teacher had said.

I was unconvinced but undeterred. I began to study and seek my own answers. I soon discovered the *Anarchist FAQ* website on the internet, and read that anarchy is a world without hierarchy, where no government existed, where no authority dictated, where no one ruled another. In a state of anarchy all would be equal without denying the freedom of the individual; a freedom that would be restrained only by the freedom of others.

This description of anarchism made sense to me. As a young punk I had come to consider my individuality sacred, while in my heart I felt a great hatred of injustice and social inequality. Now, in this description a vision of a new world opened up to me. Anarchism was freedom and

equality combined.

I went on to discover new ideas like federation, decentralisation and autonomy. I came to understand that anarchism means people working together, taking control of our lives and making decisions in our communities and workplaces together, as equals, building up from the local to the national and beyond. The seed that had been planted years before with that early question, 'what is anarchy?' was beginning to bear fruit. I became an anarchist.

Since then I have questioned the tenets of anarchism many times. I have questioned whether society can be organised without hierarchy, without government, without authority. Events in the world around us often make the idea seem remote. However, at some point along the way I discovered a concept that has helped me maintain my conviction: it already exists around us, in a sense, and can be seen everywhere – when friends and workmates help each other, when people take control of their lives and their communities, without waiting for permission or compulsion. As Colin Ward put it, anarchism is like a 'seed beneath the snow.'

So I continue to be an anarchist, to believe in the possibility of a truly free society. I join others in promoting this idea on a wider scale, and try to identify and nurture it in the world around me. In conversations I have with others, I look to plant those seeds, plant the idea that we can take our world back from the authorities that control it, and that people can exist without the dictates of a government.

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A few years ago the conversation of a family meal turned to politics, not the politics of the day but the ideas of politics. My father announced to everyone at the table that, years ago, he'd thought that "anarchism is impossible; you couldn't have a world without government, you had to have something. But since then, he

declared, after many conversations with my son, I have come to understand that anarchism isn't impossible, that it means more than simply having no government, anarchism is that something that could replace it." In that statement I knew another seed had been planted.

Stuart Highway

PEOPLE ASK YOU SOMETIMES WHY YOU are an anarchist. I wonder how anyone can not be an anarchist! Anyone who looks around and really thinks about things will be likely to reach the same conclusion.

The system we currently live under, of capitalism and hierarchical government, so often seems to bring out the worst in people; the ignorance, laziness, fear, hate and violence that we are all capable of. These negative human attributes can be promoted, manipulated and exploited by cynical politicians and others looking to give their careers a boost. The words of a Dead Kennedys song, *When Ya Get Drafted*, come to mind, '...Fan the fires of racist hatred, war is coming back in style, especially when you build the bombs that blow big cities off the map. Guess who profits when we build 'em back up. Big business gets what big business wants. Call the army, call the navy, stocked with kids from slums. If you can't afford a slick attorney we might make you a spy...'

I got into punk rock in my late teenage years. The rebel look appealed to me, the 'Fuck you!' attitude. It offered an exciting, defiant alternative to family conformity and suburban boredom. What was the point of being alive if you spent all your time doing as you're told, doing what's expected of you, not daring to question authority? It's a big world out there, with almost unlimited potential. Why let yourself be boxed in, limited and restricted by people who want to tell you what to do all the time?

I listened to as much punk music as I could get my hands on, and continued to read and to talk with people wherever I was. Trying to understand how the world worked and looking for a way to be. The more I learned and discovered, the more I realised that much of what I'd been brought up to believe wasn't true, or truly important. I read the *Sydney Morning Herald* for example to find answers, but it left me feeling frustrated and disappointed because much was left unexplained. Socialism seemed to make more sense. I felt a lot more comfortable

with it. And anarchism, when I discovered it, made even more sense.

I met someone who said she was an anarchist. I wanted to know how things would work without government and authority. That was the start of a learning process which is still ongoing 30 years later.

The more I read and learn and think, the stronger I become in my anarchist convictions. And you have to be strong to stand up against the cynicism, the negativity and hostility to anarchism.

Anarchism is a better way to do things. Doesn't it make sense to have mutual aid and voluntary co-operation, with equal access for all to power and society's wealth, rather than the chaotic system which is ruining our planet now? The Clive Palmers and Gina Rineharts of the world, for whose benefit the dominant system operates, have conned the rest of us into going along with it. They won't give up their power and wealth willingly. The more aware and organised we become, the sooner we'll be able to replace their system with a rational and sustainable anarchist one. The challenge for us is getting there from here.

It's not enough having convictions and ideas. It took me a while to realise this. We have to act on them, put them into practice in our day-to-day lives. Life is politics. Politics is life. There's no getting away from that. Those who say they're not 'political' and who shy away from taking a political stance are merely supporting the status quo by allowing it to continue.

'The strength of us all could demolish the walls...' (words from another song, by the Subhumans). It's up to all of us to realise this and do our bit. Let's play our part in history/herstory. There's that saying 'Be the change you want to see.' Yeah!

ANARCHIST CHRISTMAS COMES TO AUSTRALIA

by Jay Kerr (Jurd)

Class War's Iain Bone once described the London Anarchist Bookfair as the anarchists' Christmas – where people come together, meet up with old friends and enemies, and buy presents for ourselves and others.

IT'S TRUE THAT ANARCHIST BOOKFAIRS are a peculiar phenomenon, a strange cross of radical, anti-capitalist politics and blatant consumerism, but as an ever-proliferating event they are not easily dismissed.

Anarchist bookfairs have become a firmly established feature of radical diaries across the world. From humble beginnings in London some thirty odd years ago the bookfair idea has spread to cities across the globe, on almost every continent, including Australia, with Sydney holding its first in March 2014 while Melbourne plans its fourth for later in 2014.

The London Anarchist Bookfair now boasts 5,000 visitors, 100 stalls and 50 meetings in a single day, and other cities aren't far behind. The success of the idea is tangible. But why do so many people come to the bookfairs, while so few attend anarchist conferences and meetings?

Perhaps it's the relaxed atmosphere that a bookfair creates? A bookfair offers political ideas and discussion in a way that leaves the individual free to choose their own pace and path. Whereas meetings tend to be staunchly Political events (with an awkward hint of the social during the break), bookfairs are much more social events, with optional workshops and talks,

and an organic, accessible element of the political. A conference tends to attract politically-minded people; the converts and their detractors, with a predetermined agendas. A bookfair tends to attract a wider range of people interested in new ideas.

Yes, there's a commercial element in anarchist bookfairs, but it's largely in the service of an internal economy. Bookfairs support radical publishers and distributors, propagators of radical ideas and promote various campaigns.

In a world where political action is increasingly seen as defined by 'likes', 'tweets', and online petitions, bookfairs provide a space in the real world for libertarian activists to meet, exchange ideas and present our causes. We meet real people one-to-one and build real action.

So, is the anarchist bookfair just anarchists' Christmas? Well, maybe. But it's a Christmas in which ever more people are attending ever more bookfairs in ever more cities around the world. New contacts are being made, new comrades mingling among old, new readers are finding newly published radical books. Anarchist ideas are spreading.

THE WAGE SYSTEM AND ITS ABOLITION: TWO PERSPECTIVES

by Vin and Ben (MAC)

The following perspectives on the wage system, and the character its abolition might take, stem from an extended debate between Vin and Ben, two members of the Melbourne Anarchist Club.

An anarcho-communist perspective *by Vin*

THE CURRENT OF ANARCHISM THAT argued against the wage system, anarcho-communism, has existed since the founding of anarchist thought at the First International. Its political position is summed up by the maxim: from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs. While anarcho-communists were initially represented by the Italian section of the International, many other anarchists also agreed with the ideals of anarcho-communism, yet believed a transitional period of anarcho-collectivism (to each according to their deeds) was necessary. After Peter Kropotkin outlined the economics of anarcho-communism in *The Conquest of Bread*, anarcho-communism became a popular current in the anarchist movement. Many anarcho-syndicalist organisations such as the FORA, CNT and the IWW were against the wage system. Whilst the Free Territories of the Ukraine (1918-1921) and the Regional Defence Council of Aragon (1936-1937) operated quite successfully on anarcho-communist lines. This article will briefly outline why anarcho-communists argue for the

abolition of the wage system.

Everyone has different needs and abilities. It is therefore impossible to accurately and justly remunerate people for their work. All possible wage systems are somehow flawed: those based on time contributed discriminate against those who work faster, while in those based on quantitative production it is extremely difficult to determine precisely the relative contributions of workers in different occupations (e.g. comparing the productivity of a nurse to that of a chef). Furthermore, it will discriminate against the young, the old and the sick, since how can one accurately determine if one is mature enough, healthy enough or able enough to work? Moreover, we can expect that those who will gain advantage from a particular wage system will form a new class of the rich. The wage system will also be less efficient, as it would require a whole industry of bankers and accountants. Plus, workers would have no reason to innovate time-saving techniques, as their labour time would remain the same, or they would keep their new techniques to themselves, so they could work less, thus hindering the general spread of ideas.

The concept of remuneration is a capitalist construct, which ignores the

fact that humanity has existed under primitive-communism for millennia, when one could take what they needed and contributed voluntarily to their society. This belief that humans can only contribute to society under conditions of suspicion, coercion, assessment

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and repression is unnatural, alienating, humiliating and demeaning. And, as we all know, the one way to make an activity someone loves repulsive to them is to force them to do it. Furthermore, a system trying to squeeze workers of their labour would see workers resisting; they would work as little as possible for as much pay as possible. An historical example of this is recounted in Don Filtzer's *Labor discipline and the decline of the soviet system*, which argues that workers no longer disciplined by the threat of unemployment, as was the case in the USSR and its planned economy, resisted the alienation of the wage system so effectively through individual acts of shirking and theft that they caused the USSR to collapse.

Under anarcho-communism, in which people are certain of their access to goods, it would be absurd to hoard goods. They will not fill their houses with bottles of milk, or leave their showers going when not in use, nor will they borrow library books they won't read, nor get kidney transplants if they don't need new kidneys. Some scarcities may exist, meaning that there would continue to be luxuries, however, one equitable mechanism of distribution could be to form clubs for each luxury; for instance, if you want to drive antique cars, you would have to join a car enthusiasts' club in which you would be expected to contribute labour in maintenance, cleaning and the like. People will freely volunteer their labour to meet society's needs; if they are expected to contribute 30 days or so of work a year they will happily do so (which, according to Brian Sheppard's *The Inefficiency of Capitalism*, will be roughly the labour

time required in a post-capitalist society). Indeed many would contribute even more than this, since, believe it or not, jobs will be enjoyable! Properly socialised, humanised, ecologically harmonised and balanced jobs would be fun, creative, interesting, engaging, social and active.

These are just a few points to be made in favour of a wageless society. More superior, detailed works, such as Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*, the three-part French pamphlet *A world without money: communism* (c. 1975–76), and Steven John's *A workers critique of Parecon* can be found online. Nonetheless, despite disagreeing on details, it should nonetheless be stressed that workers from different currents of anarchist thought, such as anarcho-communism, Pareconism, Bookchinism and Mutualism, can and should work together to build a free society.

**A collectivist-anarchist
perspective** by Benjamin Smith

THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN COLLECTIVIST ANARCHISTS AND ANARCHO-COMMUNISTS forms one of the oldest debates within the anarchist movement. At the heart of the dispute is the abolition of the wage system and how the remuneration of work within a post-revolutionary society should be achieved: whether the reward for one's labours ought continue to be paid in the form of a wage with which goods could be purchased at market or from communal stores, as collectivists argue; or whether distribution of the products of labour should take place through free appropriation from communal stores, which anarcho-communists tend to favour.

Since Bakunin, we collectivists has always asserted that the creation of socialism demands people be considered and treated as equals, and that the iniquities of modern capitalism demonstrate that formal equality under the bourgeois state is not enough to offset the disparities in power that accrue from the institution of private property.¹ Rather, equality needs to be made real through two things: equal participation in social decision-making and the creation of absolute wage equality between all workers, meaning that the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker, all being engaged in socially usefully labour, can count on the same hourly rate for their efforts.²

In contrast, anarcho-communists have consistently asserted their commitment to Louis Blanc's pithy encapsulation of the ethical heart of socialism, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".³ This sentiment, however, is not necessarily original to Blanc, nor to socialists, but is a translation into a social-justice context of a dilemma, which, since Aristotle's differentiation between "arithmetic equality" and "geometric [i.e. 'proportional'] equality", has articulated a paradox lying at the heart of Western jurisprudence: that while the law must apply to all citizens equally, the determination of just retribution should take into account of both the nature of the crime and the circumstances in which it was committed.⁴ I will discuss the different relationships collectivists and anarcho-communists have to Blanc's ethical ideal later in this article, and will conclude with my own perspective on how and why a money economy and remuneration in wages is consistent with anarchist principles. However, first some preliminary observations on anarcho-communism and its resistance to money and wage remuneration are in order.

Since 1892, the *locus classicus* of anarchist communism has been Peter Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*,⁵ in which he argued that the 'geometric' or 'proportional' equality found in Blanc's "From each..., to each..." principle can only be fully realised through the institution of free, voluntary labour and free, communal access to the products of that labour; and that this program was capable of immediately ending poverty and hunger without any further development of the means of production being necessary.⁶ The continuing importance of *The Conquest of Bread* for anarchists comes from the sustained way in which Kropotkin argued that if privately owned land and instruments of production were socialised, this would create the conditions necessary to put the labour power of both the unemployed and the idle rich into productive use, thus liberating from wastage the most valuable resource society possesses: human creativity and productive power. Doing so would not only secure the means of life for all, it would allow it to be secured with a general decrease in the labour time per individual engaged in producing it, thus creating that most precious of things

– leisure-time – while simultaneously ensuring it is secured for everyone. Even if only for this reason, Kropotkin’s book would continue to remain a classic of the anarchist canon.

Yet, *The Conquest of Bread* also demands our careful attention due to the profound effect it has had, and continues to have, on the wages debate. It appears to me, both from reading and conversation, that Kropotkin’s words on this issue have been accepted uncritically by too many of my fellow anarchists. At issue are two problems: one minor and one major.

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The minor issue relates less to the thrust of Kropotkin’s arguments than to the potential for his readers today to misinterpret his critique of collectivism as applying in a wholesale manner to collectivist anarchism, while the major issue cuts to the heart of the wage system debate. Due to the way the minor issue frames the major issue, I’ll treat it first.

Anyone who has read *The Conquest of Bread* will be aware that Kropotkin devoted considerable energy to debunking what he called, “the collectivist wages system”, the supporters of which Kropotkin described as:

speaking of abolishing capitalist rule, [while] they intend nevertheless to retain two institutions which are the very basis of this rule— Representative Government and the Wages System.⁷

Yet the range of groups whom Kropotkin identified as collectivist demands careful attention. It is, in fact, extremely broad, and includes: “the early English socialists”,⁸ “Proudhon” and the “Mutualists”, “certain economists, more or less bourgeois”; “French, German, English, and Italian collectivists”,⁹ and French Marxists.¹⁰ In fact, it is not readily apparent from this list, nor from Kropotkin’s accusation that they intend to “retain ... Representative Government” that Kropotkin included collectivist anarchists among his targets at all. Indeed, since the French, German, English and Italian collectivists were not identified, it is not apparent whether they

deserve to be grouped with the others or not. Presuming that they do, it is of vital interest that Kropotkin exempted from his critique:

the Spanish anarchists, who still call themselves collectivists, [and who] imply by Collectivism the possession in common of all instruments of production, and the “liberty of each group to divide the produce, as they think fit, according to communist or any other principles”.¹¹

The distinction Kropotkin made here is critical, for it draws attention to an important terminological ambiguity that should strike a note of warning against accepting many of his assertions in *The Conquest of Bread* uncritically. Those who are aware of the history of anarchism will know that during the 1880s and early 1890s, the character of Spanish anarchism was peculiar in the way it remained faithful to the ideas of Bakunin and the First International.¹² It is therefore reasonable to conclude that much of Kropotkin’s critique of collectivism (defined in the broadest possible sense, and among whose number he includes Marxists and other authoritarians) did not, in fact, apply to anarchist collectivists. Hence whether the force of Kropotkin’s attack does indicate a weakness in the anarchist collectivists’ advocacy of money wages, depends upon a close reading of his critique of the wages system. It is here that our analysis of the major issue within Kropotkin’s argument begins.

Kropotkin lay the foundation for his attack on the institution of money wages much earlier in *The Conquest of Bread* than the chapter nominally reserved for that purpose, beginning with a loose restatement of the doctrine of historical materialism in which he argued that “Every economic phase has a political phase corresponding to it, and it would be impossible to touch property without finding at the same time a new mode of political life”.¹³ Hence:

A society founded on serfdom is in keeping with absolute monarchy; a society based on the wage system and the exploitation of the masses by the capitalists finds its political expression in parliamentarianism. But a free society, regaining possession of the common inheritance, must seek, in free groups and free federations of groups, a new organization, in harmony with the new economic phase of history.¹⁴

This, he argued, is fatal for the wages system, which “arises out of the individual ownership of the land and the instruments of labour”, and which was not only “the necessary condition for the development of capitalist production”,¹⁵ but also its “most prominent characteristic”.¹⁶

The functioning of the wages system Kropotkin described in the following way:

A man, or a group of men, possessing the necessary capital, starts some industrial enterprise; he undertakes to supply the factory or workshops with raw material, to organize production, to pay the employees a fixed wage, and lastly, to pocket the surplus value or profits, under pretext of recouping himself for managing the concern, for running the risks it may involve, and for the fluctuations of price in the market value of the wares.¹⁷

It is here that some worrying issues with Kropotkin’s argument start to appear. In the quoted passage, Kropotkin draws on an idea of surplus value, yet, this stands at odds with his explicit rejection of the labour theory of value (LTV) upon which the concept of surplus value is predicated, and which he identified elsewhere in the text as “the teaching of Smith and Ricardo, in whose footsteps Marx has followed”, and which postulates that “exchange value of goods is really measured in existing societies by the amount of work necessary to produce it”.¹⁸ Kropotkin justified his rejection of the LTV by claiming that “Nobody has ever calculated the cost of production”,¹⁹ implying by this that the LTV cannot demonstrate the sort of arithmetical comprehensiveness necessary for the

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theory to be validated as true. Yet, if Kropotkin dismissed it outright, denying it even that minimal validity normally reserved for heuristic procedures, how could Kropotkin talk about factory owners “pocket[ing] surplus value”?²⁰ By what index can surplus value be said to be excessive if it is beyond all calculation?

The fact is, while Kropotkin could claim with some justice that “the scale of remuneration is a complex result

of taxes, of governmental tutelage, of Capitalist monopoly; in a word, of State and Capital”,²¹ it is too great a stretch to conclude from this that “all wages theories have been invented after the event to justify injustices at present existing, and that we [therefore] need not take them into consideration”.²² The problem, here, is that Kropotkin, conflated the historical emergence of the wage-form remuneration with the system of exploitation that had developed around it. Hence, he believed that to abolish remuneration in wages is to abolish the system of exploitation.

Yet, while destroying the premise (wages paid in money) will simultaneously destroy the condition predicated upon it (the wage system as exploitative), it is an error of logic to assume that the necessity of the premise is simultaneous with its sufficiency. In fact, the systematic exploitation that accompanies the hire of wage labour under capitalism is premised on an equally necessary, yet more fundamental because logically prior, proposition: the commodification of labour. Given his conflation of these two related yet distinct propositions, it is tempting to characterise Kropotkin as having suffered from a peculiar form of commodity fetishism, expressed in his belief that the only way to exorcise the spirit of capitalist exploitation is to destroy the object inhabited by this spirit: wage money.

It is notable that the phrase ‘wage system of exploitation’ appears nowhere in *The Conquest of Bread*, and that this concept is always expressed in its contracted form, “wage system”. This suggests that by habitually referring to the concept in its contracted form of expression, Kropotkin committed the mistake of thinking that it is the fact of wage payment that is the heart of the system, when in fact it is a phenomenon that is important, yet of a secondly order (much in the way the presence of a catalyst facilitates the speed and completeness of a chemical reaction, but is not a primary element in that reaction, which will occur in a more limited form in the catalyst’s absence.) Rather, it is not the money wage, but what wages in money facilitates that is of primary importance: the commodification of labour, and the exploitation predicated upon it. This conflation of wage payment with labour’s commodification informs the lack of

nuance with which Kropotkin treated the character of collectivism, grouping together all contemporary advocates of wage payment, whether anarchist or not.

To be fair to Kropotkin (and to the anarcho-communists who have followed in his wake), it is possible to restate the anarcho-communist position in terms that avoid conflating the payment of wages with the system of exploitation upon which it is premised. Thus, anarcho-communists might justifiably define ‘wage’ as monetary remuneration for labour power sold in a market that subsumes it as one commodity circulating in a system of commodities. Restating the anarcho-communist position in this way takes us a step closer to the nub of the matter, for, as I will argue later, it is precisely the necessity of the link between of ‘monetary remuneration’ and ‘labour power sold in a market’ that collectivists (such as myself) reject.

From a collectivist’s perspective, anarcho-communists are quite right to object to the idea that labour should be traded as a general commodity, because it implicitly (has the potential) – and under capitalism explicitly (does in fact) – treats workers as means, rather than ends in

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themselves. Such a regime is, at best, at variance with human dignity, and, at worst, a means of exploitation and degradation. Hence, it is understandable that anarcho-communists should seek free labour and free participation in the good that labour creates, seeing in this the only way Blanc’s “From each..., to each...” principle can be realised. However, the question needs to be asked whether or not by “free” what is intended is contribution and appropriation beyond calculation and therefore beyond account?

With regards to contribution, some anarcho-communists argue that the individual must remain utterly free to decide not only the nature of his occupation but also the duration and intensity of his work, arguing that no one other than the

individual himself has sufficient intimacy of knowledge to be able to determine on his behalf what his abilities, needs and degree of exertion from day to day are? It is also worth acknowledging that this was not Kropotkin’s own position on the issue of contribution, and that he spoke of “discharging” an obligation to contribute commonly agreed time-periods, perhaps “4 or 5 hours a day”, performing tasks “owe[d] to society as [one’s] contribution to general production”, with the intention that this will ensure that every member of society is provided with leisure constituting “5 or 6 hours[,] which he will seek to employ according to his tastes”.²³ There is little, here, in Kropotkin’s position on contribution that a collectivist anarchist would take issue with. Nor would a collectivist object to Kropotkin’s observation that many of the leisure pursuits that individuals might engage in would have socially beneficial outcomes, providing additional scope in which the ideal, “from each according to his abilities”, might be fulfilled.²⁴

In relation to consumption, however, Kropotkin’s arguments in *The Conquest of Bread* are more strictly consistent with Blanc’s “To each...” principle, pointing out that this is already (c.1892) consistent with the provision of many public services.²⁵ Whenever items are a little more scarce, Kropotkin argues the cultivation of individual self-control – expressed socially as an ethos of mild asceticism and free self-moderation of consumption – will become the norm, with socially enforced rationing only necessary when threats to supply become dire, such that, “if this or that article of consumption runs short and has to be doled out, to those who have most need most should be given”.²⁶

In fact, other than the issue of money wages, there is little in Kropotkin’s anarcho-communist vision of an anarchist society that collectivist anarchists would take issue with, for the simple reason that Blanc’s “From each..., to each...” principle is an ideal shared by us as well. However the relationship collectivists have to this ideal is somewhat different.

For collectivists, “From each..., to each...” is understood (in the terminology of Immanuel Kant) as a “regulative ideal”, meaning an ideal that is not and cannot be made reality, and which is therefore inherently unobtainable, but which serves nonetheless as a standard for action.²⁷ It is a goal to be aimed at

on the understanding that we will always fall short in some way. For anarcho-communists, on the other hand, “From each ..., to each...” is a “constitutive ideal”, which is to say, an ideal that is constitutive of its domain (in this case social justice). The risk with interpreting “From each..., to each...” in this way, however, is that falling short, however small the amount, risks invalidating the regime for which it was invoked as an ideal.

It is this difference in the way collectivists and anarcho-communists interpret the “From each..., to each...” ideal that informs the mutual apprehensiveness existing between these two groups. Understanding the ideal in the way they do, anarcho-communists may be forgiven for suspecting their collectivist comrades are backsliders and apologists for reformist incrementalism; while collectivists tend to be uneasy about the inflexible and unreflective zealotry that their anarcho-communist *compañeros* appear to engage in. Luckily these misgivings, while quite real, are relatively minor when viewed against the greater scheme of things, and are usually expressed with good humour.

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This difference in perspective also explains why so many anarcho-communists embrace the idea of free appropriation moderated only by individual self-control. As an ideal constitutive of justice, the very pithiness of Blanc's formulation gives it the appearance of being sufficient in-itself for social justice to be achieved. Given this, the social imposition of regulatory mechanisms extrinsic to the ethical character of the freely acting subject appears to anarcho-communists to be cumbersome, imprecise, potentially authoritarian, and therefore open to abuse. While the logic of their position is falsely premised, they can at least be forgiven for thinking the way they do; after all, the last thing any right-minded anarchist wants to support is a law that has the potential to be as ham-fisted as its arm is long.

Collectivists on the other hand, interpreting “From each..., to each...” as a regulative ideal, understand it as being affirmed rather than negated through every attempt to implement a libertarian socialist regime. While anarcho-communists might be tempted to interpret the degree to which each attempt falls short as reason to indict either the motives or logic informing those attempts, the collectivists' approach appreciates that the fact will always fall short of the ideal, and that the latter can only be affirmed by an ever new re-embarkation on the attempt to realise it. The result is an ethic of struggle and of progress, and it is here that the collectivist's search for social mechanisms to ensure the concrete, if partial, realisation of the ideal finds genuine strength.

From a collectivist perspective, finding a properly social (rather than individual) means of consumption and allocation is important, not so much for those resources that are super-abundant, nor for those things that are ultra-scarce and which must be rationed in order to preserve them for those most in need, but for that large middle-band of resources and products of labour that are neither super-abundant nor ultra-scarce, but which participate simultaneously in a balance of both abundance and scarcity. What is needed is a mechanism that will allow them to be consumed in a way that is fair, sustainable and maximally consistent with freedom of access. In view of this problem, the anarcho-communist elevation of self-control and free self-moderation of appetite to a principle of social regulation appears appallingly effete. Something more is needed.

Social pressure, backed up by the threat of disassociation, could be an effective means of backing an ethic of conservation, and some do suggest this, but social pressure needs to be augmented by clear evidence and transparent mechanisms if it is not to fall subject to the authority of prejudice. Accountability therefore requires forms of accountancy as mechanisms for drawing together and presenting relevant facts if fully lucid individual and collective decision-making is to be achieved.

While this spirit of calculation runs counter to the inclination to generosity that anarchists share, the act of counting is necessary if individuals and their communities are to effectively know what

they have, so that they might weigh up the options open to them. Money wages, as collectivists realise, not only facilitate this by allowing price setting subject to popular control to stand in as a socially transparent means of managing the consumption of scarce resources; it can also be implemented in a way that will prevent labour from being reduced to a commodity, provided the following criteria are satisfied:

- ▼ The federation of communes and workshops into quasi- or near-autarkic economic units
- ▼ Full socialisation of the means of production, distribution, exchange and communication
- ▼ Federally co-ordinated (but popularly determined²⁸) setting of production targets orientated towards the satisfaction of needs (including provision for the sick, elderly, mentally infirm, physically disabled and orphaned)
- ▼ Workers' democratic self-management of industry regarding all decisions orientated toward the satisfaction of their workshop's production targets
- ▼ Co-operatively run labour exchanges to facilitate the collectively self-managed movement of workers between industries and workshops
- ▼ Absolute wage equality based on hour-units.

The aim is to assert (direct and participatory) democratic control over all institutions of society, while simultaneously removing the price and allocation of labour from the ambit of market forces.

Given these conditions, wage equality will make the production costs of commodities genuinely transparent in their prices by indexing them directly and uniformly against the input of labour time (something that the wage disparities of capitalism currently makes opaque²⁹). This will create the conditions for a genuinely meaningful question to be put to the confederation of productive communes: *At what level should the balance between leisure time and material prosperity be set for the coming year? Which is implicitly to ask: To what style of life do we as a free, democratic and socially egalitarian community aim?* Without a means of putting this question to the people, social production will continue

to operate blindly, whereas the intention of this proposal is to create means by which communities can rationally, lucidly, transparently and democratically regulate the material reproduction of their conditions of life.

Once the number of work hours per individual per week is determined and asserted as a right, then local modifications to this can be made directly at the level of the shop floor, such that those desiring more leisure time to pursue other interests are able to offer more work hours to their more materially-acquisitive colleagues, under the proviso that, with timely notice, the former can always reassert their right to the average weekly quota of work hours in all instances where the balance had been granted to others. This may not accord fully with Blanc's "From each..., to each" vision of geometric equality, but it is orientated toward the satisfaction of needs, is democratic and transparent, and does not preclude people devoting their leisure hours to other socially useful endeavours, should they desire to do so.

Yet, the key reason for retaining the social institution of the money wage in conjunction with the suspension of labour's 'commodity form' is the sociological value of money as a medium through which patterns of consumption can, through prices, be articulated with patterns of production, thus allowing democratically controlled regulation without the sort of encroachment on individual prerogatives in consumption one finds with rationing. The issue, properly conceived, is not the presence or absence of social control, but how to make this control genuinely democratic. Solving this question is key to achieving an autonomous society; and an autonomous society requires the simultaneous cultivation of *both* collective *and* individual modes of autonomy.

It is possible for money to form a just medium by which this articulation between democratic control of production and individual tastes in consumption can be articulated, because money is nothing more than an abstract and impersonal medium of exchange. Its character is not intrinsic to it, but a function of the social-historical regime in which it circulates. While socialists of all stripes have found in their ranks those who would denounce it as the root of all evil, its sociological value, even under capitalism, is ambivalent,

comprising both positive and negative aspects.³⁰ Even if money has come to be the preeminent symbol of capitalist social relations and the ills of bourgeois exploitation, it is nonetheless possible (contra Kropotkin) for money to regain a more neutral or indeed positive character through the replacement of capitalism with another social-historical form of life. However, if we are to carry the revolution forward, we, as anarchists, would do well to correctly acknowledge, alongside the negative effects of money in present society, its liberating characteristics as well. This is vital if we anarchists are to know what we are about, and it is key, also, to convincing others to embark on the revolutionary project with us.

Perhaps the most important of money's positive characteristics is its facilitation of impersonalised social relations, to which anyone who has left a small town to enjoy the relative anonymity to be found in the city will be able to attest.³¹ It is not merely the power to become lost in the multitude inhabiting our cities that creates the mental 'space' in which an ethos of cosmopolitan tolerance is able to flourish, rather this socially liberating aspect of metropolitan life is given material support by the impersonality of a great many of our daily interactions, an impersonality predicated on money as a portable and readily acceptable medium of exchange between strangers. As the German sociologist Georg Simmel argued:

The distancing brought about by money transactions [... forms] a barrier ... that is indispensable for the modern form of life. The jostling crowdedness and the motley disorder of metropolitan communication would simply be unbearable without such psychological distance. Since contemporary urban culture, with its commercial, professional and social intercourse, forces us to be physically close to an enormous number of people, sensitive and nervous modern people would sink completely into despair if the objectification of social relationships did not bring with it an inner boundary and reserve. The pecuniary character of relationships, either openly or concealed in a thousand forms, places an invisible functional distance between people that is an inner protection and neutralisation against the

overcrowded proximity and friction of our cultural life.³²

The impersonality of money is sociologically linked to the particular character of the private sphere, the actions within which do not take place in secrecy or behind closed doors, but occur (paradoxically) under the public gaze, yet are not subject to public interference due of their nominally 'private' nature. This emergence of the private sphere as an integral manifestation of modern social life supports modernity's tendency toward subjective individuation (i.e. the emergence of modern personalities as consciously 'unique', rather than merely typical of social type or occupation).

While those who yearn for the creation of more authentic and personal relationships might bemoan the anomie bred by the impersonality modern life, this impersonality is paradoxically a condition that deepens and enriches the creation of individual prerogatives and subjective expressivity. To invert the order of Bakunin's phrasing: the modern human is not only the most social of beings, but also the most individual.³³ The increased depth of individuated personality in modern times is a benefit partly conferred by the impersonal nature of monetised interactions. The cumulative effect of these impersonal interactions supports a mode of socialisation conducive to the toleration of personal differences and the emergence a truly cosmopolitan culture.

If anarchy is the extension of democracy to every institution of society – the image of a world in which universal and direct participation in collective deliberation implies the banishment of all rulers – we can expect much of our energies to be spent engaged in such argument and analysis as is necessary for the collective self-management of our communities. The role of money as an impersonal medium of social regulation (within a society subject to absolute wage equality) will not only facilitate the ease and transparency of decision-making; in a life committed to the *agon* of democratic participation, we may well be glad for the liberating impersonality of monetised social relations in other areas of our life, and for the occasional respite from politics and the demanding ties of our community that money's impersonality affords us.

Notes

1. Michael Bakunin, "State and Society," trans. Steven Cox, *Selected Writings*, ed. Arthurt Lehning (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973) pp.136–54.
2. It should be noted that, while those who have participated in the elaboration and popularisation of the Participatory Economic (Parecon) Model advocate taking such things as intensity of labour performed and the onerousness of particular tasks as factors to be considered when determining rates of remuneration, this should be interpreted as evidence of their commitment to the collectivist principle of equal work and equal pay, rather than its contravention. Their advocacy of balanced work complexes is further proof of this, wherein the participation of each person in a mix of onerous and fulfilling tasks also contributes to the minimisation of wage differentials.
3. Louis Blanc, *Organisation of Work*, trans. Marie Paula Dickore (Cincinnati: Cincinnati University Press, 1912) p.52.
4. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1984) pp.260–339.
5. Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). "Under the banner of "Land and Liberty", the Magonista revolt of 1911 in Baja California established short-lived revolutionary communes at Mexicali and Tijuana, having for their theoretical basis Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread*, a work which Flores Magón regarded as a kind of anarchist bible and which his followers distributed in thousands of copies", p.208; "Florentino de Carvalho, who also emigrated from Spain, got a job with the police but was converted to anarchism by Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread* – a sort of anarchist bible in Spain and Latin America – which he changed upon in a São Paulo bookshop in 1902", p.257.
6. Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1966), p.90.
7. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.152.
8. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.153.
9. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.154.
10. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.155.
11. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.154 (Emphasis added.)
12. George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975) pp.345–46.
13. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.33.
14. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.33.
15. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.24.
16. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.53.
17. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.53. (Emphasis added.)
18. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.24.
19. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.159.
20. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.53.
21. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.159.
22. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.159.
23. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.98.
24. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, pp.100–10.
25. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.26.
26. Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p.60.
27. "[H]uman reason contains not only ideas, but ideals also, which ... have practical power (as regulative principles), and form the basis of the possible perfection of certain actions. ... As the idea gives the rule, so the ideal in such a case serves as the archetype ... ; and we have no other standard for our actions than the conduct of this divine man within us, with which we compare and judge ourselves, and so reform ourselves, although we can never attain to the perfection thereby prescribed." Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp-Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1929), [A569/B97] p.486. See also Jeanine Grenberg, *Kant and the Ethics of Humility: A Story of Dependence, Corruption and Virtue* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), p.77.
28. Cornelius Castoriadis, "On the Content of Socialism" (1955-57), *The Castoriadis Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell 1997), p.54–59.
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30. Much of what I am going to argue here regarding the ambivalence of money was originally set out in Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby, ed. David Frisby, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1978).
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THE REVOLUTIONARY ART OF CONVERSATION

by *Jeremy Kay* (Jurd)

We anarchists are often terrible at real conversations. The more introverted of us prefer reading quietly, while the more extroverted of us spend our time ranting at friends who already agree with us (online or in person). When we meet someone who is actually interested in anarchism, some of us will direct them to a book, others will bore them with a lecture, and others will ignore them, sure that they must be a cop. We hope people will spontaneously develop anarchist ideas, rise up and create a better society. But how is that strategy working out for us?

PERHAPS WE AVOID REAL POLITICAL conversations because we see them as inherently authoritarian? Certainly the sorts of people who regularly have these conversations – union organisers, Leninists, preachers and politicians – use them to manipulate and control.

But approaching a conversation with a clear political intention is not inherently authoritarian. In fact, if you don't consciously choose your words and actions, you are more likely to fall into the authoritarian ways of interacting that are standard in this society. It's better to think before we speak, and better still to translate anarchist politics into a conversational approach that is effective for organising.

Organising means facilitating the process whereby people become angry and hopeful enough to overcome their passivity and brainwashing by the social system. In *Sedition* Number One, I argued that if we want to see social change along anarchist lines, we need to improve our organising. In this article I will focus on the most important skill of organising: the

one-to-one, face-to-face conversation.

If you aren't having regular, face-to-face political conversations, you aren't organising effectively. No amount of writing, reading, gigs or online posting will create the revolution. To organise a movement, we need to have thousands of conversations. Not chats or rants, but intentional conversations aimed at developing anarchist ideas, empowering people, and bringing them into relationships of solidarity with each other. It doesn't matter whether you're quiet or loud, articulate or reticent: we all need to improve the quantity and quality of our conversations.

In order to begin the vital task of developing an anarchist approach to intentional conversation, we need to look at different organisers' approaches. In this article I will discuss approaches from the union movement, community organising, and the feminist and environmental movements. We need to engage with these methods, with a view to adopting some components, while rejecting others which are authoritarian or apolitical.

Structured conversations

Unions in Australia tend to have a very tightly controlled approach to political conversations. It's not uncommon in big organising campaigns for every single conversation between an official and a worker to be planned, structured, scripted, counted, categorised, debriefed and analysed. This is because unions know that these conversations are the basis for organisation and power.

The classic conversation structure is 'Anger-Hope-Action.' Picture yourself as an organiser; you might spend five or more minutes finding the worker's issues and agitating around them: e.g. *What's the pay like here? Does the management treat you with respect? That doesn't seem fair.* Then you'll spend a few minutes trying to inspire the worker with hope about the campaign: *Lots of other workers here have been saying the same thing, that's why everyone is getting together in the union. Last year workers at company X got a pay rise through running a campaign like this one.* Finally, you'll move on to the action, the 'ask': *Are you ready to join your union today? Can all the other workers count on you to come to the picket on Friday?* Other elements of the conversation that might come into play include building rapport, countering objections, and inoculating against management tactics.

The development of this 'issues-based organising' approach is often attributed to Saul Alinsky, who worked as a community organiser for many decades, beginning in Chicago in the 1930s. It is a powerful method with a proven success rate, however it has some

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problems. Firstly, the conversations (and the campaigns they are a part of) are not transformative or revolutionary, but focus on mobilising large numbers of people around pre-determined issues; issues that have been chosen (by the 'leadership') because they are winnable in the current system, or suit the institution running the campaign. The organisation that is built through this process is purely instrumental, and often disappears when the issues are resolved (or turn out to

be too big to resolve). The conversation, and the campaign itself, is focussed on tasks and incremental changes, not relationships or qualitative change. The sort of questions asked are those where the organiser already knows the answer. Also, it is a hierarchical approach, where a specialist organiser exercises a significant degree of power over the people being organised.

Relational organising

Unlike 'issues-based organising' which relies on pre-existing communities and pre-determined issues, 'relational organising' seeks to build community where there wasn't any before. This is done through building trust and relationships, through conversations based on honesty and human warmth. The focus is on common values and relationships, not issues and anger. The goals and targets arise out of the process, from the people themselves. The focus is on the process, not solely on the tasks to be completed. And the organisation which is built this way lasts beyond specific issues, because it is based on cooperation and genuine relationships.

Edward T Chambers is a well-known community organiser (also in the Alinsky tradition) who argues for relational organising and the 'relational meeting'. He defines it as a one-to-one, face-to-face, pre-scheduled, 30-minute meeting, outside the busy schedule of life and work. A good relational meeting involves 'connection, confrontation and exchange'. It will have an intensity, a purpose and a focus beyond ordinary conversation.

As an organiser, you need to use your whole self in a relational meeting. You need to connect at the emotional level, before the intellectual level. Non-verbal communication is very important: keep eye contact, smile and be friendly, lean forward and nod to communicate interest, and try not to make the person uncomfortable by standing too close (or too far away).

Relational meetings should be mutual and reciprocal. Both people must be prepared to be open and vulnerable about their passions and values. They must be willing to question and doubt their own beliefs, and truly value the other person's perspective and stories. A good relational meeting will expose two people to the deepest levels of what they care about and are willing to act on. This is why

these conversations can be revolutionary in themselves.

Stories are a vital part of relational meetings. When people tell their stories, they become more conscious of their past, present and future, and their potential to change that future. As an organiser, you need to take risks and share some stories about yourself, as well as getting the person to tell their own stories. You should have a repertoire of stories (that you have written out and practiced in advance) that explain who you are, why you do what you do, why you're an anarchist, etc. Stories are an extremely effective way of communicating; people will remember good stories even if they forget your name. Good stories have a plot, obstacle and climax; they include description and imagery.

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Although relational organising is a powerful tool, it too has its limitations. Its practitioners tend to be very selective about whom they hold relational meetings with – only having such meetings with 'leaders', and writing off everyone else as a 'follower'. It also tends to be aligned with faith-based organising, and can be very conservative in its goals. If all the emphasis is on building good relationships and confidence in the community, relational organising can simply accommodate people to the status quo. Also, relational organisers always look for 'things we all have in common', and may try to include bosses, politicians and other ruling-class types into the feel-good love-in.

Good listening

The approaches to conversation discussed so far are effective for mobilisation, but - especially in the hands of union officials - they tend towards authoritarianism and Taylorism (minute control over behaviour for maximum efficiency). They lack revolutionary spirit. I would now like to look at some methods and skills developed in the feminist and environmental movements.

These methods suggest ways to open up the really transformative potential your conversations. The first and most important of these skills is good listening.

Good listening requires a discipline of the ego – you need to spend less time talking and thinking about yourself, and more time focussing on the other person. Silence your cynicism and arrogance, and don't get impatient, even if you think you already know what they are saying. Don't let your mind wander while they are speaking. Don't interrupt.

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Listening requires respect. If you don't respect the person, you won't be able to listen or engage meaningfully. It is a basic principle for many radicals (feminists, anarchists and others) to value the individual, their diversity, equality and participation. So, listen without judgement, with an open mind and genuine interest in where the other person is coming from. Listen for their passions and motivations, their dreams, their ideas about change, and the blocks to their taking action. You can recall these elements to help them find hope and take action.

Really trying (and wanting) to listen can be challenging, but it is also deeply rewarding, and is a way to connect to the humanity in others and in ourselves. Listening is one way to show you care about someone, and people won't listen to what you say unless they see that you care.

When you really listen, people may open up and talk about strong emotions, such as suffering. This can be confronting, and you may feel like backing away, or intellectualising. Much better is to just listen and try to empathise, even if this exposes your own limitations and helplessness surrounding the issues at stake. Give the person your full attention, and you may both grow from the experience.

Strategic questioning

Good listening goes hand in hand with

effective questioning. Short, succinct questions can unlock new and powerful ideas in the person you are talking with. Questioning is a basic tool of rebellion, and can cut through fear, ideology and apathy.

Fran Peavey, a well-known practitioner of strategic questioning, defines strategic questioning as a way of facilitating 'dynamic listening', where the participants create new ideas together about what could be. Answering a question can be an empowering experience; much more transformative than just being given a solution. The person feels ownership over their answer, even if it has been said many times before.

Critical educator Paolo Freire spoke about the need for the oppressed to be agents of their own liberation. Through developing a critical consciousness, people break through the dominant, silencing culture and begin to remake themselves. Strategic questioning is a process that can help people to develop this critical consciousness for themselves, and begin to ask their own questions and find their own solutions.

Strategic questioning is not about asking questions to manipulate. The goal isn't to lay traps to get the answer you want! Strategic questions are open-ended and seek to uncover options. Your intention is important: rather than trying to put ideas into a person's head, you are really trying to learn from them and to help them develop what's already in their head.

Strategic questioning is the skill of asking the questions that will make a difference. Questions that avoid simple 'yes' or 'no' answers. Questions that create the confidence that change can happen. Some examples (depending on the context) might be:

- ▼ What leads you to say that?
- ▼ How come it matters?
- ▼ How would you like it to be?
- ▼ What are changes you have seen or read about?
- ▼ How did those changes come about?
- ▼ What would it take for you to participate in...?
- ▼ Who else cares about this?

'Why' questions are controversial. When we ask them of ourselves they can be profound: *Why are things the way they are? Why am I doing what I do? Why don't I spend more time doing the things I say are important to me?* They can prompt a powerful focus on values and meaning.

However, when you ask someone else a 'why' question, they may feel forced to defend the existing state of affairs. For example, compare *Why haven't you joined this campaign?* with *What has kept you from joining this campaign?*

Strategic questioning is powerful and transformative in itself, however this can lead practitioners to a problematic rejection of political content. It is argued that the role of the strategic questioner is solely to uncover the solutions that the questionee already has in their head – even if the questioner disagrees with their solutions. The questioner is expected to put all of their opinions to one side, on the assumption that they will 'not be useful' to the questionee. Yet most of us anarchists would have a hard time doing that! And I think it's fine that we want to expose people to perspectives that do not have mainstream circulation, and engage with people critically regarding false ideas. The challenge is to do this effectively and respectfully.

Towards anarchist conversation

There is value in each of the approaches and techniques discussed above; each also has its flaws. I think each of us should be experimenting with parts of these approaches in our conversations. You already have a powerful vision, and a passion for social change; people will join you if you have inspiring conversations with them!

Together we need to develop an anarchist approach to organising. As a start, I think we need to increase the number and quality of face-to-face conversations that we have. These encounters must have some degree of structure and intentionality; they must

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build strong relationships between people, and they must involve good listening and strategic questioning.

We need to be persuasive – not by ranting or writing well, but by talking honestly with people, and by building trust and respect. These interactions help us to build organisation, and also to develop our humanity in the midst of the dehumanising system we find

ourselves in.

We all need to be organisers – not paid professionals, but good listeners, who help people to empower themselves and make connections with others in their communities, working towards revolutionary goals. An organiser must not be a specialist who selects and manipulates a few privileged leaders, but rather one of an ever-growing number of empowered rank-and-filers. An organiser is someone who practices and shares the skills of organising. Everyone should be an organiser. Including you.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION IN AUSTRALIA

by *Lugius* (MAC)

On 6 December 2013, at the 25th Congress of the IWA in Valencia, Spain, the status of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation was changed from “Friend of the IWA” to Australian section of the IWA. However, this is not the first time there has been an IWA affiliate in Australia, or even the first time there has been an Australian section of the IWA.

The IWA has had a presence in Australia since 1956 (the IWA itself having been established in Berlin in 1922).

IT WAS IN 1956 THAT AN EXILE SECTION of the CNT-B was established in Sydney. The CNT-B was the Bulgarian section of the IWA established before the Second World War. The CNT-B comrades who established the CNT-B-in-exile section had engaged in armed resistance against the military of Nazi Germany from 1943, but were nonetheless pursued by the Red Army after September 1944. The CNT-B comrades fled Bulgaria to Italy, and from there travelled to Sydney by ship. The CNT-B-in-exile section operated under the name ‘Sydney Anarchist Group’ and commenced publication of the Bulgarian-language periodical, *Our Road*, the last edition of which was printed in 1988.

Under the name Sydney Anarchist Group (SAG) the Bulgarian comrades also distributed anarcho-syndicalist literature in English from 1956. In that year, at the May Day rally organised by the NSW Trades and Labour Council (now known as Unions NSW), a leaflet about anarcho-syndicalism came to the attention of an

official of NSW TLC who promptly gave it to the NSW Police, warning that there were ‘anarchists in the crowd’.

In 1966, the SAG established what later became known as ‘the Anarchist Cellar’ in the basement beneath a tailor’s shop in Oxford Street, Paddington. Initially it was a venue for talks and discussion about anarcho-syndicalism, but it wasn’t long before it attracted increasing numbers of university students, particularly from UNSW. Soon, ‘the Anarchist Cellar’ became better known for its LSD parties under the influence of the enigmatic Irish anarchist Bill Dwyer. This was very frustrating for the SAG, as ‘the Anarchist Cellar’ became the focus of attention from the NSW police drug squad.

The SAG continued to promote the strategy of anarcho-syndicalism where it could, and continued to publish the Bulgarian-language *Our Road*. Upon the foundation of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation in 1986, the SAG made the decision to disband.

The Spanish section of the IWA, the CNT, established an exile section in Melbourne in December 1965. Large amounts of Spanish-language anarchist literature were imported and distributed to Spanish-speaking communities in Australia. These comrades made contact with the remnant Italian anarchist community, and established a branch of *Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista* (SIA). The Spanish anarchist exiles in Melbourne were particularly active in the anarchist-inspired Collingwood Free Store established in Smith Street in 1972.

The Spanish anarchist exiles in Melbourne also initiated what was eventually to become the Fitzroy Legal Service and the Tenants Union of Victoria. They also founded the first branch of *Cruz Negra Anarquista* (Anarchist Black Cross) in Australia. In addition to this, Spanish-language anarchist magazines were published: *Nosotros* from 1972 to 1975; two issues of *Militando* in 1975; *Acracia*, first published in 1972; and from 1973 through to 1992, the journal of *Cruz Negra Anarquista* (Anarchist Black Cross) was published in Spanish, with bi-lingual Spanish and English editions published from 1973 to 1975.

While these two exile sections of IWA affiliates continued to be active in whatever way they could, they were largely confined to their own communities, and had little contact with the broader anarchist scene in Australia. While the SAG had as its primary focus the raising of awareness in Australia about the strategy of anarcho-syndicalism, the Spanish exiles main emphasis was support of Spanish anarchists incarcerated in Franco's jails. Yet the Spanish exiles were also active in creating a support infrastructure for workers in Melbourne.

The idea of establishing an Australian section of the IWA was first articulated by a small group of Sydney IWW members in 1981, when *Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee Communique No. 1* was published. This document was the first to openly call for creation of an organisation in Australia that would be suitable for affiliation with the IWA. The document was the culmination of a series of informal discussions that had taken place in Sydney among some SAG members and some Sydney IWW members commencing in 1979.

The Sydney IWW commenced publication of *Rebel Worker* as the 'Paper of the Australian IWW' in February 1982.

By this time, the Sydney IWW was the last remaining General Membership Branch in Australia, and most of the members were seriously considering the formation of a group applying to affiliate with the IWA at the 1984 Congress in Madrid. In February 1983, the Sydney IWW was dissolved and reborn as the Rebel Worker Group (RWG), and *Rebel Worker* was now "An Anarcho-Syndicalist Paper".

In the same year, a group of ex-IWW and ex-CNT members from the anarchist community in Melbourne formed the Melbourne Anarcho-Syndicalist Group (MASG). Although the MASG had aspirations to apply for affiliation to the IWA in the future, this was seen as a distant goal. The primary focus of the MASG was raising the awareness of anarcho-syndicalism through discussion and the publication of texts. The MASG was essentially a propaganda group.

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The application of the RWG to affiliate to the IWA was ultimately unsuccessful, with the IWA Congress making it clear that a single group alone did not meet the required criteria. It was under these circumstances that the RWG called for a conference to be held to address, among other things, the question of an IWA affiliate in Australia. The time and place chosen was Jura Books, King Street, Newtown, in January 1986. In the meantime, the RWG continued to publish *Rebel Worker* six times a year. The MASG had failed to attract any new members and consequently chose to dissolve itself in 1985.

The conference was open to anyone who had an interest but only a small number of people from Sydney and Melbourne attended. In addition to the members of the RWG, Georg Kristov of the SAG and Antonio Jimenez, both of whom, sadly, are now deceased, also attended from Sydney. Among those from Melbourne attending were former members of the MASG as well as some young people from the Melbourne squatting scene. The conference was held over 25, 26 and 27 January. On the

first day it was clear that there was some level of mistrust and tension between the two camps – some members of the RWG thought some of the comrades from Melbourne were hippies. But as the day progressed and the discussion allowed each camp to develop an appreciation of the other's understanding of anarcho-syndicalism, it became clear that the two camps were divided on the question of creating an anarcho-syndicalist federation.

On the second day, the RWG proposed the Aims, Principle and Statutes of the RWG as the model for the document by which the mooted federation would be constituted. The whole day was taken up with arguing and negotiating about changes to the Statutes. Large parts were rejected *in toto*. The article regarding Congresses was more or less lifted straight from the CNT Statutes. At an impromptu lunchtime meeting, the comrades from Melbourne resolved to form a group intending to affiliate if certain agreements could be made. Most importantly for the Melbourne group, the federation would be provisional for a period of twelve months, at the end of which the inaugural Congress was to be held, with the question of whether to confirm or dissolve the federation to be listed as the first item on the agenda.

After continuing to work on the Statutes, an agreement was made on the final day to found the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation with the aim of applying to affiliate to the IWA at the 1988 Congress in Bordeaux. This agreement was to be provisional for twelve months. The RWG was renamed once again, becoming ASF Sydney, and the new Melbourne group became ASF Melbourne. Despite the misgivings of the Sydney crew, it was ASF Melbourne that became the most active in support of workers struggles. In the following twelve months, the ASF Melbourne became involved in two of the biggest industrial disputes in the history of Victoria: the de-registration of the Builders Labourers Federation and the Nurses strike. In addition to this, the ASF Melbourne commenced publication of *Sparks* by and for workers in the public transport industry. ASF Sydney were responsible for the publication of *Rebel Worker*, now "the Paper of the ASF" in accordance with an agreement made at the conference known as the Rebel Worker Charter.

At the First Congress of the ASF, the ASF was confirmed and a decision made to apply for affiliation to the IWA. The ASF was admitted to the IWA as the Australian section of the IWA at the 18th Congress held in Bordeaux, April 1988. The first ASF Congress admitted the Public Transport Workers Association as an industrial affiliate. The PTWA assumed responsibility for the publication of *Sparks* which had been an initiative by public transport workers of the ASF Melbourne. By 1989, *Sparks* had grown to a 44-page publication with a circulation of about 6,000 in the public transport industry.

The ASF continued to grow with the admission of the ASF Melbourne South in June 1988 and the ASF Sydney East in January 1990. January 1990 was the time of the tramways dispute which saw tramways workers occupy their depots and run the tram service for free, under workers control, for a day, before the Government of Victoria ordered the power cut off to the tram system. The tramways workers responded by blockading the Melbourne CBD for 33 days.

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In January 1991, at the Fourth Congress of the ASF in Melbourne, the dissolution of the PTWA and Sydney East affiliates was acknowledged and a long-running problem with *Rebel Worker* became apparent. Under the terms of the agreement known as the Rebel Worker Charter, which saw *Rebel Worker* become the paper of the ASF, an affiliate was chosen to be responsible for its publication. The ASF Sydney had had this responsibility since 1986, but it had become clear that an individual member of ASF Sydney had been editing and publishing *Rebel Worker* without recourse to an assembly of ASF Sydney. This was in clear breach of the agreement. While this problem had long been ignored, due to a focus on other activities, it now became an issue to which the ASF Melbourne

demanded resolution.

The ASF Melbourne proposed that the status of *Rebel Worker* be changed from “paper of the ASF” to “paper of the ASF Sydney”; that is to say, the ASF would no longer publish a regular magazine, and *Rebel Worker* would become the sole responsibility of the ASF Sydney. The Rebel Worker Charter would also be jettisoned as an addendum to *The Aims, Principles and Statutes of the ASF*. This issue would precipitate a crisis in the ASF that came to a head in June 1992 at the Fifth Congress of the ASF, and would have far-reaching ramifications.

The individual member of the ASF Sydney who had been the de facto sole editor of *Rebel Worker* conspired with others to change the order of the agenda at the 5th Congress to prevent the proposed change of status – another clear breach of the Statutes. Specifically, the item on the agenda admitting two new affiliates (always the first item on the agenda to enable their full participation in the Congress) was pushed down the agenda to be dealt with after the proposal regarding *Rebel Worker*. The delegates from the Melbourne-based affiliates sent to the 5th Congress failed to intervene due to their lack of experience.

Yet such instances of manipulation at Congress were never going to succeed due to the ASF Statutes accounting for it. Section 7.B.11 states:

All decisions to be ratified by affiliates in duly constituted meetings of their assemblies. Ratification is a recognition that correct procedure has been followed.

The decision by the Fifth Congress to change the order of the agenda was not ratified, and ASF Melbourne invoked Section 7.C of the Statutes of the ASF to hold an Extraordinary Congress to initiate a process to disaffiliate the ASF Sydney. This was held in October 1992 and the ASF Sydney was duly disaffiliated.

The ASF Sydney did not attend the October 1992 Extraordinary Congress and went on to claim that the Melbourne affiliates had “effectively expelled themselves”. To this end, they enlisted the aid of the editor of *Libertarian Labor Review* (now *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*), Jon Bekken who ‘took the side’ of ASF Sydney. This was to create a great deal of confusion. It was later discovered that at least one member of the editorial board

of *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* had been partly funding *Rebel Worker* without the knowledge of the ASF.

The ASF Melbourne City dissolved amid bitter acrimony in September 1992, leaving only two remaining affiliates in the wake of the October 1992 Extraordinary Congress. After the dissolution of the Unemployed Workers affiliate in 1994, only ASF Melbourne remained. In March 1994, after a series of debates and discussions, the ASF Melbourne decided to suspend the monthly schedule of meetings, but not to dissolve. An emphasis was placed on recruiting more members so that public meeting could be held and more texts could be published. In 1996, former Terrassa CNT member, Jorge Garcia, took the initiative to re-establish monthly meetings and from January 1997, fortnightly meetings were held. ASF Melbourne changed its name temporarily (not for the first time, as it had previously been known as ASF Melbourne North) to Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASGM), and set about the task of rebuilding the ASF.

The ASGM held public meetings, commenced publication of *The Anarcho-Syndicalist*, and engaged in solidarity actions once again, most notably in support of the Mapuche people of Chile and Argentina in response to a call of the IWA. However, during this period, the IWA Secretariat became aware that there that there had been division within its Australian section resulting in the disaffiliation of the Sydney group when Warren Buckland wrote to it claiming that his fictitious federation of five Sydney-based groups were 'the REAL ASF'. The issue of the situation of the Australian Section was on the agenda of the 20th Congress of the IWA in Madrid. The IWA Congress instructed the IWA Secretariat to investigate, and to this end, sent Felix Irroquzipena to Australia to compile a report that was published in *Il Debato* in June 1997. The IWA investigator conducted interviews with the Sydney group and the ASGM during April-May 1997 and found that the disaffiliation of the ASF Sydney had proceeded in accordance with the Statutes of the ASF. In response, the Sydney group announced it had changed its name to Anarcho-Syndicalist Network (ASN) and disavowed the IWA in September 1997.

The momentum continued to build and in June 2000 the ASF was

reconstituted with a new affiliate from Sydney (also known as ASF Sydney) and an affiliate from Perth. The ASF commenced publication of *Organise* and continued to grow with the affiliation of the Syndicalist Education Union, although the Perth affiliate dissolved in December 2000. However, at the 21st Congress of the IWA in Granada, the status of the ASF was changed to a 'Friends' section. The emphasis continued to be on raising awareness and solidarity actions. One notable achievement during this time was a joint project with the Terrassa CNT to establish the Aboriginal Embassy to the EU, with ASF Melbourne member Lionel Fogarty as the inaugural Ambassador, and who issued hundreds of 'passports'. New affiliates continued to be admitted: ASF Adelaide in January 2003, ASF Melbourne East in February 2005 and ASF Sydney (yet another new iteration) in April 2009. However, by the middle of 2010, the ASF had once again been reduced to a single affiliate in Melbourne until the formation of the ASF Brisbane in December 2011.

AT THE 25TH CONGRESS OF
THE IWA IN VALENCIA,
THE ASF WAS ADMITTED
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TIME.

In April 2012, a member of ASF Brisbane, a delivery driver for Domino's Pizza, discovered that his pay had been cut arbitrarily, and he asked his union to support his efforts to have his pay restored. The ASF initiated an industrial campaign during 2012 that eventually resulted in the restoration of pay owed to thousands of delivery drivers to the sum of \$590,000. This campaign commenced with protest actions outside Domino's Pizza outlets across Australia from May 2012, and a process initiated by ASF Brisbane at a Fair Work Australia Commission hearing in July 2013, after which the General Transport Workers Association affiliated to the ASF. In September 2012, an International Day of Action in support of the campaign was organised by the IWA with the support of other organisations, resulting in protest actions in 49 cities around the world.

At the 25th Congress of the IWA in Valencia, the ASF was admitted as a full section from Australia for a second time.

This fulfils the aspiration outlined in Section 10.1 of the ASF Statutes:

The ASF shall be affiliated to, and shall form the Australian Section of, the International Workers Association.

It also realises the aspirations of the first section of the IWA in Australia, the Bulgarian exile section, and the SAG, which first set out to create an Australian section of the IWA in 1956.

MARX'S ECONOMICS FOR ANARCHISTS?

by Paul Kubner (unaffiliated)

Review of Wayne Price, *The Value of Radical Theory: an anarchist introduction to Marx's critique of political economy*. AK Press, 2013.

ANARCHISTS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN cautious about endorsing any part of Marxism – with good reason, considering the fractious and sometimes bloody history of relations between these two rival political traditions. However, despite deep political differences with Marxism, there are some anarchists who recognise the value of Marx's critique of political economy and his approach to economic theory. Wayne Price is one of them.

In this handy, pocket-sized volume – itself a revised, expanded and much improved version of his *Marx's Economics for Anarchists*¹ – Wayne Price takes up the challenge of attempting to convince anarchists of the value of this particular part of Marx's writings. At the very least, this involves showing that Marx's critique of political economy is relevant to our times, is a solid basis for explaining the basic mechanisms of the capitalist system, and is compatible with libertarian forms of socialism – more specifically, with anarchism. Price tackles each of these tasks in turn.

Although, as the title suggests, the book is addressed specifically to anarchists, it is also directed to a general audience interested in radical theory. In introducing Marx's critique of political

economy, the book outlines and explains Marx's basic concepts, indicating some of their different interpretations, and shows the relevance of Marx's ideas to understanding developments in today's globalised capitalist system. In the course of his exposition, rather than attempting an exhaustive and impartial overview of Marx's concepts and economic theories, Price opts for certain interpretations over others, and then uses these to present his own analysis of current economic developments.

Price notes that in Marx's *Capital* and other writings, one of Marx's main concerns is to develop a critical assessment of what was then known as "political economy". In seeing the bourgeois political economists, e.g. Adam Smith, as apologists for capitalism, Marx was not only providing a critique of their writings, but was also opposing the capitalist system itself. It is out of this critique that Marx's analysis of capitalism emerges, an analysis which Price regards as the best explanation available of how capitalism actually works.

However, despite his belief in the value of Marx's economic theories, Price is definitely no Marxist. This book is not, and nor should be seen as, an attempt to

persuade anarchists to become Marxists. A long-time activist, writer and theorist, Wayne Price is author of two other books: *The Abolition of the State: Anarchist & Marxist Perspectives* (2007) and *Anarchism & Socialism: Reformism or Revolution* (3rd ed., 2010). He is a frequent contributor to anarchist websites, such as anarkismo.org, and his political orientation is towards the platformist-inspired current within revolutionary class-struggle anarchism.

In marking out his position, Price is careful to distinguish Marx's critique of political economy from those elements in Marx and the Marxist tradition he considers incompatible with anarchism. He takes a revolutionary position, arguing against the reformist varieties of anarchism, as represented by the ideas of Paul Goodman, or the Parecom program; as an anarchist, he endorses federalism against Marxist centralism, and direct action against electoral politics. The book criticises Marx's state-oriented strategy (even as modified in the later writings), the poverty of Marx's vision of post-capitalist society, and the lack of an explicitly ethical or moral dimension in Marx's writings. While he notes a significant overlap in the views of libertarian Marxists and class-struggle anarchists, Price definitely believes the central issues of revolutionary politics are more adequately addressed from an anarchist perspective.

At the same time, Price contests the relevance of certain commonly-held anarchist attitudes in approaching Marx's economic writings, attitudes coloured by the anarchist memory of the conflict between Marx and Bakunin in the Workers' International, and between Marxists and anarchists in the Russian and Spanish Revolutions. Although we need to keep alive the memory of these historical experiences, the disputes involved have little direct bearing on assessing the current relevance and validity of Marx's economic theories.

On the whole, Price's book succeeds in making accessible Marx's basic concepts and economic theories. With a minimum of jargon, it sketches the main outlines of *Capital*, Marx's three-volume magnum opus, and covers difficult topics in Marx's economic writings, such as the organic composition of capital, the falling rate of profit, fictitious capital, clearly and straightforwardly. Building on this basic foundation, Price broadens the discussion to focus on current economic

problems, bringing in contemporary anarchist and Marxist writers. However, I cannot agree with his apparent endorsement of decadence theory – the view that capitalism has passed its zenith and is in irreversible decline – a theory which is problematic not least because of capitalism's continued global expansion.²

Also problematic is the commonly-held claim, shared by Price, that Marx's works lack a moral or ethical dimension. Admittedly, Marx nowhere presents an explicit theory of ethics, but the moral and ethical dimension of Marx's ideas is implicit in his humanism: the view that human beings and their human potential are systematically deformed by capitalism. Price seems to dismiss the ethical significance of the humanist dimension in Marx's writings because of the cynical ideological use of these ideas by "Stalinist totalitarians" to disguise a "monstrous reality".³

...DESPITE HIS BELIEF IN THE VALUE OF MARX'S ECONOMIC THEORIES, PRICE IS DEFINITELY NO MARXIST. THIS BOOK IS NOT, AND NOR SHOULD BE SEEN AS, AN ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE ANARCHISTS TO BECOME MARXISTS.

Perhaps the most important limitations of Price's book relate to aspects of its account of Marx's method, and to what Price calls Marx's "inevitabilism". In relation to Marx's method, Price's emphasis on the role of abstraction to the exclusion of other aspects amounts to a one-sided and rather misleading interpretation which leaves out the equally important dialectical dimension. In *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*, Marx's method is nothing if not dialectical. That Price does not bring out this aspect of Marx's method is surprising, especially given that he explicitly acknowledges as one source of his knowledge of Marx's economics the Johnson-Forest Tendency (C.L.R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya), in whose version of Marxism 'the dialectic' is all-important. Perhaps a discussion of dialectics was considered out of place in an introductory work of this kind. Whatever the reason, this is an unfortunate omission, given the importance of the topic.

Marx developed his version of the dialectic from a critique of Hegel's philosophical system and method.⁴ It differs from the Hegelian dialectic in important respects. But Marx never got to write his desired outline of the dialectical method.⁵ Probably the closest he came to doing this occurs in the Introduction to the *Grundrisse*,⁶ with its comments on what he regards as the preferable method of investigating political economy. In the absence of a definitive explication, Marx's version of the dialectic has to be reconstructed from disparate passages in his work; however, its precise interpretation and role in Marx's writings, remain highly controversial.

The one place where Price explicitly brings in 'the dialectic' is in relation to what he interprets as Marx's "inevitabilism" – the thesis that capitalism *necessarily* leads to socialism. Price's view that Marx's "inevitabilism" is based on Hegel's dialectic of history fails to recognise the important differences between Hegel's view of history, and Marx's. Despite material in both Marx's early and mature writings supporting Price's claim of Marx's "inevitabilism", the evidence is not as straightforward as Price suggests. For example, while Marx and Engels declare in *The Communist Manifesto* that the bourgeoisie's "fall, and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable",⁷ there is the contention, attributed to Engels and later popularised by Rosa Luxemburg, that the ultimate outcome of the class struggle will be either "socialism or barbarism". This implies an affirmation of the possibility of historical alternatives, rather than a dogmatic belief in the inevitability of socialism. It seems to me that whatever Marx (and/or Engels) actually believed, Marx's "inevitabilism" boils down, at the very least, to an expression of *triumphalism*, i.e., a bullish faith in the eventual triumph of the socialist cause. Whatever the "correct" interpretation, if we have to say anything is inevitable, it is that capitalist exploitation usually evokes some form of worker resistance – whether active or passive, open or clandestine, etc. – depending on circumstances and social-historical conditions. On this view, class struggle and worker resistance are to be understood as *tendencies*, intrinsic to both corporate and state capitalism – an interpretation consistent with Price's recognition earlier in the book that when Marx speaks of economic "laws", they

are to be understood as *tendencies*, open to being “interfered with, mediated, and countered by other forces”.⁸ (How far working-class resistance and class struggle, as tendencies, can develop towards achieving socialism, is an open question; inevitability has little to do with it.)

Similarly, in relation to decadence theory, quite apart from the fact of a still-expanding capitalism, when Marx in *Capital*, vol. 3 speaks of “counteracting factors” affecting the “laws” relating to capitalist decline, he is not so much speaking of *strict laws* operating in capitalism’s development, but rather of historical *tendencies*. This has serious implications for the cogency of decadence theory in that it challenges our ability to determine both capitalism’s decline and the point at which such decline is irreversible.

In this review I have concentrated on a critical assessment of some of the more important points in Price’s account of Marx’s ideas. However, it would be misleading to see this book as solely concerned with Marx’s theories; the latter part of the book concentrates on the anarchist dimension. Here, Price focuses on anarchist critiques of Marx’s economic theories, citing the views of, among others, Kropotkin, and especially Malatesta, to whose views he devotes the appendix.

In the face of the ongoing anti-democratic bourgeois revolution and its accompanying massive increases in state surveillance and control, the need for cooperation and solidarity among left-libertarian radicals has become increasingly urgent. Wayne Price’s book, in integrating Marx’s economic critique and theories into a class-struggle anarchist position, can be seen as part of the growing recognition of this need. Price’s view that Marx’s critique of political economy, plus anarchist methods and post-capitalist vision, constitutes the basis for a viable radical theory, should provide a much-needed stimulus to the dialogue between class-struggle anarchists and libertarian Marxists.⁹

Notes

1. Wayne Price, *Marx’s Economics for Anarchists: An Anarchist’s Introduction to Marx’s Critique of Political Economy*. Zabalaza Books, (orig. published on www.anarkismo.net/article/20585)

2. See the *Aufheben* series in libcom.org for a critical Marxist analysis of decadence theory. See below for further critical remarks on problems with decadence theory.
3. Wayne Price, *The Value of Radical Theory* (AK Press), p. 6.
4. See Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, final section, 3rd MS.
5. “I should very much like to make accessible to the ordinary human intelligence – in two or three printer’s sheets – what is rational in the method Hegel discovered but at the same time enveloped in mysticism...” Karl Marx to Engels, 14 Jan., 1858. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*. For Marx’s indication in the Postface to the Second Edition of *Capital*, of how his version of the dialectic differed from Hegel’s, see *Capital*, vol.1, (Penguin), p.102-103.
6. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Penguin) p.100 ff.
7. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Ch. 1.
8. Wayne Price, *The Value of Radical Theory*, p. 17.
9. For recent material exploring themes of dialogue between sympathetic Marxists and anarchists see, Alex Prichard et al., *Libertarian Socialism: Politics in Red and Black*, and the writings of Christos Memos. For Price’s view of the differences between anarchism and libertarian Marxism, see Wayne Price’s pamphlet, *Libertarian Marxism’s Relation to Anarchism* (<http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wayne-price-libertarian-marxism-s-relation-to-anarchism>).

A PLACE FOR POETRY

by Green Tea (Jurd)

Working towards an anarchist society, one of our key ideas is that means and ends should correspond. Emma Goldman's famous saying 'If I can't dance, it's not my revolution' is evidence of the festive nature of anarchism.¹

THE IWW HAD THEIR SONGBOOKS.

Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and *The Left Hand of Darkness* help us imagine alternative societies. Punk bands and street artists spawned a DIY creative culture that resists profiteering consumerism. In recent years we've witnessed a burgeoning zine scene. So it's appropriate that a journal such as *Sedition* doesn't restrict itself to polemics. There is room for short-form poetry at least.

English language *haiku* (ELH) and *senryu* (ELS) can be attractive to anarchists for several reasons. Just about anyone can write them. They use everyday language to describe ordinary events. Each one is generally open to multiple interpretations of meaning, and really good *haiku* can be read on several levels at once.

English language *haiku* and *senryu* derive from Japanese poetic forms. ELH can be serious or humorous. They usually contain a reference to nature or natural phenomena. ELS focus more on human nature and human behaviour, and can be satirical. *Senryu* are suited to social and political commentary.

There is no complete consensus as to the definitions of ELH or ELS. Generally they are written over only three lines in the format short-long-short. ELH in particular

usually consist of a phrase over two lines and a one-line fragment, which together don't form a grammatical sentence. There is a clear break between the phrase and fragment. ELH are mostly now written with minimal or no punctuation. The conventions for *senryu* are looser. ELS can be written in complete sentences and contain punctuation.

The way these poems work is by juxtaposing concrete images or details observed in the real world. The two parts of the poem provide a contrast, or focus in on details, and challenge the reader to make connections between the parts. Readers draw from their own experiences and imaginations in order to create meaning from the poem.

Anarchism encourages openness to new experiences and experimentation with style and form. How else can we build a better society? I believe that my short poems inspired by the Japanese forms of *haiku* and *senryu* have something to offer readers of *Sedition*.

If you want to know more about *haiku* and *senryu* in English or read more of these pithy poems there are some helpful websites available, as well as online journals.

Websites

AHA!Poetry - <http://www.ahapoetry.com/haiku.htm>

Haiku Dreaming Australia (includes haiku and senryu) - <http://haikudreamingaustralia.info/>

Shadow Poetry - <http://www.shadowpoetry.com/resources/haiku/haiku.html>

Beyond the Haiku Moment (Japanese traditional haiku) - http://www.haikupoet.com/definitions/beyond.the.haiku_moment.html

Journals

A Hundred Gourds - <http://www.haikuhut.com/ahg/>

Notes from the Gean - <http://www.notesfromthegean.com/index.html>

Modern Haiku - <http://www.modernhaiku.org/>

Frogpond - <http://www.hsa-haiku.org/frogpond/index.html>

Roadrunner - <http://www.roadrunnerjournal.net/>

Notes

1 See Jeff Shantz, *Against All Authority: Anarchism and the Literary Imagination*, (Imprint Academic, 2011), p.29.

Sunday at the shop
a customer asks for a cookbook
Jura doesn't stock

moonlight
on my doorstep
a cockroach

downpour
bringing in the washing
he hung out

he dials up
the extra long wash cycle
shortest day

25th of April
making felafel and tabbouli
for dinner

Mabo Day
adding to the Sea of Hands
once again

black Australia
has a white history
transit of Venus

Mr Yunupingu's passing
still waiting
for that treaty

HELP SAVE OUR VISUAL HISTORY...



Jura needs your help to preserve its rare political poster collection. We have an archive of thousands of radical political posters dating back 40 years. Many of the posters have huge political and artistic significance. Many are the only surviving copy.

Artists and collectives represented include Earthworks, Dobie Gillis, Nosey, Possum, Toby Zoates, Redback Graphix and Without Authority. Many worked out of the famous 'Tin Sheds'. You can learn more here:

We are working hard to preserve this important collection, but the ravages of time, mould, and silverfish constantly threaten their survival. As such, it's imperative to digitally document the posters for posterity. Jura has begun this process: volunteers have spent hundreds of hours sorting and organising posters for digitisation. Now we want to take high-quality photos of the 1,500 most important posters, using a professional studio. But this is expensive. It may cost as much as \$3,000.

We need your help to raise funds to take the photographs. Please make a donation now. Any amount, small or large, will be appreciated. You can deposit directly into our bank account:

Name: Jura Books Libertarian Labour

BSB number: 062193

Account number: 10204881

Please include the reference 'digitisation', and email us to let us know you've sent a donation. Alternatively, you can use paypal, post a cheque payable to Jura Books (please include a note explaining what it's for), or donate cash in person at Jura during opening hours.

BALLOT PAPER
USE OF REPRESENTATIVES
VICTORIA
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF
WILLS

Number the boxes from 1 to 8
in the order of your choice.

O'CALLAGHAN, Dean
INDEPENDENT

READ, Tim
THE GREENS

TRAJSTMAN, Adrian
SEX PARTY

WINDISCH, Margarita
SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

GIGLIA, Concetta
FAMILY FIRST PARTY

MURRAY-DUFOULON, Anne Marie
PALMER UNITED PARTY

HEGDE, Shilpa
LIBERAL

KELVIN
AUSTRALIAN

ANARCHY.ORG.AU

number every box

the line
the single figure 1 in
one of these squares
voting ticket you
vote

97