



In this month's issue:

Reflection on the S11 protests ten years on, and the role of the Autonomous Web of Liberation.

Phoenix interviews the editor of 'Original Plumbing', a magazine dedicated to the sexuality and culture of FTM trans guys.

Update on the anti-worker laws facing comrades in Aotearoa, and resistance happening there.

Reviews of the recent Greece skillshare at Black Rose and Joss Whedon and China Miéville's public talks + letters and news!

Upcoming events:

Saturday 25th September: Jura Books People's Cinema, 2pm

"The Rise of Disaster Capitalism" features Naomi Klein explaining the ideas and research behind her bestselling book, *The Shock Doctrine*. Screening followed by discussion. Jura Books: 440 Parramatta Rd, Petersham.

Tuesday 28th September: People's Assembly in Canberra at the Opening of Parliament

Assemble on the lawns outside Parliament House to call on the new Parliament to introduce humane refugee policies.

Saturday - Sunday, October 9th - 10th: Inaugural National Femme Conference, Red Rattler Theatre, 6 Faversham St, Marrickville.

Saturday October 9th: Rally for Abortion Rights! National Day of Action in Solidarity with the Cairns couple and all Queensland Women. Sydney Town Hall Square, 12 Midday.

Friday 15th to Monday 20th October: International Week of Solidarity with Jock Palfreeman

To raise awareness of the injustices of Jock's original trial and to provide solidarity with Jock for his upcoming appeal. Includes **Support Day for Jock's appeal, Saturday, October 16, 12pm**,

Cirquar Quay: featuring speeches, info on the case, music and food.

See freejock.net

Saturday - Sunday,

October 16th - 17th,

Latin America Solidarity Conference.

NSW Teachers Federation building,

23-33 Mary St, Surry Hills (near Central

Station). Challenging corporate

globalisation. A forum to find out about,

learn from and build solidarity in

Australia with the people's power

movements in Latin America. For more

information email lasfsydney@gmail.com.

com/lasnet@latinlasnet.org



REFLECTIONS ON S11 & AWOL

'ORIGINAL PLUMBING' -

AN INTERVIEW

WORKERS SOLIDARITY IN AOTEOROA

PLUS A LETTER FROM JOCK PALFREEMAN

Mutiny is an anarchist collective based in Sydney. We started this zine to explore different avenues of disobedience & resistance, & to encourage people to write about their ideas, actions & experiences. We meet regularly, please contact us on this address:

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Joss Whedon and China Mieville in Sydney

by Szyzgy

of class conflict. Conveniently for the purposes of this review, one audience member asked whether, like Whedon, Mieville has 'a dark place' from where he gets his ideas. Mieville didn't think so & was quite sceptical about this notion, suggesting that it was implicitly linked to the concept of 'the healing power of narrative', which for him has no basis in fact. For Mieville, it is also dangerous because it suggests that all narrative is good.

The Twilight Saga is one contemporary example that clinches the argument that some stories can have really bad consequences. It's a cruel irony for Whedon that the most popular vampire narrative today is Twilight, when Buffy attempted to have subversive gender politics, with her male friend Xander playing the 'helpless princess' role in countless episodes. This attempt was undermined by having conventionally beautiful actresses in all Buffy's lead roles, but its stance on gender was clearly far preferable to Twilight's, where Bella (the female lead) has virtually no agency. The mood of the Opera House audience was very anti-Twilight. Several people wore a t-shirt that read 'And then Buffy staked Edward. The End.' Whedon's clever response to a question on Twilight was that teens should watch Kristin Stewart make out with Dakota Fanning instead (as in the movie *The Runaways*).

It's in Dollhouse though that Whedon has explored his most interesting political themes. Whedon has generally used easily identifiable supervillains in his work, but for most of Dollhouse, it's the

faceless, sprawling Rossum Corporation that is the problem, which suggests the nature of capital much better. Much of the later part of the show is concerned with the technology of programming and identities proliferating and destroying people's sense of self, causing an apocalypse. In Dollhouse, the identity tech is inextricably linked to capital's search for profit, so apocalypse is ultimately about capital consuming our very identities. At the same time, the directors of the Rossum Corporation attempt to preserve themselves by stealing multiple people's bodies and switching between them. Hopefully this type of political exploration will continue in Whedon's future projects.

The last question to Mieville on the night was 'To what extent are the revolutionary themes in your novels a call to arms?' Mieville's response was hilariously self-deprecating, replying that to write an 850 page science fiction novel was the worst form of socialist propaganda ever. It was good to see a writer who was so modest about his role, but I thought he was underselling himself a little. It was pretty cool to go to a big event where there was almost no-one from the Sydney left in attendance, but where everyone still seemed sympathetic to Mieville's revolutionary understanding of the world. Anyway, the two events made me think that 'the left' could do well to pay more attention to the rebellious strands that flow throughout popular culture. Can the individual act of consuming a literary or visual product be transformed into collective feelings of disobedience? I hope so.

REVIEW: Revolt in Greece, Two Day Info Share @ Black Rose

by m.red

Sydney was recently fortunate enough to host a two day info share and discussions on the revolts in Greece. Visiting and returned comrades from Greece gave first hand accounts of events over the past two years and we discussed the strengths and weaknesses, difficulties and tensions, and aims and methods of the movement in Greece, screened films, and held a poster exhibition.

The first film, screened on the Friday night looked at the uprising in Greece in December 2008. The second film, screened on the Saturday, looked at the arrest, case and imprisonment of Giannis Dimitrakis, after being wounded by police after a bank robbery. The third looked at prison actions and solidarity in Greece. I don't want to review the films, I will say simply that they were well made, and worth seeing.

The poster exhibition itself was really something. I find a lot of posters are often quite boring, but these posters you actually wanted to look at. The one that sticks out most in my memory captured the condition of precarious, hospitality workers and customer service workers.

But really for me, the discussions over the two nights were the highlight of the weekend. I had followed the events in Greece through different outlets, but the frank and open presentations and discussions provided a far more real texture to life in Greece than many of the articles I had read. I liked how the discussions managed to identify and clarify some of the dimensions and different layers of the struggle in Greece,

further; this celebratory aspect at times flows over into talking basically of the hegemony of anarchism in areas of Greece. Arising from both these points seems to be the argument that in a number of respects the anarchist milieu doesn't need to work with other people or groups. This itself is celebrated, this kind of 'we don't need to work with anyone, we are already strong on our own' perspective. It seems to demonstrate how groups or milieus across the 'left', tend to reproduce very similar practices, despite otherwise differentiating themselves politically. I am not suggesting that it is always easy to maintain relations across political difference, or that there aren't political issues at stake in this very question of working across difference. But the celebratory dimension often runs in strange directions it seems. Paradoxically, one of the speakers lamented the history of splits and sectarianism of the 'left', and the problems this has created. I feel like everywhere I have been (which isn't many places) or heard about, confronts this same issue, where the rejection of leftism ends up sounding a lot like leftism.

Of course there is any number of points of commonality or disagreements that could be written about that came up during the weekend. But this I think speaks of the strength of the info share weekend, the talks given and discussions: it was a success in opening room for discussion and disagreement, for learning and hearing stories from an intense area of struggle, and thinking on the immediate condition here in Australia.

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AUSTRALIA Lake Cowal, NSW

On the 5th August, nine people found guilty of 'entering enclosed lands' during a walk-in at the Lake Cowal gold mine in 2009 appealed in the Wagga Wagga district court. The lawyer argued that the defendants did not deserve a conviction, due to the peaceful nature of the protest and that convictions would have a negative effect on their lives. He also questioned why the group should be penalised with a harsher penalty, just because they decided to test the law, as they would have most likely received a non-conviction if they had pled guilty. The court's decision was to dismiss the matter under Section 10(1)(a) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act. The mine received no conviction, no fine, no good behaviour bond and no court costs.

The mine, operated by Canadian company Barrick Gold, uses cyanide leaching for its gold extraction, a toxic chemical which ends up in tailing ponds along with arsenic and other toxins. Until the mine is shut down and the site is restored, there is a constant risk of the toxic waste-water leaching into groundwater or spilling into rivers during floods. Barrick plans to double the size of the mine. Uncle Chappy has a native title claim over the Lake Cowal area. In July 2009, he won a case in the NSW Supreme Court of Appeal that delayed the expansion. However in September 2009, the court ruled in favour of Barrick and the expansion can now go ahead.

Sandon Point, NSW

Bulldozers have moved in to clear land at Sandon Point, one of the last undeveloped strips of land from the escarpment to the coast in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra, and a site of great significance to local Aboriginal people. Last year, Planning Minister Kenegally approved the remaining 5 stages of the 6-stage development plan for the Point. During the elections, the Sandon Point Aboriginal Tent Embassy (SPATE) lost a legal appeal against the approval. Unfortunately, under undemocratic Part 3A laws, decisions on developments, coal mines, etc can bypass planning laws and be approved directly by the minister, so it was all

totally "legal". SPATE argued that 5 out of 6 Aboriginal local community groups weren't consulted by Stocklands, the developer. A community picket was held on the weekend of the 11th and 12th September and community resistance continues.

Darwin

Over the past month or so, the Darwin detention centre has been the site of several detainee led protests.

The first involved a group of Indonesian detainees, who began rioting at 4am on August 29. The Indonesian detainees are protesting against their legal treatment, which includes delays of up to nine months in having their cases come to court. Some of the men were also facing people-smuggling charges. Under Australian law, all the crewmen on asylum seeker boats face people-smuggling charges, which carry a minimum of five years' jail.

The rioting continued for more than seven hours and screaming and banging could be heard from behind the high-wire fence of the centre, hundreds of metres away.

Immigration officials have attempted to play down the protests and have released only scant details about them.

On September 1 at 7am, 92 Afghan refugees escaped from the detention centre. Some of the escapees carried messages written on sheets declaring "we want protection" and "show us mercy". The men have all applied for refugee status. One man told reporters most of them have had their claims rejected and immigration officials have told them they will have to return to Afghanistan.

A man yelled to reporters that if they have to return to Afghanistan they would be killed. He said: "If Afghanistan is safe, why are there Australian soldiers there? Why are there American soldiers there?"

All the escapees were surrounded by Darwin police. At 11am the detainees remained sitting in the open in 30-degree-plus heat, without shade and with only a few water bottles. Some of the men might be fasting as part of the holy Islamic month of Ramadan.

All of the detainees were searched and returned to the detention centre.

Buol, central Sulawesi, Indonesia.

A death in custody sparked a hundred-strong

riot at Buol police station on September 1, in which police shot and killed six and injured dozens more. Officers and their families were being evacuated, as reports spread of locals attacking and burning officers' houses and vehicles. Hundreds of reinforcement police were being sent from elsewhere in the country to 'restore law and order', as it was believed that 'if [local officers] are still there, it will be difficult for locals to stay calm.'" Indonesian police said they had arrested eleven officers over the deaths on the 1st and were questioning others over the death in custody.

Minsk, Belarus.

Ten anarchists were arrested on 3 September following the August 30th molotov cocktail attack on the Russian embassy. The previously unknown anarchist group, Freedom Friends, took responsibility for the attack, claiming it was a solidarity action for the defenders of the Khimki forest.

Many groups believe that the unraveling repression against social activists indicates the pre-election hysteria of the Lukashenko government.

The following was taken from a response written by a friend of the detainees: "We note that information in media concerning our friends is changing everyday. At first, they were accused of the attack on the Russian Embassy, now they are suspected in the property damage of the Belarus bank and the House of Trade Unions in Minsk on 30 April. What accusation will be next?"

We also don't understand how 'the masks with slots for eyes, and literature promulgating the ideas of anarchism' can be a proof of our friends' co-partnership to the property damage. We demand facts."

FRANCE

On September 7, France witnessed the largest national protest in over a decade over proposed changes to the pension bill which would raise the retirement age from 60 to 62. Over 1 million people turned out across France to protest Sarkozy's proposed changes, with 700 000 in Paris alone. The protests and strikes halved national rail services, disrupted underground train services in Paris and led to cancellation of a quarter of flights at Paris

airports. International rail services were also affected, with no trains travelling from France to Spain or Italy. The government aims to pass the bill by the end of October. The left-leaning opposition, which lowered the retirement age to 60 under President Francois Mitterrand in the 1980s, accuses Sarkozy of protecting his earlier tax cuts for the rich by making the middle and working classes pay for the pensions shortfall.

CHILE

Ten activists face terrorism charges after raids on 3 squatted social centres and private homes on the 14th August. They are alleged of being involved in making and exploding bombs which have erupted lately in the Chilean capital. 'Evidence' was seized of alleged bomb-making materials, which were in fact kitchen utensils. These raids have occurred in the context of changes to anti-terror laws which have continued to criminalise social activism. This also gives police the status of 'witnesses of faith', whereby they do not have to present concrete evidence against the accused.

Gurgaon, India & UK

Viva Global is a major supplier of kid's and ladies garments to Marks & Spencer, one of the biggest brands in UK, which spends billions of pounds every year to publicise their commitment to the workers' who make clothes for them. Viva Global had violated almost all labour laws including non-payment of wages, illegal forced termination of workers and all other kinds of unfair labour practices (such as ignoring safety regulations and not providing basic amenities). Subsequently the workers had unionised with the Garment and Allied Workers Union(GAWU).

On the morning of 25 August, when workers were beaten by goons hired by the management, and union delegate Anwar Ansari was kidnapped. He was detained for 14 hours and was released after GAWU President, Ms. Bhatacharjee launched her indefinite hunger strike. He had been beaten severely during his time as captive. The workers have been sitting in front of the factory from 25th August, day and night demanding the management to enter into an agreement with the union to accept their legitimate demands.

This means that when push comes to shove, the Labour Party will side with the bosses and make workers suffer - as was most clearly demonstrated during the 1980s when the Lange government introduced the most sweeping right wing reforms this country has ever seen.

What follows are some further ideas for collective resistance to these anti-worker laws.

We need to take industrial action against the bill where possible. This action can be legal or not. If you are not in negotiations, and thus cannot strike legally, push to open up negotiations for variations to your contracts to oppose the proposed laws. In that way, you open up space for legal strike action. Or push for unofficial strike action, like taking a mass sickie at your workplace on the day of the stopwork or protests against the bill. We need to build on these actions, and push for more national stopworks and strike action to defeat the bill.

If you can build a strong supportive culture with your workmates, you can create a situation where action can be taken even when outside the legal restrictions. Support others' struggles too - we are all in this together, and that means that we need to support and encourage each other to the best of our ability. Ensure that all action is controlled by the workers taking it, not by union officials who are removed from the shop floor and don't have the same interests as us.

The new laws will make us work more for less pay. We want more pay for less work. We oppose any deals or laws linked to increases in productivity and work hours (such as reducing our leave or ability to take

sickies). The bosses already steal countless hours of our lives and countless dollars from our pockets, they certainly don't deserve even more!

If, at the end of the day, these laws do pass, we need to plan to make them unworkable. Any boss considering firing someone under the 90 Day Bill should know that if they do, they will have pickets outside their business. Likewise for those employers who pressure workers into giving up their 4th week of annual leave. Bosses need to be taught that they cannot use these new laws without there being negative consequences for their profits.

One way to do this is to get involved in creating a network of militant workers in your area. This network could organise the above pickets. It could coordinate action and solidarity to support and encourage those taking industrial action and to resist any repercussions on those going beyond the law. If you are interested in being involved in a network like this, please contact us: info [at] awsm.org.nz.

We want to dump not only these new laws, but the whole sordid Employment Contracts/Relations Act era which has strangled workers' ability to strike, thus delivering massive profits to capitalists. In the end, there is no such thing as pushing for fairness at work. The capitalist system is at its heart exploitative, and all bosses are exploiters, even the 'nice' ones. Ultimately, we need to get rid of the whole exploitative system and bring in a classless, stateless society whereby we freely co-operate to meet our collective needs rather than be wage-slaves for the profit of a few.

population.

Workers who want to join a trade union may find it much harder if the proposed changes go through. Unions will require permission from the employer before they can set foot on the property, meaning it will be especially difficult for unions to get onto sites where they don't already have members. Additionally, companies will be able to communicate directly with workers during collective bargaining meaning yellow unions (unions run by the company) may become more common, which may bring a drop in wages and conditions.

Separate from this lot of law changes but also coming up soon is a private members bill from National MP Tau Henare, which would place further restrictions on strike activity. The bill, which would force unions to hold secret ballots for all strike activity, would give bosses another avenue with which to have strikes declared illegal, at a time when workers are already heavily restricted in their choice of industrial activity by the ERA.



PUBLIC MEETING:

Stop the Anti-Worker Laws

Let's Kill The Bill!

Like most of us, you too are probably overworked and underpaid. We slave away for 8 (or more!) hours a day, only to head home and find that we don't have enough

money to pay for the things we need to live an enjoyable life. Unfortunately, the Government is now proposing changes to employment law which will only make things worse! If the changes go through, we will all face a future with more unemployment, even less job security, less pay and all the stress and frustration that goes with all of that.

But it's not all doom and gloom - together, we have a huge amount of power as workers and, if we can work collectively and exercise that power, we can not only defeat these proposed law changes, but also improve significantly on the status quo!

All over the country, people have been out on the streets marching and rallying against these attacks on workers. But while mass protests on the streets are worthwhile, they will not be enough to roll back these proposed changes on their own. Mass action, like the hundreds of thousands that protested in the street against the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act in 1991, is ignored by those in power when it suits them. We need to take strike action and hit bosses where it really hurts — their profits.

The Council of Trade Unions is organising protests and probably a nationwide stopwork in October, however we need to go well beyond that if we are to have any chance of stopping these law changes. We need real resistance run by the workers, not rhetoric and symbolic action. Likewise the Labour Party, which implemented a ban on solidarity strikes and political strikes when it introduced the original Employment Relations Act while it was last in power, is primarily concerned with managing capitalism rather than supporting workers.

Original Plumbing: an interview - by PHOENIX

Original Plumbing (OP) is a quarterly magazine dedicated to the sexuality and culture of **FTM trans guys**. Amos Mac and Rocco Kaviatos co-edit the magazine, which is independently printed and distributed out of San Francisco. **OP** documents the diversity within trans male lifestyles through photos, essays and interviews. I had the pleasure of meeting Amos whilst I was bumming around SF.

PHNX: Why the name *Original Plumbing*?

AMOS: Original Plumbing is a name I was seeing a lot in online personal ads written by trans men who had not had "lower" surgery. I thought it was a unique, personal term that seemed to be a good way to sum up what was going on for them below the belt, and it was something I felt embodied a trans experience as a whole, regardless of surgery. By naming the magazine *Original Plumbing* it is turning immediate attention to our bodies --- specifically what's in our pants --- but in a way that lets the reader know that we are the ones in charge and that this is a space for us, by us, and that we are proud of who we are. The fact that we call it "OP" for short, which is also short for "OPERATION", is a completely amazing and comical coincidence.

P: When and why did you start *Original Plumbing*?

A: I started OP in the summer of 2009. The first issue came out in the fall of 2009. The initial idea was that I wanted to turn my photo project into a very simple photo-based zine highlighting a few guys per issue. I wanted there to be a space for trans men to be featured where they could tell their own stories and where I could showcase my photos of them at the same time.

P: What role do you think *OP* plays in the queer and trans* community, within the states and globally?

A: I feel like it is a stepping stone regarding visibility for the trans male community world wide.

P: Is this any different from what you thought it would be?

A: Yes it is much different than I thought it would be. It is still a small intimate project in my mind, but when I teamed up with Rocco to co-edit I didn't realize how we would fuel each other into making this project so much larger than just a magazine.

P: The *OP* website describes how the magazine promotes and documents the diversity of trans masculine folks. Can you describe some of this diversity that *OP* has already documented?

A: We showcase diverse guys, the examples are really on the pages of the magazine. Trans men who have been on hormones, or who have never been on T (estosterone), post-op, pre-op, never wanting an op, etc. Guys of all sexualities, race and size. The age range of people involved in our latest issue (OP#4 - The Workin' Stiff issue) was extremely diverse -- we have our first senior citizen trans man photo spread and interview, and then in the same issue there is a story written by a trans guy who is still in high school.

P: Do you think *OP* challenges the more traditional and/or medical ideas of what it means to be a trans masculine person? If so, how?

KILL THE BILL!

workers in both the public and private sectors.

What are the changes?

Perhaps the biggest change is the expansion of the 90 day fire at will scheme. Under this, any worker can be fired within the first 90 days of employment without any way to legally challenge this. When originally introduced following the 2008 election, this only applied to workers in workplaces with 19 or fewer employees (around 1/3 of the total workforce) however the proposed expansion would see it cover all workplaces. Since it was brought in, approximately 22% of workers hired under the scheme have been fired within 90 days, many given neither a reason nor a warning of what was about to occur, leaving them financially screwed.

A number of changes have also been proposed to the personal grievance process and the way the Employment Relations Authority works. All these changes make it harder for workers to challenge harassment, unjust firings and other problems and while making it easier for the bosses to get their way in a system that is already slanted in their favour.

We will also be pressured into working more often. The time honoured tradition of pulling a sickie is under attack... Meanwhile, the 4th week of annual leave will soon be able to be exchanged (for cash), as will public holidays (for other days). National is declaring that both of these exchanges must be initiated by the employee, but in reality many workers will no doubt be pressured by their bosses into making them, especially those workers in the first 90 days of their contracts who are in constant fear of being fired! This all adds up to more work for an already overworked

The following is taken from the website of the Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement <http://awsm.org.nz/>, 'a national organisation working towards a classless, stateless society: anarchist-communism. As class-struggle anarchists our priority is active involvement in workplace struggles and industrial action as well as community based campaigns in our neighbourhoods. We encourage working class people to organise themselves against capital and the state. We do not seek to paternalistically organise people from the top down.' On Saturday 21st August, in 4 nationwide rallies organised by the Council of Trade Unions (CTU), thousands gathered in Aotearoa to protest proposed changes to workplace laws, outlined below.



Workers Set To Face More Attacks

The National Government recently announced a series of new attacks on workers across New Zealand. The raft of proposed changes to the anti-worker Employment Relations Act (ERA, brought in by the previous Labour Government in 2000) and the Holidays Act will serve to further cut job security, wages and conditions for hundreds of thousands of

A: Yes, OP does challenge traditional trans male roles I think. I feel like we show a good solid mix of guys, from the beefcakes to the femme trans guys and everyone in between, and that's important for people to see. There certainly is more than one way to be a man.

P: You travel around a lot, hosting various OP parties all over the states, do you have any aspirations to host OP parties in other countries?

A: Yes! I know we'd love to come to Australia. I've had dreams of doing an Aussie issue from the very beginning! And of course I'd love to go to Berlin and Paris and Tokyo and host parties there as well.

P: Oh and do you have a favourite issue, interview or shoot that stands out so far?

A: I can't pick a favorite shoot. I remember them all and different things stand out for different reasons. The first issue I have the most sentimental feelings towards, because it was such a crazy time for me and I didn't really know what I was doing or how it was going to look after it was printed. Or how it would be received by both trans people and the media and beyond. And I felt that for the first time I was really putting myself out there as an artist and it is nerve-wracking to do that, and I just went for it without dwelling too much on the final product or how I felt it would be received. OP continues to be my passion and inspire me, but with the first issue, it was still very much an exciting mystery to me.



G'day Mutiny Mates,

Thanks for the write up! The FAB (Federation of Anarchists in Bulgaria) are pig dogs! They called me a criminal, demanded that the state should give me a life sentence and asked comrades not to show solidarity! And in Greece it worked, they fell for it! Traitors!

But I do need international solidarity, as there's none here in ye olde fascist Bulgaria.

My lawyer told me I've got no chance, which is right, unless there's some public protests demanding justice. I have a small chance in Strasbourg [European Court of Human Rights], but I can't submit an appeal until I'm finished in Bulgaria, which from guess will take another 2 years, then it's a 5 year wait for the Court of Human Rights! The appeal courts can lower my sentence but they can also RAISE it! So I do need shouting and protests!

Many thanks, please help my brother to organise another protest, this time at the Bulgarian embassy; and together with Athens, Brighton ABC, Bristol ABC, Stockholm ABC, Bratislava (Slovakia) 'people against racism', and ABC Berlin. I really need another International Day of protest demanding my release.

Best Regards,
Yours in Solidarity
Comrade Jack
Sofia Central Prison
21 General Stolerov Boulevard
Sofia 1309, Bulgaria



brainstorming came up with the name AWOL. ("I want the word autonomy to be in it." "Er, um what about 'network'?" "Can we use the word web instead?" asked one beloved, bearded forest blockader. Bingo! 'Autonomous Web of Liberation': AWOL.) I thought to myself, how funny, this is exactly what we've done: gone AWOL from the traditional left.

I was pretty happy with the name and statement of 'Who We Are': it focused on practice and not names or political identities but rather how we organise and what we are against, rather than 'we are anarchist' or 'we are autonomist' or we are this or that group. In so doing, and with some hard work, it became a very efficient, practical space for getting stuff done for a broad section of largely anti-statist and anti-capitalist types that avoided shit fights between people with very different politics. It changed how I saw things in a big way, and I think for many people in it, the relationships that went onwards into other projects are something we should not forget.

Who We Are

S11 AWOL is non-hierarchical, decentralised and autonomous. It aims to facilitate actions, hold skill-sharing workshops, and empower peoples with information and knowledge, to enable us all to most effectively shut down the World Economic Forum and say NO to global corporatisation and capitalism...

S11 AWOL gives a big thumbs down to those with racist, sexist, ablist, homophobic or nationalistic agendas.

I'd been involved in some stuff when I lived in London – the G8 protests, the 'carnival against capital'/J18 protests – and we had all been surprised by Seattle. It really felt like something big was kicking off and for several years it did. Then came the slow recuperation and decline of the movement, as well as many of its limitations being reached in the changing times of the 'war on terror', the shite politics of the anti-war movement, the rise and fall of the detention centre actions ... WorkChoices, followed by global recession, the pseudo-left 'pink tide' in Latin America, and now bio-crisis, climate change and the rest.

I've had a number of years where I haven't been involved in much, and I've had little new to say: I've felt ideologically and practically stuck. For some of the people I still have contact with from this time, I don't think I'm the only one who feels this way. Maybe some joint reflection will spark some debate and action!

What I took from the experience of AWOL into later stuff, and what I saw carry forward or be altered in later stuff...

- May Day 'Reclaim the Streets' action (May 2001) • Genoa solidarity action (July 2001) • 'Media Circus' conference (July 2001) • Tent City (October-November 2001)
- Woomera (March-April 2002) • Baxter (April 2003)
- 'State of Emergency' conference (May 2004)
- Anarchist and autonomist conferences (2001-2005)

REFLECTIONS ON AWOL AND THE WEF PROTESTS, MELBOURNE SEPTEMBER 2000

By Dr Woono, taken from <http://slackbastard.anarchibase.com/?p=20103>

The 'Autonomous Web of Liberation' (AWOL) was a Melbourne based 'networking hub' that brought people together to share skills, network and exchange ideas in preparation for protests against the World Economic Forum in September 2000. This experience does not have the recognition it deserves, not only in terms of the blockade, but also the later networks that sprang from people having come together at this time, and the wider effects this experience had on their subsequent political practice.

For a long time I've been thinking about relaying my experience. I've hesitated because I've not felt that one person's perspective can do justice to this subject. Many of us were involved in this experience: at times, up to 100 participated in the meeting/doing/happening that was 'AWOL'. I'm hopeful that others will seek to collaborate on a larger piece, comment on this one publicly, or write their own story, in order to develop our history and our theory.

I have so many comrades that I still have some contact with who were involved in this project, but also those that span off from it at later times. It is rare I think in political movements over time to have such a sense of shared experience. I still feel that many of you out there have got my back, that I can rely on many of you, that I share levels of affinity with many of you that I could not have anticipated at the time. That said, there is a fair bit of hate still around from people who felt left out, or who didn't have great affinity to begin with, or that grew apart as time went on. There are yet others that I have no idea where they are or what they are up to now, and some I should try to catch up with more. I hope that some of what is said in this ramble will get us asking questions about relationships of affinity and questions of organisation, then and now.

There was a sense among us – well, I can only speak for myself really – that the organising method of the 'S11 Alliance' was really problematic: it was too slow, it tried to speak for everybody, and meetings didn't achieve much but rather served as a space for the pursuit of various agendas belonging to various little political parties, fighting about the demands appropriate to a united front. This had very little relationship to my politics, or those of the Seattle events that it claimed to be building on. The authoritarian left really did not get it. Or maybe they did, but wanted to use the rhetoric of Seattle for other ends – mainly building the parties and personality profiles of select others.

Back in early 2000, a number of 'direct action folk' – anarchists, autonomists, forest blockaders and other ratbags – had started attending the organising meetings for the protests against the WEF. Many of us found the authoritarian politics of the Alliance impossible to work with, and called a meeting for an alternative networking space. This became S11 AWOL.

Precisely when S11 AWOL began is debatable, as a number of people with roughly the same ideas had meetings at around the same time, but at the first meeting I attended (held in a little tin shed) we wrote 'Who We Are', and with some further

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I only ever went to a handful of AWOL meetings from memory — I was pretty shy and didn't like meetings.

I hung around a lot of people from that scene though and I was heavily involved in s11 and projects that had roots in it for some time. I have mixed memories and perspectives. It was an exciting time and balls were rolling, no one knew where they might fall. The power of the internet was a big unknown, there was nimbleness of action and thought and much of the activism had playfulness, style and danger. Some good pranks. There was press hysteria (and so many outrageous freaking lies, I can never take media the same again).

It was often fun and sometimes infuriating, but I never really felt very grounded in what my or other's frameworks / values were. We discussed it surprisingly little, in retrospect. I guess there was a big bad that wasn't us (and a little bad — we defined ourselves as much against the socialists as the forces of 'globalisation'), and there was plenty to organise, we were young, sort of hip and that seems enough to know sometimes.

... it was as much about the process and experience and what it could lead to — no one thought a few protests would bring down global capitalism, and we were finding our feet, exploring, so I'm not saying most of us were actually deluded, but there was nevertheless this underlying tension that never got resolved, can't be resolved in a purely protest movement.

...In the last 10 years the global capitalism system has been showing some major fault lines. Perhaps informed by the tension I mentioned, many people are now putting their energies into building resilience so that as cheap shit from China and global currency stability and the energy equivalent of 300 slaves each starts to unwind, there are some working examples to fall back on. We're trying to do it in ways that are inclusive, see values in people and places that as hip young activists and largely reactionary, we weren't prone to see them. The experience of working in collectives has been very valuable in helping us organise. The sense of dynamism, excitement and messing with what is supposed to be possible, all remain. - Ag

The anarchists went AWOL at S11. No kidding. The lamest black bloc of any of the global meeting demos/riots of the early noughties.

danmurf

One of the clear, one of the very few, lessons that I do think I learnt from S11 was that attempts at ideological recruitment is opposed and harmful to class re-composition. The attempts of the socialist groups and anarchist milieus to direct the wave of enthusiasm in a way to swell their ranks ran counter to the project of increasing the solidarity and autonomy of those in struggle. Important questions about how to make decisions, what kind of actions to take, the rhythms of the struggle became subsumed into a very different and toxic debate. Also it seemed that as the wave of struggle receded this intensified ideological rigidity. But many of us have slipped away from that now. The intellectual atmosphere in and around the Black Rose/Mutiny scene in Sydney (for example) always seems very healthy to me and free of the rigidity that so many were caught in at that time.

This is an important lesson it would be a shame to forget it.

Dave

Stuff I remember most is: the propaganda war preceding The Event; wondering if anyone was gonna rock up; the cold and the wet; being needlessly shouted at by Trots armed w/ megaphones (and Messianic zeal); the contrast b/w the attitude of The Kids on the blockade / picket lines and the unionists on the march (S12); feeling vevy angry and upset at the cop who punched my g/f in the face, fracturing her cheekbone;...the guy who sat on the bed of nails

Oh

And being quoted by Bolt in the run-up. And the Pacific Islander (?) guy what done the awesome don't-fuck-with-me, my-people-have-been-fighting-yr-imperialist-wat-machine-for-centuries warrior pose while staring down the cops. And the AMWU/CFMEU/ETU guys who snuck onto the pickets despite being told by Brian Working Class Discipline Boyd that this was Bad and Wrong and would make everyone at T/H vevy vevy upset 'cause blah blah blah blah blah blah. And watching the black bloc run around. And the looks of outrage on the faces of the innocent as they discovered that Yes Virginia, there is a ruling class, and their media lies, and their cops punch kids and OAPs in the face and yes they're gonna get away with it. And watching Guy Rundle introduce the rough cuts of video footage @ T/H and being outraged — outraged! — that a Guy who'd only several mths previously denounced 'S11' for being organised by pea-brained students and the like should have become an overnight expert — just add platform! @ndy