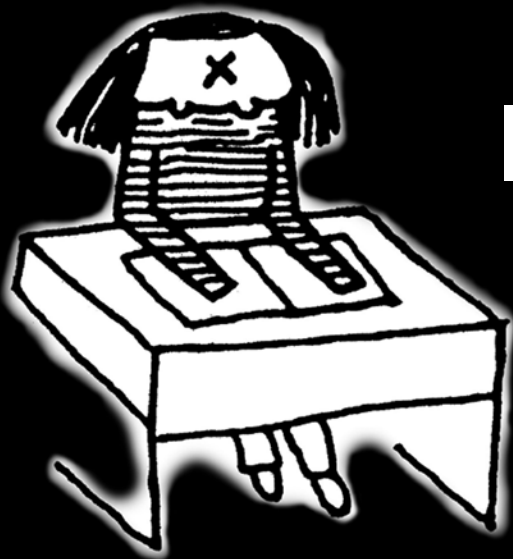




# imminent rebellion

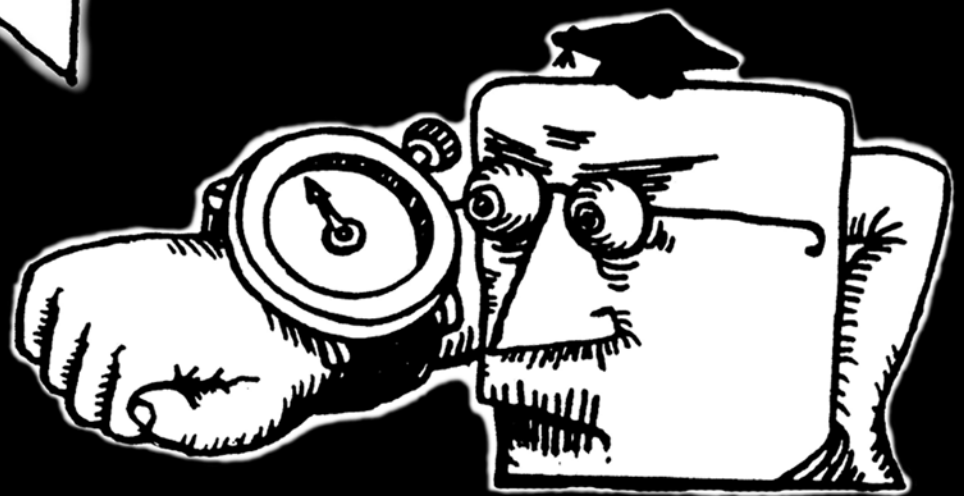
Issue 3 - April 2004

Free To All



## Education or Indoctrination?

An anarchist look at schooling



### Also in this issue...

Anarchism is about life!

M20 Coverage

Syndicalism in Sweden

The Anarchist Origins of May Day  
and more...

*a 'zine for anarchists in Aotearoa - for our collective liberation!*

# Welcome!

KIA ORA and welcome to the third issue of *imminent rebellion*. We're still going strong – and still coming out bimonthly which is a feat in itself!

This issue is focused on education with an article, in fact written by a teacher, looking at education from an anarchist perspective, including its role within capitalist society and how it can be changed. The article is based largely on discussion that occurred at the Anarchist Tea Party – great to see work still coming out of that event!

As well as this, we have a sizable reply to Mr Grumpy's "Anarchism is about Struggle" which is interesting reading – I personally think both make good points. The FAI, which was probably the most militant anarchist organisation in the Spanish Revolution of 1936, was started after one of many gatherings of a particular group of vegetarian anarchists. These gatherings regularly consisted of nude excursions to the beach or rock climbing in the mountains – clearly a focus on lifestyle does not have to be at odds with collective struggle! For me, to be a revolutionary to the fullest extent one cannot ignore one's own personal life, but also to be a "lifestylist" in the fullest extent one cannot ignore the wider social antagonisms.

As always we are looking for contributions. And not just articles! I want to see more project updates, more news, whatever! Let's make this all the more real – *imminent rebellion* continues to be an open forum for all anarchist perspectives so get writing!

I'm hoping to work on getting better distribution of *imminent rebellion* – perhaps working on some sort of network but we'll just have to wait and see. Well enough talk, enjoy!

- Torrance

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## imminent rebellion

Issue 3 - April 2004

### About this zine...

We are fighting for our freedom – for the liberation of all oppressed peoples. We strive for a society where we can live on our own terms, working together collectively as equals. We seek an end to the tyranny of the state and the oppression of capitalism (among other things) as they are completely apposed to our goals of freedom and egalitarianism. We believe that this radical social change can only be achieved through collective grassroots organisation, and we completely reject all power politics and authoritarian models. We are anarchists and this 'zine is here to better facilitate communication so that we can continue down the path to our collective liberation!

### Contributions...

*imminent rebellion* relies on your news, articles, photos and letters. Our policy is to publish anything well written and from an anarchist perspective. If you want to see us around more often simply send us something to publish!

### Subscriptions...

If you want to make sure you don't miss out on an issue of *imminent rebellion* send us your mailing details, and enough cash (or a cheque made out to "imminent rebellion") to cover mailing. \$10 will cover 5 issues in NZ.

### Donations...

*imminent rebellion* is free and we're poor – got the picture? So if you'd like to send some cash our way it would be really appreciated. Cash, stamps and cheques (made out to "imminent rebellion") would all go a long way.

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It was unspeakably sad to see this handful of men, alone among the cliffs, the sky and the enemy fire, ready to fight to the end, and already seemingly condemned to death. A heart-rending grief, a mortal anguish, took hold of one, driving one to scream in despair, yes, to scream to the whole universe, that a dreadful crime was about to be committed, and that what was the greatest in the hearts of the people, the noblest and most sublime thing that the people had produced in the heroic centuries of its history, was about to be destroyed, was about to perish forever.

- Arshinov (*Speaking of the anarchist Mahknovshchina Insurrectionary Army of the Ukraine, 1921, as they were totally surrounded by the Red Army. They escaped but were obliterated a few months later by their treacherous "comrades", the Bolsheviks.*)

# M20: Global Day of Action

MARCH THE 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, marked a year since the U.S. and its 'coalition of the willing' invaded Iraq. March the 20<sup>th</sup> also marked a day when people all over the world took to the streets demanding an end to the war in Iraq, Afghanistan and capitalist violence and aggression in general!

In Europe, Asia, and the Americas thousands took part in protests and other actions against the war in Iraq. Organisers of the Tokyo rally estimated 30,000 people, 100,000 people marched on New York and an incredible 1 million marched through Rome. Closer to home, Sydney saw about 200,000 people march against the continued war.

Throughout Aotearoa about 1,500 people took part in actions the length of the country. Wellington saw more than 600 protesters and both Auckland and Christchurch drew crowds of at least 300 people, as well

as a host of smaller protests around the country including Dunedin, Palmerston North and Rotorua.

The people in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to experience the forces of the American military, as well as its allies (and, course, the Iraqi police!). The Iraqi civilian death toll has exceeded 9,000 according one source and Afghanistan has seen an estimated 5,000 civilians killed.



Wellington



Christchurch



Auckland

On top of this are the thousands of soldiers who have also been killed that the U.S. refuses to recognise. A very conservative estimate would put the deaths in both Iraq and Afghanistan to well over 50,000 people.

The New Zealand government sent several deployments of SIS troops into

Afghanistan soon after the U.S. decided it was going in late 2001. And while Helen Clark didn't initially send troops into Iraq she has more than made up for this with several deployments of crack SIS troops, as well as engineers and other aid to enable the war machine in Iraq to function more effectively.

The New Zealand government has played a significant role in these wars, both whose goals have been to enrich the capitalist elite. War has always been used to further capitalist interests or suppress dissent at home and these wars have done both. As the saying goes, "war is the health of the state", so let's smash the state!

- Torrance

## Christchurch Anarchists Up To No Good Again...

THE ANARCHIST Round Table (ART) staged a mass burning of New Zealand flags on March the 20th as part of a Christchurch anti-war rally to mark the first anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq. Around a hundred mini flags (specially printed for the occasion!) went up in smoke in a demonstration of solidarity with convicted flag-burner Paul Hopkinson and in protest at the New Zealand government's support for the ongoing occupation of Iraq.

A leaflet handed out at the protest read: "On 12 February 2004, Porirua teacher Paul Hopkinson was convicted in the Wellington District Court of dishonouring the New Zealand flag and fined \$600.

"The charges resulted from an incident in March 2003 when Mr Hopkinson set fire to a New Zealand flag during a protest against the

visit of Australian prime minister John Howard. It was the first prosecution and conviction of a person on a flag-burning charge in New Zealand.

"The charges were laid under the Flags, Emblems and Names Protections Act, which was passed by Robert Muldoon's National government in response to the anti-Springbok tour protests of 1981. The law is a serious threat to freedom of speech and civil liberties, and is now being used by the Labour government in an attempt to stifle protest against its involvement in the war on Iraq."

Many people who attended the March 20th



protests took part in the flag burnings and none of the flag-burners were arrested.

- Anarchist Round Table



# 'Education is a system of imposed ignorance'

## The Secondary School Example

I STARTED this article as an overview of education, but thought that doing so would be a bit dull, and present my own ideas only, which is not what I'd like. This article, then, is based on the workshop that occurred at the Anarchist Tea Party that produced a great many good ideas, and a good many laughs and positivity!

Well, firstly, the workshop presented the current problems of education, and whether it does suck or not. Mainly we looked from the point of view of secondary education in Aotearoa, and the format that follows is how it went.

### What exists in secondary schools

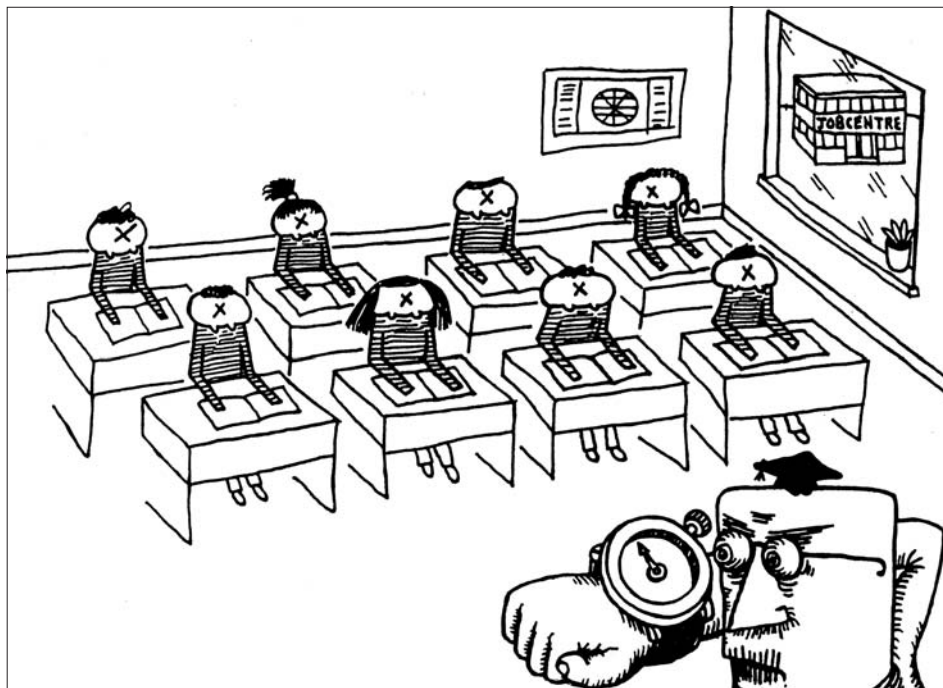
So, what do we have? In 2004, NCEA will be fully introduced, so from year 9 (form 3, 13-14yr olds) to year 13 (form 7, 17-18 yr olds) we will have mainly internal assessment. Assessment is based mainly on unit standard, and a competency has to be shown in a subject to be able to progress to studying that subject the next year. This progresses throughout a student's school life. In the past, we have had exam based assessment at 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> form level (15-17year olds). NCEA is seen as getting away from this exam based system, and as such is a clearer year-long indication of a student's achievement. At present, students are required to stay at school until 16 unless they have an exemption (usually to do other training).

Depending on the school, each day consists of five or six 50-60 minute long periods broken by lunch and a morning break. There is no 'home room' like at primary, students travel from class to class for each lesson. Lessons are based on electives, with – especially at junior levels (yr 9-10) – compulsory subjects (especially Maths and English).

### Why is this bad?

#### An example of a day as a teacher

This is how it goes for a teacher – me. I arrive, see the lesson plans for the day I have pre-prepared that fit in with the units to be studied, have a staff gathering at the beginning of the day chaired usually by the principal where news, info and events are shared. Then, I go off to my first class, say, year 9 social studies. From the H.O.D. I have been given a guide to what needs to be done, and generally the lesson



is pre-set by the department (and may be the same as done for many years). The kids arrive, I let them in, take the roll, and do an introduction into the lesson and what work must be done. I hand out material to be completed or direct what is happening, then let the

y'all later – and I might see them tomorrow or the next day (as there are usually 3-5 lessons on one subject per week). I then move onto my next class. I probably, after roll call, work setting and wrap up, have had 30-40 minutes to help the students with their work.

**"A great deal of my time as a teacher is spent being a policeman ... and the school ensures that 'discipline', i.e. the creation of a power structure, is rigidly enforced. Basically, I'm a cop or I lose my job."**

students get on with it, as I go around checking for homework. The lesson is mainly taken up with supervision and making sure 'on-task behaviour' is being shown. As time gets on, just before the lesson finishes I set homework, tell the class what needs to be completed and what future lessons will entail. I then say see

Why is this bad? Well, for a start, the teaching is compulsory – for students AND teachers. There is a set curriculum to be delivered in a set time in a set place (that in my experience are usually ugly and intimidating – classrooms are remarkably prison-like). The lessons are usually a small part of a unit that sometimes has a vague purpose, but fits in with the curriculum requirements, and to a large extent, junior classes are just 'cabbage class' (I have heard this term used by students and teachers) and are just glorified babysitting sessions. Junior students still have the more integrated curriculum idea that they've taken from primary school, and don't like the rigid structure of separated subject rooms with different teachers. That's one of the main reasons I think most senior teachers want to teach senior students (they're used to the system and don't rebel). I have mainly taught junior classes and, not surprisingly, a great deal of my time as a teacher is spent being a policeman making sure students are 'on-task'

– and the school ensures that ‘discipline’, i.e. the creation of a power structure, is rigidly enforced. Basically, I’m a cop or I lose my job. At the end of a lesson, students are confused, bored and resentful – and so am I.

### So, what is education?

The question we have to ask is – what are schools for? The obvious answer is LEARNING. If a school is a place where learning is forced, coercive and confrontational, is it learning? And, if a school by some miracle is studying great stuff, there is a set-time only to study, and discussion is centred on the ‘curriculum requirements’ and is set by the teacher. In my own opinion, learning is a passion. To be controlled, forced and boxed in by the system is not passionate, it is its opposite. Students leave school burning their books and swearing never to visit a library again. The strangest thing about this is that teachers think this is the students problem, not theirs. It is THE SYSTEM that is the problem. Basically we’ve got a system that the government reformed because it perceived that it fails to produce the product business requires, (that’s why there’s a ‘crisis in education’) and as such NCEA and NZQA have been created. Problem? If you’re poor, Maori, rural or in any way lacking in power, the education system will not support you. Apprenticeship schemes are gone. Privatisation is rife. Education is clearly on class, race and sex lines in Aotearoa (it always has been, but is increasingly obvious and unavoidable by anyone). Education is a product – and schools are after their market share. So let’s detail exactly what we’re fighting:

From the workshop, ideas as to what is wrong with the current education system were Summarised as follows:

- Kills desire to learn that we’re born with.
- Devalues students.
- Enforces society’s values, especially:
  - Capitalism.
  - Class system.
  - Blind Obedience, creating a lack of critical thinking.
  - Institutionalised Racism and Sexism.
- Creates competition as a driving factor, ignoring the value of cooperation.
- There is a lack of democracy and direct involvement in the running of the school in relation to students, teachers, parents and the community.

There are other problems, in particular that teachers aren’t allowed to teach in a free and cooperative manner, students tend to create a ‘us and them’ attitude to older generations (understandable!) and that the system

encourages the sheep mentality in order to survive – to be on the conveyor belt of school-work-obedience. From these ideas, we went onto the crux of the workshop – what are we going to do about it?

### What do we want?

Many great ideas came out of the workshop, and the main ones were based on ideas of mutual respect: secondary students will actually learn if this happens between all those involved in education. Some ways of creating this are:

**COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT** – Get involved in the school, go to meetings, many schools already have access for parental involvement, we don’t need to re-invent the wheel, get involved!

**FREE SCHOOL** – A freer space for students to study, consisting of students of *all ages*.

**EMPOWERING STUDENTS** – Ask students what they want, and from this create:

**STUDENT UNIONS**

**WORKSHOPS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

– As a way to see what students want.

**RED/BLACK BOOK** – A guide to Anarchist education ideas.

**GET AND BUILD CONTACTS** – There are masses of people with great ideas, let’s share them. I’d personally like a lot more debate between students and teachers.

We had a great presentation by a Spanish Anarchist about PAIDEIA, an Anarchist School in Spain, which had great ideas of practical day-to-day stuff, and how to create a school with Anarchist principles. What was pointed out, however, is “why create an anarchist education ghetto in which a small amount of children benefit while the rest of the students in the education system are left at the mercy of the present institution?” Things to do now are there: Active parental involvement in the students education, become a board member, organise a parental group at school, volunteer in the classroom to help the teacher.

This is where the workshop ended, with contacts made and ideas starting... the free school concept should be underway in Wellington in February, a magazine to promote free education ideas has been suggested, and contacts with teachers and students are expanding. This article, and the workshop, were intended to get debate going and action happening. Books, ideas, resources and voluntary work are needed, so let’s start. If you’d like to contact me at [gogre99@hotmail.com](mailto:gogre99@hotmail.com) or give me a call at (04) 526-4611, feel free.

- *George van den Hoeven*



Are concerns about leaving traces, personal security, surveillance, etc hindering your activism? Aunt4 Balaclava may have the answer. Simply email your questions (as brief as possible) to [imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz](mailto:imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz). Note that Aunt4 Balaclava cannot reply to emails individually.

*Dear Aunt4 Balaclava,*

*I like to phone organisations I have issues with and let them know how I feel. However, I’m worried about my phone being traced. What can I do to stop this from happening?*  
*Phoneruperer*  
*Ekatahuna.*

**Dear Phoneruperer,**

It’s never a good idea to make these kinds of phone calls from your home phone. (Or from Mum and Dad’s or a friend’s phone for that matter!) If a complaint of “telephone nuisance” is laid with the police they can very easily track your phone number. All they need is an indication of the date and time of the phone call. This sort of information is stored on Telecom’s computers for quite some time, and a track and trace can be performed even if you have a restricted number or if you’re not a Telecom customer. Also, it’s quite possible that the person or company you’re calling has a Personal Caller ID unit connected to their phone line.

Emergency services have what is known as CLI, or Caller Line Identification. This is similar to caller ID, but shows a lot of other details such as the address and name of the person who owns the line. It can even be interfaced with mapping software to show a caller’s address on a computer screen.

Payphones are a far better option for making the types of calls you describe. However, bear in mind that Telecom can automatically log all calls made using a particular phone card, so never call friends or family on the same card you use for other purposes.

Lastly, remember that all phone cards can be traced back to the retailer, and as many shops have surveillance cameras, you should leave a considerable gap between when you buy the card and when you use it. Of course, if the company you have “issues” with has an 0800 number, you can probably call it from a payphone without using a card!

Take Care Out There,  
Aunt4 B.

# Anarchism is about



AS I SIT here writing my stereo is blasting out punk music – sadly the bane of many anarchists. Songs about struggle, oppression; of hope and victories – you can literally feel the anger and the love. They are all sung in Spanish – this particular release by Sin Dios (meaning ‘no gods’) is a benefit to buy equipment for the Union of Graphic Arts, Communication and Spectacles of the C.N.T. in Spain.

I hope they sell enough copies to get what they need.

An insert in the LP reads: “For us the music has been, is and will always be, a weapon for struggle. Even if the music itself is not going to change any system, we believe in the communication of ideas and information. With hardcore, salsa or pop rhythms it’s possible to show concerns, doubts, questions, thoughts and inspire future actions, answers, decisions and affinities.”

Dire Straits does not offer me these; I need and will always seek out more than soulless capitalist ‘music’. Punk is an attitude. It does not mean ‘fast, loud and aggressive’. If you have not found the ‘punk’ for your particular tastes then keep searching comrade! Dance for the revolution, not the capitalists!

I’ve started this article talking about punk because of its continuing status as a ‘counter-revolutionary’ force. Clichés and tired stereotypes are again being trotted out to explain why so few people in Aotearoa are attracted to anarchism – apparently it’s all about ‘lifestyle’: our dress, diets, the music some of us listen to and the grotty flats that we are forced by our poverty to dwell in.

That hurts: anarchism is rejecting punk – my chosen lifestyle/favourite identity label – for the sake of image?

It doesn’t make sense. Punk is simply electrified folk music – a lot angrier at times, but essentially still stories of our struggles and dreams.

What did Makhno’s soldiers sing around the campfires? Irish rebels, black slaves, depression era workers....? They sang their punk songs. We sing ours.

Punk is a voice we so desperately need. No other sub-culture promotes anarchism to our youth. No other sub-culture actively seeks change rather than self-gratification and

**“Millions and millions of people live ordinary hard working lives and are often too tired or not particularly interested to attend political events or meetings. Their lives are full.”**

wealth. I’d be more concerned about revolutionaries that listen to Dire Straits! A round of applause is deserved, not these boo’s and hisses!

The dirty word that ‘lifestyle’ has become was repeated often within the pages of *imminent rebellion* #2 and considering the number of different writers a trend I find

worrying. Even the editor’s review of the *Anarchist Tea Party* was quick to reassure readers that early criticisms of it being very “lifestyle” focused were wrong.

Lifestyle. I’ve always taken this term to mean the way that you live your life.

I live mine as an anarchist.

Does the animal rights activist continue eating meat as she works for animal liberation? The peace activist? The feminist? The anti-racist campaigner? Frankly I think it’s weird how some anarchists condemn a person’s attempts – however insignificant – to put into practice something they are obviously so passionate about.

In his article ‘Anarchism is about Struggle’, Mr Grumpy claims that while an anarchist ‘lifestyle’ may be interesting and even fun, the way you live your life will not change the world and is in fact inward looking and a total waste of time.

What will change the world says Mr G is anarchism. Yet, “Anarchists, by ourselves, will never change the world. The ONLY way to get rid of capitalism is through the action of millions and millions of working people. The job of anarchists is to take part in mass movements and struggles, alongside ordinary people.”

While this sounds suspiciously like Mr G is forming a vanguard of ‘anarchists’ to lead the ignorant masses to their liberation, what interested me more is the implied separation of anarchism from ‘ordinary people’ and their daily lives.

Torrance (who wrote ‘Visions of Liberation’ in the same issue) hit the nail on head with: “revolution exists in the present, not in some mythic future, and it is crucial that we start figuring out how to live on our own terms now.” Yet at the same time he warns us that the potential for this to be seen as ‘lifestylism’ exists.

I’m bewildered; on one side it’s “lets form groups to tell the masses about anarchy – yet condemn anyone who practices exactly what is ‘preached’”.

Millions and millions of people live ordinary hard working lives and are often too tired or not particularly interested to attend political events or meetings. Their lives are full.

Being marginalized for not attending such events is not helpful. And now it appears that anything they could do at home is also pointless. While a lecture on the history of anarchism may help them see the bigger picture of the whole shit system, a community garden or advice on building and fitting solar panels may be of more use.

Ideas, abstracts, possibilities, aims and principles etc may satisfy some people (I won’t name names) but for others the ideas often



come after the action. Anarchy does not always need a label and complex theorems to back it up in order to be successful. The reality is enough. I've found this to work with my neighbours just fine.

This seems to be the ideological line in the sand: *imminent rebellion #2* is literally bristling with condemnation of people choosing personal life changes before the glory of the revolution.

**“Anarchism means many things to me, but top of the list is desire to live life on my own terms.”**

Weird; perhaps they have a key date in mind when we can at long last ‘become’ anarchists.

Certainly the revolution will be glorious, but it may be a long way off eh? And it appears to be drifting in a direction some do not approve. The restless are getting restless and collectivism is breaking down into individualism as they attempt to turn the dream into reality. Good? Bad? Evolution?

Mr G's article is titled ‘Anarchism is about Struggle’ which is disastrous from a marketing point of view. I offered copies to a friend to distro but she declined after reading it, saying it was too bleak and negative as an introduction to anarchism. I'd have to agree. Some would say, ‘but that's the reality’ – no it's just opinion.

Anarchism means many things to me, but top of the list is desire to live life on my own terms. Sure it may be a struggle at times to achieve some goals, but I'm winning – and I'm telling everybody about it.

It's not a waste of time nor is it inward looking. I think I'm straddling that ideological divide.

Anarchism is all about, as Chris Deaker explained in his ‘Anarchy Without Adjectives’, a social revolution; “the complete redistribution of power to each and every person. And not a revolution advocated by a small group, but actively enforced by the entire community – a grassroots revolution.”

NOT by a small group, but the ENTIRE community – I like that; perhaps it could go into *imminent rebellion's* aims or whatever.

In Aotearoa the anarchist movement is dominated by a vocal group of men who advocate a classical left-wing work-based revolution (and by a stroke of bad luck they all ended up in *imminent rebellion #2*!) They dream of the general strike (despite the fact that many do not work – but we won't get personal) while most of us would rather not go to work at all. They seem pissed off that everybody at the *Anarchist Tea Party* attended

the ‘herbal contraceptives’ and ‘living outside capitalism’ workshops instead of arguing about the foreshore issue.

Tough. The people will do as they wish.

The *Tea Party* was an open forum event; the people decided by their interest whether a workshop proceeded or not – many didn't. No one offered to hold one on work place organisation, the organisational platform or the failures of the Spanish revolution – so they didn't happen.

This is that ideological division coming together: the people decided.

Marxism is 100% irrelevant because there are no successful working examples to point at and go ‘look its beautiful, it works, join us!’ It would be a tragedy if anarchism fell into the same hole. The Spanish revolution is not a working example; The Freedom Shop is.

Enough name-calling. Anarchism is fairly small and irrelevant in Aotearoa mainly cos life is pretty bloody cruisey! We're a long way from mass deprivations for any serious dissent to begin forming. Move to Serbia if you want to be a few more stages along the revolutionary continuum.

Materially we are very well off and this carrot is for most people an acceptable bribe to losing many of our freedoms. Luckily not everybody though.

More and more people are discovering the underlying principles of anarchism and seek to adopt these into their everyday lives – take some power back and celebrate another victory. For many this may be all that maintains and nurtures their belief and support for anarchism. Who wants to live a lie once you know the truth?

We must applaud such moves, such fundamental changes in how a person lives. Fuck the labels and ‘ism's. A life change will do far more for anarchism than a placard waved at an empty building or attendance at a soulless meeting listening to sexist men stroke their egos.

These changes are our walking adverts; why should they be considered elitist or binding rules that become the face of anarchism? It's about finding the courage to challenge authority and take control – not single issues like meat eating etc. Dignity, respect and mana come in

many different ways. The pettiness of some anarchist's arguments reveals much insecurity! Still believe in power over other lives eh?

“Free the people so they can decide how they want to live,” concludes Rob McGrail after slamming anarchists with a different ‘lifestyle’ for scaring off potential recruits “fearful of an attack on their negative freedoms (like the freedom to wear leather or eat meat)”.

McGrail agrees that GM, medicine, veganism etc are important issues, but best left until after the revolution to sort out. I disagree, I can't wait that long when it comes to my health and sanity. I need victories, however small and insignificant they may appear to others. This is not a dictate for others to follow suit.

The workshop at the *Tea Party* about living outside capitalism was amazing for the number of practical ways that people could remove themselves from capitalism.

From making your jam, sharing your gardening tools, working in a non-profit organisation, riding bikes, printing your stamps to having shared meals with your neighbours. Silly little things? Or bricks in the wall?

These are not “abstract ideals” that are “divorced from everyday struggle” nor is it a



lifestyle which people must conform to as Toby Boraman asserts in his article ‘What Anarchism Means To Me’.

It's just living as an anarchist. And frankly it's a hell of a lot more real than the ‘anarchism’ promoted by many of the writers in *imminent rebellion #2*, who often appear to be content in simple ‘promotional’ work. That's fine – each to their own path.

As Deaker says, “our ideologies may be different but we all approach this from a fundamentally similar methodology: non-hierarchical grassroots change. Rather than dwelling on our differences, lets realise our similarities.”

- Mr Happy & Mrs Crusty



# The Anarchist Origins of May Day

*With May Day coming up – the 1st of May – we thought we'd provide everyone with a bit of history of this famous anniversary.*

TODAY it is just another day. Not many people know why May Day became International Workers Day and why we should still celebrate it. One more piece of our history which has been hidden from us.

It all began over a century ago when the American Federation of Labour adopted an historic resolution which asserted that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labour from and after the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1886".

In the months prior to this date workers in their thousands were drawn into the struggle for the shorter day. Skilled and unskilled, black and white, men and women, native and immigrant were all becoming involved.

## Chicago

In Chicago alone 400,000 were out on strike. A newspaper of that city reported that "no smoke curled up from the tall chimneys of the factories and mills, and things had assumed a Sabbath-like appearance". This was the main centre of agitation, and here the anarchists were in the forefront of the labour movement. It was to no small extent due to their activities that Chicago became an outstanding trade union centre and made the biggest contribution to the eight-hour movement.

When on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1886, the eight-hour strikers convulsed that city, one half of all the workforce at the McCormick Harvester Co. came out. Two days later a mass meeting was held by 6,000 members of the "lumber shovers" union who had also come out. The meeting was only held a block from the McCormick plant and was joined by some 500 strikers from there.

The workers listened to a speech by the anarchist August Spies, who had been asked to address the meeting by the Central Labour Union. While Spies was speaking, urging the

workers to stand together and not give into the bosses, the strikebreakers were beginning to leave the nearby McCormick plant.

The strikers, aided by the "lumber shovers", marched down the street and forced the scabs back into the factory. Suddenly a force of 200 police arrived and, without any warning, attacked the crowd with clubs and revolvers. They killed at least one striker, seriously wounded five or six others and injured an indeterminate number.

Outraged by the brutal assaults he had witnessed, Spies went to the office of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (a daily anarchist newspaper for German immigrant workers) and composed a circular calling on the workers of Chicago to attend a protest meeting the following night.

The protest meeting took place in the Haymarket Square and was addressed by Spies and two other anarchists active in the trade union movement, Albert Parsons and Samuel Fielden.



Albert Parsons

## The Police Attack

Throughout the speeches the crowd was orderly. Mayor Carter Harrison, who was present from the beginning of the meeting, concluded that "nothing looked likely to happen to require police interference". He advised police captain John Bonfield of this and suggested that the large force of police reservists waiting at the station house be sent home.

It was close to ten in the evening when Fielden was closing the meeting. It was raining heavily and only about 200 people remained in the square. Suddenly a police column of 180 men, headed by Bonfield, moved in and ordered the people to disperse immediately. Fielden protested "we are peaceable".

## Bomb

At this moment a bomb was thrown into the ranks of the police. It killed one, fatally wounded six more and injured about seventy others. The police opened fire on the spectators.

How many were wounded or killed by the police bullets was never exactly ascertained.

A reign of terror swept over Chicago. The press and the pulpit called for revenge, insisting the bomb was the work of socialists and anarchists. Meeting halls, union offices, printing works and private homes were raided. All known socialists and anarchists were rounded up. Even many individuals ignorant of the meaning of socialism and anarchism were arrested and tortured. "Make the raids first and look up the law afterwards" was the public statement of Julius Grinnell, the state's attorney.

## Trial

Eventually eight men stood trial for being "accessories to murder". They were Spies, Fielden, Parsons, and five other anarchists who were influential in the labour movement: Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Michael Schwab, Louis Lingg and Oscar Neebe.

The trial opened on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 1886, in the criminal court of Cooke County. The candidates for the jury were not chosen in the usual manner of drawing names from a box. In this case a special bailiff, nominated by the State's attorney Grinnell, was appointed by the court to select the candidates. The defence was not allowed to present evidence. The special bailiff had publicly claimed, "I am managing this case and I know what I am about. These fellows are going to be hanged as certain as death".

## Rigged Jury

The eventual composition of the jury was farcical; being made up of businessmen, their clerks and a relative of one of the dead policemen. No proof was offered by the State that any of the eight men had thrown the bomb, had been connected with its throwing, or had even approved of such acts. In fact, only three of the eight had been in Haymarket square that evening.

No evidence was offered that any of the speakers had incited violence. Indeed in his evidence at the trial Mayor Harrison described



the speeches as “tame”. No proof was offered that any violence had even been contemplated. In fact, Parsons had brought his two small children to the meeting.

## Sentenced

That the eight were on trial for their beliefs and trade union activities was made clear from the start. The trial closed as it had opened, as was witnessed by the final words of Attorney Grinnell’s summation speech to the jury. “Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the Grand Jury, and indicted because they were leaders. They are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury; convict these men, make examples of them, hang them and you save our institutions, our society.”

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, seven defendants were sentenced to death, and Neebe to 15 years in prison. After a massive international campaign for their release, the State “compromised” and commuted the sentences of Schwab and Fielden to life imprisonment. Lingg cheated the hangmen by committing suicide in his cell the day before the executions. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 1887, Parsons, Engel, Spies and Fischer were hanged.

## Pardoned

600,000 working people turned out for their funeral. The campaign to free Neebe, Schwab and Fielden continued.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of June, 1893, Governor Altgeld set them free. He made it clear he was not granting the pardon because he thought the men had suffered enough, but because they were innocent of the crime for which they had been

tried. They and the hanged men had been victims of “hysteria, packed juries and a biased judge”.

The authorities had believed at the time of trial that such persecution would break the back of the eight-hour movement. Indeed, evidence later came to light that the bomb may have been thrown by a police agent working for Captain Bonfield, as part of a conspiracy involving certain steel bosses to discredit the labour movement.

When Spies addressed the court after he had been sentenced to die, he was confident that the conspiracy would not succeed. “If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labour movement... the movement from which millions of downtrodden, the millions who toil in misery and want, expect salvation – if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread on a spark, but there and there, behind you – and in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out.”



August Spies

## Revolutionary Politics

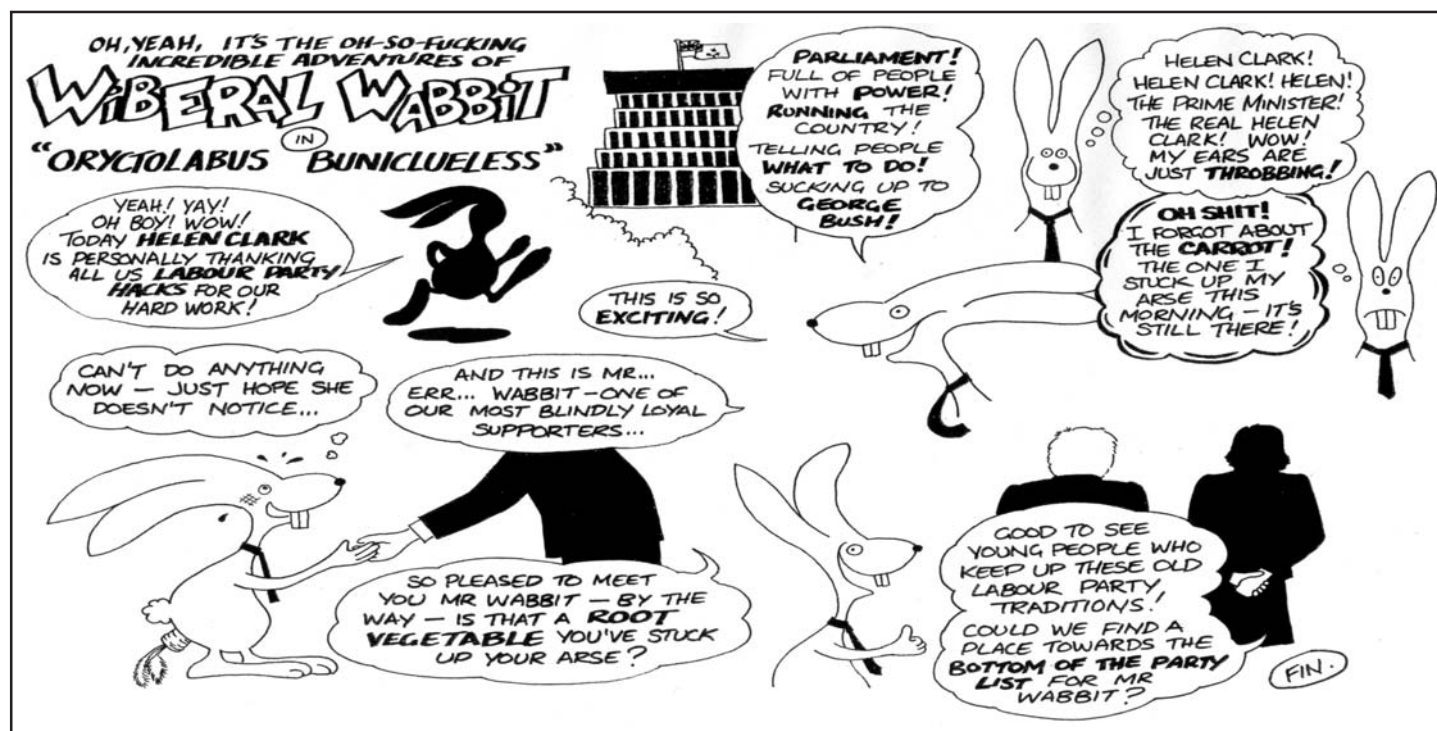
One hundred and nine years after that first May Day demonstration in Chicago, where are we? We stroll through town with our union banners – about the only day of the year we can get them out of head office. Then we stand around listening to boring (and usually pretty meaningless) speeches by equally boring union bureaucrats. You have to keep reminding yourself that May Day was once a day when

workers all over the world displayed their strength, proclaimed their ideals and celebrated their successes.

It is important that “once upon a time” it was like that. We can do it again. We need independent working class politics. No collaboration with government or bosses. Defiance of the Employment Contracts Act, not passively giving up like the CTU did.

Real solidarity with fellow workers in struggle, not a blinkered sectional outlook. We still need a further reduction in working hours, without loss of pay, to make work for the unemployed. We need revolutionary politics. That means politics that can lead us towards a genuine socialism where freedom knows no limit other than not interfering with the freedom of others. A socialism that is based on real democracy – not the present charade where we can choose some of our rulers, but may not choose to do without rulers. A real democracy where everyone affected by a decision will have the opportunity to take part in the making of that decision. A democracy of efficiently coordinated workplace and community councils. A society where production is to satisfy needs, not to make profits for a privileged few. Anarchism.

- Alan MacSimoin (Adapted. Originally published in *Workers Solidarity* 44, 1995, republished in *Workers Solidarity* 56, 1999, and finally in *thr@ll* 8, 1999.)



# SAC Syndikalisterna

“a free fighting trade union”



I'M A MEMBER of the Swedish Syndicalist Union “Swedish Workers’ Central Organisation”, or SAC. Our strategy to change society and abolish capitalism is by working through strong anarcho-syndicalist unions.

## Structure

There are two main things that make up the foundation of an anarcho-syndicalist union. One is the opinion that all workers should belong to the same union. The situation in big workplaces today is that, if there are union members, they usually belong to different unions. The cleaners to one, the factory workers to one, the receptionists to one etc. Instead, anarcho-syndicalists believe we should all belong to the same union, because we're all part of the same struggle. The second thing is the belief that all those who are affected by a decision have the right to participate in the decision-making process. No group, however, may act in contradiction to common resolutions. In practise, this means that the workers themselves should make the call if they want to go on a strike, not a union-executive who doesn't know anything about the workplace or the workers there. It's extremely important to have a decentralised structure. It's that structure that will make sure that the revolution (which anarcho-syndicalists believe will be most successful with the general strike) doesn't end with one or several individuals seizing power over the situation and turning our society into a new communist-state. It's the structure that we build in our organisations that will replace the present system of administration one day.

## History

SAC was founded in 1910, the year after the biggest union in Sweden, LO, had called for a General strike. It ended after four months with nothing gained whatsoever for the working class. Half of the members of LO left, but SAC never succeeded in organising all of them. One of the reasons why was WWI, when nationalism won over international solidarity. In 1938, LO (which has always been strongly connected to

the Social Democratic Party) and the Swedish Employer Association (SAF), signed a class-compromising treaty. This meant that SAF would give workers more rights, if LO would keep it's members calm and not go on strike. The Social Democrats built a strong welfare state, where education was free and the health care system, telephone company, railroads etc were owned and operated by the state. This is what is often referred to as “The Swedish Model”, neither free market capitalism or Bolshevik communism. But what it really meant was that the Swedish employers were scared of communism and wanted to find a way to control the workers.

## Today

The Swedish employers decided to break loose from the class-compromise politics in the nineties. They realised they could easily move a factory overseas if the government didn't do as they told them. So the government did. Sweden joined the European Union in 1994, a pure neo-liberal project. Everything that used to be state-owned is now sold off, the laws are changed in favour of the capitalists and the taxes for rich people and companies are being cut. LO's executives earn NZ\$20,000 a month and haven't even noticed that SAF has left the class-compromise politics. People are working more for less, and the gaps between the classes are widening.

In the 1980's, SAC was the only trade union against nuclear power. It was a big campaign and discussion in Sweden at the time, and the result of a public vote was that we were going to abolish it (the Government has now changed it's mind though). This led to lots of Green activists to join SAC. These activists were (generally speaking) unfortunately not

interested in building a strong, free, fighting union. They only wanted to be members of an anti-nuclear union. We need people to join the union because they need to, because they need to fight for survival. Therefore, I think that SAC needs to focus on it's trade union work and leave some of the other issues to other anarchist/libertarian socialist groups around Sweden. I'm not saying we shouldn't support them, of course we should, but we have to remember that first of all, we're a radical trade union.

During the nineties, SAC started what we call “the union reorganisation”, which means rebuilding our structures and get away from bureaucratic tendencies. One example is the course I went to a few months ago, which aimed to make us into “barefeet-negotiators”. This means that we'll be able to negotiate easier issues with employers ourselves without getting paid for it. This is another thing about syndicalism practise – we don't want a bureaucratic machine that does everything for



An SAC event from 1940.

you, we want a union where we rely on each other. A union shouldn't really have any employees at all, at least very few. During the course, we learnt to read laws, tricks you can use against the employer and which strategies to use in different situations. For example, a retired negotiator told us how he set up a meeting with an employer one hour before

Sweden would play Russia in the ice-hockey World Cup. The members he was representing had told him that their boss was a big ice-hockey fan. As the meeting went on, the boss looked at his watch every five minutes. A few minutes before the game was supposed to start, the boss finally gave in and said the workers could have everything they had demanded for.

## Feminism

It was in the nineties that feminism had its big breakthrough within the union. It had already started in the seventies, but it wasn't until in 1998 that we got our first female general secretary. In late November 2003, myself and three other women in Gothenburg's LS (local co-organisation) organised a two day course, called "The feminist trade union". We had workshops and discussions on women's participation within the union, analysed the public sector (70% of all its employees are women) through a capitalist perspective, discussed historical union fights led by women workers, and talked about sexual harassments and how we can work against it. Stories surfaced that SAC has on more than one occasion helped male workers to keep their jobs, after sexually harassing female workmates. From my perspective, it's unacceptable by a union that calls itself feminist and anti-sexist.

In 1993, the Syndicalist Youth Federation, SUF, started. It's independent from SAC, but

we usually use the same offices. SUF brought back some radical fighting spirit to LS's that hadn't had any activity for years. When I was a member of SUF, we did demos to honour the memory of Bjorn Soderberg, a syndicalist who was murdered in 1999 by nazis, had public meetings on sexism, feminism and pornography, started up a women's group, organised an international women's day march, discussions and a feminist self-defence course among many things. Most of it we organised together with our local LS. In other cities, Stockholm and Gothenburg, SUF has started "Planka.nu", which is a public transportation free riding insurance. In Gothenburg it costs NZ\$100 to travel with the public transportation system every month. With Planka, you only pay \$40 a month, and if you get caught free riding your bill is paid. The aim of the campaign is to make public transportation free for all.

## International Syndicalist Unions

Sweden

SAC – 10,000 members

Spain

CGT – 60,000 members

CNT – 3,000 members

Solidaridad Obrera – less than 1,000 members

France

CNT-f – 5,000 members

Siberia

SKT – 6,000 members

## What Can We Do Now?

Q: I'm not a member of a union, what can I do?

A: First of all, I think you should consider starting up an anarcho-syndicalist union. I've met many people throughout New Zealand in these two months who want to do this. Aotearoa needs a strong anti-authoritarian union movement! If that's not an option, at least try to unite your workmates against your boss. Make up funny names for her/him (but skip the sexist ones), i.e. the bulldozer, Fido. Always help each other out and talk about the specific problems at your work and how it could be done instead. Encourage each other. Make up small goals, i.e. free coffee, and you'll see that if you're successful, the goals will increase.

Email Billy at [ellypocrem@hotmail.com](mailto:ellypocrem@hotmail.com) if you're interested in starting up an anarcho-syndicalist network in NZ.

## Useful Links

[www.sac.se](http://www.sac.se)

[www.planka.nu](http://www.planka.nu)

[www.suf.cc](http://www.suf.cc)

- *Swedish Anarcho-Syndicalist*

# What anarchism means to me...

*"...freedom without Socialism is privilege and injustice." – Bakunin*

*"He who needs something to rebel against is less of a social anarchist than he who seeks to create something against which there is no need to rebel." – Baldelli*

*"Obviously active people understand the Anarchist idea of individual freedom as an idea of Anarchist relations towards all other individuals, as an idea of the continued struggle for the Anarchist freedom of the masses. But those who do not know the passion of the revolution, who are most concerned with the manifestations of their 'I', understand this idea in their own fashion." – Makhnov*

WHAT DREW me to anarchism were its theory, action and values and sadly not the anarchist 'movement' in Aotearoa. A disinterest in school, disillusionment with University and its complete lack of action, and disenfranchised

with single-issue and radical activism were all breeding grounds for an interest in Anarchism. My sociological and communitarian interests all led me to be rather suspicious of the unclear anarchist theory of individual freedom but drew me to the moral, ethical and spiritual elements inherent within collectivist anarchist values as well as the ascetic tradition and virtues of simplicity inherent within what has sometimes been called 'the religious tinge' of anarchism.

What makes Anarchism political is the conscious recognition of the practical steps needed for the struggle for the liberation of all and therefore a strong connection with the working class and other class struggles, theoretical coherence and the need for organization in face of the vast resources commanded by the capitalist class. Without direction the various anarchist tendencies will naturally neutralize each other.

In the context of late capitalism and the commodification of everyday life, the spectacle and the simulation, we require a critical apparatus for self-reflexivity and self-criticism for, amongst other things, an examination of the

bourgeoisification of anarchism: the relativistic, ahistorical, apolitical, anti-theoretical and anti-organisational tendencies within Anarchism. A clear critique, analysis, strategy and tactics is essential.

I would personally like to see the development of a very loose Aotearoa anarchist communication network based on the spokescouncil to help catalyse new groups and build existing groups. Also, the development of class struggle groups and a highly organized class struggle federation. The further development of *imminent rebellion* as a broad anarchist zine, the utilization of the 'www.anarchism.org.nz' community and information portal and the creation of a class struggle theoretical and practical journal are also essential. When I have time I would like to work on my 'fools manifestiv': a creative, spiritual, ethical, theoretical and practical anarchism based on collective spiritualism and freedom.

- *Bobo*



# Letters to the Editor

We encourage any feedback on previous issues and we will print all letters we receive as space permits – the smaller your letter the more likely it will be printed. Oh, and there is no decent explanation for Ernie – he was the only mailman picture I could find so I apologise in advance!

## Anarchism and Sub-cultures

Mr Grumpy's "Anarchism is About Struggle" (*imminent rebellion*, no.2) deserves to be carefully read. In particular I'd note his assertion that anarchist groups of the 1990s "were incapable of having an informed discussion about politics". Sadly, this was often true. This time around anarchists need to make damn sure that everyone who has spent some time in the movement can clearly and confidently articulate the basic ideas of anarchism.

Grumpy is pretty negative about the influence of sub-cultures on the movement, and he does have some good points. Sub-cultures have an unfortunate tendency to put on airs of superiority, as he notes. The worst example of this I've run across was a group of London anarchists, mostly getting on in the years, who routinely sneered at anyone not versed in their chosen literature - most of it pre-20th century and bizarrely irrelevant to modern anarchism. Keeping anarchism clear of cultural cliques is a constant and critical task.

Sub-cultures have also been an asset. Being an anarchist in 1980s and early 90s New Zealand would sure have been lonely and demoralising without the punks.

Anyway, anarchism has always thrown up new cultural forms and it's hard to see how a flourishing movement can avoid creating a distinct culture of some sort – and, if we avoid the snobbery, is it such a bad thing? We need something in our lives that offers more than the processed cheese-slice mediocrity served up by the corporates.

Much of the punk culture seems to be developing from a narrow artistic and musical style that paid lip service to anarchism, to a counter-culture that takes politics seriously and is more concerned with the methods of production of culture (particularly the economics) than the style of the product. As an anti-capitalist 'do-it-yourself' cultural movement, punk may yet become a valuable cultural wing to the anarchist movement.

Cultural and lifestyle politics have obvious limitations and shouldn't be the totality of the movement, but cultural work isn't necessarily a useless indulgence. Anarchism will be richer for serving up something to enjoy in today's capitalist desert in addition to promising the grand double-chocolate liqueur dessert of the future.

Salud y anarquía,  
Sam Buchanan

## Appeal to the Anarchist Movement 2

It is obvious that *imminent rebellion* has made a great impact on our friends, right through New Zealand. If I can say, for the first time, it has touched the ideological nerve really and truly in our true anarchists. All because it came down to earth to recognise the true values, the basics, the ABC of anarchism; some of which I pointed out long ago in my first appeal (which appeared in *The State Adversary*).

Anarchy is life itself, based on organisation, ideas and aims. In other words, like everything else, we cannot make the first steps without grassroots organisations among us, where we can learn together to crawl (after learning our theory and history) towards our social revolution. Only then will we be able to achieve and organise a free society.

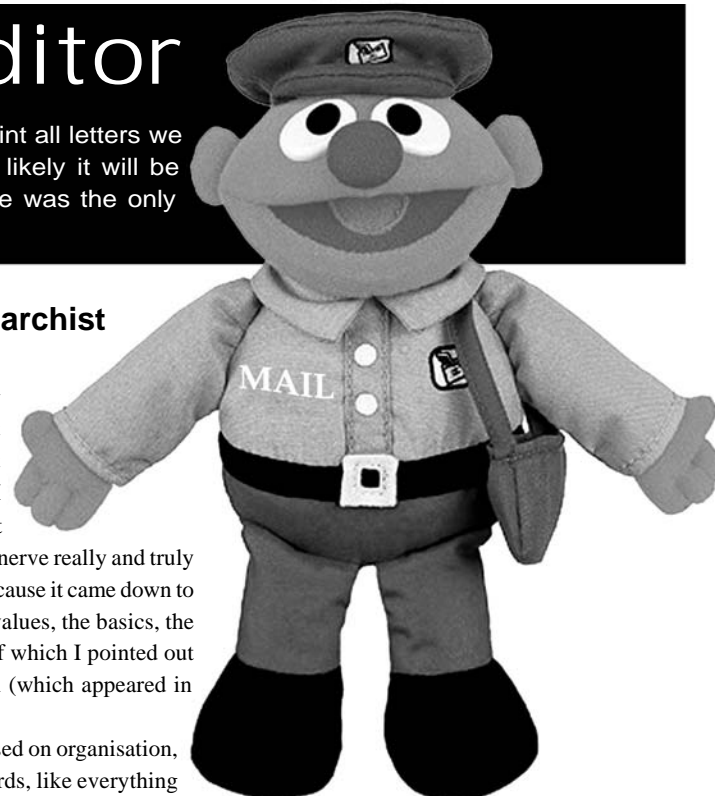
Our ideological strength is in our humanitarian values. That is what makes us so attractive to those seeking truth in life, and so dangerous to those politicians serving the state machine. That is why every anarchist has to learn the basics of anarchist ideas and share them with everybody both in the movement and beyond, especially in schools and universities. By discussing everywhere our ideas, we will build a very strong base. We will have organisations everywhere, something like football teams. Our anarchist movements, everywhere around the world, are on the move.

As one of your articles suggests in your last issue "anarchism is about struggle", so too is it about life! The future belongs to the truth, to the anarchists. Our duty as anarchists is to educate first ourselves and then the masses towards our goal – the social revolution. Keep producing articles like "Anarchism is about Struggle", "Anarchy without Adjectives" and "Visions of Liberation" and I promise you, in no time, we will have a strong base right through New Zealand.

"Jim" Z.Z.

## Robbie Williams & Other Technical Points

Congrats on a great issue no.2. I get bored very easily however I find that *imminent rebellion* holds my attention just as well as South Park.



Just a couple of points from issue no.2 that I'd like to comment on. The first is Mister Grumpy's comments about Dire Straits; he unfortunately omitted to mention that some anarchists listen to not only Dire Straits but also Robbie Williams, Fleetwood Mac and Nora Jones!

Also, in Claire Dann's article regarding the GE Camp "Anti-GE Troops Set For Action", Claire makes the comment that "your cell phone can be traced even when it is turned off". Whilst Claire has obviously picked this up from someone at the camp, it is in fact totally incorrect. If your cell phone is turned off, it is off; therefore not communicating with any 'cell sites', so your phone cannot be traced. Of course as soon as you turn your phone back on again and it finds 'coverage' or a 'cell site' your phone can be 'traced'. While I won't launch into all the technical stuff about cell phone triangulation etc, it is possible for your cell phone (when on) to be traced via cell sites to quite a close proximity. (The exact distance is hotly debated amongst nerds but it's certainly enough to know where you are within say, 50 meters)

Whilst this isn't really a biggie, there are many "experts" out there that are full of incorrect and therefore sometimes dangerous 'technical' information. (Dangerous isn't the case here however) So just a word of warning to all those involved in certain forms of activism, be careful what you believe when it comes to things that could end up costing you a lot of time and money!

Regards,  
Rob