



imminent rebellion

Issue 4 - June 2004

Free To All



What is Security Culture?

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Organisation: The Catalyst for Action!

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Updates from around Aotearoa

What anarchism means to me...

and more!

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

Welcome!

KIA ORA everyone and say hello to issue number 4 of *imminent rebellion*. Thanks to everyone who wrote articles, updates, provided pictures or helped me with my often strange queries!

This issue looks a little different from the previous. Besides having cool little topic headings at the top of each page (appropriated from Socialist Worker – haha!) we've also dedicated two whole pages to 'communication & project updates'. We really want to see *imminent rebellion* used to its full potential as a means for communication between anarchists here in Aotearoa and we hope this new section will help out in some way.

There's also a rather shameless plea for help on the back page. We would like to see *imminent rebellion* become monthly (and thus allow the communication and news parts to be more relevant) but we need more stuff to publish. If we get that, we'll probably move to a monthly 8-page format very quickly.

Also, we need help with distribution! We're printing 400 an issue at the moment and could print more but we're having trouble just getting that 400 completely distributed.

Anyway, enough of my whinging. We hope everyone enjoys this issue, starts talking to each other (yay!) and starts sending us stuff to print! Kia Kaha!

- Torrance



imminent rebellion

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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. **The deadline for contributions is June 20th (if we go to a monthly format).**

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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The most formidable military machine depends ultimately on the obedience of its soldiers, ... the most powerful corporation becomes helpless when its workers stop working, when its customers refuse to buy its products. The strike, the boycott, the refusal to serve, the ability to paralyze the functioning of a complex social structure – these remain potent weapons against the most fearsome state or corporate power.

- Howard Zinn, radical historian, author and activist.

HIKOI TRAVELS THE COUNTRY



Images from the final destination of the Hikoī, Wellington.

Credit: Aotearoa Indymedia



ESTIMATES of between 15,000 (by police) all the way up to 30,000 were made of the final day of the Hikoī as it reached Wellington on May the 5th.

The Hikoī was to make quite clear to the government Maori dissatisfaction with the proposed foreshore and seabed bill.

The Hikoī had spent 14 days coming down through the North Island visiting centres like

Auckland, Hamilton, Taupo and Whanganui and was consistently well attended by both Maori and non-Maori.

Only in Auckland as the protesters attempted to cross the Harbour Bridge did they meet any resistance, in the form of the mayor, John Banks. But police, aware of the militancy of the protesters, agreed to let them go through without Bank's knowledge.

Helen Clark smugfully dismissed the massive protest saying something to the effect of "isn't it great we live in a democracy where people can protest (and the leaders can blatantly ignore them!)". The bill was eventually passed.

Taraiana Turia, a leading Maori MP of the Labour party, subsequently resigned and has set out to start a new Maori party. Let's hope not to the detriment of grassroots Maori activity.

Other Happenings...

11th – 17th April: About a dozen protesters primarily from university campuses across the country camped out and occupied Happy Valley, 17km Northeast of Westport. The site is owned by Solid Energy and is the proposed area for an opencast coal mine; consent will almost certainly be granted. The protesters occupied the site for a week, made it onto 3 News and every major newspaper in the country. The protesters received little flak from Solid Energy besides one brief skirmish with a couple of workers. *For more about the campaign, turn to page 9.*

Saturday, 1st May: May Day this year was generally pretty quiet. Wellington, which staged a march followed by speakers and several bands, probably attracted the biggest crowd but at just 250 it was well down on previous years. 150 people turned up to Auckland's event, which was cancelled due to frigid weather and replaced by a social function. Things were more positive in Dunedin where speeches organised by a group of socialists were livened up by some performances about refugees, sex workers and free speech, as well as the appearance of Food Not Bombs and Black Star Books. Christchurch's May Day was attended by about 30 people and consisted solely of speeches. There is a general mood that next year will see the carnival activities, mood and overtly anti-capitalist message (rather than just workers rights) brought back to May Day.

Saturday, 8th May: A controversial anti-racism protest went ahead in Christchurch after threats from both the Christchurch mayor and the fascist group the National Front. The protest drew about 1,500 people and was attended by a relatively large anarchist contingent including a group of anarcho-feminists from Wellington and the local anarchist group the *Anarchist Round Table* who also distributed 300 or so pamphlets.

The National Front held a counter protest that was attended by about 20 and was penned into a corner of Cathedral Square first by the police (who also had snipers deployed on rooftops!) and then by about 200 protesters after the protest proper had finished. After half an hour of exchanges the National Front left. Many of those who protested were followed by fascists throughout the day and several racial attacks were carried out that night (though hardly mentioned in the media).

Monday, 10th May: Twenty-five protesters gathered outside a forum in Wellington where Helen Clark was addressing the members of the Pacific Island Round Table on counter-terrorism. Their message was clear: if Helen really wants to stop terrorism she should stop taking part in it herself. Banners read things like "Imperialism imperils Peace" and "You Lied Helen - Blood on you Hands".

Monday, 10th May: *Auckland Animal Action* activists were assaulted during an anti-fur protest against *Trendz* in New Market. The activists entered the store peacefully but were immediately attacked by staff of the store who pushed and shoved them out, knocked one to the ground, spat at and pulled the hair of others. When protesters still refused to leave from outside the shop, the staff returned with several buckets of water and drenched them. Five assault complaints were laid against the staff, and in return two have been laid against the activists.



This space is open to all anarchist and activist groups to tell of what they're up to, what they're planning, upcoming events, to ask for help or input in projects... whatever! Basically, it's to encourage communication and get groups talking and working together. If you want to submit a communiqué, project update or notice for your group or area send it along to *imminent rebellion* at PO Box 1913, Christchurch or email us at imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz.

Christchurch: *Anarchist Round Table* Communiqué No.1

TO ALL OUR anarchist comrades in Aotearoa:

At the most recent meeting of the *Anarchist Round Table*, in Christchurch, we decided to start producing regular communiqués to keep other anarchist groups up to date with what we're doing and what we're looking at in the near future.

The *Anarchist Round Table* (ART) was formed in 1997 by a group of Christchurch anarchists who met at an anarchist conference in Wellington, and has been active more or less continuously since 2001, when we organised and hosted the nationwide conference *2001: An Anarchist Odyssey*. ART has been meeting regularly this year, after a year or so of its members being involved in the peace movement and magazine and website projects. We have established a formal membership list and have almost finished work on revising our aims and principles (see our website for more details).

This communiqué is part of a project to contact and network with other anarchist groups. We believe that regular communication of our activities and objectives will help co-ordinate the efforts of anarchists throughout New Zealand, and so we would like replies to



this communiqué from every anarchist group that receives it. Please help us distribute this communiqué as widely as possible. If you receive a copy from a source other than the *Anarchist Round Table*, please send us your contact details so we can ensure you receive copies of future communiqués.

ART's major project at the moment is the upcoming Anarchist conference, to be held in Christchurch on Labour Weekend (23rd-25th October). We value the aid of any anarchists in organising the conference; the discussion page is located at www.anarchism.org.nz under the "Forums" section.

In addition to members' personal projects, which include involvement with the *Unite!* union and a publication about private ownership of public space, we are nearing the end of negotiations to rent a central city space that we intend to turn into an office and infoshop. We also have a computer with scanner and laser printer, with which we are printing a series of anarchist booklets. Please contact us to obtain copies or to send copies of booklets you would like printed.

In solidarity,

Anarchist Round Table, Otautahi

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art@anarchism.org.nz
PO Box 22-076, Christchurch

Dunedin: Anarchy in Otepoti

DUNEDIN'S been a busy town recently, with several new groups starting up, and lots of anarchist involvement in various political actions and events.

Sydney based artist and activist Miss Moon was in town last month to give a video/spoken word performance "*Trouble Making Chaos – scenes from the Australian Anarchist Underground*" and also a workshop on creative direct action. Blurring boundaries between art and political action, her performances featured

footage of guerrilla urban art performances, detention camp protests, stencilling the immigration department (with flour!) 'white Australia – blood on your hands' and other acts of disobedience.

Dunedin *Food Not Bombs* were launched on May Day and from now on will be serving free vegan food to the masses every Sunday. Contact them if you're keen on getting involved: fnbdunedin@yahoo.co.nz

An anarchist discussion group has

started up, with discussions scheduled for once a month. The group, based mainly but not exclusively on the university campus, aims to provide time and space for wide-ranging and engaged discussion and dissemination of anarchist ideas and practices.

The anarchist infoshop *Black Star Books* is going well and are currently setting up a library. They are also planning a series of workshops, and to set up public access to computer and internet. If you have either books, zines or computer gear you can donate contact them at info@blackstar.dystopia.net.nz.

- Clare



Unite! Workers Union Update

MANY people will already know about the growing union – *Unite!* *Unite!* is a union that is working to unionise low-paid, casual workers, as well as anyone who is unemployed or who is working in a job that is not currently covered by an existing union.

One of *Unite!*'s recent projects has been the Burger King Campaign. Groups of volunteer organisers, in all the main centres around New Zealand, have signed up Burger King workers and bargaining for a collective agreement has been initiated. A large majority of those signed up were mainly young workers, and their contact with *Unite!* was the first contact they have had with a union, and for some, the first they had ever heard about a union.

Unite! has the potential to seriously alter and change for the better the current trends in the workplace to 'divide and conquer' employees by only offering individual employment agreements. This climate allows employers to play employees off each other and undermines any sense of collectivity.

An area *Unite!* will be looking at unionising

in the near future is the sex industry. Workers in the sex industry are among the highest exploited groups in New Zealand. The imbedded structures within the sex industry are such that practises like fines and penalties, encouragement of un-safe sex procedures and lack of choice over customers, can be enforced



by parlour owners. Decent employment agreements, and education of what belonging to a union has the potential to do, will seriously alter this exploitative industry.

It needs to be said that by working with sex workers *Unite!* is not endorsing what they do nor are they making a judgement against it. It is simply a case of exploited workers needing a union. It would be wrong for a union to refuse to work with exploited workers based on what they do – the judgement or moral call is not for the union to make.

Unite! is gaining strength and momentum with every new member we sign up. *Unite!* is a community based union and therefore will work within the community to make changes. Change cannot come from within the union structures, it has to come from the members themselves, and in order to get members involved *Unite!* will need to ensure all decisions are made democratically.

My hope for *Unite!* would be that it would help to show people that there is strength in a union. By trying to alert peoples' conscience to the injustices of the current situation and averting the oppression and apathy that seems to have embedded itself in people recently then the age old union phrase of "Dare to struggle, Dare to Win" will live again.

Unite! is always looking for more volunteers to help out with upcoming campaigns. The *Unite!* website is: www.unite.org.nz or you can call 0800 4 UNITE for details on how to get involved.

- Lynda Boyd

Wellington: Anarchist Actions (and the lack of them)

IN OUR opinions these are the highlights of anarchist happenings in Wellington. Currently the black star shining bright in Wellington is the anarcho-fem posse. Although newly formed, regular meetings and events mean these Grrrls are really getting down to smashing the patriarchal state.

Anarcho-fem's created a strong presence at the Mayday march which, despite the rain, trots and lack of any tangible target, was a fairly positive event.

A contingent was sent to the anti-racist demonstration in Christchurch and 'No Diet Day' was another event in which the anarcho-fem's co-organized and pigged out on junk food.

A theory group called the 'Anarchist Book Club' was started in February to fill the void in local anarchist heads. Anarchists here seem to have a fear defining or even of discussing anarchism. These fears come back to the fact that a lot of what individuals consider anarchist practice actually isn't. So in ignorance of what anarchism actually is one can still lay claim to being an anarchist while doing what one 'wants to do'.

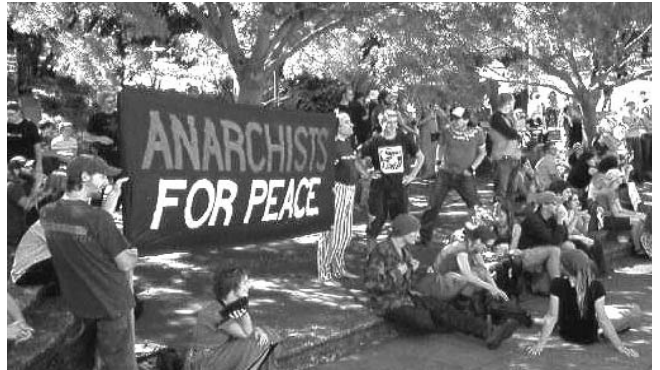
So far ABC has covered the topics: Emma Goldman on war, what anarchism is, violence and pacifism and the next topic will be on Racism and Sexism. ABC has a policy of actually avoiding any action and keeping the group strictly as a social discussion group.

Because of this guideline the group has attracted a fair share of university students, new people and a pet Marxist. ABC is especially a group where people can come with questions and criticisms of anarchism. Some questions we have been able to answer easily, but others relating to actions of local 'anarchists' always seem to reveal a stumbling block to people participating in local anarchist activities. We can best deal with this by explaining anarchism isn't a dogma and we aren't responsible for all anarchists.

Non unified Anarchists also had a presence at the March 20th Anti-war rally with an 'anarchists for peace' banner (not between classes I hope!). A leaflet made by a local soy drinking anarchist ringleader was distributed in its hundreds, black and other colour flags, and anarchist placards also adorned the march.

The Magnetic fridge diary, although surprisingly not actually magnetic, fulfils the rest of its name well. If only more anarchists were actually using it and turning up rather than being introverts or focussing on their own petty personal issues.

Unite! union has been campaigning in Wellington, although the amount of anarchists



participating is abysmal. Peace Action and Indymedia, two groups run on an anarchist model, lack anarchists and the latter lacks anybody aside the brave individuals who continue to shoulder the burden.

To an outsider it may seem Wellington anarchists are organized and active but things are more disorganized than ever. Many projects that were discussed at the tea party have never materialised while it seems like it's the same core people actually doing anything. Wellington needs a cohesive anarchist group for effective actions, with a strong theoretical basis. The only consolation is at least anarchic women have a functioning regular group to agitate from.

- Megan, Ali & Uncle Tony

So what is

“SECURITY CULTURE”

in relation to Direct Action?



SECURITY CULTURE is the practice of precaution and knowing what is and isn't safe to talk about, with whom, where, and at what times.

Those who already understand the necessity of a security culture also know which habits compromise security and they need to be quick to share their knowledge with those people who, out of ignorance, forgetfulness, or moments of weakness, partake in insecure behavior.

When the consciousness and practice of secure habits spreads throughout a group, a security subculture exists. Security violations are then recognized and made unacceptable for the group.

What Not to Say or “Don't Ask, Don't Tell”

To begin with, certain things are simply inappropriate to talk about. Here are some:

- Your involvement or someone else's involvement with an underground group.
- Someone else's desire to get involved with an underground group.
- Asking others if they are a member of an underground group.
- Asking others if they know any members of an underground group.
- Your participation or someone else's participation in any action that was illegal.
- Someone else's advocacy or knowledge of any such actions.
- Your plans or someone else's plans for a future illegal action.

There is a common point to all this: *it compromises the security and effectiveness of individuals, groups, and actions to speak about a specific individual's involvement, past, present or future, with illegal activities.* These are unacceptable topics of discussion regardless of whether it is rumor, speculation or personal knowledge.

That said, it isn't a problem to speak about direct action in general terms. It is legal and desirable that people speak out in support of all forms of resistance. The danger lies in linking individual activists to specific actions or groups.

Three Exceptions

There are only three occasions where it is acceptable to speak about such information.

The first is if you are planning an action with other members of your small group (your “cell”

or affinity group). The only people who need to hear this discussion are those persons actively partaking in the action. Anyone not involved does *not need to know* and, therefore, should not know. This is communication done on a *need-to-know* basis.

That said, it is nonetheless *highly insecure* to discuss these things over internet (e-mail), telephone, through the mail, in an activist's home or car, or in a group's meeting place, since these places and forms of communications are easily and possibly monitored.

“If it compromises the security and effectiveness of individuals, groups, and actions to speak about a specific individual's involvement, past, present or future, with illegal activities: DON'T DO IT.”

The second exception occurs after an activist facing criminal charges has been found guilty and sentenced. The activist can then speak of the actions for which they were convicted. However, they must never reveal information that could point police to other people who participated in illegal activities.

The third exception is for anonymous letters and interviews with the media. This must be done very carefully and without compromising security. Advice on secure communication techniques can be found in other publications.

Those are the *only* situations when it is appropriate to speak about your own or someone else's involvement or plan to do illegal direct action.

Security Measures

Well-informed Direct Action Activists only allow a select few to know about their involvement with direct action groups. These few consist of the group members with whom they do the actions **AND NO ONE ELSE!**

The reason for these security precautions is obvious: **if people don't know anything, they**

can't talk about it. It also means that only the people who know certain things can face jail time if the activity is revealed and compromised.

Activists who don't face the same serious consequences have no reason to know about an illegal direct action. They are more likely to talk when harassed and intimidated by the police since they aren't the ones who will go to jail. Even trustworthy people can blunder or be tricked by the police into revealing damaging and incriminating information. So it is *safest* for all cell members to keep their involvement in the group amongst themselves. The fewer people who know, the less evidence there is to bust them.

Divulging information to even trusted persons makes them complicit in the action and is more than they need to know. Showing them your trust may reinforce links, but this should be *secondary* to the security of the action and persons involved.

Knowledge should be on a *need-to-know* basis. You should know enough to do your chosen work, but not enough to make you complicit in a broader range of criminal activity. If someone tells you about things that are not your business, you should stop the person and explain why you are uncomfortable with the information they are telling you.

Security Violating Behaviours

In an attempt to impress others, some activists may behave in ways that compromise security. Some people do this frequently – they habitually gossip and brag. Some activists say inappropriate things only when they consume alcohol or other drugs, while others make occasional breaches of security because there was a momentary temptation to say something or hint at something that shouldn't be said or implied. Most activists make occasional breaches of security simply because they are around others sharing similar views. Whatever the reason, loose lips violate security culture.

The Police rely on this. Low-level surveillance is practiced by the local police, and consists of collecting even the smallest and seemingly insignificant scraps of information to send to the police national intelligence network. In order to be more effective, we need more precautions and discretion. We sometimes forget that struggling to subvert the established order and bring about a better world is indeed a crime.

Activists who strongly desire the approval of their peers can be high security risks. Certainly it is natural to seek friendship and recognition for

our efforts, but it is more important that our personal needs do not jeopardize the safety of other activists or ourselves.

On the other hand, it is also our collective responsibility to ensure that *all* activists receive the recognition they deserve for their efforts – not just the intellectuals, the organizers, “informal leaders”, talking heads or “stars”. With recognition and acceptance we build solidarity, achieve greater equality in our movements and enhance security culture as a whole. But still, placing the desire for friendship over the importance of the cause can do serious damage to our movements.

The following are examples of security-violating behaviors:

Lying: To impress others, liars claim to have done illegal actions. Such lies not only compromise the person’s security – as cops will not take what is said as a lie – but also hinders movement solidarity and trust.

Gossiping: Some people think that they can win friends because they are privy to special information. These gossips will tell others about who did what actions or, if they don’t know who did it, speculate and spread rumors about who might have done it. This sort of talk is very damaging. Rumors are all that is needed to launch a police investigation and lay charges.

Bragging: Some people who partake in illegal direct action might be tempted to brag about it to their friends. If someone did such a thing, it would not only jeopardize the bragger’s security, but also that of the other people involved with the action (as they may be suspected by association), as well the people who they told (they can become accessories after the fact). An activist who brags also sets a terrible example to other activists.

Indirect-Bragging: Indirect-braggers are people who make a big show of how they want to remain anonymous, avoid protests, and stay “underground.” They might not come out and say that they do illegal direct actions, but they make sure that everyone knows that they are doing the “heavy” stuff. They are no better than braggers, but they try to be more sophisticated about it by pretending to maintain “security.” However, if they were serious about security, they would just make up a good excuse as to why they are not as active, or why they can’t make it to the protest. Concealing sensitive information from even trusted comrades is far better than jeopardizing underground work.

‘Debriefers’: Certain people – just before, or after doing an illegal action – may want to speak about it with others. This confiding may be a way of relieving tension and/or may be born of the

strong feeling of exaltation from a job well done. There should *always* be a time and place set aside for debriefing between participants, but even alluding to these activities among other comrades in insecure places like crowded bars is a severe security risk.

Self-Education

With the above information about security, it should be easier to spot those activists who compromise our movement’s security. So what do we do with people who display these behaviors? Do we shun or expel them from our groups and projects? Actually, no – not for the first security violation, at least.

The unfortunate truth is there are some security-ignorant people in the movement. Even seasoned activists can make mistakes when there is a general lack of security consciousness in our groups. And that’s where those of you who are reading this can help. We must *ALWAYS* act to inform people whose behavior breaches security. If someone you know is bragging about doing an action or spreading security-compromising gossip, it is **your** responsibility to explain to them why that sort of talk violates security culture and is inappropriate.

You should strive to share this knowledge in a manner that encourages the person’s understanding and changes their behavior. It should be done without damaging the person’s pride. Show your sincere interest in helping them to become a more effective activist. Keep your humility and avoid presenting a superior, “holier than thou” attitude. Such an attitude can raise an individual’s defences and prevent them from listening to and using the advice offered. The goal of addressing these issues with others is to reduce insecure behavior, rather than showing how much more security-conscious you are.

Share your concerns and knowledge in private, so that the person does not feel as if they are being publicly humiliated. Addressing the person as soon as possible after the security violation will increase effectiveness. If each of us remains responsible for discussing security information with people who slip up, we can dramatically improve security in our groups and activities.

When people recognise that lying, gossiping, bragging, and inappropriate debriefing damages both themselves and others, these behaviors will soon end. By developing a culture where breaches of security are pointed out and discouraged, all sincere activists will quickly understand.

Know Your Own Limits

It is crucial to know the possible consequences of every action we take and be prepared to deal with them.

There is no shame in not being able to do an action because of responsibilities or circumstances that make it impossible for you to do jail time at this point in your life. As long as capitalism and all of its evils exist, there will be resistance. In other words, there will be plenty of great actions for you to participate in when your life



circumstances are more favorable. If others are dependent on you for support, you aren’t willing to lose your job, or drop out of school or ruin your future career, feel uncertain or just don’t feel comfortable doing something, **DON’T DO THE ACTION.**

Make certain that you talk with others in your affinity group about situations that make you uncertain whether you should be involved in particular actions, especially those that are high risk.

Remember – *there is no excuse for turning in comrades to the police* – and those activists that do effectively excommunicate themselves from our movements.

Adopt a Security Culture Now!

Activists are restless and resistance is again on the rise. Some people are adopting radical and confrontational tactics. The more we organise and are effective, the more the police continue to escalate their activities against us. For direct action movements to continue, we need to consider our security more seriously. *Good security should be made one of our strengths.*

- *Aunty Balaclava*

Are concerns about leaving traces, personal security, surveillance, etc. hindering your activism? Aunty Balaclava may have the answer. Simply email your questions to imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz.

ORGANISATION: THE CATALYST FOR ACTION!

WITH the renewed interest in anarchism in Aotearoa the anarchist movement, if it can be called that, finds itself woefully unprepared and disorganised.

Potential anarchists looking to get involved and get active are passing us over simply because there does not exist the organisation, projects and campaigns among anarchists to satisfy their desire to enact change. Instead, they are going on to get involved with, by default, reformist and authoritarian groups.

Existing anarchists are finding themselves largely paralysed from working with other anarchists and from taking part in meaningful change. This is blocking us from developing any real and coherent libertarian tendencies in Aotearoa.

This is, of course, just my own view on the matter (and I strongly encourage debate!), but it is my belief that the first step to moving beyond this paralysis is in developing long-term and sustainable organisation.

Current Anarchist Organisation in Aotearoa

The current level of organisation in New Zealand consists of just one general anarchist collective, a variety of projects like *The Freedom Shop*, *Black Star Books*, and *imminent rebellion*, and a couple of discussion groups.

These groups are often isolated and don't communicate with one another let alone work together, are often quite cliquy and vary quite drastically in their level of activity. These

“The first step to becoming better organised is to form general anarchist collectives in each locality.”

groups also have a tendency to be short-term and often end due to individual member's inability to work with each other and work through conflicts (which are inevitable!) or they simply lack commitment.

This lack of organisation blocks communication and stops us working together both within our own localities and on larger scales. It means we have a very limited presence, visibility and influence within

Aotearoa which relegates us to continue existing on the fringe of the political and social consciousness.

Those of us that have the potential to be really active find themselves disillusioned and grumpy and we end up wasting awesome opportunities.

Ultimately, it means we will continue to remain ineffective until we develop a much higher level of organisation in Aotearoa.

An Organisational Proposal

I believe the first step to becoming better organised is to form general anarchist collectives in each locality.

These would be quite broad in their focus (class struggle, anti-war, ecological struggle, etc.). They would act to educate, agitate and get involved as a collective in social movements promoting and creating libertarian methods and structures which further the struggle.

The creation of a general anarchist collective could start by getting a few comrades together that you know, trust and can actually work with. Starting with people you know allows you to set up a stable base and makes it much easier to go on to become an open group without becoming unstable as sometimes happens.

While some groups attempt to immediately move onto initiate actions and projects, it is more in the interest of the long-term survival of the group if several key areas are covered at the very beginning. While the first few meetings can sometimes feel inward-looking, a solid basis will allow the group to operate much more smoothly long-term, achieve and do more, and avoid drawn-out internal struggles later on. A few of these areas are:

1. *A well defined membership and an emphasis on responsibility to the collective is important from the beginning.* In groups where this doesn't exist the concepts of accountability

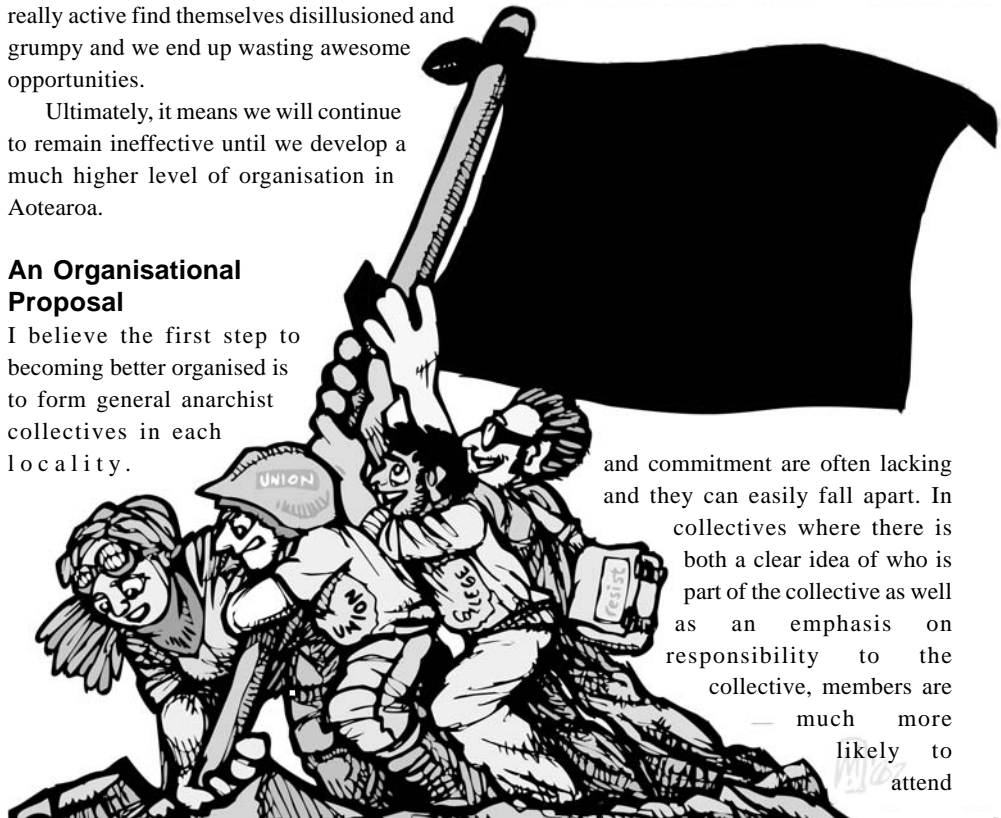
and commitment are often lacking and they can easily fall apart. In collectives where there is both a clear idea of who is part of the collective as well as an emphasis on responsibility to the collective, members are — much more likely to attend

meetings and carry out delegated tasks.

2. *Collectives should decide quite clearly on their own purpose and on the group's shared principles/theory.* Although often dismissed, theory is the basis from which we act and for a group to be able to work together there must be quite a high level of theoretical unity. Too often a group incorporates people with overly differing conceptions of anarchism and this means meetings end up being conflated as members try to negotiate starkly different positions. It is much more effective for a group to start from the beginning with a well defined theoretical basis.

3. *Collectives should seek to develop their skills to work together successfully and be able to use consensus properly.* This is NOT easy. Having been brought up to be told what to do, working cooperatively in an open environment does not come naturally. Attention must be paid to this aspect from the beginning but it is also a skill that must be continually developed.

4. *To both allow cooperation and consensus to work properly, and to stop informal hierarchies*



from developing, it is necessary to include clear and open group structures and processes. There is no such thing as structureless groups, just ones with informal and formal structures. If we want to work together in an open environment (essential for consensus) the group's structures and processes must be openly and formally recognised and developed to encourage the kinds of behaviour we want to see in our collectives.

The Case for Anarchist Organisation

I believe that the development of the sort of organisation described would act as a catalyst for the anarchist movement. We would become much more active, we would develop a much higher profile and we would have more influence in social movements.

By simply coming together regularly within our local areas we can overcome one of our most immediate and pressing shortcomings: communication. While *imminent rebellion* was set up to go some way to overcome the serious lack of communication amongst anarchists it will remain isolated and ineffective so long as there are no local anarchist organisations. Only once we have that regular communication at the local level does the opportunity for action and growth arise.

The prospect of acting as a collective allows for ideas for projects or actions to be much more fully explored than what currently occurs. Too often anarchist actions are isolated and random events with no underlying strategy. They often have no prospect for movement building and often lack any defined or realistic goal. By developing these ideas as a collective they are much more likely to be placed in their context and undertaken with specific aims in mind.

Only with a decent level of organisation is movement building possible. People are not

going to become anarchists in a vacuum, and presently the only thing that may shape someone in that direction is the punk subculture (with all the problems associated with that). We must stop the current trend of allowing potential anarchists to become part of the Anti-Capitalist Alliance or the Green Party. More than propaganda, it is seeing and being involved with anarchist groups that is going to build the anarchist movement.

An organised movement allows us to be much more influential. As opposed to being just

“Besides getting us anarchists talking in our own localities, we must also move to start talking *between* groups ... to be in a position to work together and practice that key anarchist principle: mutual aid.”

individuals getting involved in peace movements, environmental campaigns or unions, we can develop collective approaches that much more effectively utilise our skills and resources.

Local collectives also offer the prospect of acting as support for anarchists and activists. There seems to be a trend in radical politics for there to be waves of enthusiasm separated by lulls. At present these lulls see the complete collapse in anarchist organisation and leave the next wave of enthusiasm to start from scratch again. Local and well functioning anarchist collectives not only allow us to build during the times of growth but also to ride out those

lulls with minimal impact.

Finally, it's just bloody common sense (to steal that concept from Peter Dunn) for anarchists who envision a world based on cooperation and mutual aid, and who see the path to that world through organisation, to start organising right now!

Let's get Talking!

Besides getting us anarchists talking in our own localities, we must also move to start talking *between* groups. This should be a very important priority. It is essential that we are aware of what other groups are doing to be in a position to work together and practice that key anarchist principle: mutual aid.

We must be talking to one another to undertake projects or campaigns on a national level and to properly develop the sense of ourselves as a movement. An awareness of the resources each of us have could also enable us to make use of them more fully (like printers, booklets, offices and infoshops, etc.).

Even just informal communication would be a step forward, but I think some formalised processes should be set up between these groups to get that interaction going. This could consist of the issuing of communiqués, the distribution of minutes or even having members from different collectives visiting and sitting in on meetings from time to time.

Before that stage, however, we must begin now to develop and promote anarchist organisation at the local level. This first step is crucial and will determine whether or not the anarchist movement becomes a serious challenge to the forces of oppression and domination to which we and our environment are subjected today.

- Torrance

Unhappy Valley?

HAPPY VALLEY, located in the upper Waimangaroa catchment on the West Coast, 17km Northeast of Westport, is a beautiful, wild and untouched place. State-owned Solid Energy intends to destroy it for the sake of an opencast coal mine.

The Happy Valley mine will contribute to global warming, cause Acid Mine Drainage (polluting local waterways), destroy great spotted kiwi habitat, destroy 10% of the total habitat of the endangered giant snail *powelliphanta "patrickensis"*, and not help supply electricity (the coal is for export).

From the 10th-17th of April, a group of people from around the country, predominantly students traveled to the West Coast to camp out at Happy Valley in protest against the proposed mine.

Spokeswoman Jo McVeagh stated, “Our

week-long occupation sends a clear message to business leaders and politicians that, as New Zealanders, we will not allow our natural heritage to be ruined to satisfy the business sector's greed.”

The mine hearing took place in Westport from the 3rd-7th of May. A decision is expected within thirty working days - almost certainly in favour of the mine, allowing State Energy to go ahead with its plans to begin work on the mine in 2005. At this point, a local group, Ngakawau Riverwatch, will appeal the decision and have it taken to the Environment Court.

The Save Happy Valley Campaign is more interested, however, in developing public awareness about the mine so that more people will step forward and actively display opposition to the proposed Happy Valley coal mine, and coal-fuelled energy generation more generally.

As a first step towards this, public meetings about the proposed Happy Valley mine and

surrounding issues will be taking place around the country. There will also be a protest against the mine taking place in Christchurch in late May/early June, and another campout at Happy Valley is planned for soon after the hearing decision is made.

Further in the future, I see two positive possibilities. With a sufficient display of opposition, the government may decide to instruct state-owned Solid Energy to withdraw the resource consent applications for the mine. Alternatively, with enough people interested in taking direct action against Solid Energy at the mine site, we could make it no longer economically viable for them to go ahead with mining.

To become involved, or get further information regarding the campaign, email savehappyvalley@enzyme.org.nz

- Jonathan Oosterman

The Walk of Life: Anarchism is about Lifuglle

This article continues the debate begun by Mr Grumpy's article "Anarchism is about Struggle" which appeared in Issue 2 of *imminent rebellion*. It was followed up in Issue 3 by "Anarchism is about Life" written by Mr Happy and Mrs Crusty and yet another perspective is presented here by Sam Buchanan.

THIS is intended as a reply to the articles 'Anarchism is About Struggle' and 'Anarchism is About Life' that appeared in issues two and three of *imminent rebellion*.

In short, I agree with most of the points made by all the writers, but find their method of debate exasperating.

One writer writes off anarchists, specifically the 1990s movement in New Zealand, as little more than a politically ignorant and snobbish sub-culture. The others suggest the movement is a group of vanguardist and elitist men dreaming of a general strike.

Neither of these caricatures is correct.

The Wellington movement of the 1990s (which I'm most familiar with) included a great variety of people, many had kids, jobs and normal haircuts. Many didn't listen to punk music (I'm not certain that any listened to Dire Straits, but it wouldn't surprise me) and we were well aware of the dangers of appearing to be a closed social group so made a point of not meeting in people's flats, grotty or otherwise. If the people in normal clothes were undercover cops, there were sure a lot of them, and most of us were involved in politics outside

"We need both the 'lifestyle' and the 'struggle' sides of anarchism. We need the former to offer people something here and now ... We also need a political struggle movement to defend these places."

strictly anarchist circles. Yes, we did have a degree of sectarianism towards the rest of the left (though not so much as they had towards us), but given the left mostly wants to strengthen the state, that doesn't seem unreasonable.

On the other hand I very rarely hear the

term "general strike" even mentioned by local anarchists.

Anarcho-syndicalists have been a tiny minority of anarchists in New Zealand in recent years. The last issue of *imminent rebellion* had more anarcho-syndicalist content than I've seen in years. Most anarchists I meet in this country are anarcho-communists of some sort, and their vision of a revolution is not at all "classical left-wing" and "work-based." Most of the anarchist movement has been fairly supportive of lifestyle changes and people's attempts to move parts of their lives outside of capitalism.

OK, many anarchists are vocal men. I'd take the first as a compliment and the second as an accident of birth, but I do think the gender balance within anarchism is almost universally regarded as a problem. It does seem as if political writing in particular is a very male dominated field and we should treat this as a problem to be worked on rather than a way of attacking those who do write.

When the writers of these two articles eased off on attacking other anarchists and said what they were in favour of, they both made good and useful points. We need both the 'lifestyle' and the 'struggle' sides of anarchism. We need the former to offer people something here and now and as a practical experiment for testing the ways we want to live our lives in the future. We need living examples and we need places we can feel good to be in.

We also need a political struggle movement to defend these places. Without it anything that grows enough to become a threat to capitalism - and capitalism has a very low threat tolerance - will have armoured cars driven over it. Remember what happened to Parihaka?

We also need abstract ideals and theory.



Promoting ideas is important and shouldn't be belittled.

Look what happened to social democracy in this country when it abandoned its theories and ideals. True, its plan to reform capitalism was never going to work, capitalism has inbuilt defences against any real reform, but social democracy used to have some vision, a degree of integrity and attracted people with a genuine passion to create a more just society. Nowadays, it's been reduced to a desiccated corpse of a movement with nothing on offer but cowardice rationalised as realism. I think part of the reason the Labour Party and other arseholes found this so easy to do was because few people understood why social democracy was formulated in particular ways and how it was supposed to work (its weird that Marx and Lenin are household names, but nobody can name a social democratic theorist, our uncle Noam is probably better known than any social democrat).

We also need practical skills. It would be great if we could offer advice on installing solar

panels, but we also need to explain why they are a good idea beyond just knocking a few dollars off your power bill. We need to be doing more than picking up the pieces and cleaning up after capitalism. We need to make our practical actions part of a bigger political change or they'll disappear into minor reforms of capitalism

Well, that seems quite a lot of things we need already, but we also need less slagging off and more intelligent debate among anarchists. It's fine to call your allies on things you think they have wrong, but try and be reasonable and accurate and don't exaggerate their defects. Save some ammo for the enemy.

Of course, there are some tendencies within anarchism that deserve some harsh criticism. Here's a short list of my favourites:

1. Some academic anarchists who contribute nothing but unnecessary jargon and theories that barely reference reality;
2. Philosophical anarchists who adopt the label then sit around waiting for someone else to make the revolution for them while they chug back another six-pack of corporate beer or bottle of Aussie Shiraz;
3. Whingers who just moan about the deficiencies of other people's activism without

doing much themselves;

4. Pop spiritualists left over from the Beatles era who think all we need is love and that a big group hug will make the capitalists give up their privileges and dance with us in the streets.

Outside of these, and they are a minority, I think everyone and everybody who is actively working towards an organised anarchist movement in any way deserves credit and a fair hearing.

I intend to vocally promote what I consider to be the priorities for the movement. I don't expect anyone else to accept these without an argument, nor do I want people to shrug their shoulders and say "do whatever you want". I want intelligent and reasoned debate, in part because I've probably got plenty of things wrong and it's easy to sink into complacency if you're not challenged from time to time.

Sure, ultimately people will do whatever activism they choose, but I don't feel bad about trying to persuade people that certain things are more important than others,

I also feel there is a responsibility in taking on a title such as 'anarchist' or 'anti-capitalist' or whatever. If you adopt the title you have a duty to learn a bit about the subject and be able

to field some simple questions about your beliefs, otherwise you're going to make us all look a bit stupid.

And finally, despite what some writers seem to think, we are getting somewhere. Too little, too slowly, maybe. But remember the history. At the start of 1991 the Wellington anarchist movement consisted of a few personal projects, four people in an organised group, two black flags, one banner and a small box of pamphlets. We dreamed about one day counting ourselves in double figures. In the current revival things like the Freedom Shop and the office are being almost taken for granted. Now you can talk about anarchism in activist circles without being laughed at or treated as a threat, and a surprising number of people out in the wider world have at least a vague idea what we are on about.

These are real gains. Let's build on them.

- Sam Buchanan (Sam is a cappuccino crusader and latté lifestyle formerly of Wellington, currently hiding out in a mountain hut in the South Island)

What anarchism means to me...

"When the rich plunder the poor of their rights, it becomes an example to the poor to plunder the rich of their property."

- Post-Consumer Waste #1

"Perhaps it is this theory of all work and no play that has made the Marxist such a very dull boy."

- Herbert Read, Anarchy & Order

"The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently."

- Gustav Landauer

I'VE BEEN questioning a lot lately why I believe so strongly in anarchism, and it comes down to perhaps the most simplest and basic desires there are; the desire to survive, desire for freedom (freedom – such an abused word, which rolls so easily off the tongues of the powerful) and the desire for meaningful existences.

Anarchism is about survival because when you really think about why so many

people are starving, homeless, or dispossessed it becomes apparent the cause of those problems are power struggles, greed and hierarchies. The cause is not a lack of resources – it is a lack of fair distribution. These are not just things that happen in far away countries either – poverty is a real problem in Aotearoa and it's increasing, just like the gap between rich and poor is increasing.

It's about autonomy because I want life that is real; not the candy-coated emptiness of capitalism that seduces with it's shiny surfaces and photo-shopped smiles. Underneath it's really greed and control, offering fulfilment through consumption while screwing over a huge amount of people. Capitalism makes people afraid and angry at the wrong things; afraid of not being loved, of not being pretty or skinny enough, angry about Maori land claims (why?), and immigration. When the thing I'm most afraid of, or rather, angry about is the government and it's growing fists; the fact my rent is going up but my pay and work conditions aren't; the fact that there's people in Aotearoa with no food to eat tonight, and nothing for the morning either. And that the measure of life is how much you can buy.

I want more than this. I want more than this controlled emptiness, this greyspace of hierarchies and fear. Emma Goldman once described anarchy as "freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things". Those things aren't possible in any kind of authoritarian state, whether it's run by socialists or the Business Round table. Authoritarianism wearing red will screw you over you just as painfully as any other kind. No, I want anarchy because I want liberty and autonomy; a world without borders and repression. I want detention camps opened up and factory farms converted into glasshouses.

Another world is possible – and it is up to us to make it what we will, starting right now. Not just in the streets, but in our communities and homes; making networks, syndicates and collectives and reclaiming what's ours: our streets / our world / our labour / our bodies / our relationships.

That is what anarchy means to me – not just destroying hierarchies of power but dancing on their god damn graves.

- Clare

Letters to the Editor

We encourage any feedback on previous issues we can get! We will print all letters we receive as space permits – the smaller your letter the more likely it will be printed. Email us at imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz.

Anarchism is Not About Living Outside Society

My article in *imminent rebellion* issue 2, “Anarchism is about Struggle” and the reply “Anarchism is about life” (issue 3) have generated lots of interesting debate, which is always good.

One point that seems to have confused some people, including the authors of “Anarchism is about life”, is the point about lifestyle changes. Everyone agrees that anarchists should try and live their personal lives in a way which is consistent with anarchist beliefs. The difference between ‘lifestyle’ anarchists and ‘class struggle’ anarchists is not about how we live our lives, it is about how we relate to the rest of society

The “life” article suggests that anarchists should focus on becoming self sufficient and being nice to your neighbours, while dismissing involvement in political activism on the grounds that “life is pretty cruisey here” and most of society is pretty passive and happy.

Tell that to the 20,000 maori who marched in protest at the governments foreshore policy last week. Ask the thousands of Aucklanders who have been resisting privatisation of their water supply in the last few years, if they are happy with the system. Ask the thousands of families who are living in south Auckland, where third world diseases of poverty are making a big comeback, if life is pretty cruisey?

My article argued that there is in fact a lot of discontent and anger out there, and anarchism has always been about being part of the struggle for a better world. Capitalism will not fall by itself, and the system can and has been threatened by mass protest movements. Anarchists have always been part of these movements and have always seen themselves as part of a wider struggle against capitalism.

It is only in recent years that some anarchists have abandoned class politics and mass movements in favour of “self sufficiency” and lifestyle politics. If that's your cup of herbal tea then that's fine, but anarchists have to decide whether they are happy just to withdraw from society and let the world pass them by, or whether they want to take part in the real world and try and change society for the better.

Mr Grumpy.

Abolish Work by Abolishing Classes!

Mr Happy and Mrs Crusty made a number of false assumptions in their article in *imminent rebellion* issue 3 that I wish to clear up. Apparently, the anarchist movement in Aotearoa is ‘dominated by a vocal group of men who advocate a classical left-wing work-based revolution’ who all wrote for issue 2 of *imminent rebellion* (including me). Wow, that's news to me! Sure, anarchism in Aotearoa is male-dominated, and that's a humungous problem we need to address. However, in my experience, the anarchist scene here is dominated by lifestyle anarchists with a few dozen animal rights and peace activists chucked into the mix (with the possible exception of Christchurch).

Unlike Happy and Crusty assume, I don't believe in the orthodox leftist work based revolution. I want the abolition of wage-work, and the destruction of most factories and offices as they are basically prisons. Against orthodox leftists, I see the refusal of work as an important part of the class struggle. But I differ from lifestyle anarchists in that I think that the abolition of work is ultimately only possible by abolishing all classes (including, please



note, the working class!). To achieve that I reckon we need to confront the power of capitalists and their lackeys (eg. managers) in the workplace and community through our own autonomous self-organisation, not run away to the country or retreat into anarchist or lifestyle ghettos.

And this confrontation is just as practical and necessary as trying to live the revolution in the here and now. Resistance to capitalism in the workplace is an everyday thing, not a pie in the sky dream. In fact, without it many workers would go insane! Unlike Happy and Crusty assume, people in Aotearoa have not been bought off by ‘materialism’. Sure, many people are obedient, but also many people fob off on the job, subvert or ignore the manager's orders, go slow on the job, steal on the job, etc. Perhaps we should learn something from them, instead of moralistically despising their materialist bogan lifestyles or whatever.

Cheers,
Toby

imminent rebellion Needs Your Help!

We actually have both the time and money to keep this project going! Incredibly, thanks to donations, we have enough money to publish *imminent rebellion* not just every two months, but potentially monthly. We have the time as well!

We need your help to distribute *imminent rebellion*! We can print more copies of each issue than we currently are doing, but we're having trouble just distributing the 400 we're printing right now.

We need more stuff to publish! We want to move to a monthly format ASAP. We'll publish news, articles, announcements, letters, communiqués and project updates. We just need more of them!

If you can help us with either distribution or with publishing material, please get in contact with us!
Contact us at: PO Box 1913, Christchurch, Aotearoa or at imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz