



# imminent rebellion

*Issue 5 - August & September 2004*

*Free To All*



A Pakeha Perspective

## The Taming of Tino Rangatiranga

### Also in this issue...

**Shut the Fuck Up! (or How to Act Better in Meetings)**

**An Introduction to Anarcho-primitivism**

**Lots of updates from around Aotearoa**

**Radical Changes at Karamea School**

**and more!**

*A magazine for anarchists and freedom-loving leftists in Aotearoa*

# Welcome!

KIA ORA everyone and welcome to an even bigger issue of *imminent rebellion*.

This issue brings about a couple of changes. Firstly, we've expanded to 16 pages from the previous 12. We did this as oppose to going to a monthly version as we had previously proposed for reasons of workload and cost. This issue is also the first to be printed using an offset printer, as oppose to using laser printing as we were previously doing.

Secondly, and most importantly, this issue sees the focus of *imminent rebellion* broadened beyond those who explicitly call themselves anarchists, to all those on the left who are anti-authoritarian like anti-colonialists, revolutionary feminists or radical environmental and animal liberation movements. We really want to see *imminent rebellion* acting as a meeting point for these movements to communicate and work together.

We're eager beavers for more submissions in the form of project updates, articles and images so please send us stuff to publish! We hope you enjoy this issue...

Kia kaha!

- Editorial Collective

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## imminent rebellion

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### What we're about...

We passionately seek to live our lives on our own terms. We seek the dissolution of all relationships and systems of power, be they colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, the state or the domination and exploitation of the environment and other life. We seek a new way of living, one without power, based on freedom, cooperation, equality and mutual aid. We recognise that we cannot use power to destroy power, and instead turn to grassroots, decentralised and non-hierarchical forms of organisation to resist. We have created this magazine as a space for like-minded people to communicate, organise and start taking back their lives!

### Submissions...

*imminent rebellion* exists to publish your news, articles, images and letters. We'll publish anything well written and sympathetic to our aims. **The next deadline for submissions is September 15th.**

### Subscriptions...

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

### Donations...

We survive solely on donations from our readers to keep this project going. At \$400 an issue it's not cheap! Cash, stamps and cheques (made out to "imminent rebellion") would be awesome!

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We are united by dissatisfaction, rebellion, the desire to do something, by non-conformity. History written by Power taught us that we had lost, that cynicism and profit were virtues, that honesty and sacrifice were stupid, that individualism was the new god... We did not take in the lesson. We were bad pupils. We did not believe what Power taught us. We skipped class when they taught conformity and idiocy. We failed modernity. Classmates in rebellion, we discovered and found ourselves brothers. Health to you, and don't forget that flowers, like hope, are harvested.

- Subcommandante Marcos, Zapatista

# POLICE HARRASS ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

GRASSROOTS Animal Rights Activists in Auckland have been subjected to an unusually high level of harassment by Police over the last year. Several houses have been raided and activists have been charged with offences which are clearly intended to disrupt their lives and protest activity rather than to convict them.

On October the 2nd last year a group of animal rights activists entered the Tegel Head Office in Newmarket, Auckland, and spread straw over the ground and desks. The protest lasted less than 60 seconds. Jesse Duffield, the spokesperson for the group, had the sole job of handing a letter to the receptionist explaining that chickens need straw to carry out their basic instincts. It was a peaceful, symbolic protest, and care was taken to ensure that the dry straw wasn't put near computers or thrown at people.

After the protests undercover police arrived at the scene, followed protesters back to their cars and took down Jesse's number plate. They later towed his car back to the police station, so Jesse thought it had been stolen and reported it so.

The next day police turned up at Jesse's house with a search warrant for "hay, straw, sacks or anything to do with animal rights." With this they took his laptop, cellphone, vid-



eos, over 100 floppy disks, posters off the wall, school keys, a GE T-shirt and many other unrelated items. They first accused him of falsely reporting his car stolen so that he could deny being at the protest (and threatened to tell his insurance company he had committed insurance fraud) but they later admitted that they had towed it back to the police station. They kept

it for a week, and then returned it covered in fingerprint powder and missing all its important contents, including a megaphone, banner, diary, and even three empty drink bottles!

Police charged him with being unlawfully in a building, intentional damage and burglary – all for delivering a letter about straw. The burglary charge was exploiting a law change which went through parliament only the day before, which redefines burglary as "entering a building with the intent to commit a crime". They opposed bail, but a good lawyer had it granted with heavy conditions: Jesse had to adhere to a 9PM-6AM curfew and report to the Henderson Police Station every Saturday. These conditions were dropped by Judges at subsequent court hearings.

This is just one of a series of raids. In April and May fur protests were held outside Belucci, a shop which sells fur from animals which are factory farmed in extremely inhumane conditions in Asia. The owner of the store, Manwa Wong, lied to police in statements about two protests, and as a result police obtained arrest warrants and search warrants for six activists and their houses. Four houses were raided, with a search warrant that included information pertaining to animal rights activists. With these they took hoards of personal items, including computers, cameras and personal diaries.

In the case of one activist, three computers, dozens of computer parts, a video camera, miscellaneous papers and her personal diaries dating back to when she was about ten years old were taken. The activist was in the last month of her Diploma in IT Programming, and she needed the computers to complete her final assignments. Another activist was forced to wait outside while seven officers searched her home. Police seized posters off walls, trespass notices, patches and badges all of which seem to have no relevance to any crime or offence.



Two other activists had arrest warrants and search warrants issued for them and their houses, but were advised by police to "turn themselves in" so that they wouldn't have police turn up at their house. They went in and were arrested and charged with everyone else.

Six activists now face charges from a range of intimidation, disorderly behaviour and theft (of an A4 sign falsely claiming "No Animal Furs in This Store", valued at \$10). The matter is due to reach a status hearing on July 28th.

Police recently dropped all charges against Jesse for the Tegel Protest. They kept his personal belongings, and burglary charges active, for nine months, during which time he was facing up to a maximum of 10 years in prison for the burglary charge alone. His lawyer is investigating the possibility of suing police for damages. He expects to receive his belongings back in the next week or two.

This heavy-handedness of police presents a problem for all grassroots activists. Police are now using their powers of arrest, search and seizure to disrupt (and effectively punish) activist groups outside of the court system.

It is hard to believe that police really expected to convict someone of burglary for delivering a letter about straw, but they knew how disruptive the house raid and excessive charges would be. Police currently have almost every computer, banner, megaphone, leaflet, video camera, digital camera and related storage media that the grassroots animal rights activists in Auckland own.

Police are attempting to shut down a group of peaceful protesters outside of the court system. If the public are not made aware, and appropriate action is not taken to ensure police don't continue these tactics, several other protest groups could go through the same level of police harassment in the near future.

Everyone committed to social change through protest and grassroots activism must work together to ensure that police powers do not stop us exercising our rights to freedom of speech and peaceful protest.



## Speak Up!

This is a space for any anarchist or anti-authoritarian leftist groups to let others know what they're up to, to ask for help, to get others involved.... whatever! Just send *imminent rebellion* what you want published at [imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz](mailto:imminentrebellion@anarchism.org.nz) or mail us at PO Box 1913, Christchurch, Aotearoa.

## In Defence of the Earth

*Earth First!* has recently sprung up from the wetlands of Otautahi to bite back against the industrial-capitalist nightmare that affronts wilderness and other non-human life. *Earth First! Otautahi* joins the growing number of *Earth First!* cells across the world.

*Earth First!* is not an organisation, it is a priority. Each *Earth First!* cell operates autonomously – there are no corporate hierarchies here, no ‘fontliners’ on the street gobbling up people’s hard-earned cash and in return giving them a false sense of achievement.

*Earth First!* operates based on the philosophy of deep ecology. Deep ecology blames the common sense and pervasive notion of anthropocentrism – or human-centredness – as being one of the key factors that justifies the destruction of ecosystems, alongside other major factors like patriarchy and capitalism. Instead, deep

ecology insists that we must develop a bio-centric – or life-centred – world view.

As *Earth Firsters*, this shapes our struggle against ecological destruction. It is not



more efficient technologies that will save the planet, recycling or “sustainable” energy, but a complete overthrow of the industrial-capitalist system and its human-centred orientation and drive for “progress”.

We also reject scientific rationalism, it being nothing more than a human-centred ideology, and in no way “objective”. It has been used as a justification for atrocities ranging from colonialism to the devastation of the environment.

We believe ecosystems have an inher-

ent worth, and oppose their destruction because of this, not because of some arbitrary value system.

*Earth First! Otautahi* is currently engaged in a campaign to stop both the Cyprus mine, backed by SOE *Solid Energy*, and the Pike River mine, backed by *NZ Oil & Gas*. These are both planned for the West Coast. We are currently targeting *Solid Energy*, as they have offices based here but also plan to

halt the Pike River mine on the ground.

The first stage is a consciousness-raising effort as well as a low intensity attack on *Solid Energy*. When the mining eventually begins, the campaign will escalate to an all-out confrontation on the proposed mine-sites themselves.

*Earth First! Otautahi*  
9th July 2004, Christchurch  
[otautahi@earthfirst.org.nz](mailto:otautahi@earthfirst.org.nz)

## Anarchist Conference Coming Soon

THE ANARCHIST conference to be held in Christchurch/Otautahi and set for Labour weekend (23-25th October) later this year is well on track and it's looking like it's gonna be a lot of fun. The conference is open to all anarchists and freedom-loving leftists, as well as anyone just curious.

We're well on our way to getting the workshops sorted. So far the topics proposed are an intro to anarchism, tino rangatiratanga, organisation, running an infoshop, sexism in the movement, indymedia, group dynamics, libertarian education, workplace organising, the anti-war movement, radical ecology, security culture and the relevance of class today.

If you want to do a workshop there's still time to get in! Plus we also plan to have one or two ‘open spaces’ during the weekend for the more spontaneous of you!

There is a ‘reclaim the night’ march in

### To the point...

What? - Anarchist conference and other fun stuff  
Who? - Open to all anarchists and freedom-loving leftists, or those just curious  
When? - Labour Weekend, 23-25th October  
Where? - Aldersgate, Christchurch/Otautahi  
What else? - Accomodation, childcare and some food provided!  
And next? - More info to come...

the works for the weekend, as well as music and bands on Saturday and maybe even three-sided soccer! We're also thinking of finishing the weekend with a bit of direct action – with so many anarchists in one place it'd be a perfect opportunity! (But of course that's all hush hush)

We are taking care of accomodation as well as childcare, but we'd appreciate a heads up well before the event about both of those so we can make plans. There's going to be several meals provided over the weekend and hopefully everyone will be

able to offer a bit of help – and of course it'll be vegan.

We'll have a website up shortly with all the information on it and will keep everyone up to date. We hope to see you all there!

*Anarchist Round Table*  
14th July 2004, Christchurch  
[art@anarchism.org.nz](mailto:art@anarchism.org.nz)  
<http://art.anarchsim.org.nz>

## Anarchy Lives and Learns in Wanganui

THE MARAMA-ITI experiment in 'participatory anarchism' continues to be a big learning curve for all those involved!

The day to day physical work is hard, but always exciting, as small projects come to fruition making life easier while continuing to fuel dreams (and more outlandish schemes!). It's been interesting to watch our priorities shift from revolving around consuming luxuries to the more basic needs of clean water, warm shelter etc.

Plans to set up a trust for the property are still in the distance as is formalised decision making processes etc. while there are only two permanent residents (if we can't work it out with only two people...).

We continued on from the *Anarchist*

*Tea Party* with another conference in May organised by national Treaty education group – 'arc' – which was a big success. Another gathering is being planned for this summer and more ideas keep getting suggested all the time.

As for wider community organising we have initiated the formation of a local anarchist group and a news sheet 'The River Rat'. Both are still in the planning stages but we have enthusiastic locals keen to stir some shit – especially about the coming local election which will probably see Michael Laws as mayor of our wee town!

Titles, aims, political affiliations, contacts, boring meetings.... these will all come soon.

A neighbour said to us recently, "we don't fear the cops around here, it's the building inspector you gotta watch out for!"

So as we plot there is a constant nag... how far do we push things? The risks are big, but the rewards are of course immeasurably worth a whole lot more.

So, 'long LIVE anarchy!'

*Marama-iti*

15th July 2004, Wanganui  
saskiamarama@hotmail.com

## The Fuse is Burning...

FUSE Anarchist Discussion is a Dunedin discussion group. We have held fortnightly discussions on topics such as direct action and workplace struggle, unions, anarchism, and direct democracy. Attendances have been good for a small, conservative town. And just in case we get accused of being armchair anarchists, already a spin-off group is being formed to establish a radical union. Get in contact if you want to come along to the next discussion.

*Fuse Anarchist Discussion*

13th July 2004, Dunedin  
fuse@anarchism.org.nz



## Booktore Bandits Battle Bypass Beast

MAYDAY 2004 was the ninth birthday of Aotearoa's longest running anti-capitalist super-store. The Freedom Shop started its life in Auckland, but has been kicking ass on Cuba Street for nearly a decade. Frivolity was arm-in-arm in solidarity with mayhem & debauchery as local supporters and assorted trouble-makers stuffed themselves full of cake & rampaged in the streets for the anniversary celebrations.

The Freedom Shop is run by an ever-changing motley collective of pirates, scallywags and ne'er-do-wells. Our commitment to non-hierarchical organisation ensures that we enjoy many hours of lovely meetings so you can peruse & purchase the most essential texts, raucous tunes and naughtiest zines. The shop hours can be a bit random but that just makes it that much more special when you do find us open. Like all activist projects we're often short of willing volunteers.

It's not just tea & choccy over a good book and nice conversation though - there's high adventure ahead for the Freedom Shop crew. The mayor wants to pour 40 million dollars worth of concrete on our

neighbourhood, and there's an extra \$2 million set aside just for activists (security costs).

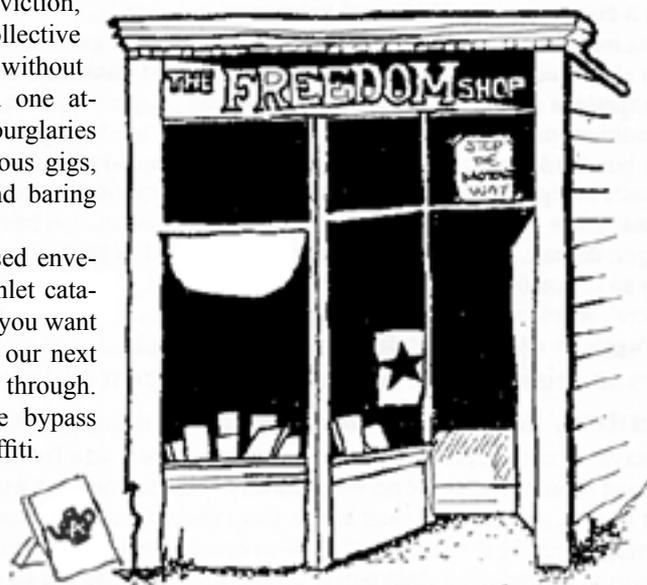
If it was to go ahead, the proposed Te Aro bypass would carve a motorway on-ramp across the Freedom Shop, before tearing through Tonks Ave, a heritage site. Neighbouring residents are being threatened with an October eviction, but the Freedom Shop collective will not be moving on without a fight. Having survived one attempted eviction, two burglaries and numerous Dead Vicious gigs, we'll be bunkering in and baring our teeth.

Mail us a self-addressed envelope if you want a pamphlet catalogue, or send an email if you want us to let you know when our next big book shipment comes through. To learn more about the bypass contact: nobypass@graffiti.net

Be sure to come in and say hello if you're walking past.

Buy. Buy. BUY your way to a better world. Tuesday to Saturday 12-4pm (Late night Wednesday until 6pm)

The Freedom Shop, 272 Cuba Street, Wellington City. P.O. Box 9263. Email: the\_freedom\_shop@yahoo.com



# The Taming of Tino Rangatiranga



LIKE A cockroach, the modern state has an impressive instinct for its own survival. When faced with conditions that seriously threaten its dominance it can adapt and reorganise itself, giving the illusion of change where none has occurred. This is what Antonio Gramsci termed a passive revolution, a process whereby the ruling political forces manage to diffuse a revolutionary crisis by making sufficient concessions to a subversive group to secure their allegiance, without any real expansion of that group's economic or political power.

During the early 1980's our own little colonial state was faced with just such a crisis brought on by the extreme economic hardship of the period, as well as the increasingly militant reassertion of Maori autonomy as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. In this article I want to briefly discuss the passive revolution carried out by the 4th Labour Government – a strategy which effectively castrated the revolutionary ethic of early Maori protest at a time when the very legitimacy of the colonial state was under threat. Finally we may look at what this means for the future of New Zealand anarchism.

## The Flax-Roots Ethic

The 1960's and 1970's was a golden era in political activism internationally and this was closely paralleled in New Zealand. Maori protest groups of the time such as Te Hokioi and The Maori Organisation on Human Rights (MOOHR) actively united with Pakeha anti-racist groups and union affiliations and sought to broaden the fight against Maori oppression.

Both MOOHR and Te Hokioi had strong trade union links and argued that the fundamental cleavage in New Zealand society was between labour and capital, and advocated a pan-racial struggle along class lines as the most effective strategy for resolving racism and Maori inequality. These groups saw the Treaty of Waitangi as the cornerstone of a harmonious society based on ethnic equality, providing past injustices were redeemed.

During the early 1970's the momentum of the movement shifted to the 'Brown Power' of Auckland protest groups influenced by the Black American revolutionary philosophies of

the period. Organisations such as Nga Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers saw the roots of minority oppression in the social relations of the colonial state and the capitalist system, and promoted a strategy of liberation through revolution. As the Panthers stated, "The revolution we openly rap about is one of total change. We see that many of our problems of racism and oppression are tools of this society's outlook based on capitalism; hence for total change one must change society altogether."

While Nga Tamatoa was eventually divided between those who sought change for Maori

**"Today it seems inevitable that the massive upheaval generated by Labour's latest attempt to violate Maori rights will be channelled and contained within the state system via an easily marginalized Maori Party potentially dominated by elite interests."**

through the reform of existing political structures, and those who felt the system was fundamentally flawed, there was no room to mistake the common object of protest, a state that was recognised as both racist and capitalist.

This revolutionary ethic was strengthened greatly during the late 1970's in response to the failures of the 3rd Labour government to secure Maori rights. We saw mass direct action tactics such as the land occupations at Bastion Point and Raglan Golf Course, mass hikois such as the 1975 land march on parliament, as well as the systematic boycott of Waitangi Day celebrations.

These actions brought together a diverse Pakeha left – solidarity actively encouraged by many Maori activists. Te Matakite, the organising committee behind the 1975 Land March

on parliament published in 1979, "We seek the support of workers and their organisations, as the only viable bodies which have sympathy and understanding of the Maori people and their desires. The people who are oppressing the workers today are the same who are exploiting Maori."

By the early 1980's Maori had achieved a high level of solidarity with other progressive social and labour movements, and had subsequently evolved into a powerful and cohesive protest group that directly challenged the legitimacy of the colonial state

## The Passive Revolution

This push towards Maori self-determination was only one part of a general crisis of legitimacy suffered by the state between 1979-1985. Political turmoil, fiscal instability, massive unemployment and the politicisation of ethnic and gender inequality forced the government to address and pacify Maori demands in the quickest possible way, without disrupting the economic and political foundations of the Pakeha state. This meant the redirection of Maori protest into the institutions of government power where they could be efficiently contained. The passive revolution was primarily carried out through the Waitangi Tribunal, and the official policy of biculturalism.

Since its 'expansion' in 1979, the Tribunal has had 3 main functions: (1) legitimisation of colonial state and legislative authority, (2) a safety valve for more radical Maori demands, (3) circumvention of the Maori version of the Treaty. It was an effort on the part of the government to shape the nature of Maori demands and integrate a subversive social group into the framework of the state. This was achieved through a judicial rewriting of the Treaty which undermined the contradictions between the English and Maori versions of the text, and hence avoided the problem of tino rangatiranga. The Court's rewriting of the Treaty via the 'principles of the Treaty' favoured the colonial version and was essentially a redefinition of the Government's obligations to make them compatible with the absolute authority to make laws and policy, including corporatisation.

In other words, it was the final consolida-

tion of colonial rule. Like Jane Kelsey said, "The Tribunal was a victory for all parties – it provided sufficient relief to satisfy the specific and limited demands of Maori, while reinforcing the legitimacy of state."

The Tribunal is basically a 'toothless tiger', limited to making recommendations on which the Government is under no obligation to act, and its subordinate position has been made clear on numerous occasions by the Court of Appeal. Although the Tribunal has served numerous positive functions, protecting Maori rights in specific areas (mostly through the dedication of under funded and under resourced personnel), this has obscured the fact that it has served as a barrier to the true realisation of Maori Treaty rights. The Tribunal has been easily marginalized in times of Pakeha backlash and political turbulence, and cynically venerated in times of Maori activism.

For a passive revolution to be successful, it requires both institutional, as well as ideological reorganisation. While the Waitangi Tribunal was the revolution's institutional dimension, the official policy of biculturalism was its ideological dimension.

In rhetoric, biculturalism is framed as the final break with the old imperialist ideologies of assimilation to a brave new society based on the celebration of ethnic diversity. In reality, biculturalism is aimed at masking the true nature of the colonial state, which is a system of domination and subordination, and inclu-



sion and exclusion. So biculturalism meant the wholesale appropriation and incorporation of Maori cultural symbolism and personnel into the framework of the Pakeha Government, giving the illusion of 'partnership' as enshrined by the judicial rewriting of the Treaty.

Labour actively pursued a strategy of containment, co-opting many key members of the protest movement into the political system and Government bureaucracy. This resulted in many Maori leaders becoming increasingly isolated from the flax-roots struggle and debased the

radical, younger leadership which had emerged during the late 70's. Such privileged positions within the settlement process has also provided an environment for widespread corruption among many Maori elite, one such example demonstrated in the 1994 Sealord deal. In a depressing irony, while the policy of biculturalism has made almost no gains in alleviating the subordinate position most Maori occupy in New Zealand society, the government's hollow Treaty worship has managed to fuel intense Pakeha reaction over what is perceived as 'special privileges' for Maori.

So, by the early 90's it could be said that the passive revolution was complete. It was a successful one in the sense that it diffused the elements of Maori protest that challenged the legitimacy of colonial economic and political authority, and succeeded in maintaining the status-quo through superficial institutional reorganisation.

A passive revolution is never absolute, and we have seen a periodic resurgence of Maori protest over the Sealord deal, the fiscal envelope proposal, and most recently Labour's foreshore and seabed legislation. However, the movement has yet to regain the intensity, depth and revolutionary ethic which characterised early Maori protest.

Today it seems inevitable that the massive upheaval generated by Labour's latest attempt to violate Maori rights will be channelled and contained within the state system via an easily marginalized Maori Party potentially dominated by elite interests. Willie Jackson has already made it clear tino rangitiratanga will not be on the agenda for the new party, and Taraiana Turia has shied away from any suggestions of forming a separate Maori parliament, proving their commitment to following the same orthodox and fruitless path of parliamentary reform which has largely dominated Maori politics for the past 20 years.

### Tino Rangitiratanga & Anarchism

So what does this mean for the future of Maori protest, and what relevance does it have to New Zealand anarchism? I think if Maori activists today are serious about ethnic equality and Maori autonomy within a truly multicultural New Zealand society, they need to realise that group stratification is the foundation of our social structure, and this cannot be changed

through the legislative and political institutions of the capitalist state. It's true that a few drops of blood have been squeezed out of these particular stones, but only drops, and this was overwhelmingly a result of the flax-roots movement, not the parliamentary diversion.

It is also true that these goals won't come any closer to reality if the movement remains shackled to the narrow aspirations of purely ethnic politics as it has done for much of the past 20 years. The strategy of any repressed minority seeking social justice should be based on the unification and extension of all forms of popular democratic and group struggle with similar aims, so as to mobilise ever wider sections of the population. This means a return to the flax-roots revolutionary ethic of the 60's and 70's.

In this context the struggles of anarchism and the struggles of tino rangatiratanga can be seen as essentially the same – we are both fighting to radically increase the scope of human freedom. In fact, I would say we are mutually dependant. If anarchism is to evolve beyond a tiny and largely invisible fringe movement into an organised and truly subversive force in this country, solidarity with the principles of Maori cultural, economic and political self-determination is essential. Likewise for Maori activists, if the precondition for this kind of self-determination is recognised as the destruction of the colonial state and capitalist economic system, then solidarity with anarchism is equally essential. This is something I intend to write more on, and hopefully this article can spark off some discussion.

For now, let me say that if social equality in New Zealand is to become anything more than an attractive myth, the unification between Maori and libertarian socialists is absolutely crucial. This is where anarchist propaganda and agitation should be focused, of course not in the spirit of paternalism or vanguardism, but in the spirit of cooperation, mutual respect of our differences and the identification of similar aims.

In this regard the formation of a Maori Party may yet have some positive side effects. Its inevitable failure to secure Maori rights will further prove the bankruptcy of the colonial state as a medium for progressive social change, but whether this will serve to mobilise significant numbers of Maori to reach out and take back control of their own destinies is unknown. This is where the actions of flax-roots Maori subversives and the anarchist community could be decisive, and these are circumstances we cannot afford to ignore.

- Matt Russell

# SHUT THE FUCK UP! (OR, HOW TO ACT BETTER IN MEETINGS)

*“Even with my mask I often spoke the tyranny of power. My first duty was to cultivate a revolutionary silence.” - Subcomandante Marcos*

BEING AN activist these days means fighting for a thousand different things - indigenous rights, rainforests, corporate accountability, etc. Despite this diversity of campaigns, there seems to be some agreement on the kind of society we want to create. It's a society that isn't based on white supremacy, class exploitation, or patriarchy.

This essay is about how men act in meetings. Mostly it's about how we act badly, but it includes suggestions on how we can do better. Men in the movement reproduce patriarchy within the movement and benefit from it. By patriarchy I mean a system of values, behaviours, and relationships that keeps men in power. It relies on domination, claiming authority, and belligerence. By the movement I mean the anti-corporate globalization movement in the US I am a part of.

I think people organizing for affordable housing, against police brutality, for the rights of immigrants (for example) are also fighting the same system that's wringing the blood out of the bottom 99 percent of the world's population and the environment they live in. However, I don't know from my experience if the men who organize around those issues act the way the men in the movement do.

Just to be clear, those men are almost always white and from middle-class or wealthier backgrounds. In my experience, as someone who identifies as a man of colour, men of colour dominate meetings in basically the exact same way. But I find that men who do not speak English fluently tend not to do so as much. I wish I could think of more exceptions.

## Who cares about meetings?

Good question. Most meetings of large-ish organizations (of more than 30 people or so) I've been to don't amount to too much. The real work - doing research, getting people involved, organizing protests and actions, fundraising, media stuff - gets done by working groups or individuals. Meetings are just about a lot of talking, right?

Well, yes and no. At worst meetings force a lot of people to get together and generally discuss everything that's been done, everything that's going on, and everything that needs to be done. These meetings tend to wander a lot. Responsibility is not clearly delegated, decisions aren't made overtly, and the organization isn't more focused afterwards than before. At the same time, there's heated arguments over seemingly trivial things, or hurtful criticism of individuals. But those arguments and criticisms don't amount to too much in the end.

But a good meeting is a different animal altogether. With good self-facilitation and a good facilitator (or two, or three...), everyone contributes to the meeting, without anyone taking control over it. People make constructive criticism, and try to incorporate concerns raised into their proposals. And since everyone gets to contribute their ideas into the decision-making process, the decisions are not only the best possible ones - but also the ones people are most invested in. Since everyone feels ownership over the decisions, people are more likely to take on responsibility for projects.

If you're serious about using consensus, you have to care about meetings. That's the only place a group can democratically decide what to do and

how to do it. The alternative is an informal group of the most influential and forceful members (who dominate discussion) making the big decisions.

## It's not just how often you talk, but how and when.

Consensus decision making is a model of the society we want to live in, and a tool we use to get there. Men often dominate consensus at the expense of everyone else. Think about the man who...

- \* Speaks long, loud, first and often
- \* Offers his opinion immediately whenever someone makes a proposal, asks a question, or if there's a lull in discussion
- \* Speaks with too much authority: "Actually, it's like this..."
- \* Can't amend a proposal or idea he disagrees with, but trashes it instead
- \* Makes faces every time someone says something he disagrees with
- \* Rephrases everything a woman says, as in, "I think what Mary was trying to say is..."
- \* Makes a proposal, then responds to each and every question and criticism of it - thus speaking as often as everyone else put together (Note: This man often ends up being the facilitator)

And don't get me started about the bad male facilitator who...:

- \* Always puts himself first on stack, because he can
- \* Somehow never sees the women with their hands up, and never encourages people who haven't spoken

It's rarely just one man who exhibits every

## Pac Man: The post-Modern Man?

I THINK when you look enough into it, videogames, especially the classics, can tell us a lot about ourselves and our reality. Think about it. Frogger: some say an annoying and addictive little game about a frog trying to cross the street. Or is it a digital metaphor for life and the pursuit of happiness, for the alienated man, his hopes and dreams relentlessly crushed under the (symbolic) wheels of progress and the overwhelming powers of capitalist inequality? You decide.

Ok, so maybe that's a load of crap. But I believe Pac Man, that constantly terrified,

drug dependant, rabidly consuming, yellow little post modern fuck up is a load of crap we can all relate to.

So what does Pac Man do? What's he trying to tell us? Well, the poor little bastard is trapped in a box shaped maze which perpetually generates ghosts. Pac Man is scared of these ghosts and must take drugs allowing him to deny his fears and destroy the spirits which constantly terrorise him. He can't stop consuming and he must repeat these actions over and over again unless he will die. Sound familiar?

There are two types of ghosts in the game,

each one symbolic of a different form of fear. The first less dangerous kind of ghost symbolises our natural animal fears, the fear of death, fear for the safety of loved ones, fear of tropical genital rashes and so on. The second, stronger variety of ghost represents an altogether more complex form of fear, what can best be described as The Burden of Society. These fears are varied and many, they range from fears of money, fear of failure, fear of social alienation, fear of physical imperfection, fear of poor people, fear of rich people, fear of war and fear of the state. The hero's experience of life therefore

problem trait. Instead it's two or three competing to do all the above. But the result is the same: everyone who can't (or won't) compete on these terms - talking long, loud, first and often - gets drowned out.

This is a result of society's programming. Almost no men can actually live up to our culture's fucked up standards of masculinity. And our society has standards for women that are equally ridiculous. In one way, we both suffer equally. That's why we all yearn and strive for a world where these standards - which serve to divide us and reduce us and prop up those in control - are destroyed.

In another way these standards serve those who come closest to living up to them. Sure, we all lose when a few men dominate a meeting. But it's those men who get to make decisions, take credit for the work everyone does, and come out feeling more inspired and confident.

**But I can't be sexist – I'm a hippie!**

Oh, but you can. The irony is that you can basically do all the things listed above, even if you don't fit the stereotype of the big strapping man. I've seen hippies, men who would be described as feminine, queer men, and others who in many ways go against the grain not go against the grain at all when it comes to dominating discussion. A hippie might speak slowly and use hippie slang, but still speak as the voice of authority, and cut off the woman who was speaking before him. A man who some might call feminine can still make a face like he smelled something when someone he doesn't respect says something he disagrees with, thus telling her to shut up; he may also politely but consistently put himself on stack every time someone criticizes his proposal.

**So shut the fuck up already**

What's to be done? I've come up with a little idea I like to call, "Shut the fuck up." It goes as follows:

Every time someone...

- \* Says something you think is irrelevant,
- \* Asks a (seemingly) obvious question,
- \* Criticizes your proposal or makes a contradictory observation,
- \* Makes a proposal,
- \* Asks a question, or
- \* Asks for more input because there's a brief lull in the discussion. . .

...Shut the fuck up. It's a radical process, but I think you'll like it.



**Men! - Sit down and shut the fuck up already!**

Since my childhood, I was raised by my parents and by every teacher I ever had in school to demand as much attention as possible. In class I spoke more often than almost anyone else I knew. Surprisingly enough, some of my teachers were annoyed with me. But while they may have counselled me to raise my hand first, they never asked me to speak less or listen more. As a result I probably got twice as much attention from my teach-

ers, measured in time spent with me, than most of the other kids I went to school with.

But a mere 15 years after I started learning to exhibit almost all the dominating male behaviour I list above, something happened. I was in a class with a friend of mine. Let's call her Anne, because that's her name. Anne and I were in the same study group, and the night before she had gone over the exact question the professor was now asking. However, Anne wasn't answering, even though the rest of the class was silent.

I don't know what struck me to actually stop and think instead of answering the question myself, as I was wont to do. That incident got me thinking about who spoke most often in class, why, and what I could do. The answers to the first two questions I've basically given already. The third is a little trickier.

**What else can we do?**

Lucky for us, being a man gives us a lot of authority. I mean that in a good way, too. Much like people of colour are always assumed to be selfish or paranoid when they speak out against racial profiling, women are often assumed to be bitchy when they call out patriarchal behaviour.

What does that mean for us? First, we shut the fuck up. This was easy for me in school - I just made a rule that I never spoke more than twice in a 50 minute class. Surprise! Almost every time I would have spoken, someone else eventually said the exact same thing, or something smarter. It was frustrating when it was another obnoxious man doing the answering, but a lot of times it wasn't one of the two guys in class who spoke most often.

The problem is that the classroom is designed to have one person in charge, and it ain't the student. While you could point out problem behaviour in class, there's not a lot of 'space' for it - it's not expected or encouraged, and would probably be dismissed by the professor.

is a constant battle, one which consumes him so totally that all originality and creativity within him is snuffed out and any idea of a different kind of reality is either extinguished or relegated to fantasy or religion. This is why Pac Man must keep consuming, to fill that void of nothingness inside him, a hollowness he created and forgot how to fix.

Every day of Pac Man's life he must he repeat the same vacuous actions because he believes if he stops he might die, and unfortunately, then it would be game over. This is why Pac Man takes so many drugs, to give him the

strength he needs for his droning routine and to face the various demons running around the maze so he can continue his never-ending and meaningless mission of consumption. Poor Pac Man. The most tragic consequence for this perturbed little guy is that he is either too busy just trying to survive, too busy being molested by all these ghosts and demons, or too concerned with scratching his un-scratchable itch that he never even notices the maze he's been running around in. He's never experienced anything different, so as far as he is concerned nothing different can exist. What's the point thinking

about it? His box is invisible, the drugs, the ghosts and the void are his reality.

The paradox of Pac Man is that he is petrified of both life and death, and as a result he never really lives, and some people might say he never really dies either. Pac Man doesn't want to be free of himself, so he will never free his Self from the box. This is the very sad, very real and very post modern story of Pac Man. Can you help him ?

- Matt Russell

The beauty of consensus is the facilitation. Not only can we facilitate ourselves - and we should - but we can facilitate each other. This is mainly the job of the person chosen to be the facilitator. But when the facilitator is ignoring problem behaviour - or exhibiting it - it's easy for other people in the group to guerrilla facilitate.'

Sometimes it's as easy as pointing out the people who have their hands up, but are somehow missed by the facilitator, or by suggesting straw polls or go 'rounds or other tools that get everyone involved. But it's usually not that easy. The worse the pattern of behaviour in the group, the more natural the fucked-upedness will seem. And you'll often be given the evil eye by the people you're calling out, if not a verbal backlash. And finally, it's obviously not the job of the people most trampled on by patriarchal behaviour to always be calling it out. That's where we come in. We are, at least at first, given the most respect when we call out bad behaviour.

The problem is doing the calling out in a constructive way. It's all too easy to call people out in a hurtful and authoritarian fashion - thus entertaining everyone with your unintended irony, but also acting the exact way you don't want others to. When you call people out in a way that's hurtful instead of constructive, it still tends to keep the quietest people at a meeting from participating.

### The solution

So call people out, but try not to be too personal about it. Unless it's outrageous, wait until the person is finished, and then make your process point about how people should stick to stack, or consider not talking if they've just spoken, or whatever. And if it seems someone's pissed off at your calling them out (and white men make it real easy for you to tell if they're pissed off), make the effort to talk to him after the meeting is over. It usually doesn't take much to smooth ruffled feathers.

Unfortunately, it also doesn't take much for those same people to do the exact same thing the next meeting. So while part of the answer is self-facilitation and facilitating others, another part is also giving everyone the skills and confidence they need to assert their place in the meeting. This means having regular workshops, for new and experienced activists, on how consensus is supposed to work. It also means going through the formal process of consensus and explaining it during meetings. You can do it quickly, especially after the first few times. But when people assume that everyone is familiar with the process, those who are least confident (but still have good ideas) will be the first to drop out of discussions. Meanwhile, other people who think they know the process but don't tend to hold things up. I'll let you guess what I think the gender breakdown of those groups is.

Another key ingredient is talking to individuals outside of meetings. Talking honestly - "I know you care about the group, but in meetings it seems like you talk down to anyone who disagrees with

you, and you cut people off a lot, and that makes it really hard for other people to participate" - is a big part of it. And as with any interaction, you have to keep an open mind to hear their perspective. Ideally, you could resolve things at this level and not have to bring things up before the group.

But it's still a good idea to come up with a structure to address the way people act badly in meetings, for people to regularly "check in" with how they feel the process is going. It also makes it easier for people who wouldn't normally criticize others to do so constructively. The structure could mean that once every two months the group has a "process" meeting, where the focus is on how peo-

**"It means constantly thinking about how we, as men, tend to dominate and control the world around us. I think this struggle always starts with shutting the fuck up."**

ple act in meetings, working groups, etc. It's often easier and 'safer' for people to call out problem behaviour, and easier and 'safer' for the culprits to own up to it and ask for constructive criticism.

Finally, it means constantly thinking about how we, as men, tend to dominate and control the world around us. To me this is most apparent (at least in other people) in meetings. To me, that's also where it's easiest to address. This is a continuous process. We have to always read about this, talk about it, inquire into how others address it, come up with creative and successful solutions, and apply them. But no matter where we take it, I think this struggle always starts with shutting the fuck up.

As men, we're encouraged to dominate conversation without even thinking about it. It's too easy for us to do really good work - fighting genetic engineering, tearing down the prison industrial complex, freeing Mumia - and still act exactly like the frat boy next door. We have to confront each other and ourselves so that domination stops seeming natural, and so we can start doing something about it. So the next time you don't think about how you're talking, please think about how you're talking.

### And the bonus section...

But I can't let a girl do this - I mean, I'm the only one who knows how.

Shut the heck up! Sharing responsibility for projects is fundamental for ensuring that everyone in the group develops skills and confidence. I'll give credit where it's due: We men are pretty good at letting women bottomline work like child care, note taking, food prep... But we rarely have structures to let women take on our responsibilities.

In your meetings, are women taking on projects in proportion to their numbers? If you're not paying attention, you should be. Along with consensus, sharing work is one of the hallmarks of democratic organizing. In my experience the most prestigious, challenging, and rewarding work belongs to men. Often, it belongs to the same men who dominate the meetings where these tasks are ostensibly delegated.

One way men make work theirs (in the worst way) is by hoarding information around it. What work has been done? What's left to do? What are the priorities? The deadlines? If the work is done informally, not only is there no accountability for it getting done, but there are also no records and no regular updates. This makes it almost impossible to pass on responsibility for the project to someone else - unless you're setting them up for failure.

Another problem is contacts. Somehow it seems that long time organizers tend to all know each other. If there's a problem they can just call each other up. This isn't just intimidating for people lower on the activist totem pole; it makes it that much harder for them to get the same work done. If we pretend our contacts are just friends, instead of people we rely on to get work done, the group at the top will stay there. And I think that group is almost all male.

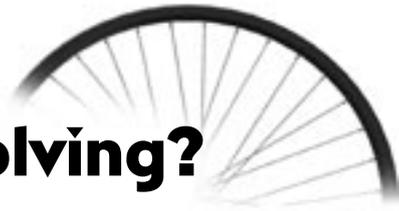
Finally, there's language. Experts in the capitalist world tend to mystify their work. Whether it's "move to demur," "updating the HTML," or "within the confines of this narrative," professionals have a vested interest in making their work sound as obscure and difficult as possible. Professionals in our society own the little part of the world they have "expertise" over. They make decisions that affect everyone, and get more control and authority as time goes on.

Sound familiar? All these factors - hoarding information, exclusive contacts, mystifying language - get even worse during a crisis. In the middle of an action it's easy to say, "There's no time to teach anyone new, men or women, how to work the radios." First, that's usually a group of men speaking. Second, that's why you have start before the action. If the problem is just a few big egos and a lot of people's complicity, then you can delegate immediately. If there's more at work, you have to set up a structure so folks outside the de facto leadership meaningfully take on projects. That structure can include documenting steps and information, helping new people develop working relationships with other organizers, using everyday language instead of bullshit acronyms, and so on. But without a process it's much more difficult to pass on that responsibility.

And who do you think you'll be passing it on to?

*- Freely inspired by Jo Freeman's "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."*

# Should we Re-invent the Wheel or Just Keep it Evolving?



THIS IS A short essay about some aspects of the new school I'm working in and how it – and possibly others like it – have a very anarchistic style.

Since February, I've been working as Secondary Social Sciences teacher at Karamea Area School in the West Coast, and it's direct democratic character and community feel is great.

Karamea is a village of about 400 people, mainly based around farming and tourism (it's the start of the Heaphy track). It's 100km north of Westport, and as such is very isolated – it's the furthest north you can go on the West Coast. The School has approximately 150 students from 5-16 years old, the Secondary School has about 50 of these (from year 9 to year 12). Having the primary and secondary together certainly helps the community feel of the school, as there are brothers and sisters from 5 to 16 years of age in the same school – some of them are taught by their relatives also (parents, uncles/aunties, and in one case, their sister!)

The last article I contributed to *imminent rebellion* (Issue 3) described some of the characteristics that schools could have to encourage learning, mainly concentrating on direct democracy ideas. This is what I have experienced – to an extent – at Karamea. Firstly, classes are small (6-15 students) which helps facilitate discussion, teachers are approachable, curriculum requirements are clear, and students and teachers are very direct with each other, so for subjects it's crystal clear as to what is being done, how, and why.

The students are well known to all the teachers and vice-versa. Trust is the way to keep a good learning environment, which is encouraged by the Principal, Vice-Principal and Senior Teachers. A

Student Council is being set up by the students with their ideas being related to teachers (if they wish to relate them) and the first action is a 'code of conduct' that students – and teachers – should follow. Parents are directly involved in the school as volunteer helpers in a range of classroom and sport activities. Board of Trustee members are similarly involved. In the classroom, rules are debated by the class before implementation by the Teacher who acts as a facilitator rather than a dictator. Curriculum requirements and problems are

**“Often I think that anarchists are waiting for the revolution and can be dismissive of an evolving freedom. We don't need to re-invent the wheel.”**

sorted out in an open fashion, usually one-on-one in the senior school, so the students know what the state requires. Things can be changed to suit talents, interests and time constraints or other difficulties.

For instance, changing the curriculum to suit student interests, especially in relation to assessment through Achievement Standards, is encouraged. An example of this was my experience of teaching year 12 Classics in which the style of assessment is chosen by the class (they created their own short play as a group). Sure, it was within reasonably small parameters and an assessment activity must be done, but at least it's a start. Another example of adjustability in small groups is the

study of terrorism (Group, Individual and State) that was chosen by the year 10 Social Studies class I'm teaching. Again, they only had a couple of subjects to choose from, but at least there's some choice, and the assessment was a presentation by the students in their own style (with help from me if needed).

There are lots of things to work on – there is still the rigidity of a timetable, the state requirements and the assessment driven curriculum, and there is not the direct democracy that should operate at all levels of the school. This will come over time as schools evolve. Schools are a microcosm of society and have changed and are changing greatly. We, all of us, need to get as involved as we can in the running of our schools so that decisions are community ones. The school I'm involved in is showing the way and is encouraging the one thing that I want to be involved in - a love of learning.

Often I think that anarchists are waiting for the revolution and can be dismissive of an evolving freedom. I have to say that the three months I've been in Karamea have been a revelation to me. I didn't believe that schools could have such a strong community base and operate so well in Aotearoa. It is my own lack of experience – and perhaps a touch of cynicism – that clouded my views previously. This is unfortunate, as due to my ignorance I have missed out on seeing the good things that happen around us. We don't need to re-invent the wheel. The anarchistic ideas that are an ideal are on their way to being created. We just need to get involved – and see what's around us.

- *George van den Hoeven*

## What anarchism means to me...

*“I won't help murderers and rapists struggling to be free. My sisters always pay the price, they matter more to me than a newborn state where men will put us down. I'd rather smash your country than help you build another one.”*

WHEN I first encountered anarchism, it didn't really appeal. The call for total freedom seemed like a mandate for people to do whatever they want, regardless of the consequences for others. It wasn't until I started learning about anarcho-feminism that I began to call myself an anarchist.

I was fed up with guys saying “we gave you the vote, what else do you want?” I was fed up with female politicians being hailed as wimmin's rights warriors when most wimmin are so underpaid. I was fed up with ad cam-

paigns using feminist messages to sell products produced through the exploitation of wimmin in the third world. I was fed up with Marxists who seem to think that wimmin's liberation will magically come about after the revolution (and not a minute sooner!).

Anarcho-feminism offers an alternative approach to wimmin's liberation. It views patriarchy, capitalism and the state as intertwined institutes of oppression. It stresses liberation for all, not equality with an oppressed male population. It acknowledges that suffrage has failed to bring wimmin (or men) freedom. It focuses on the need to live anarchism now, without giving up on the possibility of revolution.

This is what anarchism means to me: a fight for freedom, not just from class oppression, but from all exploitation, of anyone, human or oth-

erwise, anywhere. It means recognising each individual's autonomy, but also recognising our responsibilities to each other. It means the end of patriarchy. If this sounds impossibly idealistic, then at least we're idealising the best possible world.

Anarchism also means a few things I wish it didn't. It means being snubbed because I don't listen to Doom. It means being frowned on because I think animal rights are as important as human rights. It means shutting up and not challenging sexism in case a male anarchist thinks I'm violating his freedom of speech. How we deal with these problems says a lot about the feasibility of the anarchist world of which we dream.

- *Ali*

# A Primitivist Primer



*AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is not a definitive statement, merely a personal account, and seeks in general terms to explain what is meant by anarcho-primitivism. It does not wish to limit or exclude, but provide a general introduction to the topic. Apologies for inaccuracies, misinterpretations, or (inevitable) overgeneralizations.*

## What is anarcho-primitivism?

Anarcho-primitivism (a.k.a. radical primitivism, anti-authoritarian primitivism, the anti-civilization movement, or just, primitivism) is a short-hand term for a radical current that critiques the totality of civilization from an anarchist perspective, and seeks to initiate a comprehensive transformation of human life.

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as anarcho-primitivism or anarcho-primitivists. Fredy Perlman, a major voice in this current, once said, "The only -ist name I respond to is "cellist".' Individuals associated with this current

**"The aim is to develop a synthesis of primal and contemporary anarchy, a synthesis of the ecologically-focussed, non-statist, anti-authoritarian aspects of primitive lifeways with the most advanced forms of anarchist analysis of power relations."**

do not wish to be adherents of an ideology, merely people who seek to become free individuals in free communities in harmony with one another and with the biosphere, and may therefore refuse to be limited by the term 'anarcho-primitivist' or any other ideological tagging.

At best, then, anarcho-primitivism is a convenient label used to characterise diverse individuals with a common project: the abolition of all power relations - e.g., structures of control,

coercion, domination, and exploitation - and the creation of a form of community that excludes all such relations.

## So why is the term anarcho-primitivist used?

In 1986, the circle around the Detroit paper Fifth Estate indicated that they were engaged in developing a 'critical analysis of the technological structure of western civilization[,] combined with a reappraisal of the indigenous world and the character of primitive and original communities. In this sense we are primitivists ...' The Fifth Estate group sought to complement a critique of civilization as a project of control with a reappraisal of the primitive, which they regarded as a source of renewal and anti-authoritarian inspiration.

This reappraisal of the primitive takes place from an anarchist perspective, a perspective concerned with eliminating power relations. Pointing to 'an emerging synthesis of post-modern anarchy and the primitive (in the sense of original), Earth-based ecstatic vision,' the Fifth Estate circle indicated:

*We are not anarchists per se, but pro-anarchy, which is for us a living, integral experience, incommensurate with Power and refusing all ideology ... Our work on the FE as a project explores possibilities for our own participation in this movement, but also works to rediscover the primitive roots of anarchy as well as to document its present expression. Simultaneously, we examine the evolution of Power in our midst in order to suggest new terrains for contestations and critique in order to undermine the present tyranny of the modern totalitarian discourse - that hyper-reality that destroys human meaning, and hence solidarity, by simulating it with technology. Underlying all struggles for freedom is this central necessity: to regain a truly human discourse grounded in autonomous, intersubjective mutuality and closely associated with the natural world.*

The aim is to develop a synthesis of primal and contemporary anarchy, a synthesis of the ecologically-focussed, non-statist, anti-authoritar-

ian aspects of primitive lifeways with the most advanced forms of anarchist analysis of power relations. The aim is not to replicate or return to the primitive, merely to see the primitive as a source of inspiration, as exemplifying forms of anarchy.

For anarcho-primitivists, civilization is the overarching context within which the multiplicity of power relations develop. Some basic power relations are present in primitive societies - and this is one reason why anarcho-primitivists do not seek to replicate these societies - but it is in civilization that power relations become pervasive and entrenched in practically all aspects of human life and human relations with the biosphere.

Civilization - also referred to as the megamachine or Leviathan - becomes a huge machine which gains its own momentum and becomes beyond the control of even its supposed rulers. Powered by the routines of daily life which are defined and managed by internalized patterns of obedience, people become slaves to the machine, the system of civilization itself. Only widespread refusal of this system and its various forms of control, revolt against power itself, can abolish civilization, and pose a radical alternative.

Ideologies such as Marxism, classical anarchism and feminism oppose aspects of civilization; only anarcho-primitivism opposes civilization, the context within which the various forms of oppression proliferate and become pervasive - and, indeed, possible. Anarcho-primitivism incorporates elements from various oppositional currents - ecological consciousness, anarchist anti-authoritarianism, feminist critiques, Situationist ideas, zero-work theories, technological criticism - but goes beyond opposition to single forms of power to refuse them all and pose a radical alternative.

## How does anarcho-primitivism differ from anarchism?

From the perspective of anarcho-primitivism, all other forms of radicalism appear as reformist, whether or not they regard themselves as revolutionary. Marxism and classical anarchism, for example, want to take over civilization, rework its structures to some degree, and remove

its worst abuses and oppressions. However, 99% of life in civilization remains unchanged in their future scenarios, precisely because the aspects of civilization they question are minimal.

Although both want to abolish capitalism, and classical anarchism would abolish the State too, overall life patterns wouldn't change too much. Although there might be some changes in socioeconomic relations, such as worker control of industry and neighbourhood councils in place of the State, and even an ecological focus, basic patterns would remain unchanged.

The Western model of progress would merely be amended and would still act as an ideal. Mass society would essentially continue, with most people working, living in artificial, technologised environments, and subject to forms of coercion and control.

Radical ideologies on the Left seek to capture power, not abolish it. Hence, they develop various kinds of exclusive groups - cadres, political parties, consciousness-raising groups - in order to win converts and plan strategies for gaining control. Organizations, for anarcho-primitivists, are just rackets, gangs for putting a particular ideology in power. Politics, 'the art and science of government,' is not part of the primitivist project; only a politics of desire, pleasure, mutuality and radical freedom.

### Where, according to primitivism, does power originate?

Again, a source of some debate among anarcho-primitivists. Perlman sees the creation of impersonal institutions or abstract power relations as the defining moment at which primitive anarchy begins to be dismantled by civilized social relations. In contrast, John Zerzan locates the development of symbolic mediation - in its various forms of number, language, time, art and later, agriculture - as the means of transition from human freedom to a state of domestication.

The focus on origin is important in anarcho-primitivism because primitivism seeks, in exponential fashion, to expose, challenge and abolish all the multiple forms of power that structure the individual, social relations, and interrelations with the natural world. Locating origins is a way of identifying what can be safely salvaged from the wreck of civilization, and what it is essential to eradicate if power relations are not to reemerge after civilization's collapse.

What kind of future is envisaged by anarcho-primitivists? Anarcho-primitivist journal "Anarchy; A Journal of Desire Armed" envisions a future that is 'radically cooperative & communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild,' and this might be the closest you'll get to a description! There's no blueprint, no proscription pattern, although it's important to stress that

the envisioned future is not 'primitive' in any stereotypical sense. As the Fifth Estate said in 1979: 'Let us anticipate the critics who would accuse us of wanting to go "back to the caves" or of mere posturing on our part - i.e., enjoying the comforts of civilization all the while being its hardest critics. We are not posing the Stone Age as a model for our Utopia[,] nor are we suggesting a return to gathering and hunting as a means for our livelihood.'

As a corrective to this common misconception, it's important to stress that the future envisioned by anarcho-primitivism is sui generis - it is without precedent. Although primitive cultures provide intimations of the future, and that future may well incorporate elements derived from those cultures, an anarcho-primitivist world would likely be quite different from previous forms of anarchy.

### How does anarcho-primitivism view technology?

John Zerzan defines technology as 'the ensemble of division of labor/production/industrialism and its impact on us and on nature. Technology is the sum of mediations between us and the natural



world and the sum of those separations mediating us from each other. It is all the drudgery and toxicity required to produce and reproduce the stage of hyper-alienation we languish in. It is the texture and the form of domination at any given stage of hierarchy and domination.'

Opposition to technology thus plays an important role in anarcho-primitivist practice. However, Fredy Perlman says that 'technology is nothing but the Leviathan's armory,' its

'claws and fangs.' Anarcho-primitivists are thus opposed to technology, but there is some debate over how central technology is to domination in civilization.

A distinction should be drawn between tools (or implements) and technology. Perlman shows that primitive peoples develop all kinds of tools and implements, but not technologies: 'The material objects, the canes and canoes, the digging sticks and walls, were things a single individual could make, or they were things, like a wall, that required the cooperation of many on a single occasion ... Most of the implements are ancient, and the [material] surpluses [these implements supposedly made possible] have been ripe since the first dawn, but they did not give rise to impersonal institutions. People, living beings, give rise to both.'

Tools are creations on a localised, small-scale, the products of either individuals or small groups on specific occasions. As such, they do not give rise to systems of control and coercion. Technology, on the other hand, is the product of large-scale interlocking systems of extraction, production, distribution and consumption, and such systems gain their own momentum and dynamic. As such, they demand structures of control and obedience on a mass scale - what Perlman calls impersonal institutions.

As the Fifth Estate pointed out in 1981: 'Technology is not a simple tool which can be used in any way we like. It is a form of social organization, a set of social relations. It has its own laws. If we are to engage in its use, we must accept its authority. The enormous size, complex interconnections and stratification of tasks which make up modern technological systems make authoritarian command necessary and independent, individual decision-making impossible.'

Anarcho-primitivism is an anti-systemic current: it opposes all systems, institutions, abstractions, the artificial, the synthetic, and the machine, because they embody power relations. Anarcho-primitivists thus oppose technology or the technological system, but not the use of tools and implements in the senses indicated here.

As to whether any technological forms will be appropriate in an anarcho-primitivist world, there is debate over this issue. The Fifth Estate remarked in 1979 that:

'Reduced to its most basic elements, discussions about the future sensibly should be predicated on what we desire socially and from that determine what technology is possible. All of us desire central heating, flush toilets, and electric lighting, but not at the expense of our humanity. Maybe they are all possible together, but maybe not.'

What about medicine? Ultimately, anarcho-primitivism is all about healing - healing the rifts that have opened up within individuals, between

people, and between people and nature, the rifts that have opened up through civilization, through power, including the State, Capital, and technology.

The German philosopher Nietzsche said that pain, and the way it is dealt with, should be at the heart of any free society, and in this respect, he is right. Individuals, communities and the Earth itself have been maimed to one degree or another by the power relations characteristic of civilization. People have been psychologically maimed but also physically assaulted by illness and disease.

This isn't to suggest that anarcho-primitivism can abolish pain, illness and disease! However, research has revealed that many diseases are the results of civilized living conditions, and if these conditions were abolished, then certain types of pain, illness and disease could disappear. As for the remainder, a world which places pain at its centre would be vigorous in its pursuit of assuaging it by finding ways of curing illness and disease.

In this sense, anarcho-primitivism is very concerned with medicine. However, the alienating high-tech, pharmaceutical-centred form of medicine practised in the West is not the only form of medicine possible. The question of what medicine might consist of in an anarcho-primitivist future depends, as in the Fifth Estate comment on technology above, on what is possible and what people desire, without compromising the lifeways of free individuals in ecologically-centred free communities. As on all other questions, there is no dogmatic answer to this issue.

## What about population?

A controversial issue, largely because there isn't a consensus among anarcho-primitivists on this topic. Some people argue that population reduction wouldn't be necessary; others argue that it would on ecological grounds and/or to sustain the kind of lifeways envisaged by anarcho-primitivists.

George Bradford, in *How Deep is Deep Ecology?*, argues that women's control over reproduction would lead to a fall in population rate.

The personal view of the present writer is that population would need to be reduced, but this would occur through natural wastage - i.e., when people died, not all of them would be replaced, and thus the overall population rate would fall and eventually stabilise.

Anarchists have long argued that in a free world, social, economic and psychological pressures toward excessive reproduction would be removed. There would just be too many other interesting things going on to engage people's time! Feminists have argued that women, freed of gender constraints and the family structure, would not be defined by their reproductive ca-

pacities as in patriarchal societies, and this would result in lower population levels too.

So population would be likely to fall, willy-nilly. After all, as Perlman makes plain, population growth is purely a product of civilization: 'a steady increase in human numbers [is] as persistent as the Leviathan itself. This phenomenon seems to exist only among Leviathanized human beings. Animals as well as human communities in the state of nature do not proliferate their own kind to the point of pushing all others off the field.'

So there's really no reason to suppose that human population shouldn't stabilise once Leviathanic social relations are abolished and communitarian harmony is restored. Ignore the weird fantasies spread by some commentators hostile to anarcho-primitivism who suggest that the population levels envisaged by anarcho-primitivists

**"If traditional communities, frequently sources of resistance to power, have been destroyed, then the creation of communities of resistance - communities formed by individuals with resistance as their common focus - are a way to recreate bases for action."**

would have to be achieved by mass die-offs or nazi-style death camps. These are just smear tactics. The commitment of anarcho-primitivists to the abolition of all power relations, including the State with all its administrative and military apparatus, and any kind of party or organization, means that such orchestrated slaughter remains an impossibility as well as just plain horrendous.

## How might an anarcho-primitivist future be brought about?

The sixty-four thousand dollar question! (to use a thoroughly suspect metaphor!) There are no hard-and-fast rules here, no blueprint. The glib answer - seen by some as a cop-out - is that forms of struggle emerge in the course of insurgency. This is true, but not necessarily very helpful!

The fact is that anarcho-primitivism is not a power-seeking ideology. It doesn't seek to capture the State, take over factories, win converts, create political organizations, or order people about. Instead, it wants people to become free individuals living in free communities which are interdependent with one another and with

the biosphere they inhabit. It wants, then, a total transformation, a transformation of identity, ways of life, ways of being, and ways of communicating.

This means that the tried and tested means of power-seeking ideologies just aren't relevant to the anarcho-primitivist project, which seeks to abolish all forms of power. So new forms of action and being, forms appropriate to and commensurate with the anarcho-primitivist project, need to be developed. This is an ongoing process and so there's no easy answer to the question: What is to be done?

At present, many agree that communities of resistance are an important element in the anarcho-primitivist project. The word 'community' is bandied about these days in all kinds of absurd ways (e.g., the business community), precisely because most genuine communities have been destroyed by Capital and the State. Some think that if traditional communities, frequently sources of resistance to power, have been destroyed, then the creation of communities of resistance - communities formed by individuals with resistance as their common focus - are a way to recreate bases for action.

An old anarchist idea is that the new world must be created within the shell of the old. This means that when civilization collapses - through its own volition, through our efforts, or a combination of the two - there will be an alternative waiting to take its place. This is really necessary as, in the absence of positive alternatives, the social disruption caused by collapse could easily create the psychological insecurity and social vacuum in which fascism and other totalitarian dictatorships could flourish.

For the present writer, this means that anarcho-primitivists need to develop communities of resistance - microcosms (as much as they can be) of the future to come - both in cities and outside. These need to act as bases for action (particularly direct action), but also as sites for the creation of new ways of thinking, behaving, communicating, being, and so on, as well as new sets of ethics - in short, a whole new liberatory culture. They need to become places where people can discover their true desires and pleasures, and through the good old anarchist idea of the exemplary deed, show others by example that alternative ways of life are possible.

However, there are many other possibilities that need exploring. The kind of world envisaged by anarcho-primitivism is one unprecedented in human experience in terms of the degree and types of freedom anticipated ... so there can't be any limits on the forms of resistance and insurgency that might develop. The kind of vast transformations envisaged will need all kinds of innovative thought and activity.

- John Moore

# Building the Counter-culture

(This isn't a finished thought process in my own mind so I'm sure there are lots of helpful changes people could suggest [which I encourage]. Also, having had the last article for *imminent rebellion* pull out, I'm writing this in less than a day and to a strict word limit so I'm sure its scope will be limited. But that said...)

*If we are to actually change things then there are some things we have to do: We have to build our own economic, justice and social systems. We have to do this all the while maintaining an equal emphasis towards destroying the existing culture and its fucked up systems.*

## - Making Punk a Threat Again

(R)EVOLUTION is a process of individuals and collectives reclaiming what has been taken from us, rediscovering our power and creativity together. It is the evolutionary process of the creation of new worlds. As we try to create these new worlds we will inevitably come to challenge Power. I think the creation of new ways of living is just as important as resistance to this system, and I believe it can be a form of resistance in itself. The creation of these counter-cultures is essential if we are to sustain and nurture a living, loving and fighting resistance across generations.

A counter-culture is not simply an alternative lifestyle, nor is it something solely concerned with art or poetry. I use the word culture in its fullest sense: the sum total of how we live and perceive our world. This includes our day to day routines, our relationships with one another and our communities, our languages, our means of production and consumption. So a counter-culture is a culture of resistance, a culture through which the glimmer of the world for which we fight is expressed, as well as a means of sustenance for the present and a platform for growth.

So let's get real: what is meant by counter-culture? Well like I said, I'm talking about a total transformation of our lived experience (at least as is practically possible within the confines of this system). And I think this idea of counter-culture is best expressed in the re-establishment of communities. Whether these are in the form of squats, communes, permanent/temporary autonomous zones, or social centres, the key idea central all

these is the reconnection with ourselves and the attempt to take control of our own destinies.

These counter-cultures provide us with both the hope that change really is possible, as well as a base from which to act.

## The Need for Hope

Our movement(s) is a movement primarily of youth. People full of hope and optimism come on board, resist for a few years and then lose hope and fall off the wagon. Finding strength to believe, the faith to dream of the possible let alone the impossible, is arduous. But without this hope, this optimism, our movement is lost.

Just as the industrial-capitalist system is destroying nature all over the globe, so it is haemorrhaging our internal nature. Everywhere we are taught that change isn't possible and that hope is naïve. Those without hope but also without the



ability to fool themselves turn in larger numbers to pseudo-escapism and violence on themselves and each other. The result is an ever speeding emotional meltdown resulting in an epidemic of depression, self harm and violence.

The first goal of any (r)evolutionary movement is to guard against this attack on ourselves, to be able to sustain and nurture our hope, optimism and vision of a future so beautiful that it naturally inspires us to action.

This is where counter-cultures come in. By creating a new way of living and relating to one another we can challenge and confront the barrage of lies and shit that industrial-capitalism

throws our way. These counter-cultures can act as partial sanctuaries, empowering both ourselves and others to replicate our activity. As we live our libertarian and ecological principles I believe it is quite infectious – after all, most of us got hooked on the laughs and commitment of others.

## Opening Up Space

But just as we need to defend ourselves and create bases of sustenance and nourishment, we should never forget the importance of defence through attack.

With these counter-cultures acting to nourish us, they can then act as bases of resistance. From here we can protest, march, take part in direct action, all the while having an ongoing foundation, as oppose to these actions being individual and disjointed short-term acts.

But more than anything we need to open up space for the (r)evolution to grow. While most activism today is usually a reaction to the actions of the powers that be, I believe we should make moves to start setting the agenda.

The physical manifestations of these counter-cultures (whether they be communes, squats, TAZ etc.) should act to be attacks on the system in and of themselves. Where we hit walls in our attempts to live as we dream we should seek to surpass those obstacles.

In particular, I think the occupying and use of land (which in Aotearoa, could closely be worked in with tino rangatiratanga struggles) would pose a serious threat. Of course, this needs a considerable culture behind it to have some sort of popular legitimacy and that should be one of our tasks today.

We also should be working to get others involved and build the counter-culture. We should forever be pushing to expand the horizons of the counter-culture, by inspiring others to action and actively working to get them involved. Whilst acknowledging our somewhat privileged position, we should struggle to branch out and make spaces available for others to start taking back what is theirs.

- *Torrance (Freely plagiarised from "Down with the Empire! Up with the Spring!" from Do or Die issue 10.)*

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# BATHROOM REFLECTIONS

BACK FROM THE STREETS OF FALLUJA...

