

# **Anarchy in New Zealand**

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## 1900-1965...

INDUSTRIAL Unionism was the driving force behind militant trade unionism in the early nineteenth hundreds. The IWW first established a group in Christchurch in 1908. Such personalities as Tom Barker and J B King were active in a group in Auckland in 1912-1913, through the Waihi and General Strikes. They were selling thousands of copies of *Industrial Unionist* during this period. After the defeat of the 1913 General Strike, Tom Barker was deported and ended up back in England. King returned to Sydney. He spoke at a May Day meeting in Wellington in 1932 in defence of Sacco-Vanzetti.

There was a small Anarcho-Communist group in Wellington in 1912. Street fights with police frequently occurred after meetings. A Polish baker called Josephs was involved in this group.

During the 30's there seems to be individuals who were very active. The Webb family in Auckland and another individual in Wellington. All I know of him was that he was well-dressed and carried a copy of Bakunin's writings around with him.

Jock Barnes was thinking along syndicalist lines after Savage conveniently forgot to get him a job after the 1935 Labour win. (Jock Barnes was later a leader of the 1951 waterfront strike). There was a Libertarian Socialist Group in Auckland during the late fifties and the sixties. Of course, there were the exiles from Spain - however, few remained active. One person, Werner Droscher, died a few years ago. He left Germany with the rise of Hitler and fought in Spain. Werner was active right up until he died but described himself as a 'retired' anarchist.

## ...and today...(1982)

THERE are four main areas worth describing: 1 Lumpen street culture; 2 Non- ideological communal groups; 3 Protest movements; 4 @ politics.

1. Street culture groups are characterised by the proliferation of graffiti (ranging from 'Fuck the State' to the 'racist KKK@). appearances at the Labour Dept and on PEP (relief) jobs, punch-ups with the cops, support for pub-bands (eg the punk-style Desperate Measures - 1984 song).

Currently in Christchurch, a business group offers \$800 reward for a graffiti conviction and a PEP job has been created removing graffiti. In Auckland most recent graffiti is of Black Unity origin. It could be said that the youth movement this reflects knows what it is against - the state, work, police - but only has a limited conception of what it is for, let alone any contact with local anarchist tradition for what it is worth. Interestingly enough, the 'a' in the circle (@) is quite common as a symbol of resistance on blackboards in the skools.

2. Communal groups arising from the early 70's hippy philosophies.

Rural communities still functioning in many places on a combination of small farming, crafts, contracting and dope-growing. In the cities, some co-operatives exist eg Te Whanau Trust in Christchurch that runs two stores, gardens, workshops, community activities.

3. Protest Movements eg Anti- Springbok Tour, anti-Nuclear warship, Bastion Point/Waitangi Day Maori land rights groups.

Anti-authoritarian ideas are articulated but overshadowed by leadership and Leninist ideas

and separatist trends in many actions. White patriarchal communist control of Wellington anti- tour demonstrations contrasted with the militant autonomous black- and women-lead actions in Auckland. Black nationalist women are currently at the forefront of the anti-racist movement in Auckland. There are women's bookshops in all four major cities and Brickburners Anarchism and Feminism pamphlet sells well.

4. People who label themselves as anarchist.

A small number in Auckland mostly oriented towards musical activity. Lancaster Publishing produces poetry and cassettes. Wayne Innes, author of *Don't Pay Taxes* and *How to survive in Suburbia* lives up that way. Considering the amount of black and women's activity in NZ's largest metropolitan centre we would expect a nourishing anarchist movement - alas this is not so. Auckland Anarchy from its heyday in the mid 70's has largely evaporated (most individuals ending up in Australia or London). But we are ever hopeful of a revival.

In Wellington a young group with 'punk' connections. Involved with street culture activities, screen printing, anti- Truxton (US nuclear warship) actions. The magazines *Fascism & Boredom* and *Black-out* come from there. The individuals however have been subject to much recent police harassment. Political individuals of older ages tend to be heavily influenced by vanguardist and Lemmingist tendencies that proliferate in the bad vibes emanating from parliament and the downtown office complexes.

Christchurch, or more affectionately known as smogland. A new print shop has been established - offset A3 size printing. Also premises for lay-out, screenprinting, darkroom and workshop. A library , one issue of *Blackmail*, posters, and two issues of South-East News (for local letter boxing) printed. Irregular meetings but a continuity of commitment. The individuals have experience of subversive activities ranging from over a decade to a few months. This diversity of ages and backgrounds brings in new ideas and energies -all largely within the anarcho-communist ideological spectrum. We are playing on exposing local work, corruption housing, LPG issues as well as general anti-commentaries and ideas on how to survive. Contact with overseas groups is good and a literature importation and distribution service well-organised.

While the number of self-proclaimed @'s in NZ is small and almost exclusively male and pakeha the potential for future activity is good. Long-standing dissatisfaction with the Govt and business is widespread and the various protest and industrial actions over the past decade have created a tradition of struggle that has many anti-authoritarian aspects.

Tu Kana te manu kia rere,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

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