ANARCHIST NETWORK NEWSLETTER

July

1990.

UNION STREET NEWS

Two items this month: the perennial issues!:

MONEY

At the moment Union Street owes about $500 for Rates. If you are a user or a supporter of Union Street you will know that it is an important resource - even if it doesn't meet *all* the needs of the anarchist movement at this stage. So we ask you to consider making a donation to the House. Also, it is a possible to become an individual member of Union Street House. This costs $15 for workers and $7.50 for non-waged people for 3 months. Give yourdonations or dues to Spyder, or member organisations, eg: ASF or Lib Workers, may be able to pass on $$$$'s.

MEETINGS

At the last Co-ordinating Collective meeting it was agreed the following Statement be placed in the ANN:

The current Co-ordinating Committee is not working. It has met only once since November last year. Dues to the CC have not been paid and some bills for the house have not been paid. There is a very low level of involvement from the (A) community. Therefore this meeting of the CC calls an:

Extraordinary General Meeting:

Wednesday July 11th

6pm at the House,

to discuss: (1) Organisation and operation of the House

(2) Future of Union Street.

See you there. C, for the CC.

August ANN Deadline Thurs Thursday July 19th.

PO Box 150 Brunswick East 3057.

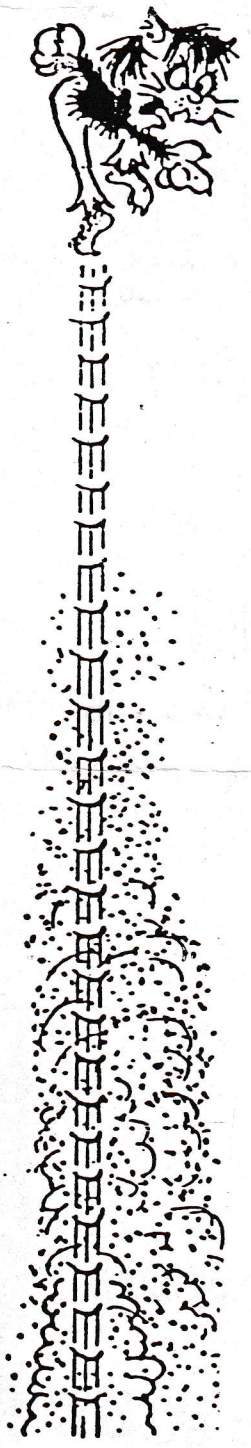
URGENT.

A.S.F. is calling an extraordinary meeting regarding the future of the A house, e.g. the C.C., group involvement ect.

6.30 WEDNESDAY 11TH JULY

P.S. We suggest that the dinner night which is normally on the weekend be combined with discussion. Nobody has put their name down to cook.

ROBERT



As I understand it; an extraordinary meeting of the A house must be called by the C.C. or a minimum of 3 members (a quorum) of the C.C. So is this an Extraordinary meeting of the A.S.F. or WHAT?

The minutes of the last C.C. meeting show that an extraordinary meeting of the A house had been called by the C.C. Represented at that meeting was the A.S.F., The A Press, and Cliff. I expect that since the dates are the same that Robert is referring to the same meeting as the C.C.

My beef with this is that Robert is unable to, or doesn't distinguish between people as members of the A.S.F., and as individuals or as representatives of other groups. Just because those present at the C.C. meeting in question are members of the A.S.F. doesn't mean that the agreement was an agreement of the A.S.F.

I don't think that I am splitting hairs here. I think this type of thinking is potentially very dangerous, because it reflects a possible attitude that the actions of an individual, whether on their own or as representatives of other groups, can be seen to be 'owned' (sic) by the A.S.F. This disenfranchised peoples right to act as separate entities, when they choose.

It is one thing to take responsibility for our own actions, but another to have someone else take it for you. I have made this statement in the interest of clear and better communications and understanding. It is not a personal attack, and neither do I want it to be constructed as such.

In solidarity

Simon

Response to Red (Bingham's) 'Reflections on the Easter 1990 Conference'

It's difficult not to be very abusive when faced with Red's writing. It's the same old clap-trap masquerading as 'reflective' thought, the same old suggestions that only others are sloppy thinkers, the same old list of what others 'should' do and why aren't they?
I can do no better than use Red's own words to illustrate:

-in one place: "we anarchists fail to appreciate each other or understand each others'position" and in another: "we listened carefully to each other and critically discussed the papers presented"
-in one place: "I was becoming frustrated...by participants labelling other participants, over-simplifying each other's positions and misrepresenting them" and in another place: "St Richard of the Fields"(labelling); Richard's paper being about "small groups having a role and a goal" as "the best strategy for establishing an Anarchist movement" (simplifying and misrepresenting).

It was not clear "from our discussion" that "the Anarchists were polarised into the group that " ect. ect. It was clear from the lack of discussion before and during the Conference that many people claiming sympathy for (A) had little idea of what was meant by "the relevance or importance of class struggle" and/or of "a power analysis that would promote a more personal revolution." This lack of understanding was the major reason (I believe) for the Conference and some understanding was obtained by the exchanges that did take place, especially at the Saturday evening discussion (not mentioned by Red) where polarisation was non existent. This degree of understanding happened in spite of an unwillingness by a number of the advocates of a 'class-based'Anarchism to enter into dialogue at all. They came, they sniggered, and left. Contribution-Doubtful.

If Bakunin had eaten Jewish babies for lunch, and Anarchism involved being vegetarian, it would be 'important and relevant'. No, he didn't, and Anarchism is not vegetarian-based. But the debate over 'class analysis-power analysis' is for me is entirely about what (A) contributes and what it doesn't. Is Red suggesting that 'Anarchists' are 'anarchists' no matter what they do? Is he suggesting that if I call myself an 'Anarchist' no-one has any freedom (note the word) to question my use of the label, no matter what I do? how is it that Red can say that other 'Anarchists' are doing 'it' badly, but not reflect on his own performance? if someone is doing 'it' badly (sloppy thinking, labelling, ect, ect,) what criteria is he using? How can he make criticism of someone's Anarchism and not (yet) see the point of discussion about whether John Ulday was an anarchist or not?

Or let me put it this way - How does he know he was at an Anarchist Conference?
(In case anyone feels these are silly questions, let me say here that they are very serious, and I look forward to responses from Red or anyone else.)

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6/6/1990.

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