May 1990

ANARCHIST NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Union Street

THERE IS NOT MUCH NEW NEWS ABOUT UNION STREET LAST DINNER FEATURED A VERY HOT CURRY AND SOME ROUSING VERSIONS OF REVOLUTIONARY SONG. DID IT MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE TO THE MAY DAY PERFORMANCE ???

EXT DINNER JUNE 7TH 7.30 COME AND HAVE A GOOD FEED, LOOK AT THE BOOKS

ANARCHIST ORGANISATION AND STRATEGY GATHERING

PO BOX 1109 NORTH FITZROY 3068

As promised, here is the final report from the organising group's last meeting, held after the Gathering.

Feedback

The feedback on the Gathering was mainly positive. The main criticisms and concerns were about the behaviour and the processes in the Circle on Saturday. People were concerned about how the banking system for speakers worked, and also the difficulties with people sitting outside the circle. Because of side conversations, any criticisms, remarks or comments could not be responded to by the group.

Any feedback, with other information collected while organising the Gathering, including mailing lists, will be written up and filed for next year's organising group. Vivien will be responsible for this.

Finances

At the end of it all we have worked out the final figures for the Gathering. The total income was $393.65. The bills were as follows:-

Venue	$210.00
Postage	15.05
Food	37.57
Total	$263.42

This left a surplus of $130.23. As the Libertarian Workers initially originally staked the Gathering $150.00, it was decided to reimburse the Lib. Workers $70.00, and bring their contribution for the 4 people attending into line with other people. The remaining surplus was donated to Union Street, via Spider who has the account.

Follow Up

It was decided to write a summary of the work done organising the Gathering, including finances, mailing lists, location of files, etc. so that there will be a record for future orginsors. Also there are a limited number of copies of the papers are available, and these will go to Union Street. We hope and recommend that a similar process should be attempted next year.

Gary Gronow on behalf of the Organising Group

July Newsletter Deadline - June 21 Thursday
PO Box 150 Brunswick East 3057.

PND

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Sydney South, NSW 2000
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264 6846

1-5-90

TO PROGRESSIVE GROUPS AS ADDRESSED.

Dear Friends,

Enclosed is a small copy of our new poster which we hope you will consider advertising in your newsletter. Copies of the poste, size 330cm x 640cm, are available for only $1 each plus p &p. This is only just above cost as we are anxious to circulate the message as widely as possible.Perhaps you might consider ordering some for distribution through your networks if you feel that it is worthwhile. This is the first of our actions towards our ' Swords into Ploughshares' campaign which will seek to promote opposition to excesssive military expenditure at this crucial time for our planet. Our aim is to use this campaign to raise awareness in the lead up to protest action against the next AIDEX arms bazaar which is planned for Canberra in November 1991. We will send more details as they become available. Should your group be interested in becoming involved please contact me at PND.

22 INCHES X 13 "

Also enclosed is a complimentary copy of our newsletter the *PEACE ACTION* which we hope that you find enjoyable. We produce the news letter on a bi-monthly basis and do our best to cover items of interest to all those who care about peace issues Many peace movement networks seem to be in danger of lapsing due to perceptions that peace and disarmament issues are now less urgent. We believe that it is imperative to keep all such networks together ready for the time when the issues once again come to the fore and to keep people informed of any important developments. To assist this process we are prepared to make multiple copies of *Peace Action* available at only $1 a copy, we hope that you might consider sending them out to your members or we can make arrangements to mail it direct if you prefer. Alternatively you may care to affiliate to PND in which case we will send you a regular membership copy We are also interested in reciprocal newsletter or insert swaps .

Thankyou for taking the time to read this letter. We hope that we can be of service to you in some way.

Yours towards peace

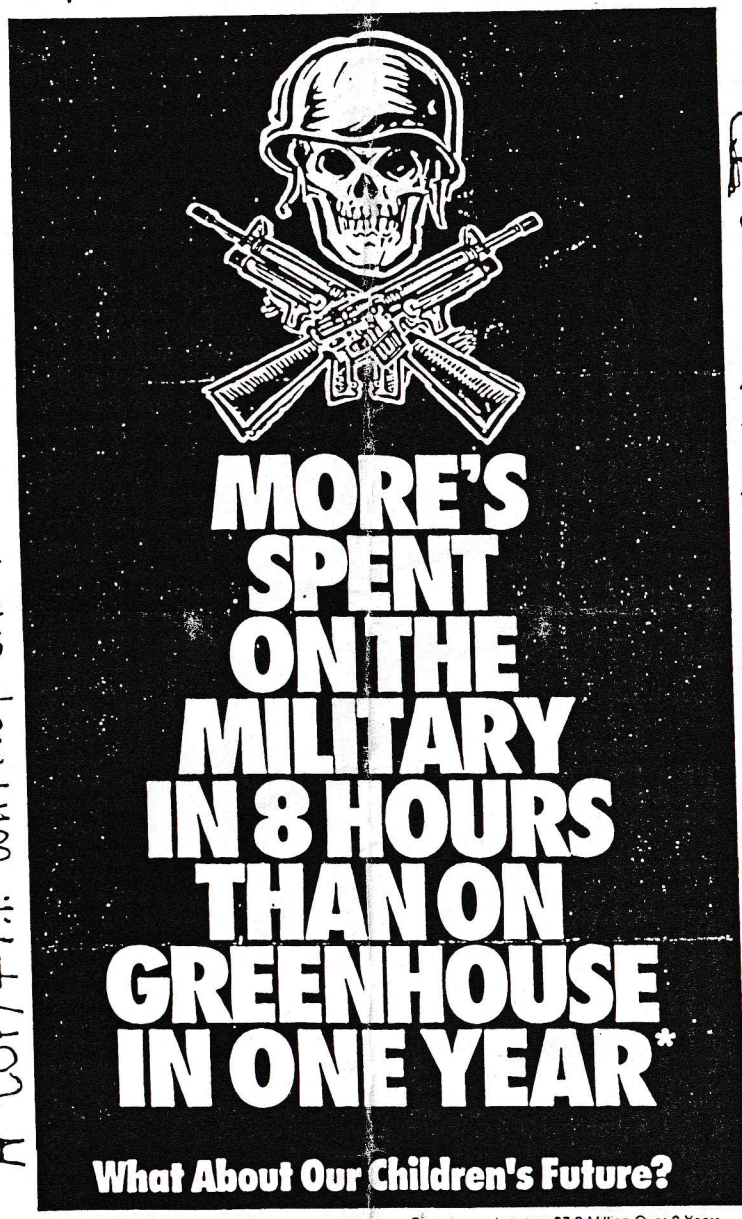
Kevin Parker

Kevin Parker (Co-ordinator PND)

People for Nuclear Disarmament (N.S.W.) Inc. is a coalition of individuals, local peace groups, churches, trade unions, women's educational and environmental organisations working for a non-aligned nuclear-free future.

THIS STRIKING POSTER, SIZE 330cm x 640cm, IS AVAILABLE FROM PND. AT ONLY $1 A COPY + P.P. WHY NOT ORDER 5 OR 10 & SPREAD THEM AROUND

HELP GET OUR MESSAGE ACROSS. FULL SIZE ONLY $1 EACH



FULL SIZE IS 330cm x 640cm

PLEASE ALLOW MONEY FOR PACKAGING & POSTAGE WHEN ORDERING

My Reflections on the Easter 1990 Anarchist Conference

By Red

I didn't completely enjoy attending the Anarchist Easter conference in Collingwood, but then again, that was not the particular aim of the conference. The atmosphere was tense with participants appearing fairly serious and tending to be overly defensive - as if they were expecting to be criticised or attacked. It was however infinitely better than the disastrous Anarchist conference held in Easter of 1976, where we split over our ideological and lifestyle differences. No, the Australian Anarchist movement had grown up since then; (and grown older).

We listened carefully to each other and critically discussed the papers presented. St. Richard of the Fields presented the first paper which was to form the background of the Saturday discussion. Richard's position, in his paper "Anti-Mass Collectives", was that small groups of mutually - supportive and committed Anarchists having a particular role and a goal was the best strategy for establishing an Anarchist movement. This is, of course, how Australian Anarchists (at least those who work in groups), operate. While conference participants acknowledged that this modus operandi was effective, people pointed out numerous problems with it, namely:

* The group may get too inward-looking; it needs a dynamic interaction with the outside world.
* It is unclear how, and if at all, each collective would relate to other collectives. How could Anarchism become a movement in the absence of some federal structure?
* If the collective is responsible only to itself, what is there to prevent it sliding into bad politics-just as many mass collectives do? (After all, power-trippers exist in small collectives too).

The other papers presented on Saturday were also very valuable for discussion. Susie Russell spoke on the involvement of the A.S.F. in community and workplace struggles, with a detailed account of their support of the long and demanding tramway workers' dispute over the state government's attempts to eliminate tram conductors' jobs by introducing the new ticketing system of scratch tickets. She also talked about the work done by the A.S.F. in mobilising community opposition to the introduction of light rail to replace trams. The role of the Anarcho-Syndicalist transport workers' newspaper, "SPARKS" in informing workers of state government plots and suggesting ways of beating them, was also discussed.

Bob James presented an historical paper on a fascinating Anarchist revolutionary, John Olday, who was active in the anti-fascist struggles in pre-war Nazi Germany and later on, in Britain during the war, as an anti-militarist (but not pacificist) activist. There was discussion afterwards on how Olday adapted different strategies for the different situations (an important point!) and on whether or not John Olday was an Anarchist (which was not important - and, I thought, irrelevant...we had come to discuss organisation and strategy, not what Bakunin had for lunch!)

By late afternoon, it was clear from our discussion that the Anarchists were polarised into the group that believed in the relevance and importance of class struggle and in developing a movement to bring this about, and the group that rejected this notion in favour of a power-analysis that would promote a more personal revolution. I was becoming increasingly frustrated by now as many conference participants were doing a great deal of labelling of other participants, over-simplifying each other's positions and misrepresenting them...e.g. that people who believed in one form of social change did not support other forms; that industrial activists were not also involved in feminism, anti-authoritarianism or environmentalism, etc.

I was also irritated by the petty bickering of Anarchists in different groups and by the sloppy thinking. We are in the middle of a major world-wide period of conservativism...you just have to listen to the media buzz-words of "efficiency" (read "job-cuts"), productivity (wage-cuts), "responsible economic management" (rip-off the environment), "privatisation" (when a greedy government tries to sell off assets which belong to the people).

The simple truth was that we as Australian Anarchists have been pretty badly affected by being isolated in whatever job and suburb we belong and we too have been unable to escape the really selfish and consumerist consciousness that prevails. The result is that we Anarchists fail to appreciate each other or understand each other's position. Hence we are unable to successfully articulate (let alone agree on) a program of social change. What we seem to be doing is merely reacting to changes that are coming from the Right. The environment movement is still effectively articulating anti-consumerist and ecological strategies...why aren't we successfully doing similar things as a coherent and united group (the sum total being greater than its constituent parts)?

The only group to present an attempt at an overall strategy for change in the 1990's was the Libertarian Workers for a Self Managed Society. Theirs was the

last paper for the Saturday afternoon. It covered a range of issues. Some it covered quite well, others badly. Its faults were that it overgeneralised in parts and neglected important areas of Anarchist strategy eg how Anarchists can provide an actual alternative to the state and to Capitalism. We need to work out economic, social and political programs taking us in practical defined steps into the future; How we can build Anarchism as a bigger movment with a louder voice. The highly commendable Anarchist Media Institute and work with the mass media are fine but what about how we are going to take on the media-barons who all but monopolise information and consciousness.; Non-sexism, non-ageism and non-elitism. What are our policies and how do we enforce them? Violent and non-violent struggle- in what situations is one preferable to the other?; Education and Training. What is the purpose of education and training at present? How is the Anarchist alternative different to the present system? Will we promote specialised career paths or encourage a variety of types of schooling or encourage a broad general education designed to allow people to participate in a number of different jobs?; Police and the Military. What alternatives to them do we recommend? Do we replace them with some form of citizen's militia, and if so will everybody serve? What about courts and prisons? How will an Anarchist society settle a dispute and what will we do to anti-social types eg rapists, murderers and young Liberals?; Workplace organisation and decision making. How do we physically remove bosses and mentally remove the perceived need for them? What is the relationship between the policy of the collective, co-operative or commune and the rights of the worker and of the outside community?; Community control. How will the community have a say in planning decisions that affect them?; Taxation and national issues. Will there still be a money economy and if so, who will control the banks and other financial institutions? Will there be any role for a central government?;

As you can see, there is plenty to discuss and, hopefully try to resolve. For if we continue to let others set the agenda, then we Anarchists will become quaint historical footnotes rather than the pathfinders of the 21st Century. The way is ahead but we have to get serious about where we are heading.

Revive the Federation Of Australian Anarchists

— Or Give Up!

Ant

Achilles, Aesop, Mark Twain,
Stalin, went to the ant.
Your odds are one to three if
You decide to ignore it.
The aardvark, he eats them up,
And frightens all the people.

Kangaroo

As you know, the kangaroo
Has a pocket, but *all* she
Puts in it is her baby.
Never keep a purse if *all*
You can find to put in it
Is additional expense.
(The reception of these words
Will also serve to warn you:
NEVER MAKE FUN OF BABIES!)