

ANARCHIST NETWORK NEWLETTER



March 1981 P.O. BOX 150 EAST BRUNSWICK 3057

Union Street Dinner

The next **A** house
dinner Saturday
2nd of March at
7pm.
All welcome.

Extraordinary Meeting

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY UNION ST. MEETING MONDAY FEB 4

present: Vivian, Kate, ben, Margot, Robert, Susi, Rowan, Steve,
Joe, Leigh, Spyder, Gary, Daniel
apologies: Cliff

Agenda

- report and update since last meeting
- future: what is to be done with \$ in the account

1. Space has been rented to D, R and K, \$40 per room per week informal rent agreement.

Doesn't seem to be problems with people living here and house use, it gives more access to the library etc. although there are some problems with mess around the layout area.

2. Finances incoming \$1835 from rent and dinners
outgoing \$937.88 rates and renovations
in hand \$897.12 cash \$210.59 bank

3. AGREED that house insurance come out of money in account. Robert authorised to organise insurance-damage for flood and fire etc., Vivian to help with ring around. COSHG could help with info on insurance. (needs to go to AGM)

Heating? does money need to be spent for the people who live and work here? The press would prefer that if money is available it goes for the establishment of new premises.

PROPOSAL to fix back section

AGREED to get quotes for this and then have another meeting only to discuss this issue. This should be done so that meeting can be called by March ANN and held in April. Herve and Ben to get quotes.

Discussion on relationship between warehouse and Union St. Daniel thinks that if R and K move their room should be used for the house i.e. increased library space. This would mean \$40 less income a week.

AGREED to extend agreements for 6 months re tenancy to be reviewed by a meeting to be held on MONDAY AUGUST 5

Ratified agreement that if tenants have to move they get 3 months notice.

AGREED to let people know via the ANN that there may be a Union St. surplus and that the AUGUST 5 meeting will decide what to do with it. So.. Submissions are invited for how to spend it an must be submitted to the ANN (newsletter) by the June 20 deadline.

Meeting ended- minutes s.r.



NEXT EDITIONS DEADLINE FOR

CONTRIBUTIONS 21st MARCH.

anarchist age monthly review

ANARCHIST AGE MONTHLY REVIEW

In 1986 the Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society set up the Anarchist Media Institute to act as an interface between the Libertarian Workers, the Mass Media and the International Anarchist Community.

The Anarchist Age incorporates much of this information but because of the high production costs it only appears annually at best. This means there is a long time lag between the time we receive much information and the time our Australian readers receive this information. To overcome this problem we are introducing a new service - THE ANARCHIST AGE MONTHLY REVIEW.

THE ANARCHIST AGE MONTHLY REVIEW will be put together in the first week of each month and will be posted out to subscribers in the second week of each month.

It consists of,

- A) Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society activities for the following 4 weeks, eg.
- i) Public meeting publicity ii) Content of Radio Programme - "Encounters & the 3rd Alternative" - synopsis of the preceding four programmes.

- iii) Libertarian Workers activity

B) PRESS RELEASES

Copies of all press releases produced by the Anarchist Media Institute over the preceding period.

C) ANARCHIST ROUNDUP

Copies of local and interstate literature we receive.

D) INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST ROUNDUP.

Copies of interesting current anarchist literature received from over 30 countries will be sent out to subscribers.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES;

\$24 for 12 issues wage earners

\$12 for 6 issues wage earners

\$12 for 12 issues non-wage earners

\$6 for 6 issues non-wage earners.

Subscription rates cover costs of postage and photocopying.

ing.

Make out cheques or money orders to LIBERTARIAN WORKERS and send for your subscription to:

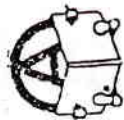
L.W.S.S.

P.O. Box 20

Parkville 3052

Melbourne

Victoria, Australia.



Please forward 12/6 issues of the anarchist age monthly review.

name: _____

address: _____

state: _____

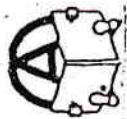
postcode: _____

send to: *lwss, po box 20, parkville 3052. vic.*

Union Street Library

Daniel has sent ANW details of some new additions to the Union Street Library. When we have some space we will print the details, but in the meantime some of the main points Daniel makes are:

- Most of the new titles come thanks to Graham Purchase and Adam.
- There are 5 copies of The Dispossessed if anyone hasn't read it.
- He needs help with the library - the borrowing system, shelves, categorising and reviewing books, etc.
- If you want to learn about the library, he would be happy to show you.
- This will also help him with keeping the library tidy and in order.
- There are some outstanding loans that he will be chasing up - first by phone and then through ANW.
- When donating books please leave them under the fish tank with the catalogue or number them before shelving.
- When borrowing make sure he knows your address or phone number if you don't want to put it in the loans book (on the top shelf). Returned books with spines should be stacked up in the numbered section, or else in the pile on the centre of the shelf.
- Office supplies are needed if you can obtain anything.



The books that Daniel has reviewed for ANW are:

A select bibliography of Anarchist thought.

Anarchist organisation.

Ecology Capitalism and state. Graham Purchase

The Spanish Anarchists. M. Bookchin

Defence without the bomb.

Jura Books mail order catalogue.

The walls of prison and other stories. John Jiggins

Fingerprinting. The Crime Bill

Custody and investigation. The Crime Bill

War in the Middle East.

Living my life volume 1. Emma Goldean

The underground. Sally Gearhart

The impossibilities of Social Democracy. Vernon Richards

Anarchism and other essays. Emma Goldean

Mutual aid: a factor of evolution. Kropotkin

The Russian Anarchists. Paul Avrich

Escape from freedom. Erich Fromm

Class struggle in Eastern Europe 1945-83.

People without government: an anthropology of Anarchism.

We shall be all, IWM

Sydney's burning. IWM

For freedom and dignity. IWM

Bureau of Public Secrets 1. Ken Knabb (ed.)

Nicaragua - say hello to the new bosses.

The struggle against Fascism begins with the struggle against Bolshevism.

Workers' councils and the economics of a self-managed society. Carlos Castoriadis

Marxism. Aisdair MacIntyre

The crisis in the working class and some arguments for a New Labor Movement.

K. Marx and F. Engels Selected Works.

Letters!!!

Dear ANN,

19.1.91.

I'm thankful to Leigh for his letter in the Feb. ANN. It was a good analysis and has helped me to see something that has been bugging me for a long time. Something I was too vague about to really explain in my previous letters.

Yes, before I met Susi Russell and Bob James, around the end of '84, I didn't understand what "class analysis" or "class struggle" meant. I didn't see myself as belonging to a "class". (This last surprising, since most people are in the same boat.)

Susi, and in an oblique way, Bob, introduced me to the anarchist interpretation of class, one which seemed mercifully free of the alienating language which characterises so much writing from marxists/communists/socialists/trotskyists/marxists-leninists/maoists...etc. etc... Anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, decentralist, anarchism fitted well with where I was at the time. I'd ready had some understanding of power analysis from contact with feminists and from my own exploration of male pro-feminist politics. The ideas of the anarchists seemed consistent and convincing, and came with an inspiring history.

But more than that, Susi introduced me to the human possibilities of anarchism - "the revolution of daily life". This practice of ideas appealed to me, so much so that I was able to dismiss, or overlook, the quirky contradictions that I encountered in that unsteady ground between theory and reality. (I think anyone who attempts to put theory into practice, who attempts to change reality - society - stumbles across these contradictions) Reality has a way of showing us the frailty of theory, and of our own practice.

Later the contradictions became harder and harder to ignore, and I withdrew from active anarchist politics sometime in '86. Why did I have such difficulty co-operating with others? Why did I feel that all I was doing was useless? Why was the experience of working with an anarchist organisation making it harder and harder to talk to people outside that organisation? Why did anarchist ideas which three years before were exciting and useful, seem now to be a repetition of tired slogans?

At the start of last year I co-operated with the East Gippsland Coalition, and participated in non-violent direct action in the old growth forests of East Gippsland. There I met people who were, like the anarchists, trying to put into practice the ideas they believed in. One of these people was Bob Burrows (who recently returned from the middle east - you may have seen his photo in the papers). He, among others, advocates non-violent action (NVA) as a political and ethical philosophy. As with the anarchists, these "radical greens" and non-violent activists are not free of contradiction.

Non-violence theorists argue that the real conflict lies between different values and emotions, not between people. (This is a simplification, necessary because of my own lack of understanding.) One way of saying this may be that conflict lies between different class analyses and different class consciousnesses. In other words, I have a belief in equality, or equal decision making, or the equal distribution of wealth (my values) and I feel an affinity with the many people who are exploited or denied or forgotten (my emotions). Someone else may believe in authority and order, the family, work and the state (their values) and they may feel an affinity with others who believe in the same institutions (their feelings).

Now I still feel uncomfortable with politics - of which the ASF, the EGC and NVA are all a part. I'm still unclear about "what is to be done", or how "good ideas" are put into practice without compromise and contradiction. Or how to organise without creating unnecessary bureaucracy. I'm still influenced by what other people say and do (I hope I always am.) I don't know what I'm committed to, except a desire to understand myself and those around me (my class analysis and class consciousness?) and a desire to participate in social change.

Finally, words on paper and always incomplete and liable to change. Don't hold me to any of it.

Chris Smith

Thanks Leigh,

You still haven't explained the joke about the Molly Maguires.

When Ben dismisses Chris Smith's attempt at discussion with 'pure white Australian middle class crap' and 'Venceremos' and you dismiss him with talk of 'flower-toting pacifists who will not take responsibility... (etc)' it's very easy to assume that fists waving and shouting slogans on picket lines is your only strategy. And it's very easy to include these practices within the notion of 'violence', broadly defined. But I also agree that its time Chris and I and others indicated a greater involvement in the real world. But a very big problem here is a lack of common language among people who see themselves as part of the anarchist world. Perhaps through ANN some movement can be made towards a shared language, I don't know.

I don't agree that the 'real' but hidden issue here is 'class analysis' vs 'power analysis' but I'm exceedingly pleased that you're prepared to put it on the agenda. I recall you were the only person prepared to seriously debate the issue back in 1986. I guess I understand why very few anarchists are prepared to get involved in the issue, would rather cheer and bleat from the sidelines, or even drop out altogether rather than attempt to problem-solve using the theory they claim to believe in. I guess that's why I search for something to explain why so-called radicals were even less well-equipped to deal with difficult situations, within their own 'family', than so-called conservatives.

Letters!!!

The question of class analysis is not a simple one. There are millions of words on the subject. I can only say it seems to me that 'class analysis' cannot handle, in theory or practise, human diversity. It insists, it needs to reduce everything to a 2-sided contest, 'us' vs 'them' which doesn't match reality, which is the same as 'the other side' is doing (so it can't be radical politics) and it leads inevitably to hierarchical forms of organisation.

I'm not anti-class analysis, in the way you seem to think. I just believe it, like any theory or strategy, has to be allowed, even encouraged to evolve. Treating it like Holy Writ is what the official left has been doing and its just lead to stagnant ideology and atrophied brains. To accuse critics of 'class' of being 'liberals' is like accusing critics of US foreign policy of being Communists, or supporters of Saddam Hussein.

The darkest side of 'us' vs 'them' is that anyone who is not 'us' must be an enemy and must be dealt with ruthlessly. Hence Stalin's purges, hence Trotsky's murder, hence Ben's abuse. And thus my still un-answered question to Ben - what would he do with me in 'his' anarchist society? I suspect all Chris was doing was pointing out the similarities between men who use the same language - be they Stalin, or Hitler, or George Bush. Of course, the peace, and the ecology movements have lots of dreamers, but so has 'the anarchist movement.' Still yards and yards of abuse of other people and what 'they' should do. In Australia especially there is almost no reflection on ourselves, on what we're doing, or our reasons for not doing.

'Class' vs 'power' is not a new issue, and its not just me who's interested: moving away from the most simple-minded body of class analysis which confines itself to white, industrial, male workers, towards an analysis that tries to deal with the whole community raises lots of questions.

M. J. Haynes in a 1985 UK anthology on strikes wrote:

Without work as the point of reference the concept of class itself becomes meaningless, except as an arbitrary descriptive classification.

Another author Trygve Tholpen has written:

The Marxist tendency to make 'class' the master category, even when the base/superstructure model is abandoned, remains an obstacle to an acceptable interpretation of working class radicalism.

You may dismiss what I'm saying as academic wank. If you do I'll have to dismiss you as a fool. The curious thing of course is that it's precisely by liberating oneself from the limitations of an 'us' vs 'them' approach that makes self-management possible. This has been of particular importance to women. Anne Summers in Damned Whores and God's Police which you've no doubt read, concluded:

If we see liberation as a process of eradicating the social and economic divisions between people as a means of decentralising power and making self-management possible, then the stereotypes have to be transcended, not perpetuated by a new group of women.

Quite simply decentralising power makes the 'us' vs 'them' approach impossible, because there is simply too much diversity and too many elements to take into account. My suggestion, and of other people, is a network of power relations, of which rich/poor relations are a part, but so are male/female, adult/child, black/non-black, old/young, etc, etc.

I expect to be down in Melbourne in July at a kind of Shoot Out at the OK Corral around these issues - a 3 day conference at the Trades Hall and called Labour History - A Reckoning. I hope that the Lib Workers have caught up by then, and that abuse from all sides has been replaced by listening to one another.

Bob James
5/2/1991

Dear Annies,

A bit of provocation I can handle but Leigh seems obsessed with trying to irritate those anarchist (oops sorry liberals) who don't share his faith in class analysis. Not content to allow that anarchism might be a broad-based movement working at social change on a number of levels and in a variety of ways Leigh wants everyone to think and do things his way.

If Leigh wants to concentrate on the conflict between classes then let him. Personally I've given up trying to view the difference between the myriad of social groups in society as being necessarily oppositional. And even the opposition between workers and bosses doesn't always easily reduce down to an oppressor/oppressed dualism. But I still consider myself an anarchist.

If I accept Leigh's game rules and agree that the argument in anarchism is between class analysis and power analysis (although he says that class analysis is power analysis), then I have to side with the power analysts. But for the life of me I can't see how (as Leigh claims) that power analysis denies class analysis. Surely the latter is merely one example of the former? (Others revolve around differences between race, gender, sexual orientation, ideologies, generations, football teams etc etc.)

If I allow myself the luxury of name 'calling' I called class analysts marxian anarchists and power analysts real anarchists- but I'm not using value judgements okay? What I find interesting about radicals influenced by Marx is that they usually take on board much more than the C19th jargon- they take on his C19th style of argument with all its limitations, a style I'll hereafter call 'linear thinking'.

This mode of logic is characterised by its 'either...or' classification techniques. Either you're 'this' or you're 'that'- with 'this' the opposite (read enemy) of 'that'. Everything in existence is divided neatly into these two antipathetic opposites. So white is not only different to black, it is its negation. Anarchists won't make a complete break with marxism until they adopt an alternative rationality like, say 'both...and' thinking. So to the question, 'should anarchists use a power or class analysis?' the reflex answer is- 'anarchists can both class and power analysis as well as any other form of analysis which will aid understanding'. In other words lets think non-linearly.

And on the subject of the failings of linear thinking, David Males ('A Chance For Real Change') sees the difference between political ideologies as constituting a straight line. It would be more helpful to imagine such differences in two or even three dimensions. So anarchism might be similar to socialism in some ways (in its support of collective action in pursuit of common objectives) while similar to liberalism in other ways (at the point where libertarian interest in self liberation, as a necessary step to social anarchism, approaches the liberal's desire for personal freedom within the limits of parliamentary democracy).

When all's said and done, the problem with marxism and marxian anarchists like Leigh, is that they spend too much time hunting the competitors and enemies. I'm a manual worker who works mostly alongside other manual workers in Melbourne's western suburbs. I'm well aware of my allotted place in the pecking order. Marxian anarchists would see me as a victim; like all evangelical ideologies it needs souls to save- 'Victims unite and protect yourselves (and you, of course, you'll need our expertise)!' But I prefer to see my life as being of my own making and I'll throw off my mental chains by myself or not at all. Leigh's method of emancipation by class identification would see me simply exchange one set of chains for another.

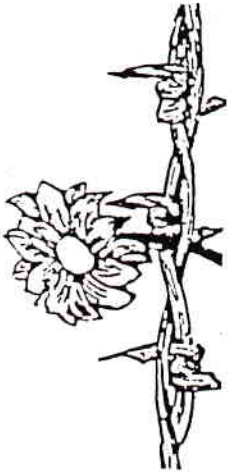
There is a place for class analysis in anarchism- but not as an end in itself. And it's important for classists to separate out mere surface class characteristics from institutionalised privilege. There are a number of things I dislike about the bourgeois ritual of port drinking, Leigh, but the actual drinking of the stuff isn't one of them.

Steve Charman
Steve

Embrace glib slogans!

(...at your peril)

Letters!!!



Dear David W,

Don't do it mate - it'll kill you!!! I say this as to a friend who had given up smoking at eighteen after trying it once and was considering taking it up again.

Voting (i.e. government) is bad for your health, expensive, reduces your mental fitness, is addictive, anti-social and a bad example for our children. Passive voting??? Don't even think about it!

David mentions reality a number of times - realistic change, unrealistic. Governments, all governments, as the lackies & hand-maidens of big business are leading us down the path of genocide and environmental disasterism. Economic rationalism and fiscal policy leave their filthy fat hands around your neck and they are squeezing.

Do you think if the Democrats got into power that they'd throw the Bombala bombastards out of the S.E. forests and tell them to get a real job?? Do you think they would confiscate peoples' second car, jet ski, aeroplane and boat, hand out white pushbikes to ride into town where the air is clean and the birds sing merrily???

Do you think they would set up bio-regional peoples' councils, kick Susan Sangster (or whatever her names are) out and house dreadlocked, black, unemployed to grow organic vegies and rip down the sandstone fence and ruin the harbour view with plantings of trees?

Do you think they would dissolve their own power structures?? Do you think Canberra will spontaneously revert into a marsh? Do you think the Democrats will hold tea parties at parliament house now a museum where people guffaw at archaic traditions once adhered to??

Do you think the desert will suddenly turn into a river and overflow with goodness and kindness and sisterly/brotherly/motherly/fatherly/godly/saintly/tauntly/all pink panty love?

Queen Janet Powell!!! Pete Garrett for king!! Ba humbug!

Francine Bell

JOHN ENGLART
5/607 PARK STREET
BRUNSWICK

3056