

Humboldt Grassroots

Anarchist Book Fair Great Success

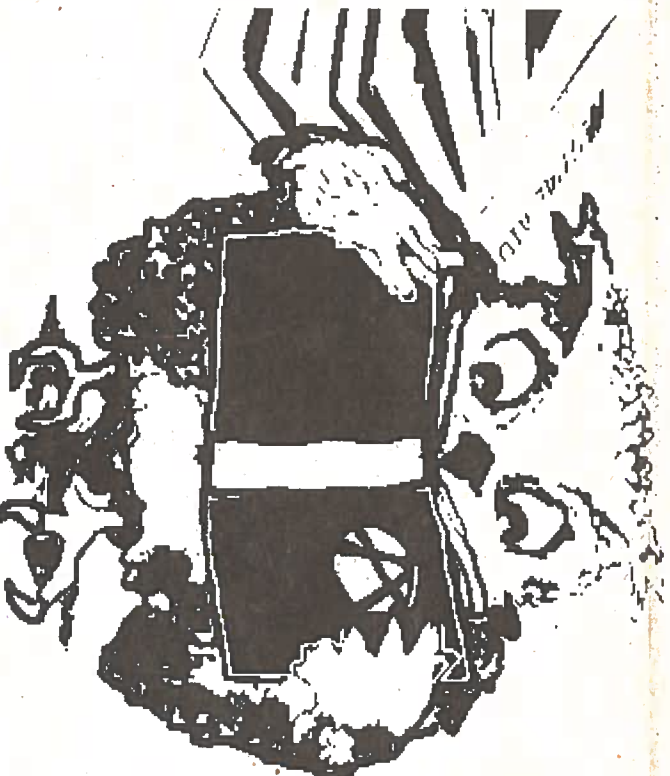
By Hammer

Organizing Humboldt's First Anarchist Book Fair started small in the late summertime after Andrew Flood, an Anarchist writer and activist, made a stop at Humboldt State University on his "Building a Popular Anarchism" tour. Flood spoke of the Worker's Solidarity Movement in Ireland to illustrate that an explicitly Anarchist political organization was a good idea because of the things it could help do, including spreading ideas and fostering more communication and cooperation both within the Anarchist movement and outside of it. The Worker's Solidarity Movement put out a newspaper for discussing various struggles, events, and cultural stuff concerning average people. There was only one column specifically about Anarchism in the whole paper. So a crew of local Anarchists involved in different projects formed Humboldt Grassroots because we felt that we could do much more with Anarchism out in the open. There was a definite need for letting fellow Anarchists know what each other is doing in order to build cooperation among Anarchists, but there was also a need to let the community know what we are about and some of the stuff we do. If more people knew about Anarchism, they could get involved in building a new society in the shell of the old society right here in Humboldt.

We decided to organize a book fair before working on other independent media projects because we felt we needed to make contact with the community and other radical organizations first. Plus, we figured it would be simple. We had many meetings to plan the book fair with as many as forty people there from various groups. But each time, they were different folks coming for different reasons. We finally found our solid core of people who were committed to taking on the task of putting the book fair together.

The first lesson we learned from organizing the book fair was timing counts. The book fair was first billed for November 22, 2008, but we soon found out nobody could show up. Vendors, speakers, community members—almost nobody could be there! The next lesson we learned was stick to the process. We had a lot of new people in and out and some core members doing stuff, but not making it to meetings. It took extra effort to

Humboldt's 1st Anarchist book fair



DECEMBER 13th
Manila community
center

make democratic decisions as a group and stick with them, but once we did—things got done smoothly with less conflict and redundancy. In the end, when Humboldt Grassroots and many supporting volunteers, especially Eureka Food Not Bombs, along with other groups, decided on the day that would work, it turned out to be that it was the same day as the L.A. Anarchist Book Fair—December 13, 2008. Many people we expected to be there still couldn't make it. Democracy Unlimited, many personal friends, comrades, and locally rooted Anarchists—a shocking many couldn't come. However, many friends and groups did show up! Redwood Curtain Cop Watch put on a "Know Your Rights" workshop to fill in for Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz who couldn't make it on account of a family emergency. That all being said, the reader will understand how surprised and pleased we all were that over four hundred people came out to the event! All the talks and workshops were well attended: Anarcho-Santa, the Kids Corner, and the mountains of amazing food made by Eureka Food Not Bombs were all well received. It was so awesome with such a great atmosphere of solidarity, freedom, and democracy! With so many people coming out for the event and considering all the people we know that couldn't make it, the book fair showed that Anarchists are not such a small minority, and our ideas and ways of organizing could be even more successful now than they have been historically in this area. What's really exciting is what we can do next and how big next years gonna be!

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