

The end of the British anarchist magazine Black Flag?

Anarcho

November 24, 2006

Observant attendees of this year's anarchist bookfair may have noticed that Black Flag did not have a stall nor was a new issue out. Some speculation has been made on the libcom.org forums that it is no more. The truth is, perhaps. It depends on what happens next and whether people get involved.

Currently, Black Flag is (effectively) on a year's sabbatical. Two meetings were called earlier this year, to which no one beyond myself attended. One member of the collective has dropped out, due to time constraints (which is fair enough). Another, myself, is busy trying to get "An Anarchist FAQ" (www.anarchistfaq.org) revised for publication as well as doing lots of other things (like writing for Freedom and having a life). Other members have also been busy and were unable to attend the meetings. So there was little point in trying to produce a new issue even if there was material to go into it.

The question is whether this is a sabbatical or whether it is (for now) the end of Black Flag after 35 years of publication. Personally, I would like it to continue. Part of the "problem" (if you can call it that) is the improvement in Freedom. Most of the people involved in Black Flag are now involved with writing for Freedom (something I never would have predicted ten years ago). While this is a positive development, it does mean less time for Black Flag and a question mark raised over its role.

There is no need for a newspaper type Black Flag and a magazine that comes out yearly does seem, well, a little infrequent. Also, there are magazines like "Organise!" and "Direct Action" and so is there really any point in producing another one? So what role is there for Black Flag?

There is, I think, a need for an anarchist publication which allows longer, more in-depth articles to be published and which is independent of any specific organisation. Such a publication would be a natural complement to Freedom which cannot, by its very nature, include longer articles. I did raise the possibility with Freedom about a bi-yearly journal in the same format as "The Raven" called Black Flag but that seems to have become somewhat muddled in communication (for the record, I never suggested that Freedom and Black Flag should merge and the resulting journal be called Black Flag!).

The question now becomes, is this viable? Do people think the anarchist movement would benefit from such a journal? Would people contribute to it? I know there was a thread on

libcom.org on the lack of any theoretical anarchist journals just now, so it seems that I am not the only person who sees the need for this. Is there any point in pursuing this idea? I await feedback, either here, to Black Flag's email address (Black_Flag@lycos.co.uk) or by snail mail (Black Flag, BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX).

Will Black Flag see another 35 years? That lies in your hands.

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