

An introduction to the

# Jura Collective

and info on how you can get involved.

## What is Jura?

Jura is a collective of people who come together to provide infrastructure for anarchists and other activists and movements. Our main projects are:

### *Jura Books (bookshop)*

For 27 years, Jura Books has imported and sold a wide range of anarchist and activist books. Members of the Jura Collective do weekly shifts in the shop, maintain a website from which we sell books, order books from Australia and overseas, and look after our mail-order section.

### *The Centre for Worker and Community Control*

The Centre for Worker and Community Control is the 'activist centre' of Jura. The Centre is an umbrella through which Jura offers a range of resources for activists, including computers (for internet, desktop publishing, and website design), meeting space (for campaign meetings, forums and film screenings) and printing and collation (for producing leaflets, posters and newsletters).

To keep this centre running, Jura members maintain the computer network, and spend considerable time and money maintaining the computers, printing machines, and the meeting room.

### *The Jura Library*

With over 8000 titles, the Jura Library is a substantial resource for activists and scholars. It is open to the public, with a simple borrowing system, and an online catalogue. Members of the Jura Collective maintain the library catalogue, purchase new titles and keep the library in order.

### *Jura Publishing*

Through Jura Publishing, we reproduce pamphlets of both contemporary and historic significance. Through AK Press - a large anarchist publishing house and distributor in the US and UK - Jura sells these pamphlets to a broad audience. Members involved in publishing scan or retype the text for pamphlets, lay them out, print, collate and then market them.

## What is Anarchism?

Jura is an anarchist collective. This means that we are opposed to all forms of domination. We believe that real human liberation can only come about through the creation of truly cooperative, participatory and mutual relations between human beings, which allow for the greatest freedom of each person over their own life.

In our current society, this means that we believe that capitalism, the state and patriarchy need to be overthrown. Instead, we propose that society should be structured according to principles of direct, collective cooperation at the lowest levels, and federations of delegates for higher levels of coordination. In many ways, the anarchist idea is just the simple logic of democracy applied to all areas of our lives. Instead of going to work and being directed by a manager, we believe workers should elect their managers, and meet collectively to run their own workplaces.

This straight forward and simple idea - of democratic cooperation in all spheres of our lives - has been a central theme through-out history, and a basic human desire which remains relevant today. To achieve it will require considerable struggle, both to build movements of people with the confidence and commitment to taking back control over their lives, and to dismantle and overthrow those with power and privilege in the existing system.

The project, which we have taken on at Jura, is one which is central to the struggle for human liberation. In the past many others have fought for a truly liberated society, most notably, during the Civil War in Spain of 1936-37. During the War the major workers' union was an anarchist union of 2 million people, which attempted the largest social experiment in libertarian socialism in human history. For a period of 18 months, they ran nearly half of Spain, and collectivised factories, farms, offices and even the trains. They organised a system based on coordinated cooperatives, building a society that truly reflected human values of cooperation, liberty and dignity.

Today, the conditions of social struggle are different, with material prosperity in western countries, existing alongside both unprecedented corporate power, and unimaginable misery in the third world. The challenges of building an movement dedicated to an anarchist future are enormous, but none the less necessary if we are to overcome the numerous problems we face.

Our aim at Jura is to build for an anarchist future by providing serious infrastructure for a serious anarchist movement in Sydney. We'd like you to join us.

## **How can I get involved in Jura?**

There are three formal levels of participation in the Jura Collective: Members, Financial Supporters and Friends.

### ***Becoming a member***

Jura always needs new people who broadly agree with our politics to join our collective. People who want to become new members are required to fulfil a few basic criteria:

- *Attend Jura Collective Meetings:* Attend 3 monthly Jura Meetings within a 5 month period.

- *Nominate for 3 hours/week regular work:* When someone applies for membership, we ask them to nominate a regular job that they would like to do at Jura once they become a member. This generally means working in one of the Jura Projects, and will generally involve a commitment of around 3 hours / week or 12 hours / month. Members working on various projects can assist prospective members by suggesting practical tasks they might want to take on. Tasks which new members might take on can be as diverse as:

- doing a weekly shift in the bookshop
- working on typing, laying out and reprinting pamphlets
- helping with running the mailorder bookshop sales
- entering new books into the website or library catalogue database
- building and maintaining the computer network
- building and maintaining the Jura website
- running a bookshop stall at the local markets
- doing the financial accounts for Jura
- maintaining the contacts database for Jura
- helping with building maintenance, electricity, plumbing and repairs.
- typing minutes, and doing email and phone notice for meetings.

These jobs have many intrinsic rewards that come from working with a team of committed individuals, working on projects where you can see tangible results, and helping to contribute to real social change.

- *An Introduction to Jura:* Before being accepted as a member, prospective members will be given an introduction to Jura. This involves four separate 1 hour 'tours' of parts of Jura, including doing a shift in Jura Bookshop, being shown around the library, the organising centre, and the computer system. Part of the idea of this is to give you the chance to get to know us and find out exactly how all the various bits of Jura function. It should help you to decide what sorts of projects and work most interest you. It also gives various members of the Jura collective the chance to meet you. Normally these introductions are run at our Saturday Working Bees. Just ask one of us, and we'll be happy to show you around.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Members**

Once accepted, members gain a number of rights and responsibilities.

### ***Jura Members have the right to:***

**i.** *keys to the building*

**ii.** *vote at meetings*

**iii.** *handle money and do either a regular shift or casually fill shifts for people who are sick.*

### ***Jura Members have the responsibility to:***

**i.** *commit regular time (normally 3 hours/week or 12 hours/month) to the tasks which they nominated for when becoming a member, and/or renegotiate their task with the Jura Collective if they want to change tasks.*

**ii.** *attend at least 50% of monthly Jura meetings.*

At Jura we understand that members have jobs, families and lives that impact on our ability to complete all the things we commit to. We don't expect people to be perfect, but we do ask is that people try to complete the things they nominate for, and if they can't, that they get in contact with other members of the collective early enough so that any inconveniences can be minimised.

## **Financial Supporters**

Keeping a project like Jura financially afloat is no small task. Virtually all the money from books sales are reinvested in buying new books. Fundraising and donations finance virtually all other projects around Jura, including:

- new library books and videos
- maintenance and replacement of computers and printing machines
- electricity, phone and internet bills
- furniture and stationary
- building maintenance and repairs
- mailouts and our website.

To help fund this, Jura has established a special group of 'Financial Supporters' who make regular monthly donations. The standard size of a monthly donation is \$10 (concession) and \$20 (full time workers), though many people give more or less depending on their current financial situation.

As a token of our appreciation, all Financial Supporters are entitled to a 15% discount at Jura Books.

To keep Jura's administration time to a minimum, we strongly encourage Financial Supporters to either authorise Jura to make a monthly deduction from their Credit Card, or to organise a regular periodic transfer via internet banking. We do, however, recognise that not everyone can use one of these two methods, and so we do accept payments in cash or by cheque.

## **Friends of Jura**

Friends of Jura are people who are not financial supporters or members of the collective, but who are recognised by Jura as making an important contribution. Friends include people who come to working bees, attend events, donate money or time on an irregular basis, or who just frequent the book shop.

Jura values the contribution of it's friends immensely, and has a number of mechanisms for keeping in touch and involving friends, including:

- Various email notice and discussion lists
- Regular Saturday Working Bees
- Occasional mailouts and 'mass SMSs' to keep people upto date with
  - latest happenings
  - Forums, educationals and dinners.

### ***Saturday Working Bees***

**The easiest way to get involved in Jura is to come to one of our weekly Working Bees. These are on most Saturdays from 12pm till 5 or 6pm. At 1pm, we have lunch together (provided by one of the collective members), and afterwards some of us usually go for a drink or dinner.**

## The Structure and Procedures of Jura

### *The Jura Collective*

Jura is run as a collective. By this we mean that all major decisions concerning the activities of Jura are made collectively by members at our regular monthly meetings.

Within Jura, however, there are a number of projects which operate with a level of autonomy, such as the Library, the Bookshop, the Centre for Worker and Community Control, and the IT group. Our aim is for the people involved in each of these projects to have maximum control over their own work, while coming back to the main Jura Collective to discuss and decide on major issues which effect everyone.

In our collective discussions, we attempt to decide by consensus, but if we cannot reach this in a reasonable timeframe, then we decide issues by a majority vote of members.

Between meetings, we communicate and discuss issues via a message book (in the front desk in the bookshop) and on an email list ([jura\\_organise@yahoo.com](mailto:jura_organise@yahoo.com)).

The finances of the Jura Collective works on the basis of two main bank accounts: one Bookshop account which is just for the sales and purchases of books for the shop ( and which is 'quarantined' from other costs), and another called 'Jura General Fund' which is which is where donations are deposited, and from which all costs (such as electricity, building repairs, computers, new library books, mailouts and cleaning products) are paid out of.

### *Anarchist Resources Incorporated (A.R.I.)*

One of the best things about Jura is that the property which we work on is owned by Anarchists, meaning that we pay little or no rent.

The property (at 440 Parramatta Rd Petersham) is owned by a corporation called Anarchist Resources Incorporated (A.R.I.). This is run by a board of 6 directors, composed of newer and older members of the Jura Collective.

ARI has existed since the late 1980s, when a number of members of the Jura Collective raised significant money to purchase a property to help Jura avoid the debilitating effects of spiraling inner-city rents. The purchase of property, however, has raised it's own problems. It was felt by those who raised the money, that to place this property in the hands of the small Jura Collective, which was potentially very easy to 'stack' and take over, would be foolish.

Instead a corporate structure was created to hold the property. The corporation, ARI, has a constitution which commits it to providing free space to an anarchist bookshop, and limits the role of ARI to maintenance of the property. The board of directors of ARI, appoints and replaces directors as they leave or rotate, and generally these directors are comprised of new and old members of the Jura Collective.

# *Jura*

- *Bookshop*
- *Publishing*
- *Library*
- *Organising Centre*