

15/03/2010

whose freespace?

the problems of a village in northern germany

statement from the s38-inhabitants on the dissolvment of the schnarup-thumby-“collective“

on **22.02.2010** the schnarup-thumby-„collective“ was dissolved. we hope that with former members we can now learn from and constructively discuss the mistakes of the last 5 years. this would ideally lead to the forming of a new collective under a new framework open to new members.

the housing project scharnweber 38 has existed since 1990 and underwent massive structural changes in 2005. the structure of the schnarup-thumby has also existed since the nineties. over time deep structural and political differences have arisen between the house as one part of the „collective“ and other members. political differences aside, one of the main problems of the „collective“ had been the impossibility of constructive discussion during plenum. political exchange became impossible and attempts to resolve disagreements fell into petty finger-pointing without any possibility for resolution. due to differing opinions on decision-making processes of left-radical collectives the plenum was often unable to reach consensus on many issues. even a consensus on the meaning of consensus was difficult. by definition consensus is not the decision of a majority. at all times single members must be able to and feel comfortable enough to speak out against developments and decisions. this was not possible.

during the last five years many attempts have been made to address the internal problems of the „collective“, but after many years we were eventually unwilling to rehash the same topics and arguments when many positions and criticisms went unrecognized. house members were sometimes not viewed as collective members. attempts at discussion were reduced to personal issues rather than used as opportunities for political discussion and development. during these conflicts the house inhabitants was not without fault, however we tried to work on and improve as best we could. in our minds this is necessary for a functioning collective. during discussions, tactics such as polemic defamations against the house, repeated fingerpointing, ideology-based language and other non-constructive behaviours were used and as a result no progress was made. we are aware that no collective is conflict-free, however we expect a self-reflective way of working together. our politics thrive on the possibility of constructive discussion. sometimes relationships end. some may interpret this ending as the result of dominant behaviour from house, we see it as a necessary step towards a new working collective. under other circumstances we would have left the collective. but we live here and would have had to accept everything that happened downstairs without argument. we are not house-owners, we are inhabitants. in the project rooms we want a respectful and friendly climate based on trust. this is the only possible setting for successful political work.

based on our understanding of a collective there had not been one in the last five years in the schnarup-thumby. the group could not, at any time, agree on political self-image. believing the former "collective" was functioning, confuses care-taking and political work. the work of the schnarup-thumby had become reduced to the bare minimum. the low-average participation at plenums in the last year resulted in an uneven division of work. administrative work and construction in the basement rooms had been to a great extent left to the house. decisions of the plenum were unrecognized and ignored. the quality of a lot of events was low. events such as *"pimp&ho party with limbo under police batons"* and resulting macho-hooliganstyle, flightsimulator-games on the 11th of september, the glorification of the GDR and the frequent use of nationalistic symbols offends our political standpoint. we don't think we should accept this.

in the past few months there had been many extra-meetings with the intention of finding finally a solution, but the conflicts only increased. we were often confronted with such statements as: *"if you want a freespace, you have to be able to bear it."* and *"if you don't like what happens here you can stay upstairs and if it is too loud you can go to the cinema"* (rough translations). some thought that if we left the collective everything would work smoothly. for us such arguments are unacceptable and counterproductive. because conflicts proved to be unresolvable the house and other members of the "collective" saw disintegration as the only option.

the reactions following the disintegration, including individuals being outed with photos on indymedia and threats of violence in the internet and on the house, only made us more secure in our decision. due to the escalation of conflicts and that a "houseverbot" has already been ignored we even felt it necessary to change locks. we wish this had not been the case. we will not respond to the arguments and accusations surrounding the end of the "collective". we would rather concentrate our efforts on constructive and productive processes with others who are willing to do the same.

the schnarup-thumby as it was is dead. we have high hopes for a new collective. we want to rebuilt the space around ideas of protection and as a free space. as space in which people can do what they want so long as personal boundaries are respected. where issues and disagreements can be discussed and solved in a constructive and productive way. these rooms should be available for political and soli-events regardless of social status. the ending of the old "collective" should be seen as the basis for realising this new objective. we will personally support and join a new functioning, left-radical collective.

for the establishment of more left-radical and functioning structures!

the hausproject **scharnweber 38.**

stagnation is boring.

for a self-critical process!