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#03

## BEN FRANKS: NEW RIGHT/NEW LEFT AN ALTERNATIVE EXPERIMENT IN FREEDOM

one

### INTRODUCTION

The 20 March 1969 edition of *New Society* featured an article by Reynier Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall and Cedric Price called 'Non-Plan: an experiment in freedom' (Figure 1.1). The year of publication was one of considerable radical activity and this was reflected in this issue of the magazine which featured, amongst others, supportive articles on labour disputes, university strikes, schemes to extend the radio waves to youth and book reviews on student power and the British revolutionary movement. Amongst these items, in the main body of the magazine, was 'Non-Plan', written by intellectuals of a noted socialist background.

Reynier Banham, then an academic at the Bartlett School of Architecture, had described himself a few years earlier in the Terry Hamilton Memorial Lecture as part of the 'protest culture': Cedric Price was a 'socialist architect' who, alongside his call for the demolition of York Minster, was also famous for a project, with the communist impresario Joan Littlewood, to design an interactive Fun Palace and – with Alexander Trocchi – a situationist university. These proposals, sadly, never came to fruition. Paul Barker, the youngest of the four authors, was the editor of the leftist *New Society*. So it was of no surprise that 'Non-Plan', appearing in this radical epoch and emanating from such noted egalitarian intellectuals in a left-wing publication, should be considered part of the New Left. In his book *Cities of Tomorrow*, even Peter Hall, the fourth of the article's authors, placed 'Non-Plan' in the chapter dealing with participatory architecture, rather than in the chapter concerning free-market planning deregulation.<sup>1</sup>

However, 'Non-Plan' has much more in common with the New Right than the New Left, and shares many key characteristics with Friedrich Hayek, a writer who is not only unequivocally of the New Right, but is regarded by both the New Right and their opponents as exemplifying their creed.

two

### 'NON-PLAN', A HAYEKIAN OUTLINE

'Non-Plan' argued that the grand architectural schemes associated with Modernism, and which were designed to resolve social problems, actually exacerbated them. These grand

1 Reynier Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall and Cedric Price, 'Non-Plan: an experiment in freedom', *New Society*, no. 338, 20 March 1969, pp. 435–443.

2 Reynier Banham, 'The activism of the short-distance minkycellist', *Living Arts*, no. 3, 1964, pp. 91–97.

3 Cedric Price, *Cedric Price: Architectural Association works II*, London: Architectural Association, 1984, p. 7.

4 Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988. Colin Ward also considered 'Non-Plan' comparable with capitularian projects to democratize architecture (Colin Ward, *Talking to Architects*, London: Freedom Press, 1996, p. 86; also, Colin Ward, *Architicism in Action*, London: Freedom Press, 1983, pp. 61–62).

programmes were often married to wider socio-economic regulations. It was not simply that these grandiose blueprints, when put into practice, failed to meet the needs of inhabitants – whether manufacturer, retailer or consumer – nor that they also restricted architectural imagination. It was that planning necessarily inferred failure. Hayek argued similarly.

Social planning for given outcomes, for Hayek, was insufficiently flexible to deal with the myriad needs and desires of a large population. An imposed order, the creation of just a few minds (indeed maybe as few as one) was termed by Hayek *Taxis*. This Hayek identified with socialism, a planned ordering of society. *Taxis* was contrasted with *Kosmos*, the spontaneous order created by individuals obeying certain economic rules, specifically those of the market economy, modifying their behaviour as that of their neighbours and competitors altered. The board game was a good analogy (Figure 1.8, p. 19). The rules were set but the outcome was undecided.

Like Hayek, the Non-Planners preferred the spontaneous order of *Kosmos* to *Taxis*. Where planning had worked, it had been serendipitous. The Non-Planners cited the heavily planned Welwyn Garden City and Hampstead Garden Suburb. The latter had been the subject of numerous criticisms because its road layout was difficult for public transport to negotiate and the back-garden cabbage patches were redundant in an age of supermarket frozen and tinned vegetables. However, with the increased penetration of the motor car, the road layout was no longer a problem and the back gardens became a safe haven for children away from the 'lethal pressed steel and rubber hurling around the streets'. The plan succeeded, but not for the reasons envisaged by the planners.

As the Non-Planners pointed out, social planning could not cope with the myriad desires of a large group of individuals whose choices grow ever more complex and divergent, as incomes rise.<sup>2</sup> Attempts to overcome social disutilities by planning merely exacerbated the social problems that planning was meant to solve. Hayek provided an example of how benign social engineering cannot improve on spontaneous order, no matter how well intentioned. Socially planned slum clearance, he argued, distorted the housing market and encouraged greater depopulation of rural areas, thereby leading to greater concentration of people in the cities and consequently more slums. The Non-Planners, too, rejected the zoning of building land to create pleasant rural areas, as this merely increased the building concentration of the cities. The rural areas became increasingly featureless as the land could only be used for farming, such as the huge monotonous fields of Banham's native East Anglia.<sup>3</sup> Cedric Price, in his singular version of 'Non-Plan' published in *Architectural Design* two months later, gave a detailed account of which legislation should be withdrawn – a list which included housing subsidies and land use control.<sup>4</sup>

5 Banham, Barker, Hall and Price, *op. cit.*, note 1, p. 435.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 442.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 440.

8 Cedric Price, 'Non-Plan', *Architectural Design*, 39, no. 5, May 1969, p. 269.

The Non-Planners, like Hayek, criticized the regulation of buildings and the zoning of space, as these were viewed as reflecting the values of a small, paternalistic élite. The planners were from a different class and had no idea nor appreciation of the interests of the majority. The bureaucrats had outmoded views indicated, according to the Non-Planners, by their choice of newspapers: the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Express*. The planners who had disparaged consumers' desires were dismissed by Barker, Banham, Hall and Price with the most pejorative epithet of the New Left lexicon, they were condemned as 'bourgeois'.

Like Hayek, the Non-Planners distinguished between two types of planning: the unacceptable static-state and that which was broadly desirable. This second type of planning came in two forms. The first was from commercial concerns which needed to plan; this planning was considered legitimate as it was receptive to individual choice. The other type was State intervention, which sought to encourage further commercial activity, opening up markets and disbanding planning laws. The 'Non-Plan' solution was in this vein – setting up three Non-Plan areas where regulations based on the zoning of land, preservation orders and paternalistic social welfare legislation would be reduced or eliminated.

These experimental districts were to provide a template for Britain as a whole. The trial areas were: Lawrence country, stretching from the East Midlands of Derby and Nottingham to the south of Yorkshire of Sheffield and Doncaster (Figure 1.4); Constable country, ranging northwards from Harlow New Town, bounded by Royston in the west and Saffron Walden in the east (Figure 1.6); and Montagu country, located south of Hampshire, taking in Southampton, Portsmouth, slices of the Isle of Wight and bits of Bournemouth (Figure 1.8). Price's own version had an additional North-Plan region based in the Lake District.

The ideal for both Hayek and the Non-Planners was free-market capitalism, which for both was synonymous with freedom itself. They shared not only the analysis of the cause of social problems and the type of solution, but also the source of that solution: North America. Hayek was lavish in his praise for the US for its economic-individualist society. He dedicated his 1960 book, *The Constitution of Liberty*, to 'the unknown civilization that is growing in America'.<sup>9</sup> The Non-Planners, too, saw the excitement and lack of coercion of the marketplace, as embodied by North America, as the perfect model for 'restoring vitality and spontaneity to city life'.<sup>10</sup> They pointed to the Pacific states, creations like Fremont Street in Las Vegas or Sunset Street in Beverly Hills as 'represent[ing] the living architecture of our age'.<sup>11</sup> The photographs that illustrated the article were either of imported neon signs for 'Morel'<sup>12</sup> and 'Coca-Cola' (Figure 1.10, p. 21)<sup>13</sup> or of

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960. See also Friedrich Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

<sup>11</sup> Banham, Barker, Hall and Price, *op. cit.*, note 1, p. 443.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

quintessential British institutions Americanized in the same illuminated medium. To illustrate how Britain could become as vital and energized as the US 'Tesco', 'Petrol Open', 'Shell' and 'Fish Bar' were emblazoned in bright light (Figure 1.3, p. 14).

The reason for this adoration of the USA might be guessed at by the choice of another sign: one for the British footwear company 'Truman's' (Figure 1.9, p. 20). This was redolent of Harry S. Truman, the US president who had governed during the Marshall Plan redevelopment of Europe, an exercise which demonstrated US bounty in contrast to the drab, ration-inflicted Britain under Aitlee's governorship. This was at a time when all the Non-Planners except the youngest (Barker) were in their economically liberated twenties.

American and British cultural signifiers were hybridized in the illustration, signed by Graham Percy, which accompanied 'Non-Plan' (Figure 1.6, p. 17). British High Street names 'Safeway', 'BP' and 'ICI' were featured on American highway boards in a scene which resembled an Iowa small town. It is hard to figure out whether the cars are obeying American or British road protocol, as the vehicles are on both sides of the street and seem to be travelling off into the horizon.

Even the three experimental Non-Plan regions were described in terms of a travelogue for visiting American tourists: Lawrence country, Constable country and Montagu country currently sound perfectly normal in heritage-dominated Britain. However, in the 1960s, the reduction of the heavy industrial and mining districts of Nottingham and Sheffield to an author notorious for a prosecution about a smutty book (and who had little love for Nottingham itself) was redolent of the marketing concepts of Madison Avenue.

In terms of identifying the problem, the key enemies, the solution and the source of the solution, the Non-Planners were in step with Hayek and the New Right. The problems appeared to be twofold: the inability of the paternalistic Welfare State to meet the needs of its population and economic stagnation. The enemies were identified as the officials in the planning offices, and bureaucrats of local councils and the liberal-democratic State. The solution, indicated by America, was the reinvigoration of the entrepreneurial spirit. Big business – in the form of petro-chemical multinationals – should be given the freedom to build their gas-stations in the locations they desired. This would promote architectural diversity and bold colourful experiment, combined with the excitement of a play-school.<sup>15</sup>

There are a number of reasons why a New Right proposal coming from this particular part of the New Left milieu should not appear particularly surprising. First and foremost the division between New Left and New Right, in 1969, hardly existed. A movement identifiable as the New Right had yet to fully coalesce. Although a body of

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

theory did exist, with substantial outpourings from Ayn Rand, Ludwig von Mises and other hyper-capitalists alongside Hayek; it had not been associated with any actually operating social policy, nor aligned with a major political movement (although Hayek had allied himself with the anti-trade union Institute of Economic Affairs). In Britain coalescence did not occur for another six years until the election in 1975 of Margaret Thatcher as the Conservative Party leader under the tutelage of Keith Joseph.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly the New Left was hardly an unproblematic category. It was open to differing interpretation. Its interests and its personnel were diverse, although some had considered it synonymous with just one part: the white, predominantly middle-class student revolts (1964–1969) of which the Non-Planners were clearly not a part.<sup>17</sup> The New Left pre-dated the campus rebellions; the unifying feature was the development of an egalitarian social theory in opposition to the repressive orthodoxy of Marxist-Leninism. Yet even here there were problems as New Leftist ideas began to percolate into the Old Left; indeed, the British Communist Party's own youth section criticized the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, albeit hesitantly.

Similarly, many participants who would naturally be associated with anti-Stalinist radicalism did not wish to associate themselves with the label New Left as they distrusted those who had loyally trusted Stalin until the tanks rolled into Budapest, having previously excused or ignored other Soviet atrocities. Alternatively, they disliked the types and backgrounds of the personnel associated with the movement and so refused to identify themselves with it, although sharing many key ideas.<sup>18</sup>

The antagonism that the New Left felt toward the orthodox Communists and their paternalistic forms of socialism was one of the reasons why a piece of New Right thinking could be generated under the guise of the New Left. The writers of the New Left and the New Right had the same enemies: the planned economies of the Soviet Union and the paternalistic liberalism of the Western Welfare States. For the New Left, the socialism of Stalinism lacked democracy and freedom, while the liberal establishment had involved the West in the genocide in Indochina. The New Left despised the Welfare State because it failed to meet the needs of the poor, but also restrained proletarian revolutionary instincts. Similarly the New Right opposed the same figures, albeit for different economic reasons. The Stalinist left was unpatriotic and a restraint on trade. The neo-imperialism of the Vietnam conflict made Western citizens poorer, not wealthier, and the Welfare State involved taxation and expropriation preventing a fully free market. 'Non-Plan' attacked the same targets as the New Left – the petty bureaucrat and restrictive laws – but did so from a New Right perspective.

<sup>16</sup> Sir Keith Joseph, on becoming a minister in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet, handed out copies of Hayek's *Roads to Freedom* to his civil servants.

<sup>17</sup> W. Bennett, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962–1968: the great refusal*, London: Rutgers University Press, 1989, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> A. Melzer, *The Anarchists in London 1935–1955*, Sandy, Orkney Islands: Centauros Press, 1976, p. 35. Also, S. Christie, *The Christie File*, Sandy, Orkney Islands: Centauros Press, 1980, p. 31.

These similarities led to concurrence in the choice of terminology. Both the New Left and New Right talked of 'freedom' and 'choice' and of opposing 'paternalism' and 'bureaucracy'. They shared the same nomenclature, but interpreted the terms in incompatible ways. As a result of these apparent similarities a proposal for one programme could be mistaken for the other.

The schema of criticism was the same for the Non-Planners and Hayek. There were only two choices: paternalistic *Taxis* or free-market *Kosmos*. The contemporary critics of 'Non-Plan' also shared this view, although they did not share the Non-Planners' preference. 'Non-Plan' generated eleven letters, more than any other article that spring (although Hall believed 'Non-Plan' was ignored). Some made incidental criticisms: I. Martin took offence at the suggestion that planners read the *Telegraph* and *Express*, and sent a detailed break-down of the reading habits of his planning office.<sup>19</sup>

Remaining criticisms fell into two categories. The majority admitted that planning was not perfect, but that planning was superior to the *laissez-faire* of 'Non-Plan' as this would restrict the freedom of the poor even further. The minority, led by the ex-communist Alfred Sherman (a soon-to-be confidant to Margaret Thatcher), supported Non-Plan as he found it hard to see how imposing planners' choices would increase the opportunities of those at the lower end of the income scale.<sup>20</sup>

These two groups of critics, like Hayek and the Non-Planners, shared the view that the choice was between State or quasi-State planning on the one hand or *laissez-faire* on the other. It was a debate which prefigured the political battles of the 1980s, in which State intervention was contrasted solely with the free-market, and these two options were presented as if they were the only possibilities.

However, these two positions were not exhaustive. For there are other forms of social organization, one of which shows far greater critical insight and experimental and liberating features than 'Non-Plan', and which also developed out of the New Left. Its first major eruption occurred in Redbridge on the Essex/East London boundary, about 15 miles from the edge of 'Constable country', a few months before the publication of 'Non-Plan'.

three

#### ADVENTURES IN REDBRIDGE

In November 1968 the London Squatters Campaign was formed, its membership coming predominantly from New Left backgrounds – that is members or supporters of anarchist, libertarian socialist and other anti-Stalinist left-wing groupings. The spur to the squatting movement was the failure of the Welfare State to deal adequately with the

<sup>19</sup> *New Society*, vol. 13, no. 341, 10 April 1969, p. 573.

<sup>20</sup> *New Society*, vol. 13, no. 342, 17 April 1969, p. 610.

problem of homelessness and poor housing. Their inspiration were the Vigilantes and other squatters who had taken over military land for homes in the aftermath of the Second World War, a movement Cedric Price had himself witnessed and supported.<sup>21</sup>

The shortcomings of family hostels in the public and private sectors had been the impetus for campaigns since the mid-1960s. With the showing in 1966 and the later repeat of the BBC drama *Cathy Come Home* (and the subsequent formation of the organization Shelter), homelessness and the shortcomings in housing provision had become an issue of public concern. The edition of *New Society* in which 'Non-Plan' appeared contained pleas for more social housing and a rent subsidy to prevent further homelessness.

It was against this background that the London Squatters held their first protest, the symbolic occupation of The Hollies, a luxury private housing development in Essex which had stood empty for a number of years following the collapse of the higher echelons of the housing market. This gained some local publicity for the squatting group and led them from symbolic to practical direct action. Over a period of three months in spring-summer 1969 they moved approximately a dozen homeless families into empty council properties in Redbridge. These had been bought by the council for a large redevelopment programme and were expected to remain vacant for as long as seven years.

The squatters successfully fought off legal and extra-legal attempts by the council to evict them, including unlawful physical violence by the bailiffs. This gained the squatters significant support locally from residents' groups, so much so that the mayor's 200-signature petition against the squatters was trumped by one of 2000 in support. They also received favourable publicity, both locally and nationally, and spurred a wider squatting campaign.

The squatting movement was not homogeneous. On one side were the reformers such as Ron Bailey, a housing activist, who regarded squatting as part of a campaign for more efficient use of council residential stock. Bailey was happy to deal with the local State and admired other reformers from other political groupings. He held particular affection for the Conservative mayor of Lewisham at the time of the campaign. On the other side were those Bailey labels a small group of the worst type of "anarchist" – they had established the free society at "their" house. The interests of the squatting families became subordinate to the "revolution."<sup>22</sup> Amongst this 'revolutionary' group were activists like Chris Broad, also involved in the Redbridge campaign, who in a 1978 edition of *Anarchy* magazine described the events as part of a programme for more radical social change.<sup>23</sup>

21 Interview with Cedric Price, 25 March 1997.

22 Ron Bailey, *The Squatters*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, p. 102. See also Ron Bailey, *Homelessness What Can Be Done: an immediate programme of self-help and mutual aid*, Oxford: Jon Carpenter, 1994.

23 Chris Broad, 'Anarchy and the art of motor-cycle maintenance', *Anarchy* no. 26, 1978.

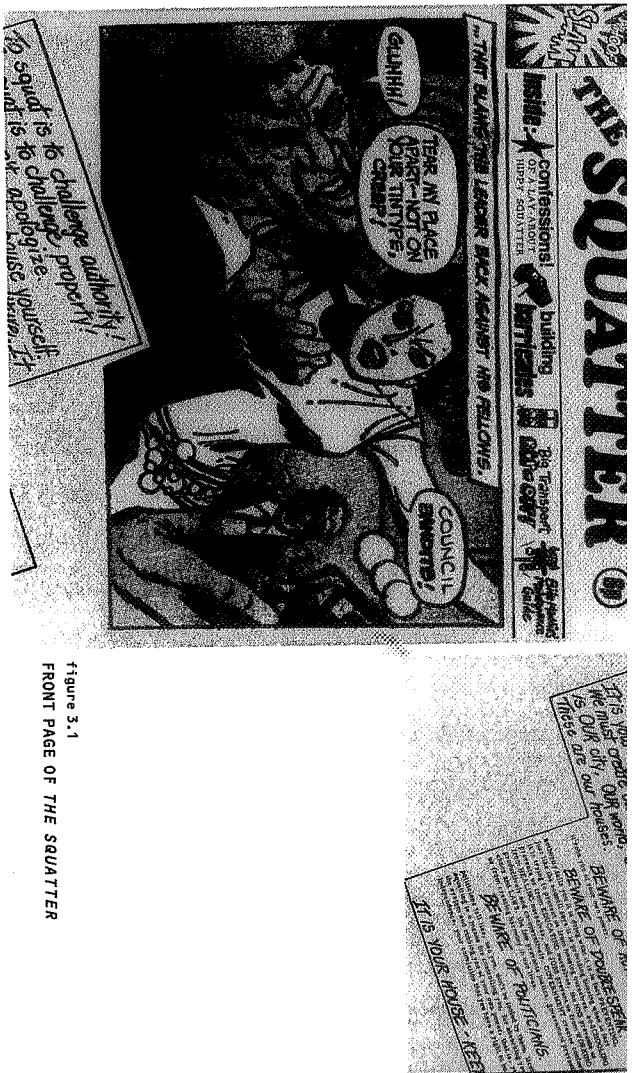


Figure 3.1  
FRONT PAGE OF THE SQUATTER

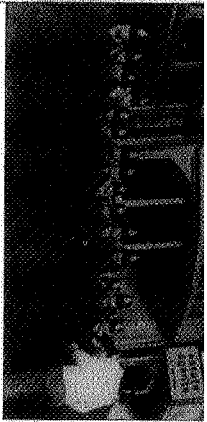
Robert Goodman made a similar distinction between those squatters who did not threaten the given framework of administration, and guerrilla architecture which helps 'promote political consciousness of the people ... expose[s] the repression of the established order ... [and] address[es] itself to the people's real needs ... [whose] successes and even failures lead to further political acts and the creation of a larger movement ...'.<sup>24</sup> It was this guerrilla section which became more prominent in the early 1970s, as squatting campaigns took off throughout London and spread and developed in other parts of Britain (Nottingham, Birmingham and Glasgow amongst others).

The squatters shared with the Non-Planners and Hayek the belief that the Welfare State was failing to meet people's needs and desires. Current planning was adding to their problems not resolving them. However, the practices of the squatters demonstrated the conservativeness of Non-Plan, and its valiative similarities with Hayek. The five main beliefs differentiating the squatters from the Non-Planners were that, first, capitalism was not value-neutral, but a system of class domination; second, that dominant architectural presuppositions and practices were repressive; third, that the current social divisions were due to hierarchies which could be directly confronted; fourth, that this confrontation itself provided opportunities for the realization of libertarian ways of living; and, lastly, that squatting itself was part of a wider social and political struggle against capitalism.

#### THE FREE-MARKET IS VALUE-SPECIFIC

Unlike the Non-Planners, the guerrilla architects saw private enterprise as value-specific (Figure 3.1) and believed that its imposition was incapable of resolving the problems of

24 Robert Goodman, *After the Planners*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972, p. 228.



Left figure 3.2  
 PHOTOGRAPH OF PREBBLE AND CO. BEING  
 PROTECTED BY THE POLICE, 1974



Right figure 3.3  
 PICTURE OF ANTI-YUPPIE RIOT FROM CLASS WAR,  
 NO. 30, C.1988, (N.D.), PP. 4-5

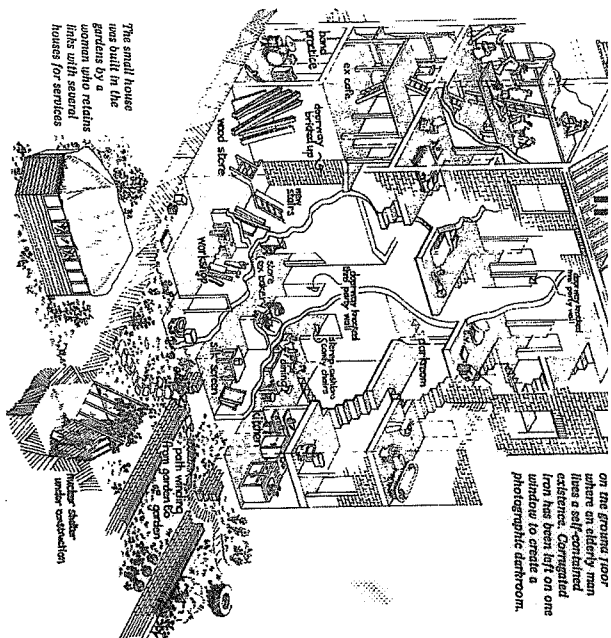
the poor. Symbols of the failure of capitalism to fulfil its consumer promises were particular targets. The office block Centrepoint was squatted for accommodation in 1974 after standing vacant for several years, as was the one-time target of the Angry Brigade, the Biba boutique in Kensington, in 1977.

Private property for the guerrilla squatters was not immutable and sovereign as it was for Hayek and the Non-Planners. The squatters viewed ownership in terms akin to the anarchist-communism of Peter Kropotkin and Alexander Berkman, where ownership was determined by use rather than title. Squatters did not enter homes in which people were living but only entered those buildings which were unoccupied.

The squatters' rejection of the primacy of private ownership went further than the direct action of taking over buildings. They also rejected capitalism's distribution of housing space on the basis of wealth. Campaigns were waged against speculators, such as the harassment of Islington estate agents Prebble and Co. (Figure 3.2) – an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to prevent the gentrification of the area. Squatters' groups led other similar campaigns in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark (Figure 3.3).

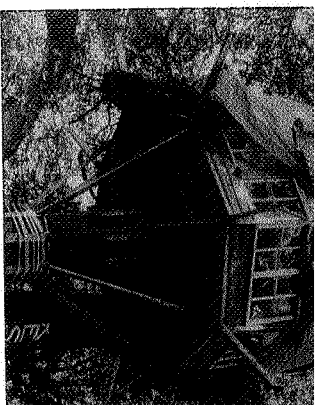
Of course, not all squatters were guerrillas. There were those who tried, through squatting, to build a lifestyle which was within capitalism, using the low-rent costs of squatting to create or win new markets for themselves. Wholefood stores, ethnic jewellery shops, vegan cafes and 'alternative' music outlets represent particular interests and predominantly 'middle class desires'.<sup>25</sup> These commercial concerns have helped in the 'yuppification' of working class districts,<sup>26</sup> where non-guerrilla squatters have been the first wave, followed by the artists and then the liberal professionals, as the takeover of London's Camden, Islington, Notting Hill, Stepney and Hoxton areas bear witness.

25 N. Wates and C. Wolmar (editors), *Squatting: the real story*, London: Blackrose Press, 1980, pp. 42-43.  
 26 S. Kelly, 'The middle class', *The Henry Street*, no. 3, n.d., pp. 2-9.



This small house  
 was built in the  
 garden by a  
 woman who retains  
 links with several  
 houses for services  
 under construction

on the ground floor  
 where an elderly man  
 lives a self-contained  
 existence. Corrugated  
 iron has been left on one  
 window to create a  
 photographic dartrroom.



Left figure 3.4  
 SQUATTING STRUCTURE  
 Right figure 3.5  
 TREE-HOUSE IN SQUATTED TREE  
 AT POLLLOCK (1995-1996)

AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED ORDER

Neither Hayek nor the Non-Planners viewed architecture outside of traditional terms of built spaces designed for predetermined ends. Squatters' practices, on the other hand, were drawn from wider afield, particularly from the artistic *avant-gardes* of Dada, Surrealism and Situationism. They incorporated aspects of the ready-made, of appropriation and *détournement*. Office buildings, such as Centrepoint, were turned into delimited zones. The separation of the work-place from the residential which came with the industrial revolution and the factory system were questioned by the squatters (Figure 3.4). Buildings had multiple uses: cafes, print-shops and dark-rooms were placed alongside bedrooms and dormitories.<sup>27</sup>

PARTICIPATORY AGENTS, NOT CONSUMERS

Social divisions and hierarchies were rejected by the squatters but not by the planners (who wanted to save their professional role) or the Non-Planners (who wanted to keep the division between those who build and the consumers who will use the building). The division of labour and the primacy of the individual as consumer was also maintained by Hayek. This division between architects and planners on one side, and the buildings' users on the other, was questioned through the radical squatters' self-build projects and participatory democratic decision-making. This egalitarian method stripped the experts of their claims to uniqueness in creativity. Hence the phrase on the poster at the 121 Bookshop (Railton Road, Brixton): 'Everything is architecture and we are all architects' – a phrase which has its roots in the Fluxus movement.

27 Wates and Wolmar, *op. cit.*, note 25, *passim*.

PREFIGURATIVE EXPERIMENTS

The way in which squatters confronted social problems provided examples of possible liberated forms of living, and allowed for experiments in communal ways of living, even if they seemed to be at the expense of personal dignity. The decision to sacrifice privacy was at least up to the individual. As Colin Ward, one of the architectural theorists who supported the squatting movements, wrote: 'It is not up to the planners to decide if we should be communal or isolated'.<sup>28</sup>

The squatters' attempts at more egalitarian social relations has subsequently been criticized by feminist activists. The sexist attitudes of male cohabitants and the division of labour and space often replicated those of the non-squatting world.<sup>29</sup> Anti-social behaviour, such as hard drug-taking and excessive noise, have also been associated with the squatting movement, but there is not necessarily a connection between such activities and squatting. The practice provides a possibility, even if only occasionally successful, for more egalitarian social relations.

REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

The radical squatters also had overtly political or social revolutionary objectives. They attempted to strengthen working class communities through the provision of arenas for gigs and local events, rather than through the creation of an exclusive squatters' ghetto, which saw their neighbours as hostile. The squatted zone has often provided a centre for political activity, most recently organizing against the Criminal Justice Act, workfare or environmental campaigns.<sup>30</sup> Squating has provided the tactic for the anti-roads protests, such as the tree-houses at Newbury (1994) or Pollock (1995-1996)<sup>31</sup> (Figure 3.5), or at Claremont Road against the M11 link, less than a mile from the original Redbridge squats.

While not all those partaking in the environmental squatting movements would consider themselves revolutionary, in a world of capitalist ascendancy, control and repression, squatting can provide a glimpse of a different, more spontaneous, communal and exciting future. It can provide a Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), to borrow a term from the American 'ontological anarchist' Hakim Bey). Bey's thesis is that by taking on heteronomous power, forces of resistance frequently replicate the power structures they seek to overthrow. For instance, the way a centralized party takes on and over the power of the centralized State. Consequently, revolutions, even when successful, do not liberate but merely reproduce heteronomous power. Even the most libertarian insurrections, while in the short term providing intense excitement and the opening up of possibilities 'peak experience' - in becoming permanent, drift into the everyday.

The TAZ, by avoiding permanence, seeks to recreate these intense peak experiences by opposing the State, in its creation of liberated spaces, but not by confronting it. Once the State intervenes, the zone dissolves to reappear elsewhere. It is, for Bey, a microcosm of an anarchist society, but with no aim at permanence. A small TAZ may avoid the interest of the State for a long time, or TAZs may become so frequent that they form wider liberated zones. The TAZ is a 'guerrilla operation which liberates an area ... and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere'.<sup>32</sup>

FOUR  
CONCLUSION

Despite the egalitarian impulses of the authors of 'Non-Plan' and their desire to overcome the stultifying paternalistic State, their response, in 1969, would have been to strengthen the power of multinationals and to impose business priorities on the public. Yet commercial predilections do not lead to ludic spontaneity, but to heteronomous control to check efficiency and the maximization of profit. The response of the guerrilla squatters, by contrast, was to encourage playfulness and autonomy rather than the garish matronly games in the privately funded 'play-school' of 'Non-Plan'.

FIVE  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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28 Colin Ward, *Housing: an anarchist approach*, London: Freedom Press, 1976, p. 39.  
29 E. Jackson, *Squatting in West Berlin*, London: Hooligan Press, 1987, p. 17.  
30 See for instance the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh or the I in 12 Centre, Bradford.  
31 See: Gerr (fish) and S. Wakefield, *Not for Rent: conversations with creative activists in the U.K.*, Amsterdam, Netherlands: Evil Twin Publications, 1996, p. 69.

32 Hakim Bey, *TAZ: the temporary autonomous zone, ontological anarchy, poetic terrorism*, Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1991, p. 101.