

BRINGING UP KIDS TOGETHER IN HACKNEY.

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.. or rather trying to stay sane and survive with them, has certainly thrown a strong searchlight on the IDEAS of LIBERTARIANISM - So you think your a Libertarian - well what does that make the kids? (you ADULT, AGE, CHAUVENISTS) ?

Whats been happening? I think we need to look at our relationship with kids from a few angles. Because it involves:

1. What each person has worked out in their heads about kids, and how realistic this is in practice.
2. What has happened when we've tries to spread our ideas.
3. How the real enemy - the Local Authorities has not yet been challenged.

1. WHAT PEOPLE HAVE WORKED OUT (Amongst ourselves)

That we do not want to h ve relationships with kids the official way - in a FAMILY which establishes the neurotic craving for a love relationship with 1 person (or 2?) which dominates all our lives & ties our need to the FAMILY to our need for the STATE & keeps peoples sexual & emotional drives safely channelled into capitalism (see Reich & Engels)

But this doesn't mean SMASH THE FAMILY (horrible simplistic slogan) - It doesn't mean smash the love between people in a family - but rather challenge the repressive structure of the family.

H O W ?

Well - by questioning our property relationships with children.

- by trying to avoid confirming sex roles.
- by trying not to teach them consumerism satisfies. & i.e. bribing them with ice-cream, sweets, toys.

~~W&W~~ We're fighting the way CAPITALISM states relationships should be - and trying to recognize that everyone can be responsible and responsive wth kids. (Though of course its not possible to pretend that we can be totally free of property relationships & we don't want to live in isolation, or be puritanical )

People have ambivalent feelings of love/hate, patience/intolerance for their children and about birth i.e. the decision to have children.

Take Hackney -how much 'real choice' did we have? Some of us wanted to be pregnant (but had doubts when they were) some of us got pregnant, then aborted, some of us have wanted to b but haven't yet, some have had a kid and left it with others, some have adopted kids. Every way - we've got kids all around us - and no-one wants to follow the 'mother' 'father' role way of relating.

- we make arrangements for the kids to spend as much time as possible with each other - to develop relationships as young as they are able to with other kids
- we go round to babysit at each other's houses.

The way we first started to try and make our relationships to each others kids develop in a more collective way was in the Grosvenor Avenue playhouse.

It was open from 11 - 5 each day. There were 10 to 17 kids ea each day and 4 - 5 adults who came on a rota basis (there being about 20 adults involved) biological parents and big friends - 15 women and 4 men)

#### I DAY'S HELL FOR 4 DAYS' FREEDOM?

What was good was that we created an anti-authoritarian playhouse in which we could develop our trust for each other looking after kids

- explore and challenge each other's attitudes
- enter a child's world and learn to play and discover our repres sions and hang-ups.

HOWEVER -

"non-authoritarian organising means very careful systematic organising" as Dartmouth Park nursery said. This didn't develop in the G.A. playhouse. I think there was som common sort of view that any type of structured planning with ki kids was repressive - that all learning and games should be spontaneous.

Well, that might be true of feelings, but games and learning can be that much more exciting if the objects are got together first.

What was worse was that it became primarily a convenience for adults to gain more freedom, without being prepared to put much work and long term thought into making the place better physically.

#### SPREADING IDEAS.

some people used the playhouse and its libertarian ideas in a soft touch way. Brought their kids, criticised it but never f felt part of it enough to want to change it - and the minute a st state place came up -took it.

We didn't bother to fight the local authority and got money from various individuals to subsidise the costs.

In fact I don't think we tried to spread our ideas.

The playhouse closed during the summer holidays and was replaced by:

#### THE CRECHE

which is an arrangement between 10 people and their 5 kids. 3 houses are used in rotation. The kids go there between 10 - 6, Mon. to Fri.

1 person is responsible each day. We either find a friend to share the day or do it alone, and in fact find it more rewarding and easier than to get totally in to the kids (and the Leggo and and monsters and play-dough than when we're with another adult and trying to talk all day.

QUESTIONS (in my mind are lit - yet there are no questions answers yet)

this arrangement might develop 'on duty - off duty' schizophrenia. It's only for friends - can't grow - we couldn't cope with a bigger number. Yet how do we spread the ideas of a creche?

On my day, I go out for walks or off to the cafe and people make remarks about "all yours?" - so I say "not likely, its my creche day" and everybody has thought it was a good idea - straight off which is important. It doesn't take big, theoretical explanations

#### WHAT ARE OUR DEMANDS?

We haven't decided clearly. We've reached a set of questions, ideas.

- Do we fight for a house, a particular place - or fight generally about childcare?

- we've often been near to squatting a place or occupying the social services

- or camping outside the town hall and stopping traffic.

Every street needs free playhouses for kids

- and not just over three.

- and not just for those who go to work

- and without state control

MEANWHILE - <sup>would a</sup> ~~and~~ the playhouse created in the area, <sup>be</sup> a reformist victory for the needs of a few?

HOW DO PEOPLE THINK WE SHOULD GET MORE? TAKE MORE?

WHAT ARE OTHERS EXPERINCES?