

Seattle neighbourhood self-act

By Douglas McLean

Stopping freeways and starting free health clinics is the easy part of community organizing work; the hard part is making sure the community doesn't get swallowed up in the organizing.

In Cascade, a 140-square block residential-industrial neighborhood in inner Seattle, Wash., the mostly poor, mostly old, mostly white residents have spent as much time and energy contacting their own "need" for a structural leadership as they have in fighting City Hall.

They've found the process to be frustrating, frustrating, time-consuming and energy-draining. But it has given them the collective strength to resist the bribes and threats by the State that weaken most action-oriented community groups and convert them into harmless vents for popular discontent.

After a great deal of agonizing, the residents of Cascade turned down an offer by the U.S. Public Health Service to provide a sorely-needed doctor for their health clinic.

The catch in the offer was that the government would then have access to medical and other records at the clinic to carry out various research programs. Cascade people, at two general meetings, decided they would rather continue with their catch-as-catch-can professional medical help (augmented by a regular nurse) than compromise the integrity and independence of their organization.

The end of the story might have been different if the Cascade organization had a conventional leadership structure conditioned to being "pragmatic" and "flexible." But the Cascade people made a compromise of these elements long ago.

Anti-Freeway
It wasn't easy, though. The original Cascade group was set up in 1969 by a local church to rally community support against a freeway project which was to slice right through the centre of the neighborhood.

The church people, most of whom lived outside the neighborhood, were skilled at issue-oriented organizing, and they succeeded in stopping the freeway through a city-wide referendum. But they established a community group that, in the words of one resident, consisted "mainly of a leader who would do things for the neighborhood and others who would help him."

"The church did not seem to trust people in the community. Their attitude was paternalistic, missionary. They wanted to help the lonely people downtown—not to address the total quality of life in the inner cities."

By any standards, Cascade was a deprived neighborhood when more than fifty thousand over 45 years old and on fixed incomes; nearly 20 per cent are unemployed; only two per cent own their own



KATE WINTER PHOTO, NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Cascade resident gets treatment at free health clinic.

homes. There are no supermarkets, restaurants or schools nearby.

Cascade was a City Hall target for conversion into an industrial district, and the process was well underway when the Cascade organization got going. To this day, a typical block contains factories, small homes and great empty lots standing side-by-side. The neighborhood is unattractive; by day, it's vir-

tually a truck route; by night, when the factory workers leave, the streets are deserted.

Yet, the people in Cascade think the neighborhood is worth fighting for. After they stopped the freeway, they asked, "Now that we've saved the neighborhood, what do we do with it?"

Just in terms of concrete services and facilities, the response has been impres-

sive: a community centre, two food unit apartment buildings (all three bought with \$60,000 in borrowed and donated money), health clinic, food co-op, older residents' drop-in, tenants' associations, daily recreational program for kids, parent co-daycare, free movies, free legal aid, etc.

As well, the residents have begun to stabilize their physical surroundings. They have gone to court to protect buildings threatened with destruction, they have stood in front of the bulldozers and they have harassed the municipal bureaucracy into considering a more humane zoning approach.

Naturally, there have been "outside" activists who have taken up residence in Cascade to help in the organizing. But the difference has been that they brought with them a consciously libertarian approach to grass roots activity.

Says one activist: "The big energy at meetings is to encourage self-expression. There is a conscious effort to get people to participate and take responsibility. People have to be supported, so they don't get freaked out and think, 'oh, oh, what have I taken on?'"

People who had never been involved in a worker

controlled situation before are brought into the food co-op or one of the other institutions and virtually put on the spot to make their own decisions.

"You can try to convince people that they don't need bosses, through talk, but don't expect to win them over at first," says one resident.

"In some cases, you have to go ahead and do it (set up the worker-controlled situation), even though some people are afraid it won't work. You don't win them over at first. You have to show them that it works, but that it's up to them to make it work."

Self Responsibility

"The way things are running now, not one of our institutions would break down if any person left. With one exception—if the nurse left, we would have problems."

Running the institutions requires a high level of personal interaction, not only in sharing skills but in criticism and self-criticism among people who may never before have consciously examined their own work habits or ways of interacting or who don't even know the definitions of terms such as sexism and elitism.

"We're aware that when we provide for our own needs

some people will say this is making capitalism run smoother," says one resident.

"If it's just left at providing services, then this would be true. After all, how do you politicize someone on twice-yearly visits to the health clinic? It can't be done. "The difference is that in running the show yourself you can raise political issues on an on-going basis. When people get involved in actually running the clinic they have to deal with questions like accepting government money with strings attached to it."

Still, they must be doing something right, to judge by the cries of pain from the former church leadership that was forced out when the community centre governing body was restructured along more democratic lines.

As one resident recalls it: "The director (of the centre) would go to the church board to warn them of what was happening. He told them that their work was threatened by anarchists who wanted to destroy the basis of society. Now, how's that for black-baiting?"

For more information on Cascade, write the Community Association at 224 Minor Ave. North, Seattle, Wash. 98109.

Braincutters stymied by pastry politics

By Fred Hillingslea

Dr. Jose Delgado, the Father of Electrophysiology, didn't know what hit him when the first of two "brain pies" were shoved into his face at a recent Brain Symposium in Vancouver.

The symposium moderator had just called for audience participation when an action squad, calling itself the Anarchist Party of Canada (Groucho-Marxist), in a parody of a local Stalinist pie, launched the pies containing barbeque sauce, whipped cream, honey, chocolate syrup, and cow brains.

"Why me?" asked Delgado, clearly mystified. By disrupting the deliberations of the 200 scientists and their camp followers, the anarcho-guerrillas managed to focus public and media attention on a major new public relations initiative by the brain research fraternity.

Delgado, a former Harvard University researcher who now heads the department of physiological sciences at the Universidad Autonoma in Madrid, is one of the front-men in the attempt to rehabilitate the image of brain research and to secure more government funding for it.

George Adams, one of nine anarcho-guerrillas, referred to Delgado as the "first of the new breed of brain robotologists." According to Adams, the first great lobotomy case occurred in the 1930's when more than fifty thousand brains were "carved out." Eventually public outrage forced practitioners of

this technique to go underground.

Now, Delgado, who has been working quietly behind the scenes for 20 years, is experimenting with electronic receivers and stimulators implanted in the brain which make regular lobotomies seem crude by comparison. Delgado's technique involves the insertion of very fine electrode shafts into the brain. The ends of these wires are soldered to a small socket anchored in the skull, where the doctor can electrically stimulate different areas of the brain causing the subject to react involuntarily.

Delgado boasts he can induce anger, fear, affection, pleasure and other emotions in experimental animals and human subjects by telemetry stimulation of specific regions of the brain. Electronic stimulation of the brain (ESB) has an effect similar to slapping a child's hand every time he or she touches a forbidden object.

"We are now talking to the brain without the participation of the senses," Delgado told a New York Times reporter. "This is pure and direct communication—I call it sensory communication."

In experiments described in his book *Physical Control of the Mind: Towards a Psychosocialized Society*, Delgado dwells for many pages on how he could "turn on" a woman, making her "more flirtatious, to the point of expressing a desire to marry the therapist."

On another occasion he

describes stimulating an 11-year-old boy: "Following another excitation, he (the boy) remarked with evident pleasure, 'You're doing it good.' And then he said, 'I'd like to be a girl' to please the male therapist."

Delgado believes that brain stimulation should be treated much like other familiar biological interventions—insulin, tranquilizers, fluoride treatment of water and food additives.

Many of the researchers

have targeted prisoners as the prime guinea pigs for this stage of their work, and proposals have already been entertained by law enforcement funding agencies in the U.S. One multi-million dollar project undertaken by the Neuro-Research Foundation is to search for the "biological causes of crime and develop and test the usefulness of the electro-physiological techniques for the detection of such disorders."

Two of Delgado's col-

leagues in the field have proposed parole systems to control crime; a prisoner is equipped with an unremovable electronic device implanted in the brain. It transmits basic information to a central computer and "intervenes electronically to influence and control selective behaviour."

"What I propose is the adoption of a strategy of mental planning," says Delgado. "The project of conquering human mind could be a central theme for international cooperation." He explains that current brain research supports the conclusion that emotion, emotion, and behaviour can be directed by electrical forces and that humans can be controlled like robots by push buttons.

All of the doctors and researchers in the ESB field recognize that legal, ethical, and religious objections to the program must be dealt with. To such reservations one researcher responds, "Perhaps the only way to answer is to rudely disabuse people of the notion that there is any dignity involved in being a sick person or mentally disturbed person or a criminal person."

"People will just have to get over their 1984 fear that Big Brother is watching."

The brain symposium's organizer claimed the pie throwers didn't understand the purpose of the meeting. But they understood it only too well. That's why they went along with the cry, "A pie a day keeps the brain doctor away."



Brain surgeon Jose Delgado gets some feedback.