

C. Freeganism B2 WB ▶ 33

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Let's imagine the world as a bizarre neighborhood. On the sunny side of the street some individuals are so rich they can afford to live in castles or mansions¹. They can travel around the globe in hours instead of weeks, and they throw away enough food to feed a small country. The United States alone produces enough to feed the whole world several times over.

Simultaneously, on the darker side of the hood, people die unnecessarily of easily remedied ailments² and/or lack of food. Every night, millions go to bed starving³, our city streets are barracks to armies of the homeless, and the planet we depend on for our existence is being poisoned to death by carbon emissions and industrial pollution.

Not willing to accept that the world has to be polarized between the haves and have-nots, a new sect of activists calling themselves Freegans (a contraction of the words "free" and "vegan"⁴) have set out to change the way we think and act. There are around 400 to 500 Freegans in New York City alone, and growing communities of like-minded individuals across the Western World who are living outside of and challenging the established social order.

"I grew up in Australia," says Martin Filla, a 36-year-old Freegan now living in London. "A lot of what I saw didn't make any sense to me. I didn't see people sitting down and really sharing meaningfully with each other. They chose to spend more and more time working in jobs they didn't enjoy. I also noticed that the material possessions people had did not bring true peace and happiness."

Often condemned as "weirdos," or "nuts," in much the same way as members of the now-respectable green movement were referred to in the past, Freegans are convinced that a better, more spiritual and humane way of life is possible. Superficially, Freeganism may seem like a new age, hippy-dippy⁵ approach to the complex machinations of capitalism and an angst-ridden⁶ world. And yes, it is perhaps naive; a utopian view of human potential in a world divided by politics, nationalism and religion. But many Freegans are well-educated, articulate people who were once high-flying achievers – smart, go-getting individuals who just happen to reject societal norms.

FREEGAN
WE WILL EAT YOUR SCRAP
BUT WE WON'T BUY YOUR CRA



A Freegan checking his last findings, New York City, USA, November 1, 2007

