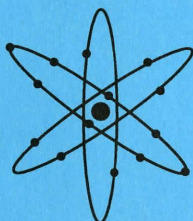
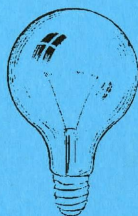
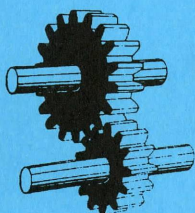


THOUGHTS ON TECHNOLOGY

FUCKTOOTH #24 / SPECTACLE #5



A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT EXAMINING
THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY (& ITS
CORPORATE CONTROL) ON OUR LIVES
AND THE WORLD

\$3 BY MAIL OR IN STORES

a collaborative project from your
friends at Fucktooth and Spectacle zines



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First printing, May 1999, 2000 copies. Printed at the Small Publishers Co-op in Sarasota, Florida (see ad on pg. 46). They specialize in zines and have great prices.

"We have met the enemy, and he is us."

Technology, especially electronics and computers, have come to define our lives. If we think in the very narrow spectrum of our own personal lives, and trace the time from when we wake up in the morning until we go to bed and what technology it is that we use along the way - well, it's pretty telling. This doesn't even begin to consider the ways technology is used every day that doesn't affect us directly - from the mystical way that multinational corporations and megabanks transfer money around the globe, to the crazy innovations the military and industry are creating every day.

Usually, we go happily along using these technological aids without really examining what they do for us or how necessary they are - and importantly, what practical and theoretical repercussions exist. This kind of blind faith - a trust that corporations and manufacturers have our best interests in mind - amounts to a tacit acceptance of their values and priorities. In regards to our health, the environment, class issues, the future and almost every other aspect of living, this trust in corporations can be more correctly characterized as a kind of "if I don't know about it, it can't hurt me" attitude.

What we are advocating, with this zine, is simply that you take a moment to observe what role technology plays in your life and the world, and that you decide, for yourself, what role you think it should play. Here, we are presenting a variety of ideas and we hope that in the very least we are creating a dialog on these topics. We are not saying that all technology is bad, we are merely advocating responsible use.

I don't really like "split" zines where it's two separate zines, created at different times and with different intentions, stapled together, trying to kind of capitalize off each other's efforts. To me it is more interesting to take two people who do good zines, and put them to work on a project together, and see what happens.

That's what we tried to do here. When Theo asked me if I was interested in a joint project, I thought picking a topic would give us some focus and direction. Little did I know that we would come up with way more information than we could possibly fit in this limited space. There was no struggle to come up with more articles or space fillers - it all just came. The delays, of course, are due to both of our workaholic-type personalities, where we take on too many projects at once and still think we can get them all done in a reasonable deadline. I guess that our similar personalities meant that we were a good choice to work together.

The thing is, I like and respect Theo an enormous amount. I feel good just being around him, and I get a lot of support from our friendship even though we don't get to talk that much, and when we do see

Jen's Intro

each other it's for like five minutes at some fest. But, I've known him for a few years, long enough to know that he's someone who I'm glad to work with and to have as a friend. Sappy but true. I believe that to maintain my own motivation, I need to surround myself with people who are dedicated and inspired, and Theo certainly qualifies.

Thanks for reading, and please let us know what you think,

Jen Angel
4/10/99

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jenangel@mindspring.com

A few notes:

1. Economics is as equally as mystifying as the idea of technology, and finally someone is taking a serious stab at examining how it affects the punk/hardcore scene directly. For more information, write Mike Q. Roth at 2036 Wendover St Apt 4, Pittsburgh, PA 15217.
2. I need to thank the following specific people for their input and support: Karoline Collins, Juan Carrera, Mom and Dad, Theo (of course), and Dave Munro, Brob Vanbrabandt, and the many people who have helped me through their continued friendship.
3. There is a new, regular issue of Fucktooth (#25), in the works. It should be done sometime this summer. Write me if you want information!

"Our civilization is considered the most advanced and progressive the world has known to date. I believe it is likely to be marked historically as the most destructive, and that the major stigma of this destruction will be attached to our own generation.

We are not paying enough attention to this destruction. We are not doing much to prevent it. What will we have gained by our higher education, by our dazzling scientific conquests, if they so blind us to the basic values that we fail to protect our inheritance of life? For many men and women do not yet realize that as we destroy it we destroy ourselves.

The cost of adequate conservation is small compared to what we spend on space exploration, aviation, superhighways, electronic devices, etc., yet the natural resources we neglect offer far more to us and to our children than do all such enterprises combined."

-Charles A. Lindbergh

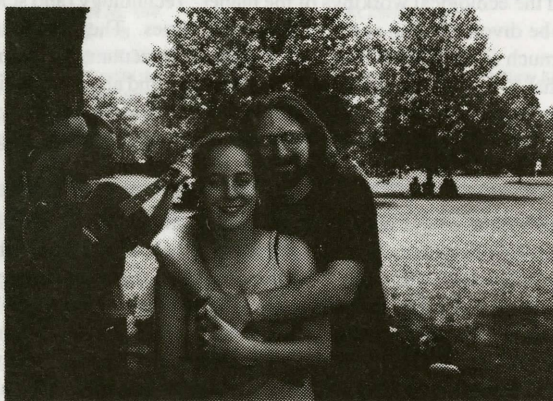
Today is my twenty-fourth birthday – two days before this zine has to be shipped to the printer in Florida. I guess it's fitting that I'm writing this today because each year on my birthday I'm reminded that my life is literally the product of technology. Without the then-cutting-edge neonatal medical technology of the mid 1970's, I wouldn't

Theo's Intro

have lived for more than a few minutes after birth. As it is I barely made it. I mention this because it influences me in any discussion on the merits and problems of technology. I can't engage in the wholesale condemnation of all things technological – nor would I want to. Sure, technology has enabled all sorts of misery and devastation – everything from increasing the disparity of wealth around the world to producing weapons of mass destruction – but it also has the potential for creating “good” things. Stuff like bikes, solar power, greenhouses, printing presses, musical instruments, sustainable agriculture, backpacking gear... all these are products of technology too, and they seem like good things to have around.

Over the past six years or so I've read and heard a lot of semi-ignorant blanket statements, often from social and environmental activists, viciously condemning technology. Not any specific technology, mind you, but the concept of technology in its most vague terms (oddly enough, they're often in very slick, computer-produced zines). I guess sometimes I feel sympathetic to their arguments but the inescapable fact remains that I owe my life to technology on some level. Besides, the prospect of reverting to living life as a hunter-gatherer seems pretty dismal and unfulfilling, not to mention totally ludicrous.

Even so, I'm greatly concerned with the effects that our technologies (and lifestyles) are having on our lives and the planet. As an ecologist I am reminded daily that we are expending “our” natural resources at an alarming rate. What's more, it can truthfully be said that we here in the so-called “first world” are expending other people's resources at an alarming rate. The “globalization” that you read about in the headlines is turning the world into a vast marketplace where labor and resources are basically stolen from poor people for the economic benefit of the wealthy (often you and I, whether or not we like to admit it). This globalization is largely enabled by technology. As Jen said in



The editors at the 1997 More Than Music Festival in Columbus, Ohio.

her intro, part and parcel to this is the question of who decides what technology is developed and who controls that technology and uses it to their advantage. That brings us to the argument that those who profit by our dependence on technology will go to great lengths to sell it to us, regardless of whether or not we need it or whether or not these technologies do irreparable harm to the environment and humanity. Jen and I will explore this theme exhaustively in the coming pages, I assure you.

I don't even know where to begin an original discussion about technology. I mean, we're all such products of it... it pervades every aspect of our lives. Even a week I spend working alone in the most remote and rugged backcountry wilderness involves all sorts of mid- to high-tech gadgets. There's my sleeping bag designed to wick moisture away from the body, my backpacking stove capable of boiling a cup of water in just over a minute, and my space-age gore-tex™ bivy sack that keeps me dry even in the most torrential rains. Even the wilderness experience gets mediated by the innovations of modern humans... Even now, I'm sitting here at my computer, being illuminated by a fluorescent lightbulb surrounded by technology... it shapes every aspect of my life.

What is technology, anyway? How do we define it? When most people think of technology, images of high-tech computers and other dazzling electronic devices come to mind. I suppose this is as much a media construct as it is anything else. It's much more glamorous than thinking of new fabrics or manufacturing processes for making cement or whatever. As a biologist I am particularly interested in the effects that the relatively new forms of biotechnology will have on the world and our lives. This technology has the capacity to revolutionize, for better or for worse, the world unlike anything we've invented in the past. The question of who controls these new biotechnologies and what they are used for is likely one of the most important issues that faces humanity and the ecological workings of the planet. Technology (and science in general) cannot be divorced from social and political issues. They are so interconnected! That much is certain. Science isn't done in a vacuum, yet so many scientists pretend that it is. Too often they shy away from any and all social/political debate and activism. It makes me sick. It was my objective, scientific training that led me to my anarchistic politics. It's the logical outcome of the "data" I've gathered over the years... it's the rational conclusion.

The blame for the delays with this issue rests mainly on me. I don't have a good excuse other than that (as usual) I bit off a whole hell of a lot more than I could chew (between work, school, Tree of Knowledge, the zine, gardening, research, etc.) and had trouble juggling everything. I don't seem to be capable of avoiding that rut. I'm afraid it's becoming synonymous with my name. Anyway, as I told Jen, I'd rather produce a quality product a little late than a mediocre one by some self-imposed deadline.

Thanks to Jen for agreeing to do this with me. I remember when *Spectacle* #1 came out and I saw a copy of *Fucktooth* #17 (seventeen!) and thought

"Holy shit! This zine rules!". This joint project is somewhat of a "dream come true", though I've never told Jen about her near-idol status before we met for the first time in 1996. Jen continually amazes me and gives me energy so I'm honored to share these pages with her. Hopefully we'll collaborate on more projects in the future. Thanks also to my partner Tanya Miller who puts up with my frantic existence and keeps me collected, and to Charles & Becky (my parents), Meredith & Gabe (for the farm), Chip King, Jon Strange, Mary Chamberlin, Joel Szymanowski, Holly Ann Mendenhall, Robert Bell, Tom Frothingham, Ravi Grover, Nathan Berg, Chris Tracey, Mike Q. & Eric the Red, The Constructive Interference Collective, the Midwest Underground Media Symposium, and all the other people who have supported *Spectacle*, Tree of Knowledge, and me. Sorry if you've written and not received a reply. Now that this beast is finished I'll wade through the growing box of letters. Hope you like this issue. *Spectacle #6* will be out soon. It's 100 pages, packed with interviews, is mostly finished, and will be delayed only by finances if by anything.

O.k. I better quit rambling. I still have to finish several of my pieces, do all the layout, design the cover, and get some photos halftoned. This project has been a long time coming and I'm real excited that it's finally about done. I hope you enjoy it and that you'll consider the issues raised and get involved in some form of activism to insure our lives and future aren't sold away to the highest corporate bidder. Thanks a lot for reading. Write and share your thoughts.

For a better world and a more free and sustainable future...

-Theo

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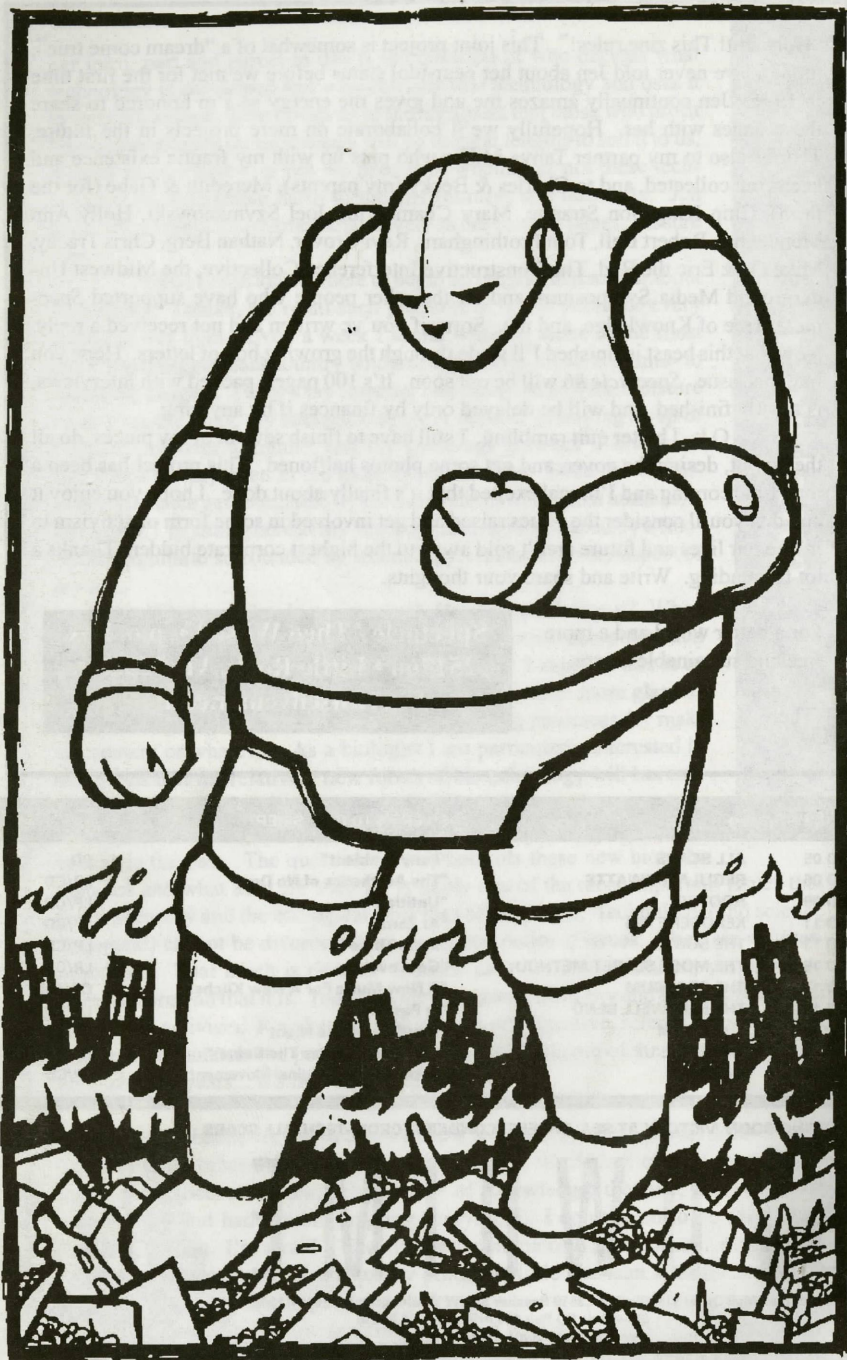
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I've been curious about Luddism for awhile, both because of my interest in popular movements and my own anti-technology feelings. I guess that can sound strange from someone who surrounds herself with so much technology (computers, email, TV, etc) - especially when you consider most people's picture of Luddism consists of the Amish or neo-primitives who seek to live with no technology at all. That is, if people have a conception of Luddism to begin with.

*Anyway, my ideas have been fed by some of my reading lately - some of it I came upon accidentally. In Marge Piercy's book, *Woman On The Edge of Time*, for example, she illustrates a fictional society which advocates the responsible use of technology - they use it to do the jobs that are dangerous or undesirable, but not to do everything. Last year I also read "Four Arguments of the Elimination of Television" by Jerry Mander, who I've discovered is somewhat of a neo-Luddite himself. Then, I started seeking out information and read a book or two and a ton of essays, by, among others, Kirkpatrick Sale and Neil Postman.*

PART ONE

Who the Luddites were and why they are relevant.

The Luddites were a small and short-lived, but important, popular movement that had its heyday almost 200 years ago. We see the residuals today when someone uses the term "Luddite" as derogatory slang to mean a person who is anti-technology. There is even a not-so-well known movement of Neo-Luddites, which is gaining strength now more than ever. So what's the deal? What's the origin of the term Luddite, and why is it important even today? Here's the sort version.

In the 1800's, right before the start of the Industrial Revolution, England had a primarily textile-based economy. One particular area in England, including Nottinghamshire (home to the much fabled Robin Hood), was dominated by textile manufacturing as a way of life, meaning a large percentage of the population were employed as skilled weavers. These were small, close-knit communities where everyone knew each other and their business. This was a time before the advent of factories,

The machine question (by Jen Angel)

before big business, and before any kind of real class-consciousness.

Now, into this semi-peaceful scene entered the new, large frames (i.e., the machines that weavers worked on) and steam engines. These machines could do the work of many weavers, and the material they turned out was not near as good quality. It also meant that the value of skilled labor dropped drastically. Skilled, experienced workmen who demanded a high wage were no longer needed to run these machines, and the factories eventually filled with women and children who would work in worse conditions for less pay.

This move to a factory system meant a move from a moral system (where owners knew and cared for the men that worked for them) to an immoral/unethical one. Where business owners were once responsible to the community, this began the move to the more distant worker/owner relationship.

The new machines and factories, in addition to the recent Enclosure Acts which sectioned off public lands for private use and the decrease in foreign trade because of England's war efforts at the time (i.e. a decline in demand for their finely crafted products) meant that all of the sudden, large amounts of people were being put out of work at an unprecedented level. This wasn't a time of unemployment compensation or any kind of social aid from the government, either.

So, around 1811, things were getting pretty desperate. The weavers realized that their livelihoods were seriously jeopardized, and a few men got together and decide to do something about it. They met secretly at night, marched to one of the new factories that had devastated the community by putting a large number of its



residents out of work, and they smashed the frames.

What followed was about a year and a half of vandalism - direct action against the new owners of the frames. Sometimes there were just threats, sometimes there was frame breaking or attacks on factories, and eventually assassination attempts, rioting, and arson. This could be considered vigilantism - but a sympathetic view interprets this was a "take action or starve" kind of situation. The Luddites attributed their acts to (and signed their letters from) a fictional "Ned Ludd" or "King Ludd" - hence the name "Luddism". The Luddites were not an organized group and did not have any hierarchy or leaders, so this truly can be called a popular movement - one which began from the people and without the help of any kind of elite politico vanguard. These men (and women) were not necessarily politically inclined; they acted because their livelihoods were threatened.

What was at issue here was "The machine question", as it was called during the time. When new technology is introduced, who decides its use or its implications? When it effects the entire community, why does the community not have a say in its application? The Luddites are usually interpreted as being anti-technology or against progress, but really, they were *for* the responsible use of technology. Instead of being *against* all technology, they were against technological innovation that is bad for the majority of people in the community or has overwhelming negative aspects, usually while benefiting a small number of businessmen who already have a lot of money. The weavers of this time had nothing against other recent inventions, such as the carding engine and the spinning jack, which aided human labor instead of replacing it.

I suppose it could be said that the final blow against labor came from the government. Touting a "laissez faire stance", the government maintained that it did not want to meddle in the concerns of industry, and that the market should regulate itself without intervention - the "invisible hand" of pioneering economist Adam Smith. This idea came to be interpreted in a way that only helped industry and hurt labor. The laws that had previously protected the workers, like those requiring apprenticeships, were done away with, and new laws, like those prohibiting "combinations" or unions were passed. So by taking this stance, the government didn't afford workers any power to address grievances or otherwise confront owners/employers.

Tensions escalated in 1812. The government, in-

The machine question (by Jen Angel)

tervening on the side of industry with the justification that they were simply "maintaining order" as opposed to "protecting business interests", began a serious crack-down, moving troops into the area and creating a "state of warfare". As Luddite activity escalated, so did their repression. Actions like the taking or administering of the Luddite oath, or smashing a frame, first were punishable by deportation to Australia, and later become capital crimes. It reached the point where the ratio of military men to the public was 1 in 70 people. The sheriff had no qualms about using spies, informants, and rewards to bring in Luddites, and the fact that the reward money essentially went uncollected is testimony to the strong community ties and the sympathies that the Luddites roused in the general population.

At the point where the Luddite revolt could have turned to mass insurrection, the government hanged eight men convicted of Luddite activities, transported 13 to Australia for different sentences, and imprisoned more. This is also the point where Sale notes that, at the height of the Luddites' impact, where the movement poised at the line between resistance and revolution, the "movement" was unable to successfully articulate both the possibilities and the means to get there. This same thing, he notes, happened in later radical movements, where those involved splinter into factions and cannot maintain any cohesiveness (or effectiveness).

Even though Luddism was not a successful movement, it is important to realize that all of the things the original Luddites feared or opposed eventually came to pass. They were justified in their actions. Not only were these fears realized, they have become the basis for the world economy today. The destruction of community (or, a community based on mutual aid, tradition, etc), the deskilling of workers, the lack of personal and moral responsibility on the part of business, the role of government on the side of business - these are all issues which have been, and continue to be, at the heart of political debate. The basic question that comes out of this movement is who decides issues surrounding technology? The community who it effects or the person who stands to gain, monetarily, from it? Or the government, which has proven that it sides with business?

This short summary cannot begin to do the movement any justice. Kirkpatrick Sale's book, *Rebels Against The Future*, digs up primary documentation and eyewitness accounts that do a good job at arousing my sympathies. I respect the Luddites because this was a popular movement. This was born out of frustration and anger,

by people who these issues were directly affecting - instead of being a grand plan schemed in a back room by a group of "radicals." There was no vanguard or leadership.

A lot of common struggles and ideas began in this era, such as the formation of class-consciousness and the widening of the gap between the business class and everyone else. The beginnings of industrialism created a permanent breach between any obligations or responsibilities that worker and owner had to each other, and most importantly the role of business. It has come to pass that what is good for business is good for the country.

An economy based on industrialism and the idea of capitalism, has a simple philosophy regarding the introduction of new technology and the displacement of workers. This theory says that capitalists, or owners, introduce new technology and though this puts people out of work. The money that the capitalists make will allow them to expand or to introduce even newer technology that will absorb these displaced workers.

This wasn't any solace to the Luddites and workers of this era, because even though this kind of regeneration of jobs would eventually take place, it left many generations of the "working class" in pretty much destitute poverty. Sale argues that in modern times, especially during the 1980s and the "Second Industrial Revolution" (the printed age, and then the computer age, beginning in the early 70s), many of these displaced workers were absorbed into government and civil positions, swelling the size, budget, and debt of governments to unforeseen heights. This means that industry never absorbed those workers they displaced. Even now, we are (and have been) experiencing a rapid move toward a service-based economy - where most of the new jobs created lack security, benefits, and real chances for upward mobility. Industrialism hasn't rebounded to take care of the people that new technology is replacing.

While this is extreme, there are some criticisms of Luddism which need to be mentioned. More than anything, you'll notice that the Luddites were not successful. Though they may have slightly delayed the implementation of the factory and machine based systems in their industries, they made no real lasting impressions on industry itself, beyond becoming instead an enduring, romanticized myth like the story of Robin Hood and his friends. But, much like Robin Hood, the Luddites have made a lasting impression on the psyche of the industrialized world - more like a thorn in the side of the giant called business.

PART TWO

How long before a computer can do your job? Modern offshoots of "the machine question."

Modern Luddites, while identifying with the struggles of the 19th century movement, realize that this same revolution in the workplace is taking place today. In the last two decades, the threat of job loss to automation or computerization is a bigger issue than ever. The oft quoted statistics - that adjusting for inflation, real wages have declined or stagnated, that the average CEO makes over 100 times what the average worker makes, that the top few percent of people control the vast majority of the wealth - these are all just the tell-tale signs that some kind of change is (and has been) taking place which has widespread effects among the population. These are signs that we, as young, politicized, active people need to be paying attention to the world going on around us.

However, most of the people who are reading this article and young people in general aren't concerned about labor issues. Maybe you're "political" and you've written off current affairs to deal with the ephemeral world of ideology and utopianism. Maybe you're one of the few who comes from a privileged background and because of your access to technology, you have the know-how to compete in the technology-based job market (for the time being).

Why does this matter to you? Because it is important to note that the general trends of downsizing (read Michael Moore) and the move to service-based industry mean our economy is moving even more toward an unskilled labor market. This means that it's likely that you'll be overqualified for your next job, if you can find one, and that you'll be easily replaceable. You'll work longer hours for less pay and benefits - the same gripes of all the previous generations. Your bosses won't need to invest anything in you because they can get someone else at a moment's notice. That temp job that gives you flexibility and good scheduling lacks security, benefits, upward mobility, and any kind of advanced training. Maybe that's OK with you now, but when you have children or when you want to buy a house, you'll understand. All the

hard-won victories of the eight-hour day, overtime pay and benefits are eroding.

We need to remember that we're not kids, in the economic sense, forever. As we grow older, we don't necessarily grow out of our punk/hardcore/youth culture roots, but like a lot of people we seek security and we make changes in our lives. We become less able to depend on parents and friends, or our youth, for financial security. Think of how many of your friends have gotten married, had babies, or bought a house in the last year. That's going to be you one day, if it's not one of the other million reasons to save money and have security. If the only jobs available to you are high paying (sic) service jobs (or unreliable "punk rock" jobs at labels, stores, or distros), how do you expect to survive, even with the punk "it's okay to be poor and dumpster dive" minimalist attitude?

Labor is an issue that effects us, as well as our parents, and we need to start paying attention to it now, before we get even further into economic crisis. We can't wait until the last minute.

Equally as important, a neo-Luddite critique of technology should not just stop at labor. Here are a few other large (enormous?) issues that beg us to be concerned about technology and its continued expansion into every aspect of our lives.

Class Issues and Technology

Wired, the mouthpiece for the hip computer elite, would have us believe that if you don't have that cell phone and laptop computer, you are going to be left in the dust. And because the people who read magazines like *Wired*, and those who create the advertising we see on television and billboards are very pro-technology, we are inundated with images of people who use all of the latest computer gadgets. In reality, this is hardly the case, but we are creating a world that is off limits to those who do not have this access. The one simple example that most of us can identify with is TV. If you don't have cable, in most areas that means you don't get any TV at all - or only one or two channels. This means that if you can't afford the cable bill, you miss out on sitcoms and dumb comedies, but also news, documentaries, election coverage - and other kinds of information that much of our society *only* gets from TV. The question, from Neil Postman, is to whom will this technology give greater power and freedom, and whose power and freedom will be reduced?

The machine question (by Jen Angel)

Technology affects class issues in other ways as well. Our newest, hi-tech high-speed communications and computers allow corporations to excel at becoming multinationals. These large entities control more money and people than most of the world's countries. They are increasingly becoming too large and powerful to be subject to the laws of any country. (NAFTA anyone?). And they can, because of technology. More than that, all new technology comes from one source: the corporation. And the only reason a corporation introduces new technology is because it believes it can make a profit. Once they introduce this technology, they create advertising that tells us that we need this new technology in our lives, despite the fact that people have been living, quite successfully, for millenia without Palm Pilots, three-way calling, and GPS car tracking systems.

In addition, we are at a time where some technologies are relatively cheap and these create the illusion of affluence, or of prosperity. Families with cable TV, CD Players, cordless phones, and new (ish) cars believe that because they can afford these luxuries that they are part of the prosperous middle class, when in reality these are just inexpensive token technologies which most people purchase on credit in the first place. Because we can afford these things and we're not in "destitute poverty", we become less aware of class issues. It's the old idea that people have to be personally affected negatively to care about larger issues and that unacceptable conditions breed popular unrest. But if we can still afford our big screen TVs and around-the-clock satellite sports coverage, what is there to be worried about?

Even within punk, we have this technological hierarchy as well. Slick, computer-generated zines win out over the sloppy cut and paste standard because that's what distributors and advertisers look for. The *Punk Planet*



look-a-likes win out because they get the money, which allows them to be financially stable and viable. The problem here is that those zines require access to computers (and the ability to use them) - that is a class issue. This is symptomatic of the class issues we just kind of look past - even in our own scene.

Community, Culture, and Technology.



Being the culture critic that I am, this is my favorite topic. Technology affects community indirectly every day, through its affects on economics and business, as discussed above, and through the way media uses technology to inundate us with advertising images that tell us how we should be, and who we should be with. We even have the Saturn car company telling us that we can substitute car ownership for real community ties.

But some technologies, like television and the internet, have a very direct effect on communities. Watching television is a passive action where you sit and stare, feeling lulled into a trance-like stupor. The more time people spend watching television, the less time they spend interacting with other human beings. The TV cannot talk back, can't respond to your criticisms, and isn't a real companion. Instead of knowing our neighbors we are content to sit inside, learning about the outside

world through a box. Jerry Mander calls this a kind of "mediation of experience", in that we live vicariously

The machine question (by Jen Angel)

The machine question (by Jon Angel)

though television and movies instead of having those experiences ourselves. Seeing a photo of or a documentary about the Grand Canyon or the Eiffel Tower isn't the same as being there and seeing it ourselves.

This is an even further breakdown of the moral fiber of our communities. How can communities band together, or neighbors help each other out, when no one is outside of their house or car long enough to even know what the issues are? You can think about this in your own life, about how many people do you socialize with or have some kind of meaningful interaction with outside of your household or workplace? Do you know your neighbors' names? Or - do you subscribe to any magazines? Have you read any books lately?

The internet is a whole separate issue. It has its very positive side, in that it allows people to build "virtual" communities that stretch between cities and states, and which aren't limited to geographic area. This is important for individuals who are isolated because of their sexuality, their political beliefs, or other aspects of their lives which have isolated them from the surrounding communities. The internet is an interactive device that allows these kinds of communities to exist.

It also is a way to allow information to travel faster and be distributed better. That is, if the information is useful. Most internet users are familiar with "spam" - unwanted emails that are usually selling some get-rich-quick scheme, but what about the web itself? There is a lot of good information out there, but it is often difficult to find what you want and skip the things you could care less about - and, as many people have already pointed out, it's quickly on its way to becoming the best home-shopping network that corporations could have hoped for. Is that the extent of its application? The internet (and the rest of today's electronic media) gives us *too much* information, information that is unstructured and doesn't effect us directly, or isn't connected to other things we know. This makes information "un-meaningful", and reduces it to trivia. When it has no impact on our lives, information begins to lose its value. And, in an extension of that - think about how so much of our world now *makes no sense to us*, which is beyond our comprehension. We are in an age where we are drowning in the flood of information, yet even within this age of enlightenment, virtually any idea of substance must be watered down or simplified for consumption.

The downside of the internet, from a community perspective, is that even though you are having interac-

tion with real human beings, it is a kind of mutation of the idea. Only so much can be communicated through written words on a screen, and we leave out all the emotion, nuance, and body language that help shape the way we communicate. And despite the interaction the internet promises, it still remains that you use the internet while sitting at home, alone. We are creating more and more technologies that are keeping us separate from other people. Is that really something we should be striving for?

Ecology and Technology

The history of industrialism can be seen partially as the domination of man over the natural environment. This goes back to the beginning, and to the Luddite era, with governmental actions like "The Enclosure Acts." These sectioned off private land for public use and would eventually amount to a dramatic deforestation of England.

I don't really feel like I need to expound much in this section because it seems like the catch-words of environmental destruction are household vocabulary: acid rain, global warming, the greenhouse effect, pollution, etc. Then there are specific incidents like DDT, thalidomide, dioxin - chemicals which harm the environment and our bodies. Think about nuclear power. Safe and efficient, unless there's a Three Mile Island or a Chernobyl. Why are we producing power that has such serious consequences? Why don't we spend our time and effort coming up with something safer?

Beyond the destruction that we cause, consider that we live in a world that is almost completely artificial and manmade. We are increasingly disconnected from anything that is natural, uncontrolled, or undominated.

Health and Technology

We live longer today than at any other time in our history, but we are also sicker. It's as if we are creating new hazards for ourselves all the time. We don't even need to go as far as nuclear weapons or chemical/biological warfare to find new threats to our health that we are springing up every day. We are hearing more and more about antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria, which come from overuse of common medicines and antibiotics as a fix-all. Are stress-related illnesses, that are now

The machine question
(by Jen Angel)

common, partly connected to both our work as well as our now passive (as opposed to active) lives? We spend all day sitting at desks under fluorescent lights, staring at computers, and then we go home and sit on the couch in front of the glowing idiot tube. Both because of the way technology has affected our work places and how it has taken control over our entertainment, as well as the effect it has had on the community.

Technology in medicine saves lives but we're really just fixing the diseases and problems we create through our unhealthy lives and environments, through our culture of convenience that feeds us on fast food, prepared/ packaged/ preserved food, and things which we know are bad for us but we consume anyway. Have you read, for example, the warnings on the little saccharin packets on your table at Denny's? Why, when we read "this product causes cancer in lab animals," do we think it's a good idea to put it in our coffee? We spend all this time and money giving people face lifts and penis implants, yet there are thousands (more than that) people in the US without adequate healthcare, without access to abortions or prenatal care, and a million other inequities.

There are many other biotechnology issues which need to be brought up, and Brob and Theo are going to discuss some of them in another part of this zine.

Conclusion

All of these things happen because we make technology that harms. We make technology simply *because we can* and not because we need it or it's good for us. We are put in the position of fixing problems we create instead of making things that don't create problems. We go by, day by day, not really thinking about it, creating a tacit acceptance for the unimpeded growth of unneeded - and possibly detrimental - technological innovation. We think that new, faster machines are the answers to life when we haven't even begun to ask the right questions. What about a technology that puts humans first? Ahead of business, ahead of progress, and ahead of science?

The purpose for bringing up all of these things is simply to point out the far-reaching effects technology has on our lives and our culture. I want to shed a little bit of a negative light on the cult of technology that typically remains unscrutinized, and in the next few pages I'll talk about what we should do once we wake up to the crazy things going on around us.

PART THREE

Neo-Luddism: The theoretical implications and the need to develop a new perspective.

Those are some extreme examples of how technology directly affects us. But we have yet to really delve into the theoretical questions surrounding technology. I believe the following quote is quite succinct - taken from a speech made by Neil Postman:

"I believe you will have to concede that what ails us, what causes us the most misery and pain - at both cultural and personal levels - has nothing to do with the sort of information made accessible by computers. The computer and its information cannot answer any of the fundamental questions that we need to address to make our lives more meaningful and humane. The computer cannot provide an organizing moral framework. It cannot tell us what questions are worth asking. It cannot provide a means of understanding why we are here or why we fight each other or why decency eludes us so often, especially when we need it the most. The computer is, in a sense, a magnificent toy that distracts us from facing what we most need to confront - spiritual emptiness, knowledge of us, usable conceptions of the past and the future. Does one blame the computer for this? Of course not. It is, after all, only a machine. But it is presented to us, with trumpets blaring... as the technological messiah."

What do these machines do except increase the supply of information? We are getting the message that more information, more efficiently uncovered and "user friendly", will be the solutions to our problems. Postman believes that this is a colossal (and dangerous) waste of human talent and effort.

The first step is to develop a critical eye toward technology and its overuse in our society. Beyond questioning the new innovations we hear about in the news

The machine question (by Jen Angel)

The machine question (by Jen Angel)

and in the workplace, we need to first recognize the role of technologies in our lives, and evaluate our own uses of technologies (hell, I now have a desktop computer and a laptop). How much is enough? How do we resist a sort of technological materialism that our society pushes? And what expectations are we placing on technology? Most importantly - what are the questions we need to deal with?

We do this by going through our lives and decid-

ing what is necessary and what is not. Some people, for example, think that it is not necessary to have a TV and advocate getting rid of them altogether. But as a first step, maybe we should think about whether we really need a television in every room of our home? And of the televisions we do decide to keep, do we use it to watch Jerry Springer and Beverly Hills 90210?

What are we gaining from the television that we do watch?

Other questions you might ask yourself include: How often do I need to buy a new car? When can I ride my bike (or walk or take the bus) as opposed to using the car that I do have? Do I own the top of the line stereo/computer/VCR/DVD just because I can, or do I own one that is simply adequate for my needs? Do I buy new items to replace something broken or just because I want some-



thing new or more modern? Who makes the products I am buying, and what are their costs to the environment? Do I need to buy a food processor, or can I use the one my roommate already has?

This is not about minimalism or about reducing our consumption to monk-like levels. There's nothing wrong with doing or buying things that you enjoy, as long as you consider the costs of these things. When you discover that a particular thing you like to do or buy has high costs to the environment, for example, you can begin by investigating alternatives or simply by doing those things in moderation.

I don't really have the answers and the more I read about neo-Luddite theory and the responsible technology movement, the more I realize that I had only seen the tip of the iceberg. I found a few books at first and figured that there was no writing on the topic, and then right when I was finishing up this article (of course), I discovered a whole shitload of new writing and resources to be explored. It all goes to show that awareness is being raised and more resources are becoming available - that's a good first step.

So, beyond consciousness raising, you can begin educating yourself. We've included a "Recommended Reading" section elsewhere in this zine to get you started.

The last step is organizing and direct action. This can be issue-based, around specific areas into which technology has intruded too far, or it can be general. It can be as simple as having conversations with coworkers and friends, like we are doing here, or as complex as Earth First! and their direct action on behalf of the environment - they are attacking the machines that are doing the harm, just like the Luddites did.

We need to take a new perspective, a new personal and social perspective that recognizes first, that all technology is political. For every advantage a new technology offers, there's always a disadvantage. It is more important to ask, What will new technology undo? as opposed to what it will do. It is important to question, "who will benefit?" and "who will suffer?" as well as asking, "What existing technology does this innovation replace?" And most important, "What problem is this new technology the solution for?"

Then, we need to concentrate on making technology that is responsible and good, that has few, if any, harmful consequences to people and to all aspects of our communities. We need to make the technology that we do accept into our lives meaningful.

Hacking Against the Man: The Subversion of Technology

Sometime last year I got this submission for Spectacle from a prisoner I was corresponding with named John Smallwood. John was nearing the end of some time he was serving for "conspiracy to commit computer fraud" (a.k.a. hacking). This is the story of how he used computer technology for subversive purposes. He was released from prison last year and we lost touch. Sorry, I don't have an address for him.

I believe that the end justifies the means. As long as no person is harmed physically, emotionally, or financially.

Let me say at this time that I do not consider myself a political prisoner. I am guilty of committing a crime. I broke the law. I am guilty of using my skills to obtain money, merchandise and services by fraudulent means. I exploited weaknesses in the computers of major corporations to acquire cash.

One day in December a few years ago I was loading my truck with boxes. It was 1988. I was going to use those boxes to pack and ship some items to another state. It was cold and wet, but I was living well, so I didn't mind too much. I heard a noise behind the dumpster and I got curious and I went back to take a look.

There sat a man about 24 years old, obviously cold. And in a box beside him were two kids. One about 4, and the other about

8 months old. The man was awake and ready to fight if he had to. He said, "I don't want any trouble." I told him "That's good. Because I would hate to have to fight you before I sat you down for a hot meal at my apartment".

He started crying.

I took him home and my girlfriend sat his kids in a warm bath tub. He explained that his wife dumped his kids off in his lap and told him that she

didn't want the responsibility of them anymore. He had no one to babysit while he worked and he knew of no one to help him. So he lost his job and his apartment.

It's pointless to say that "the Salvation Army or some other place would have helped." Don't kid yourself. Child protective services would have put those kids in a home. Without the father. And you don't protect a child by separating them from the parent. Especially when the parent loves the children. The man was in a panic situation and he didn't know what else to do. I figure he kept



hoping his woman would come back and he could go to work. Losing your lover hurts. Well, she didn't come back.

I decided to help the guy. I took him shopping and paid an apartment up for him (in full, for a year). I stocked his shelves with food and personal needs and I found him a job and found him a Christian daycare center sympathetic to his needs.

I didn't hand him a dollar and wish him luck. I helped him and spent almost \$11,000 doing it. He was debt free and secure. And I committed computer fraud to do it.

This incident happened in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Helping this person in this matter got me started. I often found single mothers and struggling families in need of help. I helped. I've helped families in many states. People from Earth First and the Animal Liberation Front have asked for my help. They got it. I had a voice mail box that various people would leave messages for me on. If they really had a serious problem, I would help. I never took anything from the individual. Only corporations. Runaways, abused women, homeless. I tried to be there. I had about three calls a week for help. The people I helped would refer others in need to me.

If you were one of these clowns with a "will work for food" sign, you had no help coming from me. I avoided the leeches and I got rather good at identifying them.

As a hacker, I could issue new social security records, alter credit histories, delete DMV files, locate missing people, trace telephone numbers, or cancel your

credit cards. This nonsense you see on TV about robbing a bank via computer is simply not possible anymore. It's also impossible to alter a criminal record via computer. Some might say it is possible, but I know that it isn't. I would go into exactly why it's impossible but I don't have the inclination to do so. Take my word for it. If it could have been done, the greatest hacker alive would have done it. And he couldn't do it. Neither can I. Neither can anyone else.

But other systems are hackable. The telephone company has no secrets from me. You can obtain a world of useful info from the phone company. If you have a secret, I can find it with a computer. No special computer required. If you can connect to a telephone, you can hack with it.

How did I get arrested? I made a serious mistake. I trusted the wrong person. I had an emergency project and I called somebody that I knew was a bit shaky, but I had no choice. This person turned me in and tried to take my equipment after the bust happened.

He only knew enough to get me a "Conspiracy to Commit" charge. Lucky for me, I had impressed a Secret Service Agent and he told me what was happening and who was responsible. I will be free in 7 months and I will be on the scene again. People out there still need help. And if it's within my power, I shall help them. I'm not saying I will break the law again. And I am not saying that I won't hack, I'm saying, that I will help if I can.

-John Smallwood

Appropriate Technology: Thoughts on Technology, Sustainability, "Lifestylism", and Anarchism at the Millennium

By Theo Witsell

There's a book I've had for a long time that I was hoping to have finished before I began writing this (no, I haven't even come close). It's called *Community Technology* and was written by a man named Karl Hess who has been a pioneer in building self-reliant, decentralized communities (made possible by a reducing dependence on corporate/government institutions in favor of a more DIY embracing of small-scale technologies like modern organic farming, aquaculture, solar/wind power, composting toilets, and so on). His basic assertion is that giant institutions (such as power utilities, hospitals, banks, and even governments) that profess to serve the interests of the people cannot possibly do so effectively because they are too large and out of touch with the very communities that they are supposed to serve. Yes! I am in complete agreement. In addition to their just being failures, Hess goes on to assert that in much of the world many of these large institutions have to maintain themselves by sheer force. Obviously their survival hinges on people's dependence on them for the

goods and services they sell us. This dependence insures that these institutions remain in control and that our freedom is kept in check.

Fortunately however, says Hess, we don't have to be dependent. The solution is hinted at by the growing trend (in some areas anyway) of a broad renaissance on the local, neighborhood level. Critical to this "breaking free" from centralized power is the need for us to take control of the means of producing the goods and services we depend on it for.

This means we must demystify and implement

small-scale technologies on a more intimate, human level.

So I've been thinking a lot about this self-sufficiency and resistance – about how to make my life more of a statement of each. This is linked to discussions friends and I have had recently about lifestyle activism vs. social activism. Many activists knock the idea of intentional communities and rural co-operative farms, dismissing them as "lifestylist" – akin to an ostrich sticking its head in the sand and avoiding pressing social problems. These "social activists", largely an urban group, contend



that the only effective means of activism involves linking with larger social movements and demonstrating. The rift between the two factions is a big deal, especially in the anarchist community. This debate, between the largely rural "lifestyle anarchists" and the largely-urban "social anarchists" has led to arguments that have escalated to such a level that Active Resistance, the yearly international anarchist gathering, was cancelled this year! Some people are bitterly divided over the issue and, as could be expected, there are purists on both sides.

Personally, I see a need for a balance between the two. Way back in my early college days, before I came to terms with the fact that I was pretty much an anarchist, I was a member of that Trotskyist phenomenon - the Socialist Workers Party (yes, that was probably them that shoved that newspaper, *The Militant*, down your throat at that demonstration that time). Though I found these people to be pretty deluded and misguided, they were very dedicated social activists. I was impressed that these "old people" were still so active. The problem was that they were rabid "anti-lifestylists". Not only did they scoff at my commitment to veganism and attack anarchists of every stripe, but when I asked why they didn't have a recycling bin in their bookstore, I was told that recycling was a lifestylist issue and that not only did they not see any use in it, but they thought it was detrimental to the real environmental struggle because it gave the workers the illusion that they are the source of ecological problems - not the capitalist exploiters. Woah. That was the beginning of the end for me and SWP.

Conversations with some of my anarchist/activist friends have revealed me to be somewhat of a lifestylist. Some folks lecture me about it. These people almost always live in

huge cities where there are a lot of organized social movements and it's conducive to that sort of activism. I live on a farm in a rural area of Arkansas (though Little Rock is encroaching) where there is a very different situation. I have little desire to live in a big city. Besides, I did that for two years in Atlanta and it was not for me (the cultural resources were great but the traffic and pollution were not). I guess part of this is that I like being in the woods. It's where I work. The other part is that I'm pretty skeptical as to any sort of sweeping victory on the part of the left - at least in my lifetime. I've been an activist for a while (both social and lifestyle) and it seems like I'm met with more hatred and contempt than anything else from the masses of people who I'm trying to "reach".

So at the risk of sounding like a dropout hippie, I've been *entertaining* the idea of getting some land in the Ozark Mountains of northern Arkansas and setting up some sort of co-operative farm or something. Granted, it's a long term goal, and I haven't *quite* given up on keeping my ties with society, but it is seeming more and more appealing every day. I've been renting a 50 acre farm in the Ouachita Mountains with two friends since October, and living there is definitely fueling the fire. It's nice and we're gardening and have chickens and stuff, but we're renting and could never afford to buy property in that area (as I mentioned, Little Rock is heading our way and the property values are increasing).

This goes back to that goal I have of sustainability and self-sufficiency. At this point I think it's essential for as many of us as possible to get together and create a network of self-sufficient (but cooperative) communities, be they rural or urban. We can implement alternative technologies and reduce, if not eliminate, authoritarian coercion from our lives. By that I mean

we can exist as independently as possible. These technologies can be applied in both rural and urban areas. Urban community gardens are becoming popular all over the place and, depending on where you live, solar power, rooftop gardens, aquaculture ponds, and edible landscaping may be possible. Some friends of mine in the middle of Pittsburgh live on the third floor of an apartment building and they compost much of their trash in a box of worms and dirt under their kitchen sink, so anything is possible. After all, much of Karl Hess's work was done in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood in the middle of Washington DC.

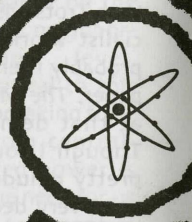
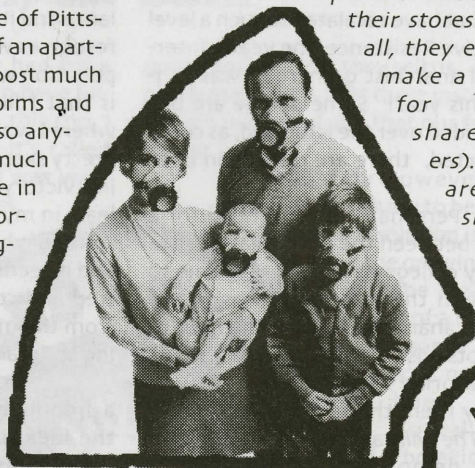
In rural areas, sustainable agriculture projects and co-operative farms are waiting for us to make them happen and land is still cheap in a lot of areas. Some friends of mine have just such a farm in the Ozarks and one of the appealing aspects for me is that they are entirely off the power/utility grid. They grow much of their own food, provide their own electricity with solar and wind power, get their own water from wells and springs, and so on. If there is chaos associated with the "Y2K problem", they will hardly be effected (they haven't had a blackout in the nine years they've lived there). They do use cellular phones (there is no service in the more remote parts of the Ozarks) and some make a living as computer programmers, but still... With the growing centralization of power and the increasing dependence of the masses on the services and resources provided by those with that power, a great deal of freedom stands to be gained through simple self-sufficiency.

The dangers of the current trends in corporate consolidation and government complicity are pretty evi-

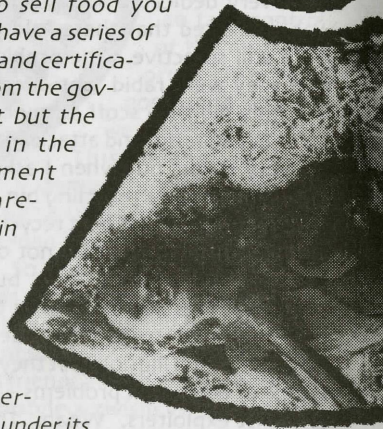
dent. For instance, let's time travel and look at food production in a slightly Orwellian, hypothetical future...

Suppose the supermarkets conglomerate further until they are all owned by one corporation. That corporation then decides to double

the prices on the food in their stores (after all, they exist to make a profit for their shareholders). There are no smaller places to



get food from because in order to sell food you have to have a series of licenses and certifications from the government but the leaders in the government are shareholders in the corporation that has all the supermarkets under its control, and the government will not permit the smaller stores. Those that try to operate without the state-sanctioned licenses get met with law enforcement, authoritarian harassment and imprisonment. The people are stuck because no one knows how to pro-



duce food on their own and even if they did, very few have any land on which to grow the food (and suppose Monsanto has a monopoly on seeds and will only provide them to corporate farms...).

Most people live in the sprawling cities that have grown over much of the fertile farmland, and all the rural land is owned by massive

agribusiness companies that are in turn owned by the corporation that runs all the super-

markets. The people are stuck with nothing to do

but work shitty jobs to pay huge prices for food just to survive.

Whew! Sure this is a bit of a worst case scenario, but it is the inevitable outcome of the current trend in the conglomeration of power and resources. Similar events are already taking place in the media and health care industries. The effective media (the media that reaches hundreds of millions of people) for instance, is owned by a handful of huge global companies. They own all the big newspapers, magazines, and TV stations. If they don't want certain things to make it onto the air, they just leave them off. A prime example is the coverage of global climate change and the vanishing ozone layer. These issues aren't going away. In fact, they are becoming more and more serious each year. This is obvious from looking at the scientific literature but you wouldn't

know it from listening to/viewing the mainstream (read: corporate) media.

If we don't start now by implementing alternatives in our own lives - even if it's just to show others that they are possible - we will just continue to plummet into a ridiculous culture of consumption and gluttony that has no concern for the future. I heard on the radio this morning that the US produces 25% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. Americans make up 4.6 % of the world's population. With all of this "free market" and "free trade" legislation passing recently, US, Japanese, and western European multinational companies are facilitating the "global economy" by modernizing the third world. Billions of new consumers are now being put in a position of being able to waste tons of resources and capital buying shit they don't need while destroying the environment, exploiting the labor of poor people, and squandering our already scarce natural resources. Great plan guys! Way to go! Fucking brilliant!

But I digress... It's no secret that the world is falling apart. I'm convinced though, that we don't have to be resigned to that fact. We can stop it if we implement changes - both in our social organization and in the technologies we use. Otherwise, as more and more of us crowd each other out, and resources become scarce (or climate change sets off some nasty "natural" disasters), our fragile social order will rip to shreds and ordinary people will prey on each other like starving animals (that is, after all, exactly what they'll be). If you think the cities are nasty and dangerous now, stick around on our current path. Perhaps you'll be able to find me tending a garden down some hollow somewhere in the Ozarks. Until then I'll be watching the power conglomerate and trying to implement resistance and alternatives to this sick system of power, coercion, violence, and waste into my life and those of others.

ISRAEL'S SECRET NUCLEAR PROGRAM

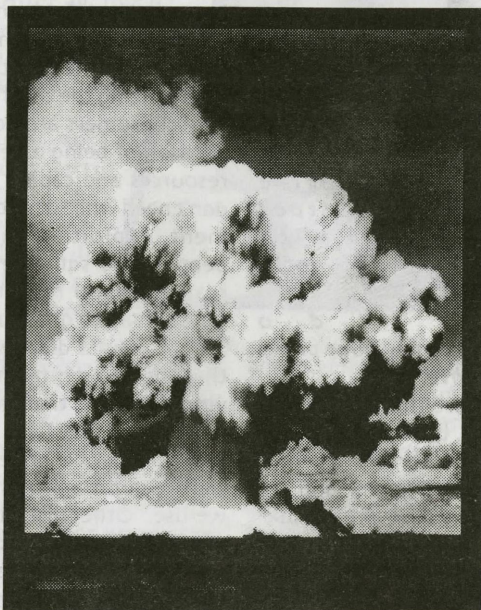
by Ravi Grover

On July 1945, the United States exploded its first nuclear bomb, tested in secrecy in a remote desert area in New Mexico. At the end of World War II, less than one month after its first test, the US military dropped atomic bombs on two highly populated cities in Japan. The result of these two bombings were widespread destruction, loss of human life, and long term contamination from radiation fallout. Other nations took the path of the US with the Soviet Union exploding their first atomic bomb in an underground test in 1945. England followed with a test in 1952. In 1954 India approached the United Nations to start dialogue on banning nuclear weapons. While talks ensued for several years France conducted its first

nuclear test in 1960, and China in 1964. Finally in 1965 the United Nations drew up a resolution calling for complete nuclear disarmament. The US, Britain, and the USSR responded with their own proposal. What eventually came about was the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT limited nuclear weapons to states that detonated nuclear bombs before the year 1970, these being the US, England, France, Russia, and China. These five nations could not provide nuclear weapons assistance to other countries. Countries that had not conducted nuclear tests could not accept or produce

these weapons. Non-nuclear weapon states could however use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and were required to allow international inspection of their plants on regular basis. Signed by 178 nations, the NPT was activated in 1970. Of countries who did not sign the NPT, three were seen as capable of

having full nuclear weapon capabilities. The three nations were India, Pakistan, and Israel. India and Pakistan called the NPT discriminatory and undemocratic, citing that only five nations could have nuclear weapons while other countries were required to be disarmed. In 1974, India, conducted its first nuclear test, saying it was done for "peaceful" purposes (as China had said in 1964).



In 1994, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was introduced to halt all nuclear tests. Between 1995 and 1996 France received worldwide condemnation for their tests in the South Pacific, furthering the popularity and support for the CTBT. Signed by 125 countries, the UN made the treaty official in 1996, and asked that countries start ratification. The five nuclear powers have yet to ratify the CTBT in their countries, including the US who conducted two tests in 1997. In mid-1998 controversy was sparked again when India conducted five

underground nuclear tests with rival Pakistan following up with five of their own nuclear tests. Both nations dealt with global protest with the US threatening to impose sanctions. Throughout the chaotic history of the great nuclear debate, one country has gone uncriticized and unchecked. It has not denied nor acknowledged that it has a nuclear weapons stockpile. It has received no pressure from the west, from the five nuclear powers, or the UN when steps were taken to reduce nuclear threat in this world. That country is Israel.

Israel's nuclear program and the US cover up

The nation of Israel was created in 1948 by the United Nations as a homeland for Jewish people. This idea was popular because of the Holocaust inflicted upon Jews in Europe by Nazi Germany during World War II. Several years following its formation, Jews from Europe and the Middle East mass migrated to make this new country their home. Along with Israel's development rose its national security. Historically, Israel has not had good relations with surrounding Arab nations and because of this its military expanded with assistance from many first world powers. After World War II, many of the American Jewish scientists who had worked on the Manhattan Project (the US' secret nuclear program during the WWII) left the US to work for Israel. The Israelis also received help military-wise from the US government, one of its most loyal allies since Israel's formation, and France in the late 50's and early 60's. At the time President Eisenhower had offered US assistance to build a civilian nuclear power program. The offer came due to Israel's inability to acquire oil from other Middle Eastern nations because of their hostility towards Israel. Already the Israeli government started construction of "Dimona", a nuclear power plant built in secrecy in the Negev Desert. The plant was built deep underground away from sight and protected by the Israeli airforce, with jets flying over Dimona 24 hours a day. In 1960 the New York Times published a news story revealing the secrecy of the Dimona research facility and the help they received

from France with construction and technology. Israel issued their own statement saying that Dimona was built for peaceful civilian purposes. The question was, if the plant was for civilian use and not military use, why was it cloaked in such secrecy and heavily guarded by the Israeli military? The Dimona project was under control of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission; not mentioned to the public was that the IAEA was under control of the Ministry of Defense!

Under criticism, Israel started allowing US Presidents to visit Dimona, with President Kennedy visiting in 1962 (Israel will not allow UN inspectors inside and US officials have never fully inspected Dimona). Kennedy never spoke of Israel's construction of a bomb. To further suspicions, in 1963 Israel spent \$100 million to purchase 25 medium range missiles from France. And in 1964, according to the CIA, Israel conducted a low yield nuclear explosion test in an underground cavern close to Dimona. US Ambassador Barbour also confirmed that Israel was fully capable of producing warheads to be deployed on missiles.

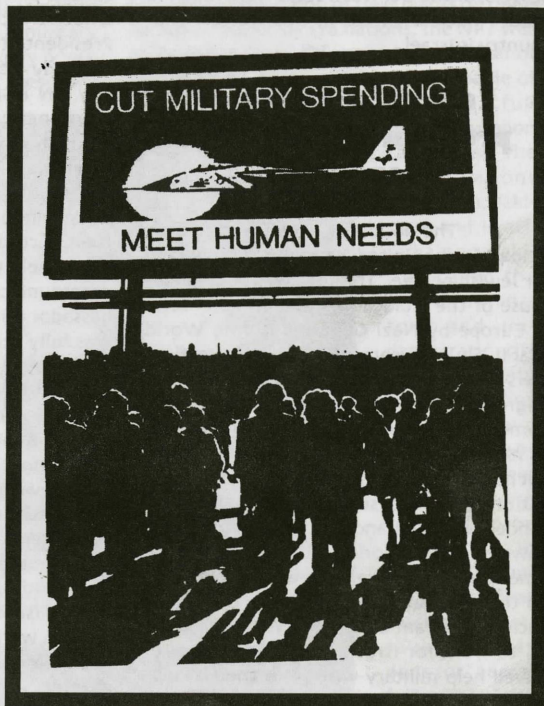
In 1970, the New York Times again printed another article pertaining to Israel, reporting of US' non-objection to Israel's nuclear weapons production. That same year a Mississippi senator proclaimed on a television interview that Israel had the ability to develop nuclear weapons. By 1971 Israel acquired long range missiles; according to former Israeli officials by 1973 Israel had at least 22 warheads. Three years later the CIA put their estimate at ten warheads. The CIA also reported that in 1974 enriched uranium disappeared from ships near Israel. Also 100 kg of enriched plutonium turned up missing from a mining plant in Apollo, Pennsylvania, many believing that this uranium was smuggled in a joint deal between Israeli officials and plant management. During the Carter presidency, when Pakistan's president was asked about its nuclear capabilities by US officials, the President fired back "why don't you people talk to Israel?" Israel has not only come under very little criticism from the US for its secret program, it virtually goes uncriticized for acquiring large amounts of uranium from South Africa, a country that has been heavily denounced in the past by people and governments all over the world.

South Africa and Israeli relations

Israel was created by Jewish people in response to anti-Semitism, persecution, the Holocaust, and other historical attacks. Ironically, Israel formed a strong alliance with South Africa, a country run by a white supremacist Apartheid government. Israel provided South Africa with military technological assistance while South Africa provided Israel with enriched uranium. When the UN placed an arms embargo in response to South Africa's brutal treatment towards its black population, Israel provided South Africa with top-of-the-line fighter planes for military use. Mirroring South Africa's white supremacy the UN General Assembly defined in 1975 that Israeli "Zionism" was "a form of racism and racial discrimination."

Of importance is South Africa's and Israel's mutual development of a nuclear weapons program. American spy satellites once photographed the South African government in what looked like preparations for a nuclear test in the Kalahari desert. Also noted were the presence of Israeli military personnel. In 1979 in an area where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic, South Africa and Israel used a tiny island to jointly conduct a nuclear test; the explosion was picked up by satellites. ABC News ran a story on the subject but the Carter administration differed with those who believed a nuclear bomb had been detonated. The US government publicly stated that although there may have been a nuclear explosion, it was most likely transmission interference caused by small meteors that caused the satellite to pick up the images that it did. Not told was that US spy planes were forced to land in Australia by the South African Navy during the test or that traces of radiation were found in the thyroid

glands of sheep near the area where the test had occurred. Years later, several organizations including the Congressional Black Caucus issued a report (using evidence released under the Freedom of Information Act) that both Presidents Carter and Reagan had covered up the fact that Israel and South Africa had conducted a test and called for an investigation. The investigation never happened.



More US cover up, Vanunu, and current Israeli privilege

Into the 1980's the US continued its policy of ignoring Israel's possession of weapons of mass destruction. Under Carter and Reagan, Israeli officials were allowed access to the Pentagon and use of US intelligence data. In 1981 two representatives introduced a bill that would have cut off US aid to countries that manufactured nuclear weapons. One year earlier, the CIA reported

that Israel could have easily developed a low yield neutron bomb. The State Department eventually stopped the bill from being discussed, noting that it would have caused the US to fully investigate Israel. In 1985 a representative introduced a bill that would deny US aid to countries that collaborated with South Africa. The House Foreign Affairs Committee convinced the representative to withdraw this bill. The US continued pretending to not know of Israel's arsenal. Israel continued to keep silent on their program, never admitting or denying what they were building. Unfortunately for Israel, one former nuclear technician that worked in Dimona finally went public.

In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu approached London's Sunday Times and provided top secret photos of the Dimona plant. Sunday Times not only interviewed Vanunu but published his photos, revealing that Israel was indeed creating nuclear warheads. The former nuclear scientist stated in his interview that Israel was the world's sixth largest nuclear power. It's been estimated that Israel has at least half as many warheads as China, some say 100-200 nuclear warheads. Eventually Vanunu was kidnapped by Israeli officials in Rome, tried in Israel for espionage and treason and given a sentence of 18 years. He is currently held in a 6 by 10 ft prison cell and is largely ignored by the media in the US for his act of conscience.

There is also more recent evidence showing Israel's nuclear arsenal. During the Gulf War, Israel defended itself by placing missiles aimed at Iraq. On images received by American satellites, Israeli defense missiles were armed with nuclear warheads. In 1997 Egypt's foreign minister asked that all Middle Eastern countries to not only be nuclear-free, but open up to international inspection. Both the US and Israel pressured the Foreign Minister to keep quiet on the issue, which he eventually did. Libya has also introduced to the UN a way to speed up the Middle East peace process by calling for an elimination of nuclear weapons, specifically citing Israel. Lebanon also wanting peace cited Israel's weapons arsenal.

Clearly, evidence shows that Israel had long been capable of producing nuclear weapons, but the US has deliberately looked

the other way for the last 50 years. While Iraq is threatened with air strikes for not allowing UN inspectors into its plants and India and Pakistan were criticized for having nuclear weapons, Israel goes completely unchecked. Both Israel and the US have asked for a conflict-free Middle East, yet neither has taken steps to effectively promote the peace process. In fact they have done the opposite by stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. So why has Israel kept this secret from the world? Because it knows that it would be criticized from the world, it would be forced to deal with international inspection by the UN, and receive more pressure from the anti-nuclear movement. The issue does not stop with Israel though. Nuclear testing spreads into other issues, with mining of plutonium and uranium destroying the environment. Every nuclear test conducted causes significant damage and wide spread contamination, with radiation seeping into the soil and air that life on earth (including the human race) uses. Every nuclear bomb built means less money spent to benefit the people. In a civilized world, progress must be made. Progress does not equal potential nuclear holocaust. All nuclear tests must come to a complete halt. All nuclear weapons productions must be stopped. Most countries have strongly supported the idea of disarmament, it is the (admitted or secret) nuclear powers that have slowed down progress. Even India and Pakistan have recently agreed to sign the NPT so long as the treaty is ratified by all countries by 1999. Disarmament must ensue for a truly peaceful world.

SOURCES

- Israel Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America Jane Hunter
- The Samson Option Seymour M. Hersh
- End the Arms Race / 405-825 Granille St / Vancouver BC V6Z 1K9 Canada
- Greenpeace / 1436 U St NW / Washington DC 20009
- Middle Eastern Realities / PO Box 18367 / Washington DC 20036
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- U.S Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu / 2206 Fox Ave., Madison, WI 53711
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Media and Technology

Part A: Technology as represented in media

There are several points I wish to make about the way media (mostly visual media) treats the idea of technology.

1. Media, particularly films, send us conflicting images of how we are supposed to view technology - both with skepticism and with open arms. In these fictional accounts, we are shown a desolate, bleak future where our lives are run by machines, but we are also supposed to champion technological innovation in medicine and science.

There are contradictions within movies, for example, in *Blade Runner*. This is the typical "bleak future" scenario where technology has been allowed to run rampant and has taken complete control over people's lives. In addition, the newest technological innovation - the Nexus 6 replicants (cyborgs) - are "bad" and are being hunted by the blade runner. This all changes at the end when technology becomes something to be desired (in the form of a woman), and the speculation that Decker (Harrison Ford's character) himself is a replicant is supposed to give the technology a human face and appeal to your sympathies. The same could be said about the *Terminator* movies - computers and technology have created this horrible future for us, but technology saves the day in the form of cyborg Arnold Swartzenegger.

There are contradictions between

movies as well - we all know that movies of similar ideas/themes are often released in pairs (*Armageddon/Deep Impact* anyone?). About two years ago, the films *Contact* and *Event Horizon* were released around the same time, both dealing with the development of inter-dimensional time/space travel. *Event Horizon* shows us that this has horrific, terrifying results, while

Contact shows us a benign, feel-good, "there's hope for the future" scenario - a kind of idea that if government would get out of the way, technology could save us all. (From what? That's what I'd like to know.). Regardless, the message being sent isn't clear at all.



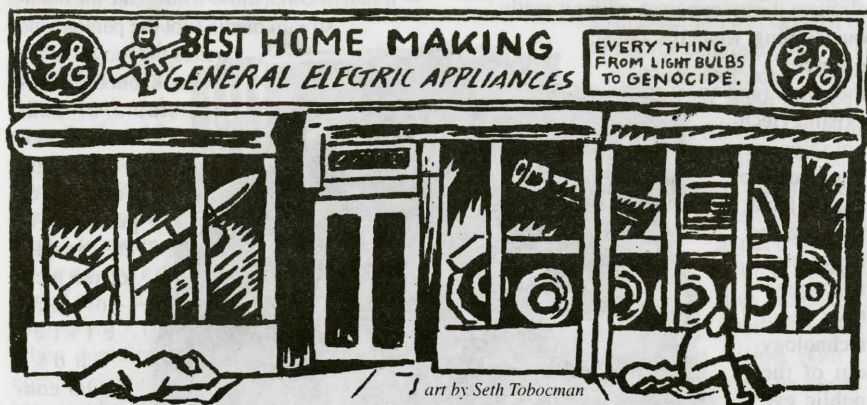
2. On the other hand, if you look

at the TV news and newspapers (and even quasi-historical films), media comes out almost overwhelmingly in favor of technology, "progress," and "innovation." New technologies are reported matter-of-factly, if not in a positive light, and the news often acts as an advertisement for new products and services considered "innovative". You never really hear any speculation on what the possible consequences are to our health, the environment, etc. Not only that, but those who distrust or question technology are portrayed in a negative light or discredited. Ted Kaczynski (*The Unabomber*), was portrayed as a crazy, modern day Luddite - a backwards mountain man. You never hear that Henry

Ford was an anti-Semite, and most people who live in outlying or rural areas (not just the Amish), are understood to be simple, peaceful folk who can't comprehend using new technology and would probably fuck it up if they tried.

Considering that major media outlets are either owned or funded (through advertising) by the major corporations, it's no wonder that media comes out in favor of their innovations and doesn't question how good these inventions are for the general public.

nario, the Empire possesses far superior technology, portrayed as stark and foreboding. The Empire holds the upper hand with their elite battle cruisers and ultimately, with the Death Star. The Death Star is a superior technology that grants the Empire even greater power. This is contrasted by the Rebel Alliance, which is relegated to using far inferior and outdated equipment, with nothing approaching the magnitude of the Empire's secret weapon. The technology associated with Luke Skywalker and the Alliance is for



art by Seth Tobocman

A good recent example is the efforts that Monsanto took to suppress a documentary on its bovine growth hormone rBGH, which showed the chemical in a negative light. (For other feats of corporate pressure, try reading the book *Toxic Sludge Is Good For You*).

3. And sometimes, usually without meaning to, films will illustrate or examine some of the more complex, philosophical issues surrounding technology.

An excellent example of this is the *Star Wars* trilogy, both because technology plays a significant role in the film and because it has made a lasting impression on American culture. In some ways, this movie is a clear illustration of the class issues associated with technology, a simple story of the "haves" versus the "have-nots". In this sce-

good - the droids are friendly, Luke has a mechanical hand, and humans and technology coexist peacefully. The Rebel Alliance is the working class to the Empire's elite.

But in some ways, the class metaphor is not so clear. The destruction of the Death Star by the Rebel Alliance, using far inferior technology leaves us with the lesson that technology will not conquer all and there is still hope. It is not an anti-technology movie, just a "human spirit wins out over machine" kind of theme.

Star Wars, like *Blade Runner*, has a lot of other lessons to be learned as well, some about technology (the personification of robots - giving them human personalities in the case of C3PO, Darth Vader's reliance on a breathing apparatus and the melding of man and machine), and some not (the portrayal of women/gender roles and stereo-

types). We can't underestimate the affect of these movies on the mainstream American psyche and on attitudes toward technology and other hot issues.

4. And the point I can never talk about enough, is the role of Advertising. We live under an economy based on industrialism and the creation of new technology. We have advertising that sells us this consumer/material based culture and tells us what we need. Advertising is the propaganda that teaches us to accept new technology and assimilate it into our lives without really questioning what the consequences of these new (and existing) technologies are. They've done a good job at keeping the larger issues and questions about technology out of the public eye and out of the news. Do we question new technologies? Do we question the need to create or even doubt the usefulness of new innovations?

The buy-buy-buy consumerism that we are sold through advertising is an essential support to industrialism and the throwaway, convenience-based kind of culture. After all, these companies need us to continually buy their products, and they ensure that we continue to do so by artificially creating needs. Corporations and advertising make us insecure about our bodies, cre-

ate competition with the neighbors, and by tell us, in millions of images every day, that there is a product that will solve all of our (real and artificial) problems. They need us to believe, without questioning, that new innovation is always good and should always be welcomed.

It is important here to remember the biases of media and the class issues that are related to technology in particular. First, technology and electronic media have their own self-interest and self-preservation in mind. Second, those who create the mainstream media (not the person who writes the movie or the book, but the major studio or publisher that funds it, the magazines which publicize it, etc), are part of the technological elite. Those who control the technology in our culture also control information, and increasingly it's those who control information who control power.

As I said, we can't underestimate the affect of the media and movies on the mainstream American psyche and on attitudes toward technology. We are all "indoc-trinated" by being inundated with images of certain situations - those previously unthinkable become perfectly acceptable and ultimately unquestionable.



Media and Technology

Part B: How technology has affected the way we communicate with each other.

It is worth discussing the effect of technology on media itself. Each of the major innovations (printing, television, internet) has dramatically affected cultures and the way people learn and think. Partially this directly affects us, because, for example, as the costs of printing and photocopying have declined over the last 15 years or so, it has enabled us access to print media in an unprecedented way. I think it is important that, when deciding to communicate our ideas and to learn from the world, we think about the pros and cons of all the ways we have to communicate.

Print vs. Audio

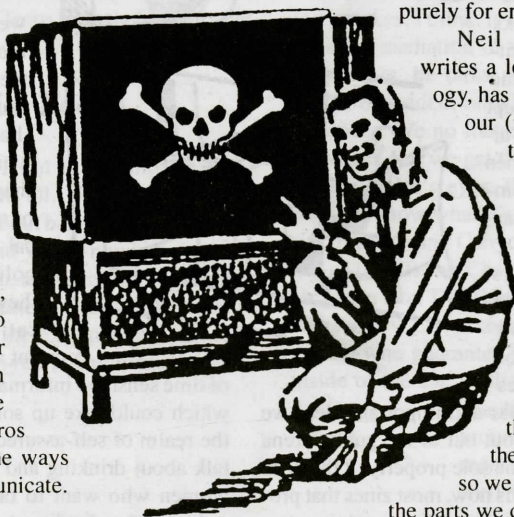
First of all - we in the punk/zine community deal with the written versus oral argument all the time. Our primary forms of communication (other than interpersonal, like letters and phone calls) are through bands and zines. There are pros and cons of both. The oral tradition (not only in our scene) is more communal: we physically go to places to watch bands, and the experience also involves socializing with other people who are there to do the same. It requires a physical action and some effort on our part, because it doesn't go by our own personal schedule. We can pick up a zine or book at any time,

stop when we want to, or pause to go to the bathroom, but it doesn't work that way with a live band (or lecturer, or spoken word artist, or organizer). It requires that we have an appropriate attention span and that we be able to retain the information that is being transmitted, whether or not it is purely for entertainment.

Neil Postman, who writes a lot about technology, has talked about how our (mainstream) culture has moved away from this aspect, first with the printing press and then with television. With a zine or book, we read at our own pace and the information is there in written form so we can go back over the parts we don't understand.

However, we can't ask questions, and there is no immediate interaction or dialog, like there can be in a more communal way. While this takes some effort on the reader's part, we are subject to our own schedule and not to that of the band or speaker.

We have done that in the punk scene as well. Spoken word isn't that common, and when we do see it, sometimes it's Dan O'Mahony talking about having "a problem with gambling" as opposed to being a transfer of information that affects our lives. This means that we place different values on the way we communicate. We value live interaction as immediate and emotional - and so we have relegated it to pri-



marily the venue of entertainment. We value the written word because it is enduring and less simplistic.

The printed word fosters the idea of individuality. Print makes it possible for individuals to exist without the community and still be informed. In essence, it is destructive to community and social integration. This would be good when you are separated from the community by distance (i.e., punks spread out over cities and states and not localized except in major urban areas), but bad when you are in the community and not participating.

This means that, in the punk scene, we have taken all of the complex issues we need to discuss and important ideas we need to think about out of the public arena and made them the sole property of the print media. As it stands now, most zines that provide this kind of community-sustaining support are unreliable, mostly because of financial aspects and the non-viability of zines (their inability to be self-supporting). Except for *MaximumRockNRoll* which doesn't allow much discussion, and *Punk Planet* which comes out bimonthly, most other zines that are large enough to create any kind of national dialogue publish on a sporadic schedule. This means that our avenues for discussion are inefficient and, well, pointless at times. It is difficult for us to discuss large or pressing issues in any kind of cohesive way. I'm not saying that all the kids in punk need to develop and adhere to a certain platform, but when large issues affect us, they need to be dealt with in a timely manner, and they're

not. This allows misinformation, gossip, and guesswork that are counterproductive and pretty damaging at times. Think about the controversies in the past year or two, and how they exploded into big issues instead of being discussed and dealt with,

like the ones surrounding Jux/Punks with Presses, Tim Yo/ *MaximumRockNRoll*, Felix von Havoc/ Code 13, or the Chris Bonner saga in *HeartattaCk*.

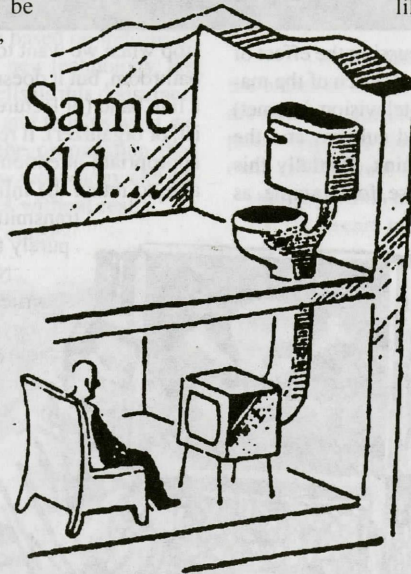
Somehow, we have come to place more value on the immediate and the emotional, which means that bands win out, while the information they impart is personal or sometimes theoretical (if they talk about politics at all) – but, they aren't communicating or discussing

"current affairs" or any kind

of time sensitive information. Spoken word, which could take up some of the slack, is the realm of self-assured men who want to talk about drinking and sexual exploits, or women who want to talk politics but are written off as femi-nazis or riot grrrls.

So, zines, which are more suited to this kind of information, don't handle it very. Those large zines that do come out frequently and on time don't care to have discussions, and the ones that do care are smaller zines that are either too disorganized or financially vulnerable to be able to communicate with any regularity. It's frustrating that zines are not financially viable and we as a scene continue to pay the steadily-on-the-rise record prices, and zines remain the same price, suspended in time.

In our scene, we need to address the print vs. audio aspect, and if discussion is a priority (as it should be), we need to make ways for this to happen. Whether it is by



making zines more viable or reintroducing information into the live experience. This could mean encouraging spoken word, making workshops at fests more productive (even though fests don't happen regularly enough to allow a steady or reliable amount of discussion), or by creating a new way of communicating that meets all of our needs.

On the other hand, in the leftist political scene, for some reason, it's more common to see speakers and the oral tradition being continued (think Chomsky, lectures, etc). Is this because the left has been around longer and is more experienced? Because the scene is made up of older folks? Or because they learn from their history better than punk kids do?

Electronic Media

Television is the most passive medium of them all. Unlike the internet, which I talked about before in that long neo-Luddite rant, and which requires some active participation, television simply requires you to sit and watch. That's it. You just sit and absorb and there is no active participation required by you at any time. You can't

ask questions and you can't respond - even the kind of delayed, drawn out discussion that is possible through zines isn't usually an option. More than that, Postman argues that television has had an even greater impact on our attention spans - making it difficult for many people to follow long or complex story lines, or to retain interest in anything that is not fast paced and "action-packed". There are many other discussions which are possible here, and a good place to start is by picking up the book *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, by Jerry Mander.

The most important argument that Jerry makes, I think, is in regards to what he calls the mediation of experience. In *Four Arguments*, he talks about how we have grown dependent on television for our experiences. We no longer experience things ourselves, but we get them filtered through someone else's eyes, through the TV. We may not know what it's like to stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon or under the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, but we've probably seen it on TV. (think of how similar this is to the new Lexus commercials (and many others) who guarantee you complete peace inside of the car, walling you off from the

chaotic and noisy world around you). This argument applies equally as well to the internet because even though it is more participatory and interactive, it means mediating the experience of human interaction through a computer.

Electronic media, including TV and the internet, are tied into a lot of class issues that are pretty obvious within punk and activism. First of all, television is a medium that is out of our hands. We do not have access to it and the culture we participate in is not repre-



sented on it, except when America's Most Wanted or 20/20 decides to do a segment on straightedge as a gang/domestic terrorism. This limits us because the mainstream culture is moving away from print based discussion toward electronic discussion at a very fast pace, along with the ideas discussed earlier about print being a less immediate avenue for discussion. Politically, it means that it is becoming even more difficult for us to compete and to guarantee that a valid "marketplace of ideas" exists. Democracy is based on the idea that a multitude of ideas is available to the "consumers" who can hear all sides and then make an informed judgement on how to proceed. If the access to all ideas is limited, that reduces the value of the choices made. What happens when all of this media is controlled by a single voice - the corporation?

Conclusions

The point of all this is that we need to understand what effect the technology we

use has on the ideas we are trying to communicate. Large and complex ideas are not suited for the oral "arena" - and are better suited to zines. On the other hand, issues that require discussion are not suited as much to zines because the discussion is drawn out and seriously delayed. The internet is a better tool for immediate discussions, since it is immediate and both written and communal in a way, but we need to first tackle the idea that it had serious class biases, even within our minority scene. We need to examine the purpose of our communication and find the medium that is best suited to it, keeping in mind all of the biases.

If punk is going to survive and avoid stagnation, we need to develop ways to communicate effectively. We need to take advantage of the tools we already have and maybe do a little research.

How do the problems we have mimic those experienced throughout history by the dominant culture? What about the struggles of the leftist movement at the beginning of the 1900's in the US, and their use of newsletters/small press/ "spoken word"/oration?



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GENETIC ENGINEERING, BIO(TECH)WARFARE, AND CORPORATE CONTROL OF LIFE ON EARTH

By Theo Witsell

What happens when biotechnology is controlled by corporations and governments who have no regard for the environment, humanity, or anything else other than money and power? Read on...

Bio(technological)warfare for the Twenty-first Century

The United States Congress, in a recent bout of "drug war" hysteria, approved \$23 million for further research into the application of "mycoherbicides", soil-borne fungi capable of eradicating plants, for US anti-drug aims. These fungi are being genetically engineered by government researchers to wipe out plants that provide the raw material for cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. According to an Associated Press article in the October 23, 1998 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, researchers are now testing a fungus that they believe will kill narcotics plants

without harming other plants or animal life. The goal of the legislation, guided through congress by Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio and Rep. Bill McCollum, R-Fla., is "to cut foreign production of illegal drugs headed for the United States".

The countries that would be targeted (with aerial spraying) – Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia – are the major producers of the world's coca crop (the plant that is refined to make cocaine). Coca plants play a vital role in the economy



and cultures indigenous to these countries. In his book *One River: Explorations and Discoveries in the Amazon Rain Forest*, ethnobotanist Wade Davis, who spent eight years traveling South America, living among

the native people and learning their uses of the native plants, writes this about colleague Tim Plowman's time spent with the Kogi and Ika people who live in the Colombian Andes:

"In a sacred landscape in which every plant is a manifestation of the divine, the chewing of hayo, a variety of coca found only in the mountains of Colombia, represents the most profound expression of culture. Distance in the mountains is not measured in miles but in coca chews. When two men meet, they do not shake hands, they exchange leaves. Their societal ideal is to abstain from sex, eating, and sleeping while staying up all night, chewing hayo and chanting the names of the ancestors. Each week the men chew about a pound of dry leaves, thus absorbing as much as a third of a gram of cocaine each day of their adult lives. In entering the Sierra to study coca, Tim was seeking a route into the very heart of Indian existence."

The fact that European-American lawmakers in the United States consider it their place to wipe out plants that are so central to the lives of indigenous people in Latin America (especially when the US's own CIA admitted that it brought cocaine into the U.S.!!!) goes a long way to expose the fact that U.S. imperialist/colonial aims are alive and well. The legislation passed by Congress also provides for the promotion of U.S.-sanctioned "alternative crops" to narcotics plants for South American farmers. This may seem benevolent at a glance, but it should be realized that the crops being touted as suitable alternatives, such as chocolate, are major crops that are legally imported for

profit by U.S.-owned corporations under so-called "free trade" laws (anybody see a pattern emerging here?). That, and the outrageous fact that U.S. lawmakers see it as their place to go messing around with the ecology and domestic affairs of other countries.

U.S. officials acknowledge that it will be necessary to "win the support of gov-

ernments of drug-producing countries" in order for the project to be successful. Notice the "win the support of governments" bit, but nothing about "winning the support of the people". If the governments of these South American countries represent the interests of the indigenous people in their countries at all like the U.S. government represents the interests of indigenous people at home, then they have much to watch out for.

The AP article

goes on to say that "unless the political groundwork is laid, farmers' unions or environmental groups in the coca-growing countries could come out in opposition, nullifying the possibility of cooperation". U.S. officials are also "bracing themselves for allegations that Washington is planning biological warfare against these countries".

Well, obviously! What else could this possibly be described as? This isn't the first time such allegations have been raised, either. For years, the Cuban government has come forward with claims that the U.S. government has dropped biological agents (pests & plant pathogens) from planes over Cuban agricultural areas, devastating food crops in attempts to further reduce Cuba's capacity to feed its people while the U.S. maintained an economic blockade against them. This doesn't seem far-fetched at all when one considers that the U.S. government readily



art by Kevin Pyle

admits that it has tried for years to foment revolt against the government of Fidel Castro through the constant flood of propaganda from Miami-based radio station, Radio Marti. Government researchers report that coca plants doused with the new fungus wilt, and that decades must pass before the area is again suitable for growing coca. They also claim that beans, corn, and other crops grown nearby are unaffected, though I couldn't find any data or claims about the effects on the enormous diversity of native plants in that area of the world.

Larger Fears About Bio(technological)warfare:

Some activists fear that this sort of biotechnology will be used not only to wipe out drug crops but also to inflict starvation on countries that won't "play ball" with the United States' plans for the global economy. Just think, mycoherbicides could be engineered to wipe out food crops and then be sprayed over any country that the U.S. currently has some problem with (Cuba, Iraq, Yugoslavia... China.. Russia...). When the targeted country can no longer grow food to feed itself and its people are starving, perhaps they will be more compliant with the U.S. government plans. Couple this with a trade embargo/sanctions and it's even worse! Some might consider this alarmist but in light of the US's track record and current strong-arming of other countries (both in trade policy and out-and-out warfare), it's certainly plausible. Just this morning (5/24/99), National Public Radio reported that U.S.-led NATO bombing last night targeted power plants and water pumping stations in Yugoslavia, reducing water reserves in some areas to 10% of normal (and falling). Who is this supposed to be hurting? And this is after they've already bombed roads, bridges, factories, and prisons! Prisons! Anybody think this is an outrage besides me? Our government is so completely out of hand! They call it "increasing domestic pressure" on Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosovic.

Monsanto, Monopoly and Ecological Catastrophe

There is even fear of similar ecological havoc being wrought on the home front. Much of the recent criticism of the biotechnology industry centers around the giant multinational chemical company Monsanto and their constant maneuvering to gain total control the world seed market. These folks, who brought us "Roundup Ready%" crops and "Terminator Seed" technology, have pretty much proven that they will go to any unethical lengths to achieve total market dominance. For example, the terminator seed technology results in genetically engineered plants that produce sterile seeds. Since the seeds are sterile, farmers are forced to become dependent on Monsanto each season since no seeds can be saved from the previous crop – a practice that has been the mainstay of agriculture for thousands of years. Couple this with Monsanto's cancerous growth in the ownership of the global seed market, and it makes sense. Monsanto now controls 25 to 35 percent of U.S. corn acreage and potentially 85 % of the U.S. cotton seed market. They are buying up seed companies all the time and are the most aggressive promoter of genetic engineering in agriculture.

Scientists are just beginning to understand the profound ecological consequences of genetic engineering. These range from bacteria genetically altered to digest crop waste severely altering soils, destroying soil organism and suppressing the growth of living plants, to pollen from crops containing insecticide-producing genes blowing into native plants and wiping out insects crucial to the survival of ecosystems. The danger of releasing these altered organisms into the environment is that you can't recall an organism that can breed or pass its genetic material on to other species. In spite of the possibilities of total ecological catastrophe, these technologies are being implemented with little testing and scientific studies have

been suppressed by powerful media corporations who depend on Monsanto and other corporations involved in genetic engineering for their advertising dollars.

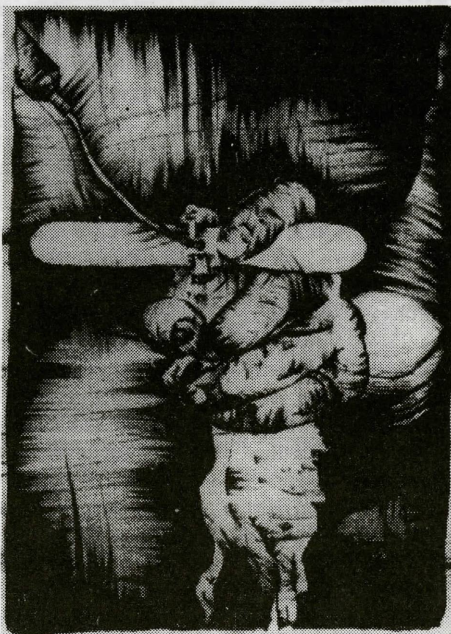
The Media Keeps Quiet for the Biotech Giants

Despite almost worldwide opposition to genetic engineering, there has been relatively little resistance in the United States. Activists assert that this is due, at least in part, to the pervading media silence in the United States

regarding the threats of biotechnology. In a somewhat-publicized incident in Florida, two investigative journalists were fired from their jobs at a FOX TV station after they went public with their story of how their bosses tried to cover up their findings that Monsanto's recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) was a threat to human and animal health. Jane Akre and Steve Wilson were hired as investigative journalists in 1997 for

Florida TV station WTVT FOX 13. They did a story on Monsanto's genetically-engineered rBGH (aka Posilac[®]) which is injected into cows so that they will produce more milk. They found that the hormone was never properly tested by the FDA prior to approval to be put on the market and that the FDA refused to allow open scientific peer review of the study's raw data. They also found that rBGH made some cows sick (one Florida farmer lost 75% of his herd and

Monsanto and Monsanto-funded researchers at the University of Florida withheld from him the information that other dairy herds were suffering from similar problems). They also uncovered that, contrary to Monsanto's claims, milk wasn't being tested for antibiotics prior to human consumption. Finally, their report focused heavily on concerns raised by scientists about potential cancer risks associated with "insulin-like growth factor-I" (IGF-1). Treatments of rBGH lead to significantly increased levels of IGF-1 in milk and recent studies suggest that IGF-1 is a powerful tumor growth promoter.



art by Kevin Pyle

Akre and Wilson submitted their story to their editors and were "repeatedly ordered to go forward and broadcast demonstrably inaccurate and dishonest versions of the story" after some "very high-level corporate lobbying by Monsanto". This encounter with corporate censorship is especially interesting because rather than just having a story omitted (a relatively common occurrence), Akre and Wilson were

ordered to lie in order to cover up a threat to the public interest. According to muckraking journalists Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, authors of the book *Toxic Sludge is Good For You! Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*, this is just one in a long line of attempts by Monsanto to "intimidate, censor and suppress the growing public criticism of its dangerous – but highly profitable – genetic technologies".

Even the Government Works for Monsanto

Resistance in Europe and India, where the media reports on the ecological and health threats of bio-engineered crops, has ranged from farmers burning test fields to governments passing laws banning genetically modified (GM) crops. The U.S. government has responded with threats against these countries that won't play ball with the bioengineers. Efforts by Ireland and France to limit imports of GM corn and soybeans were met with forceful counter-lobbying by top officials of the Clinton administration, including so-called "environmental" Vice President Al Gore. Dan Glickman, US Secretary of Agriculture, has traveled across Europe threatening a trade war if European countries restrict imports of biotech crops. The US media has portrayed countries objecting to GM crops, especially India, as backward and primitive – afraid of technology and progress. Even in Britain, where there is enormous anti-GM popular sentiment, there is no question as to the allegiance of leaders such as Prime Minister Tony Blair, who eats GM food for the media claiming it's so safe he'll eat it, etc.

Aside from the potential ecologi-

cal threats, there is mounting evidence that GM crops may be unsafe for human consumption (this seems logical considering that pesticides are poisons and Monsanto's Bt crops produce their own insecticides inside the plant tissues where you can't wash them off). There was a lot in the news earlier this year when a world-renowned Scottish plant physiologist was suddenly fired from his position at a prestigious research institute when he published research showing that consumption of GM crops caused the vital organs of rats to fail. A handful of other scientists reviewed his findings and went public with news that his results were indeed valid and that he had been deliberately silenced by corporate interests.

The bottom line is that there is abundant evidence that releasing GM organisms into the environment could cause massive ecological upheaval. At the very least, more research needs to be done before any more GM organisms are let out of the labs. Obviously there are some useful applications of biotechnology, such as the use of GM bacteria to produce human insulin under laboratory conditions. That's not what's being protested. Check out the sources for this article (listed below) and the reading list elsewhere in the zine for more resources about genetic engineering and the corporate control of technology.

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Gene-technology & Ethics

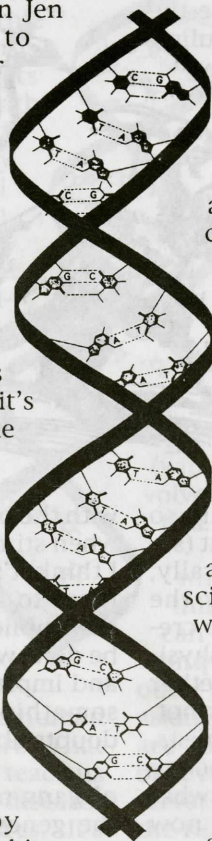
by Brob Tilt!

Because I'm a lab-technician interested, and more or less experienced in molecular biology, I thought of writing some random opinions about this when Jen asked me if I wanted to make a contribution for the "technology" split-zine she and Theo were planning. I don't have the pretension to know it all or to be able to completely cover all issues involved. I believe the conclusions I'll make are applicable to any field where scientific or technological progress is made though. Anyway, it's a mere contribution to the discussion.

The media nowadays is filled with news about cloning-experiments with sheep, cows, mice (and even humans - Dec '98 I read the first newspaper article of a group in Korea who's supposed to have cloned human cells), about genetic engineering (pesticide-resistant soy patented by Monsanto stirs up a lot of shit but bacteria, yeast, and plants have been modified for decades already, about the *Caenorhabditis elegans* worm (the first creature who's genome is totally unraveled - promises to clarify a lot of processes interfering with aging, cancer, and disease in general), about

genetic research of human embryos, about the Human Genome Project (the complete sequence of human DNA should be known by the year 2003), etc. Yes, humankind has walked a long way since Gregor Mendel grew peas in the garden of his convent. James Watson and Francis Crick started a revolution when they discovered the structure of DNA in 1953.

Hearing the words "genetic engineering" causes some people to frown. They don't realize that humankind has been genetically engineering all through history in one way or another (e.g. crossbreeding vegetables, fruits, cereals and even animals). What scientists do in a test-tube with enzymes, nature does constantly. In the last 4-5 decades there's been an acceleration of this because of the discovery of the structure of DNA. There are hundreds of examples of the positive use of genetic engineering (e.g. the mass-production by bacteria of insulin for diabetics, Von Willebrand-clotting-factor for hemophiliacs, etc.). The fact that there's also some abuses of the techniques doesn't mean that these are in se negative.



To be able to pick the fruits of genetic engineering, one needs to clone (produce identical offspring in an asexual way). In the past that has mainly been bacteria or eukaryotes (most frequently yeast or plant cells). Personally, I don't see the use of cloning humans as something human-kind has to master or as something that will bring the world unlimited prosperity. If you clone the gene coding for human insulin and bacteria, you know that it will - under certain conditions, in a specific medium - produce insulin. If cloning humans would become possible, that would result in individuals with the same genotype (set of genes), but since the human genome is so complex and the environment (socially, economically, politically, etc.) will never be exactly the same, it will be impossible to create identical individuals (physically & psychologically). Whether cloning humans is ethical or not, I leave that up to the specialists. But the ethical sense of a society is constantly developing and what is considered not ethical now might be in 20 years time so I think it will be done. Each generation develops its own ethics. We all need to keep aware, question, and discuss things constantly.

Work with human embryos is under a lot of discussion too. I wouldn't want to see them

mass-produced solely for scientific research, but I don't see anything wrong in using them when they're there anyway (IVF, or In Vitro Fertilization for example, results in more embryos than is suitable for implantation) and are otherwise discarded. That kind of research can teach us a lot about the differentiation (& its control mechanisms) into tissues and the organization of organs. Possible applications lay in the fields of organ transplantation & (in the future) regeneration, healing burns, etc. It's like donating your corpse to science, only here it's not an organized body but a



lump of cells with the potential to get organized when stimulated in the right way. I think it's necessary in cases like these to inform the parents and the public what exactly is gonna be done with them. Manipulation and implantation in the uterus is something that I still have my doubts about.

The little worm *C. elegans*, mentioned above, has all the genes humans have in condensed form. Some of them have a mutation (small "mistake" in the genetic code) that makes them live 3 months instead of 10 days. Some people already dream of easily becoming 120 years old (the question is, what would be the benefit of that?). But the process of aging is more complex than

that, it's a process of accumulation and involves "wear and tear". It's not enough to keep cells dividing. We might learn about a few mechanisms but there is a lot more involved in aging (and its prevention) so it'll surely take us a while to get there. But some of these mechanisms are related to apoptosis (programmed cell death or "cell suicide"). A dying cell plays an active role in its own demise. Apoptosis precisely and cleanly gets rid of an existing cell without any of the surrounding ones. All this is tightly regulated and it's crucial that it only happens when necessary and efficiently. One can easily see that a breakdown of the regulation of apoptosis is associated with cancer, auto-immunity and neuro-degenerative diseases. The molecular mechanisms involved are studied in this simple organism.

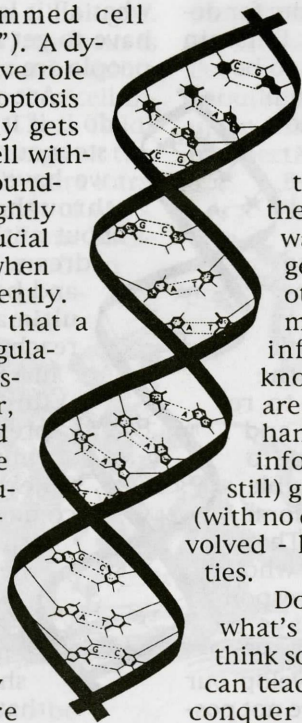
Of the approximately 100,000 genes we have, only about 10,000 are charted. The knowledge of what every gene in the human DNA codes for is a treasure. That knowledge can obviously teach us a lot about a variety of diseases and bring us possible cures. It's also a treasure in the economical/financial sense. The pharmaceutical industry is pumping millions of dollars into trying to monopolize this knowledge. The US company DeCode genetics - linked (or owned?) by the Swiss multinational Hoffman-LaRoche - has "bought" the genetic databank of

the population of Iceland. Obviously they want to make a profit out of this. They're gonna use this to research certain diseases (should I point out that the diseases are not ones that occur in the third world - 'cause that's not where the money is). That kind

of monopoly is disastrous of course. We all have to lobby to try and regulate issues like this politically (US Native Americans filed a lawsuit to return

DNA-samples they'd given: they don't want to be involved with gene patenting). On the other hand, this does not mean that the research-information and the knowledge that is gained are in se bad. On the other hand, there is still a lot of information (already and still) gathered at independent (with no economical interests involved - let's hope so) universities.

Do we have to be afraid of what's going to come? I don't think so. Genetic manipulation can teach us a lot and help us conquer a lot of medical and other problems. Some people are asking whether or not scientists are "playing god." Personally, I believe that this is a rather conservative opinion reminding me of the reaction of religious rulers to Galileo's comment on Copernicus' theory of heliocentrism (the theory that the sun is the center of the solar system). I don't believe in any dogmas and agree that scientists should investigate everything in a critical way. Science and technology shouldn't be hindered by people who're afraid of



progress, of change. I also certainly don't agree that scientific and technological progress is accountable for all problems in the world today (overpopulation and famine, pollution and natural disasters, war, etc.). Humans with a poorly developed sense of ethics are responsible for that. Nobel didn't intend his dynamite for destruction of people. Einstein didn't want his theories to be used for the production of weapons of mass destruction; Watson & Crick wouldn't have approved of tyrannical warlords using gene technology to create modified germs for biological warfare.

Scientists should be allowed and given the means to investigate, to research every question and problem. They don't have to speak out about the possible application that may come from their discoveries. That's the task of society as a whole, of all of us. We're all responsible. There will always be people who want to go "too far" but we will have to develop our ethics so that excesses are not possible. We have to learn how to live with the fact that humankind is going to gain certain information and knowledge (like it already did during thousands of years) that can be used in a wrong way. There are always going to be people who are corruptible or plain malicious. I don't accept that because of some villains, unscrupulous people, or tyrants, that any scientific research should be forbidden. Our societies have to get accustomed to and deal with this and people have to be brought up with an

ethical sense that can tackle things like this. We also have to avoid that people can be bribed or corrupted by providing everyone with a decent standard of living, by giving everybody equal rights. That of course is a political and socio-economical issue and I'm sure I don't have to explain here what all it involves. Basically we have to get rid of systems where people are exploiting others.

Are we actually going to do it if it becomes possible to steer our evolution? (Actually we have been doing that all through history; just think about antibiotics, etc.). Some dream out loud about this and believe that this is the ultimate humankind can reach. Others, who believe in a god, ask themselves if this is the intention of our presence on earth. It's a philosophical question. The existence of ethical committees at our universities is proof that society has been thinking about the possible abuses and derailments. Scientists shouldn't have the idea that they can decide everything in their own little circles,

from up on their ivory towers. Citizens should be interested, keep vigilant, and follow up on issues like this. Consumer groups are good tools for that but there's also a task for educators to teach young people some sense of ethics. A society gets what it deserves, and we all have a responsibility.

Discussion?

Brob (Tilt!) / Tennisbaanstr. 85 / 9000 Gent / Belgium



Problems with Biotech: A Rebuttal to Brob's Piece

by Theo

Like Brob, I'm a biologist. Unlike Brob, however, my focus is on ecology, botany, and wildlife while his is on molecular/cell biology and genetics. These fields are concerned with things on two very different scales but are intricately connected in a lot of ways. I think the diversity of our backgrounds is of great benefit to this discussion

b e -

cause all too often, there is too little communication and understanding between these two areas of biology. I've had courses in genetics, cell biology, and microbiology but found them to be of little interest when compared to forest dynamics, biogeography (distribution) of plants, or anything to do with mountain lions. People tell me that some people feel the opposite way, so I guess some people enjoy the microscopic. Anyway, in addition to our scientific career choices, Brob and I are both social/political activists. This fact alone separates us from just about everyone we work with on a day to day basis (scientists, unfortunately, are not always known for their activism, as it is

thought to shatter their credibility and ability to be objective). Even still, Brob and I are at odds about some of the things he brings up in his editorial, so here's my perspective to complement his.

Brob is right that there has been a lot of positive innovation based on human knowledge of genetics. Virtually all of our food crops are

the products of centuries of selective breeding. For example, modern blueberries used in agriculture have much larger fruits than their native counter-

parts and some

crops have been selected to be more disease-resistant or cold-hardy than others. I suppose this is, in a sense, genetic engineering, but it should be realized that there is a big difference between a selectively bred tomato and one that has had some deep-water fish genes spliced into it under a microscope so that it can tolerate colder climates. Selective breeding of plants and animals is not what is meant by "biotechnology" at this day in age. What we're talking about is the insertion and de-



letion of genes at the molecular level, giving rise to new forms of life that have never before existed. This includes the creation of transgenic organisms that have genes from totally different species in them. Genes from pigs, fish, and even humans have been inserted into food crops. It's a whole different scale of manipulation. Changes in life forms never thought possible can now be done instantaneously, at least on an evolutionary time scale.

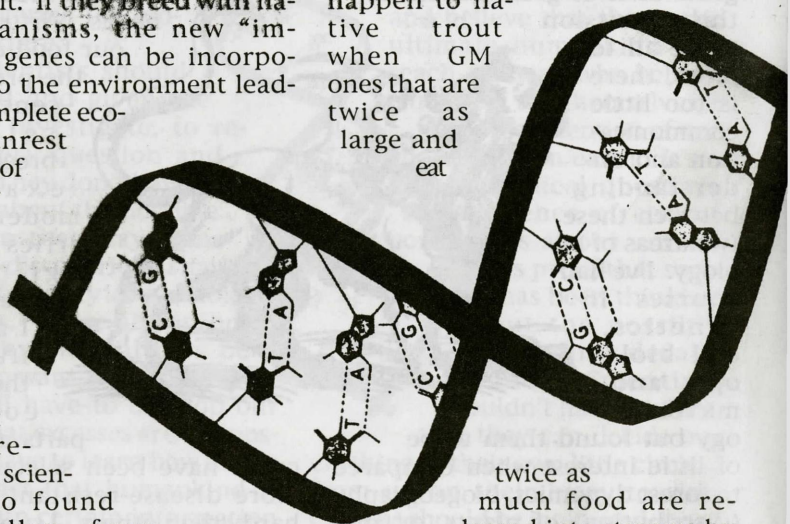
The bottom line is that we have no idea what could happen if genetically modified (GM) organisms are released into the environment. If they breed with native organisms, the new "improved" genes can be incorporated into the environment leading to complete ecological unrest

(for lack of a better term).

For example, in the last week a report

was released by scientists who found that pollen from Monsanto's Bt corn (corn that has genes from the pesticide-producing bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* spliced in) had blown across species lines and "infected" milkweed plants with the insecticide-producing genes, killing Monarch butterflies whose sole source of food is milkweed. Many scientists (not on the corporate payroll) are saying that this is just the tip of the iceberg when it

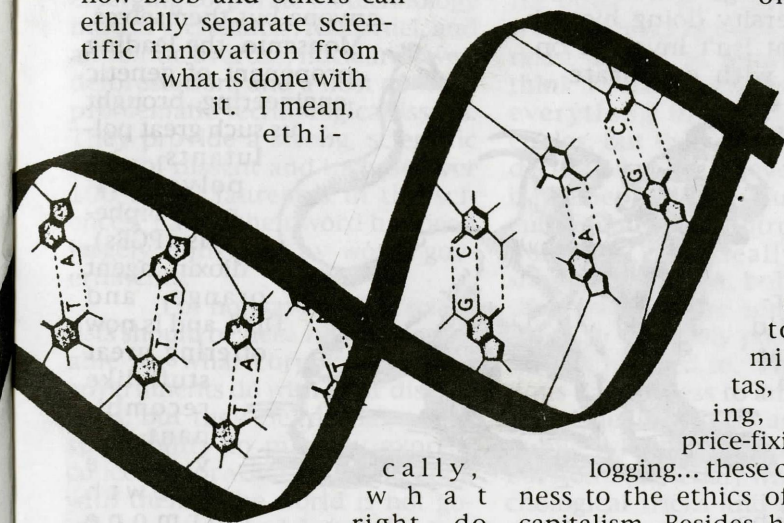
comes to the possibility of GM organisms disrupting the ecological relationships that keep us all alive. This lends more support to the possibility of a so-called "superweed" outbreak where herbicide-resistant genes (or genes for faster growth, faster seed production, larger leaves, lighter pollen, etc., for that matter) from GM food crops could "break free" and get into invasive plants, making them a botanical juggernaut that could take over entire landscapes, wiping out native species. Genetically improved organisms could out-compete native plants on all levels. What would happen to native trout when GM ones that are twice as large and eat



twice as much food are released into streams by fishing resorts or government game and fish organizations?

Brob's argument that "what scientists do in a test tube nature does constantly, so what's the big deal?" is the same one my microbiology professor gave me when I challenged his talk on the benefits of genetic engineering in class. I find it to be entirely inapplicable and skewed. The time

scale of evolutionary change in nature is so slow that all organisms in an ecosystem adapt to selective pressures over time. Sure, some species (or traits) may go extinct as others that are better suited to the environment move in. Correlating bioengineering with natural processes is a longshot to be sure. Furthermore I don't see how Brob and others can ethically separate scientific innovation from what is done with it. I mean, ethi-



h u - cally, what right do humans have to risk the complete alteration of the biosphere to meet the demands of the so-called "free marketplace"?

Much of the criticism of genetic engineering is that it is a technology that is controlled by corporations and the governments that serve their interests. Applications of this technology are ones that serve the interests of these corporations, regardless of the potential damage that these technologies could inflict on the ecology and people of the planet. Sure I'm glad that recombinant bacteria can produce insulin, but it's done under laboratory conditions. It's not being released into the en-

vironment to wreak havoc on organisms that already live there! Perhaps, as Brob asserts, our sense of ethics as a society is always changing. That doesn't mean we should let corporations and capitalist investors set the terms for the debate on what is/is not ethical. I don't think I need

to explain to anyone reading this that CORPORATIONS DO NOT CARE ABOUT WHAT IS ETHICAL! Sweatshops, factory farms, military juntas, union-busting, pollution, price-fixing, clearcut

logging... these can bear witness to the ethics of corporate capitalism. Besides, how many of you reading this accept society's version of what is/is not ethical? Any vegetarians out there? Anticapitalists? Tree-huggers? I thought so.

Brob talks a lot of about the use of people's cells in research but only briefly mentions that biotech companies are patenting genes, cell lines, and new organisms. That's right, these corporations OWN both the genes and the technology for discovering and manipulating them. If the key to aging is unraveled from *C. elegans* or some other organism and a vaccine for aging is developed, you can bet it will be available only to the wealthy and that the company with the patent on

it will make an unbelievable profit. I won't even launch into a discussion on what this technology would do for the human population problem.

Brob mentioned that there is "a lot of information (already and still) gathered at independent (with no economic interests involved - let's hope so) universities". I challenge him to find a single university doing biotech research that isn't involved on some level with corporate funding, or funding from governments acting in the interest of corporations. Furthermore I'd assert that there is no such thing as an independent university - with no

economic interests involved. Corporations are notorious for influencing what is taught in universities and using them as factories to train workers. This has been my experience at the two major universities I've attended (The Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock). Furthermore, the more high-tech the field, the more corporate control and influence there is. I studied engineering, biology, and geology and saw the corporate hand, so to speak, directing traffic all over the place, in all three departments.

Brob asks "do we have to be afraid of what's to come?" and says he doesn't think so. Based

on what I consider to be a pretty good knowledge of ecology and of corporate capitalism, I'd say we should be very afraid. It's not just the knowledge or the technological ability that is frightening... it's the fact that it is completely in the hands of people who will profit by it. The history of these companies proves that they couldn't care less about the environment or anyone but themselves.

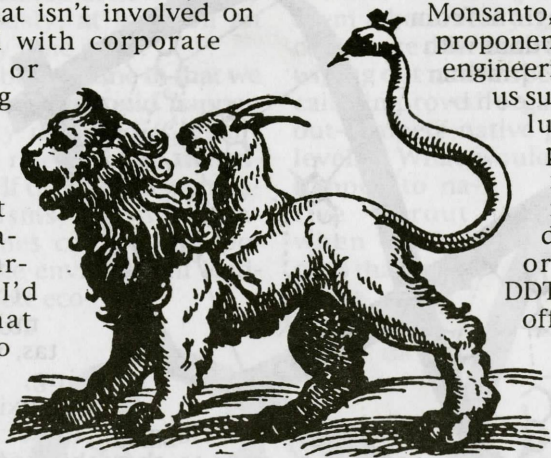
Monsanto, the leading proponent of genetic engineering, brought us such great pol-

lutants as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxin, agent orange, and DDT, and is now offering great stuff like recombinant Bovine Growth

Hormone

(rBGH), Terminator Seeds (which produce sterile seeds so farmers cannot gather their own seeds, keeping them dependent on Monsanto who is buying up every seed company it can get its hands on). See the article elsewhere in this issue to read about the lengths Monsanto has gone to cover up findings about the dangers of its products, past and present.

I don't share Brob's belief that scientists should be immune from responsibility for technologies that they develop. How can society as a whole (with little scientific training) be responsible for understanding the ecological and social consequences of new technologies? It is without question



that scientists have a responsibility to speak out about the possible implications of their discoveries. In fact, there are groups like the Union of Concerned Scientists whose purpose is to brief both leaders and citizens about the effects we are having on the world. Not surprisingly, they have spoken out in opposition to the emerging corporate biotechnology industry, chemical, fossil fuel, and antibiotic overuse, nuclear power, deforestation, and a host of other problematic technological issues. They provide a strong, scientific voice of dissent and include over 100 Nobel laureates in the sciences. Sadly, their word has been largely unheeded by world governments.

I'm not saying that scientists should be held 100% accountable for what corporations and governments do with their discoveries, but they clearly have a responsibility to publicly express concerns for what could be done with them. The world is not going to pause and let us fix our daunting social problems (i.e. "get rid of systems where people are exploiting others"), especially when new technologies are increasing the speed, efficiency, and

totality with which the wealthy and powerful can do the exploiting. It has to be fought on all fronts. I'm never one to prescribe hacking at the leaves to kill a weed (fighting the symptoms while avoiding the root of the problem) but when the line between the symptom and the cause becomes so blurry and one tends to feed the other (as with corporate control of biotechnology), we have to resist as well as reform. I don't think it's the scientists that decide everything in their own little circles, but the corporations that decide what gets developed and implemented. They fund the scientists and they control the technology. Yes, ideally citizens should be vigilant, but in general they aren't. Sure some are, but they are relatively powerless and are not listened to. The corporations have access to an incredible global media network and brilliant public relations "engineers" like Burston-Marsteller, who use psychological tricks and media monopoly to greenwash the most horrifying atrocities in the public mind. Activists have to compete against this and (surprise, surprise) are often ignored by the corporate media.

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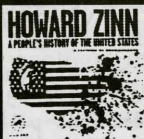
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THE COMPUTER:

Dr. Frankenstein's Latest Monster

OR

Biggest Ripoff in History ?

A recent item about computerized record keeping appeared in a very unprominent spot in the newspaper. Computer engineers, it said, are struggling to fix a problem that may turn a simple aspect of the year 2000 into (I quote the Associated Press' word here) a "nightmare". Thousands of computer programs, it seems, calculate the year solely on the basis of the last two digits: '70, '80, '95, etc. Therefore, when the year comes up that will end in two zeroes, later to be followed by '01, '02 and so on, whatever computer apparatus there may be that is paying attention will want to subtract the seemingly smaller number from the larger one.

Looks like a simple problem, doesn't it? Especially when you consider the way we're subjected to endless propaganda about how childishly simple and easy it is to change things around, once you've entered 'em in a computer. People like me, who still use manual typewriters, are subjected to a literal barrage of urging, importuning and wheedling from television, movies, newspapers, and individual computer enthusiasts, with the object of making us give up

our "clumsy" way of doing things. We'll never have to re-type anything ever again! The computer will print it out for us. Add things at will! I have heard every variation of this impassioned plea a hundred times or more.

But when you get right down to cases, where it's important and it counts, the computer's vast flexibility mysteriously evaporates. The trivial problem of what number comes after 1999--a thing no old Burroughs or Monroe mechanical calculator, or Comptometer, would have to dally with for even a single moment -is turned by the computer into a "crisis" that promises to cost untold billions of dollars.

Do I exaggerate? Not if we believe the AP article. It says: "The Gartner Group, an influential technology research firm in Stamford, Connecticut, estimates that large businesses will spend 100 billion dollars

trying to correct their programs. Government agencies may need to spend a similar amount." One unnamed financial company guessed it would have to spend

about 250 million dollars on the "problem". And if they don't correct

OR BOTH??

By Fred Woodworth

it, everything from paychecks to rent payments --a lot of which now flow through computers-- will leak away into hopeless confusion. The person this will ultimately injure is the individual consumer; the government will not do without its taxes, the landlord will not forget about his rent. The banks will screw up YOUR account, and you --the bottom of the economic food-chain-- will pay the whopping price.

ENDLESS TINKERING IN THE NAME OF SPEED

INTERESTING, isn't it, how computer "convenience" reveals itself as anything BUT convenience in a lot of places where it counts. Even though the experts still have several more years to work on the "problem" just outlined, and though some of them have been struggling with it for years already, many claim to be worried that it can't be solved completely. And as anyone knows who has ever attempted to get a computerized billing system to recognize an error, in real-life situations it is considerably harder to "make corrections" than when all you want to do is add some meaningless extra word to your PC-stored poetry manuscript. Convenience, where are you now?

A fellow I know who is absolutely infatuated with computers, and perpetually trying to convert me over to their usage (yes, convert is the word; it's almost like a religion for some of these people), excitedly pleaded over the phone that I simply MUST come over immediately and look at his new system. He's a politician and former state legislator, and for the past two and a half decades each of us has persistently and vainly tried to persuade the other of the error of his ways. Now he was sure that as soon as I saw his new setup I'd want my own. Just for starters, he had all of the voter-registration records for the entire state on one small disk. Tiredly I tried to beg off, but ended up having to go over to his house

where the new computer apparatus was operating.

"Give me a name to look up," he commanded. I thought for a moment, then said unenthusiastically, "Okay, look up my old friend Gary Doakes."

He typed in the command, "Find Gary Doakes." Nothing happened. He looked puzzled for a second, then changed it to "Find Doakes, Gary". Still nothing. He tried adding a colon after "Find", without success.

For the next half-hour it was a series of trials and errors: Quotation marks around the name (both single and double quotes); upper- and lower-case variations; "find" in all lower-case, and every other combination and variant you can think of. He never did find Gary Doakes that night, though I finally did. He was in the telephone book--on paper--and I located his address in about 20 seconds.

Days later the computer whiz called me up again and crowed that he'd finally managed to solve the problem. That's nice, I thought, considering that he has been fooling with computers for many, many years, and even for a while made a living teaching computer classes at a local business college. With all that expertise it still took him days to run down what was wrong. But of course, once he did run it down, all I hear is his enthusiastic recommendation of how wonderful the program, the storage medium, and the particular computer all are. No recognition of the hours and hours of trying to install the software, vainly working to get it to do what it's supposed to do, to figure out what's wrong with it, etc., not to mention the amount of time worked to earn the money to buy the system at all. Such investments may be substantial indeed--months, in some cases. But once the system works, all we hear about is the fact that you can perform operations X and Y "so much faster" than otherwise, a factor that ordinarily runs to a matter of seconds at most. How many seconds of speed does it take to add up to weeks or months of frustration and hassle?

That is a question that computer enthusiasts and the giant companies that effectuate their hypnosis NEVER talk about.

FORCED OBSOLESCENCE

So why do so many people swear by the things? Why are dozens of readers right this minute clapping their hands to their heads and groaning about my "failure" to "understand" all the wonderful advantages?

The answer lies in cultural norms, and the shortness of memory. Let's look for a minute at something that hasn't happened yet and probably never will happen, although I certainly wouldn't be surprised if it did; a metaphor for how things work in the world of big business and mass society:

One night you see an ad on TV for a new car, the ultra-highly-developed Model XZE-10. Using advanced technology, this car brings you into the future, with scientific developments that make all other cars look like, well, wagons. The hiply smug man talking to you from the ad chuckles slightly, wryly, when he says that last word- "wagons".

Next an enormous ad campaign begins to get into your consciousness from magazines and billboards, and the thrust of it all is always that the new XZE-10 from Plexon makes every other car look like, well, a wagon. You get familiar with the campaign, and in one sense you are softened up.

Finally you check out one of the actual cars. One of the guys at work just got one, and boy is he happy with it. (Remember, he has to be happy with it; he's just obligated himself to spend almost \$30,000, and no way is he going to mope around mournfully crying, "I spent 30 grand, and the goddamn thing is junk!") The big advanced feature that everybody is raving about, is this: They've replaced the steering wheel with a digital display window and two buttons;

when the electronic pointer rests in the middle, you drive straight ahead down the street. Touch the right-hand button and the car steers a little to the right. Push the left one and you go back past the middle point and turn that way. The whole deal is "scientific" at last—accurate-looking graduations on the scale of the LCD window "Give YOU Scientific Steering!" It looks pretty unnecessary, so you don't think about buying the car after that.

Plenty of others do, however. Over the next few years digital steering becomes highly developed, and is standard equipment on all the Plexon cars and several other brands as well. Initial problems such as positioning of the thumb-buttons so that people misgrabbed them and smashed into buildings or other cars, are worked out, with new updated, better versions that all have scientific-looking descriptive numbers: "Plexon's XZE-95, with 4.2 steering makes the others look like, well, (chuckle) wagons."

There are a lot of engineering difficulties that have to be worked out to make digital steering function reasonably well. For instance before, with analog steering, you didn't have to think about how many degrees of arc you turned the wheel; you just turned it a little to go a bit one way or the other. To turn sharply you turned it a LOT. During a turn, a series of feedback operations involving the path of the car, the steering wheel, and your eyes and your brain and your hands, got you around corners with hardly a conscious thought at all. Now, though, the driver of the digital car needs to read up on proper turning procedure: When you turned into that driveway just now, was that a 4.3, or did you have to go up to 6? Articles are written on steering numbers; in-depth magazines report on preferred turns of steering whizzes.

Thousands of accidents, many fatal, take place during the years when people try to get used to the new system. And it turns out that tires wear out much more quickly because the car has to track back and forth in specific increments, corresponding to

definite fractional numbers, instead of being able to steer in a continuous analog of direction. Some manufacturers get around this by making more sophisticated and costly steering systems that have sub-buttons that lapse into tinier digital instants of turn. Cars costing \$50,000 and more are considered cheap models. A gigantic repair industry grows up around digital steering, too, because there are now drive motors controlling the lateral wheel movement, and complex electronic systems running those motors— all of which require frequent servicing or replacement.

You, along with a few others, see no need for all this, and you stick with your old car. But after a few years you start to become aware of a lot of jokes on TV about steering wheels. Parts for your car start getting tremendously expensive and have to be ordered from farther and farther away, and take longer and longer to get in. Mechanics act funny when you take your old car in, like they are somehow personally offended that

you aren't in line with everybody else. After a while some of them begin refusing to do repairs for you. Newspaper articles occasionally describe "the last man" in this or that town, county or neighborhood, who drives a car

with a steering wheel and pairs him as hopeless anachronism. The writers make it seem that cars prior to digital steering were exceptional crude, and years ago, on misconception about: took people hours to get anywhere because they had to get out and put turns to hand. On very strong men could drive cars because took great muscular exertion to turn the wheels. Most accidents those days were caused by the fact that people had no numbers

Fad Topic: "THE INFORMATION ECONOMY"

Trendy analyst columns these days are loaded with breathless prose about how the "economy"—that is, the whole system of goods, wealth, trade, and money—is shifting to an "information basis". While this provides these commentators with something to say, so that they are able to fill up their allotted space and get paid by their publishers, it is nonsense.

A million people self-importantly hovering over computer keyboards are not "the economy", because they are not creating anything. So-called information is only intelligence concerning something else that does in fact have real material existence. In this respect the "Information Economy" is just a new and fancy label for what used to be called pencil-pushing. The real economy rests on real things: food, fabrics, building materials, manufacturing, etc. Information is not a commodity in the same sense as soybeans or machine screws, but the people who hype it and convince the effete that they are doing real work as they sit entranced before their TV typewriters, are spreading this propaganda because it sells their own commodity: computers.

bers to steer to. (Grin) "So you guys used to just eyeball it, right?" (Implication: hand/eye coordination is intrinsically suspect.)

You point in vain to speed records set in days of analog steering. You dredge up photos of people casually driving one-handed. You argue that cars lasted five years or so, but

then, while they now go off the road because of planned obsolescence and shoddy manufacture in about ten months. But everything you say is discounted. After all, you're not up with the times.

CLUMSINESS AND UNWORKABILITY; HYPE

WHAT'S WRONG with computers? Well, for one thing they're clumsy -- as clumsy as digital steering-- in everything they do. I've seen people waste hours on end fighting to find the print command in Symphony, laboring to install software, trying to get functions to work that are supposed to work, but do not, in fact, work at all.

Hyping the clumsiness with misstatements and outright lies has become a whole sub-branch of advertising. For example I saw a recent ad that said:

"The Connor hard drive averages a million hours between break downs."

A million hours, eh? Let's check that out: 24 hours times 365 days equals 8760 hours in one year. Ten years equals 87,600 hours. 100 years equals only 876,000 hours, close to a million but not quite. In fact, 1,000,000 hours works out to 114 years, one month, and 3 and one-half weeks. Since the current date is the year 1995, in order to have tested the Connor Hard Drive for that many hours, they'd have had to start during the year 1880; and to derive an "average" of operating life from both shorter and longer examples, the manufacturer would have needed to begin testing its computer junk by no later than the end of the Civil War.

Then there's the visual clutter: Whenever display comes up on a computer screen, it looks like a tax form from the IRS things scattered all over the place, non-linearly so that you're sure to miss something, screw up some step. Then the computer refuses to budge, and the operator hovers nervously over the keyboard for

some length of time.

Programs and systems seem immediately as clumsy by anybody with a grain of common sense, are hyped as streamlined, efficient, smooth-operating tools of business, scholarship, and human communication... until next month, when the 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 or other scientific-sounding version comes onto the market. Suddenly there's the tacit admission that the old version maybe wasn't so good after all, but now you'll want to spend several hundred bucks on the latest untried, unproven software package. Adding to the shifting sand that the computer consumer totters around on, is the frequent obsolescence of magnetic media, electronic wiring, printers, monitors, and entire brands of computers. The consumer can rarely buy something, make it work, and keep using it for a long time, because from the moment he or she opens the box and drags the instrument out onto a table, it's obsolete and superseded by the next model; and should anyone cling too long to an outmoded configuration, repair servicing will no longer be offered and the device's resale value will drop to zero.

Adding to the hidden costs of computer clumsiness are explanatory books, classes, and endless time wasted consulting among friends, acquaintances, and tech support lines that are usually busy with the massive volume of other consumers who likewise can't make the apparatus work. Hours and whole days of frustration and tension eat at some one's health as he or she fights an uphill battle to make something function that seems to cunningly resist at every turn. For a person who is the product of millions of years of evolution in the analog style real world to shift over to the mind-set wherein images cannot be touched directly, but must be manipulated through the inexact and self altering electronic levers sticking out of a key board, involves some profoundly thwarted impulses. Yet, you can't reach out and grab the recalcitrant things existing as flickers on

the screen.

One measure of how jittery people feel in the presence of their computers, is the sale of "screensaver" programs. These cause the monitor display to shift over, after some period of inactivity, to various patterns or pictures: fish in an aquarium, swirling shapes, cartoons, etc. The purpose is to prevent the phosphors in the cathode ray tube (screen) from being burned or exhausted in the pattern of the information that would otherwise be displayed continuously.

Now think about this. Sounds practical, right? Only in the fabulously clumsy world of computers. It would make MORE sense to save the screen by simply TURNING THE THING OFF—but many computer users hesitate to do so. After all, they spent such a long time, the last time, booting up the whole system, and there was that funny glitch where the whole screen went dark a couple of times and -- Simpler to just put in a screen saver. Yes, it is simpler; and it's an indication that the computer is in control, not you. It's so complex that there is an air of randomness or capriciousness in whether it works or not, and when people have it working, they prefer to tiptoe about to keep from disturbing it. They sure don't want to risk turning it off. Looked at this way, exactly how "liberatory" is a "machine" that operates only on its terms, not yours; that can't be tinkered with, repaired or tuned, or even diagnosed when anything goes wrong?

IN SUBMICROSCOPIC SPACE

MUCH of what's wrong with computers is that they're beyond human scale. By that I mean that there is a typical range of movement and life that we inhabit--our dimension, if you will. The computer is partly in another dimension, almost in molecular or atomic space rather than in the space of human proportion. Portions are too tiny to be seen, cannot be touched, cannot be observed under any reason-

able circumstances. The computer exists because machines made by people have made other and still other machines that have extended, out in a precarious tottering path, a kind of suspension bridge into the nowhere of inner space to make microcircuitry come into existence. And come into existence it does, but not in any way that any individual person is responsible for or capable of directly manipulating. This is alienating because it puts us into the same position as a chimpanzee who is taught to operate a light switch. Since that chimp cannot, in principle, find out exactly what happens that makes light come on following the click he imparts to the switch, his thought about the phenomenon (if any) is a vague and passive acceptance. Some particularly bright chimp may realize that he does not know what happens, but for most it will probably never even cross their minds to wonder.

For the overwhelming majority of computer users, what really takes place when they press down a key, is every bit as much a mystery, and it is INTRINSICALLY almost as big a mystery as the light is for the chimp, because, lacking the electron microscopes (more machines made by machines) to see into the circuitry with, and lacking the necessary theoretical and mathematical background to comprehend the process even in a general way, understanding what goes on in their computers remains, in principle, incomprehensible. Thus the computer user becomes in truth less than human-- using tools he cannot fully understand.

How alien this dimension of tininess is to us as creatures of a different region of reality, is illustrated by some of the size factors frequently reported about computers. The "wiring", as everybody knows, is largely no longer wiring at all except for interconnecting cables. Instead, it consists of literally microscopic arrays of circuits photolithographically printed onto silicon wafers, ultimately forming "chips" that contain immense labyrinths of electrical pathways. Such di-

mensions are unreachable by our unaided eyes or fingers; we can't see them even with a magnifying glass, nor touch them even with tweezers. "Wires" in these chips are on the order of one four-hundredth of the thickness of a hair.

Similarly, as information density has increased on magnetic recording media such as disks, the electromagnetic pulse-sensing heads have had to be lowered ever closer to the surfaces that bear the computers' hard-drive memory. At present, the sensing heads rest so near to the spinning disks beneath them that an ordinary-sized dust mote getting into the hard drive and coming between the head and the disc is a disaster mechanically comparable to a rock about 18 inches high getting onto a roadway ahead of your car. Should you run over that rock it will rip out a lot of the undercarriage, engine pan, hydraulic systems and electrical wiring. If a computer's hard drive smashes into a dust-mote boulder, a so-called crash occurs that has a high likelihood of destroying both the apparatus and the information it contains recorded on it. Current hard-drives are even more critical than this: on most of them a boulder the size of one particle of smoke is large enough to rip out the undercarriage of the hurtling subdimensional "car" therein.

These are - or should be - sobering facts, the same way that it would be sobering to think of trying to cross the Pacific Ocean in a dinghy or a canoe. The reality of the Pacific Ocean is that there are typical wave heights and velocities of winds that are incompatible with the size of tiny floating craft such as those mentioned. It is assumed that except in the case of risk-taking adventurers, people would not want to travel in very flimsy boats on the high seas, and they certainly don't entrust valuable cargoes to such a form of shipping.

Nevertheless, to an increasing degree today, SPEED (read: tininess of circuitry) is an avidly sought-for quality of computer apparatus. (The rea-

son that speed and size are related has to do with laws of momentum and application of energy; the smaller something is, the easier it becomes to accelerate it, slow it, or change its direction, because you are dealing with fewer elementary particles in a tinier object.) With electron flow also a larger number of different events are capable of taking place in the same time, the smaller the number of actual electrons involved. Reputedly, some computer companies are nearing the ability to create circuits run by passage of single electrons through particular gates in the chip circuitry.

To sum up, what's wrong with this in an ultimate philosophical sense is that it's out of harmony with the dimension we inhabit, just as a toy boat is out of harmony with the surface of the ocean. In our reality there is too much going on- too much turbulence, too many particles of matter, too many static charges, magnetic fields, radio waves, dirt particles, microbes, water droplets, and much, much else, particularly vibration, temperature fluctuations, and random accidents. The frantic quest for speed and hence smallness, results in almost unthinkable delicacy of the circuit structures, meaning that those have to be isolated in containers so clean that even one loose molecule rattling around poses a danger; one stray electron can change drastically an overall result ultimately tossed up on the screen. Such cleanliness is, however, at our scale of existence, impossible.

Consider stray electrical currents: The following experiments are instructive. Get a small voltmeter or milliammeter with several adjustable ranges, and touch the two test leads simultaneously to any two electrical appliances in your home. You WILL get a reading- a perceptible current and voltage will be present; not enough for you to feel, in most cases (although sometimes you may get a perceptible buzz when touching, say, the refrigerator and the stove at the same time. If so, reverse the way the refrigerator's plug is oriented in the outlet.) You can try to get completely

away from electrical currents by going out in your yard and moving far from power wires or even metal objects. Then stick the two test leads of the meter down into the ground about a yard apart. Again, a noticeable current will register. On an earphone the ground current will sound like a faint hum, and what it is, is a stray byproduct of millions of grounded circuits operating and pumping tiny alternating currents into the earth.

You can string a simple wire out the window of your house to a pole or a tree where that end is fastened; then, connecting a pair of headphones bridged by a semiconductor to that wire and some grounded object like a waterpipe, you will hear the mishmash of radio noises comprising all transmissions within a radius of a few miles. In other words there are currents passing through the air, too. You just don't notice them at the scale of reality that you normally operate on.

But the computer, working at a lunatic level of delicacy, may well notice such stray currents. For the same reason that on a seemingly perfectly still day, a tiny feather will waft away from an outside table-top, the computer's operation, even insulated as it is from our dimensional reality, may suddenly give a random result now and then, or stop working altogether, or "crash", or perform some other type of weird and seemingly inexplicable action. The explanation for

the apparently inexplicable is on this microscopic level of existence, where things are going on in a torrent that is perfectly invisible to your senses.

What this means is that the fanatic quests for speed and tininess are doomed to failure, as far as reliability is concerned. Already, computers are so prone to losing information stored in them, that people are routinely urged to make two backups of anything important that is ever on a disk. To do this is to reverse the effect of tininess in one direction, by largeness in another direction--as

Fad Topic: "VIRTUAL REALITY"

This amazing act with smoke and mirrors has convinced those too young to have lived yet, and those too old to have any life left, that pictures are every bit as good as, and maybe better than, real events. "Virtual" in this case isn't even close; it's a hype by people who have something to sell, so that they'll have the money it takes to buy real interactions with other real people in real places. What they're selling is of course The Computer, but the solution is not to buy it from them but to change the world so that you don't have to have that kind of cash to enjoy real interactions.

people do when they try to use pocket calculators that are made with keys too small to be hit comfortably with the fingers; you use a pencil, a larger tool, to compensate for the unproductive miniaturization.

This can be stated as a law: As computers get smaller and faster, the likelihood of loss of information or function expands. (Woodworth's Law.)

JARGONIZED CONSUMERISM

BEFORE the hapless computerist even gets a chance to wrestle for hours with recalcitrant "programs", or to lose in a millisecond a whole 70,000-word manuscript, he has to buy the thing. Only problem is, it's not a thing; it's a system. Just as it took a couple of dozen variously-named interstate

freeway systems to replace the old Highway 66, it has taken a myriad of computer artifacts to crowd out the simple old typewriter.

I once read that to buy all the individual parts in a (then) \$5,000 car, the consumer would have to pay in excess of \$50,000. IBM, Microsoft, and other outfits must have read the same article, because they've arranged matters so that you can't simply go out and "buy a computer". This is the Batteries Not Included syndrome with a vengeance.

Every single piece used in putting together a (barely) functioning computer system is sold, and must be bought, separately: computer, monitor, printer, software, memory discs. This is a strong clue to what a ripoff the whole business is. At no other time in history have consumer goods been marketed in such an exploitive way, clearly designed to put the buyer in over his head and make him spend more than he ought to. Then, having a bunch of separate packages that have to be plugged into each other, when the setup doesn't work each manufacturer's support representative can point the finger at the manufacturer of one of the other packages. Example: the 'Print' command results in nothing happening. The computer company's rep suggests the printer is defective; the representative for it lays the blame on the software or the hard drive or the installation procedure. There's always somebody else to blame.

And a lot goes wrong that somebody IS to blame for, too-- newsstand racks are jammed with personal-computer magazines, each one of which carries an almost infinite supply of plaintive customer woes. The effect is of a screaming mob of very unhappy people, but the editorial responses are almost never anything but calm, cheerful reassurance that your error messages will go away, your disk operating system will be restored, and Windows will come up on your screen, if you'll only carry out the following procedures... For a contrivance that's supposedly so easy to

use, an oddly numerous throng seems to have a lot of trouble getting it to do anything. Meanwhile, each one of these desperate inquiries has a dollar value -- sometimes a very large one indeed -- attached to it. Behind the last-ditch letters to the computer magazines are untold numbers of frantic calls to support lines; waiting hours on hold; talking to people who don't follow the problem; and being shunted off to someplace else. Money, money, money- it's all flowing away from the consumer, but it's never lost. As usual, with all computer-related situations, this wealth trickles in from millions of sources to the same vast rivers and lakes: telephone companies, credit card companies, and computer-related suppliers.

According to a recent study by analyst William Kirwin, the typical cost of a business's owning a PC over a five-year period is: \$40,000. It's not so much the cost of the equipment, but the vast hidden cost of installing programs and trying to learn how to operate the system. Kirwin's report says, moreover, that such costs are not going down, as they presumably would as people became more familiar with computer systems; they have in fact doubled since 1987. He says that a company with 2,000 personal computers in use is spending sixteen million dollars a year to make them operate. Naturally these costs are all passed along to the consumer, so they result in higher prices of the products you buy, and therefore the individual PC user is paying even more for the society-wide computer mania than it looks.

A technology that produces more tutoring, self-help, problem-solving, and home study books in a few short years than even automotive technology has in all the nearly a century of its existence, has clearly condemned itself out of its own mouth. Anything that requires this many classes, teachers, practice sessions, tutorials, hotlines, and frequent expenditures to replace "defective" components, is not only fabulously expensive and wasteful, but an economic

dead-end.

OBLIVIOUS ENTHUSIASM

DEALING with computer enthusiasts has given me some insights into psychology that I never had before. For example, there's something like what we know as rationalization, only different, and as far as I know there's no name for it. It's a heedless favoring of something, that doesn't even listen to itself and hear its own voice- oblivious enthusiasm.

For instance about two years ago I happened to mention to an acquaintance, that my bid at auction had just been accepted for one of the old wooden library card-catalogue cabinets from the local university. I was installing the cabinet in my office and transferring the thousands of index cards I had from years of correspondence and publishing THE MATCH into these beautiful bronze-fitted catalogue drawers.

"Huh!" he chuckled. "You oughtta get those files onto computer."

Ponder this. Without a moment's hesitation this blind enthusiast judges that (a) I am ignorantly blundering; (b) computer technology of the type that exists today, which didn't even exist in this form at the time I began keeping my catalogue cards, is automatically more reliable and preferred over a system that has

stored thousands and thousands of pieces of information for me for 26 years without a glitch, disk-crash, or anxiety or loss of any kind; and (c) that re-typing all this data into a computer would be a negligible task. It would take probably months of sustained effort to keyboard all that information; why should I bother? Just to keep up with the Joneses, apparently.

Or this: Referring to the difficulty of

making substantial additions or changes to text after it has been typeset by non-computer methods, several people have written me to insist that this alone provides sufficient reason to computerize. Evidently it does not occur to such people to consider that a writer who does not know what it is

Fad Topic: "INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY"

There is no such superhighway. At best it's an Information Tollbridge where you pay through the nose for something to ride in, sit for long periods stalled in thick traffic, and throw money in a slot to get off. In between you crawl along breathing other people's exhaust and having your license number taken down by sadistic creeps who check closely to see whether you have anything besides a delighted expression on your face.

Where the permanence of what's expressed is concerned, it turns into the Information Supersewer, as ideas and expressions get the flusheroo and vanish without a trace, forever. As an archival medium, anything

that he wants to say, probably has no business writing down anything at all until he does know. One correspondent claimed that using his computer he could simply sit down and start writing anything at all; then, by going back over whatever he'd written, again and again, modifying, deleting, and adding, he could eventually wind up with a perfectly fine essay, and no stress or strain. No thought either, I might add.

Computer enthusiasts can overlook the 900-pound gorilla in the middle of the room. Here's another example: There's a fine, humanistic and anarchistic episode of the 1960's television series, "The Fugitive", called "The 2130". In that drama the hunted man, Richard Kimble, who had been unjustly convicted of killing his wife, and who had escaped in a train wreck on his way to the electric chair, was being tracked relentlessly by a police detective obsessed with his capture. In "The 2130" the cop, alerted by a pioneer computer-using university researcher, begins a project of entering

every known bit of data about Kimble into a big old mainframe computer's punchcard memory. The idea is that if the computer is fed enough information, it will be able to predict the fugitive's seemingly random movements and escapes from the law.

This is an extremely important philosophical drama in a num-

ber of respects as it poses crucial and always-fresh questions about free will and human values. The episode may well be the most important work ever to appear on television. However...

... When I decided to check into Ed Robertson's book about the old Fugitive series to see what he had to say about this tremendously significant episode, I found this:

"...the episode could have been a lot tighter. But 'The 2130' is still fun to watch. Gerard's skepticism of the computer's capability reflects the attitude of a bygone era. Today, of course, computers are less intimidating, and not only in appearance—modern versions of the 2130 come in laptop and pocket sizes. We have incorporated computers so much in modern life that we practically take

computerized is a preposterous joke, since information HERE can cease to exist in the blink of an eye, faster than any time in history. For the first time, pages don't even need to rot or burn up; now they can just blink into cyber-unreality and be as if they never had been. Storage on magnetic discs only postpones the ultimate inevitability a few more months until new operating systems and disc drives relegate these items to the status of iron oxide-coated plastic substitutes for disposable plates. Even if the machines needed to read them keep working longer than the half-life of U-238, the impulses recorded thereon will have degraded beyond recognition in less time than it takes for Microsoft to rake in 5 billion more dollars. "Never have so many entrusted so much to so unproven an archival medium."

them for granted. Given how much the police rely on computers today, it would be difficult for Kimble to remain a fugitive for four days, let alone four years."

See the computer enthusiast in oblivious operation? He DOESN'T comment on any of the old cars in the episodes, and reflect that this or that would have happened if somebody or other had had one of the modern varieties. No, he sees the profound question of human life, which in this show happens to involve an old prop of a computer, and he sees ONLY THE COMPUTER. In that oblivious state he even emits the exceedingly curious claim that with modern computers to use, cops catch everybody, and nobody is ever a long-running fugitive.

You sure can't say that using computers a lot aids people in learning how to think.

SOME FINAL WORDS

OVER the years that I've been thinking about computers, my attitude has changed. Not my basic opinion of them, but my attitude itself. For one thing, I now no longer believe that it is possible for me or anyone else to swerve this juggernaut aside. The key is in realizing that as far as the users are concerned, they really do love big brother. Yes, many will readily admit that in the hands of the government or big business, the computer is a very dangerous thing, but I close with only a nod toward these acknowledged dangers.

For the problem is much more serious. Computers link people in ways that preclude individuality and bind them to techno-elite manipulation. It's bad enough that the Internal Revenue Service or the Federal Bureau of Investigation or any of a directory full of other fantastically freedom-hating agencies control an ever increasing number of aspects of everyone's behavior, but it is another thing entirely to do it to yourself. I've come to feel that once you set out the arguments and make them available,

your job is done. It's up to the victims after that, and if they don't even think they're victims, well--!

Consequently this will be my last discussion of the topic. I've even grown to loathe the enthusiasts almost as much as their apparatus, so that the affliction seems more and more like a fitting punishment for itself. As with fools who smoke, you can make available all the arguments and facts on how the practice affects their health, and you can concede their right to keep it up. Let 'em die of lung cancer, then! Let the computer yuppies condemn their writing to effete triviality; let American business shoot itself in the foot and bleed endlessly—what do I care for American business? Let the goofs of the Internet sit night after night before radiating screens in the dark as life passes them by! They're no friends of mine; why should I care? Just let me move aside to avoid the secondhand smoke.

The wasted money is not MY money. The flaccid reliance on "SpellCheck" doesn't erode MY mental dictionary. In fact, I don't even wind up paying higher prices overall for the goods I do buy, because with everyone rushing to discard everything of value and replace it with computers, I get wonderful old items I never could have afforded in a lifetime before, for mere pennies.

Toss out your oak library-card cabinets with their bronze fittings! Trundle in some plastic junk that won't last any time at all! Give me your old typewriters, your presses, your gear-driven calculators yearning to live into the future where they will be worth a million bucks!

You see, it's no skin off my nose. In fact, if you think I'm wrong, I only consign you with a smile to your stupid hell that you're not even smart enough to see the agony in. Finally something abominable happens that I don't have to be hurt by! Such a relief.

But in closing, I would like to make one final observation about computers, life, and reality; and this

one will probably seem to you the most obscure yet. To me it is the hidden heart of everything here.

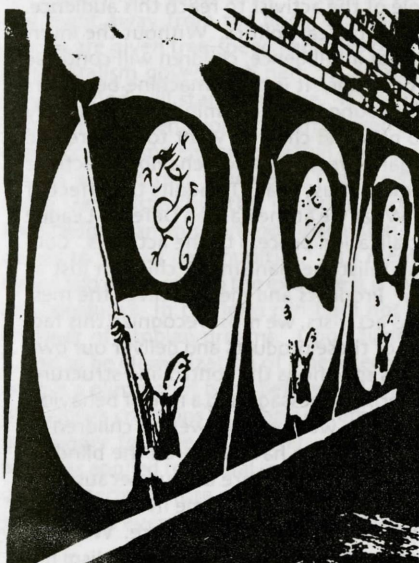
Ours is an analog reality; events are continuous. There is no series of static frames through which we pass at such velocity that movement seems constant. One and Zero don't make it; the values of the universe have no connection with One and Zero, and computer thinking is a dangerously misleading false approximation. In an essay by Joseph Wood Krutch I once found this arresting passage:

"To a mathematical physicist I once confessed somewhat shamefacedly that I had never been able to understand how inanimate nature managed to follow so invariably and so promptly her own laws. If I flip a coin across a table, it will come to rest at a certain point. But before it stops at just that point, many factors must be taken into consideration. There is the question of the strength of the initial impulse, of the exact amount of resistance offered by the friction of that particular table top, and of the density of the air at the moment. It would take a physicist a long time to work

out the problem and he could achieve only an approximation at that. Yet presumably the coin will stop exactly where it should. Some very rapid calculations have to be made before it can do so, and they are, presumably, always accurate.

"And then, just as I was blushing at what I suppose he must regard as my folly, the mathematician came to my rescue by informing me that Laplace had been puzzled by exactly the same fact. 'Nature laughs at the difficulties of integration,' he remarked-and by 'integration' he meant, of course, the mathematician's word for the process involved when a man solves one of the differential equations to which he has reduced the laws of motion. "

That essay was written quite some years ago, and we now know that Krutch's problem of the motion of the coin on the table is in fact incapable of being solved, in principle, by anything other than that coin on that table at that time. Underlying chaotic factors in an analog universe make the computer a dinosaur that thinks it is an egg.



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THE CARBON DEFENSE LEAGUE

Earlier this month (May 1999) I visited some friends in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. While I was there I attended an art exhibit / punk show at an art gallery near the University of Pittsburgh. The art show consisted of technological art and writings of a group known as THE CARBON DEFENSE LEAGUE. The CDL, through words, mechanical (robotic) sculpture, computer animation, and interactive exhibits, explore the effects of technology on humanity and the collision between the high-tech and the organic. For example, one piece consisted of a mechanical contraption with a metal cord attached to it. The viewer was encouraged to lift and manipulate the cord, causing an incredibly loud buzzer to go off and a cow eye (encased in acrylic) to twitch wildly at the viewer. The writings and art were by no means anti-technology (obviously) but they weren't afraid to be critical. It was a really cool exhibit, not unlike stuff by the San Francisco-based Survival Research Laboratories, if you've ever heard of them. I wasn't able to arrange an interview because A) I didn't have a recorder and B) I had an appointment to play Laser Tag for a friend's bachelor party (an interesting technological experience in itself that left me sore for three days!). Anyway, here are two excerpts from their texts, which can be viewed in their full form at their web site (www.carbondefense.org). No analog address was given. -Theo

MISSION / STATEMENT

The mission of the Carbon Defense League (CDL) is to study the effects of technologies on society. Children are a tool. Humans are milled and machined at a young age by the ideological state apparatus. It should be the role of the activist to reach this audience. This audience of children is seen as unprepared for radical politics. Without the intervention of the activist or the acknowledgement of intelligence, children will continue to be prepared for complacency and machine behavior. It is these machine behaviors that we are setting out to conquer and destroy. Young minds are minds still relatively free of constrictive thought. Children want to play and children want to explore and children want to love. Western societal boundaries restrict child behavior to actions that involve even more restraint than adult humans must bear. To adults the effect of removing these restraints is incomprehensible. What we at the Carbon Defense League are trying to do is reallocate control of the socialization process to the activists. Control structures are set in place through the capitalist mechanism for children just as quickly as for adults. Commodity rules the day. Products and media deliver the message of restriction and obedience to children. As activists, we must recognize this fact and do whatever is in our power to steal control of these products and deliver our own message to the children. While we need not be as specific as the controlling structure, we can still be an effective force. By simply delivering a message and a role of behavior/vocabulary for the hacking and subversive scenarios, we are empowering children to open their eyes before they are sewn shut. As adults, we have suffered the blinding procedure and can only hope to regain partial vision. Children are unique because our time of existence dictates our immersion into the system (i.e. less time lived, less time absorbed into the capitalist structure). It is true that children are the future. We must adjust our focus of education on to the children to truly effect a change. Capitalism has

always known this and it is time for activists to learn the same lesson. There is no need to re-program if you are the person hard coding the initial program. Children demand our respect and our admiration as well as the focus of our activist teaching.

THE VIRTUAL IS THE DEVIL

I must first state that my bias has always been towards the side of the technophobes on the issues of telecommunications and virtual communities. This is my disclaimer for all that is to follow. I fear very much the utopian context that virtual communities are placed in. Avatars interact over networks, human do not. Our interaction is still limited to face-to-face meetings. This is dependent upon one's definition of interaction I understand. For now ignore the term. If we were to look at the Internet through the eyes of a humanist we would question of course where the humanity is. Is it divine or horrifying that some MOOs and MUDs are able to evolve their own set of governance? Is it also acceptable that deviants in the virtual space are to be dealt with according to the morality of the puppeteers in "real-life?" I would say that it is impossible to think of these virtual sites as anything more than a construct of the real-world society that they emerged from. The creators have created from what is known. All the utopian promises have been found to be false. The initial reaction of the cyberfeminists was amazement with the ability to transcend gender. When rethought, it was easy to see that the mistake lied in forgetting who was paving the information superhighway; men. Artists saw the ability to reach a mass public audience with newer, interactive media. While this is still attempted by a few, most have found that this was also an impossible dream. It is impossible because of what the terms give us. The term public and the term community seem to get tossed around morosely in the real world and to an even greater extreme in the virtual. We must remember what this so-called public space is. It is not an anarchic supporter of dissidents and deviants. It is a network with restrictions. In some ways the virtual has more governance restrictions than its real world counterparts. This loss of personal communication has done nothing for those that are outside the mainstream constructs. Instead of solving real problems, virtual communities allow flight away from the body and back into the closet. The argument that radical groups are given free-speech abilities on the net are unfounded as well. The effects of pancapitalism govern the net. As a capitalist machine, those that do not serve the greater good will starve and die. It is important to a degree to allow some dissident behavior. This behavior can than be seen as the rational for all other restrictions. Battles may occur online either in virtual communities, chat rooms or bulletin boards. These battles are not real. They aren't real in the sense that discourse is occurring. Text is being transmitted but this is not an exchange in understanding. The virtual provide knowledge transmission, not discussion. Free speech is of course not valid when it comes to virtual communities. As I mentioned before, deviant behavior is acknowledged and dealt with to the extreme it is "needed." What does this mean for face-to-face relationships? In the long run I am not sure. In the short run it has meant a slight glimmer of utopian dreams. Upon further investigation, all of these dreams can be found to be glamorization of a new technology. This is not a new occurrence. There is always a glimmer of hope before the control sets in. It is uninformed to expect any of humanity's creations to be any different than the society the creation was breed under. In a longer text we could even go into an invalidation of the terms community and public as applied to virtual spaces. For now it is important to just suggest an evaluation of these terms before usage. Do not undermine the importance of community by assigning it to every grouping of online users.

www.carbondefense.com

There is no need
for demand

Innovations

Things that scare me about technology.
(by Jen)

My sister thinks I'm paranoid, ever since we watched an Oprah Winfrey episode together on the subject of surveillance cameras. I was going on and on about how cities have them on street corners now and how if they wanted to, they could use that surveillance system to track certain people's movements. You see, I'm not *completely* irrational, I have a logical basis for my fears.

One we started to work on this project, I decided to keep track of the almost daily reminders that what you don't know *can* hurt you. Here are a few of the highlights.

1. I was listening to NPR on my way home from work one day, and they had a segment on the new Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) technology called INSPASS (I can't remember what the acronym stands for – it went by pretty fast). This new system makes it easier for frequent international travelers to get through customs. You are issued a special ID card and your hand scan is taken. When you get ready to go through customs, instead of going through the terminal, you go up to a little ATM like machine, insert your card, and let it read your hand print.

The commentator said something to the effect of: "People will let

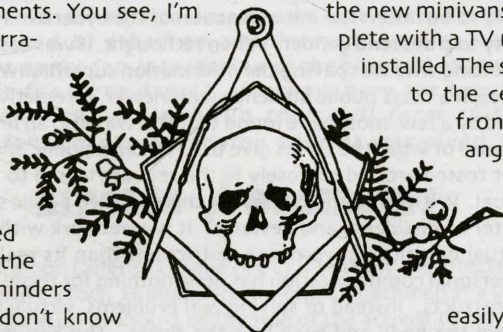
big brother in the door for shorter lines." Big brother for the sake of convenience, right? The "con" of this is that information gathered from your handprint can be gained surreptitiously (without your knowledge or consent) and used for whatever purposes.

2. I saw a commercial on TV for the new minivans that come complete with a TV monitor and VCR installed. The screen is attached to the ceiling above the front seat and is angled in such a way so that the front passenger and backseat passengers can see it easily. The commercial

showed a typical family of four driving through the mountains, with mom and kids glued to the tube and dad behind the wheel.

Well, the first and most obvious scary thing is that if you thought cell phones were distracting to drivers, this is another giant leap in that direction. But mostly I thought it pathetic that there was this amazing scenery going by outside and the kids couldn't be bothered to look away from the TV set to see it. Another step toward a society of convenience and indulgence and another perfect example of Jerry Mander's idea of "mediation of experience."

3. Apparently, and I have yet to do any real research on this, the first



ever human hand transplant has taken place. I heard on news radio this morning that the patient is progressing: he moved a finger! And there is no sign of infection or rejection at this point.

Does it seem obvious that this is pretty fucked up? I mean, the very first thought that came into my head was where did they get the hand? It couldn't have been from a dead body, the tissue would have started to deteriorate. Did it come from an organ donor? A brain dead patient being kept alive on machines? Did they consent? It just all seems too creepy (and gross).

4. January 28, 1999: On this date, over a decade ago, the space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after lift off, killing all crew members on board. This date is also my birthday, so I remember the anniversary easily, and I remember what was I was doing the day it happened (just like people who say they know what they were doing when they heard Kennedy was shot). Let's take this moment to reflect on other technological (ecological) disasters, like the Exxon/Valdez oil spill, Chernobyl, Love Canal, Three Mile Island, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

5. GTE Wireless (and other phone companies) has a new campaign where you get one low rate for calls around the country, instead of a higher rate for calls outside of your state. Finally, we get a good price on long distance, but at what expense, according to the commercial? Their campaign says we should get ready for the new "one state of America", because this new technology is going to do away with all state lines. Doesn't this also abolish any kind of regional identity or idea of diversity? What's so good about one big homogenous United States?

6. In February, the movie "The Day After" aired on network TV. I think

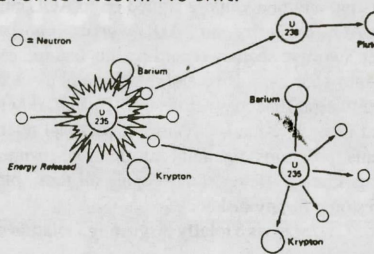
it was made in the seventies. I think it is an anti-nuclear, anti-war film if there ever was one. It just shows a realistic idea of what happens to people when the bomb is dropped. Watch it and you will understand. I only watched up until the part where they showed the people disintegrating in the bomb blasts. I have a very weak constitution when it comes to watching war or death or torture scenes in movies. What I saw was very effective (which means I felt sick after watching it).

7. Theo and I are talking on the phone, going over some of the details of putting this zine together. I am telling him about the articles I'm finishing up, and when I tell him about this little section on paranoia, he relates the following true story.

It seems that Theo's friend, Robert, used to work at a photo lab developing people's pictures. This was in a small town in Arkansas, and the police would develop their crime photos there.

One day, a batch came through that had all of these photos of people in it, just sitting there, staring off into space with these blank looks on their faces. One of them had a picture of a guy kind of reaching up like he was touching the camera, with the same vacant look.

So when the policeman comes to pick up the photos, Robert asks him what they're about. The cop tells him that there are new television sets that *have cameras in them which can take your picture while you're watching your favorite sitcom*. No shit.



Another scary technological tidbit is outlined in this letter I received via e-mail a while back. I have no way of knowing for sure if it is a true story or a hoax, (does anybody reading this know?) but here it is just in case. Watch out. Big brother is on the net! -Theo

Hello,

I'll try and cut through the crap, and try to get to the point of this letter. I used to work for America Online, and would like to remain anonymous for that reason. I was laid off in early September, but I know exactly why I was laid off, which I will now explain:

Since last December, I had been one of the many people assigned to design AOL 4.0 for Windows (AOL 4.0 beta, codename Casablanca). In the beginning, I was very proud of this task, until I found out the true cost of it. Things were going fine until about mid-February, when me and 2 of my colleagues started to suspect a problem, an unexplainable 'Privacy Invasion', with the new version. One of them, who is a master programmer, copied the finished portion of the new version (Then 'Build 52'), and took it home, and we spent nearly 2 weeks of sleepless nights examining and debugging the program, flipping it inside-out, and here is what we found:

Unlike all previous versions of America Online, version 4.0 puts something in your hard drive called a 'cookie'. (AOL members click `here` for a definition). However, the cookie we found on Version 4.0 was far more treacherous than the simple internet cookie. How would you like somebody looking at your entire hard drive, snooping through any (yes, any) piece of information on your hard drive? It could also read your password and log in information and store it deep in the program code. Well, all previous versions, whether you like it or not, have done this to a certain extent, but only with files you downloaded. As me and my colleagues discovered, with 'the new version, anytime you are signed on to AOL, any top AOL executive, any AOL worker, who has been sworn to secrecy regarding this feature, can go into your hard drive and retrieve any piece of information that they so desire. Billing, download records, e-mail, directories, personal documents, programs, financial information, scanned images, etc ... Better start keeping all those pictures on a floppy disk!

This is a totally disgusting violation of

our rights, and your right to know as well. Since this is undoubtedly 'Top Secret' information that I am revealing, my life at AOL is pretty much over. After discovering this information, we started to inform a few other workers at America Online, so that we could get a large enough crew to stop this from happening to the millions of unfortunate and unsuspecting America Online members. This was in early August. One month later, all three of us were unemployed. We got together, and figured there was something we had to do to let the public know.

Unemployed, with one of us going through a divorce (me) and another who is about to undergo treatment for cancer, our combined financial situation is not currently enough to release any sort of article. We attempted to create a web page on three different servers containing in-depth information on AOL 4.0, but all three were taken down within 2 days. We were running very low on time (4.0 is released early this winter), so we figured our last hope to reveal this madness before it effects the people was starting something similar to a chain letter, this letter you are reading. Please do the following, to help us expose AOL for who they really are, and to help us and yourself receive personal gratification for taking a stand for our freedom:

1. Forward this letter to as many people as you can (not just friends and family, as many as you can!).
2. Tell people who aren't on America Online in person, especially important people (Private Investigators, Government workers, City Council).
3. If the information about the new version isn't exposed by the time AOL is released early this winter, for your own protection, **DON'T DOWNLOAD AOL 4.0 UNDER ANY CONDITION !!!**

Thank you for reading and examining this information. Me and my colleagues hope that you will help us do the right thing in this situation. Enjoy America Online (just kidding!).

Regards, A former AOL employee

new

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Recommended Reading

on technology and
politics

from Jen & Theo

- ***Toxic Sludge Is Good For You*** - John Stauber & Sheldon Rampton (How advertising and public relations companies work to convince you, for example, that storing nuclear waste in your back-yard is OK)
- ***In The Absence of The Sacred*** - Jerry Mander (neo luddite theory)
- ***Four Arguments For The Elimination of Television*** - Jerry Mander (exactly what the title says).
- ***Technopoly*** - Neil Postman (neo luddite theory)
- ***Amusing Ourselves To Death*** - Neil Postman (about how media and the way we communicate has changed with TV)
- ***Rebels Against The Future*** - Kirkpatrick Sale (luddite history, basic neo-luddite theory and statistical information).
- ***Full House*** - Stephen Jay Gould (against the idea of Progress as a drive toward greater complexity).
- ***Woman On The Edge of Time*** - Marge Piercy (a novel which includes a fictional account of a society which practices responsible use of technology).
- ***The End of Work*** - Jeremy Rifkin (technology and labor)
- ***Progress without People*** - Noble (first name?? I haven't read this yet, I don't know exactly what it's like).
- ***Downsize This!*** - Michael Moore (lots of stuff about how corporations take advantage of governments etc).
- ***Best of Temp Slave!/Temp Slave!*** zine - Jeff Kelly (humor and temp work, labor and social criticism)
- ***A Garden of Unearthly Delights: Bioengineering and the Future of Food*** - Robin Mather (examines effects of biotechnology on the world's food supply)
- ***20 Years of Censored News*** - Carl Jensen & Project Censored (compilation of the top ten censored news stories of each year from 1976 to 1996. Packed with incredible stories of corporate, military technological abuses and subsequent cover-ups)

- **Community Technology** - Karl Hess (discusses successes and failures of the large scale experiment in self-sufficiency and alternative technology in the Adams-Morgan community in Washington DC)
- **Gene Wars: The Politics of Biotechnology** - Kristin Dawkins (discusses international policies that are shaping the future of the world's food supply, including genetic engineering)
- **Secret Science: Federal Control of American Science and Technology** - Herbert Foerster (ever heard of the military-industrial complex? The government is up to some scary stuff...)

These are almost all books about general theory on technology and society. However, there are TONS more books out there that are specific and issue-based that will also help you understand the ideas we've present here. Nuclear Madness, by Helen Caldicott, discusses the dangers of nuclear technology, for example, and is inherently against technology which doesn't not benefit people, as a whole (or has disastrous consequences), and for the responsible use of technology.

Periodicals

Dark Night Field Notes • P.O. Box 3629 • Chicago, IL 60690-3629
(*Indigenous resistance, biopiracy, nuclear info, ecology*)

Lip Magazine • 1400 W. Devon #243 • Chicago, IL 60660
(*awesome activist resource magazine for all sorts of issues*)

Z Magazine • 18 Millfield St. • Woods Hole, MA 02543
(*all around great alternative, non-corporate news and analysis*)

Earth First! Journal • P.O. Box 1415 • Eugene, OR 97440
(*environmentalist news and activism, lots of info on biotech and forest issues*)

Earth Island Journal • 300 Broadway, Suite 28 • San Francisco, CA 94133-3312
(*environmentalist news and activism with a slightly more scientific focus than Earth First! Journal and plenty of social justice info too*)

If anybody knows of any other good books or periodicals that explore the relationships between technology, its ownership, and our lives, please feel free to write and let us know about them.

SPECTACLE TALKS WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

TONY WONG

ABOUT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE & HIS TWO-MONTH
HUNGER STRIKE IN AN INDIANA YOUTH FACILITY



Tony, U-locked to other activists outside of a Lazarus Department store in Indianapolis shortly before his arrest.

Somebody showed me an issue of No Compromise a while back and I saw that the feature article was about a dedicated young activist named Tony Wong who had gone on a hunger strike in jail after being incarcerated after a non-violent act of civil disobedience at a fur store. I recognized the name as that of someone who had ordered a copy of Spectacle a while back and was pretty excited. I met Tony at the More Than Music Festival in June of 1997 in Columbus Ohio and arranged to do an interview. My pals Sara and Ginny helped out. Here's what he had to say...

Spectacle: Could you tell us who you are and how old you are?

Tony: I'm Tony Wong. I just turned seven-teen.

Spectacle: Why were you arrested and what happened to you after you were?

Tony: On May 19th of last year (1996) there was a big day of action against Federated Department Stores, the biggest chain that has fur salons in their shops, and Coalition to Abolish the Fur Trade has a campaign against them. Five other activists and I blockaded a store entrance to a Lazarus Department Store in Indianapolis by U-locking our necks together and laying down in an octopus formation in front of the entrance inside the mall. We shut down that entrance for about two hours. We were arrested and the juveniles were offered probation and some fines by one of the juvenile judges. Four of us refused the probation because we don't believe in taking probation on the grounds that it restricts our freedom to protest. It's basically saying "if you're going to guarantee the courts that you're not going to get arrested again or you're not going to participate in civil disobedience"... and they wanted us to pay a \$1000 fine, part of which would be restitution to Lazarus Department Stores and also to the police officers who had to come in. We refused that too and we went to trial. They put us on probation anyway and we told the judge that frankly we didn't believe in taking probation, that we would defy it and that we weren't going to pay the fine either. She didn't really take us seriously so come last November 29th, a day that the animal liberation movement calls "Fur-Free Friday" - a big day of action against Federated Department Stores and the fur industry in general, we U-locked ourselves together and did an octopus formation blockade in front of a parking lot entrance - the main entrance to the same mall where we did the blockade in May. It was awesome. There was so much traffic.

Spectacle: Was the media there? Did you notify them? That's one of the biggest shopping days of the year!

Tony: Yeah. We sent out press releases. There was even a helicopter flying overhead. There were about fifty activists out there and along with the four of us who were arrested, they also arrested ten others who were just picketing.

Spectacle: Were they on mall property?

What was the reason for their arrest?

Tony: Yeah. They said that they were arrested for trespassing when the policemen told them that they could stand where they were standing. Right now a few of those activists have a lawsuit against the police department in Indianapolis. I think we'll probably get some money from that. Then what happened was... well, I pretty much pissed off

"They had demonstrations all over the place. When you have strength like that from everyone, you kind of feel like that place (jail) won't affect you at all.

Physically, they try to cut you off, but when you know that there's all these people out there fighting... even harder now... that's so powerful. I mean, if I'm in jail and that inspires more people to action... then that's fine. They can put me in jail again."

the judge and she detained me for 12 days in the Marion County Juvenile Detention Center and for those 12 days I went on hunger strike. On the 12th day - my parents had hired some slimeball lawyer - and he got me an early release on formal home detention, which means that I can't leave my house unless I'm going to school. I couldn't get a job, I couldn't go out to get groceries... I was basically a prisoner in my own home. I was on that for about two months until I went to sentencing for the same incident (the one in November) and the judge wanted me to accept six months of probation again and wanted me to pay a \$1500 fine, and there was a court order not to associate with 15 of my animal rights activist friends. So I was like, "No way. I can't do that.". And the judge said "Well, are you sure because I'm gonna have to send you to the Department of Corrections?" And I said "Fine. You're gonna have to send me there because I'm not gonna pay that fine and I'm not gonna take proba-

tion". So he sent me to the Department of Corrections. That was February 24th and I was kept in the detention center for two days and then transferred to a juvenile placement facility - I stayed there a week - and they decided where I'd end up permanently. After a week there, because I initiated the hunger strike again, they had to send me to a place that had 24 hour nursing. They sent me to the Indiana Boy's School which is a medium security facility. I spent two months there.

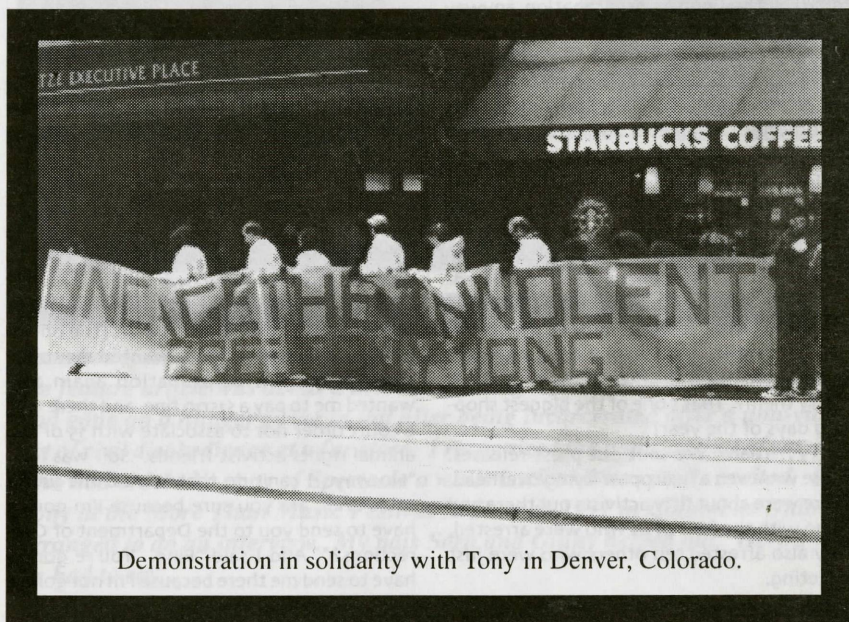
Spectacle: And you hunger striked that two months?

Tony: Yeah. I hunger striked that two months. For the first month I hunger striked without them intervening at all but after the first month, after they went through all the legal processes - of which there actually weren't any, they legally didn't have to get consent from my parents and they didn't have to get a court order to forcefeed me - that's exactly what they did. They said that under law, the warden is my legal guardian. Whatever he feels is necessary to take care of me, whatever bullshit, he could do it. And that's what they decided to do, which was forcefeeding. They did that by sticking a plastic tube up my nose, down my throat, and into my stomach and they dripped in this fluid, this liquid mixture. They wanted me

drink it but I wasn't gonna do that. At that time I had a group out in California - a lawyer and activist experienced in legal strategy - that was

helping me out. They got a lawyer in Indiana who was helping me out with my case. Unfortunately this lawyer kind of slacked everything off... we filed a lawsuit against the Department of Corrections for doing the forcefeeding, for violating my rights, but by the time anything materialized I was already out. And we've had more problems with him just because he's greedy and he didn't think he was getting paid enough. We were also trying to get a court order to stop the forcefeeding but that didn't really work either so I just kinda stuck that out for the last month until I got out.

There was also another girl in Indianapolis, Staci Shearholtz, who went into jail about two months after I went in and was on hunger strike for ten days I think. The jail that she was in, the Girls School, kept her completely cut off from communication. Nobody had any clue as to what was going on. Both of the prisons kept telling us they couldn't let us out early because other people used hunger strikes to try to get released early rather than serve a full sentence. Well, duh... that was also our intention. It didn't



Demonstration in solidarity with Tony in Denver, Colorado.

work with me but when I got out, I was sitting at home and Staci drove up my driveway and we were all surprised because supposedly she was gonna be in another whole month but they let her out early. It was really awesome.

Spectacle: Could you talk just a bit about when they forced you. How did that make you feel? Did they strap you down? Did they strap your head down?

Tony: No. I just passively resisted that which means I didn't fight them. Because in my situation being passive about it worked much more to my advantage. The media looked at that and saw these people at the Department of Corrections just totally violating this kid who's not fighting... it's his own personal choice to do this and they're sticking these tubes down his throat. If I were to fight it I think less people would feel sympathetic towards me. More people would feel force feeding was justified because I reacted with violence toward the prison. But by using non-violence, violence becomes much harder for them to justify. I remember lots of people coming up to me inside of the jail-fellow inmates and guards- telling me how wrong they thought the force feedings were. On the outside it was the same feeling, if not greater. Friends would tell me how their parents were really worried, the media always portrayed us in a positive light, and a few activists even got to meet with a Governor's aide about my situation. So, if I were to fight I think it would make it look a bit more negative.

Spectacle (Ginny): Were your parents supportive?

Tony: They weren't necessarily supportive. They were better when I was in the Boy's School because when I was in the detention center for the 12 days, they really weren't supportive at all, but the second time around they were more understanding. They knew that I had certain things that I was going to do and that these were my beliefs and I was sticking to them. They knew there was nothing they could really do about it. Parents sometimes have this view that their kid isn't going on the right path and that they need to set them straight, but you just have to show your parents that you're in control and that you make choices and learn from your mistakes as much as you do from your successes.

Spectacle: Are they sympathetic with your

convictions on animal liberation?

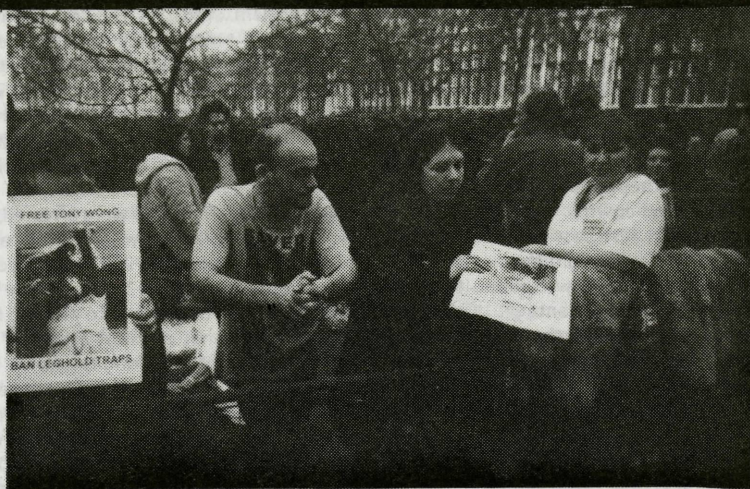
Tony: Um... mostly. They're not into animal rights. I mean, they both eat meat still but they have more understanding of it. They respect my beliefs... my diet and activism... they respect it. They don't necessarily believe I should be going out and doing civil disobedience but it's better than with a lot of parents.

Spectacle: After you were arrested, when you began to plan out your strategy and decided on the hunger strike, how did you prepare yourself mentally? I mean, I've fasted and when I do that I have to prepare myself mentally for that physical aspect of being hungry. A month is a long time...

Tony: Yeah, it is pretty long... I got a lot of letters from people saying "Man, I spent two days in jail on hunger strike and that was so hard" or "I could never do that... I couldn't spend one day", but I think a lot of people don't realize that when you have the will to do something... that you really can. It's really empowering to be on hunger strike for that long. I mean, your body... you have these cravings... and to overcome those cravings, like mind-over-body, is really empowering. It's also empowering for the fact that, here you are, you're locked up - you're completely confined. You're isolated from your friends and your family... from open communication with people. They try to take everything from you and they try to break you. They try and do whatever the hell they want but here you are... and I think a hunger strike is a really strong statement. It's like "Well, you're not going to take every last bit of me because I'm gonna be on hunger strike and you can't do a fucking thing about that". And even when they did those force feedings, I was still on hunger strike. You know, they had to be forcing nourishment into me... and they didn't even do a good job of that because I only gained like 3 pounds out of the 22 I lost after a whole month. They try and break every little bit of you and make you degraded and feel like shit... they just want you to break down but you gain a lot of power over yourself and you show them that they're not gonna conquer you.

Spectacle: You said you only lost 20 pounds and you're not that big now. How much were you down to and how much did you weigh before?

Tony: I was down to 110 and I was 132 before that.



British activists demonstrating against Tony's imprisonment (and leghold traps) at the US Embassy in London, England

Spectacle: I read about these people in Germany, the Red Army Faction, and they hunger striked in prison. There was a photo of this one guy who died - he starved to death - and he weighed like 70 pounds... and he was a big guy. I still have that image in my head. He was a living skeleton... incredible.

Tony: Yeah. I think it depends. Everybody's body is different. Some people could've lasted longer and some people might have had problems earlier than that. A friend of mine in Syracuse, Jeff Watkins, was on hunger strike for 30 days, and at 30 days his vision was getting blurry and he went into convulsions.

Spectacle: Were there any physiological things going on that had you scared?

Tony: Just weakness. I had no energy at all and I had to be careful when I stood up. If I stood up to quickly I'd go black and I'd almost faint so I had to stand up as slowly as I possibly could.

Spectacle (Sara): Did you interact with anyone while you were in the different jails or detention centers?

Tony: Yeah. I talked to a lot of those kids. I gained a really good perspective because a lot of us out here... we really don't see the problems that a lot of those kids go through because they lock them away. A lot of these

kids come from broken homes or from situations where... I mean we took these tests before we went into the Boy's Home to measure our IQ and supposedly I had the highest IQ in the whole place. That just goes to show just how lacking the educational systems are where these people come from and how privileged I am to have all these learning experiences available to me. A lot of these kids have other problems too... with their families... with dealing with people...just alot of problems. I kinda felt guilty about being there. Like I only went to jail because I was privileged enough to have the time to worry about animals and here are these kids who have so much other shit to worry about. That, I think, is one reason why the animal liberation movement is comprised of mainly white, middle class kids. We have the resources. It's sad but it's also...it was good to see because you won't gain that perspective living in the suburbs and going to shows. It makes you realize that there's a lot of people out there that are struggling. You kind of have to realize your place in society.

Spectacle: It looks like there's a lot of solidarity from around the country and even overseas... I was reading in *No Compromise* about activists in England having rallies supporting you. Did you get a lot of mail?

Tony: Yeah. I got tons of mail. Almost everyday I got something. There was only one day I didn't get anything at the Boy's School. There were some days... there was a peak when I got like 50 letters. It was awesome because it kept me busy and it really kept me strong. They had demonstrations all over the place. When you have strength like that from everyone, you kind of feel like that place (jail) won't affect you at all. Physically, they try to cut you off, but when you know that there's all these people out there fighting... even harder now... that's so powerful. I mean, if I'm in jail and that inspires more people to action... then that's fine. They can put me in jail again. If it's gonna move people into action then that's fine. And that's exactly what it's done. There were really huge underground actions from the Animal Liberation Front. About a month after I was in jail, there was a bombing in Utah where they blew up this mink breeders co-op where they stored food. That was just totally fucking awesome... they did that in solidarity with everyone. We also had some demands to get a ban on leghold traps in the U.S. I don't think anything's gonna happen with that but it kind of showed how powerful we were with everyone working together for one goal.

Spectacle: Yeah. I didn't want you to just talk about your hunger strike. Let's talk about the animal liberation movement as a whole. Being an active part of the struggle, where do you see it all going? What needs to be done differently or what needs to be done at all?

Tony: The animal liberation movement is starting to put more focus on things. Instead of just doing random protests at McDonald's and butcher's shops we've focused our efforts. Most campaigns are built against fur or hunting or circus acts- issues which the majority of the population are against. In addition to that there's still alot of vegan outreach and education going on. That's vital towards changing this thing around. Without the support of the public, the meat and dairy industries will fall. In the past year or so more animal liberation people have been trying to build more unity between us and other struggles. Fact is, we're all fighting for the same thing. I know alot of people like the chant "Human Liberation, Animal Rights- One Struggle, One Fight!" but few understand what that means. The human species has chosen to live a completely un-

natural and unsustainable lifestyle. We've stuck ourselves into believing we can take and take in an endless cycle of exploitation and "resource" extraction. It's a very anthropocentric attitude. Human overpopulation and overcrowding have created all these problems of crime, poverty, homelessness, clearcut forests, soil erosion, global warming, and a myriad other things. Tribes and other self-sufficient communities had little, if any, of the problems humans do today. The ecosystem wasn't nearing destruction and animals weren't a part of a slave system either. We've got to address issues holistically by tying them in to everything else. That means addressing the problem, starting with anthropocentrism, by attacking its symptoms. Any other way and I think we'll only be chipping away at the cancer our species has created.

Spectacle: See, that's the thing... and that's my main criticism - and it's certainly a constructive criticism as I consider myself a part of the animal liberation struggle - but I think a lot of activists, while they do great work, have such a narrow, single-issue perspective... A holistic approach is very important.

Tony: Yeah. I think that if you look, from the outside, at a movement like ours - or any other movement - it really does seem to be single-issue. Because you don't see these groups working for anything else. That's another reason why it's so important for groups to...

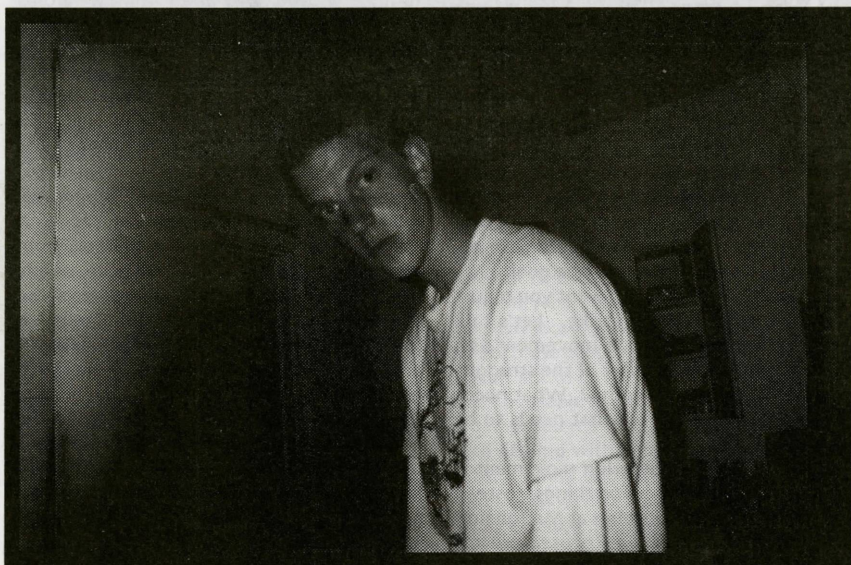
Spectacle: But at the same time, you've got to pick your issue. You can't do everything. You're only one person and you only have so much energy and so much effect. So I guess there's a fine line.

Tony: Yeah, but networking with other groups is good. Going out to demonstrations and meetings and trying to build a bridge between everyone. The government and the corporations want us divided. This way we are easy to conquer and get little accomplished. Our threat to them is to act unified and foster understanding between our movements.

If anyone wants to get more information on the **Animal Defense League or Coalition to Abolish the Fur Trade**, they can contact the Indianapolis chapter at **p.o. box 90151 / Indianapolis, IN 46290**. Their e-mail address is **ADL.indy@juno.com**

an interview with
Nathan Berg
(punk rocker, activist, city councilman)

Nathan Berg is an anti-corporate activist, a columnist for the monthly political/punk magazine MaximumRockNRoll, and a city councilman in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. He's 22 years old. I ran into him at the 1998 More than Music Festival in Columbus, Ohio and we had this little chat. He offers an interesting perspective on this "non-traditional" (yet in some ways completely traditional) route to activism and social change. (Interview by Theo)



Spectacle: Tell us a little about who you are, your political background, and how you came to sit on your city council.

Nathan: As far as politics and that sort of thing... mostly, what got me into it at first was punk rock. You know, there's obviously no lack of talk about political issues in punk rock. I started to get more and more into zines and the whole theory aspect as opposed to just music. So, I became more and more political and got into the idea that democracy, if it exists at all in America, exists on a local level. I always felt that voting, as far as national and state elections... it's almost useless in the sense that it's kind of become a

one-party system. But on local ballot initiatives and voting for people on city councils and school boards... I always thought that was a good thing... promoting community.

Spectacle: Well, it directly affects our lives in a lot of ways.

Nathan: Yeah. So, I was reading my local paper one day and I saw that the deadline to get on the ballot to be elected for city council was the next day and no one was running in my ward... not a single person. So I went down and talked to the city clerk... it's a pretty small town... 12,000 to 13,000 people... Everybody's friends with each other or knows one another. On a five minute walk to the

grocery store you may see ten people that you know. So I talked to the city clerk and he told me that all I needed to do was get somewhere between 20 or 40 signatures from voters in my ward. So I walked around my neighborhood and talked to people a lot and told them what I wanted to do... and I have a few funny stories about that, but I got enough signatures and I got on the ballot. Since I was the only one running I won pretty easily (laughter).

Spectacle: If you didn't run, what would

"Skateboarding is illegal in our downtown to the point where skating downtown carries a bigger fine than possession of marijuana... for a fourteen year old..."

have happened?

Nathan: The person who had done it before me was the council president and he had done it for seven years and was kind of burnt out on it. So he decided not to run again and no one else wanted to... apparently what they do if no one else wants to run is the council itself can appoint someone with the mayor and the council.

Spectacle: How old are you?

Nathan: Twenty-two.

Spectacle: When it was first announced that you were the councilman, what was the reaction from people that someone so young was in that position?

Nathan: Well, when I was first going around asking for signatures, I went up to knock on this one house's door and I saw that there was a Christian Coalition sticker right on the door... but I knocked anyway. This woman started talking to me and I told her I was running for city council and that I was trying to get enough signatures to get on the ballot to run, and she asked me if I was joking... if this was some kind of a weird joke or something... and I kind of took a little bit of

offense to it because anyone should be able to be involved in direct politics. In fact, that's the way it should be. Obviously there should be more diversity. So she asked me if I was joking and I told her that I was completely serious and that it was something that I really wanted to do. I love the town where I'm from... I have a lot of hometown pride, I guess. I don't even necessarily think that my town is run badly but I wanted to be a part of it... especially because no one else wanted to. I thought it was something great that I could do. So after I told her I was serious she asked me my name again. I told her "I'm Nathan Berg" and she said "Berg... is that Norwegian?". I said "Yeah, actually I'm 100% Norwegian", and she said "Well hell I'll vote for anyone that's Norwegian!". (laughter) And there was another woman that signed it that told me she was glad I was running because she had somebody to vote for. It didn't matter to her what anybody thought, she just wanted to be able to vote for somebody. Those were both stories that I thought were sickening.

Spectacle: Did people inquire about your politics at all?

Nathan: Not really at all... and honestly, a lot of the things that I believe politically... I'm a vegetarian, I'm into environmental issues quite a bit, that sort of thing...

Spectacle: I can tell from your shirt that you're some kind of left-leaning commie sympathizer (he was wearing an FZLN shirt - ed.). (laughter)

Nathan: Actually this is a shirt that I just got from my brother. He was touring around Nicaragua and saw Daniel Ortega speak in the '96 elections and brought me this shirt back... but the politics with those kind of things really aren't involved in the city council. The city council does things like public works... they do street repairs... they do make ordinances and policies, and that's where your politics get involved... but a lot of it is just logical and doesn't really have to do directly with your politics. It's just a common sense sort of thing.

Spectacle: When you registered to get on the ballot, did they ask you to declare a party or anything?

Nathan: No, they didn't. I mean, I assume that in larger cities like New York City that's an issue for a lot of people because it affects a lot more people's lives. But this is a smaller community and the people just want to make

sure that the people running have a common sense attitude.

Spectacle: When did you become a councilman?

Nathan: This past April. April of 1998.

Spectacle: How many people are on your city council?

Nathan: There's seven of us altogether and then the mayor, and there are department heads, like the head of public works...

Spectacle: What would you say is the average age of the other council members?

Nathan: I would say the next youngest person is about 50. It goes from 50 on up to about 75.

Spectacle: Wow.

Nathan: And they're all old white males. I'm not adding a whole lot of diversity by being a young white male... but our mayor is a woman.

when I'm talking to people about issues around the town, I let them know how I feel and explain why I feel that way. At the same time though, I'll vote against things that I feel strongly about that I think should be there just because there's an overwhelming amount of support in the other direction.

Spectacle: Give an example where that was the case.

Nathan: I've only gone to about five meetings so far but one example is... there's this dam in my town called the Starmill dam, and what it is... back in 1936 they built this dam for the Starmill Flour Company. The company that built this dam hasn't been around for decades. The building isn't even there anymore, just this dam. It's kinda by this big park, a recreational area in our town, and on the other side of the dam are a bunch of property owners who live next to the dam. The

■ Chippewa Falls Alderman Nathan Berg thought he found the perfect solution for solving a rift over the city's snow shoveling ordinance.

At a Tuesday Committee #3 meeting, Berg said he had looked into banning snowfall within the city limits. But acknowledging the snowstorm that hit the area Monday and early Tuesday, Berg said, "I don't think it's going to be feasible."...

(from Chippewa Falls newspaper)

Spectacle: Are you taken seriously?

Nathan: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I do a lot of things... I'm trying to put out my own zine and I write a column for MAXIMUMROCKNROLL (an international punk magazine), but this has become my top priority. It doesn't actually take as much work as I thought it would, and that's a relief... but at the same time I'm still taking it very seriously. When there's issues around, I try to go and talk to everybody about how they feel about them instead of just having my own opinion, and that involves a lot of compromise.

Spectacle: It becomes a question of who you're doing it for. Are you doing it for your own agenda or are you doing it for the people...

Nathan: Yeah, but at the same time I think that the problem with a lot of politicians in America is that, even if they are just completely representative of how the people feel, they never try to take a role as educator. So

council ended up having a study done... somebody came in and assessed the dam because they were having problems with it. Every time there was a flood, these splashboards would fall and they would have to fix the dam and it would cost \$5,000 every time there was a flood, and there were two different people who had to be sent home on paid leave for an entire season because of back injuries from working on the dam. So the assessment was done to see what they could do about the problem. One of the issues that was brought up by the company that did the assessment was that removal of the dam wouldn't be a problem at all. It was something that I was kinda for... especially... I mean, one could argue all sorts of environmental points about dams, but it's at least arguable that if there's a dam that's not serving any purpose, you've at least got to question why it's there. But the property owners that live near the dam consider it to be an object of beauty, which is an eye-of-the-beholder issue I guess, but

they consider it to be a beautiful, historical landmark because it had been in the town for so long.

Spectacle: Was there a lake upstream from the dam that they were using?

Nathan: There was a small pond upstream but it wasn't that large at all. But arguably, it is kind of beautiful... but I myself am more interested in... if we can restore nature back to the way it was, at all costs, we should. But the amount of people that have turned out on this issue in favor of keeping this dam there is amazing. They don't listen to ratio-

"I don't think the world should be run by me... I don't think that my town should be run by me. But I do want to at least have an active role in helping decide the way things go."

nal thought at all. They want a place... there's a lot of people who fish there, and they're concerned about loss of property values. I mean, that's not something that I'm too concerned with. I'm not even a property owner but at the same time, these are legitimate concerns of theirs. And there were definitely a lot more people who felt that way about the dam than felt the way I feel. The way we're going about it now is, we're going to keep the dam but make a few improvements so that they can avoid the large costs every year and still keep these people from getting hurt when they have to fix it. So it turned out OK... not the way that I wished, but that's what happens when you're on the city council. Even if I had stood out on the issue and said "No, I think this dam should be removed", there were six other people on the council that were going to disagree with me. There's a lot of compromise involved.

Spectacle: Have you proposed any initiatives?

Nathan: A couple of other council members gave me the comments when I first got

on that for the first six or seven meetings, you're not really gonna say much because... I mean, I'd only been to about two council meetings before I got elected so I'm still getting the hang of it even at this point in time. I'm learning how to go about getting that sort of stuff done. There are a lot of things that I'd like to push for. For one thing, I'd like to see our town more positive toward bikers and pedestrians. Our town, as small as it is, is still very congested with respect to traffic. And it's small so riding a bike around town is something that would be easy to promote but it's something that I don't see. So I'd like to propose some sort of initiative about alternative transportation. There's also issues facing the kids in our town. Our town is predominantly older people... it's almost a senior citizen sort of town but there are getting to be more and more kids. A lot of them though, are kind of shut out from the rest of the community. I remember when I first graduated from high school my first impression was "I've got to get the hell out of here", and I moved away two days after I graduated and lived in Colorado for two years... just to get away from it. It doesn't foster a healthy environment for kids. They don't have anything to do... we don't have a movie theater in our town... there's just nothing for kids to do.

Spectacle: Is there a juvenile curfew?

Nathan: Yeah, there's a juvenile curfew. I believe it's 11 PM on weeknights and midnight on weekends. It's age 14 for that, and then there's really late curfews like two AM for older kids. So that's another issue I have.

Spectacle: Do you have plans to fight the curfew?

Nathan: I'm not so sure that I have plans to fight it because in order to fight it I'd have to get some initiative raised so I could do it, and I think that before I would do something like that I would try explain to people why I thought it was wrong and see what my means were to go about it... At least... not eliminating the curfew, because I know a lot of people would be opposed to it, but at least trying to get something done along those lines. That's something that I just do not agree with... that kids have to be in by a certain hour... especially in a town like that where there's essentially no crime.

Spectacle: So what are the major problems facing the community?

Nathan: One of the big problems right now, at least as I see it, is that the governor



Nathan playing his violin at home in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin while wearing a stylish headgasket.

of Wisconsin, Tommy Thompson - I don't know if you've heard of him... he's very republican... very right wing... he is the one who passed the Wisconsin Welfare Reform Law that was the model for the national one they just passed here in '96 or '97... But he has started to refer to our area of Wisconsin - there's three communities; Menomonee, Eau Claire, and Chippewa Falls - and he has started to refer to them as "the silicon valley of the Midwest". There's all kinds of companies that are moving in that are high technology companies. In fact, I work for one of them, Johnson-Matthey, a semiconductor packages industry. They make products for Intel and Cray Research. There's also Hutchinson Technology... and more. So he's starting to call our town "the silicon valley of the Midwest" but there are a lot of people there that like it because of its small town atmosphere... because, largely, industry has stayed away from the town... It's been kind of a community effort... there's mom and pop stores and that sort of thing. But corporate industries have, for the most part, been kept out of our town. But they're starting to come in and that's

something I'd like to stand against. Keep it locally-owned and expose some of these multinationals for the crimes that they commit. I mean, not all of them are necessarily evil per se, but a lot of evil issues are involved with corporations.

Spectacle: Yeah, I just go back from a trip with my girlfriend... we went up to visit her parents who live in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It's pretty rural... a nice place but the corporations have recently invaded and they've taken over everything. Then we were up visiting friends in Cambridge, Massachusetts and all around Harvard Square, where there used to be all these mom and pop independent stores, but they've all been kicked out and displaced by the chains.

Nathan: It doesn't even take long to see how it happens but for some reason people don't always see it coming. I've seen it too. That stuff is really starting to happen in my area.

Spectacle: Have you talked to people about it in your ward? Do they even care? A lot of people seem to think it's great.

Nathan: A lot of people... you get a split. Where I'm from there's definitely a lot of right-wing thinking...

Spectacle: "It's good for the economy"...

Nathan: Yeah. That's the argument that you hear... that it creates jobs. You hear that all over the place. Whenever a corporation wants to move somewhere... they want to create jobs. And creating jobs isn't necessarily a bad thing... but creating quality jobs for companies that do things that are worthwhile...

Spectacle: But what kind of jobs are they creating? If it's minimum wage with little or no benefits...

Nathan: Well, these companies are offering some benefits... not full packages but a decent amount. It seems to me that they are doing enough to get by with not being considered heinous. Which is kinda their agenda. They wanna keep costs low, keep everything efficient... so they can sell the cheapest and become the market dominator. That's how corporations work. But there's also issues like... there's this land on the edge of town that the city is considering selling to Wal-Mart for development.

Spectacle: Is it farmland?

Nathan: Much of it is farmland. The city limits kinda end where the farmland starts, but there's still a lot of that going on. And

one thing that I'd like to get people in my town involved in is open space projects. I lived in Bolder, Colorado for two years and they had referendums all the time as to whether or not they wanted the city to spend the money to buy open land and keep that land open and away from development so that, in the future, if you want to start parks... or just have an area where people can go and enjoy nature as opposed to everything being just cement and industry... Just to do what you can to stop urban sprawl before it hits you like a plague.

Spectacle: I was talking to some people in Chicago and they were lamenting how there were no parks and there was just sprawl in every direction...

Nathan: And where there are parks they just end up becoming homes for these people who are disenfranchised by the rest of society.

Spectacle: Share some other stories. What interesting experiences have you had?

Nathan: OK. The meeting before the one where I was sworn in, these skateboarders came to the city council meeting and proposed the idea for a skatepark.. I used to skate... in fact that's how I got into punk rock... because I used to skate back in the day. Anyway, these kids wanted to start a skatepark in our town. Skateboarding is illegal in our downtown to the point where skating downtown carries a bigger fine than possession of marijuana... for a fourteen year old... which is absolutely silly. It's also illegal to skate on the sidewalks in the residential areas. So these kids came, and this is something we've been trying to do since I was fourteen, to try to get a place where skateboarders can go. So finally, a kid named Billy Akin, took the initiative and made a design of a skatepark and proposed it to the city council. The council gave the OK and they donated land, but they said "this has to be privately funded" and that it had to be done by the skateboarders, which is crazy. There was a skateboarder who was there who said "When you guys build a basketball court you don't make the basketball players go and raise money for it... when you build a little league thing, you don't make the little league people pay for it...". I'm kind of ashamed that the city wouldn't take a more active role in it. They just gave the land away... which they have plenty of. They gave us 100 feet by 130 feet. But at the same time, there was some-

thing started. So they started having skateboard park meetings and I've kind of become friends with the Parks and Rec. Director since this whole thing began and he ended up inviting me to be on these meeting that they're having. It ended up being me and these three other skateboarders and the rest of the people were from like the optimist club and

"...corporate industries have, for the most part, been kept out of our town. But they're starting to come in and that's something I'd like to stand against. Keep it locally-owned and expose some of these multinationals for the crimes that they commit."

the Parks and Rec. Department, and what not.

Spectacle: Is the skatepark in your ward?

Nathan: Yeah, it is. But that's another thing about the council... they try to not just restrict each other to their wards. They try to work with everyone in the community which I think is a good thing. I mean, like Wal-Mart going in on the outskirts of town doesn't just affect people in that ward. It affects everyone in town.

Spectacle: Right. If Wal-Mart moves in, businesses in all the wards are likely to suffer.

Nathan: Yeah. But anyway, these skateboard kids have finally started to get something going, and even though the odds are stacked against them... they have to raise like \$65,000, and in a town that doesn't do that much business... it's hard to try to get those funds privately. But they're working on it and it's getting accomplished a lot quicker than I thought it would. And actually the

Parks and Rec. Department is all behind it and they're a little upset with the council that they didn't give up money. Furthermore, at the end of this summer is when we start doing the budget for 1999. This will be the first time I'll be involved with budgeting process, but I think it's fair (to give \$ to the skatepark). Last year I think they gave the police another \$80,000 to upgrade their telecommunications equipment and buy more cop cars. And this is a town with no crime! And there's not low crime because there's that many police watching everything... it's low crime because it's friendly people just trying to cohabitate in a peaceful manner. If you read the police report in our town, it's stuff like "Fourteen year old cited for underage smoking"... it takes up almost the whole thing. A lot of it is kids getting busted for whatever they're doing. Why can't we take some money away from things we're giving it to like this, which aren't that useful, and giving them to kids that just want to have a place to go and do their thing in a safe place.

Spectacle: What are some of the things that you don't like about being a councilperson? Talk about the compromise involved.

Nathan: One thing, my town has virtually no radical thought whatsoever. Even if... if I dyed my hair blue and went to a city council meeting, it would be a large issue with these people. I mean, what difference does your hair color make? They would make a big deal about this. Another fact is that right before

every city council meeting begins you have to stand up and say the pledge of allegiance. **Spectacle:** So you just do it?

Nathan: Yeah. I do it just because... I'm trying to do something positive with the

whole experience and I can't let little things like that stop me from trying to make a positive influence.

Spectacle: I've been involved in a lot of activism over the last few years and you get constant criticism for small compromises like that. And some of them aren't even compromises... it's not even an issue. For example... my pal Jon Strange went to that "Town Hall Meeting" here in Columbus that they had about the bombing of Iraq when the US was about to start bombing recently. So Jon goes up in a shirt and tie, dressed nice, clean-cut, clean-shaven... well groomed... and he got to go up and ask this question and basically played a large part in...

Nathan: Yeah. This was like a huge televised event right?

Spectacle: It was on CNN. I mean, basically that played a

huge part in stopping this planned bombing. The whole event was so obviously orchestrated by the state department to justify the "fact" that "all these people are behind us... we can bomb!"... But him having the access to ask that question played a large part in sabotaging their whole plan! It's like... if you want to be effective, there's more important things to worry about than whether or not your hair is funny or whatever.

Nathan: I see that a lot with the leftist community. There's no willingness to com-

"I see that a lot with the leftist community. There's no willingness to compromise... and I understand that to a degree. Building alternative institutions to the ones that exist is very important. And breaking down a lot of these compromises is important, but at the same time we kind of exclude ourselves from the way things are done presently. And I think we need to be there as well. We need to be both places at once... helping to build a new way of thinking and trying to change the old way of thinking."

promise... and I understand that to a degree. Building alternative institutions to the ones that exist is very important. And breaking down a lot of these compromises is important, but at the same time we kind of exclude ourselves from the way things are done presently. And I think we need to be there as well. We need to be both places at once... helping to build a new way of thinking and trying to change the old way of thinking. For example... an issue I've given before is flag burning... A lot of people take a lot of pride in the flag, like veterans of wars. They believe they went and fought and died for what this flag represents. If you go up to them - and obviously I think that flag burning should be legal because it's a free-speech issue, but at the same time, if you go up to one of these people who believes in the flag and you burn it in front of them... you're not going to change their mind at all. You're not going to let them know about the reasons why you want to burn the flag... because we're allowing companies to go into Indonesia and China and pay the workers dirt to make shoes, or the fact that we're trying to bomb other countries to spread so-called "democracy"... you're not going to get these issues across. All you're gonna do is piss them off. So I think a lot of tolerance and compromise is needed in those areas.

Spectacle: So you've had that mindset from the beginning with the city council thing?

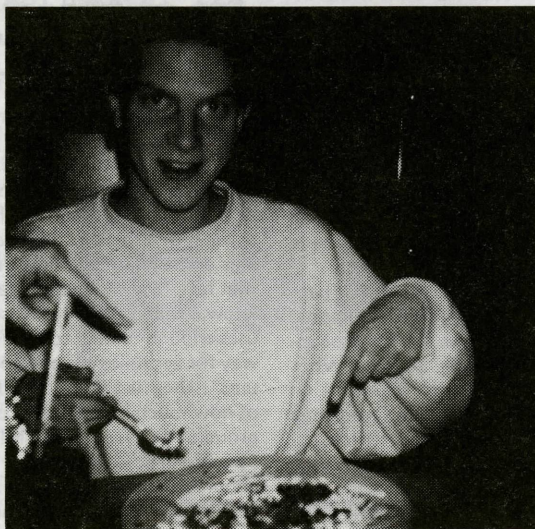
Nathan: Yeah. I knew that there was gonna be a lot of battles that I'm not gonna win... a lot of issue that I'll just be able to make my point on, and other than that it

won't go my direction. I'm OK with that, you know, I don't think the world should be run by me... I don't think that my town should be run by me. But I do want to at least have an active role in helping decide the way things go.

Spectacle: Do you think you'd ever want to pursue something further - outside the city council - in local politics?

Nathan: That's a good question... a lot of people seemed to think, "Wow, this is great! You're twenty-two years old and getting involved in local politics... you could be senator someday!", and all this... And I have to

explain to these people that that's not something that's really in my interest. You know, I could change my mind down the road, but right now what I'm interested in is our community... in what we can do better in our community. I don't have plans in changing the way the world thinks,



per se, but I can have my little mark. If it's just in this community then that's great... that's the way it should be. This is here I was born and raised. This is where I'd like to make my mark and have my say. So I don't know if I would go into politics further. Even a lot of what I'm learning right now gives me reason to understand why people dislike politicians. You know, there's obviously a lot more dirty politicians out there than what gets recognized in the major media.

Spectacle: Have you had any run-ins with corruption on a local level?

Nathan: No. There might be a few minor issues that will pop up here and there but for the most part, I think people who are involved in Chippewa Falls - whether they're on the city council as elected officials, or the

mayor, or department heads... people who work for the city do things out of a love for the town. Sometimes they may be misguided or they may have ideas that they think are great but really aren't that great, but people seem to do it for the community.

Spectacle: What is your column about in MRR? Is it about being on the city council?

Nathan: No, actually I started my column in MRR about a year ago - well before I was elected. I haven't even spoken about it in my column at all. I write about corporations. I write about multinational corporations. The column is called "Corporate Know-Who" and it's all about... I try to focus on a specific company or a specific industry and the issues involved. I've written about agriculture with Monsanto and Dow and Dupont going into genetic engineering...

Spectacle: Yeah. We were talking last night about Monsanto and the terminator seed... how they've genetically engineered all these crops that produce sterile seeds. Their goal is that no one will be able to save seeds to plant the next year. Everyone will have to buy their seed each year and they'll have total control of the global seed market.

Nathan: Oh yeah. That kind of stuff is happening all the time. Monsanto is a big one. In the last few years they've started producing these "Roundup Ready" plants. What these plants do... they are resistant to roundup herbicide and pesticide. And they make Roundup herbicide and pesticide... I read an article about it in a magazine called *Successful Farming* which is a magazine that is sponsored and funded... all the advertisers were major seed companies, major tractor companies... that sort of thing. And the article I was reading talked about how this farmer had such a positive experience because he used Monsanto fertilizer with Roundup, Monsanto Roundup-ready seeds, and then he sprayed twice the normal amount of Roundup on his plants. The plants themselves are more resistant, but what about everything else?! They weren't talking about what happens when it seeps into the soil and gets in our groundwater. What they want to do is control things so that they can sell more and more of their product, as opposed to just farming organically - which is something that I'm a firm believer in. Especially in my area.

The first side of the tape ran out

and I didn't notice for a few minutes, during which we got to bagging on Wal-Mart. Side two begins in mid sentence...

Nathan: So my brother just got a job at this Wal-Mart Distribution Center... it's this

"I became more and more political and got into the idea that democracy, if it exists at all in America, exists on a local level."

huge building - like a half mile by a quarter mile or something - where they drive forklifts full of stuff and load it into semis which deliver to all the Wal-Mart stores. But they have this whole page in their orientation manual dedicated to how large their buildings actually are and how proud they are of that fact. They have these facts like "Did you know... that a Wal-Mart Distribution Center uses enough cement to pave a two-lane highway for 275 miles or pave 400 baseball stadiums"... they had about ten different examples of how much cement they used. They were proud of it. "We're this big!"...

Spectacle: "How much useless crap do people buy in our stores?"... Meanwhile they neglect pointing out how many mom and pop stores they sunk.

Nathan: Or even issues that aren't exactly as big as the consumerism issues to me... there's free speech issues involved with Wal-Mart a lot. Like stickering or black-labeling certain artists and stuff. That's another issue when companies get that big.

Spectacle: When they put everything else out of business and you can't buy anything that's not sanctioned by the corporation because all the other stores are gone...

Nathan: A couple months ago *Z Magazine* published a list of the top twenty richest people in America. And if you go down this list... they have a whole category of what company they are the CEO of... meaning that if you are one of the richest people in America you are either a CEO of a corporation or a major stockholder. Out of the top ten, five

people were Sam Walton's descendents. And you have to wonder... I mean, this woman I work with was discussing this with me and she told me she loves Wal-Mart because of how cheap it is and how she could go there and get all these different things under one roof. And I'm like "Yeah, but the people that run this store are five of the richest ten people in America... do you really think that they're looking out for your best interest? Do you really think that they're doing this because they're so good hearted that they want you to be able to buy all these things as cheap as possible?"... No, they can make a profit by undercutting all these mom and pop stores' prices and put them out of business so that they get ALL the business... It kinda waters down the economy in a sense.

Spectacle: It's this conglomeration of everything, this consolidation of more and more wealth and power into the hands of fewer and fewer people that's the biggest threat to any sort of real democracy.

Nathan: Which is maybe something that I could promote with my city council position and my column. People should start thinking about it more. I've noticed in the punk/hardcore scene... it seems to get a lot more lip service than it does in other places. Like with my mother and father, for instance... my mother and father go to eat at McDonald's and whatnot. I try to explain to them why supporting a company like that is wrong, and at least my mom, to a certain degree, has gotten into a lot of that. Because she's started to understand why it's wrong. I mean, my mom's all for trying to make the world a better place...

Spectacle: It's so easy. It's what I call "passive activism". You don't even really have to do anything... you just make a different

choice when you want to get something to eat or whatever.

Nathan: Exactly. And a lot of times I know that gets sort of shot down with the mentality that... like with natural foods co-ops... a lot of people say "oh, that's a hippie store... I don't want to go in there 'cause it's all a bunch of hippies" or whatever... but how could that not be in your best interest? Sometimes it just baffles my mind and I have a little trouble

relating. But at the same time I try not to harp on anyone too much. I mean, obviously I make a lot of compromises myself. I can't live completely outside of corporate control... I don't think any of us can. But I think we can work toward that a lot more to help support an environment where eventually someday we could.

Spectacle: If everyone would just do a little, no one would have to do it all... to make such huge...

Nathan: I mean, I'm not necessarily here to put Wal-Mart out of business but I'm here to make people think about

what they're supporting when they shop there... to change the minds of people, so they understand why it's wrong. Sometimes greed will put a blindfold on and Wal-Mart might not ever understand that it's wrong but if the people who support them understand that it's wrong, it's gonna cut into their profit margin and then they'll catch on.

Spectacle: Hit 'em where it hurts.

Nathan: Yeah.



Nathan Berg
P.O. box 504
Chippewa Falls, WI
54729

Update to Nathan Berg Interview (5/19/99)

That interview was done last summer at the More Than Music Festival and Nathan has been a busy guy since then. He gave speeches to Optimist Clubs (and others) helping the Chippewa Falls skateboarders raise \$15,000 toward their skatepark. They are negotiating with two professional skatepark design firms including the legendary "Team Payne" who has built ramps since before I started skating in 1986. They are now working on getting a grant from AIRWALK (the shoe company). It looks like they'll get their park after all.

Nathan is also part of the ten-person "Crust Island Collective" that has just opened the INSIGHT infoshop and lounge in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. INSIGHT is a "collectively-run, non-profit space to utilize in the development of a true counterculture". There are no membership fees to use the space, which houses a zine library, show space, regular movie showings, speakers, workshops, discussion, and so on. There was recently a workshop on consumerism. Upcoming events include a bike repair workshop, potlucks, a micropower radio workshop and broadcast, and numerous shows.

The Crust Island Collective is made up of a group of ten individuals with differ-

ent political ideologies and there is no party line to be followed. The only rules are that there is absolutely no drugs or alcohol allowed and everybody has to be nice (to the space and each other).

So far, the space is being financed by donations. Feel free to call or stop by the space if you're in Eau Claire. Hours are 4-10 PM Monday-Friday, and 2-8 PM Saturday and Sunday.

INSIGHT infoshop/lounge
308 E. Madison St.
Eau Claire, WI 54703

(715) 830-8685

Or, if you want to write, the mailing address is

INSIGHT
P.O. box 1151
Eau Claire, WI
54702-1151



**Ricardo Flores Magon Club &
Affinity Group of Evolutionary Anarchists
PO Box 1402
Lawrence KS 66044-8402 USA**

...liberty, equality, cooperation...

January 8, 1999

Dear friend of liberty,

I'm writing to you on behalf of Michal Patera, a Czech anarcho-syndicalist who is in jail for killing a neo-nazi in self-defense. On the evening of November 27, 1998 Michal and a comrade were attacked at a nightclub by a gang of five neo-nazis. After beating Michal's comrade unconscious, they began beating Michal. After taking a few blows, he pulled out a pistol and shot the most aggressive thug three times, killing him. The police are holding Michal in jail, and are pursuing the case as a politically motivated murder instead of as an act of self-defense. His defense is being organized by his comrades in the Federation of Social Anarchists, a group of Czech anarcho-syndicalists affiliated with the International Worker's Association. They are financially drained after defending another member of their group from similar charges resulting from a previous attack (of which he was finally acquitted).

After corresponding with the F.S.A.'s international secretary, we have worked out a way to transfer donations in U.S. dollars to the Czech Republic - via international money order made out to a member of their group. I'm asking that, if you are able, you consider making a donation, no matter how small, to Michal Patera's defense fund to help pay his legal expenses. Everyone who sends me a donation will get a list showing the donors, the amount of their donation, and the total raised, as well as a copy of the "confirmation of receipt" letter I will ask the F.S.A. to provide. If you want to donate anonymously, please point that out.

Please send your check made out to "Ed Stamm" to the address above, and write "FSA" or something like that on the memo line of your check. If everyone who I've contacted about this can only give a few bucks, we could still easily raise \$100, which doesn't sound like much, but it will go a long way because of the favorable exchange rate. If everyone hits on their comrades for a couple of bucks, we could raise even more.

If you would like to contact the F.S.A. directly, their address is: **FSA Praha / PO Box 5 / 15006 Praha 56 / Czech Republic** *Don't send donations to this address however* - the Czech authorities often tamper with their mail and they don't have a way to cash personal checks written in U.S. dollars.

email: fsa-praha@usa.net

For more information on this incident, there is a posting at this web site:
<http://flag.blackened.net/agony/czech98.html#michal>

Thank you for your time,

Ed Stamm.



TREE OF KNOWLEDGE PRESS

Tree of Knowledge is a mailorder distribution & publishing collective struggling to provide the finest in alternative media at affordable prices. We have more than 350 zines, books, and pamphlets focusing on health & social issues, activism, DIY, anarchism, ecology, alternative living, punk/hardcore, youth culture, feminism, veganism, & other forms of intelligent rebellion. We've got zines such as *Auto-Free Times*, *Fucktooth*, *Contrascience*, *Icarus Was Right*, *Inside Front*, *The Match!*, *Flavorpak*, *War Crime*, *Here Be Dragons*, *Cooties*, *Ret-rogression*, *Screams From Inside*, *Dish-washer*, *Temp Slave*, *Outpunk*, *Dwgsht*, *Femme Flicke*, *Cometbus*, *Doris*, *The Underground Auto Worker*, *Dwelling Portably*, *War Crime*, *Live Wild or Die*, *Slug & Lettuce*, *Backseat*, & *Enobled Mind*... plus



a good selection of comics (including the entire *Migraine Press* catalog). We've got books by **Emma Goldman**, **Noam Chomsky**, **Judi Bari**, **Graham Purchase**, **Ward Churchill**, **Grace Llewellyn**, **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, **Raoul Vaneigem**, and many other articulate folks. We publish stuff when we can... stuff like *The Playground Messiah*, a graphic novel by Emily Heiple & Nate Powell about some teenage revolutionaries who inspire an uprising in their high school, or *Spectacle Magazine*, a journal of ecology, activism, humor, & alternatives & resistance to corporate dominance & destruction of the planet. Our 1999 mailorder catalog is out and is yours for just \$1.00 (or some stamps) from the address below. Thanks a lot!

P.O. BOX 251766 / LITTLE ROCK, AR 72225
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WHEN CORPORATIONS RULE THE PLANET, YOU'LL MISS THE SMALL PRESS

We're living at a time in history when multinational corporations have become the largest single force in determining the way we live our lives. Not only do they control nearly all areas of commerce & consumption, they also control the flow of information and ideas. Fewer than 10 corporations control most of the global media and it's getting worse with every corporate merger. As these institutions become larger and larger, they control more and more of our lives. They decide what is "newsworthy"... they decide which books get published... they decide which opinions will be voiced. These points of view inevitably support the agendas of those that control these empires. Advertisers manufacture our desires as "news" editors manufacture our consent by regulating the flow of information... information about the health effects of chemicals in our food, the effects of our consumption on the biosphere, and the real cost of the products we buy (in terms of human misery & ecological destruction). These cor-

porations are subsidized by our tax dollars through an elaborate system of corporate welfare. Corporations exist to make a profit for their shareholders. This is their prime directive and it is becoming increasingly evident that they will steamroll anyone or anything in their way in order to meet this objective.

These corporations won't be publishing books on grassroots resistance to U.S. imperialism & war, or be making movies about labor struggles. They won't be reporting on the devastating ecological effects of urban sprawl and a culture based on fossil fuel dependency. This is why the independent press, now more than ever before, is essential to the maintenance of a vibrant and original culture. Indeed it is vital to our very freedom and quality of life and our right to honest information. Alternative media (and all small businesses) all over the world are in danger of extinction. Your support is essential to their survival. Decentralize your consumption from the giants. Shop small!

jen's upcoming projects

The 1998 Zine

Yearbook

The 1998 Zine Yearbook is out now! It features 50 excerpts from 39 zines published in 1998 including *Guinea Pig Zero*, *Rumpshaker*, *Contrascience*, *Inside Front*, *Slave*, *The Match!*, *Slant*, *Burn Collector*, and *Fucktooth*. It's 132 pages, full size, perfect bound, and has a cover by John Yates. The cost is \$7.00 postpaid from Become The Media / P.O. Box 353 / Mentor, OH 44061

Fucktooth #25

Fucktooth #25 is in the works. It will be a "regular issue" and won't be centered around any particular theme. So far there will be an article by Nathan Berg on his quest to get a vasectomy, an article on having a natural birth with a midwife, an interview with a midwife-in-training, and the usual stuff on punk, politics, and personal relationships. There will also be more of the "50 Ways to be Punk" interviews, including one with Atom (of Atom & His Package fame). It should be out late summer to early fall of 1999. It's looking like it will be \$2.00 and be around 100 pages.

The 1999 Zine

Yearbook

The 1999 Zine Yearbook is soliciting nominations now. Nominations are due by February 28, 2000. Zines will only be considered if they are published in 1999 and have circulations of 5000 copies or less. It should be out in June of 2000. Send a S.A.S.E. to Become The Media for more information, and send xeroxed copies (or originals) of nominations.

Workshops

Jen has a workshop on how to make your zine carry itself financially. It deals with advertising and implementing alternatives to advertising (such as sponsorships, etc.). This workshop was given at the Midwest Underground Media Symposium May 2-3 in Kansas City and will be delivered again at the Zine Conference in Bowling Green, OH, June 11-13.

theo's upcoming projects

Spectacle #6

Spectacle #6 is about done. It will be 100 pages. There's probably more stuff than will fit in one issue, but at least some of this stuff will be in there... lengthy interviews with prisoners of the state Ron Campbell & Schauki Fayek Kassiss, Double Entendre record store owner Paul Kane, alternative education activ-

ist and *Drop Out* zine editor Kate Ming, author Craig O'hara, the band Animal Farm, Native American rights activist Kim Toomey, Ozark Mountains forest activist How Kuff, Ebullition/Heartattack engines Leslie Kahan & Lisa Oglesby, the *complete* Wendy-o Matic interview, and more. Articles on the U.S. war with Iraq, environmental destruction at the hands of corporations, mountain lions in the eastern United States, and all sorts of other topics. Plus comics by Nate Powell, columns, a lengthy letters section, and lots more. It will be out as soon as I get enough cash to print it.

The DIY Guide

John Gerken (of *Pants that Don't Fit* zine) and I are co-editing a book called "*The DIY Guide: An A to Z Guide to Doing It Yourself*". As the name implies, the book will be packed with in-depth, illustrated how-tos on a wide variety of activities - from how to maintain your bike or car to how to grow your own food. We've gotten permission to reprint the entire "DIY Files" from *Punk Planet* (though we have yet to contact all the authors) but we'll also have a lot of new articles. Screenprinting, starting independent businesses, zines, records, carpentry, drywalling, gardening, canning, bike repair, car repair, and tons more! We're still compiling it, so PLEASE send in your submissions!!! This will be a pretty thick book and will be published by Tree of Knowledge Press sometime next year.

The Ecological Basis of Veganism

This pamphlet, an expansion of the 1995 *Ahimsa: A Comprehensive DIY Guide to Nonviolent Revolution in the Kitchen*, will explore the ecological arguments for a vegan lifestyle. Ecological concepts such as energy loss through trophic levels, carrying capacity, and minimum viable population size will be explained in easy-to-understand terms and related to our present animal-based agriculture system. Soil loss, deforestation, over-use of antibiotics, genetic engineering, subsidence of aquifers, and other ecological problems will be correlated to food production and alternatives (such as veganism and organic agriculture) will be explored and championed. Out by the winter solstice on Tree of Knowledge if all goes well.

The Eco-Science Zine

This will be the first issue of what we hope to be an at least semi-regular journal for environmentalists and activists working in the sciences. Yeah, I know, it sounds pretty specific but it will also have easy-to-follow articles on ecology, stuff on activism, the editors' experiences trying to make a living without compromising our tree-hugging principles, and more. The idea is to help activists be literate in basic ecological concepts and to challenge corporate influence in the life- and earth-sciences. Christ, are we nerds or what? Co-edited by Chris Tracey. Submissions welcomed. Out by the end of 1999 I suppose.

Workshops

Just so Jen wouldn't out-do us, Tree of Knowledge co-conspirator Mary Chamberlin and I put together a workshop for zine geeks on how to get your project distributed and how to start a mailorder for the unfortunate folks who want to give that a try. We'll be doing it again at the Zine Conference in Bowling Green and at the More Than Music Fest in Columbus. \$1 (or stamps) = info packet.

OUTRO

At last! The final page! I've spent the entire last three days (and nights) in front of the computer writing, editing, making the graphics, and doing the layout. As luck would have it, those days have been three of the nicest ones all year and I didn't get outside to enjoy them at all. Now I'm about finished and they're predicting rain. It's ok though, I've got that the-zine-is-finished high that comes from eating very little and staying up all night.

I was hoping to have articles on nuclear by-products from military and industry. That stuff will be around practically forever and we're making more and more all the time. Bad news. I also planned to have an article on the pirate radio movement, and a 3-way dialog on technology with Brian Dingledine, Eric Boehme, and Scott Beibin. Ask them where that is. The bottom line is that I ran out of time and room. More stuff soon though!

All graphics were assembled and/or stolen by me (mostly from non-copyrighted sources, and the rest within the bounds of "fair use"). Credits are given where I could find them. Addresses for Jen and I are on the back cover.

Thanks again for reading!

Theo

How to reach the contributors...

Fred Woodworth wrote the long article on computers. It originally appeared in issue #89 of his wonderful anarchist magazine, *The Match!*. Contact him at P.O. Box 3012 • Tucson, AZ 85702. Send \$3 for a copy of *The Match!*.

Ravi Grover wrote the article on Israel's Secret Nuclear Program. He does a zine called *Indian Attack*. Contact him at P.O. Box 660881 • Birmingham, AL 35266, and send a buck for a copy of his zine.

Carbon Defense League • www.carbondefense.com

Brob Vanbrabaandt wrote the piece "Gene Technology & Ethics". He publishes a zine called TILT!. Write him at Tennisbaanstr. 85 • 9000 Gent • Belgium

Brian Ralph did the art for "The Machine Question". He does a zine called *Fireball*.. Contact him at P.O.Box 2328 • Providence, RI 02906.

The photo on the contents page was taken by Joel Szymanowski. The concept was envisioned by Tanya Miller. I dunno who took the photos in the interviews, as they were sent in by Nathan and Tony. All layout by Theo.

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