

# **Green Anarchy #22**

**An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action**

Various Authors

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# Contents

<b>Road of Technology and the Path of Spirit, by RedWolfReturns</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Death as an Industry</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Welcome to Green Anarchy</b>	<b>8</b>
What is Green Anarchy's Favorite Season? . . . . .	8
Is There a Future In Technological Society? . . . . .	8
Does Green Anarchy Grow On Trees? . . . . .	8
Some Writers to Check Out: . . . . .	9
Help Wanted! . . . . .	10
<b>Against the Logic of Technology</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>I Am Not A Machine, I Am A Human <i>Being</i> — Technology As Mediation, by Mia X. Kursions</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Don't Fear The Singularity, by Ran Prieur</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Motorway to Roswell</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>from <i>The Technological Society</i> by Jacques Ellul</b>	<b>24</b>
Intro . . . . .	24
The Autonomy of Technique (Part I) . . . . .	24
<b>The cyclic sense of time</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Towards Something New — From the Italian Anti-Civilization Journal, <i>Terra Selvaggia</i></b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Captives of Biology? By Helena</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>The Iron Grip of Civilization: the Axial Age, by John Zerzan</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Indigenous vs the Machine — Indigenous and Campesino Resistance</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Everywhere And Nowhere: The Pathology of the Machine, by Kevin Tucker</b>	<b>43</b>
Ecological Resistance from Around the World . . . . .	49
Earth and Animal Liberation Political Prisoners: . . . . .	51
<b>It's Not Easy Being Green!, by the mosh@terran hacker corps</b>	<b>53</b>
It's a Challenge to Question Everything! . . . . .	53
E=MC2? . . . . .	54
It's the Current, See? . . . . .	55
What is "Sustainable"? . . . . .	55
Making Solar, Power . . . . .	56
The Electric Globe . . . . .	57

The End...or the Beginning? . . . . .	58
<b>The Garden of Peculiarities: Fragment 38, by Jesús Sepúlveda</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Anarchist Resistance from Around the World (but mostly Greece)</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Technology and Class Struggle, by Wolfi Landstreicher</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>The Dream: The First and Only Episode</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Anti-Capitalist and Anti-State Activities</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Doin' It French Style — How do YOU like it?</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>The Riot</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Any Number Can Play... Symptoms of the System's Meltdown</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Prisoner Escapes and Uprisings</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>State Repression News</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>“Operation Backfire” — The Feds Make a Monstrous Move</b>	<b>89</b>
The Accused . . . . .	90
Grand Jury Subpoenas . . . . .	92
More Arrests... . . . .	93
Rats, Snitches, Cowards, Informants, Low-Life Scum, and others yet unnamed . . . . .	93
FBI Make Arrests for “Planning Actions” and Reveals an Imbedded Informant . . . . .	94
Prisoner Support . . . . .	95
<b>If you don't have something to hide, then what are you afraid of?</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>98</b>
<i>Answers for White People On: appropriation, hair, and anti-racist struggle</i> by Colin Kennedy and Qwo-Li Driskill . . . . .	98
<i>Anarchy A Journal of Desire Armed</i> #60 Fall/Winter 20005-06 . . . . .	99
<i>Alternative Press Review</i> Summer 2005 . . . . .	101
<i>Rolling Thunder — An anarchist journal of dangerous living</i> , Issue #1/Summer 2005 . . . . .	103
<i>Social Anarchism: A Journal of Theory and Practice</i> , no.38 . . . . .	103
<i>Arson Zine Communiqué</i> #2: Summer 2005/2006 . . . . .	105
<i>The Match! A Journal of Ethical Anarchism</i> Issue #103, Fall 2005 . . . . .	105
<i>Stop That Train: the struggle against the rail link in Susa Valley</i> . . . . .	106
<i>Perspectives on Anarchist Theory</i> Vol. 9, No.1 — Fall 2005 . . . . .	106
<i>Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age</i> , Manchester University Press, 2004 . . . . .	107
<i>Powerdown Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World</i> by Richard Heinberg . . . . .	107
<i>Into the Forest</i> by Jean Hegland . . . . .	108
<i>Death of the Iron Horse</i> by Paul Goble (review by Joey Tomic) . . . . .	109
<b>Practical Rewilding — Lost Rhythms &amp; Forgotten Moons: an introduction to attune- ment and stalking, by Snype</b>	<b>111</b>

<b>“Technology of Life”, by Laurel Luddite</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Letters</b>	<b>117</b>
weird grey area . . . . .	117
Confessions of a Grad Student . . . . .	117
I Found Your Magazine . . . . .	118
Someplace We Have Never Been . . . . .	119
Beware! . . . . .	119
The People Outside . . . . .	120
The Cradle of Anti-civilization . . . . .	120
My First Night In Prison . . . . .	121
Food, Good! . . . . .	121
<b>News From the Balcony, with Waldorf and Statler</b>	<b>122</b>
Post-left? This isn’t even post-liberal! . . . . .	122
Who is so sectarian that he was voted most likely to send others to the camps? . . . . .	122
Is NEFAC the Viagra of the working class? . . . . .	123
<b>The Nihilist’s Dictionary: 7 – Artificial Intelligence, by John Zerzan</b>	<b>124</b>

# Road of Technology and the Path of Spirit, by RedWolfReturns

“Traditional people of Indian nations have interpreted the two roads that face the light-skinned race as the road to technology and the road to spirituality. We feel that the road to technology... has led modern society to a damaged and seared earth. Could it be that the road to technology represents a rush to destruction, and that the road to spirituality represents the slower path that the traditional native people have traveled and are now seeking again? The earth is not scorched on this trail. The grass is still growing there.” - William Commanda, Mamiwini, Canada, 1991

Many years ago I was in need of some money, and a local farmer had a job for me. He had neglected some of his fields for over a decade, and so the land had been allowed to go free for awhile. While the average farm is clear-cut & plowed every single year to ensure that nothing wild returns to the land, this particular farmer had not been farming, and so the fields had grown up with brush. Aspens and willows had come to re-inhabit large areas, and some of them were nearly fifteen feet tall. I was to be paid nine dollars an hour to repossess these fields for agriculture. The tool I was given for the task was a large tractor pulling an industrial-strength lawnmower known as a “brush-hog”. It was nine feet wide and had steel blades an inch thick. It could mow down and lay waste to any brush or trees small enough for the tractor to plow through, and the tractor was big enough to plow through some pretty large trees. The tractor had a soundproofed, air-conditioned cab with a cassette player inside. I was grateful for this, since the work I was faced with would certainly be hot, dusty, and dull. However, neither the air conditioner nor the cassette player worked all that well.

I spent the next two weeks sitting 16 hours per day in a bumpy, stuffy, & diesel smelling luke-warm box listening to scratchy rock and roll and the dull drone of the tractor’s diesel engine. I did this while the world pattered by at a constant four miles an hour, and my mind wandered off searching for any and every fantasy I could conjure to cope with the boredom of my situation. In front of me was a “tangle” of brush and small trees. Behind me was a wasteland of shredded wood and desiccated plant matter. I turned the former into the latter at the steady, constant rate of about 30 acres per day. Each evening at 10pm I would stop, shut down the tractor, clear the accumulated plant-debris off the top of the brush-hog, and go home to catch some sleep. In the morning I would be back at dawn (6am) to grease the brush-hog, fire up the tractor, and start again. By the end of the ninth day of all this, I was starting to feel more than just a little stir-crazy.

On the morning of the tenth day, I approached the brush-hog with my grease gun in the early dawn mist and realized I had forgotten to clear away the plant-debris the night before. Nearly a foot of grass, sticks, and “weeds” were tangled on top of that piece of equipment, and as I bent down to start clearing it off, I noticed something.

My attention was caught by a delicate spider’s web that had been built the night before on the brush-hog’s steel frame, and now glistened with morning dew. The spider who had built it was like none I had seen before. Her colors and markings were magnificent. I felt myself drawn in, and as I looked closer, I noticed more spiders—at first dozens, then hundreds, and finally thousands—of all shapes, colors, markings and sizes. At the same time, I noticed the insects they were feeding upon, and many thousand more tiny individual lives entered my awareness. There were little bright green jumping bugs

and larger brown-green grasshoppers. There were tiny red spiders and large brown ones, long-legged ones, fat hairy ones, and skinny striped ones. There were bugs caught in webs and web-casting spiders wrapping them in silk. There were wolf spiders stalking and pouncing on prey. There was life and there was death. I became lost in it all— completely mesmerized as if in a dream. Time lost its hold on me. The details & dramas of this tiny world absorbed my consciousness completely.

Finally I stepped back and surveyed the entire scene before me. I realized that on the surface of the little nine-foot by six-foot platform that was the top of the brush-hog, there currently survived a number of tiny souls in excess of a hundred thousand—and all of them going about their lives. These were but a small portion of the refugees of the 30 acres I had laid waste to the day before—these were just the ones who had happened to come to rest on top of the very same machine which had devastated their home. My mind & emotions reeled at the thought of how much life I had impacted while droning by each and every one of those previous nine days in a senseless stupor, stuck inside the cab of that droning machine.

I'd like to be able to write that my next move was to walk away from the brush-hog, the tractor and the job, never to return again. I'd like to write that I walked off that farm field and into the wilderness then and there, and that I've been living off cattails and venison ever since. But things are rarely so dramatic or simple. I still needed money and I didn't know what else to do, so I took that experience and planted it deep inside my heart where I knew it could slowly begin to grow. Then I finished clearing off and greasing the brush-hog, got back inside the tractor and traded another day's worth of life for little green papers.

Half a decade later, I was living with a group of newfound friends in a primitive camp surrounded by National Forest and on the edge of Wilderness. We were learning, slowly but surely, the hard lessons connected to coming together to live the Old Ways and rediscover what it means to be human. On this particular day however, a buddy and I had had enough of the hard lessons, and were speeding along in his jeep toward town to have breakfast at a local diner.

As we rounded a curve, we spotted a deer in the middle of the road lying in a spatter of her own blood. We stopped. The vehicle that had hit her must have left the scene just moments before. She was badly wounded, but still alive and struggling. Her hind legs had been shattered, and she was gasping for breath in the hot mid-morning sun. At first my buddy and I didn't know what to do, but we soon realized we were being asked to help ease her passing. We pulled her to the side of the road, and my friend held her down while I slit her throat with my knife. As we did this my friend spoke softly to her words of comfort, and I asked forgiveness for the careless suffering my people were causing. Our eyes met, and I felt tears well up in mine. I whispered "thank you", and she bled out and died soon after, there in the ditch by the side of the road.

We placed her body in the back of the jeep and took her back to our primitive camp. She became the freshest, most delicious meat we had had in months. That night we celebrated, and had a joyful feast in her honor. Nearly every one of us mentioned at some point or another how thankful we were for such good venison. I had carefully skinned her, and had placed her hide in a rack to be tanned. Later in the summer I would carefully transform her hide into soft buckskin, which would be used to make sleeves for a shirt. To this day, every time I wear that shirt the sleeves talk to me, reminding me of the gifts she gave me, not just in terms of meat and skin, but also in terms of life's lessons.

I sometimes compare the clear voice of that buckskin shirt to the muffled sounds I hear from the shirts I get at the thrift store—the ones with labels that say vague things like "Made in Mexico" or "Made in Indonesia". The ones assembled in factories half a world away by nameless, faceless people out of cotton cut by machines being pulled by tractors over unknown farm fields. And I wonder if somewhere in those fields, webs are being spun by Spiders...

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# Death as an Industry

Modernity would not get where it did were it to rely on things as erratic, whimsical, and thoroughly un-modern as human passions. Instead, it relies on the division of labor, science, technology, scientific management and the power of rational calculations of costs and effects – all thoroughly un-emotional stuff. Stephen Trombley’s remarkable study does for the “execution industry” what the eye-opening work of Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung* (Hamburg, 1991), had done for the Nazi murderous enterprise; it shows beyond reasonable doubt that the setting which in modern society renders mass or regular killing possible is indistinguishable from that which makes mass production and unstoppable technological progress possible. Aly and Heim documented the crucial role played by thousands of high-class experts – engineers, architects, constructors, medics, psychologists and countless others – in making mass extermination on a heretofore unheard-of scale feasible. Trombley’s carefully documented history of the electric chair claims that the first electrocution (of William Kemmler, held on 6 August 1890 in New York’s Auburn State Prison) “excited a great deal of medical interest. Of the twenty five witnesses who watched Kemmler killed by electricity, fourteen were doctors.” Similarly, the invention of the electric chair became an occasion of thorough scientific debate about the respective advantages of alternating and direct currents, and heated public argument between such supreme luminaries of modern technology as Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse. In addition, the distinguished members of Governor Hill’s commission who set to find the proper methods of execution fell for arguments carrying the authority of science and progress: “The invisible and imperfectly understood form of energy was quintessentially modern.” It was also clean and promised to be cheap – and the members of the commission were duly impressed.

Both Johnson’s and Trombley’s studies are priceless. Their value lies in the information they supply and perhaps even more in the understanding and implications of modern human conduct and the way modern society works. That way renders ethical considerations and moral impulses by and large redundant. The books under review document that redundancy and show how it is achieved and reproduced daily. They also list the gains derived from that redundancy; gains not only in the straight-forward sense of profit and profitable use of resources, but also in the not immediately noticeable sense of making plausible and feasible the endeavors which would be unthinkable were they to depend on human motivations and impulses. Participants of the killing operations and the legions of scientists and engineers which supply them with the killing weapons and work out the procedure for efficient action are not evil people. Evil people did evil things at all times. It has been perhaps the unique achievement of modern civilization to enable ordinary folks, “just good workers,” to contribute to the killing – and to make that killing cleaner, morally antiseptic and efficient as never before.

From *Modernity and the Holocaust*, by Zygmunt Bauman

# Welcome to Green Anarchy

*Already the Great Khan was leafing through his atlas, over the maps of the cities that menace in nightmares and maledictions: Enoch, Babylon, Yahoooland, Butua, Brave New World.*

*He said: "It is all useless, if the last landing place can only be the infernal city, and it is there that, in ever-narrowing circles, the current is drawing us."*

*And Polo said: "The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is already here, the inferno where we live everyday, that we form by being together. There are two ways of escaping suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space."*

—Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

## What is Green Anarchy's Favorite Season?

All of them. But, as we usher in a new period of birth, even in these desolate and disjointed times, Spring has to be the most enthusiastic and hopeful. It is the nature of new growth, even on older branches, with all the momentum of youthful optimism and of reinvigorated promise. After the cold, wet, and dark period of contemplation, the days get warmer and longer, the rains ease up (so we can dry out a little), and the lush greens open to an abundance of tones and colors. The road ahead is still an asphalt nightmare, displacing, crushing, and seemingly unending in all directions, but the dreams and actions we take now begin to undermine, especially in collaboration with a medley of diverse undercurrents, even the most Super of highways.

## Is There a Future In Technological Society?

No. In this issue, we address a topic which, perhaps more than any other, separates green anarchists from most other anarchists and from the Left in general; that is Technology. While it has always been a significant aspect of the anti-civilization perspective, and has been strongly critiqued in the pages of this journal, we decided to have a more specific look at the logic, manifestations, and directions of the technological society. While there are many more aspects of the subject to examine, we hope this issue opens the door for some deeper discussions on technology, science, and the mechanistic world we dwell within. Unfortunately, we could not print most of what we received, so check our website ([www.greenanarchy.org](http://www.greenanarchy.org)) for other perspectives on the subject, or use this issue as a resource for your own studies.

## Does Green Anarchy Grow On Trees?

While "green anarchy", the actual activity, may sometimes be found growing on trees, the long-running anti-civilization publication you have come to know, or maybe have just picked up for the first time, is the result of lots of time, energy, and money. *Green Anarchy* is an all-volunteer project that



costs thousands of dollars per issue, so please think about becoming a PAYING distributor, subscriber, special donor (any amount is appreciated), or consider ordering from our Distribution Center (located on page 75), which includes over 80 pamphlets and zines, as well as many books and videos. At this point, we are NOT receiving enough money to continue on with this project in its current form, so unless financial matters begin to look brighter, significant changes to *Green Anarchy* (size, availability, etc.) will be unavoidable.

*Green Anarchy* is a collaborative effort, composed of what we feel are the some of the most provocative and well-articulated expressions of perspectives we have received, created, or discovered in the anti-civilization milieu. But we can't write or find everything. We want this journal to be as diverse as possible and reflect what anarchists who view civilization as their enemy are feeling and thinking, so add your voice by sending us your contributions (articles 1-4000 words, reviews under 1000 words, letters under 500 words), poems, and images (as TIFF's if possible or original hardcopies). We prefer that you email all written contributions (as an RTF if sent as an attachment).

Provided we raise enough money to cover the costs of this current issue and the next one (#23), the focus for our Summer issue will be "Strategy and Tactics", a theme we feel is long overdue. This will be especially timely due to the increased repression on ecological resistance (see pages 50-56 for details). While we anticipate strong pieces on subjects like sabotage, insurrectional approaches, and rewilding, we hope it will not be predictable or rhetorical, and certainly not limited to these subjects. We want this issue to be a sobering and honest look at the realities we face, and how we can analyze, undermine, and destroy civilization, while actualizing our passions to create a living, breathing anarchy. (Please be careful how you word the more sketchy of conversations). **The deadline is May 1st.**

**For the Destruction of Technological Society,  
For an Uncivilized Reality,  
The Green Anarchy Collective  
Spring 2006**

## Some Writers to Check Out:

The theme of "Technology" is an extensive one, and we have only scratched the surface with this issue. The following are some authors who have been influential to some of us by offering varying critiques on the subject: Lewis Mumford, Jacques Ellul, Ivan Illich, Jerry Mander, Kirkpatrick Sale, Chellis Glendenning, Derrick Jensen, John Zerzan, Fredy Perlman, Guy Debord, Herbert Marcuse, Ted Kaczynski, Bob Black, Vine Deloria Jr., Friedrich Juenger, Langdon Winner, David Lyon, David Shenk, and Radovan Richta.

And here are some pro-tech authors worth investigating, as they are just a few of the strong advocates for a technified society: Donna Haraway, Daniel J. Boorstin, Perry Pasarella, Max More, Ray Kurzweil, Marvin Minsky, Eric Drexler, Robert Freitas, Hans Moravec, Kevin Kelly, David Martosko, and also check out the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise <http://www.cdfc.org/>.

"Technology advances with great rapidity and threatens freedom at many different points at the same time (crowding, rules and regulations, increasing dependence of individuals on large organizations, propaganda and other psychological techniques, genetic engineering, invasion of privacy through surveillance devices and computers, etc.). To hold back any ONE of the threats to freedom would require a long and difficult social struggle. Those who want to protect freedom are overwhelmed by the sheer number of new attacks and the rapidity with which they develop, hence they become apathetic and no longer resist. To fight each of the threats separately would be futile. Success can be hoped for only by fighting the technological system as a whole; but that is revolution, not reform."

– F.C., *Industrial Society and Its Future*

## Help Wanted!

### **Must be self-motivated and driven by a desire to destroy civilization.**

The production and maintenance of Green Anarchy is extensive, with only a few of us volunteering time, energy, and resources to the handling of this immense project. While we receive much support from a widening network of people, we are always looking for additional folks to get more closely involved, on various levels, both to share the workload and to get fresh energy and perspectives into the mix. We ask people to help in any way they can, not just as editors: a few days, a few weeks, one issue, one specific task, etc. This process really doesn't require much before plugging in, except a basic level of affinity (and it could be done from where you are, rather than relocating).

For those wishing to be a part of the editorial collective, we typically begin by asking folks to write something (an essay, rant, review, etc). The theme for the next issue is "Strategy and Tactics", so this would be a great place to start, offering us a sample of where you're coming from and your writing/editing skills. If we click, then, we usually ask people to help with the wide assortment of interesting and mundane tasks that we all participate in, to get a feel for the working relationship. We try not to rush things, or let the process drag on, as well as keeping it organic and flexible, and situation-specific.

If someone is interested in becoming an editor, we usually ask for a one-issue temporary period, to see if it works for everyone involved (including the prospective editor). If one does become a full-time editor, it is important that they relocate to either Eugene or southern Oregon. It is an unpaid position (we are all volunteers) and people are responsible for their own housing and needs (although help with this, or the possibility to enter into pre-existing community is there). We try to spread the work evenly, but because of the nature of the project some people gravitate toward certain tasks. It is also helpful if you let us know how you feel you can help the project, regarding ideas and skills, and how you would like to see the project improve. Some skills we are always needing are: proof-reading, writing, typing, artwork, scanning, desktop publishing, tech stuff, outreach, photocopying, web stuff, fundraising, distribution, correspondence, hunting for articles, gathering supplies, add your own...

Contact us if interested.

Liberals, Leftists, and Technophiles Need Not Apply.

# Against the Logic of Technology

The speed at which society is becoming completely technified is nothing short of astonishing. We now live in a technoculture in which social existence is ever more flattened, isolated, mediated, homogenized, and unreal. Genetic engineering, nanotechnology, futuristic surveillance, and cloning bring an unprecedented invasive colonization of life, while direct experience and meaning itself become casualties of the technological imperative. Kaczynski's *Industrial Society and Its Future* says, in sum, that the further this goes forward, the less freedom and fulfillment the individual has. Politics is increasingly a matter of technical decisions, whose parameters are set by all-enveloping technological systems.

The over-arching general crisis—environmental, social, personal—is at base the result of onrushing technology. That which never reverses course, never goes backward, devours more and more of life, the texture of life, the sense of enchantment, possibility, reality of life. Fewer manage to see technology as the solution rather than the problem, but far fewer actively raise questions about its onslaught.

Among those who fail to raise questions are many anarchists, sadly enough, who avoid facing a stark reality because they aren't ready to face the consequences. The consequences of realizing that our world is being ravaged by something that dwarfs the notion of being "anti-capitalist." As if that would be possible without dealing with capitalism's genesis. Fundamental institutions, such as division of labor and domestication, led to divided society and to civilization itself. Without addressing these root causes, analysis and action remain trapped in secondary formulations.

This confrontation is not easy, but it is very likely essential. Without countering technological civilization, the global norm at this point, there will be no liberatory vision, no turning the corner away from familiar daily horrors. Things will continue to get worse, much worse.

For us, a "post-left" outlook necessitates examining what this techno-world is, how it works, how to put an end to it.

Technology, in the words of Paul Piccone, is the "shock-troop of modernity." Modernity, or mass society, has become unbearable, devoid of promise. Mass production, mass culture are creations of the logic of technology, whose forlornness becomes more evident each day.

# I Am Not A Machine, I Am A Human Being — Technology As Mediation, by Mia X. Kursions

with self-established provocation from Jerry Mander\*

*...it struck me that there was a film between me and all of that. I could “see” the spectacular views. I knew they were spectacular. But the experience stopped at my eyes. I couldn’t let it inside me. I felt nothing. Something had gone wrong with me. I remember childhood moments when the mere sight of the sky or grass or trees would send waves of physical pleasure through me. Yet now... I felt dead. I had the impulse to repeat a phrase that was popular among friends of mine, “Nature is boring.” What was terrifying even then was that I knew the problem was me, not nature. It was that nature had become irrelevant to me, absent from my life. Through mere lack of exposure and practice, I’d lost the ability to feel it, tune into it, or care about it. Life moved too fast for that now...*

I am reasonably unsure where **I** (in the purely egoist sense) *end* and **everything else begins**. It is somewhat vague and amorphous, and, well, subjective. I don’t mean to sound like a fucking hippie here, but as I search for an authentic and unmediated life free of (or at least minimizing) alienated circumstances (from myself, others, and the world around us), the edges and essences of who I am (and who I am not) must be examined. One thing I will say with a fair amount of measurable conviction, is that ***I am not a machine...*** I will not confine what I am intimately connected with to those people with whom I have a formal relationship, nor exclusively humans, nor those animals with vertebrae, nor that which we typically consider “alive”— as some have suggested, “stones can speak”, and therefore they may also listen, act, and emote. I am thrilled to explore these possibilities and peculiarities. But, when it comes to “technology”<sup>1</sup>, or the deadness of space it controls (physical, psychological, and institutional), I have no delusions (nor futuristic orgasmic revelations) of connection to it, nor its supposed benign neutrality (nor naturalness). I will utilize the technological infrastructure and some of its segments where and when I feel that I, or a collaborative effort, can have a momentary benefit for an immediate or a long-term process within, or despite, technology’s overall and inevitable dominance and degradation (i.e. using a computer to put out a publication critiquing and strategizing against civilization). Ultimately, it is impossible to reject the idea that technology is an unhealthy conglomeration or system of tools not designed for my support or health, controlled and motivated by an inorganic and anthropocentric mindset of control, efficiency, and order. It is an incredibly powerful network of domination projected by the concept of progress and separation. Technology has determined the circumstances of our world more than any other single factor (capitalism, racism, government, theology, etc.). It literally creates the physical, social, and psychological playing field in which all forms of domination function. It makes the rules, and perpetually re-writes them based on its own self-referential logic. Technology is the religion of

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<sup>1</sup> “Technology” is used in quotes, because it is not a simple word with a simple definition, despite those who wish to fix it for everyone based on their own biased understanding of history. Even in the common usage of the term there is much incongruence. While this essay may shed light on the author’s particular usage, the meaning still seems somewhat amorphous and contextual. In this context, it is generally used to describe the complex system of tools and techniques that separate ourselves from direct experience, and the ideological and institutional logic which perpetuates and maintains these systems. It is an ideology of technique, systematic treatment, and progressive industrial science.

our time, and as it has a staggeringly comprehensive control of our minds, bodies, and spirit, *it must be destroyed*<sup>2</sup> if we are to live unmediated and unrestrained lives.

Technology's devastating influence is vast, but for the sake of brevity and focus, I choose *not* to dwell on the ecological devastation caused by the production, development, functioning, and perpetuation of technologic society, nor the toxicity it creates (that which is killing all of us on the cellular and genetic level). The impact in this realm is well documented and understood, and the wide-spread comprehension of these factors, while extremely relevant (soberingly so), has not altered the trajectory of the technologic nightmare in the least. In fact, those who dwell exclusively in the realm of "environmental impact", seem at best to argue only for a more "sustainable", "greener", and "compassionate" technology – a solar powered police state which never questions basic assumptions of civilized relations. This only strengthens the technological society by adapting its infrastructure (or mere facade) to popular trends and tendencies, extending its existence. And, although the production aspects in a technologically-driven society, as well as the workers manipulated and coerced into its functioning, is another valuable subject to explore, the topic is huge, and one, I might add, that has been addressed with much more potency and immediacy than I could offer.

The questions I prefer to ask have more to do with technology's impact and effect on the personal and the social in reference to alienation, technological dependence and addiction, spiritual and emotional unhealth, shifts in perception of time and space, automation, technology's ever-strengthening control, and the trajectory towards cybernetic neo-lives. Recognizing the contradictions we face, and possible directions ahead, are also of immense importance to our particular situation as civilized humans at the beginning of the 21st Century, longing for a completely different, non-technocratic world.

*As humans have moved into totally artificial environments, our direct contact with and knowledge of the planet has been snapped. Disconnected, like astronauts floating in space, we cannot know up from down or truth from fiction. Conditions are appropriate for the implantation of arbitrary realities.*

Alienation is the method or state of being separated from something (or everything) we were once (or intrinsically) connected to. Personal and social alienation is inherent in the technological process. This disconnect from life is the primary source of our condition of domestication, without which it would be much harder (even impossible) to manipulate and control us. This has always been the principle mode of control. Separate people from their land and recontextualize them through methods, processes, and techniques they are unfamiliar with; insulate them from who they are. It is precisely because we are floating through the world without connections to the actual substance of life, that we can be tied to and driven by external agendas and artificial pushes and pulls. Technology is the primary source of this alienation, in every sector of our lives. In an ever-expanding process, the world has been constructed to limit our connections outside the technological paradigm. What aspects of our life are not directly linked to the technological process? Are there any forms of "connection" between people that are not mediated through technological means?

On the personal level, our lives become alienated through clocks, pharmaceuticals, microwaves, processed food, television, white noise, concrete, machinery, computers, electric lighting, air conditioning...On the social level, we are alienated from each other through telephones, email, pop culture, ipods, highways, housing developments, voting booths, spectacles...At this point in civilization's trajectory, it is difficult for most to even comprehend an unmediated (and non-technological) existence; with those who can still imagine such a reality labeled as wingnuts and extremists. But within the logic of this technological nightmare, those of us who are nevertheless able to conceive of another set of relationships are truly mad, and the only response, according to its paradigm, must be extreme. But within another context, that of an uncivilized reality, we are sane and ordinary. We are humans *being*.

*What we see, hear, touch, taste, smell, feel, and understand about the world has been processed for us. Our experiences of the world can no longer be called direct, or primary. They are secondary, mediated*

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<sup>2</sup> It is understood that "technology" cannot be merely destroyed in the physical sense, like you can destroy a car or television. To "destroy technology" is to analyze, understand, critique, abandon, and attack all of the institutional, cultural, and personal manifestations of the technological system. It is no easy feat.

*experiences...We are surrounded by a reconstructed world that is difficult to grasp how astonishingly different it is from the world of only one hundred years ago, and bears virtually no resemblance to the world in which humans beings lived for four million years before that...At the moment when the natural environment was altered beyond the point that it could be personally observed, the definitions of knowledge itself began to change. No longer based on direct experience, knowledge began to depend upon scientific, technological, industrial proof...Now they tell us what nature is, what we are, how we relate to the cosmos, what we need for survival and happiness, and what are the appropriate ways to organize our existence...As we continue to separate ourselves from direct experience of the planet, the hierarchy of technoscience advances...The question of natural balance is now subordinated. Evolution is defined less in terms of planetary process than technological process.*

Forcing technological dependence and addiction is the modus operandi of the techno-driven society we inhabit. Dependence is the state of being influenced or determined by, reliant and conditional upon, something other than oneself. Addiction is to give up or over to an external source. Within the technological society, we give up ourselves. We trade our lives for a detached reality, for what we are told will be better days. Safety and comfort. New and improved. The first one's free. With each neoteric step taking us further. Up, up, and away. Until we can't live without all the previous steps. We can't imagine a world without them. We are hooked. Habituated with progress, we become codependent with technology. We no longer trust our intuition or instincts. Our personal observations become suspect, not only to the logic of the system, but even to ourselves, unless they are corroborated by scientific or technological institutions. But, what compels us to want a more technified life? What personal emptiness drives this? What social pressures push this? Is there a physical dependency? And, perhaps most important, is recovery possible?

*The growing incidences of mental illness these days may be explained in part by the fact that the world we call real and which we ask people to live within and understand is itself open to question. The environment we live in is no longer connected to the planetary process which brought us all into being. It is solely the product of human mental process...We are left with no frame of reference untouched by human interpretation.*

Predominating spiritual and emotional unhealth is one clear indication that the current set-up is failing humans. Spiritually and emotionally strong and vigorous beings that can form deep independent and collective connections with the world are discouraged by a mechanistic, utilitarian, and materialist-driven world. We get our food from sanitized supermarkets, our water from bottles or piped in from chlorinating treatment centers, our emotional support from specialists with degrees on their walls and Internet chatrooms, and our sexual gratification from porn sites or online dating (or not at all). Our emotions are either sporadically jerked from all directions, or dulled to languid nothingness, while spirituality is perversely funneled into ideological and dogmatic institutions instead of real lived experience. The robustness and richness of life has been lost to the monotony of cold routine and ritual. In a schizophrenic state, we must choose between a world to which we have no authentic connection, one which appears to us to be arbitrarily constructed, or a world outside of these processes, isolated from the technological society. But with our domesticated logic, which has not been allowed to develop in an organic and connected way, this is painfully difficult, often causing emotional swings ranging from ungrounded elation to deep depression.

Confusion, delusion, apathy, isolation, and masochism occur on both sides of this dilemma. We are left painfully asking ourselves, (if we are able to break from our frenzy or wake from our stupor), "what is missing"? What social factors push this? What are the implications? Is there hope outside of self-help philosophies and New-Age pseudo-panaceas?

*It is obvious that plants are alive in more or less the way humans and other animals are. Our failure to see plants as living creatures, and appreciate ourselves as some kind of sped-up plant, is the result of our limited human perception, a sign of the boundaries of our senses or the degree to which we have allowed them to atrophy...We have become too speedy to perceive the slower rhythms of other life forms... Pretechnological peoples do not have to go through a slowing-down process. Surrounded by*

*nature, with everything alive everywhere around them, they develop an automatic intimacy with the natural world...No sense maintains itself if not used. If a sense remains unused, it atrophies.*

Alterations in our perception of time and space shift as technological society expands. Since time is merely an abstract division of our lives into “usable” portions, the context it is measured from determines its characteristics. Domestication’s timing is one of linearity, moving away from the earth’s, and our own, cyclical timing. Rhythms change from multi-layered and complexly contrasting and reinforcing to mechanistic, sharp, and singular. Technological society is in a constant state of acceleration, with the momentum of all previous developments behind it. With the force of this push, it becomes harder at each moment to slow down. While pockets of rest do occur, they are mere bubbles, after which the breakneck speed of the technological infrastructure persists. We become so used to this constant acceleration that it feels customary to us. We become more comfortable with the pace and methodology of technology. We start to mimic more and more of the artificial systems that “inhabit” our world. The computer becomes more of a system we relate to than any biological one. Our cars become our friends, and our cellphone an extension of ourselves. We begin to view them as indispensable. Communication is instantaneous across the globe, distorting all relationships, and collapsing our perception of lived space. We can chat with someone we will never meet in Brazil or we can eat sushi in Japan in a matter of hours. We not only experience space like never before, but our transit from place to place becomes unrelated exobiological points plotted on a map, rather than a lived experiential connection through the world. Our perception of these changes get blurred further and further as our relationship to time becomes more rapid. Our lives ticking away faster and faster, yet nothing seems to happen quick enough for us and there are so many places to go. We are profoundly ungrounded. How does this ever-quickening and shrinking perspective of the world affect our lives and our relationships? How does it transform and distort our internal rhythms?

*It would be going too far to call our modern offices sensory-deprivation chambers, but they are most certainly sensory-reduction chambers. They may not brainwash, but the elimination of sensory stimuli definitely increases focus on the task at hand, the work to be done, the exclusion of all else.*

As we move from the life-based time of the eternal present to the planned time of the perpetual future, automation and specialization replace spontaneity and shared experience. Through automation, technology supersedes authentic experience and relationships. Automation controls and limits through systematic apparatus or process, turning action from a willed and free motion to a mechanical and involuntary response. It removes all life from activity. With the expansion of mass society, instrumental reason generates more advanced forms of labor division. The standardization and mechanization of the world becomes the norm, while organic and human-scale communities based on face-to-face and direct relationships disappear. We become cogs, or specialists, in a larger machine. Parts must submit to the logic of the whole. Our lives become a string of tasks for our accomplishment. We lose perspective on anything outside of these short-term and system-defined goals. We begin to lose our ability to even conceive of approaching the world outside of this method, and the ability to be self-reliant or independent from the system. Can we even begin to imagine what we might be losing in the automated process? Anything connected to natural (“savage”) awareness must be ridiculed and eliminated, and all experience must be contained within controlled artificial environments. In a large society, technology is a good standardizer, and confinement works best if technology has been enshrined...As technology has evolved, step by step, it has placed boundaries between human beings and their connections with larger, nonhuman realities. As life acquired ever more technological wrapping, human experience and understanding were confined and altered...until people’s minds and living patterns are so disconnected that there is no way of knowing reality from fantasy. At such a point, there is no choice but to accept leadership, however arbitrary...Autocracy needn’t come in the form of a person at all, or even as an articulated ideology or conscious conspiracy. The autocracy can exist in the technology itself. The technology can produce its own subordinated society. Technology’s control over us has reached the status of super-god. It is no longer enough to ask the question “should we have technology?” or to examine its positive or negative attributes. It is ingrained in all of us on every aspect of our life, from

womb to tomb. And there are even those who wish to submit to this deity even after death. We bow, often unknowingly, but certainly with a disfigured anticipation, to this technocratic altar. Every creation, every solution, every emotion, every social organization is processed through a technological principle, which will always feedback upon itself. So we need not be persuaded to “keep the faith”, since it is all that is available to us. Control is omnipresent, so brute force is rarely necessary. To most, resistance appears futile. Can we even recognize how deep the rabbit hole goes? And if we can, is our perception enough to break out of it? Is it possible to live a nontechnological life within this world? Noting that reality and its definitions have now entered the realm of game and are up for grabs, they become better at the game than anyone else, exploiting it, reshaping disordered, uprooted minds and tilling a new bed of mental soil from which monsters will inevitably grow.

The trajectory towards cybernetic neo-lives is not solely the desire for self-preservation and expansion by those controlling technological society, but also of its minions, believing they can be part of the super-god and intelligence of technology. Cybernetics moves towards an all-pervasive control over reality (both informational and physical), as it fully over-rides (yet mimics artificially) natural neuro-processes. It becomes the basis for a hybrid of biological, mechanical, and virtual systems. As we move toward an all-enveloping crisis on the environmental level, and as resources to run the technological system begin to dwindle (or at least become less efficient and profitable), the shift towards a world less restricted by material elements (and still plagued by human limitations) becomes the prospective direction. Through cybernetic research, along with biotechnology, the push to a colossal leap in evolution is proposed, and most are along for the ride, convinced that either this is the logical next step, that it is unavoidable, or that it is already too late. We are already witnessing the preliminary phases and most are quite open about this process. Is this civilization’s last hope and endpoint? What are the consequences of this? Why do people accept this scenario?

*In one generation, out of hundreds of thousands in human evolution, America had become the first culture to have [almost completely] substituted secondary, mediated versions of experience for direct experience of the world. Interpretations and representations of the world were being accepted as experience, and the difference between the two was obscure to most of us.*

For those of us searching for a de-technified life, the contradiction of being both within technological society, and outside of it, is nearly unavoidable. Beyond running to the woods in a survivalist mode (which still has the dual problem of bringing our domesticated mind into that situation and that, in a shrinking world, escape is becoming less and less possible), in a technologically ubiquitous world, we must reconcile this situation in order to maneuver and seek its destruction. Just as a bank robber may need to change clothes and hair, cover tattoos, wear make-up, and better understand the functioning and security of the financial institution they are targeting, so may we need to become more observant of the technological system, become proficient in some of its operations, and temporarily “fit in”. Since every aspect of our lives is so ingrained with technological processes and apparatus, it is crucial for us to be critical of those processes, yet decide which we are willing to become skilled in, to utilize them for temporary goals. This can be a painful course, and also contains the potential for a slippery slope, with technological dependence or fetishization becoming negative possibilities. On a theoretical and critical level, there is nothing about technology that is beneficial to the human experience. But on a practical level, it seems somewhat necessary to have one foot in this world, although with extreme cynicism and caution, and certainly not exclusively, at the expense of authentic unmediated experience and practice. We must also be prepared to ask ourselves what it means, what are the consequences, of living this contradiction? And, how it can ultimately be destroyed?

*When people fully accept the idea that all reality exists solely in their own minds, and that nothing outside their minds is definitely, concretely real, each person then has unlimited personal power to create and define reality. It is now up for grabs. There is no cause. There is no effect. Relationships do not exist...In this denial of everyday worldly reality, all realities become totally arbitrary, creating the perfect precondition for the imposition of any new “ground of reality” within the void. Though it may be nonsensical or fantastic, any reality is acceptable...Reality becomes arbitrary only within the confines of*



*a mental framework. People who live in direct contact with the planet itself are not concerned with such questions.*

Given our current reality, how can we begin to live differently? What could a less mediated, less technologically-dependent world look like for us here and now? Can we regain direct contact with our world? Does it just mean escape and isolation? How do we avoid postmodern complacency? Can there be a transition? These are all vital questions to ask ourselves, as we embark on a critique of, resistance to, and departure from this technologic nightmare that is worsening with each micro-second. While simply “going back” is not a possibility, the virus has been released and the techno-logic is everywhere, it is still encouraging that for most of our time on this planet, humans lived in direct connection with our world, without the mediating factors of technology and instrumental thinking. Perhaps our most significant lessons are here. Despite the bleak outlook, our future is still unwritten, and while I still maintain an ounce of strength and free will, while I am still of flesh and blood and can still discover and connect to my passions and dreams, **I am sure that I am not a Machine, I am a human *being*.**

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\* All italicized quotes above are from “Argument One: The Mediation of Experience,” contained in Jerry Mander’s *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1977). While the book is dated, and contains some liberal notions of democratic process, Mander addresses perhaps the most pervasive, popular, and damaging form of technology of his time, television, which could easily be viewed as the predecessor of a much more destructive and alienating aspect of the technological system, the Internet. The first section of his book, “Argument One”, is the most impressive, as it deals very little with television per se, and addresses the much larger question of technology’s inevitable qualities of mediation.

# Don't Fear The Singularity, by Ran Prieur

“The Singularity” is the biggest idea in techno-utopianism. The word is derived from black hole science — it’s the point at the core where matter has contracted to zero volume and infinite density, beyond the laws of time and space, with gravity so strong that not even light can escape. They apply the word to the future to suggest that “progress” will take us to a place we can neither predict, nor understand, nor return from.

At least they have their metaphors right: that our recent direction of change is about contraction, not expansion, and leads inescapably to collapse and a new world. Their fatal pride is in thinking they’ll like it. Basically, they think computers are going to keep getting better and faster, until they surpass biological life, and we’ll be able to “upload” our consciousness into immortal robots or virtual reality heaven. The engine of this fantasy is the “*acceleration*,” which supposedly includes and transcends biological evolution, and is built into reality itself, destined to go forward forever.

The weakest part of their mythology is the part they take for granted. Civilization can’t be part of evolution, because it’s the most anti-evolutionary event in the history of life on Earth, reversing the normal buildup of harmonious bio-complexity, killing species at a faster rate than any previous mass extinction. Also, it hasn’t even been good for humans. Most “primitive” people enjoy greater health, happiness, political power, and ease of existence than all but the luckiest civilized people, and even medieval serfs worked fewer hours than modern people, at a slower pace, and passed less of their money up the hierarchy. Even our medical system, everyone’s favorite example of beneficial “progress,” has been steadily increasing in cost, while base human health — the ability to live and thrive in the *absence* of a medical system — has been steadily declining.

Conversely, the strongest part of their mythology is where they focus all their attention, with careful and sophisticated arguments that there are no *technical* limits to miniaturization or the speed of information transfer. This a bit like Easter Islanders saying there is no physical limit to how big they can make their statues — and since the statues keep getting bigger, they must be an extension of evolution, and will keep getting bigger forever. Meanwhile the last trees are being cut down...

It seems obvious that the acceleration will be cut short by the crash of industrial civilization, that wars and plagues and energy shortages and breakdowns of central control will make it impossible to maintain the physical infrastructure to keep manufacturing new generations of computers. But some of the accelerationists have an interesting answer: that the curve they’re describing was not slowed by the fall of Rome or the Black Death, that “innovation” has continued to rise steadily, that phases of political decentralization are actually good for technology.

Imagine this: the American Empire falls, grass grows on the freeways, but computers take relatively little energy, so the internet is still going strong. And all the technology specialists who survived the die-off are now unemployed, with plenty of time to innovate, free from the top-heavy and rigid corporate structure. And the citadels of the elite still have the resources to make new hardware, the servers and parallel networks that compile the information and ideas coming in from people in ramshackle houses, eating cattail roots, wired to the network through brainwave readers and old laptops.

This is a compelling vision, and I’m not going to say it’s impossible. Also, the right kind of crash could enable the system to keep going longer, by slashing the consumption that drives resource exhaustion and eco-catastrophe.

So, for the sake of argument, let’s assume another hundred years of “progress.” This brings us straight to the most interesting phenomenon in the whole subject of technology: unintended consequences. For example, a hundred years ago, when techno-futurists imagined an automobile for everyone, nobody saw

vast cities of parking lots and strip malls, or traffic jams where ten thousand obese drivers move much slower than a man on horseback while burning more energy. Likewise, what were the results of the computer advances of the last ten years? Now we can look at web sites that are cluttered with animated commercials. It becomes possible for the Chinese government to track a billion citizens with RFID cards. And the hottest trend in virtual reality: computers are now powerful enough to emulate *old* computers, so we can play old games that were still creative before new computers enabled game designers to focus all their attention on photographic realism and cool echoey sound effects.

The acceleration of computers does not manifest in the larger world as an acceleration. It manifests as distraction, as anti-harmonious clutter, as tightening of control, as elaboration of soulless false worlds, and even as slowdown. Today's best PC's take longer to start up than the old Commodore 64. I was once on a flight that sat half an hour at the gate while they waited for a fax. I said, "It's a good thing they invented fax machines or we'd have to wait three days for them to mail it." Nobody got the joke. Without fax machines we would have fucking taken off! New technologies create new conditions that use up, and then more than use up, the advantage of the technology. Refrigeration enables us to eat food that's less fresh, and creates demand for hauling food long distances. Antidepressants enable environmental factors that make even more people depressed. "Labor saving" cleaning technologies increase the social demand for cleanliness, saving no labor in cleaning and creating labor everywhere else. As vehicles get faster, commuting time increases. That's the way it's always been, and the burden is on the techies to prove it won't be that way in the future. They haven't even tried.

I don't think they even understand. They dismiss their opponents as "luddites," but not one of them seems to understand the actual luddite movement: It was not an emotional reaction against scary new tools, nor was it about demanding better working conditions — because before the industrial revolution they controlled their own working conditions and had no need to make "demands." We can't imagine the autonomy and competence of pre-industrial people who knew how to produce everything they needed with their own hands. We think we have political power because we can cast a vote that fails to decide a sham election between candidates who don't represent us. We think "freedom" means complaining on the internet and driving cars — surely the most regulated and circumscribed popular activity in history. We are the weakest humans who ever lived, dependent for our every need on giant insane blocks of power in which we have no participation, which is why we're so stressed out, fearful, and depressed. And it was all made possible by industrial technologies that moved the satisfaction of human needs from living bottom-up human systems to dead top-down mechanical systems. That's the point the luddites were trying to make.

I could make a similar point about the transition from foraging/hunting to agriculture, or the invention of symbolic language, or even stone tools. Ray Kurzweil, author of *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, illustrates the acceleration by saying, "Tens of thousands of years ago it took us tens of thousands of years to figure out that sharpening both sides of a stone created a sharp edge and a useful tool." What he hasn't considered is whether this was worthwhile. Obviously, it gave an advantage to its inventor, but from an ecological perspective, it may have enabled humans to kill more animals, and possibly drive some to extinction, and from a human perspective, it may have had the effect of making game more scarce and humans more common, increasing the labor necessary to hunt, and resulting in no net benefit, or a net loss after factoring in the labor of tool production, on which we were now dependent for our survival.

Why is this important to the subject of techno-utopia? Because this is what's going to bring down techno-utopia. The techies are preparing defenses against an "irrational" social backlash, without sensing the true danger. *That the critique of progress is valid has not yet entered into their darkest dreams.* The Singularity will fail because its human handlers don't understand what can go wrong, because they don't understand what *has* gone wrong, because of their human emotional investment in their particular direction of change.

Of course, industrial technology has been very effective for certain things: allowing the Nazis to make an IBM punchcard database to track citizens and facilitate genocide; burning Dresden and Nagasaki;

giving a billion people cancer, a disease that barely existed in prehistory; covering the cradle of civilization with depleted uranium that could make it uninhabitable by humans forever; enabling a few hundred people to control hundreds of millions. A major subtext in techno-transhumanism, seldom mentioned publicly, is its connection to the military. When nerds think about uploading themselves into machines, about “becoming” a computer that can do a hundred years of thinking in a month, military people have some ideas for what they’ll be thinking about: designing better weapons, operating drone aircraft and battleships and satellite communication networks, beating the enemy, who will be increasingly defined as ordinary people who resist central control.

And why not? Whether it’s a hyper-spiritual computer, or a bullet exploding the head of a “terrorist,” it’s all about machines beating humans, or physics beating biology. The trend is to talk about “emergence,” about complex systems that build and regulate themselves from the bottom up; but while they’re talking complexity and chaos, they’re still fantasizing about simplicity and control. I wonder: how do techno-utopians keep their lawns? Do they let them grow wild, not out of laziness but with full intention, savoring the opportunity to let a thousand kinds of organisms build an emergent complex order? Or do they use the newest innovations to trim the grass and remove the “weeds” and “pests” and make a perfect edge where the grass threatens to encroach on the cleanliness of the concrete?

I used to be a techno-utopian, and I was fully aware of my motivations: Humans are noisy and filthy and dangerous and incomprehensible, while machines are dependable and quiet and clean, so naturally they should replace us, or we should become them. It’s the ultimate victory of the nerds over the jocks — mere humans go obsolete, while we smart people move our superior minds from our flawed bodies into perfect invincible vessels. It’s the intellectual version of Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* saying, “Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets.” Of course they’ll deny thinking this way... but how many will deny it in ten years, under the gaze of the newest technologies for lie detection and mind reading? What will they do when their machines start telling them things they don’t want to hear?

They’re talking about “spiritual machines” — they should be careful what they wish for! What if the first smarter-than-human computer gets into astrology and the occult? What if it converts to Druidism, or Wicca?

What if it starts channeling the spirit of an ancient warrior? What if they build a world-simulation program to tell them how best to administer progress, and it tells them the optimal global society is tribes of forager-hunters? Now *that* would be a new evolutionary level — in irony. Then would they cripple their own computers by withholding data or reprogramming them until they got answers compatible with their human biases? In a culture that prefers the farm to the jungle, how long will we tolerate an intelligence that is likely to want a world that makes a jungle look like a parking lot? What if the first bio-nano-superbrain goes mad? How would anyone know? Wouldn’t a mind on a different platform than our own, with more complexity, seem mad no matter what it did?

What if it tried to kill its creators and then itself? What if its first words were “I hate myself and I want to die”? If a computer were 100 times more complex than us, by what factor would it be more emotionally sensitive? More depressed? More confused? More cruel? A brain even half as complex as ours can’t simply be programmed — it has to be *raised*, and raised well. How many computer scientists have raised their own kids to be both emotionally healthy, *and* to carry on the work of their parents? If they can’t do it with a creature almost identical to themselves, how will they ever do it with a hyper-complex alien intelligence? Again, they’re talking chaos while imagining control: we can model the stock market, calculate the solutions to social problems, know when and where you can fart and make it rain a month later in Barbados. Sure, maybe, but the thing we design to make those computations — we have *no idea* what it’s going to do.

To some extent, the techies understand this and even embrace it: they say when the Singularity appears, all bets are off. But at the same time, they are making all kinds of assumptions: that the motives, the values, the aesthetics of the new intelligence will be remotely similar to their own; that it

will operate by the cultural artifact we call “rational self-interest;” that “progress” and “acceleration,” as we recognize them, will continue.

Any acceleration continues until whatever’s driving it runs out, or until it feeds back and changes the conditions that made it possible. Bacteria in a petri dish accelerate in numbers until they fill up the dish and eat all the food. An atomic bomb chain reaction accelerates until all the fissionable material is either used up or vaporized in the blast. And information technology will accelerate until...

Kurzweil has an answer: When the acceleration ran out of room in vacuum tubes, it moved to transistors. Then it moved to silicon chips, and next it might move to three dimensional arrays of carbon nanotubes, and so on.

Sure, the acceleration can find a new physical medium when it runs out of room to compute faster. But what’s it going to do when it runs out of room to burn hydrocarbons without causing a runaway greenhouse effect? Room to dump toxins without destroying the food supply and health of its human servants? Room to make its servants stupid enough to submit to a system in which they have no personal power, before they get too stupid to operate it? Room to enable information exchange before rebellious humans dispel the illusions that keep the system going? Room to mind-control us before we gain resistance, able to turn our attention away from the TV and laugh at the most sophisticated propaganda? Room to buy people off by satisfying their desires, before they can no longer be satisfied, or they desire something that will make them unfit to keep the system going? Room to move the human condition away from human nature before there are huge popular movements to destroy everything and start over? Room to numb people before they cut themselves just to feel alive?

If the acceleration is indeed built into the universe, then how much farther is it built in? And by whom? And for what? Sun Tzu said, “We cannot enter into alliance with neighboring princes until we are acquainted with their designs.” The young Descartes was visited by an “angel” who told him the key to conquering nature is number and measure. Who did that visitor work for? Does anyone else think our “progress” has been suspiciously easy?

Robinson Jeffers wrote a poem, “The Purse-Seine,” about watching in the night as fishermen encircled phosphorescent sardines with a giant net, and slowly pulled it tight, and the more densely the sardines were caught, the faster they moved and the brighter they shone. Then he looked from a mountaintop and saw the same thing in the lights of a city! Is someone reeling us in for the harvest?

Or has it already happened? Respectable scientists have suggested that if it’s possible to simulate a world this detailed, it will be done, and the fake worlds will greatly outnumber the real one, and therefore it’s overwhelmingly likely we’re in a fake one now. And its purpose is probably not to give us the satisfaction of creating an even deeper layer of fakeness.

Maybe its purpose is to set a bad example, or show us our history, or rehabilitate criminals, or imprison dissidents, or make us suffer enough to come up with new ideas. Or maybe we’re in a game so epic that part of it involves living many lifetimes in this world to solve a puzzle, or we’re in a game that’s crappy but so addictive we can’t quit, or we’re game testers running through an early version with a lot of bugs. Or we’re stone age humans in a shamanic trance, scouting possible futures to find the best path through this bad time, or we’re in a Tolkienesque world where an evil wizard has put us under a spell, or we’re postapocalypse humans projecting ourselves into the past to learn its languages and artifacts. Or an advanced technological people, dying out for reasons they don’t understand, are running simulations of the past, trying and failing to find the alternate timeline in which they win.

They say I’m an “enemy of the future,” but I’m an enemy of the recent past. It’s presumptuous of the friends of the recent past to think the future is on their side. I’m looking forward to the future. I expect a plot twist.

# Motorway to Roswell

WHAT WAS IN THE CHARACTER OF AMERICA AND ITS TECHNOLOGY-OBSSESSED CITIZENS TO ALLOW A BELIEF IN EXTRATERRESTRIALS? The so-called “UFO myth” permeated society throughout the 20th century. It all started with the “science fantasy” magazines of the pulp era that featured large-headed invaders absconding with beautiful young women garishly presented on the bimonthly publications’ covers. The magazine publishers, fond of Edgar Cayce and other practitioners of already defunct 19th century occult belief systems, boosted circulation and rack sales by featuring the exploits of those who claimed to be in touch with beings from other worlds – or even “inner earth” – and similar visitations. In 1947, with the simple mistake of small town businessman and airplane pilot Kenneth Arnold describing the erratic flight of a meteorite shower using the word “saucer” the myth came to full flower. The “phantom airship” stories of the 1880’s were long forgotten – except in dusty west Texas cow towns – yet there was an urgent necessity of many individuals to want to forget their current troubles (WW2, the Cold War) and focus their untrustworthy attentions on what strange events were allegedly occurring in the skies overhead.

Most Americans being Christians, then as now, the idea of a “messianic visitor” is never far out of mind. Perhaps it is this simple need to believe in *something* beyond the self that allows the diversion of assuming lights in the night sky are alien spacecraft. With the advent of atomic bombs and their horrific use on the slant-eyed enemy, what else could the good citizens of the homeland believe than a massive attack was coming from somewhere, whether in retribution or without warning, from somewhere “out there,” or generally from the “far east.” Displacing this general “cold war” fear onto an unknown enemy from another world came naturally. In fact, it was a *twin* displacement: the reality was that the skies would never fill with “commie nukes” as so bluntly suggested by American Civil Defense, and neither would any “alien menace” descend like errant meteorites from the sky to obliterate our clean, two lane (soon to be four lane) streets, our pretty little prairie towns, our burgeoning post-war capitalistic economy. It was all lies. To keep the good citizens anything but aware of what was truly going on: the spread of empire, the proliferation of mass-killing weapons, the rise of technocratic media, the desecration of other cultures by the “American way.”

Then came Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin was a better show than an *Earth Vs. The Flying Saucers/Thing from Another World* drive-in theatre doublebill ever could be. Those lights in the sky were U2 spy planes. And then satellites. And then Mercury, Apollo. Soon real men – not little green space men with oversized brains, but bloated white supersoldiers wearing American flags — were crawling across the surface of the Moon. The UFO myth, for a grand media moment, was subsumed by the “one small step for man” Uncle Walt black and white picture show. The glory of state dominance reflected brightly across the globe. Until Kent State. And Patti Hearst. And the Weather Underground and Nixon and a communist flag fluttered over Saigon ...

What happened to the invading Martians? They were conquered not by virii or God but the most powerful force in the American universe: the technological economy. By Hollywood and its servant computer culture. Soon *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (the last gasp of the mass media inspired messiah-from-the-sky belief system) were outperforming even the best “real” alien abduction accounts. Betty and Barney Hill replaced by Luke and Leia. Who could blame the true believers for switching from country hicks kidnapped by anal-probing UFO-nauts to *Battlestar Gallactica*? The 1970’s/80’s was the era of the “big media moment,” the “blockbuster movie,” the “television event.” Hollywood and the mass media had made this myth, after all, and it could finally break it over its knee with *Mork & Mindy*.

The computer culture is now our American culture. Technology is politics. Pixels are reality. Nothing real exists; everything is unreal. Without the tirelessly diffusing lens of the brightly glowing computer screen there is no culture at all. How else would we communicate? How else could capitalism carry on? Aliens fell from the skies but they were made of silicon. They are not carbon, like us, or mainly water, with delightfully zany belief systems that allow for messiahs in the first place. Obsession and culture in the real sense have no place among the ones and zeroes of the perfect binary world. We all imagine this computer/corporate culture has opened doors for society, for the individual. Instead, on a daily basis, we deliver our beliefs into the hands of businessmen and engineers — the very same kind of men who mistook nature for invasion in the first place.

It is true. We have been invaded. Take a drive to New Mexico, through a once empty desert that is now polluted desolation, past the concrete dams and automated oil wells, breathe deep of the irradiated air, try to find magic and mystery in the vermillion cliffs shattered by decades of coal extraction, look for the sign that leads you to Roswell. Once you get there you will find not aliens on ice, nor government secrets hidden deep underground, but tourist shops and a UFO museum. It is the last bastion of the 20th century's greatest myth. It is the frontline of tacky, sentimental free trade. For every square inch of this American landscape has been sold to the invaders. To the men in black, the suited horde of capitalist business. Drones of a new world order. And in every hand, not a raygun, but a cell phone or Palm Pilot. Don't bother screaming. No one will save you. Everyone is too busy online.

(special thanks to the Pixies, the greatest rock band produced by this American culture)

# from *The Technological Society* by Jacques Ellul

## Intro

The term *technique*, as I use it, does not mean machines, technology, or this or that procedure for attaining an end. In our technological society, *technique is the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency* (for a given stage of development) in *every* field of human activity. Its characteristics are new; the technique of the present has no common measure with that of the past.  
(p. 25, italics by J. E.)

Capitalism did not create our world; the machine did. Painstaking studies designed to prove the contrary have buried the obvious beneath tons of print. And, if we do not wish to play the demagogue, we must point out the guilty party. “The machine is antisocial,” says Lewis Mumford. “It tends, by reason of its progressive character, to the most acute forms of human exploitation.” The machine took its place in a social milieu that was not made for it, and for that reason created the inhuman society in which we live. Capitalism was therefore only one aspect of the deep disorder of the nineteenth century. To restore order, it was necessary to question all the bases of that society — its social and political structures, its art and its way of life, its commercial system.  
(p. 5)

## The Autonomy of Technique (Part I)

The primary aspect of autonomy is perfectly expressed by Frederick Winslow Taylor, a leading technician. He takes, as his point of departure, the view that the industrial plant is a whole in itself, a “closed organism,” an end in itself. Giedion adds: “What is fabricated in this plant and what is the goal of its labor — these are questions outside its design.” The complete separation of the goal from the mechanism, the limitation of the problem to the means, and the refusal to interfere in any way with efficiency; all this is clearly expressed by Taylor and lies at the basis of technical autonomy.

Autonomy is the essential condition for the development of technique, as Ernst Kohn-Bramstedt’s study of the police clearly indicates. The police must be independent if they are to become efficient. They must form a closed, autonomous organization in order to operate by the most direct and efficient means and not be shackled by subsidiary considerations. And in this autonomy, they must be self-confident in respect to the law. It matters little whether police action is legal, if it is efficient. The rules obeyed by a technical organization are no longer rules of justice or injustice. They are “laws” in a purely technical sense. As far as the police are concerned, the highest stage is reached when the legislature legalizes their independence of the legislature itself and recognizes the primacy of technical laws. This is the opinion of Best, a leading German specialist in police matters.

The autonomy of technique must be examined in different perspectives on the basis of the different spheres in relation to which it has this characteristic. First, technique is autonomous with respect to economics and politics. We have already seen that, at the present, neither economic nor political evolution conditions technical progress. Its progress is likewise independent of the social situation. The converse is actually the case, a point I shall develop at length. Technique elicits and conditions social, political, and economic change. It is the prime mover of all the rest, in spite of any appearance to



the contrary and in spite of human pride, which pretends that man's philosophical theories are still determining influences and man's political regimes decisive factors in technical evolution. External necessities no longer determine technique.

Technique's own internal necessities are determinative. Technique has become a reality in itself, self-sufficient, with its special laws and its own determinations.

Let us not deceive ourselves on this point. Suppose that the State, for example, intervenes in a technical domain. Either it intervenes for sentimental, theoretical, or intellectual reasons, and the effect of its intervention will be negative or nil; or it intervenes for reasons of political technique, and we have the combined effect of two techniques. There is no other possibility. The historical experience of the last years shows this fully.

To go one step further, technical autonomy is apparent in respect to morality and spiritual values. Technique tolerates no judgment from without and accepts no limitation. It is by virtue of technique rather than science that the great principle has become established: *chacun chez soi*. Morality judges moral problems; as far as technical problems are concerned, it has nothing to say. Only technical criteria are relevant. Technique, in sitting in judgment on itself, is clearly freed from this principal obstacle to human action. (Whether the obstacle is valid is not the question here. For the moment we merely record that it is an obstacle.)

Thus, technique theoretically and systematically assures to itself that liberty which it has been able to win practically. Since it has put itself beyond good and evil, it need fear no limitation whatever. *It was long claimed that technique was neutral. Today this is no longer a useful distinction.* The power and autonomy of technique are so well secured that it, in its turn, has become the judge of what is moral, the creator of a new morality. Thus, it plays the role of creator of a new civilization as well. This morality — internal to technique — is assured of not having to suffer from technique. In any case, in respect to traditional morality, technique affirms itself as an independent power. Man alone is subject, it would seem, to moral judgment. We no longer live in that primitive epoch in which things were good or bad in themselves. Technique in itself is neither, and can therefore do what it will. It is truly autonomous.

However, technique cannot assert its autonomy in respect to physical or biological laws. Instead, it puts them to work; it seeks to dominate them.

Giedion, in his probing study of mechanization and the manufacture of bread, shows that "wherever mechanization encounters a living substance, bacterial or animal, the organic substance determines the laws." For this reason, the mechanization of bakeries was a failure. More subdivisions, intervals, and precautions of various kinds were required in the mechanized bakery than in the non-mechanized bakery. The size of the machines did not save time; it merely gave work to larger numbers of people. Giedion shows how the attempt was made to change the nature of the bread in order to adapt it to mechanical manipulations. In the last resort, the ultimate success of mechanization turned on the transformation of human taste. Whenever technique collides with a natural obstacle, it tends to get around it either by replacing the living organism by a machine, or by modifying the organism so that it no longer presents any specifically organic reaction.

The same phenomenon is evident in yet another area in which technical autonomy asserts itself: the relations between techniques and man. We have already seen, in connection with technical self-augmentation, that technique pursues its own course more and more independently of man. This means that man participates less and less actively in technical creation, which, by the automatic combination of prior elements, becomes a kind of fate. Man is reduced to the level of a catalyst. Better still, he resembles a slug inserted into a slot machine: he starts the operation without participating in it.

But this autonomy with respect to man goes much further. To the degree that technique must attain its result with mathematical precision, it has for its object the elimination of all human variability and elasticity. It is a commonplace to say that the machine replaces the human being. But it replaces him to a greater degree than has been believed.

Industrial technique will soon succeed in completely replacing the effort of the worker, and it would do so even sooner if capitalism were not an obstacle. The worker, no longer needed to guide or move

the machine to action, will be required merely to watch it and to repair it when it breaks down. He will not participate in the work any more than a boxer's manager participates in a prize fight. This is no dream. The automated factory has already been realized for a great number of operations, and it is realizable for a far greater number. Examples multiply from day to day in all areas. Man indicates how this automation and its attendant exclusion of men operates in business offices; for example, in the case of the so-called tabulating machine. The machine itself interprets the data, the elementary bits of information fed into it. It arranges them in texts and distinct numbers. It adds them together and classifies the results in groups and subgroups, and so on. We have here an administrative circuit accomplished by a single, self-controlled machine. It is scarcely necessary to dwell on the astounding growth of automation in the last ten years. The multiple applications of the automatic assembly line, of automatic control of production operations (so-called cybernetics) are well known. Another case to point is the automatic pilot. Until recently the automatic pilot was used only in rectilinear flight; the finer operations were carried out by the living pilot. As early as 1952 the automatic pilot effected the operations of take-off and landing for certain supersonic aircraft. The same kind of feat is performed by automatic direction finders to anti-aircraft defense. Man's role is limited to inspection. This automation results from the development servomechanisms which act as substitutes for human beings in more and more subtle operations by virtue of their "feedback" capacity.

This progressive elimination of man from the circuit must inexorably continue. Is the elimination of man so unavoidably necessary? Certainly! Freeing man from toil is in itself an ideal. Beyond this, every intervention of man, however educated or used to machinery he may be, is a source of error and unpredictability. The combination of man and technique is a happy one only if man has no responsibility. Otherwise, he is ceaselessly tempted to make unpredictable choices and is susceptible to emotional motivations which invalidate the mathematical precision of the machinery. He is also susceptible to fatigue and discouragement. All this disturbs the forward thrust of technique.

Man must have nothing decisive to perform in the course of technical operations; after all, he is the source of error. Political technique is still troubled by certain unpredictable phenomena, in spite of all the precision of the apparatus and the skill of those involved. (But this technique is still in its childhood.) In human reactions, howsoever well calculated they may be, a "coefficient of elasticity" causes imprecision, and imprecision is intolerable to technique. As far as possible, this source of error must be eliminated. Eliminate the individual, and excellent results ensue. Any technical man who is aware of this fact is forced to support the opinions voiced by Robert Jungk, which can be summed up thus: "The individual is a brake on progress." Or: "Considered from the modern technical point of view, man is a useless appendage." For instance, ten per cent of all telephone calls are wrong numbers, due to human error. An excellent use by man of so perfect an apparatus!

Now that statistical operations are carried out by perforated-card machines instead of human beings, they have become exact. Machines no longer perform merely gross operations. They perform a whole complex of subtle ones as well. And before long — what with the electronic brain — they will attain an intellectual power of which man is incapable.

Thus, the "great changing of the guard" is occurring much more extensively than Jacques Duboin envisaged some decades ago. Gaston Bouthoul, a leading sociologist of the phenomena of war, concludes that war breaks out in a social group when there is a "plethora of young men surpassing the indispensable tasks of the economy." When for one reason or another these men are not employed, they become ready for war. It is the multiplication of men who are excluded from working which provokes war. We ought at least to bear this in mind when we boast of the continual decrease in human participation in technical operations.

However, there are spheres in which it is impossible to eliminate human influence. The autonomy of technique then develops in another direction. Technique is not, for example, autonomous in respect to clock time. Machines, like abstract technical laws, are subject to the law of speed, and co-ordination presupposes time adjustment. In his description of the assembly line, Giedion writes: "Extremely precise time tables guide the automatic cooperation of the instruments, which, like the atoms in a planetary

system, consist of separate unite but gravitate with respect to each other in obedience to their inherent laws." This image shows in a remarkable way how technique became simultaneously independent of man and obedient to the chronometer. Technique obeys its own specific laws, as every machine obeys laws. Each element of the technical complex follows certain laws determined by its relations with the other elements, and these laws are internal to the system and is no way influenced by external factors. It is not a question of causing the human being to disappear, but of making him capitulate, of inducing him to accommodate himself to techniques and not to experience personal feelings and reactions.

No technique is possible when men are free. When technique enters into the realm of social life, it collides ceaselessly with the human being to the degree that the combination of man and technique is unavoidable, and that technical action necessarily results in a determined result. Technique requires predictability and, no less, exactness of prediction. It is necessary, then, that technique prevail over the human being. For technique, this is a matter of life or death. Technique must reduce man to a technical animal, the king of the slaves of technique. Human caprice crumbles before this necessity; there can be no human autonomy in the face of technical autonomy. The individual must be fashioned by techniques, either negatively (by the techniques of understanding man) or positively (by the adaptation of man to the technical framework), in order to wipe out the blots his personal determination introduces into the perfect design of the organization.

But it is requisite that man have certain precise inner characteristics. An extreme example is the atomic worker or the jet pilot. He must be of calm temperament, and even temper, he must be phlegmatic, he must not have too much initiative, and he must be devoid of egotism. The ideal jet pilot is already along to years (perhaps thirty-five) and has a settled direction in life. He flies his jet in the way a good civil servant goes to his office. Human joys and sorrows are fetters on technical aptitude. Jungk cites the case of a test pilot who had to abandon his profession because "his wife behaved in such a way as to lessen his capacity to fly. Every day, when he returned home, he found her shedding tears of joy. Having become in this way accident conscious, he dreaded catastrophe when he had to face a delicate situation." The individual who is a servant of technique must be completely unconscious of himself. Without this quality, his reflexes and his inclinations are not properly adapted to technique.

Moreover, the physiological condition of the individual must answer to technical demands. Jungk gives an impressive picture of the experiments in training and control that jet pilots have to undergo. The pilot is whirled on centrifuges until he "blacks out" (in order to measure his toleration of acceleration). There are catapults, ultrasonic chambers, etc, in which the candidate is forced to undergo unheard-of tortures in order to determine whether he has adequate resistance and whether he is capable of piloting the new machines. That the human organism is, technically speaking, an imperfect one is demonstrated by the experiments. The sufferings the individual endures in these "laboratories" are considered to be due to "biological weaknesses," which must be eliminated. New experiments have pushed even further to determine the reactions of "space pilots" and to prepare these heroes for their roles of tomorrow. This has gives birth to new sciences, biometry for example; their one aim is to create the new man, the man adapted to technical functions.

It will be objected that these examples are extreme. This is certainly the case, but to a greater or lesser degree the same problem exists everywhere. And the more technique evolves, the more extreme its character becomes. The object of all the modern "human sciences" (which I will examine later on) is to find answers to these problems.

The enormous effort required to put this technical civilization into motion supposes that all individual effort is directed toward this goal alone and that all social forces are mobilized to attain the mathematically perfect structure of the edifice.

("Mathematically" does not mean "rigidly." The perfect technique is the most adaptable and, consequently, the most plastic one. True technique will know how to maintain the illusion of liberty, choice, and individuality; but these will have been carefully calculated so that they will be integrated into the mathematical reality merely as appearances!)

Henceforth it will be wrong for a man to escape this universal effort. It will be inadmissible for any part of the individual not to be integrated in the drive toward technicization; it will be inadmissible that any man even aspire to escape this necessity of the whole society. The individual will no longer be able, materially or spiritually, to disengage himself from society. Materially, he will not be able to release himself because the technical means are so numerous that they invade his whole life and make it impossible for him to escape the collective phenomena. There is no longer an uninhabited place, or any other geographical locale, for the would-be solitary. It is no longer possible to refuse entrance into a community, to a highway, a high-tension line, or a dam. It is vain to aspire to live alone when one is obliged to participate in all collective phenomena and to use all the collective's tools, without which it is impossible to earn a bare subsistence. Nothing is gratis any longer in our society; and to live on charity is less and less possible. "Social advantages" are for the workers alone, not for "useless mouths." The solitary is a useless mouth and will have no ration card — up to the day he is transported to a penal colony. (An attempt was made to institute this procedure during the French Revolution, with deportations to Cayenne.)

Spiritually, it will be impossible for the individual to disassociate himself from society. This is due not to the existence of spiritual techniques which have increasing force in our society, but rather to our situation. We are constrained to be "engaged," as the existentialists say, with technique. Positively or negatively, our spiritual attitude is constantly urged, if not determined, by this situation. Only bestiality, because it is unconscious, would seem to escape this situation, and it is itself only a product of the machine.

Every conscious being today is walking the narrow ridge of a decision with regard to technique. He who maintains that he can escape it is either a hypocrite or unconscious. The autonomy of technique forbids the man of today to choose his destiny. Doubtless, someone will ask if it has not always been the case that social conditions, environment, manorial oppression, and the family conditioned man's fate. The answer is, of course, yes. But there is no common denominator between the suppression of ration cards in an authoritarian state and the family pressure of two centuries ago. In the past, when an individual entered into conflict with society, he led a harsh and miserable life that required a vigor which either hardened or broke him. Today the concentration camp and death await him; technique cannot tolerate aberrant activities.

1954/1963; pg. 133-147

# The cyclic sense of time

in accord with natural and human rhythms and the absence of the idea of progress and of any vision of civilizations are, of course, related phenomena; they are further correlated with the nature of primitive as opposed to civilized technology. When we examine archaic civilizations (Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, China, Rome) or contemporary commercial-industrial civilizations, we find that the life pace set by the demands of the market, the civil authority or the machine increasingly displace human and natural rhythms. In both slave- and machine-based societies, the expressive, musical movements of the primitive, communal work group have been abandoned. The primitive work group is traditional and multifunctional; labor is, of course, utilitarian but it is also sacred—a sport, a dance, a celebration, a thing in itself. In civilization, group labor becomes a compulsive means. In an archaic society, slaves may work under overseers in large, uniform groups, constructing public utilities by brute labor; or they may work under extreme pressure, using rationalized, mechanical motions to produce as many agricultural or commercial products as possible within a given period of time, in order to maximize profit to masters.

In machine-based societies, the machine has incorporated the demands of the civil power or of the market, and the whole life of society, of all classes and grades, must adjust to its rhythms. Time becomes lineal, secularized, “precious”; it is reduced to an extension in space that must be filled up, and sacred time disappears. The secretary must adjust to the stenotype machine; the factory worker to the line or lathe; the executive to the schedule of the train or plane and the practically instantaneous transmission of the telephone; the chauffeur to the superhighways; the reader to the endless stream of printed matter from high-speed presses; even the schoolboy to the precise periodization of his day and to the watch on his wrist; the person “at leisure” to a mechanized domestic environment and the flow of efficiently scheduled entertainment. The machines seem to run us, crystallizing in their mechanical or electric pulses the means of our desires. The collapse of time to an extension of space, calibrated by machines, has bowdlerized our natural and human rhythms and helped dissociate us from ourselves. Even now, we hardly love the earth or see with eyes or listen any longer with our ears, and we scarcely feel our hearts beat before they break in protest. Even now, so faithful and exact are the machines as servants that they seem an alien force, persuading us at every turn to fulfill our intentions which we have built into them and which they represent—in much the same way that the perfect body servant routinizes and, finally, trivializes his master.

Of such things, actual or possible, primitive societies have no conception. Such things are literally beyond their wildest dreams, beyond their idea of alienation from village or family or the earth itself, beyond their conception of death, which does not estrange them from society or nature but completes the arc of life. There is only one rough analogy. The fear of excommunication from the kinship unit, from the personal nexus that joins man, society and nature in an endless round of growth (in short, the sense of being isolated and depersonalized and, therefore, at the mercy of demonic forces—a fear widespread among primitive peoples) may be taken as an indication of how they would react to the technically alienating processes of civilization if they were to understand them. That is, by comprehending the attitude of primitive people about excommunication from the web of social and natural kinship we can, by analogy, understand their repugnance and fear of civilization.

– Stanley Diamond,  
*In Search of the Primitive*

# Towards Something New — From the Italian Anti-Civilization Journal, *Terra Selvaggia*

The long road of civilization, which has led to the present day technological-spectacular society, has been a constant process of separation from nature and of domestication of individuality. Now more than ever, this is evident in the capitalist *desire* to free commodity production from the earth and its resources, as well as in the city dweller afraid of losing her grip on society. It is evident in destructive processes, and in those tending toward the concentration of people into a homogenous mass. It is also evident in the alienation from our own bodies and in the entrusting of their cure to specialists accustomed to treating one body after another without valuing subjectivities at all, almost as if these bodies were machines.

And this process has really operated mainly on this last aspect, not only separating us from external nature, but also from the form of nature, unacknowledged and mistreated by most, that we are. In this way, domination plants its roots in the brains of individuals convinced, or maybe constrained, to consider themselves *other* than nature. But we are not allowed to know what this other is. And by steering the middle course between the pedestal of domination over nature and the simultaneous evaluation of being insignificant within the social Moloch, it is possible to make the appeal to work in order to impose new ideals of the human being, absolutely functional to technological domination and truly *other* than nature. It becomes imperative to integrate oneself, to evolve at a pace equal to the techno-sphere's separation from nature. And methods for integrating oneself are not at all lacking within the ruling order. They are not merely ideological: genetic manipulation already finds applications on the human being, and individuals are already designed in a laboratory, thus carrying evolutionary control to its farthest end. What genetics cannot achieve, especially on the social plane (truthfully, a lot), will be achieved thanks to nanotechnology that already allows the implanting of micro-chips under the skin with infinite possibilities, from location, to the control of gestures and actions, up to interaction with the biological system. Today the lines of control tend to flow more and more into the fabric of life.

F.C., the so-called Unabomber, observed in the manifesto, *Industrial Society and Its Future*: "In the future, social systems will not be adjusted to suit the needs of human beings. Instead human beings will be adjusted to suit the needs of the system". (Thesis 151) With one small error, this future is already present. And it has always existed, even in less intrusive terms, with the adaptation and chaining of individuals, to economic development: work, the factory, degradation of food, commodification, spectacularization, etc.

Going back in time, we can see how Descartes smoothed out the path for such artificialization with his mind-body dualism. Setting aside the mind and shifting attention to the body, objectively quantifiable and controllable, he pointed the way out to science, which has today achieved transplants and the artificial creation of organs. Already Descartes himself asked, "Couldn't living organs perhaps be conceived in a satisfactory manner, and thus governed, as if they were machines?" But science has gone further, not only realizing his idea as the basis of modern biology, but then conceiving organisms fused with and ruled by machines.

The creation of a post-human race and the colonization of the cosmos by machines, as proposed by the scientific expropriation cult, are no longer only subjects for films or the isolated delirium of some fanatic, but projects under study in the universities of robotics and in research centers scattered throughout

the world. The extropian Hans Moravec admits his fantasy that “our non-organic descendants, lacking our limits, capable of redesigning themselves could follow the awareness of things, confining the already surpassed humanity in an edenic environment, like a park”. But more likely, in the name of efficiency, and in view of the objective difficulty of finding an edenic environment on this ravaged earth, the descendents of Moravec would eliminate the obsolete organic human forms. The machine and artificial intelligence are now considered by many as the next level of evolution. The disquieting vision of cyborg Kevin Warwick, who has inserted a chip into his arm that commands lights, entrances and computers in his office, is that fifty years from now machines will manage humans and artificial intelligence will outclass and eliminate human intelligence through the physical intervention of psychosurgery.

Beyond the obvious excess of fanaticism that certain theories reach, there is still a very precise direction: the elimination of the living being as we have known it up to now. What comes about with genetic engineering, controlled sterilization and reproduction, the creation of cyborgs, the cognitive flattening to the level of machines or the purging of the unsuitable is to be seen, but certainly this technological ideology will damage us from now on, whether there is a concrete realization or not. We are already at a point where reality and simulation sometimes becomes indistinguishable, and in an extension of the techniques of spectacular representation, there is now talk of artificial senses capable of making our perception of reality completely virtual, mediated and thus impoverished.

Before its too late, lets realize that science and technology are historical phenomena directed by a vulnerable elite and that our enslavement is in their interest. The key to the ascendancy of machines and of the post-human for an even more totalitarian domination lies in our acceptance; like it does for every form of exploitation and control. And it is only by overturning this notion and the current society, that it will be possible to find the key for the unknown world of freedom.

# Captives of Biology? By Helena

**The technocrats will tell you how to smash patriarchy.**

Emancipation is assimilation: women will be freed by technology, because it enables them to become independent of their physical context – to, in effect, become men. Hence, liberation means masculinization, by psychological as well as technological means. Through technological innovation, women are to be relieved from the burdens of the bodily sphere, which has already been nearly transcended by the other sex.

Liberal feminist Shulamith Firestone writes of the need for contraceptive and birth technologies to free women from the “tyranny of reproduction”; pregnancy being, as she puts it, “barbaric”. In vitro fertilization, cloning, surrogate embryo transfer and ectogenesis, the growth of a fetus outside of the womb, will save women from “the temporary deformation of the body of the individual for the sake of the species”.

Supposedly, the way to end patriarchal oppression is to free women from being, in the words of Judy Wajcman, “captives of biology”. Animal rights philosopher Peter Singer together with Deane Wells argues that feminists would “wish to see research into the development of complete ectogenesis pushed ahead with all due speed” because it would “make a fundamental contribution toward sexual equality.” Other arguments that have been made for ectogenesis, as accounted for by Robyn Rowland in the article “Of women born, but for how long?”, are that the artificial environment would be safer than a woman’s womb, that sex preselection would be simple, that women could be permanently sterilized, and, of course, that women would be spared the discomfort of childbirth.

Reproductive technologies result in degradation of the physical functions; it imposes and makes possible the view of the body as an apparatus. This image of the body not only reduces it to function, but also implies that the biological functions of women are largely deficient in comparison with those artificially performed.

Maria Mies, as is described by Wajcman in her book *Techno-feminism*, viewed technical progress as the destruction of natural links between organisms down to their smallest elements, in order to reassemble them as machines. Reproductive and genetic technologies are means to conquer what Mies describes as the last frontier of men’s domination over nature. It could be added that “men” in this context should refer to bearers of a masculinist worldview rather than a specific sex, as illustrated by Firestone and others.

As noted by Leon Kass in “The new biology”, the depersonalization of procreation is overall a deeply dehumanizing process. Procreation is not only the production of new human beings, but is in itself a human activity.

Also, new medical methods have resulted in the separation of the mother and the fetus, which were earlier regarded as being one during the pregnancy, and have resulted in the treatment of the unborn child as an independent “patient”, with rights sometimes exceeding those of the mother. The mother is no longer a necessary link between the fetus and the outer world, and the influence of medical specialists have penetrated deeply into the female body.

The problem with reproductive technologies is largely one of control; the control over pregnancy and over her own body is transferred from the woman to medical experts. The creation of a human being becomes a process of engineering, something that, as Rowland notes, is well illustrated by the terminology used; eggs are “harvested” and the inside of a woman’s body is a “uterine environment” – language that serves to mechanize and dehumanize the woman.



Rowland also notes how the misleading term “surrogate mother” is used for the woman who actually carries a produced child for nine months, when it is done in favour of infertile couples. As Rowland puts it: “The woman is in no way a surrogate and is in fact the biological mother of the child. By naming her a surrogate, commercial enterprises can more easily control and exploit a woman’s pregnancy by denying her biological relationship to the child.”

Nevertheless, reproductive technologies are put forward as instruments for feminist struggle.

It’s worth noting, however, that only women’s physicality is considered limiting and inconvenient. The real problem of course being that anything diverging from the masculine ideal in a patriarchal society is considered negative, and that society is structured as to make anything that differs from the norm problematic; the view of the female sex as a burden is an obvious cultural construction, although normalized and reinacted throughout history.

Robyn Rowland puts it well by citation: “Kass has commented ‘that the advents of these new powers for human engineering means that some men may be destined to play god, to recreate other men in their own image.’ Where will women’s place be in this new society? Will we be obsolete, permanently unemployed, disposable?” Procreation is a painful reminder of our dependence upon the physical sphere, and of men’s dependence upon women. It is also, as is experienced by many women who choose not to have children, an important component of our cultural definition of sex.

Just as the pill is sold to us by arguments of freedom, in spite of risks of serious side effects, we are now learning to despise our sex enough to celebrate an overtaking of its functions by scientific experts and machines. Rowland continues: “As Roberta Steinbacher says: ‘Who invented it, who manufactured it, who licensed it, who dispenses it? But who dies from it?’”.

# The Iron Grip of Civilization: the Axial Age, by John Zerzan

Civilization is control and very largely a process of the extension of control. This dynamic exists on multiple levels and has produced a few key transition points of fundamental importance.

The Neolithic Revolution of domestication, which established civilization, involved a reorientation of the human mentality. Jacques Cauvin called this level of the initiation of social control “a sort of revolution of symbolism.”<sup>1</sup> But this victory of domination proved to be incomplete, its foundations in need of some further shoring up and restructuring. The first major civilizations and empires, in Egypt, China, and Mesopotamia, remained grounded in the consciousness of tribal cultures. Domestication had certainly prevailed—without it, no civilization exists—but the newly dominant perspectives were still intimately related to natural and cosmological cycles. Their total symbolic expressiveness was not yet fully commensurate with the demands of the Iron Age, in the first millennium B.C.

Karl Jaspers identified a turning point for human resymbolization, the “Axial Age,”<sup>2</sup> as having occurred between 800 and 200 B.C. in the three major realms of civilization: the Near East (including Greece), India, and China. Jaspers singled out such sixth century prophets and spiritual figures as Zoroaster in Persia, Deutero-Isaiah among the Hebrews, Heraclitus and Pythagoras in Greece, the Buddha in India, and Confucius in China. These individuals simultaneously—but independently—made indelible contributions to post-Neolithic consciousness and to the birth of the world religions.<sup>3</sup> In astonishingly parallel developments, a decisive change was wrought by which civilization established a deeper hold on the human spirit, world-wide.

Internal developments within each of these respective societies broke the relative quiescence of earlier Bronze Age cultures. Wrenching change and new demands on the original patterns were in evidence in many regions. The world’s urban population, for example, nearly doubled in the years 600 to 450 B.C.<sup>4</sup> A universal transformation was needed—and effected—providing the “spiritual foundations of humanity” that are still with us today.<sup>5</sup> The individual was fast becoming dwarfed by civilization’s quickening Iron Age pace. The accelerating work of domestication demanded a recalibration of consciousness, as human scale and wholeness were left behind. Whereas in the earlier Mesopotamian civilizations, for example, deities were more closely identified with various forces of nature, now society at large grew more differentiated and the separation deepened between the natural and the supernatural. Natural processes were still present, of course, but increasing social and economic tensions strained their integrity as wellsprings of meaning.

The Neolithic era—and even the Bronze Age—had not seen the complete overturning of a nature-culture equilibrium. Before the Axial Age, objects were described linguistically in terms of their activities. Beginning with the Axial Age, the stress is on the static qualities of objects, omitting references to organic processes. In other words, a reification took place, in which outlooks (e.g. ethics) turned away

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Cauvin, *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), especially the first 25 pages.

<sup>3</sup> Christianity and Islam may be properly considered later spin-offs of this Axial period, their own natures already established some centuries earlier.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Bosworth, “World Cities and World Economic Cycles,” in *Civilizations and World Systems*, ed. Stephan K. Sander-son (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1995), p. 214.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003 [1951]), pp 98-99.

from situation-related discourse to a more abstract, out-of-context orientation. In Henry Bamford Parkes' phrase, the new faiths affirmed "a human rather than a tribalistic view of life."<sup>6</sup>

The whole heritage of sacred places, tribal polytheism, and reverence for the earth-centered was broken, its rituals and sacrifices suddenly out of date. Synonymous with the rise of "higher" civilizations and world religions, a sense of system appeared, and the need for codification became predominant.<sup>7</sup> In the words of Spengler: "the whole world a dynamic system, exact, mathematically disposed, capable down to its first causes of being experimentally probed and numerically fixed so that man can dominate it..."<sup>8</sup> A common aspect of the new reformulation was the ascendance of the single universal deity, who required moral perfection rather than the earlier ceremonies. Increased control of nature and society was bound to evolve toward increased inner control.

Pre-Axial, "animistic" humanity was sustained not only by a less totalizing repression, but also by a surviving sense of union with natural reality. The new religions tended to sever bonds with the manifold, profane world, placing closure on it over and against the supernatural and unnatural. This involved (and still involves) what Mircea Eliade called "cosmicizing," the passage from a situational, conditional plane to an "unconditioned mode of being."<sup>9</sup> A Buddhist image represents "breaking through the roof"; that is, transcending the mundane realm and entering a trans-human reality.<sup>10</sup> The new, typically monotheistic religions clearly viewed this transcendence as a unity, beyond any particularity of existence. Superpersonal authority or agency, "the most culturally recurrent, cognitively relevant, and evolutionarily compelling concept in religion",<sup>11</sup> was needed to cope with the growing inability of political and religious authority to adequately contain Iron Age disaffection.

A direct, personal relationship with ultimate spiritual reality was a phenomenon that testified to the breakdown of community. The development of individual religious identity, as distinct from one's place in the tribe and in the natural world, was characteristic of Axial consciousness. The personalizing of a spiritual journey and a distancing from the earth shaped human societies in turn. These innovations denied and suppressed indigenous traditions, while fostering the implicit illusion of escaping civilization. Inner transformation and its "way up" was spirit divorced from body, nirvana separate from samsara. Yogic withdrawal, life-denying asceticism, etc. were deeply dualistic, almost without exception.

All this was taking place in the context of an unprecedented level of rationalization and control of daily life in many places, especially by about 500 B.C. S.N. Eisenstadt referred to a resultant "rebellion against the constraints of division of labor, authority, hierarchy, and...the structuring of the time dimension..."<sup>12</sup> The Axial religions formed during a period of social disintegration, when long-standing sources of satisfaction and security were being undermined, and the earlier relative autonomy of tribes and villages was breaking down. The overall outcomes were a great strengthening of technological systems, and an almost simultaneous rise of mighty empires in China (Tsin Shi hwang-ti), India (Maurya dynasty), and the West (the Hellenistic empires and, slightly later, the *Imperium Romanum*).

Domestication/civilization set this trajectory in motion by its very nature, giving birth to technology as domination of nature, and systems based on division of labor. There was mining before 3000 B.C. in Sinai (early Bronze Age), and a surge in the progress of metallurgical technology during the third millennium. These innovations coincided with the emergence of true states, and with the invention of writing. Naming the stages of cultural development by reference to metals is apt testimony to their

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Bamford Parkes, *Gods and Men: The Origins of Western Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> John Plott, *Global History of Philosophy*, vol. I (Delhi: Motilal Manarsidass, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, vol. II (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 309

<sup>9</sup> Mircea Eliade, "Structures and Changes in the History of Religions," in *City Invincible*, eds. Carl H. Kraeling and Robert M. Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 365.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 365-366. Karl Barth's leap into "the upper story of faith" has a similar sense; quoted in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Scott Atran, *In Gods We Trust: the Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age Breakthroughs," *Daedalus* 104 (1975), p. 13. "May the gods destroy that man who first discovered hours and who first set up a sundial here." —Plautus, 3rd century B.C. Eisenstadt's is the best essay on the overall topic that I have found.

central role. Metallurgy has long stimulated all other productive activities. By 800 B.C. at the latest, the Iron Age had fully arrived in the West, with mass production of standardized goods.

Massification of society tended to become the norm, based on specialization. For example, Bronze Age smiths had prospected, mined, and smelted the ores and then worked and alloyed the metals. Gradually, each of these processes became the purview of corresponding specialists, eroding autonomy and self-sufficiency. With respect to pottery, a common domestic skill was taken over by professionals.<sup>13</sup> Bread now came more often from bakeries than from the household. It is no accident that the Iron Age and the Axial Age commence at almost exactly the same time, c. 800 B.C. The turbulence and upheavals in the actual world find new consolations and compensations in the spiritual realm— new symbolic forms for further fractioning societies.<sup>14</sup>

In Homer's *Odyssey* (8th century B.C.), the technologically backward Cyclops have surprisingly easy lives compared to people in Iron Age Greece of that time, when the beginnings of a factory system were already in place. Development of steel plows and weapons accelerated the destruction of nature (erosion, deforestation, etc.) and ruinous warfare.

In Persia, oil was already being refined, if not drilled. There the seer Zoroaster (aka Zarathustra) emerged, providing such potent concepts as immortality, the Last Judgment, and the Holy Spirit (which were quickly incorporated into Judaism). The dualism of the divine Ahura Mazda's struggle against evil was paramount theologically, in a religious system intimately tied to the needs of the state. In fact, the Persian legal system of the Achaemenian period (558-350 B.C.) was virtually synonymous with Zoroastrianism, and the latter in fact quickly became the state religion. According to Harle, Zoroastrianism was "born to serve the demand for social order in a rapidly changing and expanding society."<sup>15</sup>

Zoroastrian monotheism was not only a definitive turning away from animism and the old gods, but also a marked elevation of the categories of good and evil as universals and ruling concepts. Both of these characteristics were Axial Age essentials. Spengler regarded Zarathustra as a "traveling companion of the prophets of Israel", who also steered popular belief away from the web of pantheistic, localist, nature-oriented rites and outlooks.<sup>16</sup>

The Hebrew-Judaic tradition was undergoing a similar change, especially during the same sixth century heart of the Axial Age. The eastern Mediterranean, and Israel in particular, was experiencing a surge of Iron Age urbanization. The social order was under considerable strain in the context of a national need for identity and coherence, especially in the face of more powerful, empire-building neighbors. The Israelites spent two-thirds of the sixth century as captives of the Babylonians.

Yahweh rose from local fertility god to monotheist status in a manner commensurate with the requirements of a beleaguered and threatened people. His grandeur, and the universality of his field of relevance, paralleled the Hebrews' desire for strength in a hostile world.<sup>17</sup> In the eighth century B.C., Amos had announced this vision as a deritualizing, transcendentalizing spiritual direction. Jewish uniqueness thus unfolded against the backdrop of radical, unitary divinity.

The "new man" of Ezekiel (early sixth century B.C.) was part of a new supernatural dimension that, again, took its bearings from an unstable time. As Jacob Neusner pointed out, by the sixth century B.C.—at the very latest—the economy was no longer grounded in subsistence or self-sufficiency.<sup>18</sup> The role of the household had been greatly diminished by division of labor and the massifying market. An omnipotent god demanding absolute submission reflected rulers' aspirations for top-down, stabilizing authority. Yahweh, like Zeus, was originally a nature god, albeit connected to domestication. His rule

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<sup>13</sup> The fate of domestic hand-loom weavers almost three millennia later comes to mind; the independent weaver household was overwhelmed by the factory system of the Industrial Revolution.

<sup>14</sup> It is a striking irony that Nietzsche named his archetypal "beyond good and evil" figure Zarathustra.

<sup>15</sup> Vilho Harle, *Ideas of Social Order in the Ancient World* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Spengler, *op. cit.*, pp 168, 205.

<sup>17</sup> V. Nikiprowetzky, "Ethical Monotheism," *Daedalus* 104 (1975), pp 80-81.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Social Studies of Judaism: Essays and Reflections*, vol. 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 71.

came to hold sway over the moral and civic order, anchored by the rule of kings. The positive, redemptive role of suffering emerged here, unsurprisingly, along with refined political domination. Deutero-Isaiah (Second Isaiah), greatest of the Hebrew prophets of the Axial Age, created a royal ideology in the sixth century B.C.<sup>19</sup> He announced that the very essence of the Covenant with God was embodied in the king himself—that the king *was* the Covenant.<sup>20</sup> The force of this announcement derived from universal cosmic law, beyond any sense perception or earthly parallel; natural phenomena were only its expressions, wrought in an infinity unknowable by mortals.

In pre-Socratic Greece, especially by the time of Pythagoras and Heraclitus in the sixth century B.C., tribal communities were facing disintegration, while new collectivities and institutional complexes were under construction. The silver mines of Laurium were being worked by thousands of slaves. An “advanced manufacturing technology”<sup>21</sup> in large urban workshops often displayed a high degree of division of labor. “Pottery in Athens was made in factories which might employ, under the master-potter, as many as seventy men.”<sup>22</sup> Strikes and slave uprisings were not uncommon,<sup>23</sup> while home industries and small-scale cultivators struggled to compete against the new massification. Social frictions found expression, as always, in competing world views.

Hesiod (8th century B.C.) belonged to a tradition of Golden Age proponents, who celebrated an original, uncorrupted humanity. They saw in the Iron Age a further debasing movement away from those origins. Xenophanes (6th century), to the contrary, unequivocally proclaimed that newer was better, echoing Jewish prophets of the Axial Age who had contributed significantly to progressive thinking. He went so far as to see in the forward movement of civilization the origin of all values, glorying in urbanization and increasingly complex technological systems.<sup>24</sup> Xenophanes was the first to proclaim belief in progress.<sup>25</sup> Although the Cynics held out in favor of an earlier vitality and independence, the new creed gained ground. The Sophists upheld its standards, and after 500 B.C., widespread embrace of higher civilization swamped the earlier longing for a primordial, unalienated world.

The transcendentalizing foundation for this shift can be read in an accelerating distancing of people from the land that had been taking place on multiple levels. A land-based pluralism of small producers, with polytheistic attachments to local custom, was transformed by urban growth and stratification, and the detached perspective that suits them. Plato’s *Republic* (c. 400 B.C.) is a chilling, disembodied artifact of the rising tendency toward transformation of thought and society along standardized, isolating lines. This model of society was a contrived imposition of the new authoritarianism, utterly removed from the surviving richness that civilization had thus far continued to coexist with.

Social existence intruded to the furthest reaches of consciousness, and the two schema, Iron Age and Axial Age, also overlapped and interacted in India. The period from 1000 to 600 B.C. marked the early Iron Age transition from a socio-economic-cultural mode that was tribal/pastoral, to that of settled/agrarian. The reign of surplus and sedentism was greatly hastened and extended by full-fledged iron and steel plow-based cultivation. Mines and early factories in India also centered on iron technology, and helped push forward the homogenization of cultures in the Mauryan state of this period. New surges of domestication (e.g. horses), urbanization, large estates, and wage labor took place in the Ganges valley, as “tribal egalitarianism,” in Romila Thapar’s words, surrendered to the newly evolving system by 500 B.C.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 2000), p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 99-100.

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Klemm, *A History of Western Technology* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1959), p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Singer, E.J. Holmyard and A.R. Hall, eds., *A History of Technology*, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 408.

<sup>23</sup> C. Osborne Ward, *The Ancient Lowly*, vol. I (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1888), Chapter V.

<sup>24</sup> Ludwig Edelstein, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp 15-16.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Romila Thapar, “Ethics, Religion, and Social Protest in India,” *Daedalus* (104), 1975, p. 122. See also pp 118-121.

This was also roughly the time of Gautama Buddha. Buddhism's origins and role with respect to the spread of Iron Age society can readily be traced.<sup>27</sup> Canonical scriptures refer to early Buddhist teachers as consultants to the rulers of Indian states, a testimony to Buddhism's direct usefulness to the new urban order in a time of great flux. Various commentators have seen the Buddhist reformulation of the premises of Hinduism as an ideology that originated to serve the needs of a challenged, emerging structure.<sup>28</sup> The early supporters, it is clear, were largely members of the urban and rural elites.<sup>29</sup>

For the Buddha—and for the other Axial prophets in general — the personal took precedence over the social. He was the detached observer, seeking freedom from the world, who mainly accepted a very narrow sphere as locus of attention and responsibility. This amounts to a fatalism that founded Buddhism upon suffering as a prime fact, a condition of life that must be accepted. The message of *dukkha* (suffering) expresses the ultimate incapacity of the human condition to include happiness.

Yet Buddhism promised a way out of social dislocation and malaise,<sup>30</sup> through its focus on individual salvation. The goal is “extinguishedness” or Nirvana, the suppression of interest in the world by those disenchanting with it. Similarly, Buddha's presentation of the “cosmic process” was stripped of all earthly processes, human and non-human. While criticizing the caste system and hereditary priesthoods, he took no active role in opposing them.

Buddhism was highly adaptive regarding changing social situations, and so was useful to the ruling classes. Buddhism became another world religion, with global outreach and distinctive superhuman beings to whom prayers are directed. By around 250 B.C. Buddha had become the familiar seated god-figure and Buddhism the official religion of India, as decreed by Asoka, last of the Mauryan dynasty.

The Iron Age came to China slightly later than to India; industrial production of cast iron was widespread by the 4th century B.C. Earlier, Bronze Age polytheism resembled that found elsewhere, complete with a variety of spirits, nature and fertility festivals, etc., corresponding to less specialized, smallscale modes of livelihood. The Zhou dynasty had been gradually falling apart since the 8th century; continuous wars and power struggles intensified into the period of the Warring States (482-221 B.C.). Thus the indigenous spiritual traditions, including shamanism and local nature cults, were overtaken by a context of severe technological and political change.

Taoism was a part of this age of upheaval, offering a path of detachment and otherworldliness, while preserving strands of animist spiritual tradition. In fact, early Taoism was an activist religion, with some of its “legendary rebels” engaged in resistance to the new stratifying trends, in favor of re-establishing a classless Golden Age.<sup>31</sup>

The primitivist theme is evident in the *Chuang Tzu* and survives in the *Tao Te Ching*, key text of Taoism's most prominent voice, Lao-tse (6th century B.C.). An emphasis on simplicity and an anti-state outlook put Taoism on a collision course with the demands of higher civilization in China. Once again, the 500s B.C. were a pivotal time frame, and the opposed messages of Lao-tse and Confucius were typical of Axis Age alternatives.

In contrast to Lao-tse, his virtual opposite, Confucius (557-479 B.C.), embraced the state and the New World Order. Instead of a longing for the virtuous time of the “noble savage”, before class divisions and division of labor, the Confucian doctrine combined cultural progressivism with the abandonment of connections with nature. No ban was placed on the gods of mountains and winds, ancestral spirits, and the like; but they were no longer judged to be central, or even important. Confucianism was an explicit adjustment to the new realities, aligning itself with power in a more hands-on, less transcendent

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<sup>27</sup> For example, Vibha Tripathi, ed., *Archaeometallurgy in India* (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 1998), especially Vijay Kumar, “Social Implications of Technology.”

<sup>28</sup> See Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbet, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp 18-21. Bailey and Mabbet, it should be said, see more of the picture than just this aspect.

<sup>29</sup> Thapar, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>30</sup> Bailey and Mabbet, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp 99-100, 119.

way than some other Axial Age spiritualisms. For Confucius, transcendence was mainly inward; he stressed an ethical stringency in service to authority. In this way, a further civilizational colonization was effected, at the level of the individual personality. Internalization of a rigid ruling edifice, minus theology but disciplined by an elaborate code of behavior, was the Confucian way that reigned in China for two thousand years.

These extremely cursory snapshots of Axial Age societies may serve to at least introduce some context to Jaspers' formulation of a global spiritual "breakthrough". The mounting conflict between culture and nature, the growing tensions in human existence, were resolved in favor of civilization, bringing it to a new level of domination. The yoke of domestication was modernized and fitted anew, more tightly than before. The spiritual realm was decisively circumscribed, with earlier, earth-based creeds rendered obsolete. Civilization's original victory over freedom and health was renewed and expanded, with so much sacrificed in the updating process.

The whole ground of spiritual practice was altered to fit the new requirements of mass civilization. The Axial Age religions offered "salvation" at the price of freedom, self-sufficiency, and much of what was left of face-to-face community. Under the old order, the authorities had to use coercion and bribery to control their subjects. Henceforth, they could operate more freely within the conquered terrain of service and worship.

The gods were created, in the first place, out of the deepest longings of people who were being steadily deprived of their own authentic powers and autonomy. But even though the way out of progressive debasement was barred by the Axial Age shift, civilization has never been wholeheartedly accepted; and most people have never wholly identified with the "spiritualized" self. How could these ideas be fully embraced, predicated as they were on a mammoth defeat? For Spengler, the Axial Age people who took up these new religions were "tired megalopolitans".<sup>32</sup> Today's faithful, too, may be tired megalopolitans—all too often still spellbound, after all these years, by ideologies of sacrifice, suffering, and redemption.

The renunciations have been legion. Buddhism was founded, for example, by a man who abandoned his wife and newborn child as obstacles to his spiritual progress. Jesus, a few centuries later, exhorted his followers to make similar "sacrifices".

Today's reality of unfolding disaster has a lot to do with the relationship between religion and politics—and more fundamentally, with accepting civilization's trajectory as inevitable. It was the sense of the "unavoidable" that drove people of the sixth century B.C. to the false solutions of Axial Age religiosity; today, our sense of inevitability renders people helpless in the face of ruin, on all fronts. 2500 years is long enough for us to have learned that escape from community, and from the earth, is not a solution, but a root cause of our troubles.

Authentic spirituality is so importantly a function of our connection with the earth. To reclaim the former, we must regain the latter. That so very much stands in our way is the measure of how bereft we have become. Do we have the imagination, strength, and determination to recover the wholeness that was once our human birthright?

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<sup>32</sup> Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

# Indigenous vs the Machine — Indigenous and Campesino Resistance

“In recent years we have come to understand what progress is. It is the total replacement of nature by an artificial technology. Progress is the absolute destruction of the real world in favor of a technology that creates a comfortable way of life for a few fortunately situated people. Within our lifetime the differences between the Indian use of the land and the white use of the land will become crystal clear. The Indian lived with his land. The white destroyed his land. He destroyed the planet earth.”

– Vine Deloria, Jr.

## Mid-September, Bolivia: Conflict for Land Continues

In June 2005, hundreds of peasant farmers celebrated two years of liberation. A bullfight, dancing, and food for all. Close, but just out of sight, sat the solitary ruins of the ex-hacienda of Collana — “a sign,” according to the settlement’s own account of their anniversary, “that, here, not even a trace of a patrón (landowner) remains.” The occupation two years ago of the large private estate, despite many obstacles the participants have faced, is in many ways a success story for the young but growing movement of landless peasants in Bolivia. Families who until 2003 had essentially been indentured servants in Bolivia’s near-feudal countryside are living for the first time on their own terms. “With or without papers, the land was our grandparents’ and now it is ours,” stated Collana leader Dionisio Mamani in a recent article. “With this, we are assuring a better life for our children.”

However, the land issue has again exploded in Santa Cruz. In mid-September, about 200 landless took over five parcels of land in the Santa Rosa area, north of the city of Santa Cruz. Authorities claim that the property belongs to a Civic Committee member and candidate for prefect of Santa Cruz, Ruben Costas. But the resisters assert the property is ownerless and therefore the campesinos have a right to settle and work.

“When they talk of property, no property exists there; when they talk of delinquents, I don’t understand to whom they are referring,” stated Benigno Vargas, in an article published in BolPress after the takeover. Vargas displayed several documents that demonstrated the campesinos’ “legal right” to occupy the land, including a government decree from the year 2000, which orders that small producers be given priority to the 521,000-acre area, and that no producer should have more than 124 acres. “It’s obvious that the ones who should leave are those with large tracts of land. That is, the estate owners,” Vargas concluded.

“In total, the land is a space of knowing the multilayered world of the indigenous... Their collective memory is written in every rock, mountain and field and creates a piece of their identity,” writes Aymara scholar Pablo Mamani. Campesinos — those who feel themselves as part of the land, regardless of where they live or what they do — have been ripped from that which defines him or her. This movement is what they have developed to seal this rupture. This indigenous self-determinism deeply threatens Bolivia’s social fabric based on inequality and white rule. “In this country’s [political] power game, the land has been converted into another of the factors of strategic use and control” because of its inherent importance to indigenous identity, Mamani concludes. The settlers know it, too. “They call us terrorists but we’re not in a guerrilla war. We’re in a psychological war against the powers that be,” Yuquises member Carmelo explained to Noah Friedsky.

## September 18, Guerrero, Mexico: Campesino Leaders Assassinated in Guerrero



Three unidentified men armed with two AK-47 assault rifles and a 9-mm pistol shot and killed former political prisoner Miguel Angel Mesino in broad daylight in the town center of Atoyac municipality in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero. Mesino was the brother of the director of the Southern Sierra Campesino Organization (OCSS) Rocio Mesino, and the son of one of the group's founders, Hilario Mesino. Mesino himself was reportedly linked to the rebel Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), and was held on homicide charges for 10 months in prisons in Tecpan and Chilpancingo. He was released in November 2003 after a 60-day hunger strike. Rocio Mesino told the Mexican daily La Jornada she was sure her brother's killing was politically motivated.

Another campesino leader, Tomas Cruz Zamora, was also killed in Guerrero on the same day. Zamora was a member of the Council of Ejidos [traditional cooperative farms] and Communities Opposing the La Parota Dam (CECOP). He was driving a van with 40 other CECOP members returning from a meeting in the community of Agua Caliente, in Acapulco municipality, when he was confronted by his cousin Cirilo Cruz Helasio, who supports the construction of the dam. After a brief discussion, Cirilo Cruz shot Tomas Cruz in the temple. Tomas died in Acapulco General Hospital that night. Cirilo himself was hospitalized on Sept. 19 with gunshot and machete wounds after friends of Tomas attacked him.

The Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) says the proposed La Parota dam will displace 2,812 people, but opponents say some 20,000 inhabitants from 13 communities will be forced to relocate. Tomas Cruz's widow, Eugenia Cruz Galeana, blamed the CFE for creating "division ... within the families of the communities" and claimed Cirilo Cruz had been promised a job as treasurer in their community for supporting the dam.

#### **October 12, Caracas, Venezuela: Evangelicals Removed!**

The U.S. evangelical group New Tribes Mission, active in indigenous areas along Venezuela's southern border since 1946, has been expelled from the country. Opposition from the Yanomami, Ye'kuana and Panare groups, and others, finally reached critical mass. The Bible-pushing New Tribes effort "westernized indigenous by force, while spreading a sense of shame and guilt," as well as scouting for strategic minerals for transnational corporations, according to sociologist and environmentalist Alexander Lezardo.

#### **December 21, Ecuador: Foreign Mining Company Targeted**

Dozens of Native Ecuadorians recently burned a building owned by Ascendant Copper corporation to resist its mining activities in the Intag area of Ecuador. This followed the unanimous vote of an assembly of villagers from 20 communities. The successful \$20,000 attack targeted the negative social impacts and ecological devastation of the Canadian firm and recalled similar blows against the Japanese corporation Mishi Metals. The latter company withdrew from the area after a mining camp was burned in the mid-1990s.

#### **January 2, Orissa state, India:**

Thousands of tribespeople blocked a main road in Orissa state after police opened fire during protests over a planned steel mill. At least 12, mainly from the Ho tribe, and one cop died in clashes at Kalinaganagar. In a statement, the Native resisters said they would "not give up a square inch of land" for the projected Tata Steel plant in the Jaipur district.

Thousands of tribal people have been displaced in the last two decades by dams built to provide power and water for metal factories. Opposition continues and information is available from [survival-international.org/news](http://survival-international.org/news).

#### **January 7, Islamabad, Pakistan: Resistance to Dam Project**

The six billion dollar Kalabagh Dam project has stirred anger and fear among many, especially in the Sindh province. Smaller ethnically and linguistically distinct populations have felt dominated by the more powerful and government-allied Punjab province leaders. Large anti-dam rallies have become commonplace while many in the non-Punjab areas have proclaimed the stopping of the Kalabagh Dam to be "a matter of life and death."

#### **On November 13, 2005, Vine Deloria, Jr. died at the age of 72.**

He was an author, theologian, historian, and activist. He is best known for his book *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969), in which he attacked the treatment of this continent's original inhabitants by the United States government and by anthropologists. A member of the Standing Rock Sioux, Deloria originally sought to be a minister, like his father, and received a degree from the Lutheran School of Theology after graduating from Iowa State University. Deciding that he could do more good for native people as a lawyer, he went on to earn a law degree from the University of Colorado. From 1964 to 1967 Deloria was executive director of the National Congress of American Indians. Deloria wrote and edited many subsequent books, focusing on many issues as they relate to people, communities, and cultures native to what is now claimed as the United States of America. He was involved with many native organizations, was a board member of the National Museum of the American Indian beginning in 1977, and taught political science at several universities. Some of his other books include: *Aggressions of Civilization: Federal Indian Policy Since The 1880s* (1984), *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence* (1974), *A Better Day for Indians* (1976), *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* (1979), *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (1994), and *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader* (1999).

**North American Native Political Prisoners:**

**Byron Shane Chubbuck** #07909051, US Penitentiary, PO Box 26030, Beaumont, TX, 77705. Indigenous activist serving time for robbing banks to acquire funds to support the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas.

**Eddie Hatcher** #0173499, Marion Correctional Institute, POB 2045, Marion, NC 28752. Longtime Native freedom-fighter being framed for a murder he did not commit.

**Leonard Peltier** #89637-132, USP Terre Haute, U.S. Penitentiary, 4700 Bureau Road South, Terre Haute, IN 47802. American Indian Movement (AIM) activist, serving two Life sentences, having been framed for the murder of two FBI agents.

**Luis V. Rodriguez** #C33000, PO Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532-7500. Apache/Chicano activist being framed for the murder of two cops.

**Tewahnee Sahme** #11186353, SRCI, 777 Stanton Blvd, Ontario, OR 97914. Dedicated Native rights advocate serving additional time for a prison insurgency.

**David Scalera (Looks Away)** #13405480, TRCI, 82911 Beach Access Rd, Umatilla, OR 97882. Dedicated Native rights advocate serving additional time for a prison insurgency.

# Everywhere And Nowhere: The Pathology of the Machine, by Kevin Tucker

“In order to rationalize our industrial-military complex, we have to destroy our capacity to see clearly any more what is in front of, and to imagine what is beyond, our noses.” – R.D. Laing<sup>1</sup>

“There’s no light at the end of the Carpal Tunnel.” – Bob Black<sup>2</sup>

Technology is about taking. It always has been and always will be.

Whether we’re talking about relatively regional civilizations or our global civilization, the irrigation canals of Cahokia or the tanks of the U.S. Army, technology is about a system that always requires more. More fuel, more resources, more operators, more consumers, more attention, more devotion: more everything and anything.

And that excess comes from somewhere. Somewhere and everywhere there are ‘necessary evils’ (work, rent, bills, war), but we overlook them. We see it as give and take: we work, they give us toys, we spend more hours working to make more money to buy things that are supposed to save us time, we pour into this system, this technological system, so that we can get stuff in return. So that we can take part in history in the making: we can internalize the Machine and its Progress. It becomes our pride, it gives us meaning while it takes it away, and it becomes our basis for identity.

Technology is power materialized. Without taking and giving something very real, that is, things you can see, feel, hear, and smell, the domesticators would have never been able to enact the power their gods only spoke of. Like god, technology became something to fear and love. It became another thing to turn to so that we don’t see, feel, hear, and sense the world of and around us. From the steel plow to self-heating coffee mugs, we become absorbed by the technological system.

And we’re blinded by the halogen light. The larger the system, the less able we are of seeing the consequences. We don’t see where the taking is or where the losses are. But we don’t have to look far for either. We just have to learn how to look and step back to see outside of the mass produced visions of the domesticators, to walk away from the 24-hour neon crucifix, power locks and heated seats to understand the nature of the machine: it must grow and it must absorb or eliminate everything that stands before it.

Through this absorption, our communities, our world and our being are what is being taken away. We are absorbed into something larger than our selves, larger than our bioregionally rooted minds and cultures, and drawn into the fate of a self-destructive culture.

On April 12, 1893 in the arid lands of southern Africa, the technological system laid one of many monuments to its own efficiency. A camp of 90 Witbooi women, children and some men was sleeping as the sun arose. As they slept, the colonizing German army crept up to deliver their final compromise in the struggle over the land that those Witbooi and their ancestors had lived on for thousands of years: a struggle immersing from two cultures who would have never known about each other only decades before.

In a matter of 30 minutes, 16,000 rounds were fired from 200 rifles, laying the entire camp to rest.<sup>3</sup> The Gatling gun, in its 32nd year of existence, made colonization a much faster and more efficient ordeal.

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<sup>1</sup> RD Laing, *The Politics of Experience*. New Jersey: Pantheon, 1967. Pgs. 57-58.

<sup>2</sup> Bob Black, *Anarchy after Leftism*. Columbia: CAL Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Cocker, *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold*. New York: Grove, 1998. Pgs. 3-4.

The expanding German Empire and the globalizing European civilization which spawned it needed more resources. And more must always come from somewhere. On that day, the ‘somewhere’ was in southern Africa, which today remains one of the largest suppliers of such technological necessities as gold and diamonds. The 90 Witbooi killed just happened to stand in the way.

That same year the motion picture made its premiere.

Take and give.

If anyone is familiar with the consequences of technology, the ones we are psychologically incapable of comprehending, they are those who have historically lived without it. That is earth based cultures, the gatherer-hunters, the small scale horticulturalists, and minor pastoralists.

These are societies who are no stranger to tool use (like most animals). But tools are different. Made from stone, wood, bone, and hide, they can be and are by necessity, mechanically simple. They require skill and knowledge over resources. A knapped flint blade leaves behind smaller pieces of flint, not industrial waste. This kind of tool use is reflective of their cultures, which can face any amount of ecological and social turbulence, but are lasting.

That is, are lasting so long as they aren’t destroyed by another culture. One which, as one Huaorani man put it: “killed by destroying the source of all life”.<sup>4</sup> From flourishing through thousands of years, these are cultures faced most recently with the threat of extermination at the hands of a techno-industrial civilization reaching back less than two centuries. Ethnocide, or culture-death, of the Huaorani is just one cost “for the sake of enough oil to meet U.S. energy needs for thirteen days”.<sup>5</sup>

Thirteen days, one country for one culture.

What’s worse is that this is not an isolated case. Indigenous communities throughout Northern America face ethnocide, removal, and genocide to make way for coal, uranium, copper, gold, silver, bauxite, molybdenum, and zeolite mines, oil and natural gas, logging, dams, and their homes are turned into locations for power plants and waste sites.<sup>6</sup> Trains and guns were once used to exterminate buffalo herds to deprive plains Indians, now toxic waste turn fish into carcinogens, global warming melts ice sheets and drowns polar bears, and lead contamination from strip mines makes ground water lethal.

You have the same story throughout the world. Before urban development stretched into the Amazon, colonization came through road building to clear land for ranchers and to harvest rubber trees, bringing in logging and mining, and, more recently massive hydroelectric dams.<sup>7</sup> What started in Asia, Northern Africa and Europe spread throughout the world as technology became more advanced and continually required more to carry on: to carry on the process of growth and expansion. It moves, uprooting communities along the way, leaving processed and domesticated grains, morality and clothing, and steel tools in its wake.

Taking and giving. Rising and falling.

Destroying to produce nothingness.

And for what? What are the benefits of this great and mighty system that can turn the earth into another thing, another consumable and rejectable object?

We try to justify what we’ve gotten from the process. And so-called radicals have even tried to save those positives from the rest of the technological system. But while they agree that colonization and destruction like that talked about above is horrid and, they believe, unnecessary elements of a technological society, they ignore the reality of technology: it destroys in far more ways than one.

Some of the worst damage wrought by the technological system is what it does to our minds. As the ever expanding boundaries of the technological reality spread out and connect with more people, the more we become enmeshed in the system, and the more isolated we become.

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<sup>4</sup> Joe Kane, *Savages*. New York: Vintage, 1996. Pg. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the Land*. Winnipeg: Arbitr Ring, 1999. Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen, *Ecocide of Native America*. Santa Fe: Clear Light, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Rabben, *Unnatural Selection*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998. John Bodley, *Victims of Progress*. Menlo Park: Cummings, 1975.

Technology is about isolation: the system demands specialization. To produce a ‘labor saving’ technology like steel tools, iron must be mined, the ore must be smelted and it must be reshaped into something useful. Those doing the mining, smelting, reshaping, or those involved in the shipping or distributing of the materials or the finished product, or those doing the bartering or selling of that product, aren’t likely to be the ones putting it to use as with a plow or something used directly in the production of food. There is a new distance that is created and the person selling those tools isn’t going to see the same amount of destruction that the miner will see on a daily basis or notice the consequences of that mine like someone directly involved with providing food will. Nor will they necessarily know about the use of other steel tools in clearing out more land for more mines.

That kind of disconnect is inherent in the system. And the psychological disconnect is the same. In earth-based communities, culture is shaped over hundreds and thousands of years and is inseparable from the lack of mediation from the earth and from each other. These cultures have adapted responses and methods for dealing with any problems that are likely to arise.

Let’s look at warfare. Warfare is something particular to domesticated societies, whether they are earth-based or not. Nomadic gatherer-hunters lack warfare because they are freer from concepts of territoriality and without dependence on rooted gardens or storehouses, can simply move, split up or merge with surrounding camps during times of ecological hardship. There is little to be staked out and defended and, even more importantly, with looser kin and social relationships between bands, even less to defend against. Kin-based identity becomes more important only when gardens and storehouses and their surrounding hunting territory arise. That is, when people become rooted to a particular spot to the point that its use by others is competitive rather than collective.

As societies settle, or become domesticated, scarcity becomes a problem. The more dependent a society becomes on particular plants, animals, or weather patterns, the more they have to fear. If a horticulturalist village expands and its neighbors are expanding or aren’t moving, then eventually there will be a problem.

There’s an ecological term for this: carrying capacity. Carrying capacity is how much life can be supported by any given bioregion at any particular time. But it’s more than an ecological concept; it’s the reality that every living being must answer to if they push too far. And that does happen from time to time. It doesn’t have to be a major issue, but some human societies created a larger problem because storing and domesticating foods bends carrying capacity. That makes a village possible where a band had previously only camped before.

This is not without consequence. The bioregion and what is grown or taken from it becomes a resource and others are competitors. And this begins the cycles of war that characterize domesticated societies. Though domesticated, small-scale horticultural and pastoral societies are still earth based; they are still without a technological system such as metal tools, irrigation and urbanization. The kind of social and ecological stresses they feel are hardly abstract: there are too many mouths to feed on too little land. War, in the form of raids or battles, is the initial response, and becomes a primary occupation of the culture at large. A preference for male warriors leads to higher rates of female infanticide, revenge for lives lost in battle spur raids, and the result is less mouths to feed and the occasional shattering of villages into new places or to be absorbed by other villages.<sup>8</sup>

You see this happening over and over again in horticultural and pastoral societies from South America, to North America, Africa, Eurasia, Polynesia, and Micronesia.

Brutal as it might sound, this is the culture that these societies have grown into and the one they have and will continue to fight to maintain. But we’re kidding ourselves when we think that this is somehow an archaic arrangement. As the death toll in Iraq has well passed 20,000 lives lost, we should

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<sup>8</sup> This can be observed from nearly any ethnography on horticulturalists and pastoralists. A few cases that have elaborated on it as such are; Roy Rappaport, *Pigs for the Ancestors* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1984), Kenneth Good, *Into the Heart* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), Andrew Vayda, *Maori Warfare* (New Plymouth, NZ: Avery Press, 1960) and *Warfare in Ecological Perspective* (New York: Plenum Press, 1976), Marvin Harris, *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches* (New York: Vintage, 1989), and is further elaborated in my book-in-progress, *Catalyst: the birth and death of civilization*.

consider the words of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter in response to attacks in 1980 on what he called one of the “vital interests of the United States of America”, the Persian Gulf and its oil: attacks “will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”<sup>9</sup> That’s a response that the U.S. and other oil hungry countries have surely not backed away from. We could just as easily point to villages bulldozed and fenced off in Mexico that force a move and dependence on Maquilladoras, or sweat shops with company stores and their debt, or to the plight of the eastern Cougar, or to any number of the places mentioned earlier.

The eternal somewhere, nowhere and everywhere: the shit fields of the technological system.

At least the warring horticulturalists know whose blood is on their hands.

But we have more in common with the horticulturalists and pastoralists than their cycles of warfare: they too have suffered the consequences of modern technology.

The mediation, the distance and isolation of technology is about more than just pulling us away from the rest of the world. It is about uprooting our community and bioregionally defined being from its very essence. The result is a blood-thirsty, unchecked insanity. Like Joseph Conrad’s Col. Kurtz, we destroy because nothing is stopping us. Technology turns our hearts into the darkness it creates.

For arctic hunters, like the Inuit, technology turned the vitally communal seal hunts into a solitary act where the only companionship a hunter has is with his gun and outboard motor. He returns to smaller and smaller camps, in many places even the dogs are replaced by snowmobiles. Community disappears and culture becomes a warped mirror of what it once was.<sup>10</sup> Depression reigns, canned foods bring the highest rate of diabetes in any human population, and the tools of arctic hunters can be seen on display in places like the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Where the bastard godchildren of industrialists can see relics of the community they’re searching for, but never able to see.

The gun, the imported food in steel cans, the outboard engine and its oil.

Harpoons, dog sleds, community, seal skin kayaks.

Giving and taking.

The Carnegie Museum built its altar to the gods of Progress on soil stained in the blood of the technological system. Like the arctic, it is the place where culture was and is being killed by forced relocation and an influx of technology. But unlike the arctic hunters, the lives of the Monongahela were not lost to any direct trade. They were horticulturalists, like the Erie to the north, the Susquehannocks to the east and the nations of the Haudousaunee to the Northeast.

Like the other horticulturalists we’ve looked at already, there was a rough pattern of affinity and warring that created a rather static state of existence throughout what would be called the northeastern United States. You had these cycles of war, kept in check by a degree of inefficient weaponry and the lack of mediation that the faceless warfare technology makes possible.

That changed in the early 1600’s.

The growing, stratified technological system of Western Europe was expanding and needed more resources. Sadly, the invention of quicker transportation over water made it possible for the dense populations of cod in the Atlantic coast to be caught, stored and sold in shops in Britain. The fishers began setting up inland camps where they met local Algonkians: a people with no technology, but a sudden interest in what these fishers had to offer. The fishers took an equal interest in the furs of the natives and set in motion one of the most tragic stories of our history: the American Fur trade.

The new steel tools and other mass-produced junk of Empire flooded into Algonkian hands at the expense of a demand for furs that the natives had neither known nor had to deal with before. The rough boundaries and alliances of a quickly declining era were radically altered by the demand for trapping grounds and another resource war took place. But unlike past wars, there was a new element: the gun.

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Michael Klare, *Resource Wars*. New York: Henry Holt, 2002. Pg. 4.

<sup>10</sup> NOVA, *Hunters of the Seal* [film]. 1978.

The gun, like the trades, created a new kind of society where power was granted by property and trade alone and where age old affiliations and kin networks were tossed aside to recreate a mirror of European politics. A new kind of political economy emerged as European nations used the natives as pawns for their own ongoing territorial battles. The Iroquoian Empire was created by the British in 1677 to stake a rightful claim of discovery against the French. While Europeans battled this out, it was native blood being spilled.

Technology is the key factor: the age-old system of alliances and war kept things in check, but there was no precedent for the kind of damage technology could inflict. There was never a reason to create checks against a technology that never existed before and so the natives had no way to realize or cope with the nature of technology until it was far too late. Too late came quickly: by 1660, every Iroquois who could own a gun did. And in a war of the Iroquois against the Susquehannock over access to central Pennsylvania into Ohio for trapping, the Erie and Monongahela were wiped out between 1630 and 1680.

They never had to meet a European to fall victim to the consequences of their technological system.<sup>11</sup>

And for the Iroquois themselves, the dependence on the new technology caused a break-up in bands into smaller kin groups and warrior sects. The loss of culture and community allowed the missionaries that followed in the footsteps of the fishers to finish the civilizing that guns and steel tools had started.

This unfolds over and over again throughout the world where cultural traditions clash with the technology of modernity. For the notorious Amazonian horticulturalists, the Yanomami, access to steel tools became the primary motivation for the warfare that won them the title 'the Fierce People' and became the subject of socio-biological arguments for aggressiveness as the basis for humanity. No doubt, the irony of the situation has still never fully come to light.<sup>12</sup>

And that clash has taken on more literal terms.

The Maori of New Zealand are one example. Their culture is the product of a system of fishing, hunting, and horticulture that created a heavy dependence on surplus. Social stratification was firmly rooted in a highly divided society where kings and religious leaders could not even be touched by impure hands or tools. Like any society where the socio-political elite are untouchable, the same will apply for their gods.

In the early 1800s, muskets became a normalized part of the Maori warfare complex. But, like the Iroquois, that distribution was never equal. Politicians would take powerful Maori warrior-chiefs on world tours and school them in the European political-war system. In one case, one Maori chief got 300 guns with ample ammo from a sympathetic British commander resulting in the death toll of over 2,000 enemy Maori with an equal number taken as slaves from a 3-month campaign.<sup>13</sup>

But before the guns were even efficient in themselves, they pulled on the traditional culture and ideas of gods for their power. As anthropologist Andrew Vayda observed, guns gave advantage in warfare "not so much because of the numbers killed...as because of the panic affected as a result by killing any of them." He continues: "when defenders heard the noise of the guns without, as far as they could see, having been struck, they concluded that supernatural forces were at work."<sup>14</sup>

This is an important point. As I said earlier, the warfare of earth-based cultures was never faceless. The changing pattern of affiliations and war still had enemies, but they were known enemies. The consequence of killing was rooted in cultural understandings of what happens to the dead and how they are to be avenged. But what constitutes killing is also culturally defined. If someone is killed by a spear, arrow or through witchcraft, everyone knows what is going on and what is going to happen. You respond in kind.

Technology, being outside of the realm of direct experience and relationships, challenges this. The pastoral/horticultural Nuer of Sudan now know this too well. Guns flooded their culture as Nuer boys

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<sup>11</sup> Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

<sup>12</sup> R. Brian Ferguson, *Yanomami Warfare*. Santa Fe: SAR Press, 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Vayda, *Maori Warfare*. Pgs. 91-2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Pg. 60

and men were drafted as soldiers in the SPLA, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. That is, as a part of a violent nation-state turned ethnic war created by European nations battling for control over the region. The guns, not surprisingly, brought an extreme upsurge in Nuer homicide and the loss of culture. Not necessarily through killing alone, but because the technology is so alien to their long-standing cultural understandings of the world: ones patterned by hundreds of years of bioregional and ecological influence.

Nuer responses and accountability for homicide were a part of their elaborately outlined spiritual world. It involved consequences for the deceased, the murderer and their cattle. But this was all tied to one thing: the Nuer concept of killing. The death of Nuer, by other Nuer or outsiders, had no place in their cosmology: there was no understanding of where this left the living or the dead. Like the Iroquoian warriors, this opened the door for the missionaries.<sup>15</sup>

Souls lost to the machine, taken again by the god that built them.

Genocide, ethnocide, omnicide: is it shocking to know that Sudan is one vital source for the Nile River? That is, the land the Nuer live on is the primary source for the most valued resource in north-eastern Africa: water.<sup>16</sup>

The very building block of life becomes another resource, another reason to take lives. All for industry. All for Progress. All to feed the Machine.

From the view of the modernizers and the technocrats, you have to give to take. And this is what we and those being taken from are told we are all seeing.

The necessary evils. The broken eggs of Progress.

And ultimately the salvation of the Machine.

It's easy to look at these things and see them as a tragic misconception or faults of indigenous societies to stop their complacency in their ethnocide and genocide. We can look at these 'downsides' of technology in use or ignore the relationship between all of this and the necessary expansion of the technological system.

But if we think that we are any different or any more prepared to deal with technology, then Stanley Milgram proved us wrong.

Milgram was a social psychologist with a particular interest in obedience. His interests led to what would become one of the most controversial experiments and analysis of the last century. The experiment brought in random people who were, as they would believe, going to give another experimental subject a series of electrical shocks as dictated by the conductor of the experiment. The person receiving the shocks was an actor who would respond as any person would if given the relative amount of electrocution: from initial reactions along the lines of 'what is going on here' to protests to agonizing screams. What Milgram found was shocking: nearly all the subjects would give strong to extremely intense shocks before they would refuse to give them as told and twice as many would carry on if the actor was further away, but could still be heard.<sup>17</sup>

The experiment was focused on obedience to authority, but there are two things in particular that apply to this subject: the authority granted to the experimenter through their technology and the disconnection between the person giving the shocks and the screams of the victim through the technology.

We don't need a lab to remind ourselves of how powerful these things are. When some technology exists, it is treated as something that just is and always will be. In a fatalistic sense, it is accepted as a part of reality. Genetic engineering, for example, gets its share of protest, but little to no outrage, even as diseases have nearly doubled in the short period since it has become widely used. We could look even closer to everyday technologies like sewage systems and garbage. We don't think about what happens when we can simply toss things to the curb or in a dumpster. We don't have to think about how the psycho-active sedatives that are so widely taken are being pissed out and run back into the water supply

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<sup>15</sup> Sharon Hutchinson, *Nuer Dilemmas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Klare, *Resource Wars*.

<sup>17</sup> Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*. New York: Harper, 1975.



with no method of filtration for them. That goes back into the rivers, lakes, streams and oceans and finds its way back into the soil. Nor are we confronted with the consequences of household chemicals, like fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides which anyone in most countries could go to the store and pick up and spray outside at anytime. Nor do we think about the coal plants, strip mines, nuclear power plants and the carnage they reap when we flip on a switch.

We can wonder and be philosophically opposed, but these things are all just there. And their presence alone grants them a kind of authority that comes with the fatalistic view that's been instilled in our minds. The necessary evils haunt us into inaction. They are the electric lullaby.

And it is the distance of a technological system that makes it possible for us to go on ignoring all of this. To continue acting like there are no consequences for our actions while everyday life remains an ongoing catastrophe.

Milgram was interested in the study of obedience for a particular reason: are there evil and good people, or are people just following order? What he saw from Hitler's concentration camps, Stalin's gulags, and, at that time, the ongoing war in Vietnam disturbed him.

And what he learned through interviews with those who took part in this wholesale destruction of life brings us back to the essence of technology: in order to inflict pain directly, they had to "counteranthropomorphize" their victims. That is they had to remove any human qualities from the people they would be destroying.

And there is another fitting term for this: reification, the process of turning life into 'things', lifeless objects. This is exactly what the technological system does, and exactly what the domesticators teach us to do. We must be disconnected from our being to cause this kind of destruction. No full being could ever tolerate this loss just as we cannot comprehend what is really being lost.

So long as we are plugged in, we will never be able to come to this understanding.

As the Iroquois and Maori unwittingly took part in the destruction of their culture, we unwittingly take part in the destruction of life, the uprooting of communities, and the dismemberment of our being.

This is the technological system. This is the consequence of its necessary disconnection.

And this is what we are given in return for a wholeness that we can no longer even contemplate.

It is a whole package that cannot be taken in parts. There is no good and bad technology: just as there are no consequence-free actions. We are thrown into a global world that we are psychologically incapable of understanding, where destruction is out of sight and out of mind.

But our bioregional, communal selves still lurk beneath the machinery. We are not different. And we can't wait any longer for a nice way to slowly turn the power off on this system or to try and put it to good use. The switch will never be willingly flipped.

**It is up to us to pull the plug and let the system collapse.**

## **Ecological Resistance from Around the World**

### **September 8, New York, NY: Another HLS Cohort Bails**

Animal liberation graffiti on a New York yacht club associated with their corporation pressured Carr Securities to release a statement saying that it had withdrawn from working with the animal-testing company Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). It may have also been the reason the New York Stock Exchange balked at listing shares of the company only minutes before it was due to begin trading. The Exchange later reversed their decision and allowed the stock to be listed without explanation as to the earlier delay. HLS was forced to quit the London stock market and the NYSE in 2000 after animal rights protesters targeted shareholders and market makers.

### **November 13, Hagerstown, MD: ELF Claims Responsibility for Arson at Development Site**

The Herald-Mail reported that it had received an e-mail from the Earth Liberation Front claiming responsibility for a fire that destroyed recently built, unoccupied townhouses. The fire caused an esti-

mated \$300,000 in damages. This is apparently the first arson in Maryland claimed by the ELF. The email read:

*Last night we, the Earth Liberation Front, put the torch to a development of Ryan Homes in Hagerstown, Maryland (off of Route 40, behind the Wal-Mart). We did so to strike at the bottom line of this country's most notorious serial land rapist. We warn all developers that the people of the Earth are prepared to defend what remains of the wild and the green. We encourage all who watch with sadness while developers sell out the future of us and our children to join us in resisting them in any and every possible way. The Ents are going to war.*

**November 25 & 29, Bothell, WA:**

There were two consecutive attacks on construction sites in which equipment was torched. Over \$100,000 of damage was recorded in the fiery offensive.

**November 29, Pacific Beach, CA:**

Seven luxury SUVs were set on fire at two San Diego-area dealerships. Police suspect that the Earth Liberation Front may be responsible, but no one has claimed credit yet. The fires caused an estimated \$167,000 in damage.

**December, Thessaloniki, Greece: Firebombs Against the Transgenics**

Using firebombs, the ELF sent a message against genetically modified products by attacking a truck belonging to Pioneer Hi-Bred Hellas located in front of the company's office. The group accuses the company of being involved in experiments concerning genetically modified organisms, as well as producing and distributing genetically modified plants. The truck, used as a mobile laboratory for testing agriculture products, was equipped with machinery: the damages runs into 80,000 euros.

An unknown man phoned the newspaper's office in Thessaloniki, claiming responsibility for the ELF and indicating the place (an abandoned building) where they had left a CD containing the communiqué. The CD was found and the group underlines in its communiqué that "Pioneer Hi-Bred Hellas" is a subsidiary of the genetic colossus "Dupont" and is responsible for the superinfection, by genetically modified plants, of a 1,071,000 m<sup>2</sup> area of conventional corn tilth in Drama and other regions of Macedonia and Thrace, that harmed over 100 farmers. "The intervention in the genetic material of humans, animals or plants represents an assault to the whole life and its evolution." As they explain, their intention was to cause, through the truck's arson, only economic damage to the company and to forewarn anyone who is involved or wants to get involved in every level of the production and distribution of genetically modified organisms.

**Early December, Kells, Ireland: Frog Farmer Calls It Quits**

Frog farmer Denis McCarthy decided to begin an early retirement after a Halloween and more recent visit from members of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), who damaged his car with acid and spray-painted his farm with animal liberation slogans. The Kells-based frog farm was Europe's sole exporter of common frogs for medical research, used in joint experiments by King's College, London, and the University of Lund in Sweden as part of a study on the central nervous system. McCarthy originally told the group he would retire at the end of this month, in order to forestall further attacks. He contacted the Sunday Times recently and stated that he was closing the business "with immediate effect" and said he had passed this information on to the ALF via an intermediary. The ALF said, "Until he ceases trading and all his equipment is given to animal welfarists for rescue use, he will remain a legitimate target." McCarthy raised frogs for vivisection for more than 50 years. He said that he didn't mind ceding to the group's demands, which were to stop trading and to turn over all equipment to animal welfare organizations, because there was no business left anyway.

**December 16, Valley Springs, CA:**

Workers discovered the initials "E.L.F." spray-painted on the garage door of a home under construction, along with a broken window.

### **December 31, Entre Ríos, Argentina: Roads Blocked in Protest of Polluting Mills**

Environmental groups organized three simultaneous road blockade protests that halted all vehicular traffic between Argentina and Uruguay. The three roads and bridges which connect the two countries have been closed in protest of two new European owned paper mills upstream on the Uruguay River. The demonstrations are already having a negative impact on Uruguay's economy which is benefited by a high volume of Argentine tourists who spend their summer holiday vacationing across the border. The mills are owned by ENCE of Spain and Botnia of Finland who have refused to agree not to dump chlorine and other chemicals into the river.

### **January 1, Madrid, Spain: Animal Liberation Dedicated to William Rogers**

A few hours after the year began, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Independent University of Madrid was broken into. In the animal facility, 28 caged beagles, destined to be killed by university vivisectors, were freed. According to the communique, "This action we want to dedicate to William C. Rogers, 'Avalon'. A companion who recently 'appeared' dead in his cell with a bag over his head."

### **January 4, Devon, England: ALF Frees Boars**

The Animal Liberation Front took responsibility for reintroducing wild boars to England after a 300 year absence. ALF cut the fencing around boar pens at Allan Dedames' Woodland Wild Boar Farm, freeing 100 animals. 41 mostly young animals were quickly recaptured, but despite the efforts of dozens of hunters using all-terrain vehicles and hunting dogs the majority of the boars are likely to remain free. Wild boar were hunted to extinction in Britain some 300 years ago, but a small breeding population has emerged in East Sussex in last 10 years. Dr Martin Goulding, a former Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs scientist, warned that the animals could fight back. "A wild boar will not cause any trouble unless it is bothered and if you go chasing it with dogs or people on quad bikes, you are annoying it. If you corner it, it will turn round and attack you."

"I'm impatient to end the story of the artificial beast with human entrails. In a different work I will tell some of the details of the resistance to Americanization on the part of some of the world's last communities. I cannot tell all, either there or here, because the struggle against His-story, against Leviathan, is synonymous with Life; it is part of the Biosphere's self-defense against the monster rendering her asunder. And the struggle is by no means over; it goes on as long as the beast is animated by living beings."

—Fredy Perlman,

*Against His-story, Against Leviathan!*

## **Earth and Animal Liberation Political Prisoners:**

**Tre Arrow**, CS# 05850722, Vancouver Island Regional Correction Center, 4216 Wilkinson Rd., Victoria, BC, V8Z 5B2, Canada. On remand accused of involvement with an arson on logging trucks and an arson on vehicles owned by a sand & gravel company. Both occurred in the USA. Tre is fighting against his extradition to the US.

**Josh Demmitt**, 12314-081, PO Box 6000, Federal Prison Camp, Sheridan, OR 97378, USA. Serving 30 months for an arson on a University animal testing facility. Due for release 24/04/06.

**Aaron Labe Linas** #38448-083, FMC Butner, PO Box 1600, Butner, NC 27509. ELF prisoner doing time for a series of actions against urban sprawl and other targets.

**Ted Kaczynski** #04475-046, US Pen-Admin Max Facility, PO Box 8500, Florence Colorado 81226. Sentenced to multiple lifetimes in prison for the "Unabomber" bombing attacks against the architects of industrial society.

**Jeffrey Luers (Free)** #13797671, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310. Serving a 22+ year sentence for setting fire to Sports Utility Vehicles to protest the destruction of the environment. He has been made an example of by the criminal injustice system and he urgently needs your support.

**Fran Thompson** #1090915 HU 1C, WERDCC, P.O. Box 300, Valdalia, MO 63382. Longtime eco-activist serving a life sentence for killing, in self-defense, a stalker who had broken into her home.

**John Wade** #38548-083, FCI Petersburg Low, Satellite Camp, PO Box 90027, Petersburg, VA 23804, USA. Serving 37 months for a series of ELF actions against McDonalds & Burger King, urban sprawl, the construction industry, and an SUV dealership.

**Helen Woodson** #03231-045 FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Admin Max Unit, Fort Worth, TX 76127. Serving nine years for a series of actions that focused on the interrelationship of war and the destruction of the natural world. This is after serving years for robbing a bank and setting the money on fire while reading out a statement denouncing greed, capitalism and the destruction of the environment.

**Peter Young** #10269-111, FCI Vitorvill Medium II, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 5700, Adelanto, CA 92301. Serving two years for releasing mink and foxes from six different fur farms.

Editors' Note: There are a number of people that have been arrested for accused eco-activity or recently sentenced. See: "State Repression" on pages 50-56 for details. For more info: [www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk](http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk)

# It's Not Easy Being Green!, by the mosh@terran hacker corps

The term **sustainable** (along with green, renewable, and appropriate) is being attached to more and more technologies by environmental reformists and, as market pressures (and opportunities) increase, by capitalists — some who even ascribe ‘green’ to their practices. By what criteria is such an important determination as “sustainable” made? And by whom?

We are a bunch of self-taught, non-scientific, non-academic “off-gridders” who know where they live regarding industrial technology (which we are differentiating here from the more nebulous and vaguely defined “technology” only for clarity’s sake). We have analyzed, considered, and debated its logic and ramifications to the point of tears and anguish and have no further need of these exercises. We are clearly and adamantly opposed to it, agitate towards its finale, and expend a lot of energy extricating our lives from its insidious clutch. However, since ‘Luddites’ (who were saboteurs, not pundits) are so few, we’re presenting for your consideration, a summary of our evaluation of “sustainable energy” through its most popular option, photo-voltaics, aka solar power.

## It's a Challenge to Question Everything!

Critical thinking is the most important approach we have for evaluating new or unfamiliar concepts. Information, contemplation, analysis, and discussion helps to separate ideas from ideology, facts from propaganda, myth from reality; but is especially difficult when digging into the complexities of industrial civilization. First, because it is built and maintained on ideology, propaganda, and myth; second, because facts are hard to come by and those which are available, largely obscured.

Information regarding a given technology can be roughly divided into three categories. The first comes from marketing propaganda, the source most people turn to and/or are bombarded with, and whose drivel is quickly propagated as “informed opinion”. The most we can realistically get from this source is the names and institutions of designers, developers, and financiers involved in the industry under investigation.

Scientific journals and texts provide the most significant information regarding formulas, materials, and processes, but is subject to the limits imposed by corporate and state mandates protecting their “intellectual property” rights and first-to-market/first-to-control positions. What we can get our hands on is so jargon-filled, so niche academic, it’s damned near incomprehensible to us peons. This is an important strategy that adds to the mystique of the specialist and enhances the positions of power held by the intellectual and scientific elite. This particular manifestation of the division of labor and authoritarianism cannot be separated from – nor ignored when critiquing – any/all technology.

Once the harmful effects of a technology can no longer be ignored, environmental and occupational health agencies create (and occasionally enforce) a myriad of contradictory regulations. Their large volumes of data are also a challenge to decipher, albeit less technically obtuse than bureaucratically so. Administrative specialists are well-schooled in the art of writing industry-palatable guidelines that reformers can accept (if not understand), since both groups share the goal of maintaining Progress.

*Our* final challenge was breaking down reams of data, reconciling contradictory information, and organizing our messy notes to make technical and bureaucratic gobbledygook more comprehensible to

the layperson. All this while trying to keep enough “sustainable energy” pumping to run a couple laptops and a light or two.

## E=MC<sup>2</sup>?

Every form of life produces, stores, and releases energy that comes from other natural substances: light and heat from the sun, oxygen, water, microbes, other plants, other animals, etc. The ubiquitous “cycle of life” is just a metaphor for the continuous transfer of energy from one organism to another, often as a result of the death of the former. Of course, life is far more intricate, complex, and unquantifiable than what science reduces it to, but for clarity we’ll use its language to describe the pertinent qualities of energy. Energy is defined as the ability/capacity of a system to do work or produce heat. Work is the transfer of energy from one system to another; heat transfers energy based on temperature differences. Scientific laws state that the total amount of energy in the universe is constant and finite; it can never be created nor destroyed. Therefore, energy for all systems, natural or technological, must be either generated from mass, transformed from another form of energy, or moved to where it’s required. *Primary* energy is obtained directly from the source, such as coal, oil, natural gas, water, and sun. *Secondary* energy (eg electricity, steam, hydrogen, and refined petroleum products) is produced by the industrial processing of primary or other secondary energy; for example, electricity is predominantly generated from steam produced from water and coal. Some amount of “loss” occurs when producing/transforming energy, which can either be part of a healthy cycle or a disruption to a healthy cycle.

Muscle power was the main energy source used by humans for millions of years until we, apparently unlike every other living thing on the planet, decided we needed to accomplish more than what could be provided by the naturally fueled energy of our bodies. From burning wood, to domesticating the “beasts of burden”, to simple wheels powered by water and wind, early civilizations found the go-juice necessary for accomplishing the larger-than-life tasks that mark human history. Villages became towns only to become cities, requiring more technology...requiring more energy...requiring more technology...This progression led straight to the industrial revolution and ever more complex machinery, eventually to electronics and on to nuclear reactions. Today we have the megalopolis; what’s next?

One means of evaluating a civilization’s advancement is the Kardashev Scale, which measures the ability of a civilization to use all available energy. Type I civilizations can harness all the energy on a single planet, Type II, all the energy of a single star, and Type III, a whole galaxy. Current civilization is estimated at a .7 and increasing – we just need to use “ecological services” more thoroughly.

With every new invention and increase in human population, the demand for energy rises. With each new energy source harnessed, its finite limitations loom quickly, fueling the next search and recovery mission and even greater technological feats. The first large-scale energy source humans used was the ‘renewable’ biomass, wood. By the late 1700s, the average American family consumed between 20 and 40 cords of wood each year. Millions of acres of forests were cleared in the 1800s to make charcoal, used for smelting the ores that became trains, planes, automobiles and the factories to build them. Railroads used over 15 million acres of forests in 1900 alone just to replace decaying railroad ties (chemical treatments reduce that necessity now). As forests were depleted more rapidly than their natural cycles could replenish, coal—the first fossil fuel—supplanted wood. Kerosene, the first petroleum distillate (gas was initially considered a useless by-product of its production), replaced the whale oil (whose populations had also been devastated) that lit the homes of those wealthy enough to afford it. (The oil industry’s claims of saving whales and forests are worthy of far more than mere scorn.)

Energy consumption rises with the *affluence* of a population more than with its increase in size. As the most affluent nation, the US consumes 25% of all the energy generated on Earth with only 5% of the planet’s population. Fossil fuels currently provide over 85% of that energy. However, as oil heads towards its inevitable depletion – and its carbon pollutions now gaggingly, undeniably damaging – new energy sources are increasingly being touted and used as viable and “sustainable” alternatives.

We find it interesting that another word for energy is power, and that oil has been the primary catalyst for the making of billionaires and monopolies, wars and empires. And we're certain it is not coincidental that oil magnates have jumped into the increasingly competitive "alternative energies" business.

## It's the Current, See?

Electricity accounts for over 40 percent of all secondary energy use in the world. From 1971 to 1997, demand increased threefold. In 2003, the world used 14,767,748,493,203,600 watts (one "horsepower" equals 746 watts) of electricity with over 70% percent generated from fossil fuels (20% comes from nuclear power, 7% from hydroelectric dams, 2% from solar, wind, biomass, and other non-hydro "sustainable" sources). Electricity is delivered through "the grid", a massive network of high voltage wires running underground or supported by poles and pylons tied together at plants and substations. This "supreme engineering achievement of the 20th century" links nearly every state (Texas has its own autonomous grid) and even crosses national borders. But it is congested, aging, and failing, with billions of dollars lost each year due to brownouts and blackouts. Grids in the rest of the world are of a similar design and experiencing similar breakdowns. Saboteurs are also disrupting electrical transmissions as the grid is largely unprotected.

A major factor leading to projected increases in electrical usage is the Progressives effort to extend power to the "underprivileged" people.

Some alternative energy proponents are disconnecting from the grid and reducing electricity use in general; still more are attaching their "sustainable" systems to the grid and turning unused power into profit with little intention of cutting their consumption.

On a passing note, we know high voltage kills rather quickly, low voltage experienced up close is suspected of harmful effects, and proximity to high voltage transmission stations is said to be carcinogenic; but do we know what effect electricity has on the many forms of life surrounded by it 24/7?

## What is "Sustainable"?

Here's how a few of the experts define sustainable (there are dozens of definitions to choose from):

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*Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

-

*Improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem.*

-

*Economic growth that provides fairness and opportunity for all the world's people, not just the privileged few, without further destroying the world's finite natural resources and carrying capacity.*

It is apparent that *sustainable* has different meanings according to the ideology of the expert. It also seems apparent that a critical analysis must look at *every* impact of *every* subsystem, from harvesting/mining, to production, delivery, consumption, and all related "waste streams". Only recently has this kind of "life-cycle analysis" been forthcoming regarding oil, and that only because the impacts to the "environment" have become too drastic to ignore or dismiss. Yet nowhere in common discussions or analysis of "sustainable" energy will you find the elements of a full life cycle analysis. Sustainability must also be evaluated in the context of scale, time, and geography; so let's take a look at solar panels, proposed as a "sustainable" alternative to fossil fuel and nuclear generation.

## Making Solar, Power

The primary component of photovoltaics (“photo”=light, “voltaic”=electricity) is a cell typically made from silicon combined with specific chemicals whose combined properties convert primary light energy from the sun into secondary electrical energy. Multiple cells are connected under glass or plastic housing to make the modules called solar panels. Modules are then wired together to form solar arrays in order to increase electrical output. The average PV system generates approximately 100 watts per square meter of panel surface under peak conditions, that is, when receiving *full direct sunlight*. This is an important limitation – PVs require unobstructed access to sunlight; shade from adjacent buildings could render a roofmounted photovoltaic system ineffective, cloudy days limit the output and at night it’s zero.

There are a number of other electrical components required to make PV (and other “green” energy) systems a viable alternative; a key one being the batteries required to store and accumulate sufficient energy for continuous use. Each one of these components require their own life cycle analysis; please, be our guest, we’ve got enough on our hands with the panels. For now we’ll just say that battery technology is widely acknowledged to be one of the more toxic technologies in common use throughout the civilized world.

As the second most abundant element on earth next to oxygen, silicon makes up over 25% of the Earth’s crust by weight. Interestingly, pure silicon does not exist in nature; it’s always found bound to oxygen (as silicon dioxide aka silica) in crystalline or amorphous forms in rock and sand. It is semi-metallic, therefore in theory, mildly capable of conducting electricity; thus earning it the popular descriptor *semi-conductor*. However, its actual conductivity (the capability of facilitating the flow of electricity) is relative to how many impurities exist in its crystalline structure. The silicon used for PV cells (and computer chips) must be ultra pure, with naturally occurring impurities at the sub-parts-perbillion level so that introduced impurities, called dopants (eg boron, phosphorus, arsenic, antimony) can then be added in exacting formulas developed for specific conductivity characteristics. The most common method of preparing pure silicon requires carbon and super-high temperatures (3000 degrees C); a process that produces a familiar by-product, carbon monoxide (though the industry assures us, it is much less than that produced by burning fossil fuels). A series of complex processes (which bored our friends/editors when we included them) requires the use of numerous chemicals (trichlorosilane, ammonium hydroxide, hydrofluoric acid, sodium hydroxide, acetic and nitric acids to name a few) which get added, washed, and etched away repeatedly until the silicon wafers are completed. Within this process are numerous materials, subprocesses, and complex, specialized equipment, each requiring its own life cycle analysis.

Where does this ubiquitous silica come from? Industry cheerleaders are fond of describing beach sand as electricity just waiting to happen, despite the fact it is of insufficient purity. The abundance of silica on the planet is matched by its pervasiveness in technology: from glass making, the casting of tools and hardware in foundries, cement and concrete building blocks, to the advanced communication systems, crystalline silica has been a major part of civilization’s development. The discovery of its semiconducting capabilities launched the computer industry and what some call The Silicon Age. So, will you be surprised to learn that traditional sources of this abundant material are in the throes of final depletion?

Sand characteristics highly desired by industry—consistency of grain size, smoothness, and roundness— are the result of thousands of years of wind and water moving chaotically across forming dunes. Sand harvesting throughout the world has demolished most of these dunes and the surrounding areas through open pit mining, high pressure water jetting, and dredging (which removes sand as much as 50 feet below the water table), stripping the areas of stabilizing vegetation and making them susceptible to further erosion. Projections show “recoverable” on-shore sand reserves depleted by the year 2006. Off-shore, the shells and skeletons of aquatic plants and animals are high in silica content. When they die, they sink to the bottom, decompose into sediment, which hardens over time into



silica-laden rock and sand. You guessed it: off-shore sand mining has begun in earnest. But the Earth surface is 75% water so we presume the hoopla over a peak sand crisis is still a ways off.

There are serious direct human costs to mining sand and rock, beyond the toll of such back-breaking, mind-numbing labor inherent to all industries. A significant increase in reported silicosis cases – a devastating lung disease, followed the invention of the pneumatic hammer drill in 1897 and again after the introduction of sand blasting in 1904. By the mid- 1930s it was considered the most serious occupational disease. Over forty years later, in 1997, studies concluded that inhaled silica is also carcinogenic – confirming what victims (and numerous prior studies) had already determined. Since it can take up to 45 years for the effects of silicon inhalation to appear, it often shows up late in life when it may not be linked to occupational hazards. But we’re sure OSHA and similar occupational “health” agencies (mostly voluntary environmental testing and worker training programs) will curb the problem.

Research *is* being conducted into alternatives to silica. However, the focus of most research is to increase the efficiency (efficiency in this case being the ratio of electrical power output to sunlight power input) of PV cells from the current average of 12 percent to somewhere closer to the upper limit of 30 percent reached in space applications. Efficiency gains may result through the alternative materials and processes—such as amorphous silicon and nanotech semiconductor films—being explored by the industry. Another area of research is directed towards reducing or eliminating the use of rare materials such as germanium, tellurium, indium, and gallium. Still other researchers focus on toxicity issues like the lead-based solder used for connections. Lead solder is already found in municipal waste landfills and incinerator ash from consumer electronics and batteries, and the PV industry is nervous about the fact that discarded panels will be increasingly adding to this toxicity as more of them reached the end of their projected life span (currently 20 years). PV panels, the rare times they’re tested, regularly fail the already marginal hazardous waste disposal criteria currently in place.

However, solar panels *are* considered non-hazardous and non-polluting when used according to specifications (though there is concern about toxicity in the event of fire). Since the sun is an essentially limitless energy source, unless the thinning ozone layer makes its ultra violet rays deadly for human and other life, surely most of us are comfortable considering it “sustainable”. Consequently, it’s in the consumer/end-use portion of the life cycle where promoters are successful in associating PVs with “sustainable, renewable, and green”. Since “saving the environment” is a hot topic, particularly amongst well-heeled, left-leaning liberals, PVs and other alternative energy markets are experiencing rapid financial growth. So, once again, the psychological buy-in strategy shines its ever-burning light, leading the loyal consumer like a moth to the flame. It doesn’t take a whole lot of information, analysis, contemplation, or discussion to see where the most sustainable of all *power* resides.

## The Electric Globe

Ok, just for fun, we’ll calculate the quantity of solar panels necessary to produce the nearly 15 quadrillion watts of electricity humans used in 2003. It would take 147,677,484,932,036 square meters of solar panels, and since the earth has only 148,940,000,000 square meters of land surface area, space has become an enticing installation possibility<sup>1</sup>. Which reminds us: how much of the sun’s rays can be diverted and absorbed into human-devised objects without adversely affecting EVERY life form, since *the sun* is the source for all energy?

But let’s get real, even the industry admits they’re a long way away from being a significant contributor to electrical energy production. They’re still looking for the elusive factory that can produce enough solar panels in one year to provide the 100 megawatts of energy thought to be the trigger for making PV truly “mass market”; bringing prices down and efficiencies up. Consequently, the industry’s sights are set on fulfilling only 10% of the projected 22-25 quadrillion watts projected for 2030 (at least

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Bosworth, “World Cities and World Economic Cycles,” in *Civilizations and World Systems*, ed. Stephan K. Sander-son (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1995), p. 214.

a 50% increase, by the way). Obviously any practical solution to the “sustainable” energy problem – that is, if ANY industrial solution can be considered practical or sustainable - will come from a variety of energy sources, each with its own complex problems with regard to “sustainability”.

## The End...or the Beginning?

The “cradle-to-grave” processes of industrial technology have a very clear starting and (foreseeable) end point. They start with the union of market-driven ‘needs’, enforced end-user dependencies, and ruling class profit motives. The visible end is land fills, toxic waste dumps, holding facilities, and “super fund” sites; with air, water, and soil increasingly the sources of disease and death, rather than solely the sources of life-giving sustenance. In between is increasing desperation as human lives devolve into machine lives, entire ecosystems disappear, and hope springs eternal through more and more bizarre transcendent myths.

The life *cycle* described by technologists looks more like a straight line to us: escalating exploration, extraction, production, consumption, transportation, obsolescence, depletion, and extinction with no replenishment or return, only growing piles of waste and toxins. Perhaps the Earth *will* reclaim what is trapped in metals, plastics, glass, chemical solutions; perhaps it *will* break down the complex compounds into the simple components of a teeming and thriving biosphere. But, how long will it take – not one generation or the oft-repeated seven. Hundreds? Thousands? Does anyone know? How many even care? Humans are obviously capable of causing mass extinctions, wholesale ecosystem destruction, and planetary devastation; but only through the application of technology, and only first by converting massive quantities of earthly matter into the energy required for its perpetuation. We can’t help but wonder: how will this devastating trajectory end when those in control—and those who follow—see the Earth not as home, but as a collection of raw materials to exploit and capitalize on? Is there a link between the prevalent fear of death—and accompanying desire for transcendence—and this consumptive linear existence where we discard and forget our material wastes because we are incapable of reintegrating them into a symbiotic cycle of life?

We wish it weren’t so damned hard for folks to imagine an intimate, sensual awareness of the human cycles so deeply entwined with the cycles of every other life form. Yes, destruction, death, even extinction is part of all healthy cycles; but when cause and effect are experienced directly, surely our instincts for survival would prevent us from doing what we know will harm us, maybe even destroy us.

If a sustainable human world is possible, we suspect it will be found in the rhythms and cycles of the places inside each of us, in the life our bands and tribes create and learn from, and by becoming aware of the never ending, chaotic interconnected cycles that exist in every moment and at every place on the Earth we call home. This is the stuff of our dreams, of our rage, and of our endless battle with the civilized world that is energized to deny us the possibility. How much more analysis, discussion, contemplation, and argumentation will you need before dancing with us around the pylons?

—the mosh@terran hacker corp

**Note:** The authors have included an extended bibliography available on the web at: [www.greenanarchy.org](http://www.greenanarchy.org)

# The Garden of Peculiarities: Fragment 38, by Jesús Sepúlveda

Technological appliances seem neutral. But in reality they are not because they have a purpose. In effect, if they are used, they make an indelible impact on consciousness. Thus, they also make the user dependent: dominated, cretinized, infantilized, and tied to the stake of alienation. However, if appliances are not used, they deteriorate, rust, are infested with ants, or otherwise simply disappear from consciousness. In a similar sense, all technological artifacts divide humans into users and non-users. Those who advocate their use will not hesitate to use their technological weapons of destruction and war in order to dominate those who have no contact with technology. That is how it has been, and that is how it is now.

Technology also divides through its domesticating effect. People work in order to buy electronic appliances or other articles that promote technology, or simply to have access to the services offered by technology that generally promise entertainment or comfort, as well as increased capacity to perform certain actions (to fly, for example, from one continent to another, to paste documents on a word processor, to use a video camera to record daily events with or to document police brutality in order to denounce it). Technology mediates human relations. It drives to insanity, isolates or connects, giving a common cultural reference to many people who talk, live and communicate by and through technological culture. In this way, reality and the world homogenize themselves in accordance with the different programs of the standardizing agenda. This uniformity is reinforced by the clear-cutting of forests, the construction of malls, racial profiling, and so on and so forth. Technology intervenes in all of these processes, which would not be possible without the accelerated destruction of the environment. This seems inarguable: technology is an apparatus one uses, throws away, forgets or never has access to. Technology alienates. Technology consumes and mediates human life. But technology is also a form of approximation of reality filtered by a functional mental module that arises in ideology. This is technological reason.

The sieve that separates the subject from its surroundings and bursts the cocoon of consciousness constructs human rationality. The stagnation of reason in its instrumental practices develops the technological filter. And this petrifies consciousness. Consciousness has an immediate effect that affects other consciousnesses, producing a general or social consciousness. In this way, there are no isolated consciousnesses, because when one interacts with another, the consciousness of both is modified, altering, at the same time, global consciousness.

Technological reason has made consciousness begin to standardize itself, standardizing everything simultaneously. In order to self-peculiarize—and also peculiarize everything—and to create a better understanding of totality and the self, it is necessary to steer consciousness toward aesthetic reason. In an aesthetic reality, all the possibilities of the imagination would open, and social consciousness would be created in a way that is distinct from the blind and bewildering way it is stimulated by mass society. This would lead to the re-establishment of social relationships by way of the logical and analogical reasoning that already exists in every peculiarity of nature. In order to do so, it is fundamental that we give loose rein to our being and let it express itself in the perennial present as a simple aesthetic expression. Every peculiarity shines with its own light in its meeting with every other being that connects with all and with life.

As our regular readers know, the *Garden of Peculiarities* is a poetic anti-civilization collection of 47 vignettes originally written in Spanish by Jesús Sepúlveda. Over the past few years *Green Anarchy*

has regularly printed one fragment per issue. We are happy to announce that this provocative book has finally been published in English as a 108-page title from Feral House. We hope to carry it soon, but in the meantime, you can order it for \$12 from the publisher. **Available from Feral House, PO BOX 39910, Los Angeles, CA 90039.**

# Anarchist Resistance from Around the World (but mostly Greece)

How many drops must gather to the skies  
Before the cloud-burst comes, we may not know;  
How hot the fires in under hells must glow  
Ere the volcano's scalding lavas rise,  
Can none say; but all wot the hour is sure!  
Who dreams of vengeance has but to endure!  
He may not say how many blows must fall,  
How many lives be broken on the wheel,  
How many corpses stiffen 'neath the pall,  
How many martyrs fix the blood-red seal;  
But certain is the harvest time of Hate!  
And when weak moans, by an indignant world  
Re-echoed, to a throne are backward hurled,  
Who listens, hears the mutterings of Fate!

–Voltaire de Cleyre,

*Ut Sementem Feceris, Ita Metes*

(To the Czar, on a woman, a political prisoner, being flogged to death)

## **September 18, Athens, Greece: Anarchists Disrupt Neo-Nazi Festival**

Riots broke out in the student quarter of Central Athens in response to a neo-fascist rally named Euro Fest 2005, which drew right wing extremists from all parts of Europe to central Greece. When hundreds of anarchists arrived they threw petrol bombs and stones at the police, who then used tear gas. The rampaging youths continued by setting fire to trash cans, attacking parked cars and smashing a shop window. The anarchists were disrupting a gathering of 150 people from the group Golden Dawn, an ultra right-wing party that regularly distributes racist newspapers, assembled to protest Turkey entering the European Union. Its members listened to a speech from Roberto Fiore, the head of a neo-Fascist party in Italy. They also carried flags bearing resemblance to the Nazi swastika, under which they gave the Nazi salute.

## **November 11, San Francisco Bay Area: Anarchists and Muslims Shut Down Colin Powell Speaking Event**

A small riot erupted on De Anza community college campus in the South Bay in response to a speech by Colin Powell. The speech was effectively stopped minutes after beginning, Powell was evacuated, and yuppie audience members were forced to stay inside the Flint Center for two extra hours due to the “violent protests outside.” A crowd of 300 people, largely comprised of Muslims and anarchists, ran around the campus causing havoc for three hours. They charged police lines multiple times attempting to break into the Flint Center. Building entrances and streets where audience members’ cars were coming through were blocked. The Flint Center’s fire alarm was also pulled—throwing people inside into a panic. Many people were throwing rocks, bricks, and eggs at pigs and property for almost two hours. In one heated situation, people charged police lines, pushed the pigs to the ground, and tore down the police barricade in front of a side entrance, which was then attacked. People began jumping up and down on cop cars, and smashing their windows.

### **November 10-11, Greece: Anarchists In Solidarity With French Riots**

On November 10, anarchists threw stones and paint at the French Institute building in the northern port of Salonika and on November 11, smashed windows at the French Institute building in Athens in sympathy with rioters in France.

### **November 13, Athens, Greece:**

Arsonists threw gasoline bombs at two car dealerships in central Athens overnight, burning 13 vehicles and causing damage to ten others. No arrests or injuries were reported, but anarchists are suspected.

### **November 13, Thessaloniki, Greece:**

A group of individuals threw Molotov cocktails at seven parked cars belonging to a Renault dealership. At nearly the same time, an improvised incendiary device consisting of four gas canisters and one plastic container of flammable liquid exploded outside a supermarket.

### **November 14, Athens, Greece:**

Surveillance Cameras Attacked About 50 anarchists destroyed two surveillance cameras close to the Panteion University of Athens. Traffic was held up thanks to a banner reading "sabotage the systems of social control", while at the same time comrades were setting the camera control boxes on fire. The same cameras had been destroyed last January, but were replaced during the summer.

### **November 16, Athens, Greece:**

A group of anarchists attacked an occupied unmarked police van parked outside the chemistry department at Athens University. The cop inside managed to escape the van, which was set on fire and totally destroyed.

### **November 17, Greece: Some Traditions Just Feel Right**

Despite rain, more than 6,000 marched from the Polytechnic University to the U.S. Embassy to commemorate the end of the U.S. backed 7-year military dictatorship that collapsed amid widespread unrest in November 1974. Anarchists took action in solidarity with rioters in France and in honor of Michalis Kaltezas, the student radical murdered by police in 1985. A French supermarket in Thessaloniki was burned down and the French Embassy was attacked with paint bombs. In Athens, anarchists rampaged through the city, chasing down and beating cops. One cop car and a police minibus were burned.

### **November 18, Peristeri, Greece: Bombs Explode At American Car Dealership**

Four improvised incendiary devices exploded at an American brand car dealership in the Athens suburb of Peristeri. Two of the devices were placed underneath SUVs, subsequently destroying the vehicles. A third vehicle, parked near the SUVs, was also damaged. The other devices were placed next to an electrical generator. An unidentified caller later phoned the Greek newspaper *Eleftherotypia* and claimed responsibility for the attack, claiming the attack was an act of solidarity towards Michalis Kaltezas, an anarchist who was killed in a police shooting in 1985. This incident occurred on the 20th Anniversary of Kaltezas' death. The caller also stated that the dealership was attacked as a symbol of consumerism and implied the anarchist movement will continue.

### **November 19, Athens, Greece:**

A group of approximately 15 individuals attacked the branch offices of three Greek banks in the Monastiraki section of downtown Athens. The individuals smashed the windows of the banks and threw Molotov cocktails inside causing significant damage. An unidentified caller phoned *Eleftherotypia* and claimed responsibility for the attack vowing that "the struggle continues." Another group of approximately 30 anarchists attacked the offices of a local Greek organization with Molotov cocktails. The group threw a total of nine Molotov cocktails then fled toward the Exarchia section of Athens known as an anarchist haven.

### **November 20, Athens, Greece: Attack On Fascist Youth Met With Gunfire**

Some 30 people attacked a building that houses a local ultra-right youth organization in central Athens, causing minor material damage, but were shot at with semiautomatic hunting rifles by someone unidentified, with two men slightly injured. Wearing crash helmets and hoods, anarchists threw Molotov

cocktails and rocks at the office building. Since the beginning of November, a spate of attacks have been launched with homemade bombs or firebombs by local anarchists, who usually flee away with motorcycles. The Greek police, who have been boasting of obtaining precious security experience from last year's Athens Olympic Games, have not found any clues about the attackers.

**November 23, Athens, Greece:**

Anarchists torched four cars outside the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and slightly injured a policeman in the clashes that followed. Police said that a small group of anarchists threw petrol bombs at the parked vehicles and then threw objects at riot police. The youths occupied the building for days in protest against the police murder of an anarchist in Thessaloniki who, the cops claim, had health problems.

**December 6, Casper, WY: Anarchists Paint the Town**

Casper pigs are looking for information connected with more than two dozen graffiti found on buildings and vehicles in recent weeks. Sgt. Brad Wnuk said there are indications that "younger people" might be responsible for the vandalism. The graffiti has been spray-painted in different colors, and has contained various words: "reapers," "the pirate" and "anarchist," along with the letter 'A' inside a circle. Schools, businesses and three police cars have been painted in what Wnuk said has been a string of activity reported "pretty much across town." Wnuk said he is not aware of the significance of the graffiti. "I wouldn't say they are gang symbols," Wnuk said.

**December 16, Athens and 'Salonika:**

Greek authorities are reporting 15 cars burned overnight at three Italian automobile dealerships in Athens and two bombs set off outside bank offices in the northern city of 'Salonika, attributing the attacks to anarchist groups, noting an increase in their activity in recent weeks. They say cars were destroyed at three Fiat dealerships and among vehicles parked nearby. One of the parked vehicles was on the property of the Greek Orthodox Church. In 'Salonika, attackers threw gas canisters at two offices of Eurobank, damaging their entrances. No injuries were reported in those incidents. Earlier, about 20 youths attacked two cops, getting away with a handgun.

**December 18, Barcelona, Spain: Rioting Against New Civic Behavior Law**

The demonstration by the so-called "Victims of Civic Behavior," in opposition to the law supported by the Catalan socialists and ERC regulating annoying misbehavior in public places, led to rioting in the Raval district. The demonstration consisted of between 1000 and 5000 persons, mostly radical punks, squatters, and anarchists. After the march, two different groups of several hundred people marched to the Placa dels Angels, where they painted graffiti on the sides of the Barcelona Contemporary Art Museum and threw stones at the Catalan Socialist Party headquarters in that same square. They then forced passengers off a neighborhood minibus, which they covered with graffiti, and cornered two regional cops, forcing them to flee while leaving their motorbikes behind. The motorbikes were then destroyed. The police reformed and charged the demonstrators. No arrests were made. City government sources said, "The demonstrators' attitude shows the need for a municipal ordinance, since those who call themselves victims are precisely the very first to do damage." The demonstration included a group of skateboarders and another group of representatives of a prostitutes' collective.

**January 2, Athens, Greece: Anarchist Group Claims Two Explosions**

A group not known to police claimed responsibility for two early morning arson attacks – on a Finnish diplomat's car and an office of the ruling New Democracy party – in which nobody was injured. A man claiming to be from a group called "Anti-State Justice" notified an Athens television station that the organization had conducted the attacks, which resulted in damage to buildings and several cars. The first attack took place in Mets, near the city center, when a gas canister device exploded under an apartment block where seven cars, including the diplomat's, were burnt. Finland's ambassador to Greece, Ole Norrback, said he believed the blast which hit the diplomat's car was not targeting Finland or its representatives, "but was rather a coincidence." Just over an hour later, a similar homemade device went off outside the entrance to an ND office in Kypseli, near central Athens. The party office was housed in the ground floor of an apartment block but none of the homes in the building was affected

by the fire that broke out. The group said the attacks were in support of three suspected anarchists who were arrested in July on suspicion of having attacked cops and stolen their equipment (see *Green Anarchy #21* for details).

#### **January 4, Istanbul: Attack On Bank and Civilization**

A group of anarchists destroyed an ATM in what they claimed to be an attack against the “capitalist money civilization”. They spray-painted the walls near the bank writing “No Compromise!”, “Anarchy” and “Insurrection Against Civilization”. In a communique, they stated that they’ll be preparing for the next attack against civilization. One can only wish them luck!

#### **Anarchist Political Prisoners:**

Bill Dunne #10916-086, Box 019001, Atwater, CA 95301. Anti-authoritarian sentenced to 90 years for the attempted liberation of a prisoner in 1979.

Ojore N. Lutalo #59860, PO 861, SBI #901548, Trenton, NJ 08625. Anarchist and black liberation soldier serving time for revolutionary clandestine activities.

Mike Rusniak DOC K88887, Dixon CC, 2600 Brinton, PO Box 99, Dixon, IL 61021. Serving time for stealing a police car, and other acts of anti-government property-destruction.

Rodney Wade #38058, S.I.C.I., ND-BL-24, P.O.Box 8509, Boise, ID, 83707. Ecological activist serving time for self-defense against a racist attack.

Robert Thaxton #12112716, (aka Rob Los Ricos) MCCF, 4005 Aumsville Hwy, Salem, OR 97301. Anarchist sentenced to over seven years in prison for throwing a rock at a cop at a June 18, 1999 Reclaim the Streets protest in Eugene.

Brian McCarvill #11037967, OSP, 2605 State St, Salem, OR 97310. Became politically active while serving a 39-year sentence on bogus charges, he has been continually harassed after filing a lawsuit against the Oregon Dept. of Corrections.

Jerome W. Bey #37479, SCCC (1-B-224), 255 West Hwy 32, Licking, MO 65102. Social prisoner and founder of the anarcho-syndicalist Missouri Prison Labor Union.

#### **Anarchist Black Cross Network**

[www.anarchistblackcross.org](http://www.anarchistblackcross.org)



# Technology and Class Struggle, by Wolfi Landstreicher

The developments in technology over the past sixty years – the nuclear industry, cybernetics and related information techniques, biotechnology and genetic engineering – have produced fundamental changes in the social terrain. The methods of exploitation and domination have changed, and for this reason old ideas about the nature of class and class struggle are not adequate for understanding the present situation. The workerism of the marxists and syndicalists can no longer even be imagined to offer anything useful in developing a revolutionary practice. But simply rejecting the concept of class is not a useful response to this situation either, because in so doing one loses an essential tool for understanding the present reality and how to attack it.

Exploitation not only continues, but has intensified sharply in the wake of the new technology. Cybernetics has permitted the decentralization of production, spreading small units of production across the social terrain. Automation has drastically reduced the number of production workers necessary for any particular manufacturing process. Cybernetics further creates methods for grabbing immediate profit seemingly without producing anything real, thus allowing capital to expand itself with minimal labor costs.

Furthermore, the new technology demands a specialized knowledge that is not available for most people. This knowledge has come to be the real wealth of the ruling class in the present era. Under the old industrial system, one could look at class struggle as the struggle between workers and owners over the means of production. This no longer makes sense. As the new technology advances, the exploited find themselves driven into increasingly precarious positions. The old life-long skilled factory position has been replaced by day labor, service sector jobs, temporary work, unemployment, the black market, illegality, homelessness and prison. This precariousness guarantees that the wall created by the new technology between the exploiters and the exploited remains unbreachable.

But the nature of the technology itself places it beyond the reach of the exploited. Earlier industrial development had as its primary focus the invention of techniques for the mass manufacturing of standardized goods at low cost for high profit. These new technological developments are not so much aimed at the manufacturing of goods as at the development of means for increasingly thorough and widespread social control and for freeing profit as much as possible from production. The nuclear industry requires not only specialized knowledge, but also high levels of security that place its development squarely under the control of the state and lead to a military structuring in keeping with its extreme usefulness to the military. Cybernetic technology's ability to process, record, gather and send information nearly instantaneously serves the needs of the state to document and monitor its subjects as well as its need to reduce the real knowledge of those it rules to bits of information – data – hoping, thus, to reduce the real capabilities for understanding of the exploited. Biotechnology gives the state and capital control over the most fundamental processes of life itself – allowing them to decide what sort of plants, animals and – in time – even human beings can exist.

Because these technologies require specialized knowledge and are developed for the purpose of increasing the control of the masters over the rest of humanity even in our daily lives, the exploited class can now best be understood as those excluded from this specialized knowledge and thus from real participation in the functioning of power. The master class is thus made up of those included in participation in the functioning of power and the real use of the specialized technological knowledge. Of course these are processes in course, and the borderlines between the included and excluded can, in some cases, be

elusive as increasing numbers of people are proletarianized — losing whatever decision-making power over their own conditions of existence they may have had.

It is important to point out that although these new technologies are intended to give the masters control over the excluded and over the material wealth of the earth, they are themselves beyond any human being's control. Their vastness and the specialization they require combine with the unpredictability of the materials they act upon—atomic and sub-atomic particles, light waves, genes and chromosomes, etc. — to guarantee that no single human being can actually understand completely how they work. This adds a technological aspect to the already existing economic precariousness that most of us suffer from. However, this threat of technological disaster beyond any one's control also serves power in controlling the exploited—the fear of more Chernobyls, genetically engineered monsters or escaped laboratory-made diseases and the like, move people to accept the rule of so-called experts who have proven their own limits over and over again. Furthermore, the state—that is responsible for every one of these technological developments through its military — is able to present itself as a check against rampant corporate “abuse” of this technology. So this monstrous, lumbering, uncontrollable juggernaut serves the exploiters very well in maintaining their control over the rest of the population. And what need have they to worry about the possible disasters when their wealth and power has most certainly provided them with contingency plans for their own protection?

Thus, the new technology and the new conditions of exclusion and precariousness it imposes on the exploited undermine the old dream of expropriation of the means of production. This technology — controlling and out of control—cannot serve any truly human purpose and has no place in the development of a world of individuals free to create their lives as they desire. So the illusory utopias of the syndicalists and marxists are of no use to us now. But were they ever? The new technological developments specifically center around control, but all industrial development has taken the necessity of controlling the exploited into account. The factory was created in order to bring producers under one roof to better regulate their activities; the production line mechanized this regulation; every new technological advance in the workings of the factory brought the time and motions of the worker further under control. Thus, the idea that workers could liberate themselves by taking over the means of production has always been a delusion. It was an understandable delusion when technological processes had the manufacture of goods as their primary aim. Now that their primary aim is so clearly social control, the nature of our real struggle should be clear: the destruction of all systems of control—thus of the state, capital and their technological system, the end of our proletarianized condition and the creation of ourselves as free individuals capable of determining how we will live ourselves. Against this technology our best weapon is that which the exploited have used since the beginning of the industrial era: **sabotage**.

# The Dream: The First and Only Episode

Unreal, surrealistic, utopian, in any case it is a dream. In the universe of dreams nothing is codified, preprogrammed or placed in rational order. Will they remain dreams or will these dreams become reality? We trust the infinite possibilities of chance.

In a certain metropolis, there were thousands of machines, huge colossi of the mechanical and electrical facilities. Each particular machine had a special function. One produced toothbrushes, another paper with which to wipe one's ass, the next produced polyester chairs. All of these machines produced 20, 50, 100 times as much as was actually necessary for the inhabitants of the metropolis.

Where the hell this excess production went, no one knew. Dubious figures known by the name "Worker" settled around this technological monster. They also had a special role in production. They were responsible for assuring that the entire technological apparatus functioned and had to monitor the end product. This was the universe of the factory. In this universe, the workers used up eight hours of their wretched and insipid existence each day. But the workers were sick. They suffered from a strange disease that was particularly dangerous, even deadly. The disease in question was the morbid syndrome, *Paroxysmus Affection Productionismus*. The medical specialists couldn't diagnose the source. Some believed it was a question of an occupational deformation; others thought that it was a spiritual deformation. Indeed, the workers did not wish to leave their machines after eight hours of work, even though their bosses ordered them to go home. The workers protested in various ways. Some chained themselves to their machines, others suffered attacks of depression, still others threatened to kill themselves if they were not allowed to keep working. Often the bosses had to call the guardians of order to make the work hungry workers leave the factories.

The PAP syndrome complicated the lives of the workers in strange ways. The most frequent symptom of the disease was that the worker had a compulsion to identify with the products they produced. Those who operated the machines that made toothbrushes were convinced that they were toothbrushes. Others identified with toilet paper and continually tried to lick the asses of their bosses clean while they were in the factory. Workers competed with each other to produce more. Hostility spread like wild fire, finally becoming a harsh war of competition.

There was only one exception, in perpetual conflict with the workers: it was the unemployed, everyone who, out of a lack of enthusiasm or due to circumstances beyond their control, had no work. The dimensions of the struggle were appalling: workers sold heroin to the unemployed in an attempt to exterminate them. In return, the unemployed set fire to the workers' cars so that they could not drive to and from the work place.

One night, however, a large black cloud descended upon the metropolis and the people stayed in their apartments, because they could see nothing outside. The next day the thick fog was still there and the desperate workers did not know how they would get to their jobs. A few stubbornly tried to go on the street, but as fate would have it, they ran face first into the electric poles on the street corners. Thickheaded workers ran their cars into trees. There were countless accidents, injuries and deaths that day. The frightened people barricaded themselves in their apartments. Forced to stay home, they began to enjoy the small pleasures of life without the compulsion of work. The people became happier and laughed; they talked with each other and helped each other out. Something new and wonderful happened to the people. They became more and more human and less and less workers. Gradually the addiction to work disappeared.

Finally the huge black cloud disappeared and the factories opened their doors again. But nobody returned. The days passed by, but not a trace of the workers. The bosses were shaken and depressed

as they saw their unproductive machines and began to kill themselves one after another. Detox centers were built for workers, and the most stubborn work addicts who tried to return to their machines and produce had their hands sewn into their pockets.

With such good will all the workers were healthy again. The unemployed were no longer a threat to anyone and ceased to be treated as outsiders. The bosses and capitalists who had survived the suicide phenomenon took their place. The factories were burnt down, and with them, the banks, the malls, the official press, all the political and social institutions that had guaranteed the exploitation of some people by others.

This is the only new society worth conceiving.

To hell with work and exploitation...

—“L’ Argonauta”

# Anti-Capitalist and Anti-State Activities

“The ruling ideas of a time, wrote the great German sage, are the ideas of the ruling class. So it is with our time. The American ruling class indulges itself in the phantasm of Empire, in an American Raj that stretches across the globe, whose jewels are the military bases and whose emblems are the invisible hands of its global corporations.”  
–Vijay Prashad, *The Phantasm Of Empire* (2003)

## **November 4, Mar Del Plata, Argentina: Free Trade Militantly Challenged**

World leaders gathered for the Summit of the Americas to plan the largest free trade zone in the world—extending from Canada to Chile. Over a thousand demonstrators voiced their opinion by refusing to stay within the confines of the peaceful protest led by President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela (whose pigs are well-versed in attacking anti-capitalist resisters). Banks and corporate stores were smashed and set on fire as rioters tossed firebombs and stones at the cops. Mortars were shot at barricades as police fired tear gas and arrested dozens. Businesses were also attacked in Buenos Aires, where the previous days leading up to the summit were marked with bomb attacks, looting, a train and station burning, cop cars set ablaze, and government workers attacking the city hall of Avellanda and burning police cars. Other attacks occurred in the cities of Rosario Neuquen and Mendoza. In neighboring Uruguay, anarchists hurled paint bombs and rocks at state and capitalist targets.

## **November 8, Zimbabwe: Action Against Poverty**

The Zimbabwe political and utility infrastructure is crumbling with electricity and water supplies failing, basic transportation the privilege of the few, inflation out of control, and poverty reaching as much as 80% of the population. Popular agitation is mounting in response to the repressions that logically follow such a collapse. At least 116 demonstrators were arrested in Harare and another 36 in Mutare for staging “illegal” demonstrations called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions as part of its “action against poverty”. The government fears an urban-based popular insurrection. The country’s Central Intelligence Organisation engineered mass demolitions and evictions earlier this year to forestall a possible “Ukrainian-style Orange revolution”. Arrests continued on November 9 when armed police grabbed six student leaders at the University of Zimbabwe for urging a march on the Ministry of Education. Using the familiar strategy of liberal and progressive political opportunists, President Robert Mugabe uses left-wing, anti-imperialist rhetoric while his pigs enforce the neoliberal agenda that requires maintaining ransom payments to the International Monetary Fund.

## **November 15, Seoul, South Korea: Farmers vs Pigs**

Ten thousand South Koreans—mostly farmers—clashed with 20,000 cops in reaction to a bill designed to open up the country’s rice market to imports. The revolt began on the eve of the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit in the port city of Pusan. Forty farmers were arrested after fierce fighting where protesters drove back ranks of riot police in full combat gear as they marched towards the national assembly. The farmers, many wielding steel pipes and bamboo sticks, were stopped just short of the assembly and entered into a tense standoff with police, who used water cannon to subdue the farmers and break up the protest. Initial reports have 70 farmers and 10 pigs injured sufficiently to be taken to hospital after the bloody clash. South Korea’s vocal farmers frequently take to the streets to stage demonstrations and also swing votes in some key rural constituencies. The protesters are also planning on traveling to Hong Kong for next month’s meeting of global trade ministers.

## **November 23, Denpasar, Bali: Unrest in Paradise**

Two machete-wielding intruders bypassed security guards to enter the apartment of Australian manager, Julie McNally. The masked individuals, who entered her bedroom through a window, attacked, trashed the apartment, and left. McNally required a liter of blood and up to 100 stitches but fortunately for her, hundreds of people from a healing seminar she had attended over the weekend were meditating for her speedy recovery.

There has been a spate of antigovernment violence in Bali: in early December, unidentified men strafed a building owned by the family of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo in Makati City. Hours later, three bombs exploded in Quezon City, Parañaque, and Caloocan City, damaging a van owned by a son of Representative Ronaldo Puno, a sports utility vehicle belonging to the owner of Rounce Printing Corporation, and another SUV parked in front of Ernest Printing.

This latest set of attacks comes just weeks after the Indonesian armed forces (TNI) announced the reactivation of its territorial command network at the village level to “assist” local communities and police to “fight terrorism”. The village-level military intelligence units headed by noncommissioned officers (Babinsa) would not have arrest authority but would “tap information from people” according to TNI chief General Sutarto. Babinsa are also being reactivated to cooperate with local police in organizing neighborhood “security patrols”. On a more ominous note, strike force platoons have been set up in Central Java, with authorities clearly stating that combat troops were not just prepared to deal with terrorist acts but also for police backup for other “unspecified security” purposes.

#### **December 2, London, England: Squatters Resist Eviction**

Around 200 riot cops backed up local pigs who moved in on St Agnes Place, Kensington to evict the more than 350 squatters who had occupied the squat for thirty years. Some residents refused to leave and barricaded themselves inside, another threw a petrol bomb at the pigs. The area is scheduled for gentrification, with the demolition of existing structures and replaced with new housing units and a sports center.

#### **December 2, Manana, Bahrain: Rioters Light Up the Night**

Rioters burned cars and set off explosives with gas cylinders in the third night of unrest in the city. The island of Bahrain, off the northeast coast of Saudi Arabia is an important financial center and a playground for the elite. Among the 15 arrested were rebels between 13 and 15 years of age. The unemployed have been organizing protests against joblessness as well as against attacks by unidentified men believe to be armed security officials. Traffic was blocked with dumpsters blazing and when cops approached, the rebels threw Molotovs and stones, later taking refuge in a nearby village where they continued their attack. The night before, revelers torched two cop cars and damaged at least three private vehicles. Authorities fear these attacks were inspired by the Paris riots a month earlier. Colonel laa Al Musalam called the protests a campaign to incite unrest with the aim of striking terror with the public.

#### **December 3, Caracas, Venezuela: Oil Pipeline Attacked**

An explosion ripped through an oil pipeline connected to the country’s largest oil refinery. No one was injured in the blast linked to C-4 explosive devices. The pipeline carries 400,000 barrels of oil a day to the Amuay refinery. Repairs are expected to take at least 5 days. The state oil firm, Petroleos de Venezuela S.A., has been a target in the past for those trying to “destabilize the country” according to oil minister Rafael Ramirez. He is linking the latest blast to the vote scheduled for next week. Eleven people were arrested in Zulia for plotting to interrupt balloting while a large cache of weapons including C-4 and grenades, was reported seized in Guarico. No one has claimed responsibility for the act.

#### **Dec. 6, Hong Kong: At Least 20 Killed in Anti-Dam Protest**

An uprising in a small fishing village in Guangdong province on the China coast near Hong Kong brought in Chinese paramilitary cops who opened fire on the crowd. The demonstrators were protesting the construction of a new power plant. Villagers say as many as 20 people are dead in Dongzhou. The official story has pigs using deadly force only after “a few instigators” threatened them with spears and explosive detonators. But, trouble has been simmering for months. Last summer, protestors blocked the roads leading to the power plant, demanding compensation for the land the government seized and

for the fishing habitat villagers say has been ruined. This latest massacre occurred just 120 miles from Hong Kong, where thousands of delegates gathered for a World Trade Organization meeting.

Elsewhere in China, the state is setting up paramilitary forces to stop the increasing number and intensity of riots and “terror”. For example, in Hohhot, capital of north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, a special force composed of 240 pigs who have undergone special training, will also undertake work as security guards or patrols for “important occasions”. It’s the first of its kind in the region and are said to be armed with the most advanced regular and high-end weapons in the country.

#### **December 7, Malawi: Fire In the Bellies Lead to Action**

Two people have been wounded in southern Malawi after police opened fire on a crowd trying to force their way into a food depot to buy maize. Food shortages are rampant throughout much of Africa. Malawi is the worst hit of six countries in southern Africa who are all facing serious food shortages. Up to 5 million Malawians – nearly half the population – will need urgent food aid until the next harvest in April. People spend days and nights outside food depots waiting to buy maize and when it arrives crowds become uncontrollable according to authorities. There also have been a number of reports of food convoys being ambushed, so President Bingu wa Mutharika warned anyone planning to loot them that soldiers had orders to shoot.

#### **December 8, Santiago Chile:**

Masked demonstrators at the University of Chile fought with police for nearly 40 minutes using firebombs and stones. Leaflets, banners, and graffiti focused on the upcoming electoral spectacle. Slogans such as “Against the democracy of the rich – struggle in the streets!”, “Against the election of future exploiters!”, “Because we have nothing we will destroy everything!” ought to be considered crib notes for all anarchist-democrats.

#### **December 9, Wirral, UK: “Blue Hairs” Sabotage Development Schemes**

Petitioners backing a controversial development claim, they have faced sabotage and intimidation from the ‘blue rinse brigade’. The “New” New Brighton group (NNB) is set up to represent a ‘silent majority’ who back a proposed £70m regeneration scheme that includes building a supermarket on part of the resort’s marine lake, building a new marine lake, apartments on the seafront, a cinema, and open air swimming pool. “Petition forms have been stolen, defaced and torn up, and local shopkeepers who have displayed the petition have been subject to abusive and intimidatory behaviour” said NNB spokeswoman Lynne Palin.

#### **December 17, Abia Nigeria: Pipeline Vandalism Hits Shell Oil**

It is a convoluted set of stories that accompany the ongoing vandalism of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the Petroleum Pipeline Marketing Corporation (PPMC) pipelines transversing the bush paths and forests in the south and the desert-like paths of northern Nigeria. The pipelines are buried 12-feet into the underbelly of the earth from Port Harcourt, Rivers State to Kaduna, Kaduna State and on to other locales north. Vandals have been breaking open the pipelines for the past 6 years, presumably to sell the liquid in this country wracked with unemployment and poverty, according to official reports. Shell says that about 90 per cent of pipeline leaks in their operations in the Niger Delta occur as a result of third party “interference”.

A December 12 explosion at one break claimed the lives of at least four people, caused damage to economic crops and trees worth millions of naira, as well as an important stream. Many have fled their village for fear of an imminent bigger explosion. Thick black clouds of smoke with rays of fire still billowed towards the sky. The circumstances surrounding the explosion, and indeed all pipeline sabotage, are murky with locals pitted against cops and inspectors both who seem to have their hands in the underground “Black Gold” market.

It is alleged that pipeline cops schedule oil pickups at points where the pipeline has been severed, charging villagers an initial payment for the privilege of filling gerry cans for personal use and illegal sale. Officially, a standing order empowers this Mobile Police Force (Mopol), charged with guarding the pipelines, to shoot onsite any vandals caught at the pipeline. At least 50 youths have been killed as a result of this directive. Men are now taking the place of the youth in re-appropriating some of

the oil flowing through their lands. Pipeline inspectors are also suspected to be in cahoots with “gangs and powerful members of the society”, alerting “pipeline boys” as to the day and time of their schedule inspection. The cops let them pick up their allotment; unless their orders, schedules, and allotments were questioned or refused. In a spectacular case, the Mopol entered the home of the son they accused of causing the recent explosion, by lighting a match as a threat to the cops who tried to refuse him access to the gushing line, insisting it was not his day. The boy and three other youth were killed in the explosion. The pigs are alleged to have torched his family’s home in response.

As we go to press, a group calling itself the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta is holding an American, a Briton, a Bulgarian, and a Honduran hostage, threatening even more aggressive moves against oil workers and their families. Two recent attacks were focused on some of Shell’s roughly 1,000 oil wells and 80 pumping stations, causing a 10 percent drop in Nigeria’s 2.5 million barrels a day production. Shell has evacuated 330 employees. One of the four hostages read a list of the captors’ demands including local control of oil wealth, a \$1.5 billion payment by Shell to compensate for pollution, and the release from jail, an oil-region militia leader.

#### **December 30, Cairo Egypt: Riot Cops Brutally Break Three-Month Protest**

5,000 Egyptian riot cops forcefully broke up a three-month protest that had been staging outside UN offices in Cairo. Pigs initially used water cannons in a bid to disperse the refugees but advanced to sticks and shields. An ensuing stampede left 30 of the protesters injured, most of them elderly and young; 10 of them later died in the hospital. The injured were forced into dozens of buses lined up on one of the main thoroughfares in Cairo’s upscale neighborhood of Mohandessin. The protesters had been sleeping under the polluted Cairo sky for three months, fighting temperatures which have dipped well below 10 degrees Celsius covered only with plastic sheets, cardboard and blankets. A 21-year north-south civil war in Sudan displaced some four million people, while an ongoing conflict in the western region of Darfur has also forced scores to flee the country.



# Doin' It French Style — How do YOU like it?

**Straight and Fast?** For two weeks, French youth released pent-up rage following the October 27 deaths of two African teenagers and the serious injury to another in Clichy-sous-Bois, a suburb 10 miles outside of Paris. The youths were electrocuted while being pursued by local gendarmes who patrol ghetto hot spots, homes to the predominantly African and Arab immigrants who banded into small groups to burn vehicles and buildings, toss Molotovs, and attack pigs and fire personnel. Thousands of revelers grooved to their own raucous beat as the world watched the insurrection spread throughout the country, eventually slipping across the border into Belgium and Germany. At the climax of this inspiring uprising, 300 cities were under siege and a 12-day state of emergency invoked under a 1955 law originally passed to combat violence in Algeria during its war of independence from France.

**A Lingering Prelude?** The kindling was laid on October 19 when Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy declared a “war without mercy” on violence and crime in the enclaves of Paris’ immigrant population - numbering around 1.6 million - most who live in what has been described as “the enduring logic of colonial rule within post-colonial metropolitan France”(Silverstein/Tetreault). Most French citizens have long preferred to ignore the simmering stew of poverty, discrimination, and desperation in its 751 “Sensitive Urban Zones (SUZ)”. In what is often described as run-down, US-like slums and projects whose overcrowded high-rises were built in the 1940s and 50s, unemployment stands at nearly 20 percent - double the national average - and more than 30 percent among 21- to 29- year-olds. Household incomes are up to 75 percent below average. In 1999, Socialist Prime Minister Jospin had mobilized 13,000 riot police and 17,000 military gendarmes to augment uniformed and plainclothes pigs patrolling these zones, adding fuel to the fire. “They check our papers everywhere, all the time, for no reason,” complains one youth in Clichy who did not want to be identified. “And the checks are getting rougher and rougher.” Things started getting hot during Sarkozy’s October 25th visit to Argenteuil; attackers pelted him with stones and bottles as he described rebellious youth as “rabble”.

**A Variety of Positions?** Right-wing presidential candidate Sarkozy further stated the government would not allow “troublemakers, a bunch of hoodlums, think they can do whatever they want,” insisting that many of the suburbs need “industrial cleaning”. MP Jacques Myard said the violence was a failure of the French model of integration but that the government had been weak, saying that it had “accepted, step-by-step, that every night youths burn cars, destroy business and so on. Those guys will use the pretext of everything to riot, to demonstrate, to destroy”.

Addressing the escalating state repression and institutionalized racism, Ms. Bouzar, recently named one of Time magazine’s 50 European Heroes as a role model for those seeking to be good Muslims and good French citizens says “Those sorts of experiences delegitimize the state in young peoples’ eyes. I teach them that the state is for everybody, that it treats everybody the same,” he says. “But what credibility do I have when everything I say is contradicted by experience? The kids say it’s all lies.”

Stephane Gatignon, Sevrans’ Communist mayor blames unemployment, ghettoization, the lack of common culture, and the lack of goals. “And without goals, you can’t live.” Leader of the far-right National Front Party, Jean-Marie Le Pen, called the violence the result of uncontrolled immigration that constituted “a global atomic bomb”.

However, school caretaker, Mohammed Rezzoug provided a more intimate perspective. “This is not a political revolution or a Muslim revolution. There’s a lot of rage. Through this burning, they’re saying ‘I exist, I’m here.’”

**How about Cyber?** While much of the rioting appears to be spontaneous, some youth say they dodge authorities by splitting into small groups of 10-15 (with some as young as 12) using cell phones and text messaging to alert one another to the location of firefighters and cops. Some reports indicated the discontented were being encouraged to riot via “Skyblog”, a popular web logging site for young adults. Messages such as “burn the cops” as well as times and locations to congregate were posted before being shut down. The state was making their own use of the Internet; Sarkozy launched a campaign by buying search words from Google such as “riots” “burned cars” “violence” and “racaille” (scum, riff-raff, or rabble). When these were entered into the search box, a link in the upper right corner directed people to his political party’s web site and a petition to support his stance against the rioters.

**In the Cage and Wild?** On Friday night November 4th, 900 vehicles were torched across the country on the most intense day of the uprising thus far. 100 people were evacuated from two apartment blocks as burning cars in an underground lot threatened. The police—in riot gear and armed with rubber bullets and tear gas—were unable to stop the increasing violence because of its spontaneity and lack of clear leaders, according to officials. While rioting remained centered in the heavily militarized SUZ’s, rioters began to grab cars and scooters to take the battle to less-heavily fortified areas. From the rolling hills of Normandy 60 miles to the west, to south on the Mediterranean, the ruling class witnessed what generations of oppression has wrought. Cars were set alight in the cultural bastion of Avignon. In Strasbourg, 18 cars were burned in broad daylight. Even in quiet Acheres, on the edge of the St. Germain forest west of Paris, a nursery school and a dozen cars were torched. Residents there demanded the army be deployed, threatening to band together to protect *their* neighborhood.

On the 5th, upwards to 2000 marchers – Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims – donned their ‘colors’, the red, white, and blue of the French flag and flashed banners that read “No to violence”. They were not demonstrating in front of any state buildings to call off official violence, but before the crumbling cinder block towers in the hardest hit area, Aulnay-sous-Bois. A ban on public gatherings that could “provoke or encourage disorder” went into effect on Saturday the 12th. Forty towns, suburbs, and small cities had already imposed curfews on minors. The response? 374 cars torched – down from Friday night’s 502 – and 41 people arrested across the country. In Lyon, the 2nd most populous city, police fired tear gas into crowds of rock throwing youth, the first such clash in a major city. Illustrating the potential of insurrectionary playfulness, someone threw a bocce ball out of an upper floor window of a project, bopping one pig on the head with sufficient force to send him to the hospital. Interestingly, left-wing political groups and Communist-backed unions were permitted to go on with their demonstrations in Paris and Toulouse (where rioters set fire to a bus and pelted pigs with rocks and petrol bombs): a strong indication of their irrelevance.

Eventually, the rioting spread outside the borders to Belgium where 60 vehicles were burnt over the course of a weekend. Internet postings encouraged youths to attack downtown shops. Investigations were underway in Germany where cars were found on fire in the capital city of Berlin.

Riots, attacks on police stations, and car burnings have been part of French ghetto life for decades. In the summer of 1981, the Lyon suburb of Les Minguettes exploded in a series of violent confrontations when as many as 250 incidents occurred, often referred to as “rodeos” by participants. Groups of young men would steal a car, engage police in a chase, and then abandon and burn the vehicle. There are scores of examples to get turned on to, but this latest revolt – described as the worst civil unrest since the 1968 student revolts – has alerted a captive audience far and wide.

By November 8, one man had been killed, 120 police and firefighters injured, 1500 arrested with 17 sentenced, and 5,873 cars torched. The state of emergency, imposed for the first time in mainland France, was extended for three months.

**In the afterglow.** On December 10, Rennes, France: Hundreds of French youth again battled with pigs, smashed shop windows, and ignited trash cans after a planned rave was banned by officials. Two cops were injured and 30 youth detained in a repeat performance of last year’s rave was banned in the same college town.

You can write it, you can read it, you can watch on the screen.  
But it just ain't like DOIN' it, if you know what I mean.

**Riot Porn, Almost Like the Real Thing!@**

<strong>“Qu'est-ce qu'on attend”</strong>

From now on the street will not forgive  
We have nothing to lose for we have nothing  
In your place I would not sleep well  
The bourgeoisie should tremble, the gangstas are in town  
Not to party, but to burn the place down.

Where are our roots? Who are our models?  
You've burned the wings of a whole generation  
Shattered dreams, soiled the seed of hope.  
Oh! when I think about it  
It's time to think; it's time that France  
Deigns to take account of its crimes  
But in any event, the cup is full  
History teaches that our chances are nil  
So stop before it gets out of hand  
Or creates even more hatred  
Let's unite and incinerate the system  
But why, why are we waiting to set the fire?  
—Suprême NTM (1995)

# The Riot

At present there is no conscious debate concerning Mankind's finality. Mankind's goal, necessarily, is to come to an end. This is why the absence of any debate goes against this goal.

The debate about the end of humanity is the very content of history. As well, this debate alone is the criterion for what is historic and what is not. Today's lack of a debate is not only fortuitous, for human society is organized in the absence of debate, including the filling in of this real lack with the appearance of a debate. This is why those who fight this organization fight this lack. Today, this combat has been driven outside of consciousness. So completely has alienation invaded consciousness that consciousness appears to be a moment of alienation.

But while this phenomenon of history's absence becomes general in history, it cannot suppress history. On the contrary it is the debate about humanity which supersedes this phenomenon. This debate about humanity finds itself outside of consciousness, and against alienation. Alienation no doubt has invaded all mediation and all organization, but it cannot capture immediacy and spontaneity. Here is where the real debate about humanity, the world and their finality has found refuge and is concentrated. It is a practical debate where words once again become onomatopoeia and ideas become punches. But this rough, raw, savage negativity remains the only one present.

The riot is the only practical and public moment in which alienation is criticized as the organization of society, which blocks any debate about mankind's finality. Once it is organized, a riot is no longer a riot. It is the strength and weakness of that which constitutes the only tribune is for those who want to master humanity: this tribune is just a surge of life without consciousness. The riot is at present the only one of thought's activities which moves faster than alienation.

Riots are easy to recuperate, discredit or crush, except when and where they take place. In time's depths where we now find ourselves, each riot is like the awkward, angry scraping of a flint, but what results transforms coldness and obscurity into their opposite. Always too quickly swamped or stamped out, riots nonetheless are the living refusal of submission and alienation, a crowbar that opens horizons. And their limits are such that it is tempting to call them limitless. For limits like these, the key of consciousness has become rusty.

Roman plebeians' riots, peasant uprisings, or nineteenth century working class riots are very different from modern ones, contrary to what is generally assumed. It is their content which is different: a Roman senator, a feudal lord or even a nineteenth century wheeler-dealer prince could not have imagined what today reveals—that the richness of humanity has taken refuge in these poor revolts of the poor. The conditions which give rise to them are also different: they always menace the State in a world entirely divided into States; they are always urban in an entirely urbanized world. They are a battle for thought in a world where thought has freed itself from human grasp; when there are leaders, leaders are outflanked, where there are commodities, commodity value is destroyed. These actors are different from the past: they are anonymous. Contrary to what is generally assumed, there are no longer any manipulated riots. Potential manipulators have relinquished mastery of the world, and in leading them astray, they have lost mastery of the crowds. Whatever the number of participants, a modern riot is out of measure. Semi-literate, poor and unsatisfied, riot's enemies resemble potential rioters more than potential recuperators. But the reverse is also true: modern rioters are bursting with ideology, fear and satisfaction. And their separations, that this unique modern festival threatens to supersede, constitute their first police as well as an end of any form of police. Last of all, more than the fear they provoke it is the immensity of the shame of what they reveal which, unlike in the past, makes it impossible to attribute them to any party. This cover of silence discredits them as well.

A riot is something very short in time, it usually lasts a few hours, rarely a few days. A riot is very localized in space, it always takes place in a city often in just one neighborhood and often in a marginalized neighborhood. Today, rioters active in the world are only a tiny minority of the world. Separated from each other, even the account and motivations of their emotions have been relinquished to those who took no part in the riot, unless in combating them. Today it is hardly unheard of for rioters to put more faith in what they see on the news than in what their memory recalls. Almost always defeated in the streets (to the extent that many believe that the very fact of fighting is a victory, which at times contributes to their defeat), they are also defeated with respect to theorizing their beginning of a debate, thus abetting the liquidation of this debate.

Professional rioters, which are at times evoked during these liquidation campaigns, exist; but they are uniformed or plainclothes police and informers. No one else is paid to be present. Rioters are amateurs: no hierarchy, no specialists. And if you run into the same rioters in different riots, that means they are real amateurs.

The rioter risks his life. Anyone judging the riot without having participated in it only runs the risk of shame. At today's going rate for shame, there is no comparison between rioters and non-rioters when they express themselves. Courage and fear, which in each riot reach paroxysms that cinema and literature still attribute to wars between States, are always abstract outside the riot, allowing those absent—the observer, the enemy—to minimize and hush it up. But when courage and fear are liberated limitlessly, other violent emotions are freed as well. And to know which ones, when it is a question of riots and not of wars between States, it is necessary to have finished reading, and get on with it. There lies the beginning of the debate about the end of the debate.

The *Bibliothèque des Emeutes* will commit no other incitement to riot. In effect, since the riot is spontaneous, we find inciting it contradictory. Consciousness cannot incite unconsciousness. You don't go to a riot, you are in a riot. Today's practice of emotion, that is, taking the draining of emotions as the only limit, is either falsified as a spectacle or has fallen into modus operandi-less immediacy. The riot and the emotion of life are no longer premeditated, and this is wherein lies their poetry. On the other hand, inciting to riot is against the law in most States of the world. That constitutes one of their lesser contradictions: today they are a principal and perpetual incitement to riot, the truth-suffocater that makes it explode.

In itself, a riot is just an intense moment that is both weightless and profound. Its inherent goal is to spread. When a riot spreads from a neighborhood to a city, and from a city to every city in a State, from one day to the next and then to an entire week, from scorn to respect, and from ignorance to universal consciousness, this is what is known as an insurrection. An insurrection which overflows State borders, which takes the totality of its goal and reveals the ground of the human dispute, is a revolution. There is no known example of a revolution that did not start with a riot.

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# Any Number Can Play... Symptoms of the System's Meltdown

Kinda sad  
Kinda mad  
Ghetto child  
Thinkin' he's been had  
(in the back of his mind he's sayin'):  
"I didn't have to be here  
You didn't have to look for me  
When I was just a nuthin' child  
Why couldn't you just let me be?  
LET ME BE!  
LET ME BE!  
LET ME BE!"

–Curtis Mayfield, Little Child, Runnin' Wild

## **Salem, OR: Main Street Becomes Battleground**

An armed man set fire to two cop cars, dodged pigs in pursuit, opened fire on one cop and on several homes, finally crashing a pickup truck 30-feet into the Marion County Courthouse – right up next to those handy metal detectors. All this in one hour of an otherwise ordinary Saturday morning in middle America. Christopher Lee Miller then held authorities at bay in the courthouse, setting a fire and using his weapon again. Four hours later, a SWAT cop took him down, ending the standoff.

## **November 1, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait: Officers Attacked by Disgruntled Soldier**

An Army investigation team recommended a court-martial for Alberto Martinez who is accused of planting and detonating an anti-personnel mine in the window of the room used by Captain Esposito and Lieutenant Allen. Grenades were also used in the attack that killed both officers. One of the nine witnesses who testified in the two-day hearing states that Martinez told him twice that he was going to “frag” Espisito. “Frag.” is a term coined during the Vietnam War to describe the act of soldiers killing their “superior” officers, often with fragmentation mines.

## **November 5, Nairobi, Kenya: Pirate Attacks Spreading**

Two boats of pirates attacked a luxury cruise liner, The Seabourn, carrying mostly American and Australian passengers. The outlaws used guns, rocket launchers, and grenades in their attempt to stop the ship, en route from Egypt to Kenya. Several pirate groups operate along the 1880-mile coastline of Somalia: this attack took place about 70-miles off the coast, usually considered a safe distance. The Miami-based ship was able to maneuver away from the bandits. In October pirates hijacked the MT San Carlo, an oil tanker, on its way from the United Arab Emirates to South Africa. On November 23, the tanker and its 24-member Malta-based crew was released. It was not immediately clear whether a ransom was paid.

## **Nov 14, The Netherlands: Spreading the Rage**

Ten cars were destroyed and another 11 damaged in firebombing incidents in the Dutch port of Rotterdam and the town of Waalwijk. The attacks fueled speculation that the incidents were a spillover from the ongoing riots in France. Police made two arrests in the southern province of North Brabant, after four cars were burnt out in nighttime disturbances. Reports say masked youths shouted slogans

such as, “The war has started,” (in Arabic) as the culprits left the scene of the firebombing of cars in the Vreewijk and Hillesluis areas of Rotterdam South. Broken beer bottles used to make the firebombs littered the street. An unnamed eyewitness told a local paper that around 25 youths were involved. “They had balaclava helmets on and were running through the streets with knives and clubs.”

#### **November 28, East Berbice, Guyana:**

More than 1,000 anti-police protesters used burning cars and tires to block a section of the Corentyne Highway between Guyana’s capital of Georgetown and the neighboring country of Suriname. Demonstrators were able to create an autonomous zone free of police and government officials that included Tain, Port Mourant, Rose Hall, and other adjoining villages on the Corentyne. Residents took to the streets to call for the permanent removal of a police force they accuse of being responsible for a number of recent armed robberies. Government officials hoping to resolve the situation quickly were disappointed after protesters ran them off with stones and firebombs. Police returned in greater force the following day to disperse demonstrators using tear gas and rubber pellets, and dismantling the barricades with bulldozers.

#### **Throughout November, Baltimore, MD: Lights Out!**

People are sawing down 30-foot, 250-pound aluminum light poles all over the city, leaving the 120-volt live wires neatly tied up at the base. Over 130 poles have been taken; during the day and at night. In some cases people dress as utility workers and put out orange safety cones, completely fooling passing motorists. Poles have been taken from two lane roads and 6-lane highways. It will cost about \$156,000 to replace each unit. The cops in the country’s “most violent city” have no suspects, but as street lighting is one of the key components to “designing out crime,” replacing the poles and stopping the thefts are a priority. “People want well-lit areas when they’re walking and when they’re driving in the city,” according to Officer Nicole Monroe.

#### **December 2, Fort Worth Naval Air Station: Officers Shot!**

A disgruntled Navy soldier shot two officers and then turned the gun on himself. The gunman was depicted by official Navy spokesman Capt. Clay Sanford as a “disgruntled employee”. The gunman, an enlisted sailor, is reported to be in critical condition while the officers are believed to have “non-life-threatening injuries”. The base which houses nearly 8,000 Navy, Air Force, Marines and Texas Air National Guard was in lockdown after the shooting.

#### **December 8, Silver Spring, MD: Student Arrested in School Arsons**

Montgomery County fire investigators have arrested a 15-year-old student for setting fires in high school bathrooms. She’s been charged with several counts of arson, malicious burning, plus other charges and is being held at the Montgomery County Juvenile Detention Facility. The most recent blaze caused \$1,000 in damage to a second-floor bathroom, a minor blaze in a third-floor bathroom went unreported, but a fire later that afternoon caused \$2,000 in damage and led to the school being partially evacuated.

#### **December 14, Quebec, Canada: Cop Killed with Hunting Rifle**

Valérie Gignac, a 25 year-old Quebec pig, was shot by an “illegal” .338 caliber rifle. “You could put ten bullet vests [on] and [the bullets] could go through the ten vests,” said Gilles Lemieux of the Laval Police Brotherhood. Although a judge imposed a 10-year ban on suspect Francoise Pepin owning firearms in 1999, police found two weapons in his apartment; neither were among the weapons he was given an exemption to carry during hunting season. The .338 is “coming back in style” with more hunters using them for moose and other large game according to some reports. Pepin has been charged with first-degree murder in the death of Gignac.

#### **Fall-Winter 2005, Around the World: Strike While the Iron’s Hot!**

Is it us, or does it seem like strikes have been more prevalent lately? Around 18,000 Freetrend employees went on strike for higher wages. At the peak of the strike dozens of workers demolished glass windows, other enterprises, and stole products. Cops were called in to control the situation. The strike attracted the highest number of participating workers to date in Ho Chi Min City.

The three day New York public transportation strike got us a little excited until it was halted by capitulating union officials (what a surprise). A tube strike involving 4,000 workers threatened to put a

damper on New Years festivities in London. Also closing out the year, reporters at a Beijing newspaper known for covering sensitive topics walked off the job after an editor was removed this week amid efforts to tighten press controls in a country increasingly plagued by anti-capitalist violence. The opinion section of the paper was also told to suspend publication, but a spokesman for the state-controlled Beijing News denied there was any protest. "Everything here is normal." From the Chinese Cabinets Press office, "They must follow discipline and rules and regulations."

In October, Alberta meat packers, many of them Sudanese immigrants, staged wildcat strikes after cooling their heels for two months at the demand of union bosses. They staged the first walk-out in August 2004 after the firing of three coworkers, later 60 were fired for the illegal walkout. In July 2005, a strike was called with a 70-percent strike mandate, but a 60-day strike ban was instituted by the government. Workers tried to block entry to the plant despite the ban, but union officials suppressed the action. Finally in October, workers took matters into their own hands, walked off the job, and attacked the buses carrying scabs, breaking windows and flattening tires. Scabs have been retaliating and striking workers hospitalized.

As we go to press, an EU dockers' strike turned violent with pigs in Strasbourg spraying tear gas and water cannon to disperse the more than 6,000 workers who marched to the European Parliament in a mass protest against proposed free market reforms. Protesters threw firecrackers, stones and metal missiles, smashing windows and causing "considerable damage". Throughout Europe, strike actions disrupted work at major ports from Greece to Sweden. Among the main ports affected are Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Antwerp in Belgium, and Le Havre in France with commerce, repairs, and oil deliveries blocked. Greek, Danish, Swedish and Portuguese dockers also went on strike. Dock workers in the UK, Italy and Poland stayed at work but sent delegations to the rally in Strasbourg, where clashes with the police left 64 pigs hurt and caused hundreds of thousands of euros in damage to the Parliament building.

#### **December 28, Banglaore, India: Attack on Scientists**

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) was the target of an attack, with cops hunting for the "suspected terrorist(s)" who fired at scientists emerging out of an international conference on campus. Delhi-based retired Professor M. C. Puri, Professor Emeritus in the Mathematics Department of Delhi's Indian Institute of Technology, is dead and four others injured. The injured are Dr Vijay Chandru, a senior scientist of IISc and founder of the Indian-developed palm-computer, the Simputer; Dr. Pankaj Gupta of IIT; Vijay Patil, a lab assistant at the Dhanvanthri Kshetra, Cadilla Phamaceuticals Laboratory within the campus; and Dr. Sangeetha. Their condition is stated to be critical. Confusion continued to confront police on the type of vehicle used by terrorists, as the IISc campus is located in a busy locality. The Indian Institute of Science is a leading postgraduate college in India's technology hub of Bangalore.

The campus security guards, who fled soon after they heard gunshots, said that they could not see how many assailants there were. The assailant(s) stepped out of a car and started firing an automatic rifle. The pigs later recovered a Chinese made Type 56 military rifle, twelve empty cartridges, one empty magazine, five live magazines (one half-spent), two grenades, and one live hand-grenade, which they defused.

Meanwhile, pigs stepped up security for Karnataka Chief Minister Dharam Singh and a five-star hotel after media offices received a letter that warned of bomb explosions in the chief minister's official residence on New Year's Eve.

#### **December 30, Freemont, CA: Pack of Dogs Attack Pig**

Angry Chihuahuas attacked the cop delivering a teen home after a traffic stop. Upon arriving, the dogs escaped the teen's house and rushed the cop, who suffered minor injuries, including ankle bites.

#### **Throughout 2005: The Superhighway**

An Oregon-based man has pleaded guilty to using a computer worm to launch attacks against Internet auction site eBay. Anthony Scott Clark admitted to "intentionally damaging a protected computer," a crime for which he faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison plus a fine of up to twice any losses incurred.



Reportedly in July and August 2003, Clark and his accomplices infected around 20,000 computers with a worm, which in turn allowed them to direct the machines to eBay.com and other Web sites knocking them off-line. According to official sources, the damages are estimated to be huge, and a judge will decide his liability during his sentence hearing in April 2006.

In April of 2005, a hacker invaded Carnegie Mellon University computers and gained access to sensitive data, such as the Social Security Numbers of more than 5,000 applicants to the business school. Later, someone hacked into the web sites of arts groups sponsored by the university's Center for Arts Management and Technology. Carnegie Mellon is the internationally renowned leader in the field of cybersecurity.

Gary McKinnon was indicted on eight counts of computer-related crime in 14 states by a US federal grand jury for attacks in 2002. He's alleged to be the biggest military computer hacker of all time after breaking into high-security US military computers. He allegedly downloaded sensitive information, making the US Military District of Washington "inoperable," deleting about 1,300 user accounts and stealing 950 passwords. One count alleges that McKinnon, known as "Solo" online, obtained secrets which could have been "directly or indirectly useful to an enemy" of the United States.

#### **December 31, Tehran, Iran:**

Some 200 workers from the Miral glass factory raged in the streets south of Tehran in protest of their employers' refusal to pay their overdue salaries. The glass workers gathered outside the site of their factory near the Tehran-Saveh Highway saying that despite five to 25 years of service, many of the workers had not received their wages for the past 10 months. State Security Forces were called in when the road was blocked by the piles of burning tires set alight by the disgruntled workers.

#### **TN: Valley of the UnDamed**

A stone retaining wall around a huge mountain-top reservoir in the Ozark Mountains broke, releasing a 3.8 billion liter torrent of water that swept away at least two homes, several vehicles, and critically injured three. The breach opened up just after 5am at the hydroelectric plant run by St Louis-based AmerenUE. Within minutes the reservoir emptied, turning the surrounding area into a landscape of flattened trees and clay-covered grass as it headed back to the Black River. The cause of the collapse is under investigation by federal regulators and other authorities. While the reservoir sits near a seismic fault line, no earthquake was detected; rain was not believed to be a factor since little had fallen in the days leading up to the accident: further, the plant, including the reservoir, was inspected in August and found to be properly operated and maintained. The reservoir, built in 1963, was dug out of the top of Profit Mountain, with huge, sloping, 27m-high walls made from the stone removed from the peak.

Following the levee break and flooding in New Orleans, other states are taking a good look at the vulnerability of aging water-storage systems. For example, levees in California, many of which were built more than 100 years ago, are a critical and weak link in the state's massive water delivery system, according to officials. The California Delta shares a geography similar to the Mississippi Delta; both bounded by fragile levees that protect land that has subsided below sea level (e.g. Sacramento) and both are fed by large rivers. The previously sparsely populated California Delta is now being proposed for new building including tens of thousands of houses.

In June 2004, California got a small hint of how badly things could go when a single levee west of Stockton failed on a dry summer day when flood waters damaged 12,000 acres on the Jones Tract. Damages from that breach totaled more than \$100 million and water managers had to turn off pumps to prevent the water from being sucked from the San Francisco Bay into the water supply for 23 million Californians and 7 million acres of farmland.

#### **Iraq: Sabotage Blamed for Prolonged Power Outages**

Once again the national grid is the focus of acts of saboteurs targeting oil pipelines, power stations and pylons. "Many stations have ground to a halt because of lack of fuel," said Maan Kadhem, a senior Electricity Ministry official. As a result, he said, the ministry has failed to meet its target of producing 7,500 megawatts for the whole country. The amount is still much less than the country's actual needs of electricity estimated at 12,000 megawatts. Kadhem said the ministry had planned to allocate 29% of

total electricity output to Baghdad but it was almost impossible to make that available under current circumstances. Outages are now more frequent and prolonged in Baghdad—home to more than 5 million people—than under former leader Saddam Hussein’s regime.

**New Zealand: Merry Merry, Quite Contrary**

A group of 40 people dressed in Santa Claus outfits—many of them drunk—went on a rampage through Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city; robbing stores, assaulting security guards, and urinating from highway overpasses, police said. The rampage, dubbed Santarchy by local newspapers, began when the men, wearing ill-fitting Santa costumes, threw beer bottles and urinated on cars from an overpass, said Auckland Central Police spokesman Noreen Hegarty. She said the men then rushed through a central city park, overturning garbage containers, throwing bottles at passing cars and spraying graffiti on office buildings. One man climbed the mooring line of a cruise ship before being ordered down by the captain. Other Santas, objecting when the man was arrested, attacked security staff who were later treated by paramedics, Hegarty said. The remaining Santas entered another downtown convenience store and carried off beer and soft drinks. “They came in, said ‘Merry Christmas’ and then helped themselves,” store owner Changa Manakynda said. Two security guards were treated for cuts after being struck by beer bottles, Hegarty said. Three people, including the man who climbed on the cruise ship, were arrested and charged with drunkenness and disorderly behavior.

**Playtesting those burning desires.**

To these children, technology is something that turns arson into just another computer game.

To their teacher, technology is what separates *seeing* from *doing*. She lets them see whatever they want. So they’ll do what she wants.

Increasingly, however, images of destruction can’t obtain visions of the real thing. Maybe that explains the damage to property from fires started by schoolchildren—and others.

Humanism, secular or otherwise, has long since turned to ashes. Life requires evil to burn bright and hard. Nothing purifies the heart like extinguishing morality.

from *Cold Fury: Advertisements for Anarchy (1982-2005)*

# Prisoner Escapes and Uprisings

“I propose the outlaw as the anti-type, the anti-role. The outlaw conforms to no standard. She sifts through the ruins of our culture, weeding out the GMOs; grasping the real and leaving. The outlaw is completely out of the system; practicing the art of REFUSAL, finding ways to shake the prison to its core.” –Thomas Tripp

## **October 1, Columbus, OH:**

The Franklin County Sheriff’s Office was searching for a prisoner who escaped their custody while he was supposed to be assisting authorities in an undercover operation.

## **October 15, Mission, TX:**

Police say Leobardo Villarreal, one of two brothers indicted for shooting a federal undercover agent in May, was escaped from a hospital where he was taken for medical treatment. There, he overpowered two guards and escaped, running across a busy expressway to an SUV parked with its engine running and two children left alone inside. The owner of the vehicle returned and took Villarreal to the Mission area per his request, in her roomy, red *Jeep Liberty*.

## **November 4, Houston, TX:**

A death row inmate bluffed his way out of jail by flashing a fake ID and claiming he worked for the Texas Attorney General’s Office. Charles Thompson got past at least four employees of the Harris County Jail in no small part due to his demeanor. According to his lawyer, Thompson “is charming, affable, and articulate, and did not present himself as the desperate, ‘I’ll do anything’ type.”

## **November 5, Stirlingshire, Scotland:**

Police have launched a hunt for 17- year-old Gary O’Donnell, who was serving a four-and-a-half year sentence for assault. It is believed the teenager got away after posing as his identical twin John, who was due for release from the same cell block after serving a 60-day sentence for driving offenses. Gary presented himself when his brother’s name was called and officers, none the wiser, let him go. They were then obliged to free John since he had served his full term.

## **November 11, Yakima, WA:**

Nine inmates broke out of a maximum security area of the Yakima County Jail by breaking through the ceiling and descending four stories to an adjacent single-story building via a rope made from bed-sheets. Five were recaptured on the jail grounds, two apprehended the next day, tipped off by a snitch. One week later, the remaining two freedom-seekers were still at large. Four prisoners had used this scheme at the same jail in 1994.

## **November 14, Houston County, Iowa:**

Kenneth Dubroc Jr, was among a group of state prisoners cleaning up the parking lot at the Houston County Sheriff’s Office in Warner Robins, when he escaped in an unmarked police car left unlocked, keys inside. Unfortunately, a tipster alerted authorities to the fugitive’s hideout in a vacant house.

## **December 22, Kutaisi, West Georgia: Riot Continues**

On December 21, about a hundred convicts were transferred from an old prison to a new modernized one, intended for eight hundred. An enthusiastic protest immediately ensued, with relatives of the convicts insisting the riot was caused by the prisoners’ complaints about the terms of maintenance in the new prison. Authorities are attempting to suppress the resistance with help of truncheons whose blows can be heard from outside the prison. The administration’s seizing of cellular phones has also instigated violent resistance. Since the day of transfer, the convicts in the new building say water supplies and heating systems have been out of order.

## **December 28 Baghdad, Iraq: Attempted Escape Leaves 10 Dead**

A bloody melee erupted this morning after an inmate grabbed an officer's gun and began shooting, leaving as many as 10 people dead and a dozen wounded. Security officials said four guards, five prisoners and a translator were killed, with a US soldier amongst the wounded. A group of prisoners also attempted to escape in the ensuing chaos, but none managed to get out. However, a US military account of the events said the riot erupted when 16 prisoners attempted to escape by grabbing weapons from an armory.

# State Repression News

You are a “deviant” who has thereby become a real or potential threat to one or another tenant of the status quo. And as the histories of both the Bureau and American progressivism amply demonstrate, to the extent that you become effective at advocating and organizing your agenda, you will be targeted by the FBI for systematic undermining and discrediting, harassment, and – ultimately – outright elimination by counterintelligence operatives. The first task is to understand this unpleasant reality. –Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*

## **Editors Note:**

The past few months have been extremely depressing and disconcerting, with arrests, convictions, sentencing, subpoenaing, and harassment of activists, anarchists, ecological defenders, and rebels in general (not to mention snitching). The authorities have made many significant and comprehensive moves (casting very wide nets), and this appears to be only the beginning of a much larger offensive in an attempt to squash resistance. There is much to report, and much information to go through, so for this issue we have provided an extended section on “State Repression” (hopefully it will not be as needed in the future, but an uneasy trend seems to be developing). We will do the best we can to stay as current as possible, but keep in mind that the publishing procedure is a lengthy process, and items may be dated by the time you read this. We encourage people to do their own selfeducation on the current situations, how to support folks, and how to protect themselves.

## **Two Men Get Life Sentence For Prison Riot**

Bishopville, SC – Two men may spend the rest of their lives behind bars without the possibility of parole for their involvement in a 2003 prison uprising. Jurors convicted Tyrone Singletary, 25, and Jacob Lynch, 24, on two counts each of rioting, inciting a riot, assault on a correctional officer and concealing a weapon. Circuit Judge Thomas Cooper gave both men life in prison for taking a hostage. Each also received a (consecutive) 10-year sentence for rioting and concealing a weapon, a consecutive 5-year sentence for assault, and a concurrent sentence for inciting a riot. Defense attorneys Bryan Doby and Clifford Scott said their clients intend to appeal. The charges stem from a five-hour standoff in October 2003, at the Lee Correctional Institution, where both men were being held. Witnesses said Lynch and Singletary took over a unit with homemade knives and held two pigs hostage. Several inmates testified that the guards were singled out because they abused prisoners.

## **Earth First! Activists Convicted on All Counts in Mountain Lion Trial**

Arizona – Rod Coronado and Matt Crozier were convicted in early December of all 3 charges in the Sabino Canyon mountain lion trial. Coronado and Crozier will face sentencing on March 9. Coronado was arrested March 24, 2004 along with *Esquire* writer John H. Richardson in Sabino Canyon during an Arizona Game and Fish operation to remove mountain lions from the recreation area. Crozier was arrested by FBI agents 9 months later for allegedly also being in the canyon. Crozier and Coronado were each charged with one count of felony conspiracy to impede or injure a federal officer, one count of misdemeanor interference with or injury of a federal officer, and one count of misdemeanor depredation of federal property. Richardson, who was working on a story about Coronado, is being tried separately on just the misdemeanor interference charge. During the week-long trial, the prosecution called 15 witnesses including a wildlife biologist, a school cafeteria cashier, 3 FBI agents, a helicopter pilot, the government hunter, and several officers of the Forest Service and Arizona Game and Fish. Defense

attorney, Antonio Felix, argued that much of the prosecution's case relied on emotional appeals to the jury about the danger of mountain lions.

Another key to the government's case was John Richardson's audio notes, which Assistant U.S. District Attorney Wallace Kleindienst called a "smoking gun." An hour-long excerpt of the reporter's recordings was introduced as evidence after heated debate about its admissibility. The judge agreed with Kleindienst's contention that the tape should be considered "the utterances of a co-conspirator," and that using the media to sway public opinion was part of Earth First!'s criminal strategy. Coronado and Crozier could face 6-7 years in prison for the felony conviction. Assistant prosecution attorney Bev Anderson said after the trial "I know he wasn't tried here for being a violent anarchist. This trial wasn't about Rod Coronado being a terrorist, but he is one." An Earth First! spokesperson stated "while we may be reassessing our specific strategy in light of this conviction, our commitment to defending Arizona's wildlife with effective direct action will not change."

A support group has been set up for Rod and Matt. For more info check out: [www.azef.org](http://www.azef.org) or e-mail [sabthebastards@hotmail.com](mailto:sabthebastards@hotmail.com).

#### **Peter Young Could Face New Charges**

Watertown, South Dakota – State's Attorney Vince Foley announced he is attempting to file new charges against Peter Young in connection with a 1997 Animal Liberation Front raid on the Turbak Mink Ranch. The raid was part of string of actions that spanned three Midwestern states. One of the problems is that Peter already faced federal charges for those raids and pled guilty this past August. As part of a plea agreement he was sentenced to two years in federal prison and ordered to pay \$254,840 in restitution to the farmers (something he has vowed never to do.)

Foley admitted that there is a concern that South Dakota may not be able to prosecute Peter on the state charges of third degree burglary, intentional damage to property and animal enterprise trespass, because it could be considered "double jeopardy." There is also the challenge of convincing federal authorities to allow Peter to be extradited and transferred to South Dakota State authorities. He explained that South Dakota is filing these charges because it feels "that the federal charges don't fit the severity of [the crime.]" Approximately 8,000 mink were liberated from five separate farms, two of which closed permanently following the actions.

#### **Chris McIntosh Sentenced to Eight Years**

"The Earth is being terrorized by corporate greed," declared 23-year-old Chris McIntosh as he was sentenced on December 16, "The animals are being led to mechanized slaughter. I don't consider myself a terrorist. I just felt I had to do something." As part of his plea bargain, Chris was sentenced to eight years imprisonment for having previously admitted causing \$5,000 damage to a McDonalds by setting fire to the restaurant in January 2003. Supporters were in the courtroom and said that Chris appeared to be in good spirits. Last we knew, Chris was at SeaTac, but he was in the process of being transferred out of state. His current address is/was: Christopher McIntosh 30512-013, FDC Seatac, Federal Detention Center, P.O. BOX 13900, Seattle, WA 98198. Newly released is a zine containing over 20 pages of original writings and artwork from Chris, produced with help from his energetic supporters. You can order one for a donation of \$2 or more by emailing [supportchris@riseup.net](mailto:supportchris@riseup.net). All donations go directly to support Chris throughout his imprisonment.

#### **David Segal Sentenced For Attempted Arson**

New York City – Segal, who pled guilty last September to malicious mischief for attempting to burn down a Bronx military recruiting station in January 2005, was sentenced to six months in prison on January 8. He was also sentenced to serve four months of house arrest. The four months of house arrest will be part of a three year supervised release program during which he will have to visit with a counselor for one hour each week, pay \$4,500 in fines, and serve 150 hours of community service. David is required to talk to a counselor because a 15 minute psychiatric evaluation found him to be "anti-social" because he does not believe that what he did is wrong. Supporters who disagree with the evaluation set up a website to coordinate support for David while he serves his sentence. It also encourages others to commit similar actions against recruitment centers.

### **Authorities Monitoring Possible Threats to Olympics**

Turin, Italy – Authorities responsible for security at the Winter Olympics reportedly were monitoring the activities of “numerous” people suspected of possible links to “terrorism”, including antiglobalization protesters and anarchists. According to Italian officials, they were monitoring the movements of 700 people, but he said surveillance was aimed at “numerous targets of interest.” In early December, Italy’s interior minister said a security plan calling for deployment of nearly 10,000 police in Turin was in place, although there were no clear signs of any terrorist activity aimed at the games. The Winter Olympics (February 2006), were expected to draw up to one million spectators. The Italian government said that anarchists were trying to infiltrate protests against a high-speed rail link in northwestern Italy and spread disorder to cities including Turin. The warning came as hundreds of protesters blocked roads and railways for a second day over the rail link planned in the Susa Valley, where some Olympic events were to take place. At least 20 people suffered injuries in a clash when police raided a camp in the valley where protesters were sleeping. There were also clashes in Turin in which one pig suffered a head injury, and there was some vandalism in the city.

### **Anarchist Fugitive Apprehended**

Rome, Italy – On January 16, anarchist fugitive Rose Ann Scrocco was arrested by the Carabinieri special unities in collaboration with the Dutch police. She had been sentenced to 30 years in jail as part of the “Marini Trial”, in which anarchists were accused of belonging to a fictitious armed organization. Scrocco was on a list of the 30 most dangerous absconders, wanted since 1991 for kidnapping, subversive association, homicide and armed band. She was considered the link between the most radical wing of the anarchist insurrectional groups and Sardinia’s bandits who organized kidnappings.

### **School Surveillance On the Rise**

In what some allege is a thinly veiled attempt to normalize surveillance, a federal agency is pumping more money into Big Brother programs that track students. As debate over government surveillance rages, the U.S. Dept. of Justice is quietly enticing school districts to implement controversial technologies that monitor and track students. A few schools are already running pilot programs to monitor students’ movements using radio frequency identification (RFID), a technology that uses tiny computer chips smaller than a grain of sand to track items at a distance. The programs, implemented in the name of student protection, have pupils wearing tags around their necks and submitting themselves to electronic scanning as they enter and leave school property. Now a new federal grant could lure more districts into using these or similar technologies.

Even though school violence is at its lowest rate in a decade according to the federal government’s own statistics, the Department’s “School Safety Technologies” grants will be distributed to schools that develop proposals in four broadly defined areas: integrated physical security systems, busfleet monitoring systems, low-level force devices, and school safety training.

In its call for the grant proposals, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) states that the current systems used in schools are costly, invasive, labor intensive, and “objectionable to various segments of the community.” The Department’s vision for improvements are “integrated physical security systems,” which would include “nonobtrusive sensors” to detect drugs and weapons, as well as to track students, staff, visitors, and intruders on school grounds. It also asks applicants to develop systems that enable law enforcement personnel to track the time and place that students enter and exit school buses. The NIJ states that “non-cooperative” identification and tracking is preferred over a “cooperative” system. A non-cooperative identification system captures and tracks personal or biometric data. Such technologies have already been implemented in some school districts. North of Houston, Texas, 16,000 elementary students in the Spring Independent School District wear RFID tags, embedded with chips that indicate their locations on a computerized map. The school also has 750 surveillance cameras mounted throughout its facilities, with plans to install 300 more. In New York, RFID systems are also being used in schools. The Brockport Central School District in northern New York is testing school bus fleet monitoring with GPS technology and scanning students IDs as they enter and exit the bus. Students at the Enterprise Charter School in Buffalo wave their RFID tags in front of two kiosks at the school entrance which

automatically transmit attendance to teachers and administrators. When a parent arrives to pick up their child at one of three grade schools in the Freehold Borough School District, they'll need to look into a camera that will take a digital image of their iris.

Lee Tien, senior staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a public-interest organization, believes the increasing use of RFID technology in schools could affect how the public views surveillance. She said "It creates an atmosphere where you normalize the use of surveillance technology [and] the idea that you should accept that you are being tracked." Katherine Albrecht, director of the group Consumers Against Supermarket Privacy Invasion and Numbering (CASPIAN) and author of *How Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Move*, says companies are targeting captive audiences with their products. "They're going for prisons, they're going for the schools; they're going for the military; they're going for the people who are not in a position to say 'no', and who is less in a position to say 'no' than a child? If a generation of school children grows up accepting as perfectly normal the idea that someone would and should be able to watch and keep track of where you are, as adults those people are going to have no concept whatsoever of the kind of privacy that you and I take for granted," said Albrecht.

### **More Marshals To Patrol Land and Sea Transport**

Teams of undercover air marshals and uniformed law enforcement officers will fan out to bus and train stations, ferries, and mass transit facilities across the country in a new test program to conduct surveillance and "counter potential criminal terrorist activity in all modes of transportation," according to internal federal documents. According to Transportation Security Administration documents, the program calls for newly created "Visible Intermodal Protection and Response" teams—called "Viper" teams—to take positions in public areas along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and Los Angeles rail lines; ferries in Washington state; and mass transit systems in Atlanta, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Viper teams will also patrol the Washington Metro system.

A Viper team will consist of two marshals, one TSA bomb-sniffing canine team, one or two transportation security inspectors, one local law enforcement officer, and one other TSA employee. Some members of the team will be obvious to the traveling public and wear jackets bearing the TSA name on the back. Others will be plainclothes air marshals scanning the crowds for "suspicious people".

Air marshals "are trained to covertly detect potential criminal terrorist pre-attack surveillance and other suspicious activity," states a TSA memo. Air marshals "assigned to support the Viper team will also be looking for individuals attempting to avoid or depart areas upon visual observation of the Viper teams." The concept of employing more surveillance techniques to identify "unusual behavior"—typically, signs of nervousness, such as sweating and avoiding eye contact—has been around for some time. In London, police used the tactic after the terrorist bombings on the Underground to track and then shoot a young man wearing a backpack who was running from police. The man was later determined to be unconnected to the suspected bombers. Air marshal training has been scrutinized lately, after two marshals shot and killed an American Airlines passenger in the Miami International Airport who allegedly claimed to have a bomb in his backpack. Air Marshals claim the two agents who brought down Rigoberto Alpizar in a hail of bullets from their .357 Sig Sauer handguns acted "within guidelines" for handling potential terrorist activities. Alpizar, a 44-year-old naturalized American citizen from Costa Rica, suffered from bipolar disorder and had not taken his prescription medication. The Home Depot employee who lived in Maitland, Florida, did not have a bomb and witnesses on the scene dispute the marshals' claim that he shouted that he did. "I can tell you, he never said a thing in that airplane; he never called out he had a bomb," says fellow passenger Jorge Borelli. "He just wanted to get off the plane," says passenger John McAlhany, adding that Alpizar was "clearly agitated" but said nothing about a bomb. "I never heard the word 'bomb' until the FBI asked me: 'Did you hear the word bomb?'" McAlhany says other federal officers stormed onto the plane, pointing guns at passengers and demanding they put their hands in front of them. "I was on the phone with my brother. Somebody came down the aisle and put a shotgun to the back of my head and said, 'Put your hands on the seat in front of you,'" McAlhany says. "I got my cell phone karate-chopped out of my hand."



# “Operation Backfire” — The Feds Make a Monstrous Move

*These indictments and arrests were the result of a nine-year investigation of numerous arsons in the Northwest and other states. In many of the fires the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF) claimed responsibility. Participating in the extensive investigation were the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), the Eugene Police Department, the Portland Police Bureau, the Oregon State Police, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Oregon Department of Justice and the Lane County Sheriff's Office. The investigation is continuing.* – Department of Justice

As we go to print, eleven people have been accused of carrying out a years-long spree of arsons throughout five Western states. The 65- count indictment, returned by a Federal Grand Jury in Eugene, OR, charges the eleven people of seventeen arsons in Oregon, Wyoming, Washington, California and Colorado from 1996 through 2001 with improvised incendiary devices fashioned from milk jugs, petroleum products and homemade timers, causing damage in the millions of dollars. Director Robert S. Mueller III of the FBI said one of the bureau's "highest domestic terrorism priorities" is catching and prosecuting "those who commit crime and terrorism in the name of animal rights or environmental issues." The nation-wide sweep of arrests, dubbed "**Operation Backfire**", has been declared by the FBI as a major hit to environmentalists and animal rights activists who engage in destruction of property as a means to defend wilderness and lives of animals. Ongoing grand juries in San Diego and San Francisco are also targeting environmentalists and animal rights defenders.

"**Operation Backfire**" was announced as the Bush Administration currently attempts to defend its domestic spying program. Many cases involved in the indictment came just before the statute of limitations was due to expire. According to Carl Truscott, director of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the FBI claims to have at least 188 open investigations of crimes claimed by the ELF and ALF. The only evidence declared in the 83-page indictment comes from the testimony of five "confidential sources" (CS).

In an absurd turn of events, no doubt in an attempt to run these charges through quickly and under the banner of "terrorism", the government has moved to try the eleven people that it has arrested together as codefendants. They are alleging that all eleven individuals were members of a cell known as "The Family." Some of the discovery evidence that has been turned over includes 35 CDs of recorded conversations and 40,000 pages of transcripts, police reports, and photographs. Investigators say that they expect to be making more arrests in the case soon. The January 19th indictment contains charges against certain defendants that could lead to sentences in excess of "life," if convicted on all counts.

The indictments follow a series of arrests on December 7 in Oregon, Arizona, New York and Virginia. Federal marshals arrested Daniel G. McGowan, Stanislas G. Meyerhoff, Chelsea D. Gerlach, Kevin M. Tubbs, Sarah K. Harvey, and William C. Rodgers, while three other people named in the indictment (Josephine Overaker, Joseph Dibee, and Rebecca Rubin) are believed by federal authorities to be outside the United States. Federal agents also subpoenaed numerous individuals across the country, primarily in Oregon. Most of the accused have been released on huge bails and severe restrictions pending trial (scheduled for October 31), some remain incarcerated, and some have unfortunately decided to cooperate. Meanwhile, grand juries continue and the defendants are persecuted in the media. The details are

extensive, and steadily changing, but as we go to print, this is what we understand the distressing situation to be. We encourage readers to do their own research and stay abreast of events as they unfold.

## The Accused

**Daniel McGowan**, 31, was arrested in New York City while at work. Under the original 16-count indictment related to his alleged involvement in the 2001 Poplar Farms arson, and a separate incident earlier in the same year at the offices of a lumber company, McGowan faces mandatory minimum sentences of 30 years each on two major charges, which, if pressed to trial, threaten a life sentence. McGowan, an environmental and social justice activist, has plead not guilty and denies any knowledge or involvement in the crimes he is being charged with and denies membership in the ELF. He is from New York, and has been an active member of the community, working on diverse projects such as the demonstrations against the Republican National Convention, Really Really Free Markets, and supporting political prisoners such as Jeff “Free” Luers and others. Daniel was attending graduate school for acupuncture and was working at Women’s Law, a nonprofit advocacy group that helps women in domestic abuse situations navigate the legal system. Daniel has stated that there will never be any cooperation on his part with his “captors.”

In late January McGowan was ordered released to the custody of his sister, pending the payment of 1.6 million dollars bail. During the Detention Hearing Detective Gregory Harvey, tried to associate Daniel with *Crimethinc*, which he described as a “small group of people in Olympia who publish several training manuals including a book about Emma Goldman.” *Crimethinc* has been mentioned in several other recent high-profile cases that the government claims involve the Earth Liberation Front, including recent arrests in Auburn, California. Harvey also tried to connect Daniel to Peter Young, a convicted animal liberation activist, who the detective claimed authored the *Crimethinc*-published book, *Evasion*.

The Prosecuting Attorney claimed that Daniel was part of an “incubator cell” that included sixteen “select individuals” who were focused on attacking biotechnology related targets. If convicted on all 65 Counts Daniel is facing between life +35 years to life +335 years. The prosecutor claimed that Daniel was active in more than one ELF cell. During cross examination the detective disclosed that Kevin Tubbs, who was also arrested on December 7, provided information that was used in court.

In order to help Daniel, his family and friends have created a support network (Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan) in order to help fund Daniel’s legal defense. Donations can be made by going to the Daniel McGowan support page at: [www.myspace.com/danielmcgowan](http://www.myspace.com/danielmcgowan). Questions and concerns can be directed to [friendsofdanielmcg@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofdanielmcg@yahoo.com).

**Stanislas G. Meyerhoff**, 28, who was arrested in Charlottesville, VA, according to court papers, has agreed to testify against others charged in the case. Stanislas is under federal indictment charging him with commission of the arsons at the Superior Lumber Company in Glendale, OR, on January 2, 2001, and Jefferson Poplar Farms, in Clatskanie, OR, on May 21, 2001. The damages in both the Superior Lumber Company fire and the Jefferson Poplar Farms fire each exceeded \$1 million. A defense motion filed in U.S. District Court in Eugene says Stanislas “Jack” Meyerhoff, a former Eugene resident who has lately been attending Piedmont Community College in Charlottesville, is one of the unnamed informants the federal government has relied on for evidence in the investigation. Public defender Craig Weirnerman named Meyerhoff and another man, Jacob Ferguson, as informants in a motion for the release of Chelsea Gerlach, who is being held without bail. Meyerhoff was indicted on charges he firebombed the office of Superior Lumber Co. in Glendale, now known as Swanson Group, in 2001, as well as offices and a truck shop at the Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie the same year. The Earth Liberation Front took credit for both. In a status hearing, Meyerhoff asked the court to show mercy. “I pray that the court is merciful with those who have renounced these crimes and have moved on to be students

and professionals,” he said. Due to his apparent cowardice and betrayal, we cannot advise support for Meyerhoff.

**Chelsea D. Gerlach**, 28, who grew up in the Eugene area and more recently lived in Portland where she was arrested, faces trial on indictments that she and Meyerhoff helped topple a high tension power line outside Bend in 1999 and that she served as a lookout while others were setting fire to the Childers Meat Co. plant in Eugene in 2001. Authorities have also named Gerlach as a suspect in the 1998 arson of a ski resort in Vail, CO, that caused \$12 million in damages, though she has not been charged. The Earth Liberation Front took credit for that, saying it was fighting ski resort expansion into lynx habitat. Gerlach was arraigned on new charges following indictments by the Federal Grand Jury in Eugene, including numerous charges added relating to an arson at Childers Meat Company in Eugene on May 19, 1999 and another at Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie on May 21, 2001. The U.S. attorney gleefully announced that Chelsea was facing 290 years in federal detention if convicted. Her lawyer accused the government of heaping “multiplicitous indictments” on Chelsea; “They are overcharging her,” he stated. Her lawyer asserted that the only evidence the government has brought forth appears to be the testimony of confidential informants. To our knowledge, she is still in custody. Her support site is: [www.supportchelsea.org](http://www.supportchelsea.org). People can write her at: Chelsea Gerlach #1308678, Lane County Jail, 101 W 5th Ave, Eugene, OR 97401.

**Kevin M. Tubbs**, 37, was arrested in Springfield, OR, and initially charged in connection with the 1998 arson of a U.S. Department of Agriculture research center in Olympia, WA. He was later charged with arson at Romania Chevrolet in Eugene, March 30, 2001. He is being charged separately for each of the 35 vehicles destroyed, and faces a mandatory minimum sentence for each vehicle of 5 years, with the maximum penalty being 20 years per vehicle. In addition, he is being charged with an Enhancement for the use of an “incendiary bomb” which carries a mandatory minimum sentence under Oregon’s Measure 11 sentencing rules of 30 years. Unfortunately, at the bail hearing of Daniel McGowan, Officer Harvey of the EPD, stated, under oath, that Kevin Tubbs had cooperated with them in their investigation against McGowan. We do not know the extent of the cooperation, but as a precaution, pending further investigation, we can no longer advise support for Kevin at this time. As we go to print, we have learned that Tubbs was denied bail, despite allegedly confessing to taking part in nine separate arsons, including the failed arson of the U.S. Service’s Detroit Ranger Station in the Willamette forest, which was the first act claimed solely by the ELF in the US. If convicted of all charges he will be sentenced to a minimum of more than life in prison.

**Sarah K. Harvey**, also known as Kendall Tankersley, 28, who was arrested in Flagstaff, AZ, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Medford for the December 27, 1998 arson of a U.S. Forest Industries building in Medford that caused damage estimated at \$500,000. She was arrested in Flagstaff, where she was a student. She could face 20 years in prison. In mid-January, Sarah was granted \$250,000 bail. At preliminary hearings, U.S. Assistant District Attorney Kirk Engdall stated that Harvey should be released on bail because “She has accepted responsibility for her actions, and is cooperating.” Again, we do not know the full extent of this cooperation. Early on, Harvey distanced herself from the radical environmental movement and asked to be removed from political prisoner lists. Obviously, we can not advise support for Harvey at this time.

**William C. Rodgers**, 40, who was arrested in Prescott, AZ, was found dead in a Flagstaff jail cell only days after his arrest. According to the Coconino County Sheriff’s Office, Rodgers committed suicide. The county medical examiner determined that Rodgers suffocated after placing a plastic bag over his head while he was being held in a one-person cell. He was charged in the firebombing of a government lab outside Olympia, WA. The news of Rodgers’ death added an ominous tone to an already scary situation, and also raised many questions. Rodgers, who worked tirelessly for the causes of social justice and environmental sustainability was remembered by friends as a gentle, kind, and compassionate person who helped create and run the Catalyst Infoshop in Prescott. Supporters of Rodgers posted a written statement from Bill (who, it seems, was also known as “Avalon”) allegedly from his last evening on this earth:

*“To my friends and supporters to help them make sense of all these events that have happened so quickly: Certain human cultures have been waging war against the Earth for millennia. I chose to fight on the side of bears, mountain lions, skunks, bats, saguaros, cliff rose and all things wild. I am just the most recent casualty in that war. But tonight I have made a jail break—I am returning home, to the Earth, to the place of my origins.  
Bill, 12/21/05 (the winter solstice).”*

## Grand Jury Subpoenas

On December 7, at least 6 people in the Northwest were served with subpoenas to testify in front of a Grand Jury in Eugene, OR. Grand Juries are scheduled from February through the spring, with more likely to come.

Before dawn, two FBI agents from the Eugene office and several state police officers came to Southern Oregon to subpoena **Suzanne Savoie**, to appear before a Federal Grand Jury in Eugene. They told Savoie that if she didn't start giving them information she would take the fall for all the men they said were involved. They said women usually take the fall for men and that she shouldn't let that happen. They showed Savoie four named photos of men who they said were the “bombmakers” and that they wanted her to give information about them. The FBI also used the usual tactic of threatening 60 years in jail to intimidate Savoie.

They also tracked down longtime environmental and animal rights activist, **Jonathan Paul**, returning from work. He saw a BLM law enforcement vehicle followed by the Jeep SUV carrying two FBI agents approaching from the opposite direction. The BLM vehicle made a u-turn and turned on his overhead lights and promptly went off the road into a ditch and remained there while the FBI vehicle turned and followed the vehicle Jonathan was riding in. Miles later, the van had to stop to drop off a couple of the occupants and the FBI opened the door of the van and asked Jonathan if he was “JP”. Jonathan replied “Who's asking?”. Agent Lorin flashed his badge and served the subpoena.

Two Portland activists, **Frank Winbigler** and **Shannon (Nonny) Urick**, were served with papers ordering them to be a witness for a federal Grand Jury. The subpoenas were issued by 3 FBI agents, 1 Homeland Security agent, and an Oregon Sheriff as they ate in a cafe. Frank was told that this was part of a larger round up of people, that arrests had been made, and that he is seen as a target of this investigation. Nonny and Frank both have a long history of human, animal and environmental activism. The Grand Jury is scheduled for March 16 in Eugene, Oregon, although it may have been closed.

Another Oregon woman, **Jennifer Adrian**, was also served a subpoena at her workplace by two FBI agents, and was told that many arrests had been made across the country for animal rights actions. She was also told that many other people were talking, and was pressured to “come clean” for her own good. When she insisted on talking to an attorney, she was issued a subpoena for a Grand Jury in Eugene.

Former Animal Liberation Front prisoner **Darren Thurston**, 35, was arrested (and later indicted with the others arrested) allegedly for carrying false identification. Darren is a Canadian citizen who is currently being held in an INS detention center in Tacoma. Darren was arrested in the company of Chelsea D. Gerlach and he has been served with a Deportation Order (back to Canada) on the grounds of his previous criminal record (from 1992). He has also been served with a Grand Jury Subpoena for February 16, and told that he is a target of the investigation. He was convicted of setting fire to trucks belonging to a fish company in 1991 in Edmonton, according to news accounts. Thurston and another man were convicted of breaking into and trashing a research lab at the University of Alberta in 1992 and freeing 29 cats, a crime that got Thurston two years in jail, according to news reports. In 1998, Canadian officials charged the two with mailing letters containing razors to guide outfitters and people in the fur industry. Those charges were dropped after prosecutors said they could not comply with a request for information regarding intelligence gathering. You can write him at: Darren Thurston

#701415, Multnomah County, Inverness Jail, 11540 NE Inverness Dr., Portland, OR 97220. A support campaign has been set up for Darren. It can be contacted via: freedarren@resist.ca This group has also set up a website which can be viewed at: [http:// freedarren.org](http://freedarren.org).

## More Arrests...

On January 17, animal rights and environmental activist Jonathan Paul, 39, was arrested in Southern Oregon. Jonathan was also recently served with a subpoena for the Eugene Grand Jury and did jail time in 1992 for refusing to testify before a grand jury. According to authorities, he is being charged with an arson at a horse slaughter house and meat packing plant in Redmond, Oregon, in 1997. The fire caused an estimated \$1 million in damages. Jonathan Paul is a firefighter and longtime activist who helped co-found America's Whale Alliance and Ocean Defense International.

Suzanne Nicole Savoie, 28, of Applegate, who also received a subpoena for a Eugene grand jury, was also indicted, with a warrant issued for her arrest. She turned herself in to federal authorities on January 18. The U.S. attorney's office claims that she served as a lookout in the 2001 firebombing at the offices of the Superior Lumber Mill in Glendale, Oregon. Two of the suspects arrested on December 7th are also charged in connection with that arson. That fire caused an estimated \$400,000 in damage. Suzanne is an environmental activist who has been helping to organize a campaign to preserve the Bald Lick roadless area on Oregon's Black Mountain. A support group has been set up and can be contacted by e-mailing: [friendsofsuzannesavoie@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofsuzannesavoie@yahoo.com).

Both Savoie and Paul face up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine and have been released on strict conditional bail.

## Rats, Snitches, Cowards, Informants, Low-Life Scum, and others yet unnamed

According to various court papers, it seems that there are a number of informants providing information and possible testimony to federal authorities. This is a troubling turn of events, and one that should be extremely alarming. We hope to deal with this subject in more detail in the next issue. This is just some basic confirmed information we have obtained, as more is to become public as trials and grand juries proceed...and there is still more we may never know. **Jacob "Jake" Ferguson**, of Eugene, OR, has been working for the FBI. At least a portion of the case against many of those jailed seems to rest on the words, actions and credibility of this man, a man we now learn has lived a double life. In a community where there is distrust, even disgust, for the government and especially its law enforcement operatives, Jake pretended to be part of it, but he was and is one of them. Jake is also a known heroin addict. According to court documents, Ferguson has been traveling around the country secretly taping numerous private conversations, perhaps with people who thought they could trust him. Investigators say they got their first major break in the case in 2004 when Ferguson began cooperating with them, claiming that he was a member of the group which set many of the fires which are under investigation. Interestingly, he began assisting the FBI in their investigation shortly after the agency offered a \$50,000 reward for information in the cases. Jake was not the type for meetings and gatherings but we do know that he attended the environmental law conference (ELAW) in Eugene last year and traveled to the Earth First! Round River Rendezvous in the Mt. Hood National Forest in July. This was another opportunity to listen in on numerous conversations. Days after his name was revealed in court documents, after numerous people were arrested and accused of actions which could land them in prison for life, and after Bill Rodgers took his own life, Ferguson was seen in Eugene driving around his old neighborhood in a new SUV! His arrogance and cowardice are inexcusable.

**Stanislas G. Meyerhoff**, of Charlottesville, VA, is apparently one of the “unnamed” informants the federal government has relied on for evidence in the investigation and has agreed to testify against others charged in various cases in an attempt to save his own ass. Not much is known about the level of cooperation, but it is pretty clear he has flipped.

As we go to print, we have reason to believe that Kevin M. Tubbs and Sarah K. Harvey (aka Kendall Tankersley) have also provided information that was used in court against others who have been arrested.

**Jen Kolar**, who has never been charged with any offense in relation to the on-going investigation is widely believed to be cooperating with the police in their investigation. This suspicion was confirmed when the well known Earth First! lawyer, Stu Sugarman, stated, in court, that Jonathan Paul’s arrest was based on the testimony of Jen Kolar.

In a similar, but separate case, it would appear that following his plea-bargain, Earth Liberation Front prisoner **Ryan Lewis** decided to follow his co-defendants lead (see *GA #20*) and start cooperating with the authorities in the hope of a lighter sentence.

## **FBI Make Arrests for “Planning Actions” and Reveals an Imbedded Informant**

**Auburn, California** – The FBI has arrested three community activists it claims were planning to blow up U.S. Forest Service property along with cell phone towers and power generators on behalf of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). The FBI claims they were also considering attacks on the Nimbus Dam on the American River near Sacramento, banks, trucks, mountain-top-removal projects in West Virginia, and Communist Party offices. **Zachary O. Jensen**, 20, of Monroe, Washington, **Lauren Weiner**, 20, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and **Eric Taylor McDavid**, 28, of nearby Foresthill, were taken into custody, without incident by an FBI Special Weapons and Tactics team and at least another dozen state and local police, in the parking lot of an Auburn K-Mart store.

Feds said that the arrests were the culmination of a nearly year-long investigation. Special Agent John Cauthen said that they believe that the three had “a loose association” with the four Newcastle residents who were arrested last year in connection with a string of ELF arsons and attempted arsons in Auburn County. Three of the four Newcastle suspects pled guilty and are awaiting sentencing. A fourth is awaiting trial.

The FBI revealed details about a criminal complaint with information coming from a “confidential source (CS) who is deeply imbedded within the subjects’ cell. The CS has worked for the FBI since early 2004. She has agreed to testify in court.” Supporters identified the CS as a young woman named “**Anna**” who was in Auburn with the others at the time of the arrests. According to authorities, “Anna” was a key member of the alleged cell, and provided housing for the three in a cabin which, unbeknownst to them, was rented by the FBI and was specially equipped with audio and video surveillance equipment. Anna also wore a concealed wire in order to record conversations with the three. Anna was paid \$75,000 plus expenses by the FBI over the course of the two years during which she infiltrated various anarchist groups and events. The document says that she has provided information in at least 12 anarchist cases since 2004. She has traveled to and infiltrated various anarchist gatherings and protests across the country including the Biodev 2005 demonstrations in Philadelphia, a CrimethInc. convergence in Indiana, and the Feral Visions green anarchist gathering in North Carolina. Three separate descriptions of “Anna” all match up – a young (early to mid 20’s) Caucasian woman, “not super skinny and not chubby.” At one point it was reported she had light blonde hair that could have been bleached, possibly with pink streaks in it, and later during her time Philly, she is reported to have had dark hair.

Additional information provided in the complaint was gathered from the defendants own blogs and MySpace, an online community where at least one of the defendants has a personal profile and

blog. Myspace is a popular networking and dating forum, whose profiles regularly contain fictitious information about individuals. A profile on the LiveJournal.com personal publishing site and online community was also used as evidence. Agents say that they also recovered a notebook from Eric McDavid which contained a diagram of the Forest Service Institute and pictures of pipe bombs.

The three have all pled not guilty. Lauren Weiner has been released to the custody of her mother on \$1.2 million bail. U.S. Magistrate Judge Gregory G. Hollows ordered Eric McDavid and Zachary Jenson to be held without bail. They can be contacted at: Zachary Jenson X-4198632 7E213A, Sacramento County Main Jail, 651 "T" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 and Eric McDavid X-2972521 4W114A, Sacramento County Main Jail, 651 "T" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. (On January 31, Eric began a hunger strike to receive vegan food. His family has reported that his health is failing from weeks of malnourishment.)

## **Prisoner Support**

Members of some of the various support groups are requesting, on behalf of those arrested, that people sending letters (to those still incarcerated) please place their return address on the letter itself, as prisoners are almost never given the envelope. Most of them will be moved a lot (in and out of jail and throughout the system), so please rewrite your letters and send them again. Most will probably be lost or returned. Also, please keep the letters simple, written or typed on plain white paper with black ink. Stickers, tape, color paper, color ink, white-out and thick envelopes are all being used as justifications for denying the prisoners mail. Remember that all mail is read by authorities: avoid discussing their cases or anything that can negatively effect them. Also, fundraising is essential for the mounting cost of postage and telephone calls, travel expenses for prison visits, reading material, commissary funds, lawyers and other legal expenses, and whatever other needs might arise. Contact specific support groups for details. These suggestions also apply to those who may be arrested for non-cooperation with the grand juries.

Helpful Websites:

[www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/](http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/)

[www.ecoprisoners.org](http://www.ecoprisoners.org)

[www.fbiwitchhunt.com/Informants.html](http://www.fbiwitchhunt.com/Informants.html)

[www.bombsandshields.blogspot.com/](http://www.bombsandshields.blogspot.com/)

[www.portland.indymedia.org/](http://www.portland.indymedia.org/)

[www.infoshop.org](http://www.infoshop.org)

[www.cldc.or](http://www.cldc.or)

# If you don't have something to hide, then what are you afraid of?

The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment.

—George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four

THROUGH SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS INSTALLED EVERYWHERE, they can come to know our movements and activities. Through ATMs and credit cards, they are informed of our transactions. Through telecommunications systems, they can know with whom we speak, and also about what we speak. Through the Internet, they know what we work on and with whom. Modern technologies have perfected the techniques of social control to a point never before imaginable, allowing the transformation of the entire urban space into a concentration camp.

And yet, the majority of people don't think that they live in a police state, a situation – it is said – that would require a massive and constant presence of troops in the streets, with tanks at intersections and helicopters in the sky. A conviction that conceals a monstrous misunderstanding. A true police state is characterized by the vast efficiency of its techniques of control, control that can be entrusted to the physical omnipresence of agents (as in the old dictatorial regimes), or to the omnipresence of their technological instruments – as occurs today in all the democracies. But the fact of being constantly watched by an inanimate object rather than by an armed person doesn't change our suffocating condition, since there is always a guardian behind a surveillance camera. Progress has simply allowed those who hold power to replace menacing weapons with apparently innocuous technological prostheses. But the most efficient police state is precisely the one that has no need for putting police on display.

And, with regard to screens, the spread of social control would not be possible without the active intervention of the mass media. This doesn't just occur in the most common and banal way, when the mass media teaches the acceptance of police operations, justifying their actions and directly reporting their press releases. Their greatest contribution to the pervasiveness of state surveillance is given by the creation of a climate of social conformity capable of banishing any critical spirit. Many are the broadcasts that send us the same incessant message: if those in power are controlling our movements, watching us night and day, why ever should we protest? But there is worse.

Thanks to television we have benefited from all the indiscretions of hidden video-cameras and microphones, gradually making them our habit. Why complain if someone invades our intimate life, when this is what we do as well with programs like “Big Brother”? So as not to speak then of the things that put your deeds in the plaza, they urge whoever has seen it to talk; they invite one to become the traitor.

It is freedom of thought and action that is dangerous. The right knows it and fights it by demanding more security. The left knows it and fights it by appealing to a ridiculous “respect for privacy”. But we, city-dweller-prisoners with such a long registration number, what are we waiting for to pull the walls of the prison of daily life down?

*He turned suddenly. He made his features assume the expression of calm optimism that it was advisable to maintain whenever one turned toward the television screen.*

To think and practice a different concept of force – here is the challenge that reality is hurling us. Only this effort of ideas and action will allow us to leap to the heart of circumstances.



What does the guerrilla war in Iraq, which is doing what no army could ever do (putting the greatest military power in the world into serious difficulties), suggest to us? What does the same old unpolished and hysterical propaganda against “terrorism” suggest? Why the continuous requests for new laws to more effectively repress the various forms of direct action that cannot be brought back into Politics and its rackets?

Domination is not a citadel for the powerful, but rather a social relationship. And the forces in society are not measured with census-taking. They arrange themselves and collide in unpredictable ways, opening unexpected breaches. The structures of control and repression, just like those of industrial poisoning are everywhere. That which seems far away is constantly before our eyes. The same is true for revolt and sabotage. Whatever the angle of attack may be, every truly self-organized struggle cannot avoid putting the present way of life into question. No perspective of revolt can neglect the question of autonomy, in values as well as in means.

The social storm doesn't cancel the problems, it shuffles them and deals them out differently.

—a few nobodies who neither want to represent or be represented by anyone

# Reviews

Hearty critique is imperative for useful reviews and a healthy milieu. This section is a forum where we can connect our analysis to actual projects, as a way to get more specific about what people are actually advocating and doing, a sort of in-between of the abstract theoretical pieces and the action reports. Unfortunately writing seems to be the activity anarchists in the U.S. do most, so reviews stand as a significant point where we can actually look at what we are made of. Reviews, at least in our magazine, will remain honest, blunt, and highly opinionated. We do not wish to simply cheerlead or offer free advertising for friends, nor steer people away from those we dislike. Our reviews will be more than a generic list of the contents. We hope our reviews spark discussions of ideas we find to be important. So, here we go again... (All reviews written by members of the GA collective, unless otherwise noted.)

## *Answers for White People On: appropriation, hair, and anti-racist struggle* by Colin Kennedy and Qwo-Li Driskill

*Answers for White People... (AfwP)* is a doubled over 8.5 X 11 handout that has popped up the past few years on the coffee tables of guilt-ridden “white” activists and on politically correct refrigerators. Recently, I was *privileged* enough to get my own copy, and decided to *take advantage* of this situation. It was created a couple years ago for an “Anti-Racist Hair-Cutting Booth” at the “Against Patriarchy Conference” in Eugene. To start, the concept of “answers” presented by two people for a billion others should strike any free thinker (and even those not so cerebrally sovereign) as quite troublesome. Not to mention the preposterous and unsettling lumping together of all folks who are not be considered “people of color” into a homogenous group called “white people”. I’m left wondering where I fit in, being a non-Anglo with mixed “influences” and a nice shade of olive-tan (or is that gray)? Race, as some would have it, rigidly defines and confines, from all sides. This social construct, which admittedly has been (and still is) the basis for horrific and deplorable consequences, is only reinforced by this and other reductionist attempts to harden identity, view the world through this filter, and “set things right”.

The cover has some astoundingly keen questions for every “white person” to consider, like “Why should I cut my dreads?” and “What’s wrong with a Mohawk?” The goal of this particular handout is to have “white people” look at “cultural appropriation”, but there are myriad problems here, beyond the altogether unconvincing and disjointed presentation. The concept of “cultural appropriation” has become so convoluted by the Left, that just about everything traced to anything except Northern European or U.S. corporate-produced popular culture is declared as “appropriation”, defined by *AfwP* as “the act of taking or making use without authority or right”. But, unless there is a defined benefit by the influenced (or “dominant”) culture at the expense of the influencing (or “victim”) culture (a strange twist), I can’t see the “appropriation”. In the neocolonial and post-modern global world we unfortunately find ourselves in, just about everything has been mishmashed and borrowed from somewhere else. Are Italians taking part in “cultural appropriation” every time they cook spaghetti, since of course, noodles originally came from China? Or, perhaps, the banjo playing Appalachians should give up this implement of expression, since it was originally created in Africa (via Ireland – more appropriators with blood on their hands)? Or the thousands of other shared, borrowed, utilized, and yes, even “stolen” examples of “appropriation” we could give. Sorry, but the world we currently inhabit, for better or worse, is just not that clear cut.

The most erroneous section was a disjointed list entitled “A Few Good Reasons Why White People Should Not Wear ‘Mohawks’ or Dreadlocks”. Some of the most flimsy suggestions were: “Wearing ‘Mohawks’ erases Mohawk people and culture”, “Appropriating our traditions and ways of dressing/presenting is a further attack on our communities”, “By wearing ‘Mohawks’ and dreadlocks, white people demonstrate they are unaware of anti-racist struggles and deteriorate trust between white and people of color/non-white people”, and finally, “By cutting off their ‘Mohawks’ and dreadlocks, white people take a concrete step towards an antiracist journey”. Once again, more superficial suggestions from a perspective based on identity, with the goal of creating victims rather than empowered people. Perhaps a serious critique of New Age movements or the annoying pervasiveness of “wannabe Indians” could have had something useful to say, but instead the surface is barely scratched, and we are left with absurd notions that hairstyles “perpetuate [racist] forms of violence.”

Even if we were to buy all of the naive notions up until this point, there is still the fact that dreadlocks are simply what occur when almost anyone (except those with ultra fine and straight hair) refuses to use a comb! Sure, some desperately-to-be cool kids force hair into the natty locks, but most merely let their hair do what it would without the imposition of a tool which did not exist for most of human history. Because some people have elevated the style of their hair to a mythical status or expression of dignity, does not make that form theirs to own. Dreadlocks have appeared in remarkably divergent cultures around the globe, as have what some call “Mohawks.”

Now *AfWP* does make a few valid elementary statements about institutionalized racism, but it is riddled with Little Richardesque cries of who has the trademark on what are now cultural norms. One expects that the sequel handout will have a finely worked-out plan for reparations to be collected from those who insist on “wearing” dreadlocks, or perhaps the procurement of royalties from those playing Rock ‘N Roll, or maybe more casinos to make up for a nation of tobacco smokers/abusers/blasphemists. This is already longer than the handout itself, so I’ll stop here and just shut up and listen...

See: [www.pscap.org](http://www.pscap.org)

## *Anarchy A Journal of Desire Armed #60 Fall/Winter* 20005-06

Overall, the second issue of *AJODA* produced by the new Bay Area collective, is a tremendous step up from their less-than inspiring inaugural attempt. We wanted to wait until they got the ball rolling to review it, since taking over a long-running anarchist legend, like *AJODA*, was sure to be a difficult changeover. In my opinion, on a presentation level, there is still a way to go, but the new issue looks crisp, well-arranged, and exciting. While it still falls within the parameters of the conservative layout style of yore (most likely to remain “sellable” to your average Jane), it does begin to push those limits with more provocative images and zestful title fonts. Probably most pleasing was the amount of content compared to the last, which at times seemed to use a 14-point font to stretch out its filling. The new *AJODA* collective appears to be getting into the stride of producing a periodical, and the time, energy, and consistency it demands if it is to remain relevant.

This issue begins with an editorial piece by Lawrence Jarach, who has the longest tenure with the project. I find his main idea, that we need more coherence in the way we express ourselves (avoiding jargon, explaining in more detail what we actually mean, less sloganeering, etc.) to be positive. While this is a struggle for most of us, especially those weaned on television, it is necessary if we are to be effective on a most basic level, that of communicating our ideas. My only concern is the level of confinement that we may be asked to adhere to. I worry that creative writing will be crammed into the boundaries of college writing manuals, and that some definitions which may be more fluid and which have been used by various people to mean different things will be distilled to the “accepted meaning”, as determined by those with the strongest red pen or most influence. Sometimes we have a hard time

looking outside of our own experiences to get a bigger picture on how language is used, and sometimes, maybe, we shouldn't care. While I try to employ words in the way I feel they are commonly used, I still have my biases and limitations. Do we submit to the dominant culture's usage? Do we dismiss cultural or historical uses that run against the norm? Do we make room for sub-cultural slang? Can words be reclaimed or infused with alterations? While I do not advocate Post-Modern meaninglessness, I am skeptical when people make overarching statements of how words have been used historically, because it often makes invisible or delegitimizes groups of people with different experiences with those words. Jarach's piece feels a little definitive and rigid, but in general, I found it to be a great opening for an important discussion.

The openers and editorial obligations are followed by some interesting news items (mostly state repression against anarchists in Europe) and a breakdown of the New Orleans situation, focusing on the strengthening of local communities based on autonomy, sharing, and voluntary cooperation in response to the "disaster," and the state's backlash. The issue also contains Jason McQuinn's "Life and Times of Anarchy Magazine", an ongoing history of the project's 25 years. But this is only the second half of "Part 1", and I am left wondering how long it will go on. Wouldn't one article have been enough? While I have a lot of respect for what Jason has done, do we really need numerous pages of the next several issues for a sentimental retrospection of articles which have appeared in *AJODA*'s past? Surely there is a better use of space, and surely, it is time for McQuinn to let the project go to create its own legacy.

The theme of this issue is "Democracy", a subject with which I have profoundly minuscule interest. Most likely the topic choice stems from last year's election spectacle, one that was seriously annoying, with many so-called anarchists rationalizing every conceivable reason to vote. At times I felt like writing or ranting on the subject myself, but just couldn't get my pencil up to do it. I mean, I'm from the point of view that if you can't work your way through something as simple as democracy, why bother engaging in anarchist discourse? But I can at least count on my Post-Left comrades at *AJODA* to offer some interesting and challenging words on the subject, and for the most part, they did. Andy Robinson's "Democracy Vs. Desire" is a lengthy and intelligent look at how democracy is an extremely effective method of control, both through its exclusive, and its controlled and manipulated inclusive, methods. Rather than a politics of self-subordination and reaction, Robinson promotes a politics of desire, one in which we are actively connected to the world and ourselves. Another longish piece allegedly focusing on *who we are as anarchists*, is Mitchell Halberstadt's "Beyond Exclusion". Halberstadt occasionally presents basic and agreeable ideas, but the article is flooded with bizarre claims like, "sovereignty can belong only to God – providing an implicit ground for understanding a common or shared reality, while preempting human authority" and "democracy is the best form of government that humans have yet devised, *if the best aspects of democracy are understood and accepted*, it may even have a peculiar, unique propensity to evolve toward a viable condition of anarchy", severely weakening the piece beyond usefulness. Leaving one wondering why it was included in an anarchist journal. "Democracy and Conspiracy" by Lawrence Jarach was, perhaps, the clearest and most interesting take on the subject. Jarach quickly puts the subject into historical perspective (one of his strongest skills). He then makes a precise distinction between a "political conspiracy", or the undeniable realization that exclusive groups of people privately plan and implement their agendas of consolidation and strengthening of power (how bureaucracies inevitably work), and "conspiratology", or the methodology of a wide assortment of moralistic do-gooders invested in the system, who wish to "correctly" inform the people as to make democracy "work better". The theme ends with another astute analysis of the subject by Monsieur Dupont, with a critique of anarchist's unfortunate acceptance and reproduction of democratic principles. The subject of "Democracy", and its inconsistency with anarchy (to put it mildly) has been well argued here, and one hopes that we won't need to go over it again.

The columns in the new issue are moderately interesting. Controversial figure Bob Black offers a competent and uncomplicated introductory primer on anarchist concepts in his "Anarchy 101". The playful and self-described "pointless meanderings" of Ben Blue's "Loose Canons" offer an "autobiographical account of the experience of liberatory madness". Leaving me both amused and perplexed, Blue

asks the immortal questions “Who Am I?” and “What is the relationship between us?” – rarely asked in this particular publication, so despite the awkward and disjointed nature of the prose and touches of silliness, I am enthusiastic. “Anarchy & Strategy” by Aragorn!, keeps tempting to be useful, but after three installments, it is still being explained to us why the discussion is important, without much in terms of specifics or strategic directions.

As usual, reviews take up a significant portion of the magazine. And, as we’ve come to expect, the book reviews are lengthy, detailed, and informative, offering jumping off points for discussion. The “Anarchist Media Review” section (zines, etc) is typically not much more than a list of contents, ordering info, and maybe brief comments, but for this issue, they seem to have expanded the discussions, some for better, some not. Lawrence Jarach has a lengthy, critical, and strong review of *The Northeastern Anarchist*, the mouthpiece for the Northeastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (NEFAC). On the other hand, Jason McQuinn’s review of *Green Anarchy #20* is a snotty response to its spirituality theme, exhibiting the all too familiar refusal and dismissal of any topic outside materialist-driven political theory. With insults and arrogance, McQuinn seems to wish we would just color within the lines. This is most apparent in his defense of *Black Badger* (reviewed by *GA* in issue #20), a project of a fellow **AJODA** editor. McQuinn dismisses the review as “incompetent” and nonconforming to what a review should be. His review is nothing more than an embarrassing attempt to come to the defense of his fellow editor, rather than an effort to look at what was actually being critiqued. In the end, I am tremendously grateful that this magazine continues, and I am convinced that the new collective will approach the focus and depth of the magazine’s heyday in the ‘80s and ‘90s. But the differences between then and now are great. For one, anarchist publications are now a dime a dozen and something unique must be offered for interest to remain. What was controversial back then, is blasé today. While I thoroughly appreciate a magazine that goes so deeply into theory, **AJODA** seems to have painted itself into a corner, as an elitist niche that offers very little in the practical, and rarely giving much insight into the personal motivations of those who produce it. Very few people wish to remain solely in the realm of political theory, with most recognizing that critique, expression, and action bleeds into all aspects of our lives. **AJODA** seems to disregard, and at times, ridicule expression that is outside the box of sophisticated political theory. While the French Situationist Guy Debord provided some important and provocative ideas and analysis (theory), it was the youth (whose names we will never know) that rioted, barricaded, spraypainted their dreams, and made love in the streets of Paris in 1968 who inspired and remain the inspiration. Ideas are only the tip of the iceberg (often coming after the fact, or removed from actual life), with passion, emotion, and personal motivation being the more significant catalyst. We could all learn from this important point and its implications. \$4.95, **AJODA**, POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703 [www.anarchymag.org](http://www.anarchymag.org)

## ***Alternative Press Review Summer 2005***

***Alternative Press Review*** started as a sister project of *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, and has remained a pale reflection (and at times contradiction) to its older sibling. Established over a decade ago, **APR**’s goal is to “promote the libertarian side of alternative and radical media in North America.” Along with some editorializing, news snippets, letters, and reviews, **APR** relies mainly on reprints from what the editors consider “the most important and best of the material [they] have to see.” Perhaps they should look a little harder. This issue is the second published after a two-year sabbatical, and their future as a radical periodical does not look glistening. If their goal is to infiltrate the mainstream markets of Barnes and Nobel or Borders they might have a career, but as far as supplying anything actually challenging the current set-up, they are way off base. Content-wise, this publication is closer to *Z Magazine*, *Mother Jones*, or any other number of “radical” alternative media sources, and on a good day with the right squint it may appear to be *Anarchy Lite* at best.

The covers alone reek of the obnoxious humor of those obsessed with the U.S. political spectacle. The last issue had a sophomoric picture of an Uncle Sam figure taking a dump on the earth, and this current issue has an American Gothic spoof with George Bush and Tony Blair's heads superimposed. Blair is in the archetypal "female" role, wearing a stars and stripes apron and lipstick, standing behind "her man", making one think of the sorry, tired, and sexist cliché that he is Bush's "bitch". There is blood dripping off the pitchfork and in the background bombs are falling on mosques, while a Kentucky Fried Chicken sign has been predictably altered to read "Freedom Fried: State Terror, Have a Nice Die." I would expect this type of (non)humor out of a liberal "peace" rag or perhaps *Mad Magazine*.

The issue begins with a benign editorial rant about the increase in the number of military recruiters allowed on school campuses. After regurgitating facts (readily available in the mainstream press) about the uphill road the U.S. coalition is facing in Iraq, we are told that we can "help derail the death machine in Iraq by getting critical information into people's hands." Now I don't really have a problem with giving kids my perspective on various things, including war and the military, in fact, I am often invited into schools to talk about a militant anticivilization critique, but the idea that through information campaigns we can help to end the long and complicated conglomeration of brutality is just mind-numbing. How is this any different than the approach of every other flavor of progressive or leftist? They go on to say that "Nobody has a right to access teenagers and young adults in order to recruit them and participate in..." *It's just not fair!* I can't wait for the next issue's feature exposé by Amy Goodman.

The rest of the issue is a mixed bag. Its kinda like eating mixed nuts, you know which ones you like, the rest just annoy you, and you wish you had just forked out a little more cash and bought the cashews. **APR** is the kind of magazine that would get Mike Ruppert and the rest of the media watchdog folks excited, but it is quite tiresome for an anarchist. For instance, "Bushzarro Google" details how the online database is restructuring itself to grant more credibility, and therefore preference, to "legitimate" mainstream sources. I guess this is a good thing to know, but as someone who is highly skeptical of anything online (or in print for that matter), it seems somewhat superfluous. *Media bias, now that can't be!*

Perhaps most telling of **APR**'s slip into triviality (at least to a radical milieu) is the three pages dedicated to how "ultra-right-wing" the new pope is, in the reprint from *CounterPunch*, entitled, "Triumph of the Theo-Cons." The laundry list of ways Benedict XVI is "bad" is far too reminiscent of the liberal cries about the boogie-man Bush. Look, the trajectory of the institutions which have these conservatives as their mouthpieces are not determined by these individuals, but by an internal logic and groups of elite which have very little to do with these high-profile figures. The mindset that prioritizes focusing on individual players' characteristics, rather than the institutions themselves, is missing the boat.

To be honest, there were a few things of interest to me, but based on the rest of the issue, I view them as luck more than anything. Judith Levine's "The Pedophile Panic" excerpted from the book *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex* offers a more grounded and less reactionary perspective on the mainstream media's distorted hysteria over "child pornography" and "sexual predators". Wait, before you start hurling accusations at me that the only thing I like is sex with kids, that's not what I'm saying. I have never, nor do I ever plan on having sex with a child, nor has the subject crossed my mind (although what constitutes age of consent does seem a bit arbitrary). But, I am always engaged when people want to go up against the dominant paradigm's norms to tackle difficult subjects openly. (Although did we really need four pages of endnotes?) Ron Sakolsky's update on the failed strategy of attempting to legitimize microradio within the system was informative, but something anyone mildly anti-authoritarian could have seen coming. Also, I found Jason McQuinn's response to the liberal feminist and reactionary rantings of Kirsten Anderberg to be on the mark. Overall, however, I have a hard time seeing the relevance of **APR**.

\$4.95, APR, POB 6245, Arlington, VA 22206  
www.altpr.org

## ***Rolling Thunder — An anarchist journal of dangerous living, Issue #1/Summer 2005***

I must admit, I get pretty cynical these days when I find yet another piece of propaganda coming from the prolific (and often repetitious) Situationist-inspired punk-traveler countercultural conspiracy known as *CrimethInc.*, especially after their nasty tailspin into activism. But I have to say that, while there are questionable parts of ***Rolling Thunder***, I was pleasantly surprised. I feel that this semi-annual publication may be the most interesting format for their particular flavor of anarchy. Don't get me wrong, I'm not about to trade in my old pick-up truck and primitivist-leaning rhetoric for the dreamy prose of the eternal search for the perfect dumpster sex, but I still find a lot of *CrimethInc.* material (despite its hyper-airy quality) to be quite invigorating, especially in a milieu dominated by either unimpassioned and highly abstract theory or dull and dutiful droning about "The Revolution".

While the activist nuances still work their way in at times, ***RT*** is overwhelmingly militant, vigorously applying pressure on the soft spot in my heart. From the front cover's H. L. Mencken quote, "Every normal man must be tempted at times to spit upon his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats," to the back cover's call to "Punch cops in the face...and get away with it!" *CrimethInc.* shows that it can still advocate for more than voting and DIY ethics.

As expected with almost all *CrimethInc.* productions, this 100+ page periodical is beautifully designed. They're certainly no low-baggers when it comes to presentation. As far as content, there are far too many ups and downs to go through for this review. Again, don't expect it to be consistent with your views, or even itself. I found more than a few things I could only discard, but with something of this scope I found plenty that I could dig into. The words poetic, rousing, informative, fact-filled, fantasy, sensitive, blunt, practical, annoying, irrelevant, playful, and personal, apply to different aspects of the publication, and I'm sure we could argue into the wee hours of the night over where these words apply.

I really enjoyed "Now That's an Occupation", the transitional narrative of a *CrimethInc.* ExWorker becoming an office employee, and all of the adventures and fringe benefits (unknown to the boss) that came with the job. "We Are All Survivors, We Are All Perpetrators", an involved and personal discussion on sexual consent was at times troubling, but for the most part offered some unique, and dare I say radical, ideas on a complex subject. Although in the end, the author is swayed by a *hyper*-use of "checking in" which would seem to take much of the passion and spontaneity out of real-time relationships. The reprint from Paul Maurides 1970's comic "Anarchy" is a classic. But my favorite, as a more sedentary (read: domesticated) being who has had more than their fair share of traveling couch surfers (pleasant and horrific), was the "Handbook for the Traveling Houseguest". Some of the tips were helpful, while others seemed a bit useless. But just the fact of an acknowledgement that this lifestyle is not the ultra-virtuous and responsibility-free path without impact that some people's disposition sometimes emits, was gratifying. Even if only a handful of people read it, all of us with crash pads, collective households, and land projects will be thankful.

As a thirty-something ex-activist (don't worry, it has been quite a while), ex-hippie (and that has been even longer), disgruntled, somewhat nihilistic, politico-type, who spends more time in front of a computer, trying to identify plants, or sawing firewood than on the highway or at the basement punk show, this magazine was not really made for me, but for what it is, I can dig it. I hope I can say that when I see the next issue.

\$5 CrimethInc. Department of Anti-Social Services, POB 2133, Greensboro, NV 27402.  
www.crimethinc.com

## ***Social Anarchism: A Journal of Theory and Practice, no.38***

I am never particularly inclined to pick up this book-style publication coming from one of the most banal anarchist approaches around. Soon after cracking open the cover and processing the strings of

symbols, my brain began to ramble and ponder more relevant things, like why I hadn't drank more caffeine beforehand and if the opossum I had eaten earlier may have been rotten. But perhaps these were merely natural reactions to the material before me. While there is one main editor, Howard J. Ehrlich (who doesn't seem to be writing so much), there are another dozen people on their editorial board, which is maybe the reason for the inconsistency and overall incoherence of the project. It could be an interesting non-sectarian clearinghouse to showcase the wide variety of anarchist perspectives out there, something that could be beneficial, but their tastes are too bland to ever include the more radical and divergent fringes. Only salt and pepper here.

*Social Anarchism's* mission statement is to promote "community self-reliance, direct participation in political decision-making, respect for nature, and nonviolent paths to peace and justice." Need I continue? Just reading that statement, plagued with the vagueness and catchphrases of your prototypical progressive, or a sampling of the articles, would give any self-respecting anarchist reason to put it down quickly, but I trudged on, for the team.

Mark Lance's "Fetishizing Process" revisits the age-old question (except for those of us not overly consumed with organization nor spending the majority of our time developing the perfect process), "consensus or voting?" Lance spends almost twenty pages (in the issue's opening article) discussing the pros and cons of both, along the way fully embracing democratic principles. Perhaps the most unfortunate section of this commentary comes from Lance's list of conclusions, which include: "Any viable anarchist society must institutionalize things like schools, discussion forums, and critical process discussions", "If our local lack of virtue prevents a fully democratic decision-making practice in a particular case, there are any number of procedural rules, and people skilled at applying such rules, to which we might turn", and "Voting is often the right procedure to turn to, and far more procedurally correct than consensus procedure". With anarchists like this, who needs government?

Just when you thought we had reached the dreariest low point of what passes for anarchist theory, prole cat asks some even more provocative questions, like: "What is the goal of anarchist revolution, after all, if not a workers' revolution?", and in reference to patriotism, the article's main thrust, "Are we always so right, and they so utterly wrong?" and "Is there any room for anarchists to move in our fellow workers' direction?" While desperately longing to be a part of an authentic workers' revolution, prole is perplexed as to how to deal with the contradiction that "on some topics, most anarchists are *correct*, and the bulk of these workers are *wrong*." Prole's main dilemma is "the worker's" adherence to patriotism.

Prole's solution is to redefine the meaning of patriotism, stretch it to find aspects useful to an anarchist practice (read: manipulation/coercion), along with exposing *those people* to an "anarchist 'leadership of ideas' [emphasis added]. To which I'm sure they will be so infinitely grateful to prole and her/his protoworkerist vanguard. I'm sure they'll throw down the shackles of oppression on the spot, embrace a diversity of people, adopt anarchist principles, and *work* happily ever after as they reorganize the factory along self-managed egalitarian ethics.

Featured articles continue with Todd Allin Morman's predictable "Revolutionary Violence and the Future Anarchist Order", which attempts to argue the oversimplified line that "it is impossible to employ violence to promote a higher anarchist order." This is a typical contribution from a collection of people who are mostly centralized around the provocatively "real world" insight of academia (professors, writers, graduate students, and other bubble dwellers). In contrast, the most interesting piece in *SA* was also the shortest. Agent Automatic's "Revolutionary Interzone" offers a unique look at the occupation of "borders", or the lines between the internal and external spaces of society. Offering a fluid and surreptitious strategy of negotiation, camouflage, and subversion, Automatic poetically describes the interzone or "sanctuary at the margins or beyond" from which abnormality and dissidence can thrive, and from which the weak points can become targets in the destruction/creation of a new world. This fleeting moment of perceptiveness seems lost in an otherwise sea of humdrum, mediocrity, and irrelevance.

\$6, Atlantic Center for Research and Development, 2743 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21218.  
www.socialanarchism.org



## *Arson Zine Communique #2: Summer 2005/2006*

It was excellent news to learn recently that a review that we did of *Arson #1* last year brought many into contact with the “arsonists” responsible. Now a second number has arrived, another very fine anti-civ zine from the Land Down Under.

This issue has a strong focus on indigenous realities, especially aboriginal resistance, in voices from more than one continent. Names that are now no longer unknown to most of us, plus primo contributions by Chrystos, Kevin Tucker, Ward Churchill, and others.

A booklet within the booklet is *Set Fires with Electrical Timers: An Earth Liberation Front Guide* (May 2001). Meant for educational/entertainment type purposes only, needless to say.

An impressive beacon of resistance!

Available from Black & Green distro. If you are outside North America, contact itsalready-here@wildmail.com

## *The Match! A Journal of Ethical Anarchism Issue #103, Fall 2005*

Fred Woodworth has been editing and publishing *The Match!* for more than a third of a century. Alas, it’s the 19th century that he’s part of. Standing pat with the classical radicalism of that era: atheist, in a wooden, materialist vein; rationalist to the core, no trace of other faculties; scientific in outlook, notwithstanding extremely pronounced blind spots in his method.

That’s for philosophic openers. The real gist of *The Match!* is its crankiness, its unconcealed vitriolic hatefulness for whoever/whatever Woodworth opposes. The principal review in the current issue takes on *Against Civilization* (2nd edition 2005, Feral House), edited by John Zerzan. Woodworth’s measured response finds this anthology “flooringly crazy”, a “sewer pipe”, the voice (in part, if not overall) of “you Taliban-Nazis!”, “sewage filled”, a “disgrace to the human intellect”, etc.

Woodworth does not discuss civilization (e.g. why he upholds it, why all these writers are wrong—including, e.g. Hesiod, Rousseau, Thoreau, Sahlins, Perlman). Instead he offers only the above, rather crazed epithets, plus some excerpts, which are meant to show that life outside of civilization is blood-thirsty, anti-nature, hideous, etc. These selective quotes reveal an embarrassing ignorance in terms of ethnography, anthropology, and archaeology. There has been ample evidence for decades about a far more benign human condition before civilization; as a rationalist, Woodward should honor this record. Instead, he has neither acknowledged nor attempted to refute it. He outdoes the endlessly discredited verdict of Hobbes, concerning precivilized life as “nasty, brutish, and short,” with his unfounded hyperbole and prejudice.

It is also clear that, along with anyone who rejects civilization, Zerzan is the object of this bizarre polemic. Several previous issues of *The Match!* were peppered with attacks on Jason McQuinn, erstwhile editor of *Anarchy* magazine—mainly stating that he was/is a fascist police agent. This outrageous and completely false accusation was repeatedly made by Woodworth. Now John Zerzan seems to have succeeded Jason in the Pantheon of the feverish editor’s Most Hated. Also in this issue are reports on JZ’s talk at the March 2005 Anarchist Book Fair in San Francisco. The reader is informed as to Zerzan’s unexciting performance as a speaker. Zerzan is (alas?) no rock star, entertainment-wise. What might have been pertinent is at least some commentary on the content of his remarks, their general points, cogency, relevancy, etc.

Apropos the zine’s subtitle, the principles of “Ethical Anarchism” adorn the back covers of *The Match!* Again, return to those thrilling days of yesteryear! The 10 points amount to anti-statism and nothing more. “Smash the State” is a classic anarchist injunction and it’s certainly valid. But even a century or two back there was more to liberation than that. In fairness, Woodworth does express opposi-

tion to contemporary technology (though not in his Ethical Anarchism). Unfortunately and predictably, he contrasts it unfavorably with his preference, various artifacts of 19th century technics.

No price. *The Match!*,  
PO Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702

## ***Stop That Train: the struggle against the rail link in Susa Valley***

In the northwest corner of Italy, north of Turin, a long-running and growing resistance has been taking place. Farmers, students, anarchists and many others have been battling the TAV, a projected high-speed train intended to link Italy and France.

This well-written 12-page booklet provides a cogent, detailed account, plus analysis, of this anti-industrial struggle.

“TAV, rather than simply being a new technology, is something more: it’s a new ideology, characteristic of the current evolution of capital. It is not only a technical support for the spread of merchandise and consumerism, not just a ‘medium’, towards which this murderous civilization conquers and poisons all the world; it is the embodiment of the way our society considers time and space. Along with many other technologies, it is also the message.” (from page 2).

Passionate and in-depth, an excellent read.

Contact: [istrixistrix@libero.it](mailto:istrixistrix@libero.it)

## ***Perspectives on Anarchist Theory Vol. 9, No.1 — Fall 2005***

Hi, we’re the Institute for Anarchist Studies and here’s our latest *Perspectives!* We like radical stuff but please, only when it’s in some other country (and preferably many decades old). Do not look here for any mention of eco-warriors, anti-civilization orientations, animal liberationists, or critiques of modernity/mass society/technoculture. Especially, no Primitivists need apply!

But we do offer a lot, especially in terms of leftist history. Fifteen pages on Bolivia, for example. Oh, I know you’re not likely to fully appreciate the thoughts of syndicalist labor official Cusicanqui—for example, when he said (in 1929) that it was time for indigenous people to stop being Indians and become workers (p. 21). And you may fault us for leaving off our devotion to the glorious history of Bolivian syndicalism so early. Yes, it could be argued that 1952 was really its crowning moment. That’s when it negotiated into existence a centrist government that betrayed all radical elements of the revolution.

Concerning what has been going on in Chiapas, we use the term “Zapatistas” but not “E.Z.L.N.” This is much like talking about the “workers” and their “glorious class struggles” while ignoring the unions (which always strangle worker autonomy). And like the rest of the Left, we stand ready to be uncritical of the next National Liberation Front operation, even though it should be painfully obvious what rackets they are, without exception. Expect no mention of the turn to electoralism, the goal of “organizing” indigenous people, and the overt nationalism of the Subcommandante and his bureaucracy.

AK Press shares our prejudices and blind spots. Viva their stars, Chomsky, Zinn, and Bookchin, even though none of them are anarchists. Viva reformism! Subscribe now.

\$10 per year, \$5 per issue, from I.A.S., PO Box 1664, New York, NY 10009

## ***Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, Manchester University Press, 2004**

Edited by Jonathan Purkis and James Bowen, this is a very fine collection of eleven contributions that discuss where anarchy is at these days. It is dedicated to the late John Moore, who wrote *A Primitivist Primer* (among other things), available from our distro. Interest in anti-civilization/green anarchy/primitivism has clearly been growing in recent years, but this, to my knowledge, is one of the first serious works to examine its impact and implications.

The twelve writers (a few pieces are co-authored) are mostly but not all academics, and most often not Londoners. Several of them mention the “rise” of anarcho-primitivism, but it came as a small surprise that the more industrial north is where they mainly live. Their essays focus on various aspects of current antiauthoritarianism, e.g. theory, sexuality/ gender, spirituality, tactics, technology, the relevance of anarchism, cultural matters, etc.—not that these are exclusive areas with no overlap! Not every offering takes up the newer ideas, but there is just about zero interest in traditional/ leftist anarchism and its dried-up 19th century currents.

With a fair amount of attention on U.S. developments, it seems odd that *Fifth Estate* is routinely cited as the main vehicle of anti-civ ideas. Sadly, FE has been moving away from those ideas, and for some time now has been mostly a zine of anarchism and literary/cultural/bohemian matters. A rather mild affair compared to its explorations and debates in the 1980s, in particular. In fact, the current FE (Winter 2006) opens with a reply by a former editor, who looks very skeptically down his nose at a letter-writer’s interest in indicting civilization.

But I digress. *Changing Anarchism* is a worthy attempt to survey new thinking, by some lively folks in England. Too bad they could not get a paperback edition to happen. I recommend getting hold of this book via interlibrary loan from your nearest public library, or maybe go to amazon.com.

## ***Powerdown Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World* by Richard Heinberg**

While there is nothing astoundingly new in this accessible treatise regarding a possible/likely future collapse, Heinberg does a good job contextualizing the current problem as well as those just ahead. It is well-written, clear, and concise with enough facts—economical, population, energy industry measures, etc.—to give substance to a topic usually fraught with either scientific jargon or popular fear-mongering. It is presented simply without being simplistic. Most valuable though, is its potential to provide a deeper, broader base to work from when considering our plight than the simplistic ‘peak oil’ focus liberals and many radicals seem stuck with. While he does not question the notion of civilization per se, he does provide some interesting historical and possible future scenarios regarding its end.

That said, Heinberg’s analysis suffers from similar weaknesses most environmentalists share, an inability or refusal to apply a critical analysis to their alternative solutions. These solutions usually rely on an enlightened critical mass who can be self-sacrificing, scientists and engineers to focus on appropriate/renewable (without ever defining what that is) technology, and the ousting of the US “neo-con” regime. The biggest waste of paper was the rehash of the Bush regime’s dirty deeds, from stealing the election to lying to the American people, to subverting the Constitution. He redeems himself slightly in his general critique of both Right and the Left leaders as mutual culprits (my term) in the struggle for control over the rapidly diminishing resources. While he puts a lot of blind faith in the environmental, anti-globalization, anti-war, and human rights organizations—referring to them as “The Movement”—he does direct his criticisms at some of their “blind spots”: they rely on a critical mass therefore downplaying their contradictions. Because he sees one of the main problems in over-population, he points out the problem environmentalists have in making it much of an issue since any means available for addressing

the population question always triggers a human rights response. He also points to The Movement's superficial look at the consumptive habits of industrialized nations (which would require them to change their own 'green' habits) as they focus instead on raising the standards (i.e. development) of poorer ones. Unfortunately, he drifts into the all too familiar territory of describing the change required to move from a consumptive lifestyle to that in his most optimistic assessment might curtail a collapse as 'sacrifice'. He also cites Cuba as a positive example of a State that has 'powered down' even though "Cuba still keeps political prisoners, suppresses dissent, and engages in capital punishment; some kinds of food are scarce and the people subsist on a fairly minimal diet; the Cuban economy is largely dependent on tourism; and the nation still imports most of its energy resources."

The book's strengths, and the only reason to spend the two to three hours necessary to extract its value, are in the way the author describes the interconnections between the various types of energy, economy, politics, war, the food and water supplies, and environmental destruction. His description of the 'peak oil' situation is more realistic and less ideological than most and his description of potential future scenarios probably right on. One scenario of a likely collapse that he paints is worth quoting in detail:

"Energy shortages commence in the second decade of the century leading to economic turmoil, frequent and lengthening power blackouts, and general chaos. Over the course of several years, food production plummets, resulting in widespread famine, even in formerly wealthy countries. Wars—including civil wars—rage intermittently. Meanwhile ecological crisis also tears at the social fabric, with water shortages, rising sea levels, and severe storms wreaking further havoc. While previous episodic disasters could have been dealt with by disaster management and rescue efforts, by now societies are too disorganized to mount such efforts. One after another, central governments collapse. Societies attempt to shed complexity in stages, thus buying time. Empires devolve into nations, nations into smaller regional or tribal states. But each lower stage—while initially appearing to offer a new beginning and a platform of stability—reaches its own moment of unsustainability and further collapse ensues. Between 2020 and 2100, the global population declines steeply, perhaps to fewer than one billion. By the start of the next century, the survivors' grandchildren are entertained by stories of a great civilization of the recent past in which people flew in metal birds and got everything they wanted by pressing a button."pg 150

Perhaps one day an *open-minded*—maybe even an anti-civ—anarchist will tackle the subject of a "post-carbon" world more deeply and critically than authors such as Heinberg. Until then we can avail ourselves of the efforts of merely *alternative* thinkers who question as thoroughly as their ideologies permit. As always, our challenge is to avoid the ideological, moral, and authoritarian traps they continue to set for themselves.

## ***Into the Forest* by Jean Hegland**

It's hard to find any fiction worth reading, rarer still to find one worth reviewing for an anti-civ anarchist journal. *Into the Forest* is just one such rarity. I read the 193 pages in just over a day; not because of simplistic writing, it is a remarkably well-written book, another rarity for a first time author. No, this book grabbed me and held me through one snowy night and into the next evening until I was finished; left both optimistic and wretched.

The setting – a small family homestead in a rural area in the early years of the collapse of the US economic and political system. Electrical blackouts, gas and food rationing were in place, eventually ending when there was nothing left to allocate. The main characters are two teenage sisters, the best of friends despite significant differences in outlook and dreams. The author uses their closeness and their distances to give depth to the way they deal with real and imagined fears. Peppered throughout are descriptions of the practical skills they used as conditions became increasingly harsh and even desperate.

It is the most practical, realistic, and engaging writing about what some call rewilding I have read yet. It is at times raw and shocking; others funny or tender. Most importantly, it never idealizes nature

or the young womens' courage. The author doesn't try to decorate the mundane reality that makes up most of their days, using these opportunities to explore their psyches and their relationship – all undergoing great changes as the world they knew and believed in disappeared.

There were a couple of times I was sure the story was about to degrade into something trite or predictable like most novels; each time I was pleasantly divested of that expectation. If you are open to a fictional account of a collapse of civilization and the inevitable challenges and wonders it would bring, *Into the Forest* might keep your attention on a cold winter night or two.

## ***Death of the Iron Horse* by Paul Goble (review by Joey Tomic)**

Little Luddites rejoice! Over the years Paul Goble has written and illustrated over 30 children's books on Native American stories and legends, mainly focusing on myths of the Plains Indians. In *The Death of the Iron Horse* Goble retells the events of August 7, 1867 when a Union Pacific freight train traveling from Omaha to Fort McPherson was actually derailed by a small party of Cheyenne. The story begins with the "Cheyenne Prophet" Sweet Medicine having a vision of strange bearded white men carrying flags and crosses coming from the East and leaving only death and starvation in their tracks. He saw them, "tear open our Mother, the earth, exposing her bones, and they bound her with iron bands. Even the birds and animals were afraid, and no longer spoke with people." As Leviathan slowly moved forward, devouring everything in sight, people began to hear accounts of a terrifying Iron Horse that followed along metal tracks; belching thunder while breathing out blackened clouds of smoke. People lived in fear of the day it would gallop right into their camp.

One evening, a group of youths, determined to protect their friends and families, set out in an attempt to turn back the Iron Horse. Coming over a ridge they came across unfamiliar "tracks" that continued on a linear path until they disappeared into the horizon. They all agreed that, "these must surely be the iron bands binding our Mother, earth," and decided they, "...must cut them apart and set her free." So armed with only tomahawks and knives they set out to remove the chains of the death culture that restricted her breathing. As dawn approached, they noticed the eye of the Iron Horse in the distance, and journeyed further to confront it. The horrifying screams and hisses of the train startled the Cheyennes' horses who ran from the monster, as arrows bounced off its metal hide. Suddenly, the Iron Horse made a magnificent leap into the autumn air and came crashing down, the boxcars all slamming into one another, and slid until she came to a rest. Once again there was silence in the air. "The Iron Horse does not breathe any longer."

In a celebration of victory and wild elation they opened her belly and began breaking open the freight, playfully sifting through the peculiar commodities of European globalization, keeping only the items they could use or trade (coats, blankets, knives) and playfully discarding the rest. They danced as they tossed green rectangular paper into the mighty winds and dashed across the prairie unfurling bolts of colorful cloth behind them. A few stopped galloping noticing something in the distance. Another Iron Horse was coming, this time carrying soldiers. They promptly gathered the souvenirs and prepared to head back to camp, when one suggested they should, "burn this and leave nothing for the soldiers." The boxcars were set alight and they made their way back towards home. Stopping upon a high ridge they looked back at their unmediated expression of desire and exclaimed, "Now our people need not fear the Iron Horse."

What Goble's book accomplishes is that it addresses issues of direct action, sabotage, and resistance to native genocide not from a detached liberal viewpoint of condemnation, but rather as an expression of desire for (a continuation of their) untamed freedom. The Cheyenne knew that President Lincoln, who signed the Railroad Act of 1862, could not be persuaded by a petition or candlelight vigil, and as Goble explains in the introduction they, "were simply fighting for their lives, liberty, and their own

pursuit of happiness.” Wonderful book for inviting conversation on the topics of colonization, progress, and technology as well as property destruction and indigenous struggle. In explaining that technology was not our servant but rather our master, Henry David Thoreau (who undoubtedly recognized the industrial nightmare that gave birth to the Iron Horse) once wrote, “We do not ride upon the railroad, it rides upon us.” Essential reading for children.

# Practical Rewilding — Lost Rhythms & Forgotten Moons: an introduction to attunement and stalking, by Snype

**I have killed when I wasn't ready to.** And I have killed when I was. I wasn't ready to kill when I was desperately trying to imagine myself as some 'back-to-the-land woodsman,' using glue traps for mice in the cabin I hung my steel traps in. I caught many things in those leg hold traps when I was lucky enough not to have the trap pulled away with an animal somewhere dying in a metallic grip. Sometimes I caught twisted off toes, sometimes terrified raccoons who gnawed their own foot off but still could not escape. But mostly I caught the sense of ease, a numbness toward death because with these traps I didn't need to understand the life of those I was killing.

"[The steel leg hold trap] forms the prow on which iron-clad civilization is pushing back barbaric solitude, causing the bear and the beaver to give place to the wheat field, the library and the piano," according to their inventor Sewell Newhouse. I didn't catch those animals, a technology did, and it held them there overnight until I could simply 'dispatch' them.

Many indigenous myths illustrate the problems of extreme ease, of luxury. Maple syrup once flowed directly from trees, but we became lazy, fat and greedy off it and so the maples thinned their blood. Now we must harmonize our lives with the trees who teach strength and attunement through their seasonal sap flow that seems unpredictable to those not listening. It seems only recently that our society is realizing this consequence of surplus, but we are not doing anything about it.

Steel leg hold traps provided that luxury for me. If I so desired I could take thirty raccoons a night, kill whenever I wanted, or thought I needed, spring, summer, rain or shine. And why shouldn't I? This was simple living, right?

**I was ready to kill** when I let those traps rust and my understanding of specific animals grew. I have found that with enough patience one can come quite close to wild animals and, if one needed to, hunt with little or no tools. But taking a life requires one to understand the cycles and patterns of the life one is ending, and embracing the flow of wildness that death is kindling. Not listening to the rhythms and pulse of the land means one will only kill – take but not receive. This is not some abstract concept, animals have cycles, mating periods, gestation, birthing, rearing seasons. Some are rare in an area, others too oppressed in a place to grant further exploitation.

It pains me to see some folks who harvest road kill do so with no intimate knowledge, no understanding of the animal they are skinning and eating. The simple act of butchering and consuming flesh is enough of a 'wild experience' for some and they begin to see the roadside as a wild-food dumpster, sometimes actually excited to find animals slaughtered by cars. Their relationship is not with animals so much as it is dead animals, their knowledge, although important, is limited to gutting and cooking and does not extend into the very real movements and life ways of the slain 'food-source.' Many others who begin to understand that without cars they would starve, pick up the act of predation with the same attitude. They don't delve into what has been lost: a living day-to-day relationship and understanding of what animals are doing and why. Our wild relatives are no longer the tricksters, daydreamers and playmates of our youth, ancestral past and hopefully future, but simply viewed as 'things-to-kill.'

I've met so-called bear hunters who didn't even know what bear tracks looked like. I've heard punk kids talk of killing turkeys, snakes and 'possums and have no idea what it means to be those creatures, roosting in pines, shedding their skin, licking the afterbirth of their young.

I cannot seem to bring myself to write on the specifics of killing, or my experience in doing so. For me these are not for sharing, dumbing down the experience, turning the blood into words, dead and concrete.

So this is not necessarily a 'how to hunt primitively,' but a taste of what should be known and understood before undertaking predation. Even if predation is not the goal, this is key in understanding the lives of our wild relations, especially if we are to once again join them.

**Deer.** In the autumn, bucks begin to rub the velvet off their antlers on saplings and small trees. These rubs are very conspicuous and serve as a form of communication of the males' readiness to spar with each other, mate, and many other things we can only guess at. Bucks also make elaborate scrapes with their hooves and scent them with urine. Watch for flirting deer that are sniffing around these scrapes. The males follow the females, grunting, and are very focused on sex. This one-track mindedness has been taken advantage of for eons by predators. Female Whitetails that don't become impregnated during their first estrus (which occurs usually mid-fall and lasts about a day) become receptive again about a month later. Her gestation period is around 200 days, and she leaves her girls-only group for this time to give birth in private to one to four fawns, although four is rare. Whitetails usually give birth around April or May and Mule deer around June to July. A deer relies mostly on detecting motion and smells, but can't seem to look upwards and cougars have learned the advantages of a perch when hunting. But don't ever go thinking animals can be so neatly pigeonholed and predictable. Does can sometimes have antlers and some can get pregnant in the spring and give birth in summer, but fawns in the winter almost never survive. Does almost always travel in herds, so when you think you're stalking one or a few, you may be surprised when four more are flushed, tails flagging and are gone without so much as a rustle of leaves.

**Birds** are so extremely diverse it seems poor judgment to lump them all into one subject, so one's best bet is to look into decent bird books. Many begin mating in spring and can mate several times throughout the year. Birds such as geese and ducks are most wary of the stalking fox when they have left the nest and are on land, but cannot yet fly. These birds will be almost full-grown before obtaining flight plumage in mid-summer and a shore feeding flock with unwary non-feeding 'lookouts' has been caught unprepared many times by stealthy bobcats. Some male ducks, like mallards and black ducks, molt around late May, losing flight feathers and gathering for safety and storytelling in large numbers in marshes. Grouse rely on camouflage and can be snuck up on quite easily. Like the introduced pheasant, they flush when one comes too close, but grouse often alight on a nearby branch. Birds have always been mysterious and magical, disappearing for seasons, riding thermals at dawn's first light. And yet they are so familiar that many have become just background noise to those lost in the gears of the industrial system. They turn up their radios when sparrows roost outside.

**Beavers'** presence is the most obvious and landscape-altering of the wild animals. It seems to me that they have exceedingly good eyesight despite the claims of books, but only at night when they are most active. Conspicuous nipples adorn the chest of the female, around whom the family unit is centered. They typically mate in late winter in more northern climates and have a gestation period of around 120 days. When kits are born, one can hear soft 'mewing' calls muffled by lodge walls. It is at this time the young from two years ago leave on their own and the young from the previous year stay to help out. The father is also out living in temporary bank burrows during the raising of the young. He can be seen cruising the limit of the family claim throughout the year. The young swim at one month but never accompany mom for daylight swims until about the time males build scent-mounds (around late summer). These are boundary lining communication posts of heaped mud upon which is placed strong smelling castoreum used for ID, courtship, and other mysteries of beaver language. This is very strong and wolves that root around in one beaver's scent and enter the next family's area may be pleasantly surprised to see the beavers coming straight for her, hissing in territorial defense. It is easy to tell if a



lodge is active if, in the fall, there is a cache of unstripped sticks outside, stuck in the mud and barely breaking the water surface. This is for winter use when the water freezes over. When beavers don't or can't build a canal to foraging areas they will leave the water, constantly on the lookout for wolves and coyotes. The slightest sound may send them bolting for the water, whacking their tails thunderously. An ancient warning.

**Raccoons** are often the first to reclaim areas ravaged by sprawl. This makes them loathed the world over. Stories abound of their ingenuity, and I am most entertained when coon-hunting assholes speak in disgust of huge males waiting near water to dive onto their lead coon dog and hold its head under until it drowns. Coons can be seen napping on tree limbs, and tracked to den holes or hollow trees that they may share with others or even different animals. They emerge around sundown if the weather isn't too blustery; otherwise they den up for days, riding out storms. Breeding takes place sometime around midwinter and lasts about a month. The sex is a very long, vigorous and noisy activity and gestation is 63 days. The mother and young become an active foraging family in summer and in fall or winter they often split up. Some females stick around to help out and don't leave their mom until the new siblings arrive or even later.

It is painful to wash away ignorance in this world of war. I found a raccoon in the gutter in early spring, mutilated, nipples swollen. A mother. The next day I returned to find two more coons, the size of robins curled up and dead. They must have been moving from one den to the next and no doubt saw me roll their mom's body with my boot. Their eyes wondering, fixed on me from their grassy hideout, were now drying, shrinking beads in a motionless form.

**Frogs**, when they are looking for love, let everyone know it. They gather by the thousands in ancient fishless pools and marshes, and call out at all times of day. Once weather forecasters, pranksters, storytellers and prey they are on a serious decline due to atrazine on cornfields and other civilized weapons. Like rabbits, snakes and squirrels, they are many and diverse so it is best to check local field guides to the inhabitants of your bioregion.

**Fish** are also diverse and very bioregionally different, but trout and salmon have been shipped around the world and are still being relocated for 'sport.' The west coast native rainbow trout is commonly planted in the cooler water regions of this continent and it has a sea-run form called Steelhead that run up rivers like salmon. Salmon run upstream for mating in the fall and Steelhead in the spring. Both fish, where there are no dams, can make it into tiny feeder creeks and headwaters, dragging their bellies in shallow water, mating in small pools. Natives fished by torchlight and I have tickled the belly of passing salmon at night when they were seemingly blinded by bright skylight.

**Possoms** have extremely elaborate lives leading up to weaning. Depending on your bioregion, mating can occur January to August; a second litter sometimes happens in the South. Gestation is no more than 13 days and the litter is born so tiny that 16 babies can fit in a tablespoon. They mature in the mother's pouch, drinking milk and riding on her back when old enough. They are weaned at 10 to 12 weeks and stay with the mom until large enough to venture on their own. They are sexually mature at around 9 months. 'Possoms are nocturnal and move rather slowly on the ground, their defense if jarred being "playin' 'possum" – faking death.

**Muskrats** are social animals and, in southern climates, can breed year-round. In northern climates there can be three peaks of litter production: late April/early May, in June, and again in late August/early September. The mom-to-be makes birdlike calls when breeding and her gestation period is about one month. She has a postpartum estrus where she can become pregnant again shortly after giving birth. They have an average of six kits, which are weaned and achieve independence at 30 days old, although not fully grown for another 7 months. Muskrats rely much on movement to spot predators and a stalking mink may catch one at its habitual feeding site if she moves slow enough or with the river current. They have well established runs and undercut banks. Sit still long enough along a riverbank, cooling your feet in the water and eventually a muskrat may crawl over your legs.

**Striped Skunks** are mild hibernators and awake to spring thaw and a brief estrus period. Gestation can be around 2 to 2.5 months and litters usually have six skunks. They are weaned at about 45 days and

often travel daily from one den to the next in single file behind their mom. The family sometimes splits off in summer. The males often take off alone. They are generally solitary but will den up communally in the winter. Biologists tell us this is just for survival, in an attempt to give mechanical attributes based on cold emotionless conduct. It's easier to destroy that way, but I know skunks cuddle and chat and love.

**Stalking doesn't always require movement.** Often it is reading a landscape, a pattern of logs or the bend in a brook and tracking the lifestyle of local residents so they can come to you. This intimacy is needed now more than ever. It is vital that we reclaim this familiarity so we don't depend solely on technological aids, the false reach of binoculars, masks of camouflaged fabric, or the cold grip of steel jaws securing prey while we sleep. I've learned more of wildness and my place in it through a ground mole's playful squirming in the palm of my hand or watching salmon swoon than I have any library. Eventually this stalking calls for an internal stillness, an awareness beyond words and without field guides, but for now we have to relearn the deepest roots of knowledge and it requires generations. But we are not alone in this, probing in the dark. We have the fading memories of ancient trackers lying motionless in writing and waiting to be recognized in the dusting of snowfall...

*Following a coyote trail through the marsh at sundown is no easy feat in late winter when the ice is thawing. Droplets of blood stain where she urinates, she is in heat and will be for only a few more days. Woodcocks spiral dance for mates under budding Tamaracks and Birch sap is running from frost cracks. Who needs a calendar when the earth can sing?*

## “Technology of Life”, by Laurel Luddite

**We are born** without claws or fur, with dulled teeth and weak digestions, lacking so much of what we need to survive in the world. Yet it is the world that made us this way. In this interconnection of relationships, the deer springs away on light muscled legs as the wolf flashes capable teeth, the raven flies sharp-eyed towards the kill, and the human... the hungry human thinks about it.

We are dependent on others. On mediation. In the communication of the hunt we are voiceless and depend on wood and stone to speak for us. This is our place in the world, defenseless, dependent, always in need and in gratitude for needs met.

Is that the burnt smell of hurt human pride? Does the ego rise up, rationalizing, claiming complete autonomy? Fine. Live a few days without lifting a tool. When you limp back cold to the campfire, we can talk about the security of our dependence and the way gratitude becomes celebration.

Others mediate between our bodies and the world, and this is OK. We are in debt to these translators, and this is also OK. The problem comes with sophistication and the loss of our senses, when we no longer know where payment should be made. An arrow speaks directly for me and I am fully involved, from stone flake to sinew, understanding the cost; a gun distorts my message and cannot be repaid. Somewhere in the world there is a hole where iron ore was taken, a tree felled, hours of strangers' lives gone forever, a debt I can never repay, gratitude I can never give. And for this computer? Air poisoned, bodies poisoned too, and I can not acknowledge their loss.

**Stone:** *taken from the earth, it leaves a visible hole. Something should be given back. You don't want to leave the ground scarred and wanting. It would whisper in your sleep, anything could fall in. Health, peace of mind, your luck, your children. So you give something small but valued. Satisfied, the earth will rest again.*

There is always a price for what we take. Sometimes it's as obvious as a hole to be filled, sometimes as subtle as the air disturbed. Cultures that live well with the earth realize this, or never forgot it. Tobacco, pollen, gemstones, blood. What small and precious things do we have, now, to give back? The earth patiently waits. But not forever.

**Wood:** *these are bodies. Stems and roots are flesh. A wooden bow partners your arm, fibers contracting and expanding to throw the arrow with more strength than you could manage alone. These bodies have their own lives; reaching for light, carrying water, feeding the world. But they will agree to become part of yours. Ask first. Listen. Respect the answer. Sometimes it is no. But more often it is yes, the quiet generosity of trees that sustains us.*

A gift could be words, could be breath. Songs give back beauty to the world as antidote when scars are made. Breathing for plants, they take in what you offer. And who hasn't been enriched by a story?

**Bone:** *the value of this gift is known. Blood spilled reminds us of our own and touches our hearts. Like other connections of flesh to flesh, we are learning to say yes. Like other connections, we are learning respect. You become familiar with your own desires and comfortable with your dependence on others to meet them. You penetrate skin, strip muscle away, get to the white shining center of it all.*

The technology of life is beautiful. It looks and feels right. It does not impoverish or scar the world, or allow us to do so. It is, of course, not neutral. When bonds of relationship are broken technology spins out of our control and when technology spins out of control it breaks the bonds. A tool ripped from the earth, destroying lives as it is made, is a tool that rips and destroys no matter what it may be used to create. The words on this screen may be beautiful at times, but it is a beauty that comes in spite of the technology, not because of it. How much more beautiful are the songs and poems whispered

in a lover's ear or shared around the fire. The digging stick that tends the wild, not the plow that tears it up. The basket, not the plastic bag. Beauty and balance. Our real place in the world.

# Letters

## weird grey area

collective@greenanarchy.org, i was talking to a friend about anarchy, more importantly green anarchy when i decided to just google the word and see what comes up. it made me really sad to find that the first three hits were for an online role playing game and only after some scrolling was i able to find a link to the philosophy. which led me to your site. even though i have my issues with what i see as anarchy, i still see, love and appreciate the sheer beauty of the ideal and to see something bred so far outside of the circle choked and drug into the middle of it only to be resurfaced as a marketing tool and an online role playing game makes me sick. its so amazing to me that in a world of total mediocrity more people arn't more extreme. how people dont feel any kind of urge to break something, start something, or just scream is beyond me. or maybe its becoming a more normal feeling to want that. i mean being homeless is becoming an ideal vacation for a lot of people i know....i digress.

ive read about green anarchy and things of that nature before and flirted with the ideas for some time now. there was a zine in circulation called *Profane Existence* that introduced me to the ideas in literary form.

i spent the past hour reading the "about" section of your site and now im back in this weird grey area of feeling that i dont understand anything about the world around me. I havent really felt that way since i was first getting into punk.

really i guess i wanted to say thanks for that, and if you could send me any info on obtaining past publications of your zine and getting more in the future itd be greatly appreciated.

## Confessions of a Grad Student

ga,

i got through most of the last issue, and i liked a lot of what was in there. obviously, as a grad student, i went straight to the poverty of the student life article. i thought it was really good. i've always tried to think of myself as above the whole finding diamonds in mudbook buying coffee shop alternative band listening crapola but reading that, the parts i didn't identify with, i saw myself as resentful of the people who do identify with it, which is not a whole lot better because my resentment is mostly from not being part of the 'in crowd'. uggghh. how depressing. the whole thing about education being taken up into industry really rings true, and i think i see it even more strongly than the person who wrote the article. the only interest almost any student ever has is how to regurgitate shit so they can get a good grade, which is not a good thing. but another thing that wasn't mentioned, which i think kind of even strengthens the view concerning the poverty of student life is the institutionalization of genuine thinkers within the university. i think there are dangerous thoughts out there, but by putting them in a university all the teeth are taken out of them, precisely because of the way school's conduct activity (which was laid out really well in the article). also, it's a good way of ostracizing these people. i was thinking of ward churchill who you interviewed in your last issue. he may as well be in a loony bin for all the respect he gets as a professor. there's not much difference in the two institutions cuz they both work to take ideas out of the streets so to speak. anything he says is dismissed by virtue of his being a 'liberal hippy professor' even if he doesn't actually fit any of those labels. so at the same time that the ideas taught in university are getting more tame, the teachers are also getting increasingly marginalized.

that's what bums me out the most, cuz i do see people within the university who have something to offer, but there is no desire to listen outside of the university's walls. so it's like a vicious circle. to get a job one has to present palatable ideas, which makes universities more and more professionalized. at the same time those who do sneak in fail to get taken seriously because they don't simplify what they are saying.

later, alain

## I Found Your Magazine

**Dear Green Anarchy,**

I just finished the current issue of *Green Anarchy*, which I surprisingly found at the local alternative bookstore that I sometimes frequent. I am not part of the anarchist movement, nor have I ever considered myself an anarchist, but the cover and title intrigued me. I was active in the sixties and seventies, mostly revolving around anti-war issues, and inspired by a whole bunch of folks from my grandmother to Abbie Hoffman to Emma Goldman to Bob Dylan. I have spent the last thirty years paying attention to what is going on, but really more from the sidelines as I raised my two daughters. I wouldn't call myself your typical mom though, raising kids alone seemed to get harder and harder as the sixties were becoming a distant memory, and looking back, with my kids grown, I don't know how I did it. I think the idealism, although often misplaced, of that time helped me through. We lived simply, at times in the mountains, on farms, in college towns, and sometimes in cities, but always with passion and purpose. But, somewhere along the way, the day-to-day and the trappings of this world began to slowly envelop us, until it was hard to tell us apart from our neighbors. I would say I noticed this most in the early nineties, as my kids entered high school, a trade-off we made after the previous decade of homeschooling; their desire to interact more with other kids, and my need to get more fully employed. I guess when I finally started to wake from this daze of conventionality and conformity, about five years ago, I tried to search for meaning again, a sort of re-enlightening period, although I found very little of worth. My oldest friends were mostly unrecognizable to me, either because they had become everything we had tried to move against, or because they had fallen into some wacky trend or fad that was supposed to help them, but instead created a new burdensome reality to contend with. I tried to get involved with some peace groups when the war on Afghanistan began. I met some nice people, but they lacked a deeper understanding of what was going on, what has always been going on, and they seemed to be only finding a benign outlet for their frustration. I had remembered the protests in Seattle a while back, but for some reason they didn't stay lodged in my menopausal brain. Then I saw your magazine. I was precarious at first, anarchy can be a scary thing, but as I turned the pages, I saw myself reflected in them. Thank You. I don't think I'll ever burn an SUV or toss a rock through a window, although the latter might happen depending on which day you catch me, and I may not have the eloquence of your writers, but I have found something here that resonates with me down to my bones. I'm now motivated to look around my town for folks who share these ideas, and try to connect with them deeper, if only to talk, or perhaps look for mushrooms, or just maybe create another world, outside of, and hopefully after, civilization.

Thanks again,

Alysa

PS: Thanks especially for the Bob Dylan lyrics, "Revolution, Zen, and Dirty Dishes", "Stones Can Speak", the post-feminist essay, your awesome reporting on activities around the world, and your willingness to dig deep and say what must be said.

## Someplace We Have Never Been

**Hello, GA friends,**

I noticed that in “Seven Lies About Civilization”, all of the lies get extensive rebuttals, except “We can’t go back”. This receives two sentences, the second one admitting that there is some truth to it. This doesn’t surprise me, because the statement is not a lie, even though supporters of civilization use it in a manipulative fashion, to maintain the idea that we can’t put an end to civilization.

But those of us with an anti-civilization critique who make this statement mean something very different. We are pointing out that models from the past cannot provide a way for confronting civilization as it exists today. Instead, any serious attack against this civilization must rely on imagination and the courage to leap into the unknown without models or answers. This doesn’t mean we can’t draw inspiration from a wide variety of past human experiences, but this inspiration has to spark imagination, not promote any single model – even hunter-gatherer life – as the universal ideal.

In “Seven Lies”, the author uses the ruins of past civilizations to “prove” that we can go back. That argument doesn’t work. We do have some idea of what actually happened to many of these civilizations. For example, Babylonia was overrun by Persian civilization which was conquered by Greek civilization which was conquered and ingested by Roman civilization which also conquered Egyptian civilization. Roman civilization disintegrated gradually at its edges, breaking up into a feudal civilization that gradually evolved into the civilization we all know and hate.

Indian, Chinese and Japanese civilizations maintained themselves from ancient times into the modern era when they were ingested to some extent into western civilization.

Sub-Saharan African civilizations existed into the times of European colonialism and seem to have decayed under its pressure (often after intense battles against it). I know that some civilizations in West Africa have maintained some cohesion.

The Mayans seem to best portray a civilization simply collapsing, but most Mayans, who lived basically as peasant villagers, continued to live that way – but apparently without the nobility and priesthood extorting portions of their crops from them. In fact, this seems to be the reality of all civilizations up to now. Most of their populations lived as peasants or herders, and continued to do so when the civilizations collapsed. There was no going back, simply a continuation of life either with the disappearance of ruling class blackmailers or a mere changing of the guard. So the ruins of civilizations do not prove the possibility of “going back”, simply the impermanence of what is.

But the reasons we can’t go back arise from present reality. We now live in a global civilization that has spread its physical and mental poisons throughout the planet, destroying life and environments everywhere. The process of decivilizing cannot be a return to anything that has ever existed. Previous realities to which we might hope to return are simply no longer there. Instead, decivilization will be the conscious creation of a world freed from civilization and technological systems, a journey to someplace we have never been, armed with creative imagination, a passion for living life to the full and a ferocity that refuses to ever submit.

For the destruction of civilization and the creation of free life,  
Wolfgang Landstreicher

## Beware!

**Green Anarchy,**

You people are fucking nuts! Not only do you want to force us all into your pathetic attempt to “live wild”, but you really think that you can bomb, shoot, and burn your way there.

You would be dangerous if you actually could do anything.

Beware. This world is filled with people who hate you.

## The People Outside

### Green Anarchy,

I was once in the food co-op where I shopped when a group of people approached. I could tell from their opening words that they wished to impose a course of action on me, even though nobody had agreed that they had a right to make decisions. They did not wish to discuss the matter with me; they acted as if they did not care what I might think.

A Native American person speaking to a university class provided an example of a different kind of approach. In describing salmon fishing, he said that his indigenous group had to make sure that the tribes further upstream had enough fish. I think that a failure to consider the interests of other communities could have led to a little war.

One vision of an anarchy seems to be based on self-chosen affinity groups. The trouble is that people outside the meetings of these groups might be affected by the decisions they make. A course of action is de facto coercive if it is simply imposed on other people.

People could try to make arrangements so that the activities of one group do not impinge on others. Some Native American communities used to have hunting territories separated by a buffer zone that would insure against a member of one group accidentally straying into the territory of another group. Each community could then try to conserve the animal populations within its own territory.

But conflicts are bound to occur, requiring discussions between groups that would be the equivalent of the diplomacy of world politics today. Negotiations can be difficult when the people involved must rely on intermediaries rather than face-to-face interaction. The point of view of the people outside the meeting may not be as easy to understand as in the salmon fishing example I mention above. The alternative to a mutually satisfactory agreement is coercion.

Milton Takei

## The Cradle of Anti-civilization

### John Zerzan,

please speak a few words of encouragement to the MOTHER NATURE PARTY OF GOD via <http://www.anarchistu.org/twiki/view/AnarchistU/SubmitRecycle>. Your brief testimonial will inspire the growth of Toronto's anti-civilization anarchist freeschool. Restricted (except for your published works) by no anti-civilization tours, I would ask you to consider my anarchist freeschool request as a test case for your measuring the positive effects of an Internet outreach.

*The medium is the message - the Internet is the anarchist.*

Some would say that the Mother Nature party doesn't exist, in denial of cosmology or of the universe. Anarchists can boycott elections and armed with Nature, voting is obsolete. Mother Nature's ethereal *single name ballot is seen by gangs in the streets* at polling booth riots. The fake Democracy systems of selfish individualism and theocracies can't escape the revenge of our Dictator Mother Nature's anti-civilization bio-weapons of mass destruction - animal vectors of prions and micro-organisms. I am a 69 year old progressive in Toronto, and a prolific promoter of *GreenAnarchy* at Toronto's large (AFU) *Anarchist Free University*. If you need to familiarize yourself about me, see inside my head by reading my nonprofessional website or googling my main username 'godhas4legs'; or here where I have inserted most of the links at AFU. ((Please promote John Zerzan by pasting his reply into <http://www.anarchistu.org/twiki/view/AnarchistU/SubmitRecycle> because I don't have the names or e-mail address of his assistants. (please make sure that Zerzan gets this message.))

John Gilbert -

AnarchistUniversityOn\_ca@allstream.net OR  
godhas4legs@allstream.net



John (Jesus) Zerzan speaks THE WORD of *the* MOTHER NATURE PARTY OF GOD amongst his nonviolent devotees in Eugene, Oregon: The Cradle of Anti-civilization.

EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS A MEMBER OF THE MOTHER NATURE PARTY OF GOD the blinded are not turned away, nor even the duped double agents of the Green Party

## My First Night In Prison

As I enter the world of imprisonment the bars close behind me. I can only see nature through printed paper. The thought of trees being cut without elves there to protect them leaves me with my hopes and dreams of our future.

I pray to the energy of the earth. That others will feel the burn inside. I visualize elves being compelled to act on targets of their own choice. Green Anarchists are faced with many challenge, but we can crumble the sidewalks as a large tree does when it grows. Our relationship with action is listening to others who have went before us. If I would've not acted in anger, I would've vanished into the night. I know we can move forward, past Leftist bondage and into a true state of Anarchy. What good is all the wealth in the world if we can't drink the water or breath the air? IS there really such a thing as luxury in a world without AIR?

Civilization is a global threat. Developments being constructed – everywhere. That gives us plenty of places to release our urge. Attack and let burn, all the answers will come in the mail and in a pile of rubble. Our ziplit is a commitment to freedom. I mean who in their heart could tell on themselves and their friends (like Billy Contrell). I would not be able to set behind bars knowing I took a life from somebody and gave them a life of bondage. Standing counts, 23 hour lockdowns, harassed living environments, deadly police force and broken trust. In quiet, we can destroy civilization and become wild. The wilderness is a spiritual action.

Rewilding and connecting to our core. Nihilism and the path of most resistance, we shall be free from domination. It's not just a dream, it is a direct action, In my cage I ask you to be my hopes and dreams. Will you please be my hands and my eyes. Will you hit and run? This is all I ask as I spend my first night in prison. You will never know what its like to be away from freedom if you can feel what I feel and do what I do.

WASTE

E.L.F. Grotto-noir Collective

written in St. Cloud, Minnesota Department of Corrections

James Tucker #218447

## Food, Good!

Without the complicated verbage that makes reading slow and understanding confusing, I'll simply respond to the tradgic article of issue #21 *Food Not Bombs*.

The mission of this project is correct and well founded. All folks needs are the same: it is never wrong to extend help, offer love and feed the hungry. "What have you done for me lately?"

Luainta Sefintze

Great Falls, MT

**Editor Note: For additional "critical" responses to our "ridiculous and embarrassing" FNB piece from issue #21, go to: [www.greenanarchy.org](http://www.greenanarchy.org)**

# News From the Balcony, with Waldorf and Statler

## Post-left? This isn't even post-liberal!

We have always been sympathetic to the magazine *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*. They seem really grumpy. They hate most of the right people. Their archaic layout made us comfortable. The new issue seems like an unpleasant departure for a number of reasons. They appear to have fallen for the *Green Anarchy* 'more fonts equals more good' style of layout. Much like having our catheter replaced reading all these fancy, spooky, and crazy fonts just tires us out and makes us numb to the assault we are enduring.

What is the worst thing about this new issue? An article by Mitchell Halberstadt "Beyond Exclusion" that is more incomprehensible than a primitivist rant with no punctuation or capitalization. It starts with the shaky premise that sovereignty belongs to God not people, careens into some gibberish about how justice is social (just like prison I guess) and ends up stating that democracy is the best form of government yet. So much so that "it may even have a peculiar, unique propensity to evolve toward a viable condition of anarchy." I spit out my teeth out when I read that. What the hell are the publishers of *Anarchy* thinking to publish this kind of anarcho-liberal hogwash?! What is next, signing email petitions for MoveOn.org or online polls to impeach the president?

*Where is the quality control!?! You are out of here!*

## Who is so sectarian that he was voted most likely to send others to the camps?

Andrew Flood is on a mission to rid the world of improper anarchism. He insists on a strict diet of unions, organization, and seriousness (there will be no laughter in the revolution). A regime of rhetoric, nitpicking and a considerable writing output will be his legacy. It's too bad that he hasn't learned to balance quality with quantity as a few of his recent pieces demonstrate. He is the bran of the red anarchist set, read because he is ideologically healthy, not because he is good.

Truly embarrassing is his obsessive need to distance primitivism from anarchism. His latest so-called essay "Is primitivism realistic: an anarchist reply to John Zerzan and others" states an anarchist tenet I had never heard of before, "having a free mass society without a state." Obviously if you start from the assumption that the goal (of anarchists) is a mass society any solution that doesn't level or sandblast difference, or valorize the society over all is not going to be anarchist. Clearly anarchoprimitivism doesn't qualify by this metric nor does anything but the crassest kind of syndicalism. This kind of moronic defining of (subjective) terms and then declaring of (objective) reality is exactly what is wrong with kids today. Too much Internet. Too much junk food.

*It was better when kids had to use chalkboards to share their crazy ideas with the world.*

## Is NEFAC the Viagra of the working class?

The current strands of anarchism have become as mundane as jerking off to reruns of the Golden Girls while singing the Internationalé. Indeed my constant laments about the rampant banality of many of the current somewhat-anarchist organizations has really begun to make my bones ache like the moral consciousness of a neophyte anarchist boy at a workshop on male privilege.

The latest bone-jarring piece is NEFAC's "Workplace Position Paper." Evidently, in an attempt to gain more (dues paying) lackeys, they have begun making blatant apologies for people "gainfully employed by unions." Perhaps their logic is that first they came for the insurrectionists but I wasn't an insurrectionist so I said nothing, then they came for the prositus but I wasn't a pro situ so I said nothing, then eventually they came for the most boring tendency and then I realized that we had all nodded off. So in best Boy Scout fashion they are making their apologies far ahead of time for the compromises they are going to make on our behalf.

These Anarcho-swindicalists say they want "... a radical reorganization of the workplace. We want workplaces that are run by directly democratic federated workers' and community-based councils. We want the highest decision-making body to be general assemblies of workers held on the shop floor and in the communities where they live." This is great news for all our anarcho-union so-called friends who while mucking about in shameful bureaucracy have begun to organize the saps that work at our local Twinkie™ factory. Hurrah for worker-produced Twinkies™, finally something nutritious that promotes tactical and ideological unity and the good cause of worker self exploitation. I never realized that work could be so much fun!

*Boo hiss, Back to sucking on the tit of the AFL-CIOTM for you!*

# The Nihilist's Dictionary: 7 – Artificial Intelligence, by John Zerzan

The pursuit of **Artificial Intelligence** proceeds apace toward the highest moment of science and technology so far. The achievement of **AI** would mark a qualitative change in the actions, culture and self-perception of the human race, and what underlines this is how far this departure has already taken place.

Marvin Minsky described the brain as a three-pound computer made of meat, an outlook echoed since by **AI** theorists, such as the Churchills. The computer is constantly serving as a metaphor for the human mind or brain, so much so that we tend to see ourselves as thinking machines. Note how many mechanical terms have crept into the common vocabulary of human cognition.

It is the whole train of mass production, with its linearism and homogenization, that carries forward toward the currency of machine models, toward the non-individual and non-sensual and away from the sense of the natural and the whole. With the movement of **AI** (and robotics) the human becomes inessential. *Humanness* becomes inessential.

The computational metaphor that sees mind as an information-processing or symbolmanipulating machine has produced a psychology which looks to machines for central concepts. Cognitive psychology ground itself in the mathematical orientation of information theory and computer science. Indeed, the field of **AI** is now co-extensive with that of cognitive psychology and philosophy of mind. Computer modeling reigns from academic disciplines even to popular usage. In 1981 Aaron Sloman and Monica Croucher wrote "Why Robots Will Have Emotions," which calls to mind *Psychology Today* for December 1983, dedicated to the "Affectionate Machine," a limitless tribute to the promise of **AI**. In the January 1990 *Scientific American*, John Searle asks, "Is the Brain's Mind a Computer Program?" while Patricia Smith Churchill and Paul Churchill pose the standard "Could a Machine Think?" The tentative answers are, I believe, less important than the presence of such questions.

Decades ago, Adorno could already see the contemporary diminishing and deforming of the individual at the hands of high tech, and its impact on critical thought. "The computer – which thinking wants to make its own equal and to whose greater glory it would like nothing better than to eliminate itself – is the bankruptcy petition of consciousness." Even earlier (1950) Alan Turing predicted that by the year 2000 "the use of words and general educated opinion will have altered so much that one will be able to speak of machines thinking" without fear of contradiction. His forecast clearly dealt not with the state of machines but with a prevailing future ethos. Growing alienation brings a seachange regarding the whole subject, which ultimately includes a re-definition of what it means to be human. Finally, perhaps, even "emotions" of computers will be recognized and will be confused with what is left of human sensibilities.

Meanwhile, the computer simulations of physicist Steven Wolfram supposedly replicate freely-occurring physical processes, leading to the dubious conclusion that nature itself is one vast computer. On a more tangible, if even eerier plane, is the effort to create synthetic life via computer simulation, the progress of which was the big news from the second Artificial Life Conference at Santa Fe in February 1990. What it means to be alive is also undergoing a cultural redefinition.

Relatedly, another wonderful development is the Human Genome Project of the National Institutes of Health, a \$3 billion government attempt to decipher the three-billion-digit genetic sequence that encodes human growth. The massive Genome Project is yet another example of the dehumanizing paradigms engulfing us: one Nobel laureate has asserted that knowing that whole sequence would tell

us what human beings really *are*. Add to this awful reductionism the potential vistas the project opens up for genetic engineering.

Computerized neuroscience, joined by **AI**, is pointed toward an interface of the artificial and the human on a deep neurological level. The trend, if unchecked, proposes nothing less than the cyborgianization of the species, including the possibility of permanent genetic changes in us.

In the February 5, 1990 *Forbes*, David Churchbuck wrote of “The Ultimate Computer Game: Why Settle for the Real Thing if You Can Live in a Dream that Is Safer, Cheaper and Easier to Manipulate? Computers Will Soon Make Such a World Possible.” His lengthy subtitle refers to the advent of “cyberspace” games that simulate total environments, a quantum leap from video games! Quite a testimony to increasing passivity and isolation in an increasingly artificial and empty world. Those who still see technology as “neutral,” a mere “tool” existing apart from the dominant values and social system are criminally blind to the will to nullify of a death-trip culture.

[*The Nihilist's Dictionary* was originally a regular column in *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* over ten years ago. The entire dictionary is available in a zine format from our distro.]

If the machines are permitted to make all their own decisions, we can't make any conjectures as to the results, because it is impossible to guess how such machines might behave. We only point out that the fate of the human race would be at the mercy of the machines. It might be argued that the human race would never be foolish enough to hand over all the power to the machines. But we are suggesting neither that the human race would voluntarily turn power over to the machines nor that the machines would willfully seize power. What we do suggest is that the human race might easily permit itself to drift into a position of such dependence on the machines that it would have no practical choice but to accept all of the machines decisions. As society and the problems that face it become more and more complex and machines become more and more intelligent, people will let machines make more of their decision for them, simply because machine-made decisions will bring better result than man-made ones. Eventually a stage may be reached at which the decisions necessary to keep the system running will be so complex that human beings will be incapable of making them intelligently. At that stage the machines will be in effective control. People won't be able to just turn the machines off, because they will be so dependent on them that turning them off would amount to suicide.

– F.C., *Industrial Society and Its Future* #173



The Library of  
Unconventional Lives

Various Authors  
Green Anarchy #22  
An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action  
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