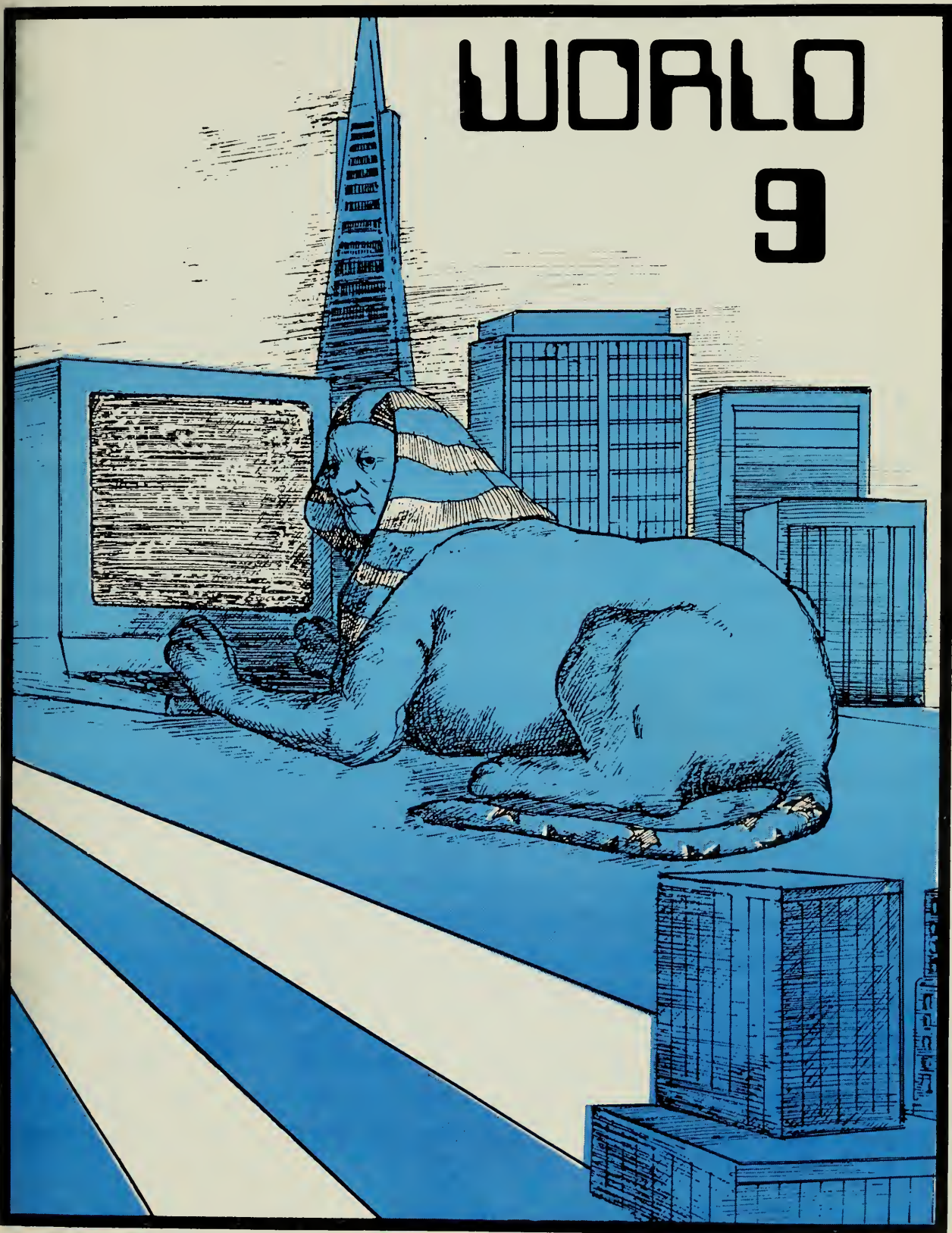


PROCESSED

WORLD

9



PROCESSED N N N N N N WORLD

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All of the articles in Processed World reflect the views and fantasies of the author and not necessarily those of other contributors or editors.

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CREDITS: Zoe Noe, Bradley Rose, Linda Thomas, Maxine Holz, Stephen Marks, Helen Highwater, Chris Winks, Mark Leger, Lucius Cabins, Shirley Garzotto, Rickie "K", Clayton Sheridan, Steve Stallone, Louis Michaelson, Mark Barclay, Jo Falcon, Jeff. G., Jill Allison, Meadow, and others . . .



People —

Your efforts provide a forum and vehicle for communication that is very worthwhile. . . I suggest that the notion that the “traditions” of the “revolutionary movements” can be drawn upon for any kind of guidance as to “what is to be done,” is totally misguided. The past does *not* produce solutions; history is *not* liberation. Analogies about re-inventing the wheel, not putting one’s hand into the fire a second time, etc., are specious and unhelpful. Even in *PW*, one can see (as one trend and variant among many) the tendency to pursue and produce *rhetoric*, which is the verbal mattress ideologues place between themselves and the cold, hard floor of reality’s basement. To the extent that the temptation to “draw upon the past” is taken in a serious way, *PW* will founder and fail, as just another vehicle for processed thinking. Ideology is a Big Mac of the mind.

The great value of *PW* (and for which I send you hugs and kisses) is that, for the most part, it has not (yet, at least) succumbed to the temptation to reduce the world as it is, to a series of mental “spots,” à la left wing commercials/singles. I regret it when people take as revolutionary, the primeval practice of

dividing the world into us/them, pig-dog-lackey-subhuman robots on the one hand, and revolutionary, freedom-loving, good-hearted folks, on the other. To the extent that people partake of such delusional ways of viewing the world, they tend to create these realities around themselves.

The exciting thing about *PW* is people talking in the language of life (which has no “revolutionary tradition”), about their actual experiences. Will was right in *PW*#6 when he spoke of apathy as the *functional politics* of the great (and, yes, usually silent) majority. When people see *actual* alternatives, *not* theoretical visions, then there will be movement. And let’s be clear about what an “alternative” is: I am currently a member of a large, “progressive” food co-op in the Seattle area, which promotes “alternative” insurance that turns down applicants if it appears they might use the insurance; has a “democratic” internal structure with no printed set of documents describing how the levers of power within the co-op are available to its membership; and which has a current money surplus, the disposition of which is being used *not* to reduce prices for the membership, thus freeing them a bit from reliance

upon the *real* status quo, but instead, is earmarked for further co-op expansion, via the creation of more stores. Not all that's an "alternative," *is*, unless your idea of a real choice is Safeway vs. Tradewell, or Brand X vs. Brand Y.

Well, enough for now.

Sincerely,
D.R. — Seattle



Dear PW,

I think you have initiated the next great craze for the U.S.A. and enclose an offer to purchase 99% of your stock via our dummy-corporation fronts in the Seychelles, Panama etc. In addition we propose a clothing corporation selling 'Processed World' T-Shirts, buttons etc.; a 'people's stock exchange' to help community groups support our industrial efforts in the Third World; a private public relations organization to stimulate the imaginations of young Americans and increase their demand for our novelty items through flashy but essentially harmless pseudo-terrorist acts against straw capitalists created by our 'biographical staff'; a chain of 'Processed World' discotheques serving "Marxist" drinks at high markups to the children of the privileged classes, together with an entertainment corporation whose records and videos, released under camouflage of a number of seemingly separate legal subsidiaries, will allow young Americans passively to simulate the process of social criticism and thus give them the illusion of independent personal existence as promised by the U.S. Constitution, all the while hooking them on our products. We shall create a large labour force by hypnotising large numbers of losers into the belief that since "wage

labour" is fundamentally immoral, they should work on strict commission and not expect any guaranteed support whatsoever from us. In court we can maintain that our status as a political organ exempts us from the minimum wage statutes. We have already drafted 20 self-help authors to prepare 'Books for Success' on the lines of "Think for Yourself in 30 days!", "How to be Rude to Capitalist Swine", "How to make a fortune as a political activist", "Processed World's Buyer's Handbook", "Socialist Realism: The Magic Key to Self-Expression", "The Girls of Processed World: Beauty Tips for Aquarian-Age Proles", "1001 dirty Marxist Jokes Old and New", "How to Make Nouveau-Expressionist Prints in Ten Easy Lessons", "Death to the AMA!" (naturally we have our chemists at work now on 'Marxist natural healing potions' which should guarantee us a 3500% retail markup) — etc. etc. Our publishing operations will include an endless series of romantic novels where the lowly word processress hooks a high-level management executive and, amidst a flurry of torrid sex disguised as noble political action, eventually persuades him to leave the wicked Capitalist Anthill and be her front man in a lucrative new 'Processed World' enterprise.



We are sure that you will find our offer exciting, since after all you are good Americans and know that making a profit is a nice thing for everyone. Americans love to think they are riding the crest of the future and we are in a position to flatter their vanity right to the limit in this respect. And after all — if they are happy with our products, surely we must be fulfilling an authentic need?! You will all end up with honorary doctorates from the university of your choice and lovely homes in Manhattan and Santa Monica. In the meanwhile you will have \$25,000 cash for the rag direct from us and a full 2% of the profits from future related enterprise, and until our advertising sales managers regard 'Processed World' as ripe for nationwide glossy distribution, you will maintain nominal editorial control! (These terms are subject to certain legal provisos which we can discuss after you have signed the enclosed contracts.) We know that you will find our offer scrupulously fair and a credit to the great American tradition of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Lucre; because if you do not you will be eliminated within two weeks and your children mysteriously refused credit for the rest of their lives. What a shame that would be, nicht wahr?

Yours truly,
John Q. Standard
Chief Executive Officer
The United States of America



Dear People:

Being a part of the bureaucratic red tape that puts people in little boxes and then forgets where they are placed, I am belatedly answering your kind missive, not knowing

when you will receive this, but knowing that in due time you will.

As you are well aware of, I am a prisoner, and there are some things which are deemed unfit for my rehabilitation. It seems as if your magazine is included in that frame of mind. So when I do get your magazine it is only about three weeks behind when it is sent to me, sometimes even later. I am wondering if it is not read by the staff here and then passed around, which is not a bad idea, in point, but of little help to those who may read it. In order to understand what is said a person has to first have some understanding of their own worth first and no one who can work in this system has that kind of understanding.

I have no money, but if I did, I would have to pay the state for the privilege of receiving your magazine, which is something that I refuse to do. That is why I brush my teeth with salt and use some of the most caustic soap in the world (Pink Death) when I shower because I will not pay these people for the thrill of using Colgate.

I have enjoyed every issue of your magazine and I would like to keep receiving it, even if it is not conducive to my well-being in the eyes of the people who mis-run this hell hole, that is the only price I will pay for it while I am in here, to me that is worth more than money. I could order many hot-dog magazines which are offered, (i.e. hot-dog, fuck books, with pictures of naked women and men, condoned and approved by all the reigning members of the parole board), and I would be considered a model convict, as long as I did not masturbate, which is frowned upon, as being an illegal handling of the sexual organs.

I have done some writing and I just came out in the magazine *Yellow Silk*. It is a simple pleasure



to sit and let the human element of my being come alive. It is a sin for man in this place of lost souls to try to hold on to his humanity, it means that the system has not performed the final operation on a sleep starved mind. I read and listen to the news, and I hear the people who in their fear are calling for more people to be put into prison, and I cannot understand their reasoning for such an outcry. Prisons are made to employ the unemployable, it is a haven for the unskilled, for the redneck illiterate to visit his hate for anyone who can read a few more words than him/her. It is a place for the birth of hate/sexual fantasies which haunt a mind until they become a part of his every waking hour, and a ghost that clings to his back once he is released, back among those who must have hated him with the same malice, the same vastity, as the dreams which wake

him in the night, leaving him limp with release, at the sight of anger exploding in many colors before his closed eyes. Prison is a pit of snakes waiting for spring to come so that they can go forth and spend their poison in the waiting veins of whoever. It is also the home of self-pity, and selfishness, and survival at all costs. Yes it is good to sit and let my human-ness expand itself and replant its roots in the world of humans again. Did you know that upon receiving your letter I first put it to my nose and sniffed it like cocaine, breathing deep gulps of its humanity, letting it rain its waters on my cancerous insides healing me and rubbing me back in touch with my female humanity, and for the first time in many months, I slept with my arms wrapped around me and I was at peace.

Thank you,
F.C. — a Calif. prison

Dear PW,

I apologize for replying on this 1930 Royal, but I have fallen in love with it while trying to learn how to type. To think that this was once a standard office tool, and a means of oppression. My, my; how times (don't really) change.

I must agree with most (though not all) of what J.S. of Richmond says about information processing equipment and its relationship to humans in the workplace. I don't buy his cottage-industry dream-boat. But I do agree that info is important to *any* side (with which PW agreed).

A computer is only a tool, and like any tool, only as good or bad as the purposes to which it is put. A plow is a plow is a plow. If you are being economically coerced into wielding a plow to till the lands of a master who owns both land and plow, it is oppressive. But should that same plow be owned by yourself and used to till your own land, that's another matter altogether.

Work sucks. But what are you going to do? The problem is with the men who own the tools, and the relationships they foist upon their workers (management included). Office work is full of drudgery, as is factory work, or any kind of work — whether in a corporate-capitalistic republic, a military fascist dictatorship, a socialist democracy, or in an office in downtown Moscow. As distinct from the technology, the office situation, with its worker/manager relationships, is not a tool, but a form of human organization. It is the forms of organization that are the problem, not the tools.

Current technology is no more or less insidious than any past technology. Using tools positively allows humanity to do such incredible things as preserve food and escape the ravages of the elements. And with tools humanity will eventually control the so-called ineluctable

laws of economics (the owners do so already). Things do not have to be as they currently are. But tools such as those commonly found in the workplace will be necessary for the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of the presiding edifice.

Oh, hell; who cares? Let's face it: all that deconstruction and reconstruction is *work*. Who needs it? The tools are just a taunt, a dare. Easier to hang-out and trash out *their* workplace. "If I can't stand around and bitch, I don't want any part of your revolution."

My major complaint with PW is the way it exploits the natural worker/manager animosity. This is an easy shot; the manager is the visible "boss." But the trugh, of course, is that manager and "worker" alike are drones for the *owners*. That the owners have exploited this animosity between the two camps is understandable — anything but unity among the drones. But why does PW agree with the owners on this point? Again, seeing the commonality of our plight, and putting that understanding to daily use is *work*.

It is fatuous to hold managers responsible for upholding the current system, while excusing oneself for being a worker on the grounds that one has no choice but to work. There are far more workers than managers; assuming that every human being counts the same, the workers provide far more support for the system than do the managers. And in total dollars they purchase more of the goods the system produces, which also supports the system. Don't be a cry-baby and say you have no choice but to work in an office, that's bullshit. The fact is, any alternative to the workplace of the owners would be even *more* work. This is due to the present nature of the system as the owners have it designed. But if enough

workers chose an alternative, the system would have to change. But the prospect of more work inhibits any such readjustment. It seems effort itself is the culprit. Like I say, what are you going to do?

I enjoyed Tom Athanasiou's piece "World Processing: Technology & Instability." Clearly, the separation of work and income is the answer (the question is how). With increased un- and under-employment due to computers and robotics (which I feel will be far greater than even Tom suggests), will come an economic paradox: who will be the market for the products these robots and computers churn out? For economic (as well as political) reasons that should be obvious, the power of the owners rests upon a healthy, growing economy, which in turn rests upon a relatively affluent middle-class that can purchase the commodities of industry. A miniscule professional and technocratic elite will not support such a system.

If the new technology is seen as a matter of labor-saving devices, the same wages being paid out for less work, the system will remain intact. But other than preserving the current system, what economic enticement does such a view offer? On the other hand, if the new technology is seen as a means to maximize profits — less wages due to less labor — economic havoc will result. But this is probably what will be required to instigate any real change in the current system.

As for myself, I am considering starting an open-forum 'zine in the Atlanta, GA area. As you are probably aware, unlike the Bay Area,

Atlanta is no hot-bed of worker reform, so I have no intention of forcing the zine in that direction unless reader response indicates such would be accepted. I'll content myself with general complacency-shattering and mind-opening, let whims and stances fall where they may.

Therefore, I am intrigued with the *production* of your publication. It is wonderfully layed out. And typeset! And has a glossy cover and colored ink! and 68 pages worth! With no adverts! and all for \$1.50! Even the savings you make with bulk mailing can't account for it. So who subsidizes PW? Have you actually found a print shop willing to publish you for a loss (tax-write-off)? Or have you another source of funding? Pray tell. I'm beside myself with the projected costs of a small-run, plastic plate, typewritten zine. So how do you do it? (And don't tell me it's merely a matter of the economies of scale!)

Thanks again. Keep up the good work.

G.H. — Macon, GA

Dear G.H.,

I generally agree with you that computers are "tools" and can be used "positively." However, most forms of modern technology can clearly not be disassociated from the social organization that accompany their applications (including most uses of computers). In other words, some tools correspond closely to the way they are currently being used. Part of the danger associated with nuclear power is the oppressive and hierarchical security apparatus that goes along with the installation of power plants. Developments in numerical control computer technology which have been applied to automating machine tooling goes hand in hand with workers' alienation and their disempowerment by management.

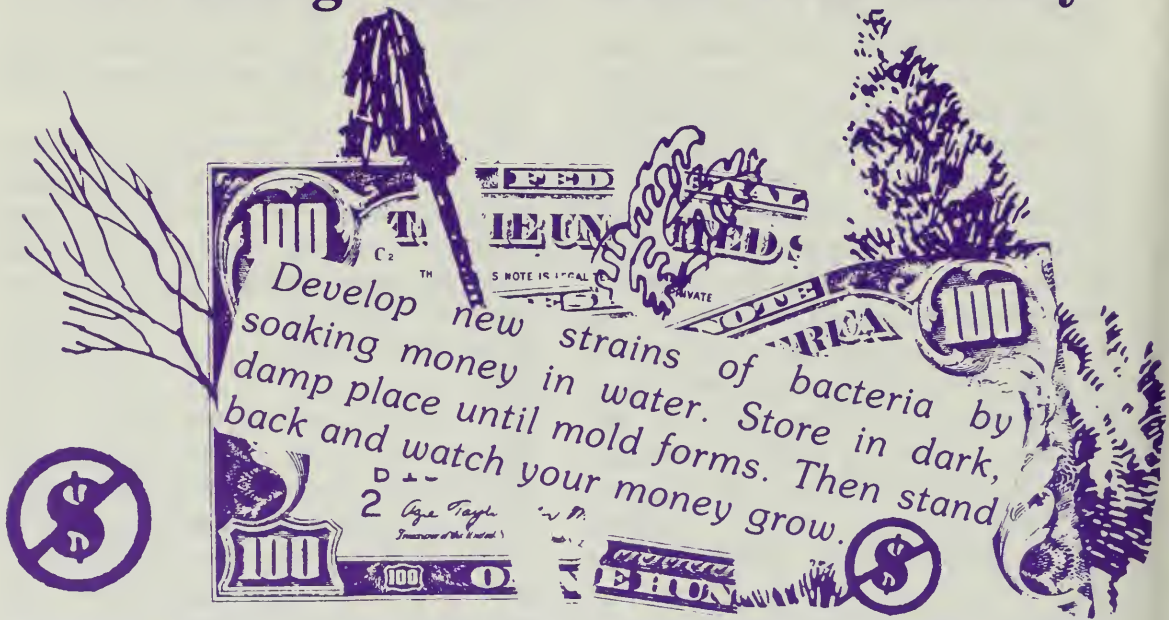
"Public Poetry" part 1

No poetry!
 No poets allowed
 Poets speak softly.
 But they scream too loud.

by Linda Thomas

Tired of feeling that money rules your life? Develop your "Financial Creativity" with the following guidelines:

101 Things To Do With Your Money



Furthermore, looking at computers simply as "tools" obscures the productive process they currently involve, i.e. tens of thousands of intensely exploited workers throughout the world.

It's all very well to speculate on how modern technology could be used if it was in the right hands, and applied to projects of direct social value. But the fact remains that aside from some significant advances in fields such as health care and library science (and even here there are plenty of examples of adverse effects of modern technology), the immediate results of widespread implementation of much of modern technology are disadvantageous to workers and others directly affected. I think it is important not to lose sight of the current reality of conditions created by these tools.

Although it is true that, in many ways, managers are just drones and more likely than not as trapped by their jobs as workers, their position and influence in the office is dif-

ferent. Managers usually have more power over the very details of office life that can make the difference between a job that is "bearable," and one that really sucks. The manager is the one responsible for enforcing work rules, assuring high productivity, punishing workers who come in late, etc. Their power can be used against the workers, and few managers can resist using it. In rare cases, humane and sympathetic managers can use their clout to shield and protect workers who are "under" them. But because they have greater responsibility — to the owners, to the company and its profit rate, they usually identify more with the company and its interests.

Workers have a "choice" to make — they can act like snitches or brown-nosers and undermine their co-workers, or they can act in solidarity with them, even if the choices are rarely that simple and clear. Managers also have a choice, but often this choice is already made by their decision to accept

managerial roles, especially if their job includes monitoring and accounting for the productivity of their staff.

PW keeps above water financially because most of the labor that goes into publishing, including printing, photography, and typesetting, is given freely by friends and collaborators. Over the 2½ years that we have been producing the magazine we have accumulated a lot of skills in these areas, so our expenses are mainly materials like paper and ink, and postage.

Sincerely,
Maxine Holz



Dear Processed World,

I was a secretary for 16 lousy years. Then I met Lou and he took me away from all that shit.

Sure, Lou's a little weird, and this mask gets so hot that sometimes I think I'm going to start shitting my bikini panties. So?

But then I look around at this beautiful condo and, hey man — I'm loaded on ether from noon on (which is when I get up) till 4 in the A.M. (which is when Lou usually crashes) (the insane sluglike whiff brain) and yeah you better believe this beats *the office job!* *In spades it beats it!!* So tell all your readers, especially those poor mousy little secretaries and file clerks!!! Tell those 9-5 gals or gally-slaves to find themselves a well-heeled pervert like Lou — Kick back — and start digging it!

E.R. — Los Angeles

P.S. You can always spot the *real rich sickies* like Lou because they always want to snort lady "C" out of your box on the very first date. Just say to them: "How High?"

Dear PW:

At first glance, PW came as a bit of shock. I have made my living for thirty years within the business establishment where all complaints are carefully swept under the rug of "good form." This sanitizing, by the way, has the effect of giving the misfit the impression of being a one-of-a-kind, and therefore abnormal.

But upon an unhurried reading of issue #7, I realized that you are not a bunch of wild-eyed anarchists; your readers are sensitive, intelligent, articulate people who simply have the courage to say what we all know to be true: that working for the establishment is boring and demeaning, and that management is a closed society of bull-shit artists conning the workers and the public. PW makes me realize that my long-standing feelings of alienation and being exploited are shared by thousands (millions?) of the others in this great country of ours.

A little bit about my background. Like J.S., I am in computers. After 20 years of programming and systems analysis (whatever that is, and yes, 20 years — I'm 51), I realized that my skill lies in the area of technical communications: writing manuals and giving courses. I'm particularly interested in the highfalutin' language members of both the business and computer establishments employ to conceal the truth and mask the basic emptiness of what they appear to be saying. I

Keep the faith. I look forward to reading many more PW's.

P.M. — New Jersey

P.S. Yes, I work for Exxon.





Alex Igloo

Dear Processed World,

I've been reading your mag for several issues now and find a certain amount of affinity with your concerns. There are only a few other mags that share your concern with making changes in everyday life. *Tabloid*, *Left Curve*, *Cultural Correspondence* and *Processed World* though not immediately similar, all share the vision of changing this work-a-day life.

Although your focus "on the job" provides a necessary forum for "talking back" your basic approach could equally apply to "life-time" vs. "job-time." What good are better jobs, bosses, conditions if a person's real life — one's own time — is worse than the time at work, i.e. *WHY* do people actually *want* to stay at the office rather than go home?

The time spent on the job, admittedly the largest block of time in a person day, is not the whole day. As I'm sure many of you putting *Processed World* together know — it is the time after the job that living

becomes vital and inspiring. To help people recover this vision in spite of fatigue, in spite of all the problems, in spite of every obstacle, is heroic — and I, for one, admire your efforts to encourage people to question their perspectives.

On a slightly different subject — computers — I'd like to note an analogy between the steam engine and computers. It was the steam engine and its evolution into the gasoline engine that drove the industrial era. The new driving force is the electrical engine — computers. The similarity between the rows and rows of data entry operators and those of say the rows of women seated at sewing machines in a garment factory has not gone unnoticed. The application of technology hasn't changed. Just as there were mechanics for the steam/gas engine there are now programmers and technicians to keep these engines going. When the steam engine was first introduced to the public there were those that feared its consequences, as

there are those that now question computers. However, their fears should not be of the technology but how and by whom it is used. All tools can be used to create a life worth living.

Pleasant Dreams,
K. — S.F.



Dear PW folks,

I've got a few belated responses to your "Special Sex Issue" (#7) that I'd like to share with you.

Though I disagree with Holz' article and the large number of other articles in more orthodox Left publications in the USA about the issue of sexuality and pornography, my disagreement doesn't come from a kneejerk reaction or from tailing of the anti-pornography movement.

The issue which seems to be missed by Holz and by both sides of the Great Porn Debate within the women's movement and the Left is that of ideals and ethics in the area of sexuality. When talking about changing life we have to have some idea of what we want to change *to*, as well as what we are changing *from*. What sexual styles should we promote and which should we not? Which emotional and sexual responses are in tune with our ideas of the way that the world should be which are not? Unless you would argue that our loves and sexual encounters are outside of our ideas about society as a whole (that public:private split that seems to hold true in the Left generally), in which case there is little to be said, there *are* norms that should apply to these areas and ideals that we can aspire to.

If all sexual and emotional tastes are equally valid, from the most stereotypical and traditional heterosexual-monogamy-from-first-fuck-

to-death, through homosexual coupling, tribal, and group, and sado-masochist, and onanistic, and so on and on, not to skip incest and rape, and prostitution, then all attacks on any form of pornography are invalid. If there are invalid forms of sexual expression, oppressive forms, then material which promotes those forms is also invalid, *n'est pas?*

I think that a good case can be made for the feminist idea that 'the personal is political' and that our personal lives set up the frameworks of oppression (typical idea in the anarchist movements, too). So, if you want to change life, you have to change and analyze ALL OF LIFE. I believe that a sexuality that was based on equality and consent, on persons relating to each other and themselves as whole and unique individuals, rather than objects interchangeable with other objects, as bodies that fit together and were all of a part and all erotic, rather than just assholes, breasts, vulvae, mouths — the parts that the pornographic image takes from the body — is a good thing. Sexuality that unites one with oneself and others rather than making one more alone and more alienated, that is surely a good thing?

Why don't we start thinking about good living, good loving, good sex? Pornography does not promote these things. Regardless of the images that are presented, and some *are* erotic (not very many, to me), this industry is making people more alienated from themselves and each other by selling their sexuality back to them. That is not a good thing. It lies about sex by removing it from feeling and making it purely a physical action, like another technical problem, like something an engineer could solve. That is not a good thing. It reinforces differences and divisions between women and men. And, worst,

it takes my body away from me and tries to sell it back to me.

I am not sure why the orthodox Left hates the anti-pornography movement, because, though I recognize an anti-sex, and anti-male tone to some of their pronouncements, the Left is generally *more* opposed to sex than the anti-pornography movement. I think it might have to do with the Patriarchy, which the A.P.M. believes exists and cuts us off from our bodies and nature, while the Left believes that all oppression is economic.

I hope PW remains a satisfying thing for y'all to publish and that you don't succumb to pressure to be 'just another boring Leftist journal.'

Love and Kisses,
S.W. — Toronto

P.S. Reading *Processed World* seems a bit hypocritical to me, cause I'm trying to get an office job so that I won't have to work with boiling alkaline soap and electrified acids in an electroplating plant anymore. . .



Dear PW:

When I saw that PW had finally published a piece dealing with gay issues, namely Stephen Marks' "Sex Roles/Social Control," I was thrilled. It was the first article I read in issue #7. As I read it, I found myself nodding in agreement at almost every point. But upon finishing, I felt somehow disturbed by it. I read the article again, but this time, instead of nodding my head, I found myself thinking "Yes, but. . ." Several months later, I picked the article up again in an effort to draw out some of my reservations, those nagging "yes, but's."

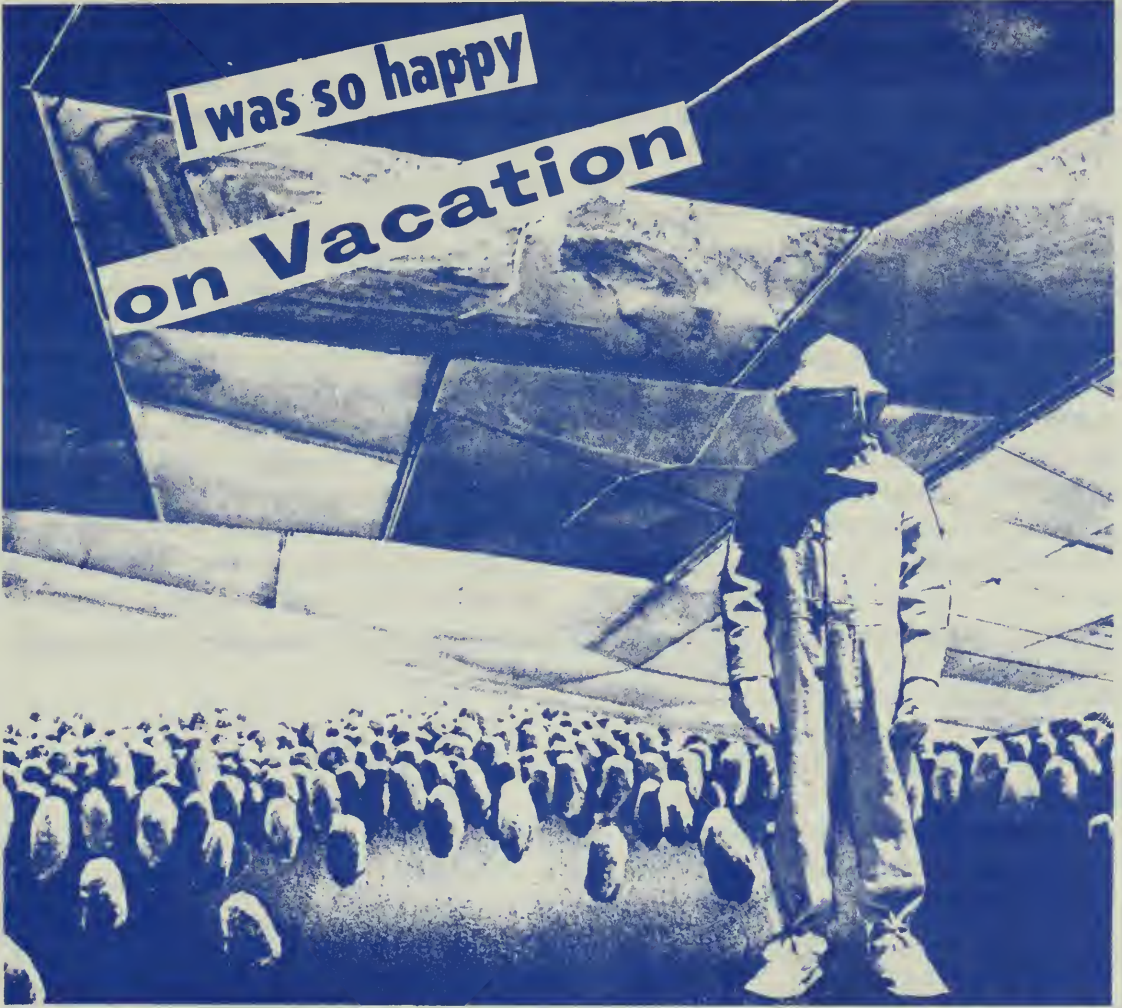
I guess the main problem I have with the article is that Marks seems

to see the gay and feminist movements as passive victims of corporate/media manipulations to spawn new forms of consumption and new methods of employee pacification. The history he presents is too neatly packaged, bound in a ribbon of cynicism. He ignores opposing strains and breakthroughs in the gay and feminist movements.

Marks sees women as pawns of the corporations at every turn. First the corporations collude with psychiatrists and others to keep women at home. Then women break through, only to reinforce oppressive stereotypes at the corporate workplace. Nowhere in the piece does Marks mention the feminists critics of Friedanian careerism, or feminist efforts to create lives and institutions apart from "mainstream culture" (whatever that is).

In a similar way, Marks seems to see sexuality not as an innately beneficial desire, but as an easily preyed upon impulse — a poor substitute for "self realization" that is used in the same destructive way that drugs and alcohol frequently are.

Although I share Marks distaste for real estate speculators, I think that the urban gay migration and the consequent "refurbished inner city neighborhoods" are a little more complex than the way he presents it. He cites the Berube article on WWII, but seems to forget that the cities were as much a haven in the 70's as in the late 40's and 50's. Some of the later gay migrants were "counter-cultural" types, but many were not. This raw accumulation of people became the critical mass for some vital, heavily textured communities. Some adapted symbols of traditional American culture. But symbols do not mean the same thing in every context. The sentence "Gay marching bands waved American Flags and gay men lavishly squandered their disposable in-



out-of-control data institute

comes on material symbols of mainstream status and security" conveys a great deal of more-radical-than-thou attitude that skips over a meaningful analysis. Besides, I happen to have a very good, very progressive friend who is in the marching band.

Marks seems to be working around a theory of commodification, i.e. capitalism's ability to turn needs into commodities for sale on the marketplace. The frequent problem with using such a theory is that it fails to examine the genesis of human needs or how those needs can snap around in subversive, unexpected ways at the powers that be. He implicitly denies the possibility of autonomous action in a schema that presents people controlled at every turn by command centers of power. In the end, the

strategy for change that Marks proposes is the abstract call to "challenge sex role stereotyping" and "reconsider our relationship" to the system of "social manipulation." Could Marks' failure to point towards a more concrete political direction be a function of his failure to arrive at an understanding of the holes and rips, as well as the seams, of the present social fabric?

M.L. — S.F.



Processed World:

Below is a letter written to Lona Jensen. . . Individual in a mass of lemmings. I'm in NY now and unemployed. In 36 years — 18 of them working, I can't remember more

than 2 periods of time in my life when I've felt better.

When I was temping at Levi-Strauss one day *on line* at the "copy machine," a young man was beating and cursing the machine. The effect of this on the "structured ones" was that they were "appalled." It was great. It was perfect. It was magic. He had a flair — this free spirit. A gift of displaying himself in truth of what he thought and felt. The "structured ones" on-line thought he was nuts. I knew he was. The letter to Lona Jensen was written after I was instructed to look "professional," shave my legs, etc.

M.G. — NYC

Dear Lona Jensen Temporaries:

Regarding our conversation this morning, there is something you are overlooking, or just not understanding. We are all individuals and yet are expected to look alike, professional, expensive, etc. At 34 years of age, I have my own style, my own taste and preference. I won't be suppressed by "dress codes" which can only be another "rule" made to be broken. Who has the authority to instruct others on how to comb their hair or how to dress? Will we all one day be instructed on how to think? Obviously I think I look fine and am quite comfortable. You don't have to agree but you should be able to

BRAIN ROT

when professor T put chalk to board
he lost his thought
somewhere in that chip micropuff
dissolved under the first yellow speck
on green board

he bowed his bristly head and
looked at stubby fingers
still clutching chalk
cuticles smiled
they weren't telling

he could not remember why
board hung stagnant on block wall
chalk dangled from board
hand grasped chalk
warm body ossified
in 2 shiny leather shoes

why
to 25 squirming students
he spewed words about books
he barely recalled titles of
much less contents

professor T barely recalled yesterday
did not remember this morning

somewhere between
the collapse of the roman empire
and rise of postmodernism
an alarmclock sounded
he dressed and drove to school

once
twice
for weeks
months
years
eons

the empire kept collapsing
the alarm sounding
he and postmodernism rising
and brushing their teeth

papers and books kept coming
and words
like empty boxes
stared
until one day
professor T

drew
blank

mind
board
faces behind him

and as void cannot fill void
professor T turned slowly
found that limp muscle
called a tongue
parted his lips
and said

"class dismissed"

by Sheila Goodman Brown

accept. Dress codes are for the army. I am not in the army. I am an individual who prefers if everyone does not look alike, think alike or smell alike. I am neat, clean and have my own way of using clothing. This society is losing its individuality by suppressing one's self in the falsity that we should all look alike and be comforted that we all are alike. But. We are not. I will not conform when it comes to what I eat or what I wear. That is me. Not a "professional," but a person, making my own choices. I will not alter my taste to suit another, a corporation or a fashion of the day. I thank you for acknowledging me for me.

— M.G.



PW—

2 comments on PW#8:

a. It wasn't funny, how come? Have we all become overwhelmed by the external shit?

b. Referring to Dorothy's poem ["My Lead at Work", back cover #8], I've been in the position of her "lead." Chances are, she thinks the same way Dorothy does, but Dorothy will never know it if she "don't talk about anything/When she's there."

E. — Petaluma CA



Dear PW:

During the past year I have been a word processor with over a dozen temporary agencies in the Los Angeles area. Working through temporary agencies has its benefits. The pay is good (usually \$10 to \$12 an hour) and working on a temporary basis allows me to continue in graduate school. The drawbacks

to this kind of work, however, are clear. Living with a ball and chain around your leg for seven hours a day is a source of tension and strain which those who are not subjected to it cannot understand.

The degree of hegemony of the word processing systems varies from place to place. Although some secretaries use the word processor as an appendage to their main tasks, there seems to be an increasing tendency to form word processing pools (a variation of the typing pool). This results in people (usually women) being stationed next to a word processor for about seven hours a day. This form of work is dehumanizing, a kind of stationery assembly-line. But not only is such work dehumanizing, it may be hazardous to your health.

Lately, I have become concerned about the possible hidden effects of word processing. Several weeks ago I began an assignment with a legal department of a city in Southern California and came across a business card of a sales representative for Wang. I had heard that the radiation level of Wang was low and the sales representative gave me no new information when I called him. He mentioned tests conducted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the people who brought us Three Mile Island) and thus whetted my appetite for more information. I requested more information and her referred me to the main office of Wang Laboratories in Lowell, Massachusetts. I called Lowell and told a person in the Product Safety Division I wanted more information about possible radiation effects. The supervisor of the division wrote to me, assuring me that Wang workstations are (or have been) tested for compliance with a number of official standards: Underwriters Laboratories, UL-144; Canadian Standards Association, CSA C22.2 No. 154; and the U.S. Dept.

of Health, Education and Welfare.

They sounded very impressive. However, a close reading of the articles was unsettling. They disclosed that there are still unanswered questions about long-term radiation effects. Although numerous studies have been conducted, findings still tend to be equivocal. Some studies, for example, recommend that word processors wear vests or utilize protective shields. And it is recommended that equipment be thoroughly inspected periodically for radiation leaks. Fifteen-minute breaks are also recommended for word processors every two hours. This type of information apparently is not widely distributed. In the dozen or so companies I worked with this past year none advocated such breaks and I saw no radiation screens nor word processors who wore vests.

I brought the articles to work and the women I work with read them and were outraged. One of the women who was pregnant had the foresight to ask to be transferred to non-terminal work when the new system was introduced in March. [In fact, there have been a number of miscarriage clusters in Canada and the U.S. among CRT operators — *Ed. note*]. Copies of the articles were sent to the union representative who will make recommendations to management.

We also found out that radiation shields which block 95 percent of the radiation are available. (A Somashield is such a product. It blocks about 95% of the radiation and costs about \$100.) The union will ask management to buy these shields for all word processors.

This office operates democratically in terms of scheduling so most of the word processors are taking 15 minute breaks every two hours. Initially, this felt self-indulgent, yet it is surprising that a back-long of work does not result from this

practice. Moreover, we all agree that we do not feel so fatigued at the end of the day.

This experience raises a number of questions. Why doesn't Wang make it a policy to warn users of their systems about possible radiation effects? The obvious answer is that word processing systems are cost-effective, particularly in terms of personnel time, the largest expenditure of any organization. Wang, as well as other manufacturers, do not readily disseminate information about the hazards because this would jeopardize the profit margin of their product.

Another question is why management has not investigated the question of radiation more thoroughly. Much of this inactivity has to do with ignorance. Also, in the final analysis, management has historically been indifferent to the health of workers.

The ramifications of this problem are just beginning to be understood. More than seven million people in this country work at video display terminals, and in the next few years most offices in this country will be automated. This means that health hazards will proliferate.

Of course it is the responsibility of producers of VDTs to ensure that the use of their product is not hazardous to the user's health and safety. And it is just as clear that these manufacturers are not willing to invest time and research dollars because such measures, at least in the short-run, do not make money. As such, it is incumbent on us who are exposed to radiation hazards to hold these manufacturers accountable.

If you are interested in protecting your health and your rights (closely related entities), there are a number of organizations you can contact. Information about health hazards can be obtained from the Los

Send PW
Your Writing!

We are very interested in your articles, short stories, "Tales of Toil," letters, etc. Usually the PW editorial collective

comments on things we receive, either verbally or in writing, so a dialogue of some sort is sure to ensue. Generally, everything should be typed, double-spaced and preferably in 3-10 copies. Thanks! Also, all you artists out there, send us your graphics!!



Angeles Committee on Occupation Safety and Health, (724 South Park View, Los Angeles 90057, (213) 387-7283). If you are interested in becoming involved in the issue of radiation effects, 9 to 5 [Local 925 — SEIU], a national union, is organizing around this question.

M.K. — Los Angeles



Dear M.K. —

Thanks for the information on WP hazards. Some other groups organizing around VDT hazards are: Bay Area VDT Coalition, c/o LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley CA 94720; and VDT Committee, Labour Council of Metro. Toronto, Rm. 407, 15 Gervais Drive, Don Mills, Ontario. Both groups publish newsletters full of latest news in research, law, and contract developments about VDTs.

One question that immediately came up for me was my profound skepticism about suggesting people turn to unions to solve this type of problem. You state in two places, almost as an afterthought, that the union will make recommendations and requests of management to alleviate the problems. Well, did they? And if so, what changed, if anything, and what qualitative difference in daily worklife has been achieved? My guess is that things aren't that different, but I'd be curious to hear what you think now. By the way, readers are strongly urged to send accounts of any successes they have been part of, in addressing office health hazards, and how it was done.

I'd also like to say that I think it is a mistake for office workers concerned about workplace health hazards to focus exclusively on the potential radiation hazards of VDTs. In fact, practically the entire office environment is riddled with poisonous substances, not simply CRT

problems. A focus on radiation could lead to a defusion of protest if it is convincingly proven that radiation is not a major problem. A good source of information about the full range of office health hazards is the book Office Hazards by Joel Mawker (\$6.95, Tilden Press), which unfortunately fails to address the ideology of medicine/disease/health and "acceptable risk" that underlies nearly all discussion of these subjects. We hope to have articles and "Tales of Toil" on the medical industry, "processing disease and health," in future issues

— readers are urged to submit related material.

Lastly, I don't think a discussion of WP hazards can avoid talking about the content of the work. Some studies have shown that clerical CRT operations are the highest stress occupation around, while writers who use VDTs have statistically rather low stress levels. It becomes necessary to look at what is being done on these machines, and how the entire labor process is organized and controlled, in order to begin understanding how deep the sources of "health hazard" go. In fact, we have to look at office work in general, its usual purpose in the circulation of capital, and the irrelevancy of that "purpose" to human well-being.

Thanks for starting the discussion.

— Lucius Cabins

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A.

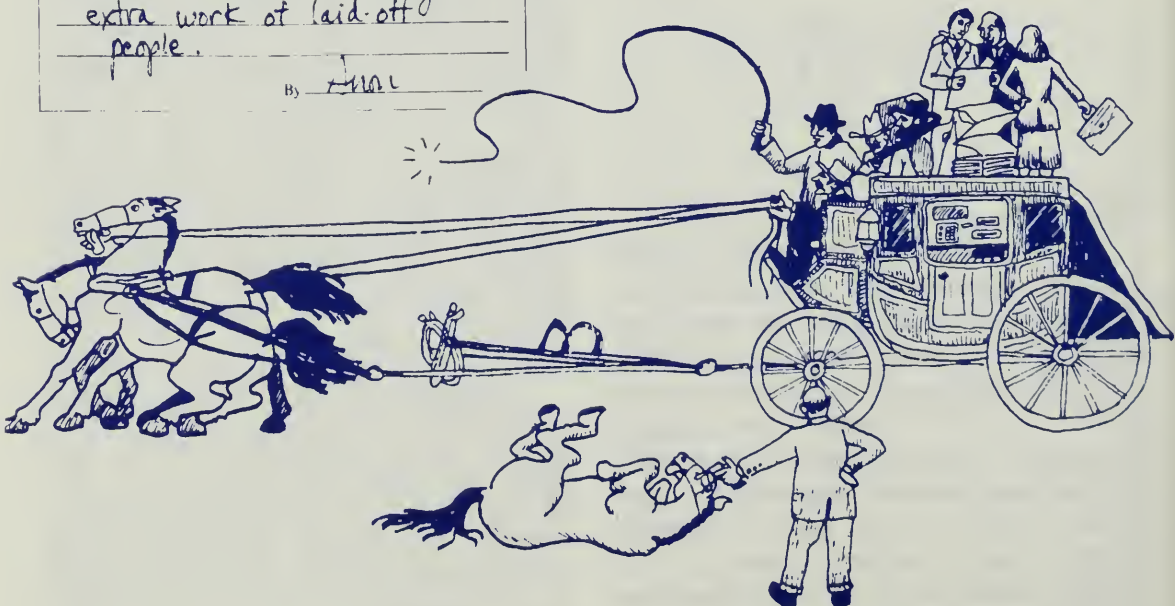
TO Processed World people
 DATE 8/4 TIME _____
 WHILE YOU WERE OUT
 M _____
 OF _____
 PHONE _____ EXT _____

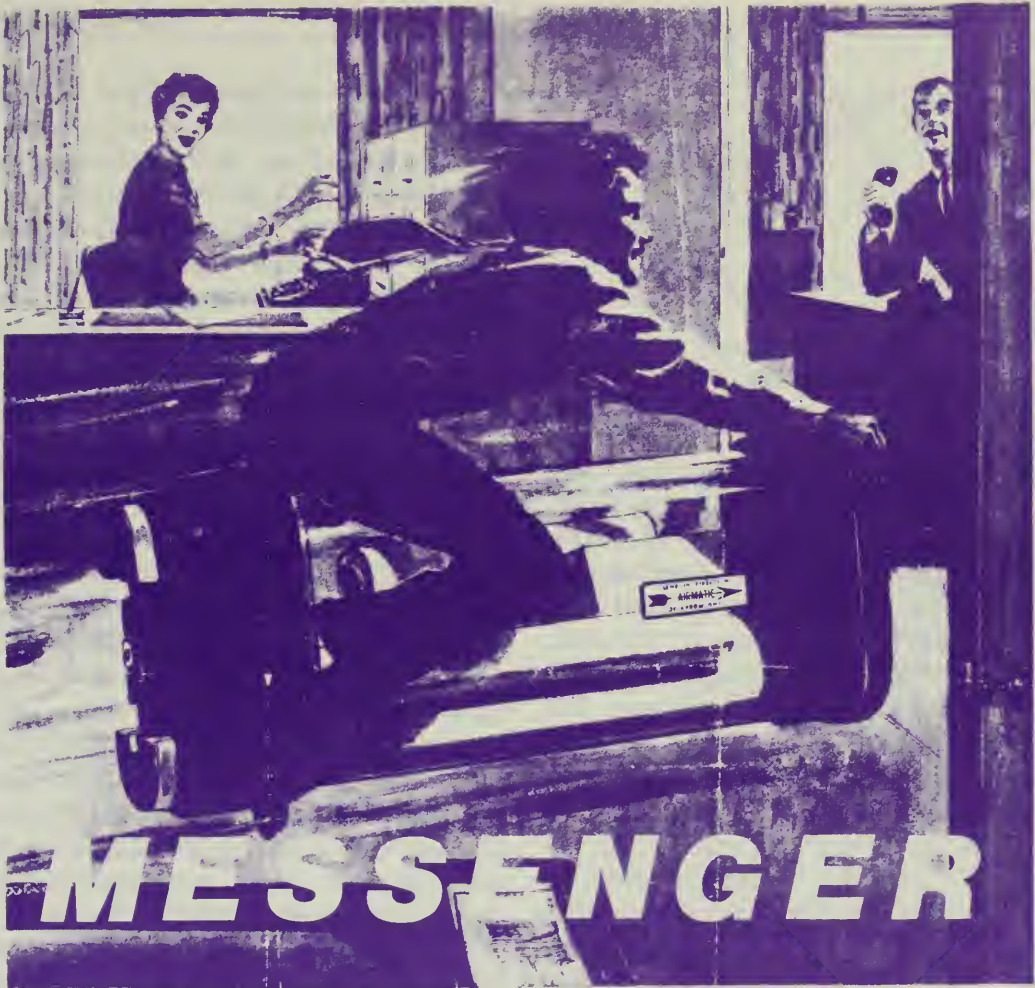
TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL
CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
WANTS TO SEE YOU	URGENT
RETURNED YOUR CALL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LEFT THE ATTACHED

MESSAGE This is anonymously dedicated to those employees either laid off or doing extra work of laid-off people.
 BY AME



Bonus Situation





I would like to say that most, if not all, of MESSENGER was taken from a notebook that I kept on me at all times, and the different "blocks" were more or less taken from this notebook,.. out of incidents, thoughts and so forth, in the course of a day's work.

Block Five □ TRANSITS

The structural reality of Street-Office and Office-Street alike is based upon a deliberate and deadening linearity and rectilinearity. The city is an ordered chaos of square and rectangular blocks of various shapes, sizes, and combinations, with the only variations and breaks assumed by arrogant corporate and banking structures who only break from the linearity to further sharpen its morbid effects, and never as an integral and organic element of a larger transformative area of the city as a whole.

But the messengers come to know another possible set of patterns, shapes, and configurations in all this mesh of the straight and square. The messengers must cut across and through the cross-cross and up-down structurality of the city in a way that changes the sense of visual perspective, of the illusion of "solidty" and concrete massification, and especially of the otherwise dehumanizing effects of always keeping to the straight and narrow path of linearity, signing or walking away one's own freedom along dotted lines, on paper or cement. The messengers break out and rise above this web of mortification by following the principles of physics that now tell us that the shortest distance between two points is not necessarily a straight line.

So messengers largely come to ignore the separation between sidewalk and autoways, which are blended into a single and integral entity — the Street. Swerving, weaving, and

OFFICE HAIKU

Inside
Overloaded
Workday
Of constant noise
And paper answers.

by Miriam Clavir

jaywalking, the messengers trace out a new geometry of curves, zig-sags, and odd angles which defy the still-dominant linearity. The messengers also come to learn of the existence of several parallel-universes of Transit, spiralling passageways of all kinds whose magic always engages the young, and which by their challenging presence, however limited by their creators or intended purposes, hints at a possible free city of the future.

These irregular Transits are, of course, represented mainly by the Subway system, with its bends and even sharp turns, dictated to the designers and builders by natural configurations in the rockbed base of Manhattan island, natural patterns of flow and form. Is it any wonder that it is the Subway which has attracted, magnet-like, that true and liberatory expression of Present-day Proletcult, the Graffiti artists?

In addition to the great snaking tunnels beneath us, there are also several other small examples of non-linear and anti-linear eccentricity, which receive special attention and usage by messengers. These include the system of passageways, with

stores, news-stands, cafes, etc. underneath Rockefeller Center and environs, as well as various arcades cutting through whole blocks and buildings at street level, special above-street walkways and foot-bridges between structures, and special escalators and stairways veering up, off, and away from their adjoining or surrounding archi-textures.

Block Six □ STRUCTIONS

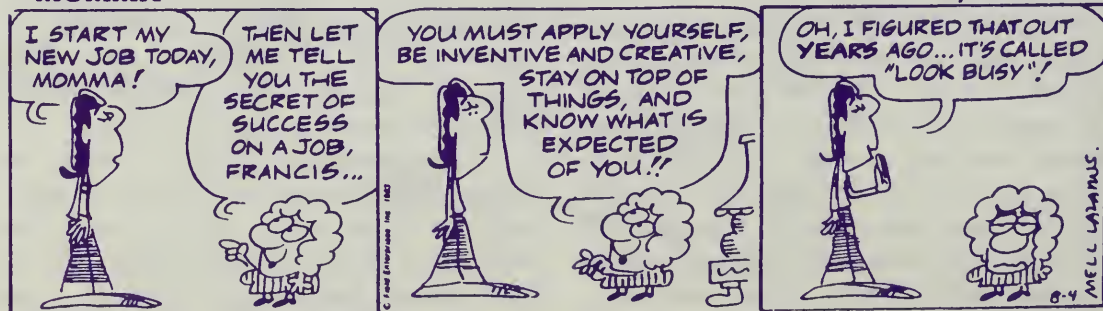
The entrance swallows you and the exit shits you out. Between the two, you are digested like a morsel, divested of your measured labor, and processed through a mesh of surveillance and security.

Like the castles of the nobility in the era of feudalism, the headquarters of the corporate-banking-industrial complex, in the City of the World in our own time of crisis, are fortresses of fear, fortresses against the living, battlements of iron and glass and concrete armor to defend against, and the crush, the human. Like the castles of the past, the architecture of the era of Late Imperialism is a hideous combination of function and design. Just as molten metal or burning oil would spit out on the heads of attackers from the mouths of ornate gargoyles, so today, the latest in "high-tech" electronic spying and listening devices peeps out from that potted plant in the hallway, that junk "abstract art" by the elevator, or those large mirrored surfaces that have become so popular....

The latest innovation in this overall

MOMMA

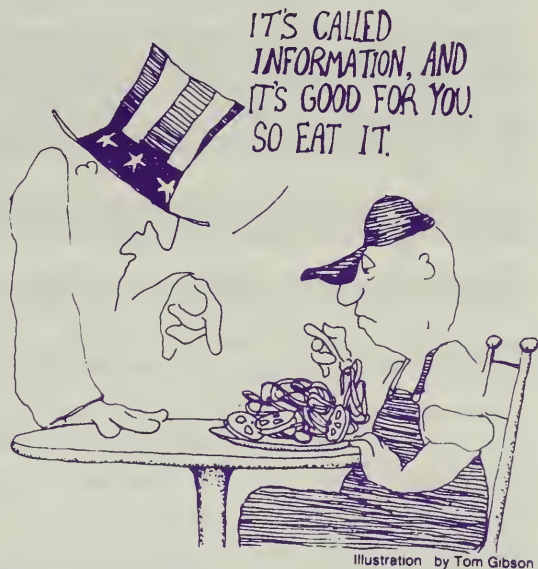
By Mell Lazarus



effort is the “friendly environments” sometimes called “Atriums,” that many corporate or banking buildings are having built into their first and/or second floors. Complete with tranquilizing artificial waterfalls, plastic and/or real plant-life, coffee-stands and food facilities, as well as seats and tables, these places serve several functions on behalf of the particular interest involved. First of all, employees can be induced to take their lunch and other breaks here, thus not leaving the building and staying within reach of the boss. Secondly, these places are highly-monitored by all kinds of TV and video spy-systems, and probably listening-bugging devices as well, as well as being patrolled by both uniformed and plainclothes private-security oinkers, thus allowing the bosses the option of investigating any specific workers, or of keeping an eye on the workforce as a whole in times of tension, firings, strikes, or whatever. Finally, these “friendly spaces” are carefully integrated into the overall para-military fortification system which now dictates much of real estate manipulation, “city planning,” and particular architectural-design techniques in all the “strategic” central locations of all the big cities of the world today.

This is why there are no longer any windows in the first, second, third, and sometimes even more floors in so many of the new buildings being built. This is why your walkman-radio, or even your LED watch, will be often thrown out of whack when you go in or out of the new hi-tech/security buildings, as invisible probing fingers of special devices designed to screen sensitive computer-complexes tangle with the weaker signals of devices carried through, or even near, the building.

The buzzing and beeping of automatic-locks, the crackling of intercoms, and the hissing of doors without handles or any other human attributes, all of these are the burping and



farting of an organism which just barely tolerates the presence of the life-forms it was initially intended to serve.

Like the castles of old, these fortresses against the living are only awaiting the cannon of the future, the force of the New which turns their greatest strength into their greatest weakness, their massivity into immobility, their towers into targets.

Block Eleven END-COUNTER II

On the corner of 57th street and Madison avenue, where the effete elite meet and excrete, a symbolic cataclysm has just erupted, and magnetically pulls on everyone in the immediate area, congealing a crowd which soon draws yet more of the curious.

This Mini-Apocalypse is the destruction of a traffic light by a gigantic yacht, being towed on a special wheel-carriage over to the annual boat show at the Coliseum on the west side. Pieces of the rigging from the deck of the yacht are entangled with the fragments of traffic light, more surrealistic than any indulgence by poseur-artistes. Around this tangle gather rich women in fur-coats, businessmen and the usual number of

messengers and other proletarians and street people. The divisions of class and status are immediately stamped on the faces of all present, as they gaze upon this bizarre wreckage. All the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie bemoan the "loss of property," the disruption, the mess on "their" street. All the proletarians and lumpen-proletarians alike find uplift and even joy in the sight. The negation of apparently-fixed objects of control (the traffic-lamp) by, through, and with the simultaneous negation of apparently-inviolable commodities for the super-rich (the yacht) is beautiful truth and true beauty at once. The vulnerability of this material world of things is hope, and life's hope, for the world of the living and the human.

Block Fourteen □ TWIST OF FATE

The worse nightmare of the messenger is the run where he is delivering an envelope containing the means of his own undoing.

The manila envelope that he is rushing crosstown or uptown or downtown with is carrying the eviction notice from the landlord that will throw the messenger out into the street, his workplace. The manila envelope contains the pink-slip from his employers that will now end this job and force him to look for another. The envelope encloses a medical report that will condemn the messenger to a lifetime of illness. The envelopes carry letters from one great power to another that will involve him, unwittingly, in sordid intrigues which will seal his fate. The envelope contains a message which concludes with the inexplicable, but irreversible, command to eliminate all traces of itself, including the one who delivered it...and so it goes....

But what are all these nightmares of the messenger but the imagined and concentrated expression of the daytime and night-time reality of ALL forms of exploited labor in this exploi-

tation-based society, in this Civilization of Exploitation?

In fact, the messenger is always delivering the means of his or her undoing, even if only in the smallest ways. Every message is stained with one tiny drop of blood, and the immensity of delivered packages and envelopes and commodity-forms of all kinds is a sea of life's blood, flowing from the exploited walk-work of the small army of messengers, and into the ocean of blood of all the world's exploited and oppressed and enslaved labor, down through history.

And all this world's work, all of humanity's toil, and all the commodity-forms of that labor, are marked with that same mark, and even where workers, or workers and their true allies, already rule.

And this is the terrible truth of all of our lives, until the Emancipation and Equalization of the whole of this suffering world.

by Jonathan Leake

Full text of 20 "blocks" available from the author: c/o G.P.O. Box 1643, New York, NY 10116.



The All-New MoneyDroid!: when shopping, don't go without your MoneyDroid... Pull him out and let him pay the bills with his credit card. Never pay for anything again!

THE WALLING OF AWARENESS

by Bradley Rose

Three years ago I spent a few days in a mountain wilderness with two friends. We wanted to "do a sweat" and so we set to work at building a sweat hut. After choosing a flat site along a stream, we began to collect boughs for supports, wood for a fire, rocks for heating, and so on. We used the renewable resources at hand and a sheet of plastic we brought from home. We bent and tied boughs to form a dome-shaped ribcage over which we stretched a plastic skin.

At each stage of construction, we had to make choices. What should we do first? How many ribs did we need? What kind of rocks were best to use? Who would get wood for the fire? We sensed or came to agreement on all issues and we had several rejuvenating sweats during our stay in the mountains.

The days were mild, broken by afternoon showers. Inside our sweat hut, seated around a small pit of red hot, steaming rocks, sitting close on grass which we had sprinkled with

sage, we talked and chanted and hushed to hear the thunder. We had combined our architectural prowesses into something that was mutually satisfying. Moreover, our sweat hut didn't impose upon others since it was only a provisional reorganization of time and space. It was acceptably "rough around the corners," richly sensual, and celebratory—like us.

As that experience settled into my memory, I began to examine how the space surrounding me was shaped and defined, who made such decisions, and with what intentions.

ARCHITECTURE AND POLITICS

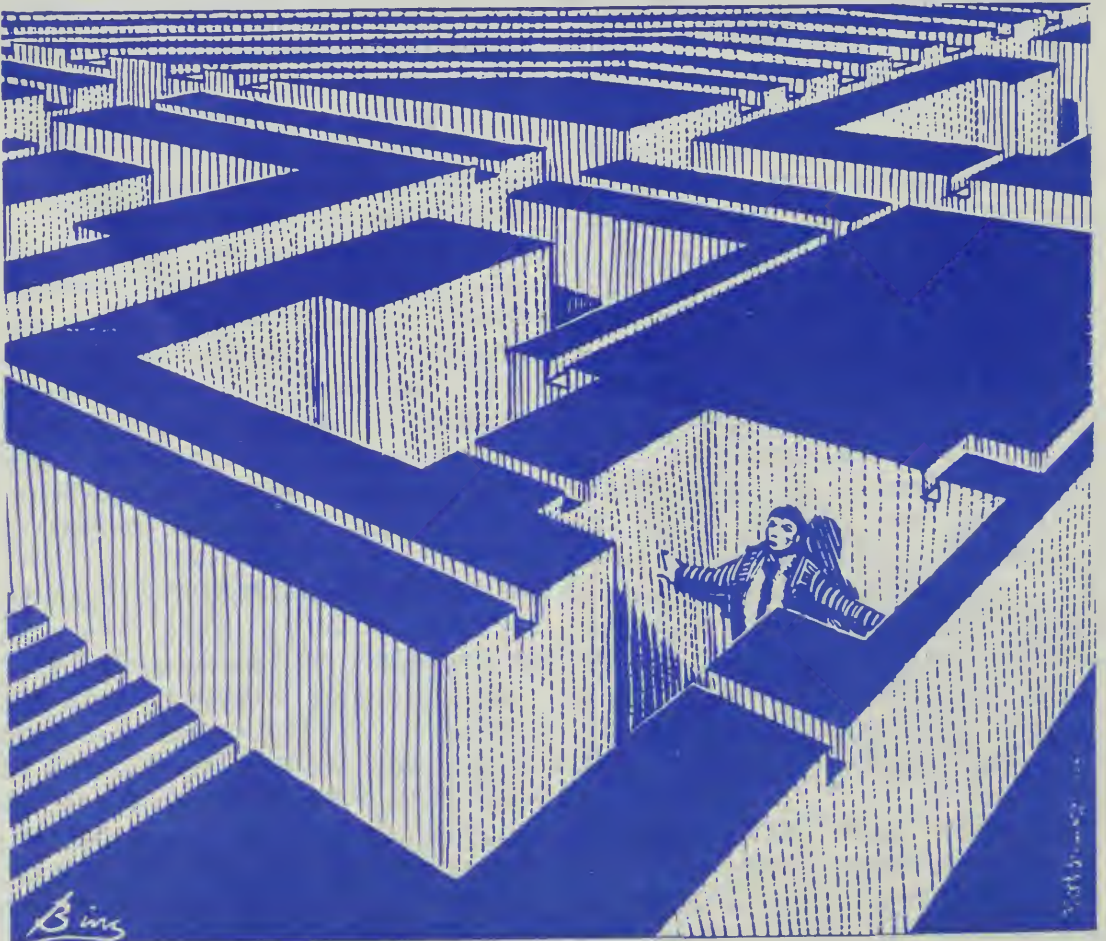
I define architecture as behavior (i.e., thinking, acting, building, choosing, burning, etc.) by which space and time are structured for future use. This definition is deliberately broad in that it recognizes that all people, not just a professional elite, are capable of structuring space. If we remove a door within our home, if we use space on the office

desk to grow herbs or display photos of loved ones, if we make a garbage can of the street, or if we simply leave a space and time untouched—we are making architectural choices.

How such choices are made is a *political* as well as *architectural* matter. The architect, professional or not, limits possibilities, channels tendencies, concentrates resources to facilitate certain kinds of activities (and not others). Architecture, to a large extent determines how people will interact with each other and their environment. The predominant role of professionals in architecture—as in most other spheres of life—is a recent development. Until the Industrial Revolution, only royalty and organized religion needed or could afford the services of professional architects. Most people met their architectural needs by drawing on communally held science and tradition.

When I returned to San Francisco from my mountain experience, the professional, modern architecture in my day to day life seemed even more miserable and inadequate than it did before. I labored in offices permanently sealed against fresh air and sunlight, rain, animal life and all the other “snares and snakepits” of nature. I ventured into streets made cold and windy by highrise aerodynamics. I was hoisted up to work in ‘elevators’ as one of the human units which measured an elevator’s capacity. Phone booths for single people, restaurants with parking lots and family accommodations, “men’s rooms” and “ladies’ rooms,” public parking garages, hallways—even doors (glass, locked, automatic, front and back)—all presupposed and attempted to facilitate and perpetuate certain planned human relationships.

San Francisco’s corporate architec-



ture institutionalizes the most unimaginative uses of form, color, texture, taste, smell and other sensory qualities. It is designed to be unappreciable to human taste, hearing, smell and touch. It shows a bias toward what can be mass-produced, for high-tech precision and engineering, for mirrorly smooth surface, for metal, concrete and glass, and for uncompromising uniformity or regularity. Environments based on sensory deprivation result.

With my wilderness trip still fresh in my memory, I asked myself: what is the value system behind modern design and what are its underlying messages? I began to pay more attention to the effect of architecture on my own life. From the architecture itself emerged a pattern of messages and values shaped by the consciousness of industrialized people.

In San Francisco, new buildings are meant to be as *permanent* as possible. They are erected without regard either for people who live and work in the vicinity or for future generations. Through these buildings, developers attempt to *colonize the future*. Although this has characterized monumental architecture in all ages, only in modern times has the secular corporate world utilized the symbolism of monumental architecture. Right up to modern times, civilizations symbolically established their own permanence in stone. By its sheer size and timelessness, such architecture seemed to convey the impression that the status quo would last through eternity. Corporate modern architecture seeks to do the same.

Modern building materials are largely made of *nonrenewable resources* in limited supply from the far parts of the world—steel, aluminum, copper and petroleum. Oil and gas are used to perfect other raw materials into building-quality glass, steel and concrete. Oil and gas are also used to hoist, weld, press, fit, bore and otherwise erect San Francisco's



buildings. I used to eat my bag lunches on the windy and cold terraces of 3 Embarcadero Center, watching resources from all over the world concentrated into 4 Embarcadero Center across the street.

INDUSTRIALISM ON THE DRAWING BOARD

Through the 19th century the machines created to mine, traverse, smelt, and manufacture affected the way reality was perceived. People could not ignore the sudden and overwhelming presence of machinery. With railroads, canals, bridges and the telegraph, people broke through spatial and temporal barriers. New materials—such as steel and rubber—and new technical aids to production—such as control of electric and steam power—seemed to make many traditions obsolete. Many philosophers who were born to that world

were inspired by the power of contemporary machinery. Machine operation metaphorized their experience and convinced them that 'civilized man' could master nature. He had learned to release and harness the power stored in oil, gas and coal; with nitroglycerin (1847) and dynamite (1866) he blasted his way through mountains. Amid so much progress, industrial men showed an unprecedented self-confidence. They no longer felt bound to hold sacred what Nature through her "wiles" had created. Men leveled forests, bred meatier cattle and sturdier corn, and 'reclaimed' wilderness and wasteland. To them the 20th century represented a new era, not only man-centered and man-bound, but man-controlled.

"The era of the great mechanized individuals has begun and all the rest is palaeontology."

—Umberto Boccioni, 1912

Radical artists and architects, such as the Futurist Boccioni, were among those who dreamed of a world restructured by industry. Architecture became more and more a subject for conversation, discussion, debate, diatribe . . . and manifesto. The supporters of industrialism confronted the old traditions. Fantastic and unprecedented architectures and radical theorems were published during the early 20th century. Adolf Loos, an Austrian architect, equated ornament with crime. Bruno Taut, an Expressionist, pictured dazzling, jeweled cities in watercolor. Antonio Sant'Elia, a Futurist architect whose work rarely got beyond the drawing board, apotheosized grand dams, monumental train stations, colossal power factories and megalithic apartment blocks. On the surface, these fantasies seem various and fundamentally personal, but they all shared a vision of a wholly new world, built and controlled by industrial Man.

New schools of modern design were established in Austria, Germany, Italy, Holland and Russia. Many of the "architects" in these schools had little to show of their work other than manifestos, sketches, and slogans, but over these they attacked and counter-attacked each other and formed alliances. These architects equated the value of their visions with their appropriateness to an industrially restructured world.

As Theo van Doesburg, a radical modernist from the Dutch *de Stijl* school, asserted with millenarian bravado in 1922:

"All that we used to designate as magic, spirit, love, etc. will now be efficiently accomplished. The idea of the miraculous, that primitive man made so free with, will now be realized simply through electric current, mechanical control of light and water, the technological conquest of space and time."

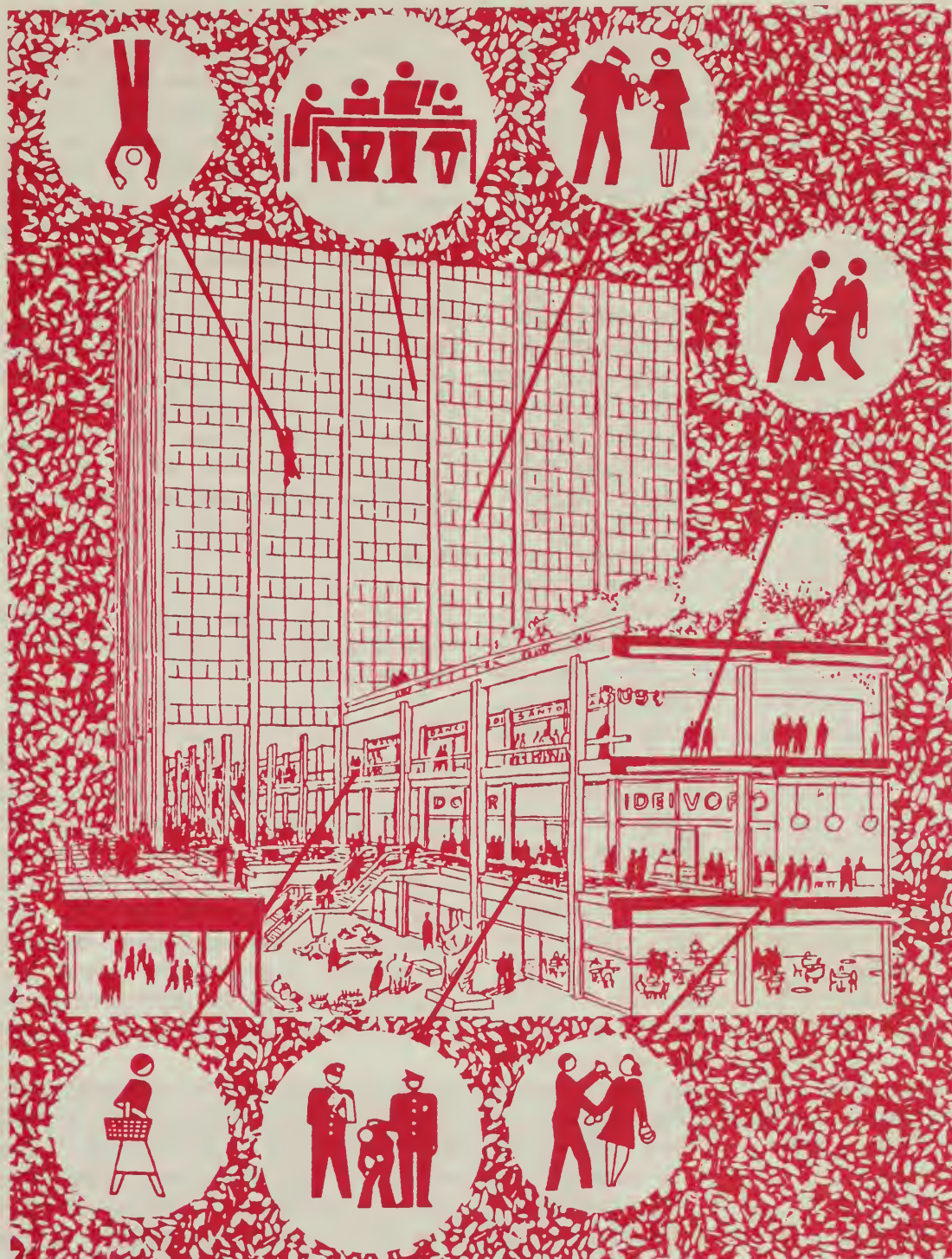
SOCIALISM: ONE WORKER EQUALS ANOTHER

"The individual is losing significance; his destiny is no longer what interests us."

—Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1932

The radical architects, like so many other people of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were possessed with the promise of socialisms. In many of these social-ist schemes, the heinous extreme between the plight of the poor and the luxury of the wealthy was attributed to individual excess. Many of the social-ist architects of the early 20th century—and in Europe nearly all the formative modern architects referred to themselves as socialists—assumed the task of designing an urban, worker-oriented world which reflected and reinforced their anti-individualist attitude.

Around 1920, for example, the Swiss-born architect and painter Le



Corbusier designed "A Contemporary City for 3 Million Inhabitants." The inhabitants were to be housed in rows of identical highrises conveniently connected to their places of work. He did not have any particular 3 million *individuals* in mind; he de-

signed his city for a co-conscious, worker-identified *society*.

The influential German architect Muthesius in 1911 also echoed the principles of popular social-isms:

"In modern social and economic or-

ganization there is a sharp tendency to conformity under dominant viewpoints, a strict uniformity of individual elements, a depreciation of the inessential in favor of immediate essentials. And these social and economic tendencies have a spiritual affinity with the formal tendencies of our aesthetic movement."

Guided by such "formal tendencies" the fantastic sketches of the early 20th century looked more alike and less fantastic by the mid 1920s. Elements of design which could be labeled individual or eccentric were ridiculed by the cliques of architects and designers who had banded together under the flag of industrialism.

The history of the "State Bauhaus" school in Weimar shows how modernist architecture was shaped by conformist pressures. After the devastation of WWI, Germans hoped to rebuild Germany through industrial production. To meet the need for industrial designers, Walter Gropius's Bauhaus opened in 1919. A unique feature of the early Bauhaus was its liberating preliminary course, conceived and elaborated by Johannes Itten. In this course, apprentices were encouraged "to start from zero" and to express their "inner voice." But in 1923 Gropius scrapped the preliminary course and yielded to industrialist-socialist dogma. In order to finance the Bauhaus he needed to appease government and private enterprise, and leaders in both groups pushed for social-ist industrialization.

Gropius's Bauhaus had been criticized by Le Corbusier and van Doesburg who were seen by many as the leading Art formulators of the day. In 1922-23, Theo van Doesburg himself settled in Weimar near the Bauhaus. He took credit for turning the Bauhaus curriculum away from handicrafts and individualism. "At Weimar I have overturned everything . . ." he wrote. "I have talked to the pupils every evening and I have infused the

poison of the new spirit everywhere . . . I have mountains of strength and I know that our notions will be victorious over everyone and everything." At the same time, Le Corbusier was working (that is, *writing*) out of France. Le Corbusier had formulated the "scientific laws" of industrial expression:

"Nothing justifies us in supposing there should be any incompatibility between science and art. The one and the other have the common aim of reducing the universe to equations . . . The work of art must not be accidental, exceptional, impressionistic . . . but on the contrary, generalized, static, expressive of the invariant."

To him, the dominance of simple rectangularity characterized the industrial style:

"If we go indoors to work . . . the office is square, the desk is square and cubic, and everything on it is at right angles [the paper, the envelopes, the correspondence baskets with their geometrical weave, the files, the folders, the registers, etc.] . . . the hours of our day are spent amid a geometrical spectacle, our eyes are subject to a constant commerce with forms that are almost all geometry."

Gropius planned a Bauhaus exhibition in response to criticism and industrial pressure. The theme of the exhibition was "Art and Technology—A New Unity," in which the influences of van Doesburg and Le Corbusier were obvious. At the same time, Gropius suggested that artists should wear conventional clothing—that is, business dress. The Bauhaus opened a department of worker architecture and Bauhaus students produced volumes of genre drawings which imitated the many other impersonal drawings then circulating around Europe.

Before the Bauhaus closed in 1933

the new industrial style had become well established in Europe. It was characterized by a rational, impersonal, systematic approach to architecture in which standardized “worker needs” were met with mass-production technology. Efficient hierarchical social organization was its basic goal. Emotional expression and ornament—which purportedly interfered with efficiency—gave way to simple geometries in black and white. This modern style was also characterized by what seemed (to any Westerner) to be its *international* base; after all, it had developed simultaneously and under similar conditions throughout industrial Europe. And so, in 1932, when H.-R. Hitchcock and Philip Johnson arranged the first exhibition of this style in the US—at the New York Museum of Modern Art—they called it the ‘International Style’, a label which persists to this day. Through the International Style Exhibition, Americans saw that the principles by which their cars and factories were designed would also shape their homes, shops and schools.

In the late '30s many of Europe's modern architects (Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer) emigrated to the US where they further influenced the development of modern

architecture. Gropius, for example, was asked to teach at Harvard in 1937 and the following year, he became chairman of its architecture department. By then it was obvious that the new style was no mere fad. American capital financed its development in the US. By the end of WWII, modern architectural style emerged preeminent.

The socialist principles which shaped the development of modern architecture—the suppression of individual expression, domination over Nature, time-efficiency, and mass-production—served American capitalism as well as it had served the socialists in Europe. Mies van der Rohe, for example, welcomed a commission to design a ‘communist’ monument, but when he became director of the Bauhaus he expelled communist students because it was expedient under the Nazis to do so; he designed a Reichsbank for Hitler (whose personal tastes thwarted the advance of Bauhaus-type architecture in Nazi Germany) and then designed school buildings, apartment towers, and corporate highrises for American business. Gropius asserted the international quality of modern architecture in the '20s, designed Nazi ex-



hibition structures in the '30s, and tried to persuade Goebbels that modern architecture was not anti-Nazi (but failed—again because of Hitler's personal stance). Whether under the state socialists or the capitalists, the social reorganization necessitated by industrial production was facilitated by modernist, social-ist architecture.

TOWARDS RADICAL CRITICISM

Not surprisingly, a body of professional criticism has developed in response to modern architecture, but very little of it penetrates to the deeper flaws. Most critics examine modern architecture as one would examine an exhibit of paintings in a museum: they write about the "articulation of light" and the "thingness of the brick" and they ignore the hostile reality of the modern design in which human beings live, work, buy and die.

Some critics have rejected the visual austerity of "Manhattanization"—the concentration of megalithic office slabs in urban financial centers. Responding to such criticism, some architects began in the 1970s to design highrises with 'old-fashioned' decorations; condos with 'Victorian' ornament; and buildings with unusual shapes. This trend has been promoted as a new, visually stimulating style, called Post-Modernism. But the Post-Modernist call to bygone traditions is superficial. The fancy wooden scrollwork of new 'Victorians' no longer reflects the pride and talent of craftsmen. It is the soulless imitation of the craftsman's art, turned on factory lathes. In fact, the spirit of Post-Modernism is that of modernism itself. It incorporates the same biases as modernism—biases toward the same building materials and methods ... toward a-sensuality ... colonization of space and time ... 'sanitization' of nature ... coercive preplanning of human activities and relationships ... and professionalization. Modernism

also prevails over architectural "preservation." When civic groups demand the preservation of an older and noteworthy building in cities such as San Francisco, nothing more than the *facade* gets preserved. Behind the facade, both literally and figuratively, modernism holds its ground.

A meaningful criticism of architecture therefore must rise from something more substantial than "what it looks like." Modern architecture, for instance, has had many notable *technical* failures. Peter Blake, in *Form Follows Fiasco*, cites a number of the technical shortcomings of modern buildings—such as Boston's John Hancock Tower which dropped 10,000 of its windows into the streets below. Gross technical failures are inherent to modern architecture. When building materials are mass-produced, so also are their flaws. The same is true of construction methods.

A radical analysis of modern architecture examines the inherent messages and values from which modern architecture is formulated and which it perpetuates. Modern architecture reveals itself as a censoring expression, as a message of social control. Every modern building says: "You are not qualified to build for yourself. Your individual feelings have no significance in the structuring of common space. Your needs have been decided for you. The scope of your existence is circumscribed by professional preplanning. You are accommodated as shopper flow, floor usage, occupant, worker, etc. Your sensitivity and sensuality have no bearing on architectural concerns." Whether we live in a condo, use a men's room, or adapt to the office, we experience modern architecture as a subliminal lesson in industrialism.

The "modern" architecture of the near future is likely to *look* extremely different than what we're used to. As supplies of cheap oil run dry, professional technoarchitects are looking

to new building materials and methods. Transnational corporations are financing research into bio-engineering—the manipulation of genetic material in order to “manufacture” new, “living” materials, fuels, and

processors. The modern architects have a passion for “dead” building materials—concrete, glass, steel, and they control them with intimidating effect. But with the technology of bio-engineering, the future architects can

*Just don't
ask me to
build
something
I have
to live in! . . .*



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Bauhaus socialist, Nazi opportunist, the darling of American capitalism. . .

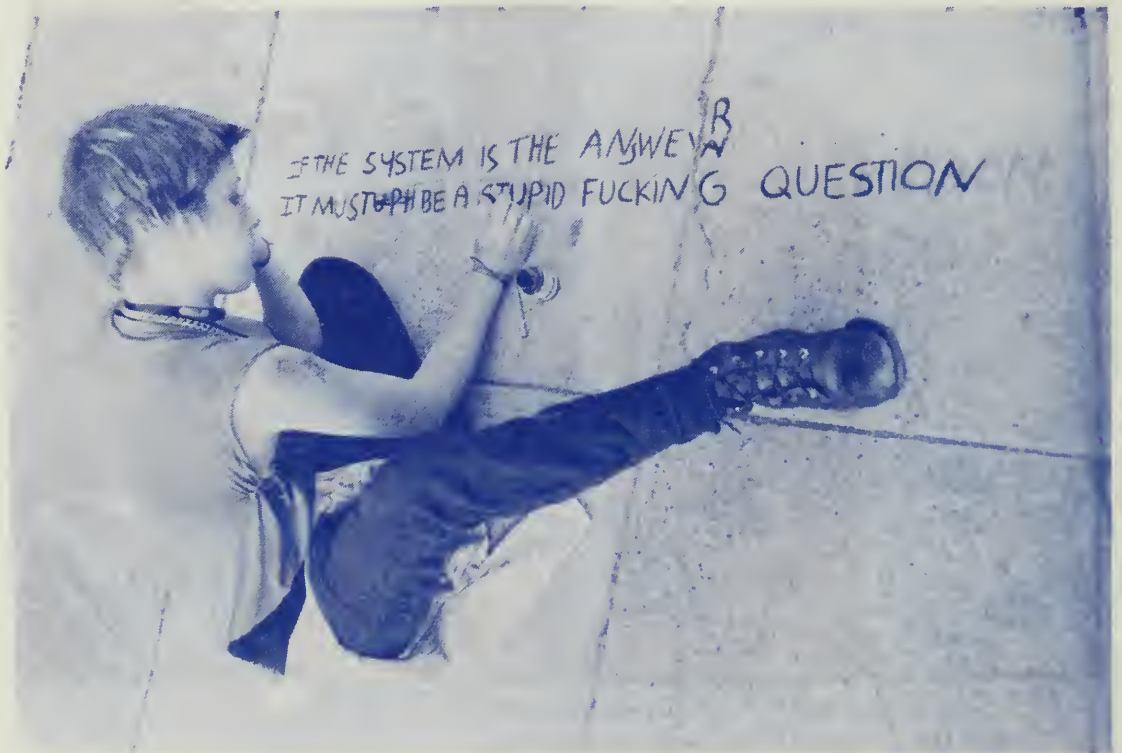
shape living as well as dead matter. Under such circumstances, the final distinction between life and manipulable matter may well be obliterated. Bio-engineered architecture may look substantially different than that of today, but social control will likely remain its predominant function.

PROSPECTS

The modern architects designed clean and inexpensive dwellings for a mass-produced world. In so doing, they provided a more healthful alternative to tenement living. They developed an architectural ethos and aesthetic in which the common worker received particular care and attention. But the spirit of modern architecture has run its course. We recognize that modern architecture does not promote individual, subjective worth; that its monumental aspects intimidate more than they inspire; that social control—and not free and willful cooperation—is its underlying motive; and that it is ecologically unsound. These charact-

erizations expose values by which we can examine the appropriateness of various architectural schemes to a free society. An architecture of the richness and scale of human being need not be limited to small structures. The range of human sensitivity includes an appreciation of grandeur, of monumental symbolism, of awesomeness. Today's corporate architecture is, ironically, as close as modern architecture comes to such expression.

I once saw a grafitto on the rear wall of a San Francisco supermarket which read: *THE WALLS HAVE EARS*. It was a redefinition of that wall—of the *idea* of the wall—as common space for social uses—in this case, an *exchange* of information. Walls are not just walls: they are functions. They retain hills, obstruct passage, contain space, suggest the containment of space, invite the curious, support color, etc. We can begin to think in these terms—not of what architecture *is*, but what it *does*; to see architecture as behavior and as consciousness made manifest.





DOWNTIME!

Translating Your Company Newsletter

Recently, in an attempt to rescue the sinking morale of employees in a time of widespread layoffs within the company, the top executives held a series of employee briefing sessions. Below are some of the questions employees asked, together with management's answers, followed, in turn, by translations into plain language.

Question: What is the purpose of this meeting?

Answer: While employee communications meetings have been held in the past, this meeting marks the renewal of management's commitment to management/employee communications.

Translation: We've neglected to talk to you for the past several years, but things are so bad now we had to do something.

Question: In the face of the current economic pinch, what direction will our company take?

Answer: We have two major goals. First, to become more trim and flexible in our operations. Second, to resize our operations to the level of profitable market opportunities.

Translation: We're going to lay some more people off.

Question: What steps are being taken to ensure career development for us as employees?

Answer: What the company offers each of us is an opportunity to utilize our talents and develop new skills. And it is up to each of us to take advantage of that opportunity. The challenges we face today have never been greater. If you're willing and able to tackle them, there continue to be good opportunities for growth, self-satisfaction and career development.

Translation: You're on your own.

Question: Has the company look at cost-cutting measures like elimination of the executive dining room?

Answer: The dining room is considered to be an accepted way of conducting business and is, in fact, judged to be a cost-effective program.

Translation: We're not giving up our dining room.

Question: As a result of recent layoffs, severe morale problems exist among employees. The company has made what seems to be little or no effort to help improve morale. Does management plan to address the morale problem?

Answer: We are sensitive to the problem and I think the problem has been the uncertainty of the environment during the past 12 months. I think

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things are getting better. High morale comes internally, when people enjoy what they're doing. As we better structure the organization, hopefully morale will improve.

Translation: It's not our fault you're depressed, it's the economic situation. We don't know what to do, but we're hoping the problem will go away.

Question: A structured communication like this one could have been helpful to employees during the past 12 months of uncertainty. Is this meeting indicative of a consistent intention to inform employees of matters affecting their work environment, or is it just a one-time thing?

Answer: We plan to continue these on an ongoing basis. Employees are also reminded of the company's long-standing "open-door" policy. Talk to your supervisors and others about your concerns.

Translation: We'll probably forget the whole thing after this all blows over. Communication is really your responsibility anyway.

— by Peter Martin



What's a Word Processor?

A Duplex Planet Special Interview

Interviews conducted by David B.
Greenberger at the
Duplex Nursing Home

Harold Farrington: He makes words out of other words. Like did can say did backwards, d-i-d.

Bernie Reagan: A person who understands and knows so many words and so much English.

Andy Legrice: Processor? Producer — producin' the progress, progress ahead. Progressin'.

Bill Niemi: It's some kind of a new machine, isn't it, that was invented to put words in their correct place, so people can understand them properly. Sometimes it's hard to read printing.

Frank Wisnewski: I never heard of that word, so I can't help you out. I thought you said 'prostitute' at first. I don't know what that word means though. I'd like to help you out, but I'm not college material like Johnny Fay. I know a little, but not a lot.

John Fay: I don't know. I don't know if it's somethin' to drink or eat or what.

Harry Katz: Profound, they're profound.

George Stingel: To process words, to break it down. To process a man is to get rid of him from the service, to let him go — it's a discharge from the services — army, navy, coast guard.

Ernie Brookings: A word processor would be to arrange words to express past events and thoughts, is that true? It could be verbally or written.

Ed Rogers: Somebody that discusses words, on a subject, like a debate.

John Fallon: Somebody that figures out things. He figures out the cost of everything, he's a processor.

Gene Edwards: I never even heard of it before, so how can I tell you what it is? You're not gonna write THAT down, are you?

Ed Poindexter: Obviously I don't know at the present. Is everything alright? Can I have a cigarette?

Abe Surgecoff: A guy that works at the city hall and watches out for the work to be done. He attends to processes around the office. The processor is like a judge, but don't write that down.

Francis McElroy: It's one that gains, a prospector.

Walter Kieran: That means somebody that done something.

William "Fergie" Ferguson: One that measures gold. He doesn't make it, it's already made — he finds it. It isn't glued together or anything, it's just gold, g-o-l-d.

Private Computers' Income Data to Aid IRS in Hunt for Evaders

The Internal Revenue Service is about to test whether computerized information about the lifestyles of American families can be used to identify individuals who fail to pay their income tax.

The information includes the neighborhoods in which families live, how long they have lived there and the model and year of the cars they own, and will be supplied by the private marketing companies that sell computerized lists to direct-mail concerns, among others. For some time, these marketing companies have been compiling income estimates from such data, using the publicly available records of telephone companies, motor vehicle departments and the Census Bureau.

If the new computerized procedure to target those Americans who pay no taxes is successful, the IRS has a second experiment in store, to determine whether the same procedures can be used to spot those who underpay their taxes.

The attempt to use lifestyle information to estimate the annual incomes of households, and thus help the revenue service select individuals for further investigation, reflects the agency's increasing concern about the growth in

the number of Americans who are failing to pay their taxes.

According to the latest Government report on income tax compliance, the number of individuals and corporations not paying income taxes has been gradually increasing in recent years. Individuals who did not file any income tax returns in 1981, for example, are estimated to have reduced Government revenues by about \$3 billion that year. In 1973, such individuals are estimated to have owed the government about \$1 billion.

The service estimated that in 1981 the total of taxes underpaid by corporations and individuals engaged in legal activities was \$81.5 billion.

The report added that the percentage of all income voluntarily reported declined from 91.2 percent in 1973 to 89.3 percent in 1981, more than two-tenths of a percentage point a year.

The new attempt to find what the IRS calls "nonfilers" is made possible by the increasing power of Government and commercial computers to store enormous amounts of information and to manipulate this information at a very small cost.

The information used by the private companies to estimate the annual incomes of individual households is all legally available. The sources of the data are telephone books, the automo-

ABUSEMENT PARK



POEM TO A LEAKING SHIP NOT SUNK

the crest of the wave
 the vault of the sky
 leave me breathless;
 the chicken of the sea
 leaves me with heartburn
 if over-seasoned

but let us not speak of such drivel
 at such a momentous time
 when our minds should be occupied
 with the Great Challenge which sits before us
 in the form of a mocking parrot who repeats, over and over
 "Give me mellon, or i will make such a mess!"

the great buildings of our cities
 the great advances of our age
 instill me with such wonder;
 but how i tremble before
 that awful thing we have made
 which may destroy us;
 and if we survive American television
 we will have only the bomb to fear

i do not dread abandonment
 or confinement in love's great potato sack
 to be smothered by your solicitous doting,
 but your quivering thighs i do fear
 inside them i could almost
 exile myself for good, never coming out
 taking all my nourishment there;
 how tiresome for you

if i am not sensible, contradict me
 if i am inefficient, instruct me
 if i am irresponsible, chastize me
 if i am indifferent, shake me
 but if i fail to make money, leave me be:
 this means i have found a profitless joy
 which capitalism must despise
 and i am content

by Ron De La Houssaye

bile registration files from the 30 or so states where they have been declared a public record, and statistical information about the average incomes of the families living in different census tracts, which is compiled and published by the Census Bureau every decade. The income information compiled by the bureau is supplied by the individuals and families counted.

There are more than a dozen companies currently producing computerized lists of American households, their addresses and their estimated income. The three largest companies reportedly are The Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation of New York, R.L. Polk & Company of Detroit and the Metromail Corporation of Lincoln, Neb.

The techniques of the different com-

panies vary. But according to several industry experts, one of the more complex methods is used by Donnelley. That corporation's national list begins with the telephone book. As each new city telephone book is published anywhere in the United States, the names, addresses and numbers in it immediately are fed into a computer by Donnelley. A special program then places each of these households in its appropriate Census Bureau tract, which includes information on the median income of the households within its borders.

There are two more major steps in the Donnelley process. Because studies have shown that people who live at one address for a long period tend to have higher incomes than those who are mobile, the computer is instructed to adjust the estimated income up or down according to how long the telephone book data shows the family has lived at the same location.

Finally, information on the car or cars registered in the names of individuals living at each address is added to the equation. This information is made available to private companies some by motor vehicle departments, although New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut bar release of such information to those concerns. Using complex computerized formulas, the estimated household incomes again are adjusted to the make, model and year of the registered cars.

"To have a free society, we have to have a viable Government," he said. "And a working tax system is essential to government."

New York Times, 8/29

COMPUTER FRAUD BILKS GOVERNMENT OF MILLIONS

Hundreds of federal employees working at newly installed computer terminals are stealing millions of dollars from foodstamp, Social Security, Veterans Administration and other federal pro-

grams, according to a study of computer fraud and abuse.

The study uncovered innovative ways that federal workers, ranging from low-salaried clerks at the Social Security Administration to supervisors at the Commerce Department, have found to steal funds, computer time and other resources, such as valuable computer programs that can be sold to private businesses.

By creatively entering data and computer commands on their desk terminals, the federal computer thieves have pulled off these capers:

— A clerk assigned to the recovery of loan overpayments to veterans caused by computer errors found a way to divert the overpayments to his personal bank account.

— Three data-entry clerks at the Agriculture Department who were given terminals that could accept only names of potential food-stamp recipients were able to steal \$150,000 in stamps because their supervisor, whose machine was capable of actually issuing them, left the terminal running while he was at lunch. The thieves typed in fake applications and then approved them on the boss' unguarded terminal during the lunch break.

The investigation was conducted for the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency after White House budget officials found that no effort had been made to determine the scope of computer fraud despite the bureaucracy's dependence on the machines to handle work once done by humans.

The survey also found that many of the agencies had no way of keeping track of computer fraud. There were indications, Kusserow wrote, that the losses and people involved were substantially higher than what was actually reported in the 172 cases.

Because most of the cases were found by what Kusserow called "accident," the report warned that the extent of the abuse is unknown.

Chicago Tribune, 7/83



A Year's Worth of Journals About Working and Not-Working

July 1982
"Outpatient Administration"

Sitting the phones is much like taking care of a baby. It demands your constant attention — you can never stray too far away without its crying out; it won't stop until you pick it up and touch it in the right places, give it what it needs (another person, a message) or else reassure the voice at the other end (as quickly as possible before *another* line rings) that yes, things will be all right, yes, *I will* tell them to call you back, no, they have not forgotten you (though often they actually have. But a good receptionist, like a good mother, is there to soothe, not instruct.)

August 1982
The Fifteen-Minute Break

It is very strange to come out of the office (you know, The Office) into a parking lot with a ledge to sit on and which (furthermore) faces onto a hill with a spread of large beautiful trees and green grass....What I mean is, looking at this world and feeling

removed from it, how the World Outside and the World Inside collide and yet remain separate, I mean....

Ah, yes. That Office: sharp, efficient, phone rings and paper clips and high heels and pantyhose that itch unbearably when the cold wind blows around the legs...and yet, nature, beauty, the Unknown, somehow all the more intensified for being so rare, so removed, and yet *here*, as if by miracle (certainly not by purchase order)...What I mean is, beauty invades our life in spite of ourselves, in spite of That Office, and that is the real beauty of it.

October 1982
Blissfully Unemployed
(Poor But Halfway Happy)

This great empty space of spare-time has made me realize how truly dangerous it is to become lost in thought. I am now reduced to the point where I cannot read one sentence of a book without being lost for an hour or more in the infinite complications and suggestions, experiences and sensations, it evokes in

me. It seems that thinking leads more and more away from action and more and more towards a world in which no action is possible, because one's thinking is never yet completed, never will be. Thinking becomes an action in itself which cancels out all other action.

And so I realize that all that we call leisure, "doing nothing," "not working," "being unemployed," all that goes through us when we stare blankly into space, actually betrays an activity so intense and far-reaching that it could overturn our whole lives. The more I indulge in this activity which is no activity, the more useless and trivial the rest of life begins to seem. That, of course, is why this kind of leisure is forbidden to us — through the economic necessity of "work" — and why TV, bridge games, and typing pools (which never fail to evoke an image of drowning) were all invented. In other words, society is terrified at the prospect that we might stop working and start thinking.

March 1983

Back-To-Work

(Wherein I Leave the Swelling Ranks of the Unemployed and Re-join the Rank Swells of the Employed)

"Pulling yourself together" (which I am attempting to do now) is after all the opposite of spreading yourself out, laying thin and still, listening to the atmosphere, to the clouds condense, feeling the air pressure build....

I can feel acutely, now, the shift in consciousness when I occupy myself with "work" — instead of being filled with the world, immobile, I am sharpened, focused, bounded. It's the difference between thinking poetry and writing it — this involves also the unfortunate narrowing-down, just as we have to narrow our mouths to get the words out...to be open-mouthed is to be awe-struck, speechless and full

of wonder, or simply retarded, or perhaps all of these at once (and it certainly means being out of a job. Clerical workers must always keep their mouths *shut*.)

July 1983

*At the "Office of Development"
at UC Med Center,
A "Very Well-Run Office"*

Ultimately, the fault of the office — especially the well-run office — is that it organizes life in a way that it refuses to be organized — or, rather, that the life-outside-of-the-office (the Sutro Forest above the buildings) refuses to be organized. It creates an illusion of order where none in fact exists — and then, when the rest of life does not follow form, we are lost and betrayed. Therefrom (whence, thereto, leading out of) lies the obvious liberating solution: which is -- (but I forgot, the phone rang.)

— by Roberta Werdinger

Make paper roses and spray paint red. Sell to military veterans.





“The Line You Have
Reached . . .
DISCONNECT IT!”

INTERPRETING THE PHONE STRIKE

The 22 day nationwide strike by 700,000 telephone workers provided a window on the relative strength of capital and labor in the current era. In classic style, both management and unions are claiming victory, since neither side was able to push through its most aggressive bargaining goals.

The union successfully resisted the “takebacks” that management demanded. Nationally, AT&T sought a restructuring of medical insurance payments that would transfer up to 25% of basic costs to workers, but surrendered in the face of union intransigence. In California, Pacific Telephone workers won two important issues when they resisted the imposition of split shifts in all departments, and maintained the 7½ hour workday for clericals in spite of PacTel demands for an 8 hour day.

On the other hand, AT&T and the soon-to-be-divested regional basic operating companies (BOC’s) overcame union demands for guaranteed job security, establishing instead a miniscule \$31 million “retraining fund” for workers whose jobs become obsolete and an incentive-bonus program for early retirement. No specific job protection guarantees were made, the company thereby reserving its “right” to lay off and transfer workers according to market conditions. Given the forthcoming deregulation of the communications industry, phone service employment will significantly diminish over the course of the three year agreement. The severance payment plans do represent a concession

by management to cushion workers from layoffs, but for a corporation giant with \$7.2 billion in profits last year, and \$1.9 billion in the first quarter of this year, it is a small price to pay in exchange for control over workforce levels and the labor process itself.

Both sides have expressed satisfaction with the wage settlement, 5.5% in the first year, 1.5% + COLA in second and third years (estimated total for the three year contract is 16.4%). For the company the settlement looks good because it is less than each of the last two national contracts; it is substantially less than the 28.5% granted to GTE telecommunications workers in bargaining last year; and most importantly, the BOC’s are blessed with very low built-in labor cost increases for the first two years of their marketplace independence (’84 & ’85). The unions, for their part, can point to the total increase of 16.4% as an improvement over widespread wage freezes and wage cuts agreed to by other big unions.

AT&T: Strengths & Weaknesses

The media has made much of the 97% automation of basic phone service that made it possible for 700,000 people to strike without much affect on the public. Of course, this high level of automation did hurt workers’ power to affect phone service from outside the workplace. The company could also rely on a built-in force of

250,000 strikebreakers — its vast bureaucracy of “managers,” most of whom usually perform routine information processing and have only narrowly-defined decision-making functions.

The Bell System assumes it has a basically uncooperative and “lazy” workforce. Thus, it exercises rigid control over all its operatives via close surveillance and evaluation of workers and managers alike, and more recently through computerized tracking of work performance. Now that the machines are able to take on much of this work, Bell is saddled with a redundant, costly middle-management bureaucracy. During the strike, most middle managers were in a sense re-proletarianized, as they went back to being operators, linemen, sales clerks, and secretaries, commonly working 12-hour days and 6-day weeks. In the Bay Area there were grumblings about starting a “managers’ union” for future protection from these conditions. This strike experience could be a hint of what’s to come for managers with further industry automation and rationalization.

LEAVING THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT, SUDDENLY, THE SEA

The sky explodes at noon.
Hundreds of office workers
killed in the streets
by a hail of silver dollars.

The survivors are only disgruntled
about the added city costs
for clearing the district of bodies.

Somewhere outside the economy,
I peddle like a falcon
down the dense city streets
to the bay

where shreds of fog drift,
blank paychecks,
a currency almost forgotten.

by David Steinberg

There was significant discord among the management bargainers during this strike. Marketplace competition is only a few months away, and different prospects for profits are facing different BOC’s and AT&T itself. PacTel in California and several units in the new Bell Atlantic region (around Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C.), fearing that deregulation and divestiture would aggravate their already weak financial conditions, pushed for substantial takebacks in this contract — this hard-line position prevailed in the early stages of the strike. Eventually, however, AT&T and other regional bargainers, wanting to ensure relative peace and stability during the breakup process, reached a compromise contract agreement.

The greatest weakness of the Bell System in this strike, ironically, proved to be the divestiture process itself. Because so much managerial and marketing time is being spent gearing up for “1-1-84,” the actual date of the breakup, there is a great deal of clerical work to be done — work which, while invisible to the public, is nonetheless crucial to the current and future profitability of the phone companies. The hundreds of thousands of striking word processors, data processors, key punchers, typists, secretaries, file clerks, etc. crippled the phone company’s ability to continue vital information processing.

AT&T needs to get the divestiture over with as soon as possible. They are getting out of basic phone service just in time for the fast-moving technological upheaval in the communications industry. The phone system needs to upgrade its technology and overhaul its operations if it is to maintain a slowly falling share of the total communications market. By divesting itself now, AT&T is taking half its total assets, plus its most innovative and competitive divisions, into the competitive and profitable

communications marketplace.

The divested BOC's will have to modernize their technology and decrease their workforces. Had they remained part of AT&T they conceivably could have tapped its enormous capital resources to finance this restructuring. Instead, they will have to obtain the needed capital by doubling basic phone service costs — thereby lowering the basic standard of living (10-42% of present phone holders are projected to give up having a phone at home as basic costs double) while AT&T uses its retained capital to dominate the communications markets.

Labor: Strengths & Weaknesses

The strike caught the unions unprepared. The smallest union's president, John Shaughnessy of the Telecommunications International Union (TIU), claimed that management forced the strike. The largest union, representing 525,000 phone workers, was the Communications Workers of America (CWA). The CWA didn't expect a strike until it was almost underway. Also, the CWA's small strike fund couldn't sustain a long strike.

In spite of the union leadership's flatfootedness, the important trade-union principle of solidarity was reaffirmed in this strike (contrast the predicament of the Machinists on strike against now-"bankrupt" Continental Airlines without support from other airline unions until the bankruptcy scheme — the same Machinists who crossed PATCO picket lines 2 years ago). The three unions in the phone strike (CWA, TIU, and the International Brotherhood of Electric-

DOWNTOWN

waiting in a phone booth
for the rain
for the business to
come down
on my lackey head
between ink-spurts and
cloudbursts of exhaust
and cement reflections
which shine in the overcast
as though there were
still something to sing about
here downtown
where everyone's either
dead, sad, or believing that
it's over,
their checkbooks cupped in their
hands like prayers,
that there is no
choice, you've got to be
this way, or else . . .

by J. Cleave Barker

cal Workers — IBEW) promised to respect each others' picket lines, and with few exceptions did in fact stay off the job while others were still negotiating. At its last national convention the CWA had the foresight to pledge national solidarity among locals so that everyone stayed out until all local issues were "resolved."

In spite of these positive steps, the phone strike was definitely "under control." For information strikers depended on daily bulletins issued by the union, which offered the same platitudes dished up to the press about progress in negotiations. Negotiations were carried on at all levels in secret meetings, and the negotiators were primarily union officials. Strikers do have the right to vote on ratification, but that ballot took place over a month after the back-to-work



Money kills. Drop a two ton sack of money on somebody's head — you'll see it's true.

order.

The structure of the strike reinforced a passive role for the actual strikers, whose primary function was to stand at isolated picket posts for a few hours a day. The structure of U.S. labor conflict is based on "experts" on both union and management sides defining what is "negotiable" and then proceeding to arrive at a "settlement." That arrangement, in which strikers are spectators of their own battle, is an important element in defusing the common (but difficult to "negotiate" or "settle") frustration and anger stemming from alienation, boredom, work quotas, and management. The humiliation of submitting to the discipline of a phone company job is well known (it's not uncommon to have to raise one's hand to go to the bathroom). Less clear is how that humiliation, and the anger at it, is *used* by the union for its own narrow economic goals. Since "management's right to manage" and capital's right to exist aren't rejected by the unions it follows that they cannot address problems about the qualitative *nature* of work, or life in general.

Even what solidarity there was was a mere shadow of a real class soli-

arity. For example, AT&T's vulnerability as a result of the divestiture process could have been exploited to better advantage. Instead of accepting the constraints of "acceptable demands," such as wages and working conditions, the strikers could have demanded that AT&T put up the money to modernize local phone systems, and thwarted its scheme to double the customers' costs. Such a demand would have created a natural unity between all phone users (most people) and the strikers *against* company and union negotiators who were trying to limit the issues, and against the courts and government bureaucrats who have set up the great "divestiture" scam.

Widely considered "progressive," unions are themselves *capitalist* institutions, having the function of bargaining over the sale of human beings. Collective bargaining is inherently oppressive since it always implies the continuation of wage-slavery and never allows for the *termination* of the selling of human beings, for any time or price under any conditions. Trade unionism, especially in its narrowest and most widely practiced form, is a vital

We're On Strike!

FOREVER!!





You can be popular at bars by proving the Domino Theory with your pocket change!

support for capitalism, since it contains workers' conflicts within the logic of the system of buying and selling.

In the phone strike, the workers did partially break out of that logic through widespread sabotage, albeit sporadically and unlinked to any radical demands or goals. There were perhaps a thousand incidents nationwide, many of which demonstrated great skill and good sense about targets. In New Jersey there were 25 acts of sabotage reported in the first three days of the strike. The most dramatic was a severed cable which cut off phone service to a New Jersey state police barracks and Fort Dix, a major army base. In the Chicago area there were 47 acts in the first week, one of which consisted of throwing a lit highway flare into a switching box, thereby cutting off service to the Du Page County Sheriff's Department. In California, Pacific Telephone reported there were 227 incidents of sabotage, for an average of over ten per day during the 22 day strike. Damage was done in most parts of the country, including Miami, Dallas, Detroit, Reno, Philadelphia, and many other places.

This remarkable outbreak of direct action undoubtedly steered management negotiators toward conciliation. Beyond that, it kept the scab work-

force in a state of "crisis management," where in addition to handling the ever-increasing backlog of routine repair and installation, they constantly had to attend to emergencies.

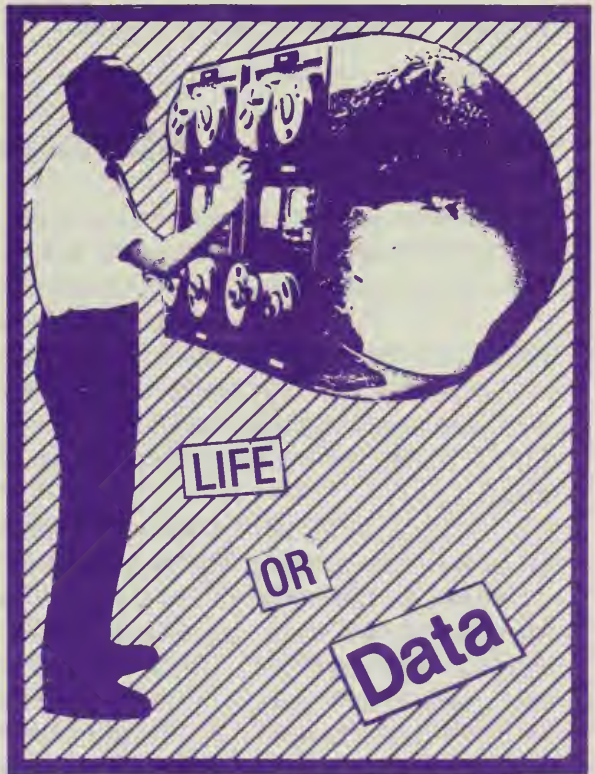
In several areas the picket lines were militant. In Providence Rhode Island pickets skirmished with mounted police, and in Brooklyn NY a scuffle took place between strikers and cops, injuring three police and leading to the arrest of 3 strikers. In Dorchester Mass. (a suburb of Boston) strikers surrounded three scabbing phone company trucks until they were dispersed by police.

In spite of this direct action, union control and direction prevented strikers from resorting to a much stronger form of leverage: the occupation. Two years ago, in a strike against British Columbia Telephone (Canada), which is owned by GTE (U.S.), 11,000 phone workers occupied 20 installations over an area as large as California, Oregon, and Washington combined. At the height of their occupation they controlled all telephone, radiophone, satellites, and cable in British Columbia, and provided free phone service to people during the six days. Similarly according to a recent report from Australia, phone workers were giving citizens free long distance phone calls from specific phone booths in major

cities. What characterizes these tactics is the suspension of the business part of phones while maintaining their use value for the general population.

In the U.S. phone strike, workers gained significant leverage by thoroughly disrupting basic information-processing. The bulk of phone company information is generally only of use in billing or keeping track of ownership, etc., so disrupting it halts the smooth circulation of capital. The phone strike thus reinforced the power of clerical workers to hurt capital, though we probably won't hear much about it from most commentators.

The fact remains, however, that an occupation would have *totally halted* information processing, and also information *gathering*, as workers could have tampered with or destroyed vast amounts of data needed for billing. In fact, the power to destroy vital data is growing. With computerization there is less paper or "hard copy" evidence of what is "correct," so it is possible for workers to creatively intervene at each link of the infoprocessing chain.



out-of-control data institute

Phone workers are also uniquely positioned to exert tremendous leverage in solidarity with other workers. The selective cutting off of phone service to intransigent owners (or arsonist landlords or brutal cops for that matter) can be a powerful weapon in an increasingly hot class conflict. It isn't the new technology as an outside force which has disempowered workers, as *Time* and other establishment press claim. Capital has continually restructured work to expand its control, and new technology has always been a key to its strategies. The problems lie more with workers who don't grasp the power at their fingertips, instead relying on moribund and obsolete strategies imposed by a decaying trade union movement in its death throes. By taking direct control over worksites and labor processes, workers can make dramatic immediate improvements and begin to open the possibilities for a free future.

THERE MUST
BE MORE TO
LIFE THAN WORK
WORK WORK!!!



TO: Selected faculty and staff
FROM: President Sperry Univac



Spring 1984

RE: Orange Blossom Special Plan

Years ago we commissioned a study of the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) by the Bechtel Time-Motion Efficiency Maximization Corporation to ferret out waste, corruption and inefficiency and develop a more **streamlined** approach to education. The Bechtel team has finished their study, presenting us a comprehensive proposal to overhaul CCSF operations and cut costs.

The Bechtel team began with a macro-economic analysis of CCSF's role in the local economy and concluded that the yearly capital outlay is not fully paid off by future dividends accrued from increased alumni productivity in the economy at large.

Glaring inefficiency was uncovered in the usage of time/space by CCSF students. For example, the average number of class hours per student is 2 hours. This means the 75% of the student body which commutes via public transport spends as much time on buses or BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) trains as it does in class. And students with cars spend the equivalent of 60% of their class time in transport, when parking time is accounted for. Further there is the notorious "down time" expended chattering with other students, cutting classes, sleeping in the library and listening labs, sitting on toilets and in cars, playing huge radio-tape players, and staring into space, walking about aimlessly. The survey found a similar amount of man-hours being wasted by faculty and staff, and an enormous portion of the annual budget devoted to mere physical maintenance of the campus.

Accordingly the Bechtel proposal is to terminate the CCSF campus, converting it into an industrial park, and transfer classes onto MUNI buses and BART trains during non-rush hours, all coordinated through an advanced computer system. Students and staff could be provided with daily scheduling data wherever there is a conveniently located BART station, bus stop, computerized bank teller or Pac-Man machine. By placing a magnetic ID card in a local computer, a student/staffer could receive its bus or train route for the day in 15 seconds. There can be rest stops at fast food chains, shopping centers, Consumers' distributors stores, bookstores and Army recruitment centers as a part of the daily program. Childcare services would be moved onto buses also. (**Note:** This is not an eccentric Rube Goldberg scheme. The Bechtel team has already constructed a working model of the "Orange Blossom Special Plan" based on their 15 years of work on the mobile MX missile system.)

Further, CCSF, with its motto "We Do It All For You," cannot ignore the psycho-social aspects of modern academic life. Currently, students with full-time jobs who take only one or two classes adapt well, since CCSF appears to be a recreational activity next to their family/job routine. It is the full-time student who induces real problems. The average full-timer complains of drifting alone in a sea of 15,000 other day students, often going through an entire day without a single personal conversation. One rather emotionally-disturbed youngster scrawled on the Bechtel team questionnaire that CCSF should be re-named "Market Street University" and claimed that the cafeteria resembled a Greyhound Bus station.

The survey found faculty had little time for personalized interface with students, burdened with from 50 to 350 students per semester. This was found to be the main cause of low student productivity, manifested by frequent lapses into "pupulus catatonus" during class. This phenomena was found reaching epidemic proportions (**Symptoms:** Student stares blankly into space for hour intervals, smiling and nodding, scribbling as if he were taking notes). The extreme 10% of

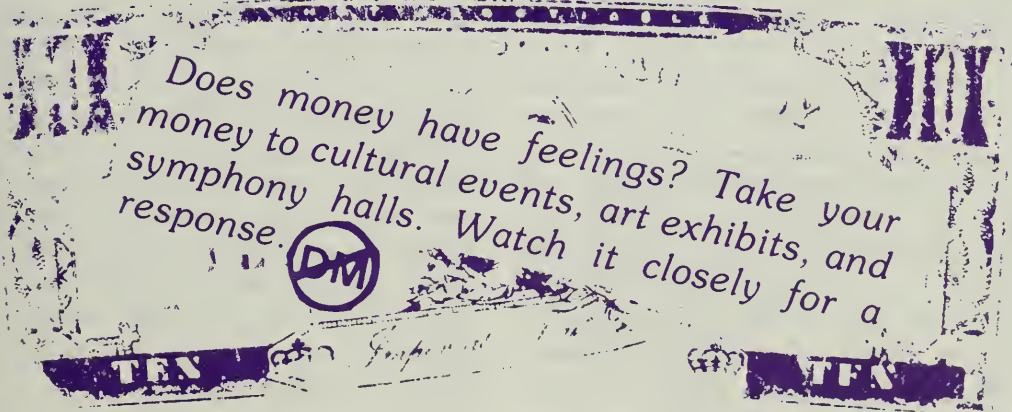
these cases sleep mainly in CCSF classes and do schoolwork under heavy doses of amphetamines between 1 and 6 a.m.

Could the stop and go of a bus or train be disruptive to reading, lectures or class discussion? Research has found students to be more alert on buses, watching card tricks, for instance, than in class. The stop and go of the bus can be a stimulant to the student's sleepy demeanor. The scenery, light breezes through the window, and the professor strolling up and down the aisle lecturing can be expected to produce even greater student attentiveness. The changed atmosphere of the mobile school should also ameliorate numerous complaints over the "anonymity" and "loneliness" of the CCSF campus.

Bechtel deduced that greater savings can be made by combining the job of bus driver and professor. Bus drivers who are inclined toward conversation can be tutored on a given subject and will be able to chatter intelligently to students through a microphone while driving. On the other hand, many professors who have been repeating the same lectures for 10 to 25 years can be trained to drive while lecturing. Certain popular classes could be held on 5-car BART trains or broadcast to other buses over closed-circuit TV. These video-equipped buses could also be utilized by students on their breaks, who could eat lunch and watch soap operas.

The Computer Science Department will be the only one to remain fully-based on the old campus, given that this semester the department will encompass 67% of the student body. The first two floors of Batmale Hall will be converted into a silicon chip assembly plant, manned by that sector of the student body with a 2.0 grade point average or lower, to encourage them to pursue a career where their manual dexterity can be more efficiently employed. The more advanced students will run the computer of the CCSF itself, the first college on wheels!

The major objection that we foresee is that our streamlined approach to education won't be conducive to the creation of the so-called well-rounded student. Let's get down to brass tacks: aren't there enough English majors, second rate "artists" and failed football stars on the city's welfare rolls, driving cabs or washing dishes? In what sense do these "well rounded" individuals contribute to the progress of our nation? The Orange Blossom Special plan will synchronize CCSF's curriculum with today's job market. We all know that the average student attends community college to give his career a little boost. Under our plan local corporations will be searching out CCSF graduates the way law firms look for Harvard or Yale graduates. They'll **know** that CCSF graduates can be counted on to be loyal, productive employees. The change would not be as great as you think: is walking through CCSF at midday any different from a BART station at rush hour? In all candor, this plan can cut CCSF's budget in half, and modernize its teaching methods **without lowering City College's high educational standards one iota.**



PIECEWORK

I worked as an office temp upstairs, above the workshop factory, in what was euphemistically called a “sheltered workshop.” It was a mezzanine, with open window space through which you could look down on the workroom floor. My job entailed logging in the hours of each production worker down on the floor, figuring out their individual piece rates per hour, according to a predetermined piece rate standard that Gretchen, my immediate boss, would give me. The rate would be established by Mr. Hershman, the stern Austrian-born director of the workshop, after the beginning of a job, after taking a one or two week set of figures on what each worker did per day.

The various jobs were contracted out to the workshop by different companies. A typical job might consist of stapling two flyers together, or maybe inserting forty pieces of literature into pockets of a plastic folder, then inserting the plastic folder into a polybag and stapling it. The two regular jobs were shrink wrapping books from a printer in a sort of Saran Wrap in order to keep them undamaged in distribution, and assembling snake bite and hypodermic kits for clinical laboratories.

Whenever the workers would start consistently surpassing the standard per hour rate on any job for a two week period or so, Mr. Hershman would have us change the standard quantity per hour, to up it from, say, 20 to 25, and then lower the piece rate pay. For example, 15.8 cents per might be dropped to 14.2. Calculating the pay was my job, and although I suspected that this manipulation of pay rates might be illegal, it took me a while to understand how it worked. Then too, I was grateful to have

gotten the job because I had few sophisticated office skills, no experience in accounting, and I had no one looking over my shoulder, so whenever I needed to type one of the few and basic letters required I could struggle with it a couple of hours unnoticed.

Gretchen, a soft-hearted Hungarian, told me that she’d tried berating the workers for habitually waiting at the workshop door to get in to work before eight in the morning, explaining to them that they were defeating their own purpose by it. But they would be eager to make the “standard” by starting early. The majority of them were of foreign origin, old, with varyingly serious medical handicaps, and had nothing but loneliness to shut the door on when they left home in the morning, so they looked forward to coming to the workshop where they would argue with each other, with Gretchen — even though she had good rapport with them — with Mr. Hershman, and with his Filipino foreman, Marcel. And with Darwish, the shop steady man, although arguing with him often proved to be a one way street, if he didn’t have his hearing aid turned up at the time.

Darwish was in his mid-seventies and wore a pacemaker. His primary responsibility outside of running errands to the main office of the workshop on the other side of the city was to clean the floors and the office upstairs. He was gregarious, but self-contained, spry in a serene way that I liked. He reminded me of an elf. If he liked you he would drop little European chocolate or coffee candies on your work area as he went by. Try as I might, I could never manage to pronounce his name right and usually

called him Darvish. Darvish introduced himself to me with a question. "You know how many years I'm here?" Eighteen years I'm here." Whenever anybody asked, "How are you, Darvish?" he would answer, "I'm dyink," patting his chest over the area of his pacemaker.

Things were catch as catch can in the office. There was often nothing in the bathroom to use for toilet paper and we would have to resort to using the scratchy hand towel paper which was left on a shelf. I realized after a while that toilet paper was something that Darvish was sent out for upon immediate need, not something to be stocked because of its obvious future need. The same was true of a lot of the other supplies. I often wrote up pay sheets with a one inch stub of pencil, and added sets of five cent stamps to update postage on ancient workshop envelopes. I learned how to enjoy warm, eyeballed instant coffee, unstirred, and to write business letters on a typewriter with no right hand margin. Once when I ran out of white-out, I had to go out and buy a bottle in order to finish a letter I was typing.

One morning, Gretchen had spent the morning downstairs on the workshop floor and Darvish, who was upstairs cleaning, had accidentally locked the office door behind him. When I came to work I couldn't get in. I knocked, then pounded on the door, yelling, "Darvish, Darvish, open up." Gretchen then came up and pounded even louder, yelling for Darvish to come to the door. The Filipino foreman, Marcel, began yelling up from the work floor through the two window openings which looked out onto the first floor. "Darvich, Darvich, open the door!" Then the eighteen workers chimed in. The whole building reverberated with versions of !Darvish! with everyone waving, gesturing, pounding, screaming, trying to get Darvish's attention, in vain. After a quarter

hour of this futile effort Darvish, who by now had finished cleaning, opened the locked door. He looked astonished to see so many people out there at the head of the stairs. He had turned down his hearing aid before he started to clean. That afternoon I heard Mr. Hershman in his office complaining to Gretchen. "If Darvish wasn't here so long, I'd let him go." Shortly after, he took Darvish off the office cleaning job and gave it to a new, young Filipino worker, Elvino, and it became increasingly obvious that Mr. Hershman wanted to fire Darvish.

But Darvish didn't seem to mind losing his cleaning job. He still came in in good spirits, would say good morning to Gretchen and me, hum to himself, and give us our two candies apiece, darting around in his elfin way.

About this time, Mrs. Rugoff got in a big fight with Mr. Morales about his not cleaning up the downstairs bath-

G A S P

They're cutting down the trees to make room to raise cheese burgers, down in the Amazon rainforests. (Check it out for yourself.)

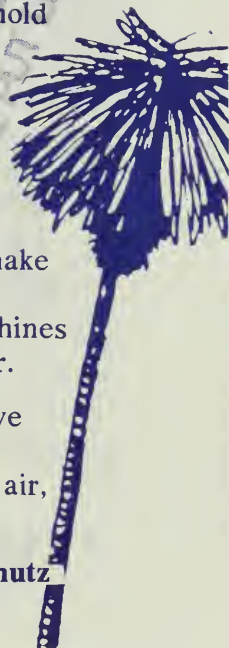
They're eating up the atmosphere. I hope your children don't like air. (Train them early how to hold their breath.)

They're growing buildings miles high, full of people eating burgers raised in vanished forests.

They're magicians, they make trees and air disappear. When they get better machines they'll make you disappear.

They, they, they. They have names and addresses. When there's only bottled air, guess who will be selling the bottles?

by Kurt Lipschutz



room after himself, not returning the toilet paper and letting the hand towels fall into the toilet bowl. Gretchen had to go down and act as mediator as everyone took sides and it sounded from upstairs like this time there was the possibility of a riot developing. When she came back upstairs, she was exasperated. "They're just like children, I swear, when they get going like that. Mrs. Rugoff told Mr. Bargov to quit staring at her so much. I don't know what's got into her lately. She's so damn touchy."

A while later Darwish came upstairs to get his letters to deliver to the main office. He was wearing a spicy green bow tie with his usual suit jacket and short-sleeved shirt. How's it going, Darwish?" I asked. "Dyink," he said. "I'm dyink." His hand went up to his chest. Then he put two Austrian chocolates on my desk and

winked. "I'm so bad now I got to go see the doctor. How about you callink for my appointment?" I made the appointment for him early the next week. "You. You two. You're two beautiful girls, you," he said, carrying his manila folders and letters out the door. After he was down the stairs, Gretchen confided that Mr. Hershman was planning to let Darwish go in two weeks.

Everyone now and then one of the workers would pass out downstairs. Then there would be bedlam in the building, and even after I realized that this happened on the average of once a month I was always surprised at the frenetic activity it could generate. Both Gretchen and Mr. Hershman would bolt downstairs, leaving me to call the ambulance. Then, while they waited around for the arrival of the ambulance, the workers, Marcel,



“WE GOT THE MONEY!!”

and Mr. Hershman would keep up a commentary on the condition of the passed out. I could hear them from upstairs. "She's coming around." "She's breathing better now." "Her color is comink." Mr. Hershman would meanwhile try to get the others to concentrate on returning to work. (I could imagine him saying something like, "OK, everybody back to work now, it only takes one person to die.")

Across from the workshop was a mini-park that had playground facilities, with swings and monkey bars, but children seldom went in it because the park was well populated all day long with winos. One wino lived there the entire six months I held the job. In daytime he lived in a sleeping bag in the sand and slept there in the open, but whenever it drizzled or rained he would move his sleeping bag underneath the slide. He would get out of his cocoon during the day only to go over to pee in the same place up against the wall of an abutting office building. It dawned on me that that playground was possibly the biggest litter box for male *Homo sapiens* this side of the continental divide. Every wino who walked, stumbled or crawled past that park, it seemed, stopped to urinate against that office building. It took its full share of ammoniac showers.

One afternoon, as I was idly looking out the office window, I saw directly beneath on the sidewalk an extremely drunk man waving his penis about in one hand towards the oncoming traffic as though he were a signalman with a racing flag. An enormous stream of urine jetted up and out into the street, while he grinned foolishly at the oncoming cars as though he were terrifically pleased with this endless hydranting stream which he was capable of producing.

As I was watching this scene, Mr. Hershman walked into the office on his way to his own office which was in back. It was getting close to Christmas and he was having a hard time

organizing the annual party. Darwish had begged off the party, because he said he was having troubles with his pacemaker.

"I haff a good mind to cancel the party, with everybody sick. It's costink us too much. First Mrs. Rugoff, then Mrs. Berg gettink sick, and Darwish. I should let him go." Then he looked at me. "Are you comink to the party?" I tried to be polite about turning him down, telling him I had errands to run.

"Well, just tell me. It doesn't matter if you're comink or not, but I got to know. It's \$7.50 a person for this."

"Well, I'd appreciate the day off," I admitted. I was relieved that he was being so blunt about it.

"Good." He walked back into his office and I went back to typing out the paychecks, a new chore I'd been given as I had mastered the books so well that I had large amounts of obvious free time by then. Then he came back in. "And another tink. If you don't want to hire on permanent, we're goink to haff to lay you off after Christmas because it's costink too much with this agency." I didn't want to hire on permanent and told him so, and that settled it. Then he went back downstairs (It was then that I decided to cook the books on the big Copy Copia shrink wrap job we had gotten in. Nothing big, not so it would be noticeable, but just enough so that the last checks I typed out would have a small bonus in them.)

I heard some sort of noise, I guess, but I was thinking so hard about what I was going to do about a job after Christmas, and on typing the paychecks, which had to be perfect, that I was completely absorbed. So it was a good fifteen minutes later that the yells registered. I rushed down the stairs and saw that the place was empty — everyone had gone home early, Gretchen was on her break — except for Darwish, who was in the back doing some piece work — he was

paid a straight salary and he often filled in his time doing some the piece rate work — and Mr. Hershman, who was on the floor by the workshop door, holding his side, writhing in obvious pain. I called the ambulance from the downstairs phone, and was relieved to see Gretchen get back by the time they got there. The ambulance driver spot-diagnosed a cracked or broken rib (it turned out to be three). Mr. Hershman said a drunk with his fly open, exposing himself, had wandered into the workshop. They argued and then Mr. Hershman had tried to evict him and they tussled until the drunk had swung him around hard onto one of the pallets. The drunk had then wandered away. Mr. Hershman had tried to get Darwish's attention, but couldn't. Even as he was telling his story for the second time, Darwish was still there, oblivious, in the back at one of the work set-ups, methodically melting down the tips of glass laboratory tubing over a Bunsen burner. He just happened to turn around and see the ambulance attendants getting Mr. Hershman onto a stretcher. He looked startled to see all of us there.

Later, up in the office, after the ambulance had gone and we had called Mrs. Hershman to let her know what happened and had all calmed down a little, Darwish told us he had turned his hearing aid down in order to spend the rest of his work shift in peace and quiet, so he could think about where he and Mrs. Rugoff were going to go on their honeymoon. She had agreed to marry him the next Friday, on the day scheduled for the Christmas party. He said they had argued it, but he had finally given in to her demands for a Russian Orthodox ceremony, while she in turn agreed that he should get to pick where they would go on their weekend honeymoon. "And the kids," Darwish gave us one of his pixie glances, "we already decided. They should be Russian Orthodox or go to

Temple, however they want to do it." Gretchen gave Darwish and Mrs. Rugoff two paid vacation days as a wedding gift on the spot, and Darwish then insisted that we join him in a taste from the bottle of Slivovitz that Mrs. Berg had given him for a Christmas gift.

— by Penny Skillman



THE GARBAGE CAN LUNCH

Trash can eater suffers
hunger fits.

Sick to the stomach
for a super garbage dish.

Look, I'm not a dog
without any sense
my food is carefully
inspected by the F.D.A.

The food hunt
and my taste for lunch,
the garbage can menu
doesn't offer much.

High minded people
nose in the air
little green bucks
think they're going
some where.

New York steaks
roast lamb
luxury living
puts me to shame.

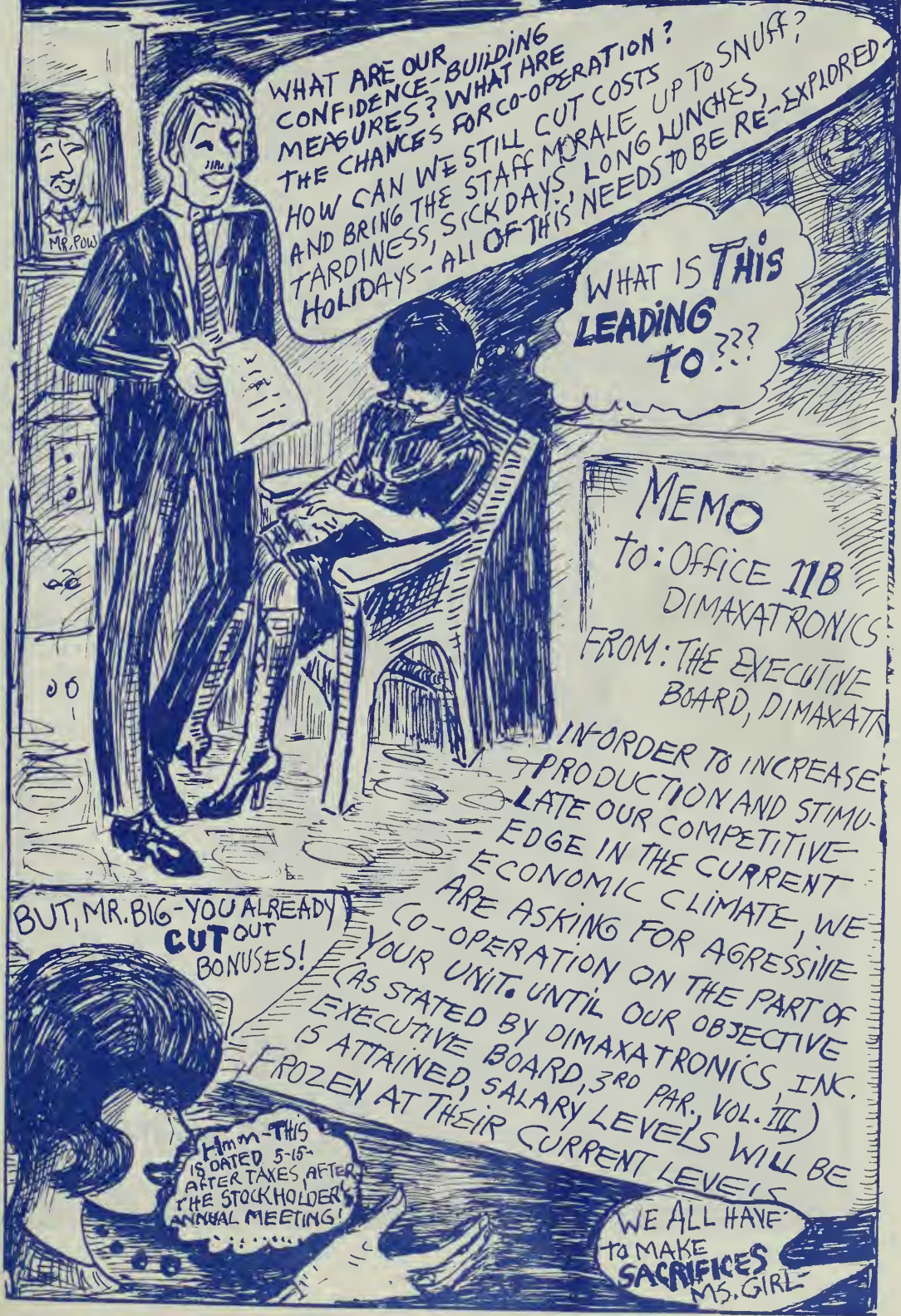
Education, can't spell
anything. But when
it comes to my garbage
can lunch, I hunt, hunt,
hunt, until I find me
something to munch.

Concerned about people
I'm no fool
hearts are cold
money, the golden rule.

by Henry Calhoun

BAD GIRL II

By SHIRLEY ANN GARZOTTO ©1983



WHAT ARE OUR CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES? WHAT ARE THE CHANCES FOR CO-OPERATION? HOW CAN WE STILL CUT COSTS AND BRING THE STAFF MORALE UP TO SNUFF? TARDINESS, SICK DAYS, LONG LUNCHES, HOLIDAYS - ALL OF THIS NEEDS TO BE RE-EXPLORED

WHAT IS THIS LEADING TO???

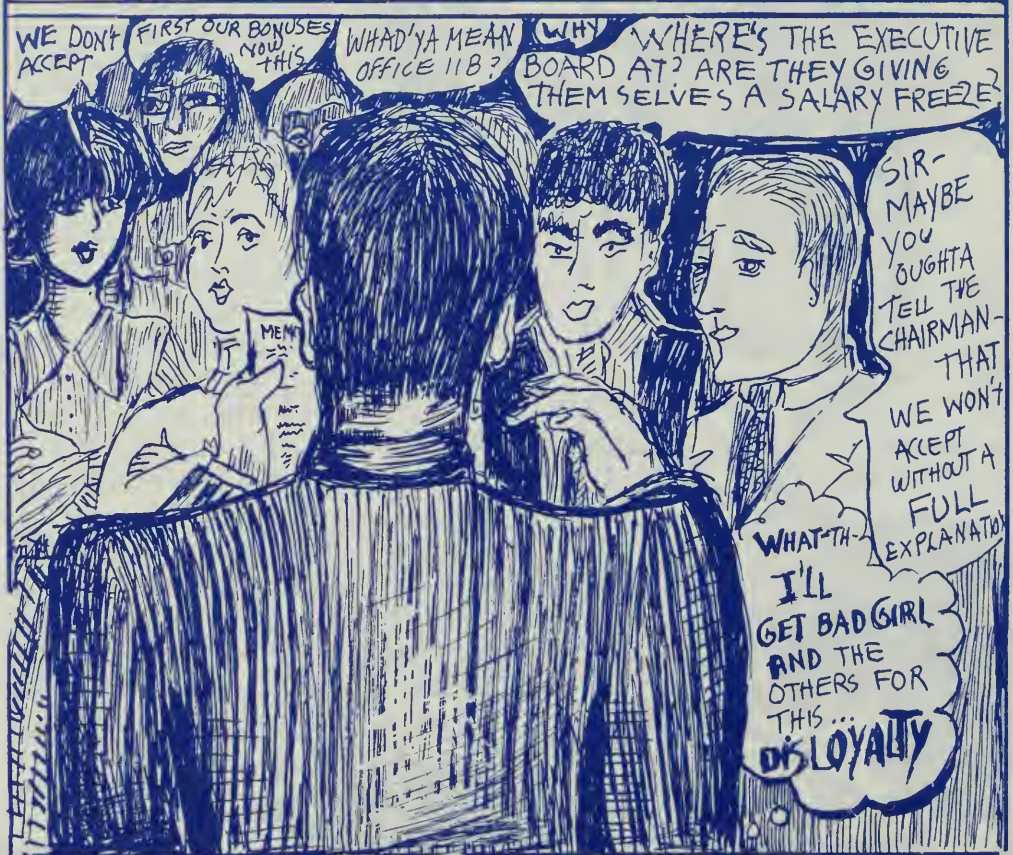
MEMO
TO: OFFICE 11B
DIMAXATRONICS
FROM: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, DIMAXATRONICS

IN-ORDER TO INCREASE PRODUCTION AND STIMULATE OUR COMPETITIVE EDGE IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE, WE ARE ASKING FOR AGGRESSIVE CO-OPERATION ON THE PART OF YOUR UNIT. UNTIL OUR OBJECTIVE (AS STATED BY DIMAXATRONICS, INC. EXECUTIVE BOARD, 3RD PAR., VOL. III) IS ATTAINED, SALARY LEVELS WILL BE FROZEN AT THEIR CURRENT LEVELS

BUT, MR. BIG - YOU ALREADY CUT OUR BONUSES!

Hmm - THIS IS DATED 5-15 - AFTER TAXES AFTER THE STOCKHOLDERS ANNUAL MEETING!

WE ALL HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES MS. GIRL

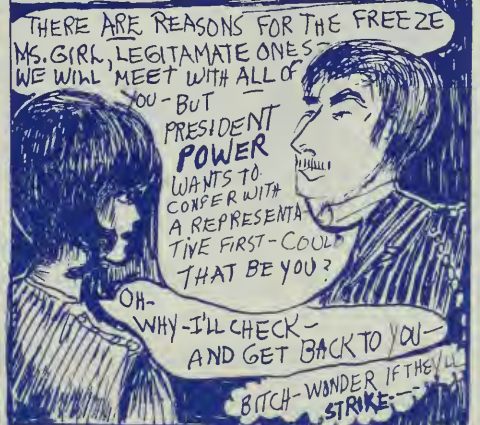


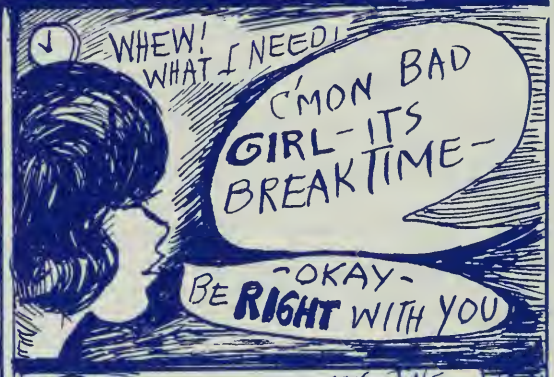


2 AS YOU HAVE OBSERVED SO ASTUTELY, THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE IS CURRENTLY UNWIELDY FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE RECEPTIONIST, THE SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR, THE THREE CLERKS, THE TWO PRIVATE SECRETARIES, THE JUNIOR ASSISTANTS, THE SR. AND JR. ACCOUNTANTS AND THE TWO WORD PROCESSORS, WHO ALL, LIKE THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, HAVE WIVES, HUSBANDS, LOVERS, CHILDREN AND UNCLES, AUNTS AND COUSINS WHO DEPEND ON THEM. BECAUSE THREE POSITIONS HERE HAVE BEEN LEFT VACANT FOR THE PAST YEAR, OUR WORK LOAD HAS INCREASED 19.2% WITHOUT THE COMMENSURATE INCREASE IN SALARY, THUS WE-



LATER... IN MR. BIG'S OFFICE...





to be continued . . .

AGAINST "FAIRNESS" & FARES

"No Fare is No Fair" proclaimed the billboards sprouting all over San Francisco's streets and buses in the summer of 1983. In an absurd (and for all practical purposes ignored) attempt to turn "average bus riders" into vigilantes for the Municipal Railway, Mayor Dianne Feinstein launched a \$50,000 public relations campaign to improve receipts for SF's beleaguered and underfunded public transit system. It is widely assumed that fare evasion has skyrocketed along with the more than doubling of fares in the past few years (from 25 cents to 60 cents). Though statistics aren't available, MUNI (SF Transit) estimates put unpaid fares at five million dollars each year.

In the past two years, as the Financial District has exploded in size, more people have crammed on-

to the already overcrowded transit systems to get to work. A grass-roots campaign to force large downtown employees to help pay for costs of modernizing and expanding public transportation in SF was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1981, but vetoed by Feinstein. Other attempts to tap corporate coffers have floundered in the courts.

Mayor Feinstein had to develop other means of raising funds for public transit. The \$50,000 publicity campaign indicates her strategy: appeal to middle-class sensibilities of "fairness" and civic responsibility and scapegoat the poorer people who have developed ingenious methods of fare evasion.

Presenting fare payment as a civic responsibility reinforces widespread

FOSTER — KLEISER

FARE IS NO FAIR



DON'T Pay Your Fare Share on the Muni

mystification about the primary function of public transit, and obscures the unequal benefits derived from it. The obvious primary beneficiaries are employers and merchants. The obvious function is to bring people to and from work and shopping. In S.F., as in many other cities, the public transportation system is designed specifically to facilitate commuting to the downtown financial district from any part of the surrounding metropolitan area, whereas routes which do not pass through downtown are far less available or frequent.

Governments tax people to create transit systems (Dallas and Los Angeles are just beginning multi-billion transit systems at taxpayer expense). Then people have to pay again to use

these systems, usually suffering incredible discomfort, degradation, and frustration waiting for and riding on the vehicles.

In fact, transit systems are the means of *last resort* for assuring a mobile workforce and mobile shoppers. The automobile culture has served to thoroughly transfer costs of mobility to individuals in the form of car, gas, repair payments, and highway taxes. The transit system serves as a backup for millions, and as a primary means of commuting only for those who cannot afford a car, or parking . . .

Commuting itself represents a transfer of costs, too. Business could not function without workers coming to work, hence commuting is actually

COWORKERS

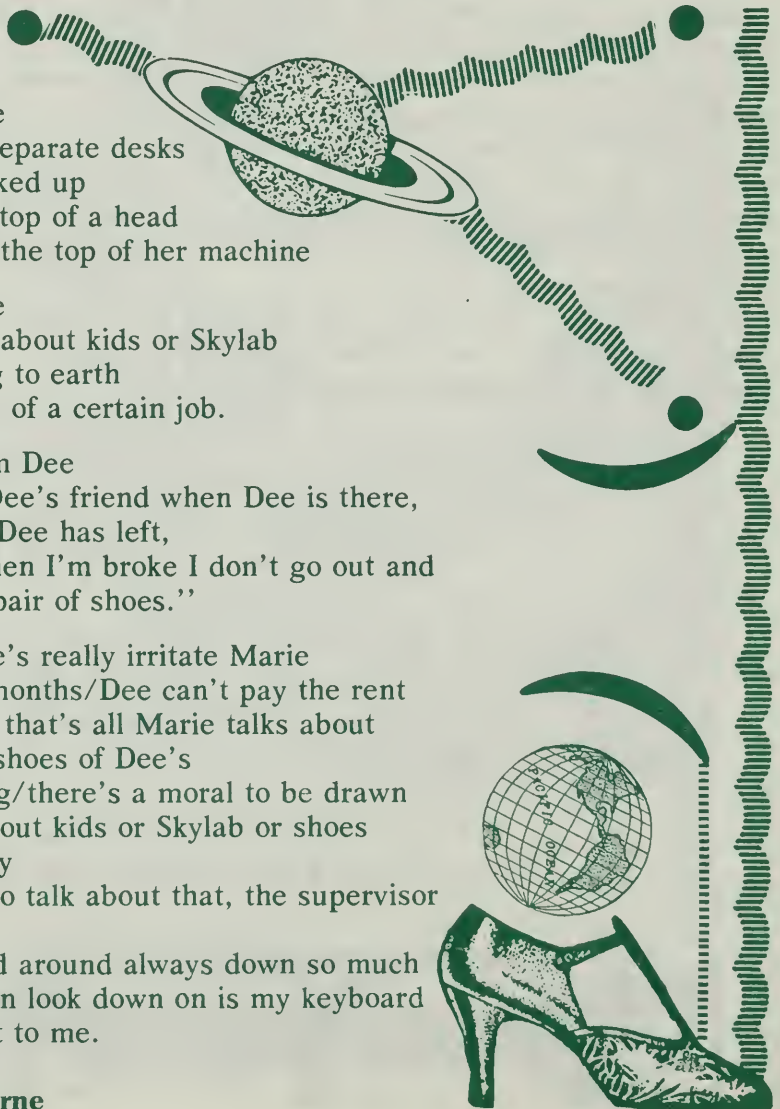
They sit around me
Each of us at our separate desks
If anyone of us looked up
She would see the top of a head
A turf of hair over the top of her machine

They sit around me
Sometimes talking about kids or Skylab
The satellite falling to earth
Or the crumminess of a certain job.

Lack of money from Dee
And from Marie, Dee's friend when Dee is there,
From Marie when Dee has left,
"I'm broke and when I'm broke I don't go out and
Buy a sixty-dollar pair of shoes."

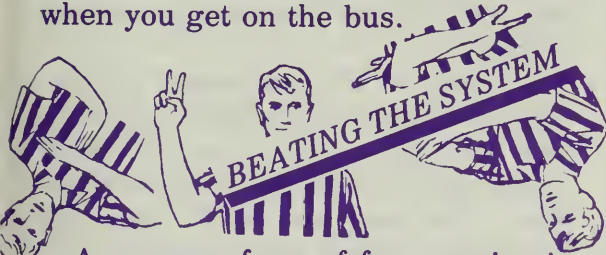
Those shoes of Dee's really irritate Marie
Dee saved up six months/Dee can't pay the rent
For the last month that's all Marie talks about
Those sixty-dollar shoes of Dee's
It proves something/there's a moral to be drawn
But I don't care about kids or Skylab or shoes
I care about my pay
But no one wants to talk about that, the supervisor
is in the room
We've been shoved around always down so much
The only thing I can look down on is my keyboard
Or the women next to me.

by Dorthy Shellorne





a crucial part of the workday. But capital doesn't pay the cost of that mobility; instead workers pay to get to work, increasing both their own cost of living *and* the rate of profit for business, as a cost of (re)production becomes part of the "cost of living." The owners and managers who benefit the most from the transit system's *function*, already faced with declining profit rates, refuse to acknowledge this underlying reality. As a result, they won't pay for the transit system, and the paid workday begins when you enter the office or worksite, not when you get on the bus.



A common form of fare evasion in San Francisco has been the use of expired transfers. SF MUNI attempted to defeat the recycling of flimsy newsprint transfers (good for unlimited rides in any direction except reverse) by developing a new, random and unpredictable symbol-number coding system. Whereas people had been saving transfers for use in the following months (the old system merely had numbers matching the date without any indication of month) and could eventually gather enough transfers to cover any ride in any direction on any date, and never pay again, the new system required a transfer matching the days' code and color. This new system has made it harder to "abuse" transfers, but not impossible.

The transfer system requires bus drivers to scrutinize transfers for date/time validity. Luckily a large number of SF bus drivers refuse to play cop, and generally avoid taking a close look at transfers. As a result, expired transfers are usually easy to use. It is also possible for people to pass on valid transfers to waiting riders as they get off the bus.

Equally dependent on vigilant bus drivers is the use of the monthly "Fast Pass," good for unlimited rides in any direction on SF MUNI. Four years ago Fast Passes cost \$11/month, then they were raised to \$16 and now they cost \$24. The new Fast Passes were also redesigned with a magnetic machine-readable strip for use in computerized fare gates in the underground Metro/BART stations downtown. But for the majority of rides, Fast Pass use still consists of showing it to the driver. As a result, uncoordinated counterfeit Fast Pass circles have sprung up (usually among small groups of friends), depending largely on the use of color xerox machines. These machines create a reasonable facsimile of the original, though since MUNI started using hard-to-color-xerox colors, they often require some additional color pen or pencil touch up. Xerox Fast Passes cost about \$1 each instead of \$24.

Another favorite and easy form of fare evasion is paying in numerous small coins, not adding up to the full fare (e.g. 40 cents in nickels instead of 60 cents). Of course no driver can count the jumble of coins as they clatter to the bottom tray of the fare box — many don't even try. A vacationing family from Spain using this method never once paid full fare during their recent trip to SF, and once were given good transfers to replace expired ones by a sympathetic driver. Yet another technique was tearing dollar bills in half and crumpling them up and dropping in only ½ for each ride across the Bay.

A local investigative journalist, Tim Redmond, has pointed out in his *Bay Guardian* articles that if the MUNI estimate of annual losses of \$5 million is correct, then there is an average of 16,000 fares evaded weekly, or \$100,000 per week lost (or *saved*, depending on how you look at it).

COMPUTERIZED COUNTERMEASURES

AC Transit, which serves over a million people in the eastern areas of the SF Bay, has spent several million dollars during the past two years to install computerized fare boxes. These new machines give the driver digital readouts of how much money was dropped in the box, and require the face-up feeding in of dollar bills. While the investment in these boxes probably far exceeds any actual losses due to evasion, they have been specifically installed to eliminate the aforementioned and other forms of cheating. Methods of fare evasion that worked in the old open top fare boxes are impossible now.

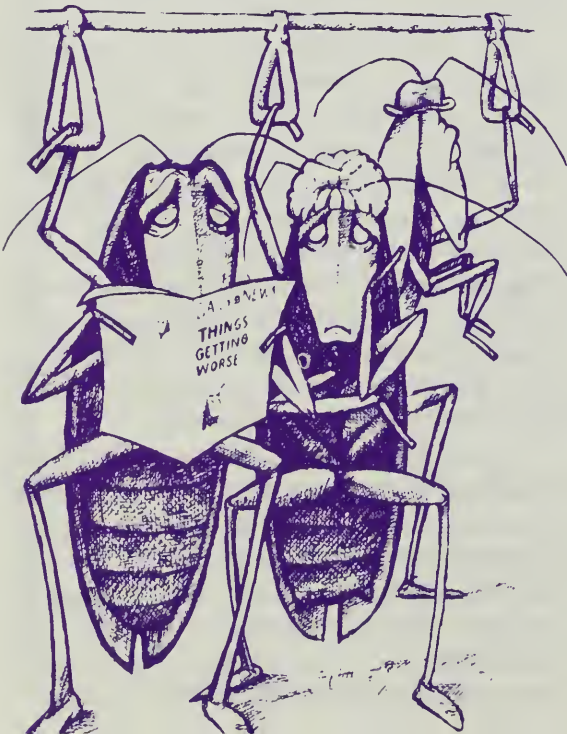
The new computerized fare boxes are not presently adapted to accepting the magnetic-strip monthly passes, but presumably they will be adjusted to do so later. For the time-being however, human enforcement in the form of driver scrutiny is still required to assure proper fare payment in the monthly pass system on both major transit systems in San Francisco and the East Bay.

Full scale computerization of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) sys-

tem seems to have defeated most of the common forms of fare evasion. The rider buys a computer ticket from a machine in the lobby, and the fare gates read its magnetic strip to charge the passenger for the ride. Most transit systems in the U.S. only require fare payment up front to get in, but no further examination or authentication of payment occurs past the initial fare box. But BART monitors passengers at both ends, charging different fares for different distances, and requires computerized reading of the ticket at both ends of the ride in order to assess the correct fare.

In spite of this increased control, fare evasion has flourished on BART and has spawned its own publicity campaign with threats of jail and \$50 fines. The method used, again, depends on human, not computer controls. Disabled and seniors are entitled to purchase special discount tickets at banks and certain offices — a \$10 ticket costs only \$2 with disabled or senior identification cards. Naturally a black market in discount tickets has sprung up, since the machine cannot tell what kind of person is using a special discount ticket. Statistics aren't available but the investment in the publicity campaign alone is several thousand dollars, so clearly the transit authorities feel threatened.

Another increasingly common sight on Bay Area transit systems is the camera continuously videotaping the passengers on a bus, in a station, etc. BART stations are famous for the closed circuit TV monitors in the station agent booth, where s/he can watch the entire station at once. More recently, MUNI and AC Transit have begun installing these cameras on buses, but since they scan back from the driver's partition they are irrelevant to the fare collection process. Their ostensible purpose is to "deter crime," but since many people don't believe they contain film, and if they



did, it would be too labor-intensive to actually look at all of it, they are of dubious use.

The role of new technologies has proven to be rather ambiguous in the ever-simmering battle over fares. While improvements in rapid reproduction technologies (color xerox) have given fare evaders an important tool in circumventing the payment system, computerized fare processing has generally served the authorities well, at least so far. It is equally clear, however, that magnetic media too can be duplicated, and as such technologies become more available and better understood, new methods of counterfeiting will develop. Some closet technologists have suggested the possibility of duplicating the magnetic stripe with regular recording tape after analyzing the electronic impulses recorded on tickets with a tape recorder. Ultimately, human control over the information about how the computerized systems work is the Achilles Heel of these "foolproof" methods of fare collection.

MAKE IT FREE!

When the concept of "fairness" is used around public transportation, the only sensible interpretation for most of us is to demand that all public

transit be made free to the users. The fact that the individual can occasionally use the system to visit friends, or for other private purposes, is the sole benefit for the average person. Let the *real* beneficiaries, the employers and merchants whose abilities to make profits depend on the existence of working public transit, pay the *full* costs of creating and maintaining these systems. And while we are at it (short of the abolition of wage-labor), let's demand to be paid for the *full* working day, including the hours of our lives wasted on public transit. Commute time is *work*, and it's time the employer paid for it!

P.S. to transit workers: The next time you're fighting the transit authorities and want to press grievances or wage demands or anything in a direct and powerful way, take a hint from the bus drivers in Milan, Italy, who have successfully used the strategy of keeping the transit going (thereby serving popular needs) but have refused to collect fares. Such a social strike can bring the managers to their senses much faster than any traditional strike (it will also generate a lot of popular support) . . . Warm regards to all you who "neglect" to enforce the cash nexus on your vehicles.

— by Lucius Cabins

**FREE PUBLIC TRANSIT
FOR ALL!**

WAGES FOR COMMUTE TIME!





Once in a great while Hollywood producers exhibit a keen sense of historic opportunity.

Spring 1979. Weeks before the nuclear blow-out at Three Mile Island, *The China Syndrome* exposes the industry's vulnerability, bringing life-like glimpses of the Harrisburg terror to the curious. Motivated by surreal news coverage of meltdowns, radioactive plumes, and other strange and threatening phenomena, millions of Americans look to Hollywood to see what the nuclear power industry was really like. The accident made *The China Syndrome* an overnight \$en-\$ation and fed growing distrust of nukes.

Summer 1983. In Pentagon war rooms, a debate rages over how deeply the U.S. should rely on computerized weapons systems and how much to invest in fifth generation computer R&D. Deviant computer hobbyists — 'hackers' — from Milwaukee (the "414 Gang") penetrate a computer network at Los Alamos Labs (one of two labs that design virtually every U.S. nuclear military device). Meanwhile, twisted, tax-fed minds tinker with nuclear lockwork. Chiefs of Staff and mad engineers rush to deploy Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe and MX "peacekeepers" at home, perhaps not fully conscious of the hairtrigger they set for global

nuclear war.

Along comes *War Games*. Here is a Hollywood movie that powerfully projects an anti-nuclear war message, plausibly features a fifth generation computer in control of NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense [sic] Command), and a computer whiz kid who (less plausibly) finds a backdoor to the computer's "War Games" directory. *War Games* makes a bundle for producer Leonard Goldberg and UA/MGM — but suggests that unlike coin-operated video games, "the only way to win nuclear war is not to play."

War Games recounts the story of a clever, unwitting breach of a fictional NORAD computer by a deviant Seattle youth who, thinking he has found a new video game, inadvertently ignites WWIII. Generals and civilian technical managers have recently assigned the computer — named WOPR — control over the continental air and ground nuclear delivery system, an assignment prompted by the refusal of enough human beings in the military to launch nuclear missiles at other human beings (during tests). The controversial step to "take humans out of the loop" actually places a fifth generation computer — WOPR — in command.

Uncanny timing is not the only fas-

cination with *War Games*. 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, *Failsafe*, *The Forbin Project*, and even *Dr. Strangelove* have presented similar themes before: sinister computers seizing control over human affairs, nuclear weapons accidents waiting to happen, mad scientists and generals with state power, etc. *War Games* recombines these and other themes into something of a celluloid Rosetta stone for the future. The anti-war message is apparent; others, embedded, are reminders of the techno-dilemmas that both underpin and stalk civilization.

DEVIANTS WITH A CAUSE?

HIGH TECHNOLOGY awakens new meaning in the tired cliché “the present holds the key to the future . . .” Today, barely perceptible parts per trillion of many compounds (such as PCBs) maim and poison human tissue and threaten the unborn. With deadly persistence, enriched uranium contaminates everything for tens of thousands of years. Aerosol commodities perforate the earth’s protective atmosphere. We simply are not accustomed to thinking realistically about the raw power of modern technology. The damage may be irreversible, but the trend is not. The question is who will control technology and how will it be used?

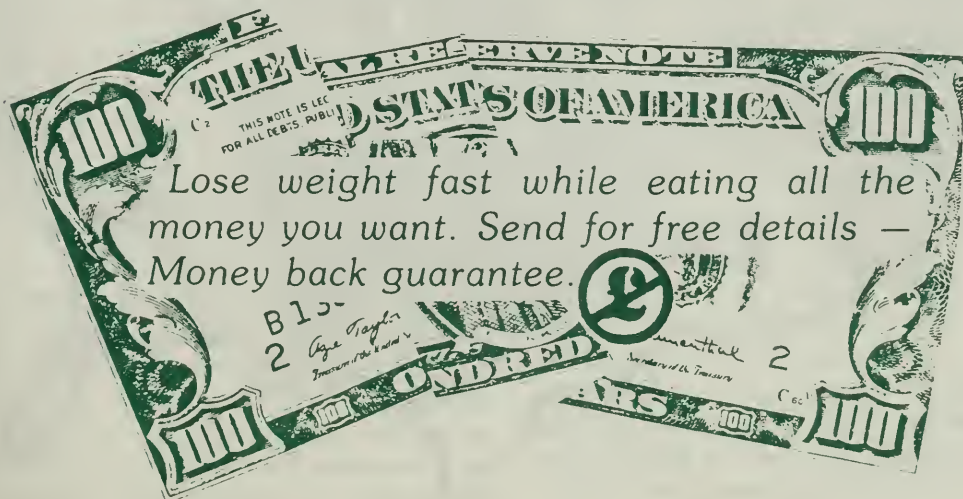
War Games portrays some of the

frightening implications of HIGH TECH as well as its reliance on technical workers — the creators and achilles heel of HIGH TECH. *War Games* also asks if “hacking” — the deviant probing and sabotage by curious computer programmers — is constructive.

Like literature and movies that explore similar themes, *War Games* pits people against their Frankenstein creations: much of this movie is a race against a machine-imposed deadline by human minds struggling against exquisitely executed military logic. To its credit, *War Games* suggests that HIGH TECHNOLOGY is not monolithic, but is vulnerable. *War Games* points to a modern, practical solution to all techno-dilemmas: revolt by those who really create technology: technical workers.

In *War Games*, both the young hacker and the retired architect of the NORAD computer use their technical skills and deviant ways first to threaten and then to consciously save humanity by “teaching” the computer that global thermonuclear war is like TIC TAC TOE: a game that no one can win. In a time of growing paranoia and gloom about HIGH TECHNOLOGY, *War Games* delivers a hopeful message: where there are deviant technical workers, there is a way.

In real life, deviant programmers and technical workers like those por-



trayed in *War Games* populate computer labs and military outposts. This cannot be comforting to managers and generals. But is hacking — technical sabotage — constructive? Not when it takes on such anti-social directions as mixing blood types in a hospital. But when it wipes out consumer billings at major public utilities? Or fouls programs that postpone a new missile deployment? Individual deviance is not the constructive social act that collective rebellion can be. But it does indicate a raw, subversive potential. And for those of us not technically-employed or -inclined, it is a subversive potential that we must rely on, however uncomfortably, if we are to safely dismantle a lethal civilization.

TECHO-FASCISM, the encrypted title of this review, suggests the alternative emerging in the vacuum of revolt by technical workers and the rest of us. TECHNO-FASCISM is the evermore powerful and dangerous technology which the state and private capital deploy against us *but cannot safely control*. Its ideology is the supremacy of human creations over humanity and over creativity.

Our submission to it greets the Orwellian New Year.

A final note: *War Games* clearly was the stuff from which Hollywood blacklists were made in the early 1950s. How did it slip through? Because it looked like — and was — a good investment to UA/MGM. And also because it contained or implied its share of Hollywood confusions, including our military leaders' rationality, good intentions and willingness to learn from mistakes. Films such as *The Day After* do not fare as well. *The Day After* is an ABC-TV film that graphically depicts what Kansas City looks like after a nuclear attack. In the film, the attack is provoked by the American deployment of missiles in Europe. Apparently, and certainly plausibly, the Reagan administration is pressuring ABC not to air the film, which also has had the devil's own time trying to find a corporate sponsor. The 3½ hour special was ready to run last May, and now is tentatively set to air on November 20.

— by Melquiades



Check 'em Out!

Magazine (mag'-a-zen, mag-a-zen'): (n.) 1. seeds waiting to be spread or propagated (fr. Arabic for granary); or 2. a space in which explosives are stored.

Midnight Notes (\$4 for 3 issues, P.O. Box 204, Jamaica Plains, MA, 02130) A very readable theoretical journal. Latest issue — "Posthumous Notes" — features analyses of the Freeze campaign, the global crisis, and an account of pre-revolution class revolts in Colonial America. Highly recommended.

Bulldozer (P.O. Box 5052, Stn. "A", Toronto, Ontario Canada M5W 1W4) This original publication for inmates proclaims that a bulldozer is "the only vehicle appropriate for prison reform." The magazine is free for prisoners and provides them with an opportunity to speak for themselves and to others without censorship. Bulldozer's support for the Vancouver 5, charged with bombing the Litton cruise missile factory in Toronto, and other "crimes," led to a police raid on the *Bulldozer* members' household, which had been under heavy electronic surveillance in previous months.

Global Electronics Information Newsletter (\$5 sub., 867 West Dana St., #204, Mountain View, CA 94041) This 4-page newsletter contains updates about happenings in the electronics industry and especially about 3rd world workers who manufacture the circuitry.

RE/SEARCH (\$20 for 3 issues, 20 Romolo #13, S.F., CA 94133) The current "Industrial Culture Handbook" features artists such as Mark Pauline, Johanna Went and others whose "impetus in common is rebellion... there is no strict unifying aesthetic, except that all things gross, atrocious, horrific, demented and unjust are examined with black-humor eyes. Nothing is (or ever will be) sacred, except a commitment to the realization of the individual imagination." Lotsa nice

pictures, too.

No Middle Ground (\$6 for 4 issues, 495 Ellis St., #781, S.F., CA 94102) Providing "anti-authoritarian perspectives on Latin America and the Caribbean," it takes its name from the belief "that the models of social change subsidized by the Western and Eastern powers have failed, and that there is no viable people's alternative except that of a self-managed revolution . . ."

Radical Science Journal (\$10 for 3 issues, 26 Freegrove Road, London N7 9RQ, England) **RSJ** is an analytical journal which looks at "how capital's priorities get incorporated and represented as 'natural' in the direction of research and development." **RSJ** focuses on labor processes and ideology in science, technology and medicine, in order to undermine oppressive forms of expertise, and to challenge the structure and purpose of scientific work.

Kick It Over (\$5 for 6 issues, P.O. Box 5811, Stn. "A", Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P2, Canada) **K.I.O.** has recently taken up the "pornography debate" in several articles and a series of letters. **K.I.O.** tries "to get away from being political in a narrow sense . . . to do less railing against the State and the Right and more talking about what we desire from life and how frequently these desires are themselves political."

International Blacklist (\$2.50, 719 Ashbury St., SF, CA 94117) To find out about countless interesting groups and publications we didn't have space to mention, check out this remarkably comprehensive listing of anti-authoritarian and libertarian groups and projects from around the world. Has great graphics, too!

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