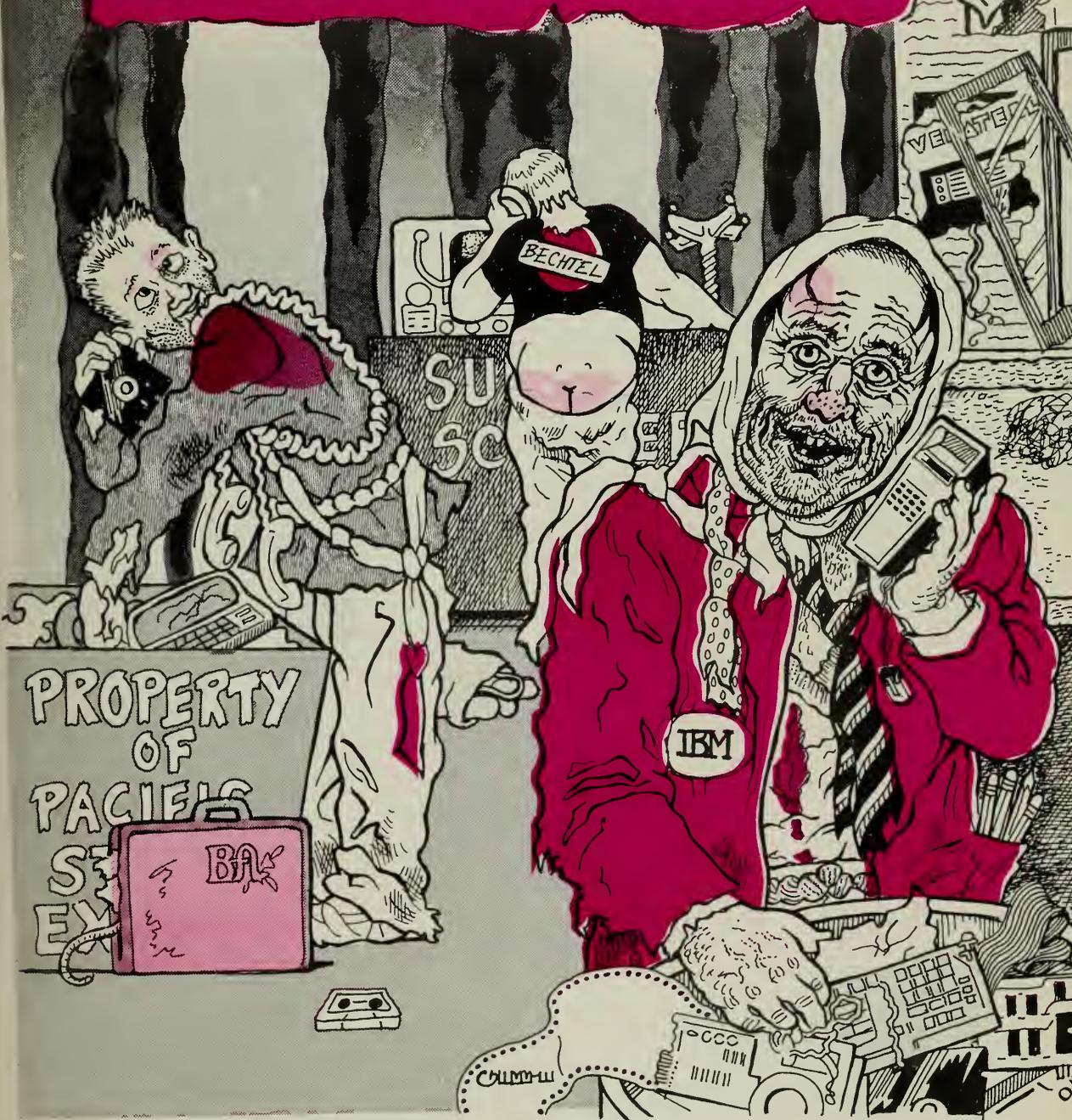
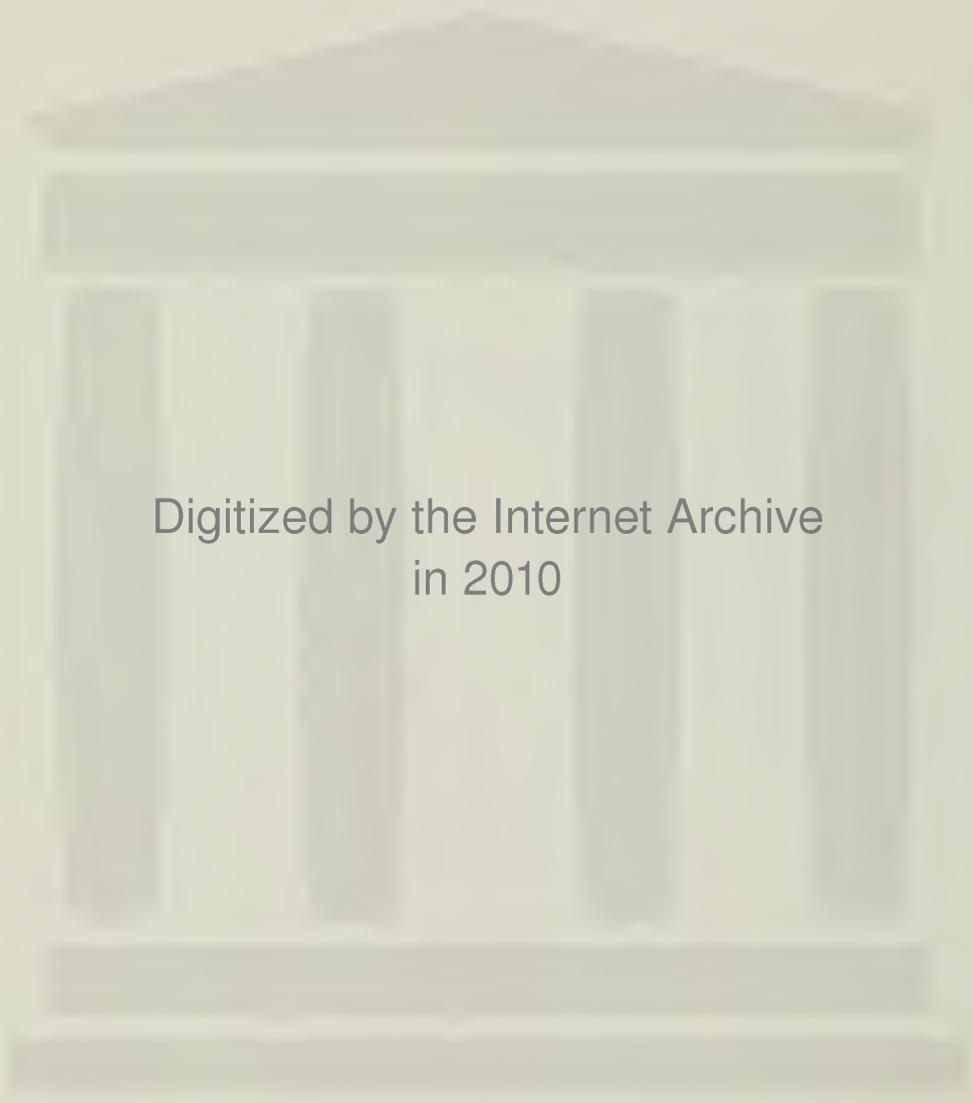


PROCESSED WORLD II



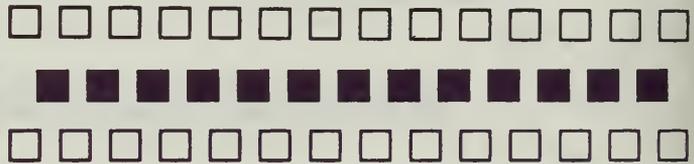


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L E T T E R S



dear pworld,

In pworld 10 I read "The Chips Of Our Lives." With a SUNY degree in video art, I proceeded to Silicon Valley to seek work as a computer programmer. I knew that Silicon Valley was where I could find work for a salary significantly higher than any place on Earth. I also knew that there were more jobs than people and, even with my self-taught knowledge, I had an opportunity to jump into the job market after college (a rare thing these days).

So, off I went. What I didn't know was that there were more people than places to live. My big salary looked like pickings after rent. What I also didn't know was office politics. I learned the hard way. One day, after an employee

"purge," in anger, I wrote some stuff on the bathroom walls. I figured I would stimulate discussion. NO. People were disgusted that anyone would have the nerve to write on bathroom walls. They put up notes shaming my actions. Wasn't anyone disgusted that management had just lied to us and unjustly "layed off" workers?

Occasionally now, I see some of the old pals I worked with in the valley. They tell me about their big salaries. I keep trying to remember my low rent and other obvious advantages of a non-valley existence. I'm not sorry I lived there, it is certainly a monument in history. An advancement is happening there that will either surge and die or will change all of our lives. I can't tell which.

I couldn't stand the classism, the office life, the buildings without windows, the social network, the fat salesmen, the blandness, the ever-present military, the car life, the lack of places to eat or go, the landlord, and most of the neighbors. I do think though, that if there is any way out of the 9-5 existence, it is robotics and a generation of computer systems that will release humans from their work-hell.

Judging by the overwhelming motivation of the workers in my valley company, if released from work-hell, most of them wouldn't know what to do. I would.

M.L. — San Francisco



Dear PW,

I work in a warehouse where I receive pallets of boxes daily. One day, a box arrived addressed to the Naval Weapons Center in Oakland. The sender was IBM — it was a shipping error. The contents appeared to be some kind of computer software — mechanical gears for the war machine.

The box sat on a shelf for a week while I considered its fate. I considered taking the package home and giving it to some friend who owned a computer. In the end, I opted for sending my greetings to the Naval Weapons Center; I marked the box all over — US OUT OF EL SALVADOR — and left it in the mail to be picked up.

Unfortunately, my supervisor, a devout believer in the gods of business and private property, got to the package before the mailman and showed it to the Big Boss. Big Boss came over to admonish me for my "childish behavior." In a business where no worker is older than 40, being called "childish" is something like a football coach calling one of the players "faggot." Big Boss don't believe in mixing business with politics. He was particularly irate because a co-worker

had marked a box destined for S. Africa with a similarly suitable message.

I don't believe my behavior was childish, but in retrospect, I believe it was foolish. Foolish because I got caught. Foolish because they wrapped up that box so it looked like nothing ever happened.

So this is my message for citizens of the Processed World: the strong action is discrete and effective. A loud statement often never reaches the right ears. I should have quietly shipped that IBM box straight to the dumpster. My co-worker should have ripped up the S. Africa order and gone around smiling a quiet smile all day (to paraphrase another co-worker). Oh well, you live, you learn.

Yours for more courageous actions,
RF



Dear Processed World,

Re the "three principles" enunciated by J.S. of Richmond, CA in his letter in PW #8:

First, emphasis on the emancipatory effects of ever-increasing amounts of information overlooks a number of important considerations.

1) The powers-that-be will do their utmost to withhold crucial information until (at least) the moment of its historical significance is past. (Who cares when we now find out FDR knew Pearl Harbor was going to be bombed?) For the most part they will be successful.

2) What information is available is "packaged," its purpose firstly and lastly to be sold. The commodity form automatically, hence almost without notice, ensures that the content will reflect the naturalness and immutability of exchange-for-gain consciousness.

3) So what if we can have available a hundred times the information we do now? We are *already* saturated by information. Instead of enlightening us it merely serves to confound and



Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario CANADA

distract us from the underlying pattern. Sifting away and drawing out information into a critique of the dominant ideologies and an understanding of our historical predicament is quite a different task, and a peculiarly human one, than learning more facts about more things.

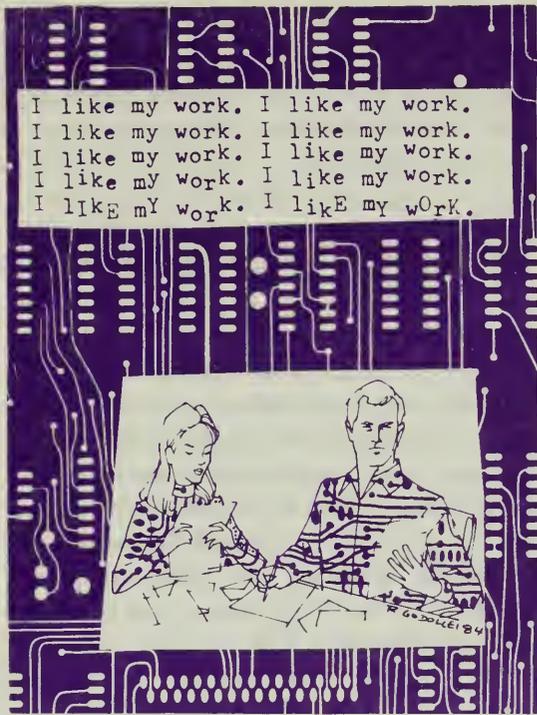
Second, to assert that computer technology is neutral is naive and simple-minded. Just as different trees grow in various climates and soils, so different technologies arise from the various social structures in which they are embedded. (In some areas, like Antarctica, there are no trees, and nearly no life. In other areas, like the oceans, there are no trees, yet they are teeming with life. The absence of technology can mean many things.) The development of computers has been chiefly propelled by the capitalists' need to solve their bookkeeping headaches, with the refinement of weaponry a bonus side-effect. The societies that computers arise from are based on accumulation and imperialism.

So what if the PW readership were tomorrow to come into control of all of America's computers? What would we do? Give everybody in the country an equal number of shares of General Motors? Redirect the missiles against South Africa and El Salvador? Computers are part and parcel of this

present system of war and domination. There is no reforming them, no making them serve good ends. The myth of the neutrality of advanced technology parallels that of the state. Both seek to convey their *indispensability* — adequate productivity in an overpopulated world without the presence of high-tech is impossible, society without government is unthinkable. Once people are convinced of their necessity, the failures of these technological and political processes can be passed off at the level of staffing and/or funding problems. Thus the familiar lament, "if only we had good people at the reins and/or more research into the matter." People go on to exhaust their energies, and eventually their hopes and dreams, on electoral battlefields and in laboratories inventing new technics to remedy the calamities created by the current technics. The present system is not like some amorphous vessel waiting alone on the shelf ready to accommodate whatever human aspirations and needs happen by. No, it is a very specific form of life that precludes, obstructs, and obliterates the others. Our desires, cosmic and everyday, are *contained* within and *deflected* by its ideological boundaries. The first step to getting out of the cage is to see it.

So, as the saying goes, "if voting could change the system, it would be against the law." If computers had anything to do with an egalitarian and free society, they would not exist. Our struggle is not to take control of the computers (or the government), but to eliminate them.

Third, J.S. is correct in asserting that revolutions occur when great numbers of people move in the same direction though oftentimes with different goals, motivations, and theoretical backgrounds. But to emphasize that a social revolution is a "process" smacks of a gradualist vision of societal change. Revolutions are nothing if not sharp breaks in history (relative to the existing pace of change) wherein vast amounts



of power are lost by some classes and interests and gained by others. To read J.S. you would think a sales count of microcomputers was an index of class consciousness and social insurrection.

The advent of capitalism did produce a revolution — the social hierarchy was radically restructured and the reality of values radically reordered. To echo the pitch of the Apple company skills and talk of a “computer revolution” however is just a bad joke. Computers are here not to upset the current social arrangement but to preserve, solidify, and extend it. Only by an Orwellian debasement of language could an instrument for the suppression and impoverishment of the masses of the earth be heralded as a vehicle for dismantling the ruling classes.

And as for those oh-so-wondrous Gothic cathedrals — remember, their construction was contemporaneous with the beginning of the Inquisition.

For a world without clocks,
Nebraska

processed worlders—

I recognize that things are bad, but I don't have any desire to change them in any organized or managed fashion. I've just purchased an Apple MacIntosh, for instance, because it will enable me to continue what I enjoy doing and save me time on those tasks I hate: retyping, filing, keeping track of trivial details.

I've worked in various positions. I have an m.f.a. from the University of Arkansas. I used to be a poet-in-residence with the South Carolina Arts Commission's Total Arts Program. I got fired from that job for giving the only reading those assholes ever arranged for me in the year and a half I worked for them. I was asked to apologize to a member of the audience (an arts commission sponsor, given) who was offended particularly by the idea of somebody shoving a Black & Decker drill up his ass. The poem is a compendium of people I've known or read about in the daily papers. All I did was cast the incidents in undestandable language.

It was while I was working for the UNC-Chapel Hill, Printing & Duplicating Dept. [that] I received my first oral reprimand for having a bad attitude. When I requested in writing a clear definition of what was bad about my attitude and specifically what a good attitude was, I received an oral reprimand on abuse of sick leave. So it goes. I spent nearly nine months in one grievance after another at that place, until I was promoted to equipment control technician in another department where it was my honor to affix tiny metal decals to the university's moveable equipment and inventory same.

After I got my masters, my first full-time job was hanging turkeys for the Ralston-Purina Co. in Springdale, Arkansas. In effect, I've been hanging turkeys all my life.

If there's any reason I shouldn't be included among the citizenry of the processed world it's that my motto is



BRING ON THE BOMB. I have no argument whatsoever with other individuals who protest, disrupt, sabotage, or otherwise refuse to participate in *any* system. The best I've been able to do thus far in supporting any continuing process is to maintain a compost heap with which to feed the garden.

Take care.

Ligi — Portland, OR

P.S. There are many "politically aware" individuals out there who still believe the system can be changed. I often wonder why none of these people have ventured an amendment at even the local level which would count the no-shows of registered voters as votes of no-confidence. I voted for McGovern in 1972, the only time I voted, and I registered and pulled the lever because George McGovern in 1972 was voicing a morality and responsibility that ran counter to everything I saw this country stood for. I voted my opposition. That there was no paper in the voting booths does not bother me even now. What was Watergate, what did it mean, after all, if not that *no one* could beat Richard Nixon? I know people who are still reluctant to admit they voted for McGovern. Few people like admitting to siding with a loser. The funny thing is George McGovern could have won in 1972; probably even did win, but the embarrassment of the landslide made it impossible for *anyone* to call for a recount. A recount would have found, perhaps, that there were *no* actual tallies, that the figures announced by the networks were supplied by CREEP. Remember that wonderful acronym?

I recognize the difficulty in getting such an amendment to pass. After you had the necessary signatures on the

petitions to put it on the ballot, the people who most supported it would not be able to vote for it. This is not irony. This is simply one of the reasons I prefer the bomb.



Dear PW,

I have to thank you. I too am an office worker, and I am aware not only of my bosses exploiting me, but of the entire system I am involuntarily contributing to. It is a system by which a privileged few enjoy the spoils of a worldwide economic disease. A disease which rewards those who divide and confuse, built on fear and fed by hate. I do not wish to support this system, but like so many people, I am willing to compromise with corporate America in order to gain the privilege (as it is defined by the landlords) of being able to sleep inside and eat when I want to.

I don't want a raise. I don't want a bigger share of the spoils reaped by the great amerikan free enterprise system. I want to destroy this system, plow the great holy profits back into the soil, to heal, if it is possible, this poor planet.

So meanwhile I am typing in data on my VDT which will make my beneficent company hundreds of thousands of dollars this week. Sabotage rewards some emotional satisfaction, but my company knows how to keep track of data that would, if altered, be able to make any real difference to the sainted profit margin. Since I work in payroll, I can cheer myself up knowing I can steal a little cash here and there for the workers I process. Still, I know the limits and it will never amount to much.

Then one day, at seven a.m. (much to early for the bosses to be there) I begin



my shift and find a copy of *Processed World* someone has left on my desk. Feeling dramatic and trying to be nonchalant, I slip it into my drawer, to later joyously suck in each page. In this partitioned, soundproof, PCB lined office jungle, truly the worst fate is to believe in your boss's dream, to strive for the company good. Thank you *Processed World*, for letting me know there are others who despise the purposes to which they are employed. Thank you for letting me hope that someday, not too far from now, we will join hands, and let our bosses know we want room for everyone and let them know that it is time for them to get an honest job.

P.K. — San Francisco



Dear Friends at PW—

Groan

OK

So I quit working at the restaurant a few weeks ago and it's GREAT! You think clerical work is bad but restaurant work is fuckn awful!!! Primarily because the people you must be subservient to are pretty much one dimensional saps. But I guess everyone has worked in a restaurant sometime or another — I suppose it's good that people can get a job pretty easily when they need to... (...Uh oh, lost in the land of dicotic indecision!...)

ANYHOW, sorry to tell you, but it's been great being out of work. A chance to do some creative stuff, a chance to go to some galleries, to volunteer my time with some groups I want to be involved with, a chance to get to know myself again.

It seems like I'm busier now than I was when I was working. I was surprised until I realized that it's not like I would be bored and have spare free idle bored time on my hands! Hell no, I can see where my heart lies — in creative involvement, not mindless

droid clone labor.

Still, I've got to get back to that harsh continuing Job Search Campaign. It *hasn't* been any fun having no extra money at all... but I think I've learned ways to be happy without materialism (yea), and alternative ways of getting what you need. Now, get out there and fill out those applications you rent slaves!

Throw off the shackles of conditioning,
B.S. — Seattle



Dear "Processed World":

Although I'm not a clerical worker, I could identify with many of the articles, because I work in a huge bureaucratic institution, and I'm recently getting involved with our new union.

I work at East L.A. College in the L.A. Community College District. The situation at my campus is this (my perception): administrators vs. teachers and staff (me); and teachers vs. staff.

The faculty and staff are united in their fight against the administrators, but the faculty looks down on the staff. You know, they think their shit does not stink. We (the staff) think we are better than the faculty, 'cause we do real work. (I'm wrong to use "we" I guess I can only guarantee that this is my feeling). Even the faculty that treat us as human



beings still think we're, fundamentally, some lesser creature. From what I've observed, the faculty don't give shit about anything except their high pay.

The staff are divided (so as to conquer, of course) into three "units". Unit I: Clerical/Technical (That's where I'm at), I don't even know what the others are called, exactly. One has trades/maintenance workers, the other has custodial, I think.

My unit, clerical/technical, was represented by the California School Employees Association until recently, when they lost in the election to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

AFT recently held an agency shop election for the faculty in our school district, and won. I am sure they'll be doing the same in our unit soon. Although I voluntarily joined this union, I will oppose agency shop, for the reasons I read in "Processed World." That is; agency shop will facilitate the union's shirking of responsibility.

An interesting note: the president of this school district's AFT Guild *joined the district* as personnel something or other. Can you believe it? Seduced by the dark side of the force.

Now that some of the low-life staff are in the same union as the holier-than-thou faculty, some staff are treated better, some worse, by faculty.

And there is some snobbery, in that the white-collar staff think they're better than blue-collar staff, because we are in the faculty union.

I happen to think that I am no better than a custodian, and no less than an instructor.

As far as administrators go — they get more money than the holier-than-thou faculty and do no work. They relegate all tasks to the faculty and staff: campus safety, etc. Where our input is useful they ignore it, i.e. campus budget committee.

That's the way it is so far...

B.M. — Pasadena CA

KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING!!



PW:

I used to be a technopeasant. But I was unhappy. My daughter did not have a cabbage-patch-doll-clothes-universe. My wife used generic eye shadow. We were unable to even dream of a completely oversized, underused house in the Lafayette Hills.

Now I have a desk-terminal-business cards-BART ticket (with magnetic strip) - brief case (with papers) - a friend who thinks Marcuse is a boutique in Carmel - shirts with alligators on teatie - Saturday afternoon at "The Mall." Garbage in Mega-tons...

Well you must excuse me — the coffee truck is here — I'm going to get a glazed old fashioned and a transparent cup of coffee...

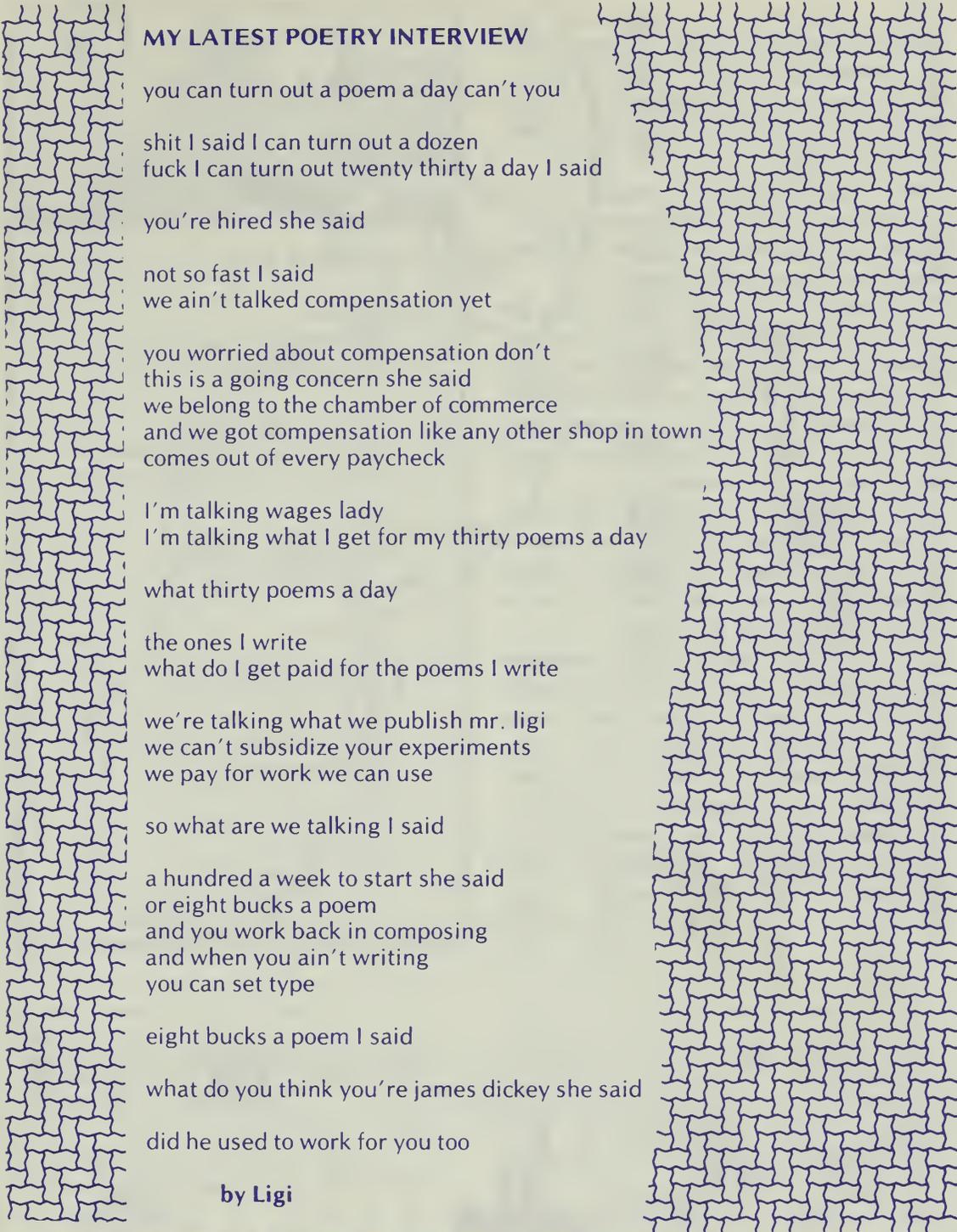
B.P. — Concord CA

PUBLIC POETRY PART 4

"Public Poverty"

Positive thoughts,
Keep your chin up,
believe in your dreams.
Public poverty
Walks with eyes downcast
in search of a dream
Fat wallet stuffed with cash

by Linda Thomas



MY LATEST POETRY INTERVIEW

you can turn out a poem a day can't you

shit I said I can turn out a dozen
fuck I can turn out twenty thirty a day I said

you're hired she said

not so fast I said
we ain't talked compensation yet

you worried about compensation don't
this is a going concern she said
we belong to the chamber of commerce
and we got compensation like any other shop in town
comes out of every paycheck

I'm talking wages lady
I'm talking what I get for my thirty poems a day

what thirty poems a day

the ones I write
what do I get paid for the poems I write

we're talking what we publish mr. ligi
we can't subsidize your experiments
we pay for work we can use

so what are we talking I said

a hundred a week to start she said
or eight bucks a poem
and you work back in composing
and when you ain't writing
you can set type

eight bucks a poem I said

what do you think you're james dickey she said

did he used to work for you too

by Ligi

Oh, what a lovely rag!

I must say, it makes my day a little more pleasant to sit down without work already piled on my desk, knowing I can spend my day writing letters and fomenting revolution.

I find myself wondering occasionally what I'm doing here. I'm white, male,

able-bodied, college-educated, from an upper-middle class family—I thought I was supposed to be one of the owners. Then I remember I'm an anarchist faggot, and it becomes clearer again. (Joanna Russ says "*I don't want to be a feminist, it's no fun!... People think you decide to be a radical, like being a*

ship's chandler or a librarian, for heaven's sake. You make up your mind, you commit yourself.... Years from now I'll put up our gravestone and no one will understand it but you and I. WE WUZ PUSHED.'")

Are male office temps queer everywhere, or is Boston unusual? (I suspect Sf isn't representative.) Love to hear from others about that.

How about full-page posters that we could copy and distribute at work? Or particular recipes for imaginative sabotage? (Don't you just love the derivation of that word? A *sabot* is a wooden shoe, and Dutch mill workers threw their shoes into the mill works.)

(I'm looking at issue #3—the progressive bookstore here is a bit cool to anarchism so things like *PW* are rather catch-as-catch-can—so maybe you're doing these things now.)

I'd just keep rambling 'til someone puts a memo in front of me, but that's probably not such a good idea. Here comes someone asking what office supplies I need—if I order a refrigerator, do you think someone would notice? And does coming in on a weekend and telling the guard "Pardon me, I've come for the Selectrics" work?

R.W. — Boston



ON SHELF LIFE

I am there
in the wilted lettuce
lopping out of the vegetable bin

I am there
in the slick slices of bologna
sliding around the meat keeper

I am there
in the watery ricotta
and furred cheddar

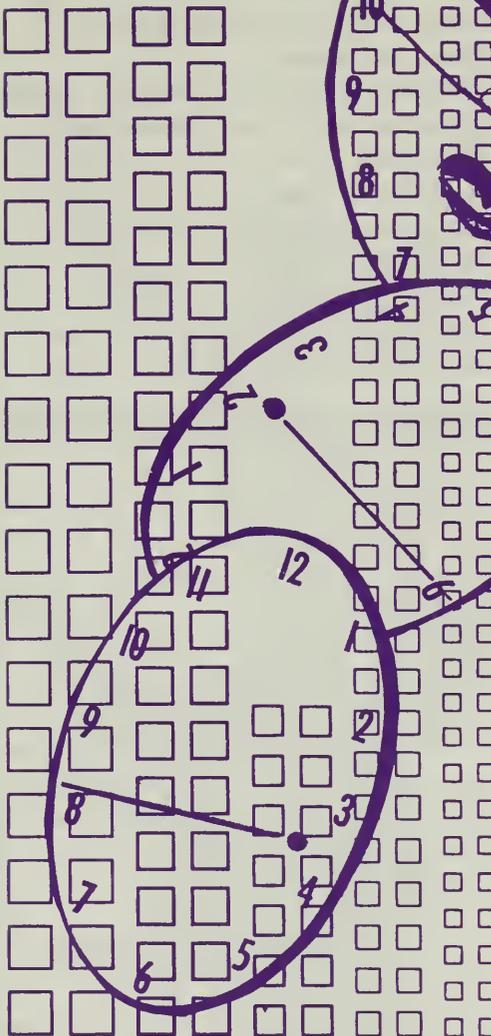
I am there
in the Jonathan
gone brown and squishy

I'm still waiting
right where you
put me

too long now
under refrigeration

by Sheryl L. Nelms





the TYRANNY of TIME

Every moment is a chore when you're nagging time and pursuing every second with a will to conquer.

Yet the hardest task is this: to be neither hunter nor hunted boss nor slave but outside the warp of time woven by work.

Time is money. So intimate is this knowledge, one of our most popular activities is "spending time." Rather than 'wasting time' reading this 'on your own time,' let's hope you are doing so on 'company time.' One fun way of 'stealing time' on the job is creating 'downtime!' which could

leave you with a lot of 'time on your hands.' In this case, 'killing time' sounds more active than merely 'biding your time,' but then you could end up 'doing hard time' instead of working 'overtime.' Now, I'm seldom 'on time' but then I'd rather be on drugs than a 'prisoner of time.' When the 'time crunch' is so severe you are running 'doubletime' to 'make time,' instead, I'd suggest ruffling some feathers by 'blowing some time' to *make* it with a lover — the real prime time.

People have not always perceived time in such peculiar ways. In Europe throughout the Middle Ages the very notion of a secular time, of owning and dividing it into measured units,

was considered sacrilegious. The developing merchant class was criticized for 'mortgaging' time which was supposed to be eternal and belonging to God alone. In the 14th century a lector-general of the Franciscan order remarked:

To the question: Is a merchant entitled to demand a greater payment from one who cannot settle his account immediately than from one who can? No, because in doing so he would be selling time and would be committing usury by selling what does not belong to him.

The battle for dominion over time wasn't only between religious and merchant interests. In tandem with the public application of mechanical clocks, workers began to fight for a shortening of the work day and, consequently, a more precise measurement of time. Until the end of the 14th century, the fundamental unit of labor time had been the day! The struggle against this is quite evident in the ordinance of the provost of Paris of May 12, 1395:

Whereas several men of crafts such as weavers of linen or cotton, fullers, washers, masons, carpenters, and several other kinds of workers in Paris have wanted and do want to start and stop work at certain hours while they are being paid by the day as though they were on the job the whole day long, the provost reminds them that "the working day is fixed from the hour of sunrise until the hour of sunset, with meals to be taken at reasonable times."

Despite the efforts of merchants and workers (although for opposing reasons) the social application of standardized time lagged behind its technological development. While mechanical clocks and large clocktowers became widespread in urban areas, they were less a tool of daily life than an ornament of status for cities. Even though the 60 minute hour became firmly established, it was completely unsynchronized from one city to

another. In what seems like a Chaplinesque absurdity today, the zero hours of clocks varied widely and could begin at noon, midnight, sunrise, or sunset.

Modern culture, however, strives to measure out a meticulous metronome of human activity. The common term, clockwork, reveals the insidious degree to which metered time meshes with the American work ethic to feed a subtle, yet powerful form of social control. In one way or another, most days, most of us punch in at our job, school, or domestic worksite rather than punching out the clocks that help channel our behavior. Long before the institution of school bells, timed tests, and homework deadlines American children are programmed with a doctrine that "there is a proper time and place for everything." Partly this is the socialization necessary to participate in cooperative group endeavours. Mostly, it reflects and perpetuates the mass conceptualization of time as something that must be compulsively filled with planned, structured activities.

UNWORKING THE WORK MYTH

The relationship between the social conception of time, work, and identity is seldom put to public scrutiny. A recent book, *Time Without Work*, explores the experiences, feelings and values of those living outside wage work. While the editors did not include the unpaid labor of "housewives," parents, or volunteers in their definition of work, the book could just as aptly have been titled 'Not Working' since it supplements Studs Terkel's *Working* by compiling first person accounts of the jobless. Two women, Walli Leff and Marilyn Haft, travelled across the U.S. interviewing 145 individuals from diverse situations. The good, bad, and ugly of life without an income-producing job is spilled out by fired clericals, laid-off construction workers, a millionaire,

gamblers, the disabled, artists, welfare mothers, former executives, street people, and many more. All in all 73 oral histories were selected to illuminate the love, hate, and often ambivalent feelings toward (not) working that pepper the American consciousness.

Leff and Haft's purpose and analysis are presented in four short chapters. The first, "The Myth of a Nation at Work," articulates their basic premise: *"Everywhere we went we were struck by the fact that a*

the reality that nearly 40% of the adult population (64 million of the 168 million sixteen years of age and older) do not "officially" work. Additionally, they present a short history of "The Work Ethic's Checkered Past" — the title of the second chapter. Both pre-industrial and industrial struggles against work are detailed. In particular, they examine industrializing America, its peculiar development of 'alienated labor,' and working people's various resistances against increasing cultural fragmen-



Paul Winternitz

growing number of people did not hold jobs. . . [but] how revealing it was that the very fact of not working and any description of what that experience was like were so closely concealed. The reason, we soon began to see, resulted from the prevailing social belief that 'everybody' works."

That myth is thoroughly debunked. First, by ripping apart the standard manipulation of unemployment statistics, revealing how non-wage-workers become 'disappeared,' and exposing

tation. Excellent material is provided to support this chapter's conclusion that: *"Even a regular salary, held out before people like a carrot before a donkey, was not foolproof enticement to join and remain in the industrial labor force. Once alienated labor was experienced, it clearly did not take so easily."*

Leff and Haft's insights often provide a wealth of well-researched information and cogent analysis. However, the third chapter (Toward a Natural Way of Working) and the

book's conclusion (A Future That Has Begun) are more hopeful than critical. For instance, they take the position that "Theoretically, the potential for great progress is prodigious" and ". . . new technology, managed wisely and humanely, could free an unprecedented amount of free time for challenging pursuits." True

enough. But no critique is made of the prevalent ideologies that see 'salvation through technology' and 'progress as manifest destiny.' The editors make no mention of the complexity in developing new technology compatible with a life-sustaining ecology. Nor do they mention the capitalist logic inherent in new tech-



nology.

The editors don't grapple with these complexities. But they also fail to challenge the institution of wage labor and this seriously faults their analysis. Despite their repeated acknowledgement of increasing structural unemployment and that some people find joblessness quite rewarding, they fail to attack the myth that full employment is desirable. Instead they lump together "massive unemployment, alienation, and hardships" as "failures of our system." Maybe massive unemployment is not a failure, but a signal to dump modern capitalism. Perhaps the solution to material deprivation and social alienation fundamentally lies with eradicating *all* the buying and selling of human time?

Without confronting the ways in which the money system, forced labor, and the commoditization of time perpetuate authoritarian control there is no hope for the big, "systemic changes" the editors call for. This leaves them in a kind of analytic schizophrenia — bound by an either/or schema. They conclude that either civilization might experience prodigious progress or the old exploitative, feudal-like practices will prevail, albeit in newly perverted forms. This is a very complex, dialectical process shaped by an ongoing history of struggle between the minority who wield power and the majority who are victims of it. By omitting an analysis of this dialectic, the editors can only hope that the (necessary, but surely insufficient) dissemination of personal stories and social research will enable us to oppose the increasingly sophisticated corporate/governmental hold over our lives.

However, it is a theme beyond the vivid and often contradictory descriptions of (not) working which makes *Time Without Work* so unique: how people deal with unstructured free time in a society bent on mass producing the opposite. Many of the

stories reveal the submerged truces we form with a standardized, productivity-oriented construction of time that is against autonomy and personal fulfillment. One common truce is what I call the Busy Beaver Syndrome. It was graphically expressed by a laid off chemistry professor:

"I am obsessed with filling up my time. Instead of preparing dinner in forty-five minutes, I'll invite people over and take two hours to prepare a feast. I feel I must do something constructive. It's hard for me to read a book; I keep thinking I should be out improving myself. When I'm doing something frivolous, I feel that I'm throwing my time away. I never felt that when I was working."

Fundamental to American culture is the conviction that an income producing job is *the* correct way to dispose of time and avoid the anxiety of unscheduled time. The dread of being consumed by a vortex of squandered time is justified, for many, by the reality that work provides greater social possibilities than their non-work existence. A single mother related how work was tied to her need to feel active and social:

"I like to work. I don't like staying in one spot, just doing nothing. It makes you feel lonely or sad. I can't explain it, but I like to stay active. . . If I was working I'd socialize with people. You meet people and get to know different people, not the same friends all the time. I feel like time is wasting. I'm getting older and ain't got no job, can't get no job, ain't doing nothing."

The feeling of emptiness, of being trapped in an aimless void is a serious crisis for many who are unemployed. This can be particularly acute for 'unrecognized' workers such as women doing housework and caring for children. That wage work may be a preferred alternative is an indictment of the profound lack of meaningful community and social space that can truly meet our needs. For many, a

TALES OF NOT TOILING

Time Without Work (1983) is available from South End Press, 302 Columbus Ave., Boston MA 02116 for \$9.00.



"I have had anger directed at me, especially by white middle-class people who have the attitude, 'We hate what we do, we hate our life, and we hate our work. We have to do what we don't like — why don't you? Why should you be any different? Why shouldn't you have to get a crappy, dumb job and be miserable?'"



Bob Fass who, at this point, had been fired from WBAI radio for refusing to sign a loyalty oath after a management/union clash put it this way: "Every situation of finding yourself unemployed is different. I was fired from the station once before. It was within three months after I began to do my program. 1961 or '62, and it was devastating, devastating. When I was in the army, I was fired after two years, and that felt wonderful! When you're fired in a strike it's another kind of emotional situation."

"I went through all the usual emotions when I became unemployed — anger, surprise, puzzlement, bafflement, despair — all the things people go through, I suppose, when they are told they have cancer. I must be going through some sort of emotional repression — but I can't think of any other explanation as to how I ended up building model airplanes."



". . . it's like someone springs a trap door from under you and you're flying in space, trying to grab onto something. . . work is such a security blanket."



"The work ethic produces too many workers who have to do too much work to satisfy that ethic. Modern automated technology can produce much more than workers can, more goods than society needs. So we have an excess of workers, an excess of work ethic, an excess of material goods and a discontinuity in the society. The technology has outrun the value system."

straight job may be the best setting for several kinds of important social relations: cooperating in groups, relating to peers with similar interests, assessing how a specific goal can be realized, and negotiating for better conditions.

Even for the millions who find their job absolutely wretched, there is a powerful myth that work is the underlying structure for a satisfying life. Those who are not visibly engaged in productive functions are seen as non-entities, or worse, parasites leeching off others busily executing structured tasks. Time not filled with planned activities becomes a paradoxical prison whose doors are *too* wide open.

That joblessness in this society tends to create and maintain such a time vacuum is evident for this fired clerical:

"The hours weigh on me. I don't have to do anything — to keep things clean or to keep myself up. I haven't exercised. It's almost a mental problem at this point. I'm just depressed. . . I realize that I don't like to do anything and that most of the time I don't like what I'm doing. . . The only time I like is when we're out visiting people and talking. But I don't get out enough. Most of my friends work and I can't get myself to visit because I always think I have to have a purpose when I do it."

In addition to having a sense of using time purposefully, another important desire is arranging your time to be synchronized with others. Rather than allowing this to be a flexible arrangement, contemporary western societies have organized isolated 'time tracks' that rigidly compartmentalize leisure from work, education from application, personal feelings from your public persona, ad absurdum. The most common and perverse of these separations is the acceptance of life as an unavoidable schism between dreaded work and longed for free time. A laid off sheet metal worker saw it this way:

"You get up, you go to work, and you come home and forget what you did. You fill in the time idly until you have to get up and go to work the next day. You live for the weekend and try to cram as much enjoyment as you can into two days because you know the next five are just a drag."

WINNEBAGO TIME IS FOREVER...

That most of our so called free time is far from 'free' is a fact few want to face. For the most part, a pervasive social amnesia blocks out the routine and stress that often makes off-the-job time just as constraining as working. For many, most of the time remaining after work is devoted to recovering from and preparing for the job. Grooming, commuting (usually during that in accurately named Rush Hour), eating, shopping, childcare, domestic chores are essentials that are rarely integrated with time on the job. But since work is so awful, we desperately need to find meaning in our non-work time designated as autonomous, even if these activities are largely shaped by mass consumer culture.

In the age of alienation, consumer products are, for many, the closest approximation of satisfying our social, psychic, and erotic needs. In this way, the Happy Hour, eating out, enter-

tainment and travel, fitness and spectator sports, all the various 'Miller Times' of consuming culture have become the modern wages of alienated labor. Such wages exact a hefty price though. Not only are our real needs rarely met by the glorified goods and services pandered before us, huge chunks of time get consumed by the very process of selecting, and buying these commodities. Even with the advent of amnesia-inspiring plastic credit, few forget that along with the purchase of a commodity comes a commensurate expenditure of labor time. What often gets shunted aside are the secondary costs. 'Modern' goods increasingly demand expensive and time consuming maintenance. Coupled with planned obsolescence and the glut of new, 'improved' products and services, and social realization has unfolded that sees consumption (much like housecleaning) as something never finished and done with. This feeds another rip-off, largely hidden to many — the volumes of time churned up standing in line, 'on hold,' and waiting.

QUEUEING: COULD YOU PLEASE HURRY UP AND WAIT!

Whether at the bus stop, bank, post office, or that hot lunch spot very few escape queueing in line. Within a capitalist economy, all public services and private businesses strive to maximize their operational efficiency by minimizing their service costs, which often results in maximizing client waiting. The modern order, with its enlarged service sector and precariously complex organization, breeds endless opportunities for what seems to be unlimited periods of waiting.

Not surprisingly, the nature and length of waiting varies mostly with the wealth of the individual. For example, in 'finer' clothing boutiques a customer is "waited on" by a salesperson who acts as an intimate guide

in finding what perfectly suits the buyer's discriminating tastes. In department stores and establishments a grade below the best, customers may have difficulty finding someone to serve them during busy periods. However, once they get paired with a salesperson they are usually accompanied until the transaction is consummated. At the bottom of the rung are the Salvation Army and similar type thrift stores which have very few servers. Here, you wait on yourself by hunting through racks of clothes (often in total chaos) and, if successful, line up behind others at a cashier counter.

Immunity from this kind of time drain is enjoyed only by those who possess the money, fame, and/or power to refuse to wait. The privileged can either afford to go elsewhere for faster service or make others, such as servants, secretaries, and other employees wait in their place.

Often, the rest of us are driven to accept even the most congested waiting lines. A whole host of institutions like banks, social services, and medical care produce long and, sometimes, extremely humiliating periods of waiting. Nowhere is this more excruciating than when you expend enormous amounts of waiting time with no assurance it will result in your desired goal.

Being processed for food stamps and unemployment insurance are two of the most degrading of such situations. Like most public-serving bureaucracies, they dish out heaping amounts of delay, uncertainty, and debasement. Adding up the time you travel to and from the processing centers, the extended waiting once 'on line,' the petty paperwork and personal probing by the authorized dispensers of the services, and the lag between applying for and receiving benefits, it is no surprise that many eligible recipients balk at the potential waste of their time and dignity.

SUBVERTING THE TIME BROKERS

Our everyday activities will continue to be defined by cash/time relations unless we vigorously fight for free control of our time. While this can never be fully realized in a culture which systematically divides units of time into productive and monetary value, there exist small cracks in the mass clocking of life that can be pried open much further. One opening is the reclaiming of time structured by the cycles of nature. Another is the desire for more unstructured personal time. Both are points of resistance to oppose the frantic monotony and social sterility of an increasingly fluorescent, interior life.

Recreating natural time in a world that has largely killed, covered up, or segregated nature from people is hardly possible. What can be sought, when desired, is the integration of social life with naturally-determined cycles of activity and inactivity: day and night, phases of the moon, ocean tides, and the annual seasons. For instance, I like my work life to have a mixture of physical and intellectual tasks. How much of either depends mostly on my mood and the weather. On warm, sunny days my general preference is for outdoor, physically oriented activities. But on those cold, rainy days of January — forget it! Such flexibility is exceedingly simple and practical. Yet few of us get to make such choices.

One person I know who does, found he could by living in the hinterlands of Alaska where he varies his waking hours from an average of 12 hours per day in the winter to a whopping 20 hours per day in the summer. As it is for the wild animals of that environ, outside temperatures and available daylight play a critical role in his level and type of activity. Such a lifestyle is incompatible with this system's standard *modus operandi* — a uniform 9-5 schedule disrupted only by sickness, tragedy, and the yearly vacation.

Of course, many people might never choose to live so closely to the natural cycles. Still, there are many ways we might want to rejoin the natural ties severed by this system's ceaseless drive for time-efficient uniformity. For women, menstruation is an obvious biological force that is seldom considered in the social construction of time since it doesn't fit the relentlessly even-keeled mold. Similarly, very few of us can call into work and say, "Hey, I'm not coming into work today — I'm simply feeling too emotionally vulnerable (or angry!)."

The absence of an external source structuring you into a 'time track' is basic for those wanting to self-manage their time. The few people who

Work described his organic structuring of time this way:

"I've never been able to hold to the idea of a self-imposed discipline. As soon as I stipulate that I must work three hours minimum at my painting, I'll spend the day meeting with friends and getting high. If I get out of bed early in the morning and the work goes down with a certain amount of clarity, then I'll do that for a couple of days until I hit two or three days in a row when it doesn't work. Then another system comes up. I don't take these systems of discipline very seriously."

Not taking *the system* seriously is central to taking charge of your time. One social expression of this is the rhythm of urban nightlife. Particular-

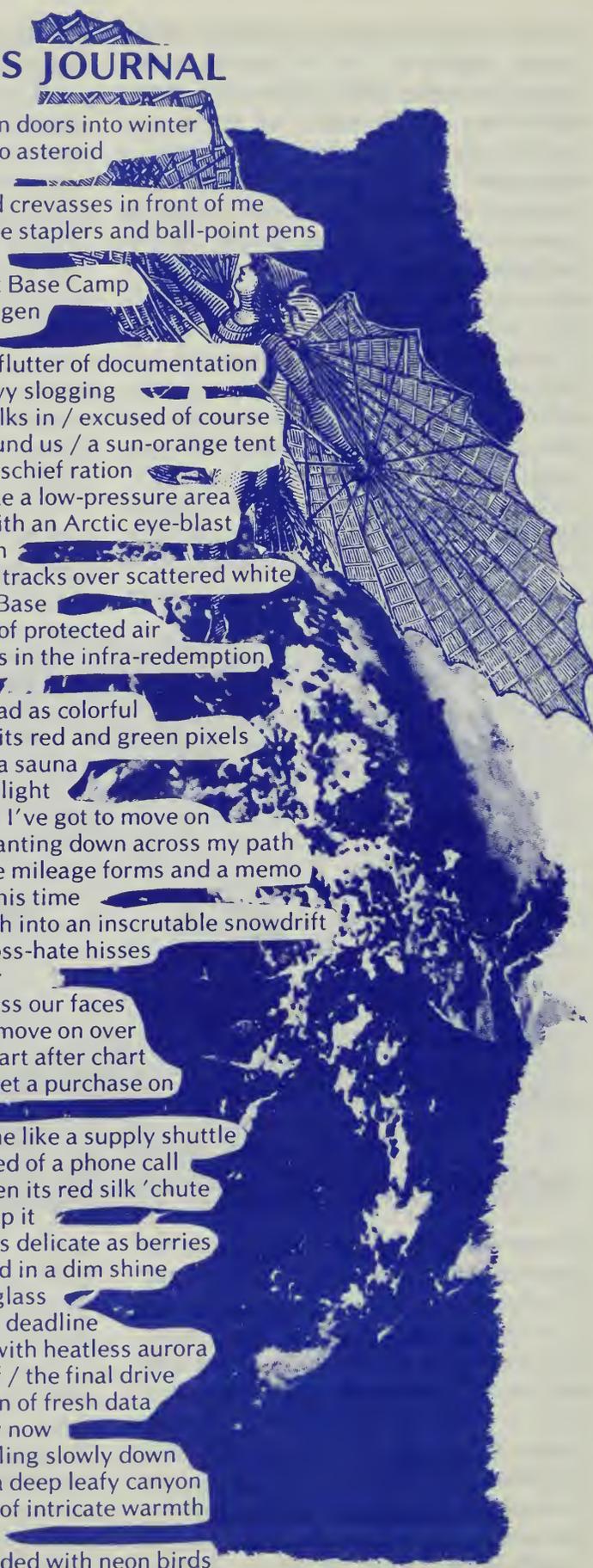


internally direct their activity *and* feel good about their use of time invariably have little tolerance for authority or imposed structure. This doesn't mean they are incapable of scheduling time that is synchronized with others. Rather, their use of time arises from the merging of internal rhythms (social, psychological, and biological) and an open repertoire of responses to external factors. An artist interviewed in *Time Without*

ly for the young and single, late night/early morning hours have become a time to 'get down' and strip away the drab veneer of the daytime work world. Clubs, drugs, parties, dancing, and other pleasurable personal 'indulgences' take center stage for many. Often a rich mix of people and counterculture come together for spontaneous, open enjoyment.

A more common daily experience presents a ripe opportunity for rebel-

A TIME THIEF'S JOURNAL



9:02 I walk through the main doors into winter
 the clockface a huge subzero asteroid
 eight hours of icecap
 unfurling ghostly peaks and crevasses in front of me
 over the carpet the desks the staplers and ball-point pens
 that still pretend to be real
 9:08 I huddle over my tea at Base Camp
 snuffling the steam like oxygen
 9:12 Reluctantly I set off
 leaning into a smoky white flutter of documentation
 Forty-some minutes of heavy slogging
 until 9:53 when Joaquin walks in / excused of course
 Our gossip balloons up around us / a sun-orange tent
 Chuckling we nibble our mischief ration
 10:06 The boss whirls by like a low-pressure area
 snapping our cover loose with an Arctic eye-blast
 It's 11:23 before I halt again
 looking back at my miles of tracks over scattered white
 then push on toward Noon Base
 12:04 I relax under a dome of protected air
 warming my hands and toes in the infra-redemption
 of an authorized break
 It's terrific in here / my salad as colorful
 as a video game crunching its red and green pixels
 my novel swallows me like a sauna
 into a dozey subtropical twilight
 But suddenly it's 12:36 and I've got to move on
 fresh paperwork already slanting down across my path
 1:28 Lucia stops by with the mileage forms and a memo
 Up goes the gossip-tent / this time
 camouflaged by our Spanish into an inscrutable snowdrift
 Inside / our compressed boss-hate hisses
 out through the tiny burner
 a violet flame giggling across our faces
 1:35 We break camp and I move on over
 a wide blue-rib glacier / chart after chart
 my worn stare can hardly get a purchase on
 Slow going until
 2:47 the intercom buzzes me like a supply shuttle
 dropping the silhouette-seed of a phone call
 Melinda's voice ripples open its red silk 'chute
 and swings down / I unwrap it
 news-clusters tumble out as delicate as berries
 plans for the evening sealed in a dim shine
 like brandy through bottleglass
 2:53 I squint off toward the deadline
 faraway still but flickered with heatless aurora
 I hang up and brace myself / the final drive
 3:44 I blink away the glisten of fresh data
 thinking I must be there by now
 Before I know it I'm stumbling slowly down
 into a crack in the world / a deep leafy canyon
 hoarding a brainforest full of intricate warmth
 I get lost among branches
 coiled with snake-ivy / beaded with neon birds



Somehow at 3:56 I stagger back up onto the plateau again
trudging one step at a time
over the heaped corrections
into a headwind heavy with blankness / on and on
4:58 Lucia's keyboard hum clicks off
and she's out the door before I register Ciao
body already lit by the apricot star of early June
I watch the clock's iron wings
flap creakily away like a deformed albatross
until tomorrow
reach for my coat / one more time / it's
Daylight Saving Me

by Adam Cornford

ling against the system — time theft on the job. There are a number of ways such theft manifests itself. Except for those strictly bound by a punch-card time clock, most workers have some potential to shrink work hours by arriving late, leaving early, and extending breaks and lunch hour to the fullest limit possible. If you work somewhat independently there exists the potential for the wholesale stealing of paid time. Then there is the normal lying about being sick on those days you would rather not go to work at all — oh so common on Mondays and Fridays.

Still, these are only small reprieves from the inordinate amount of time spent at the workplace. Since we are often stuck there, it is important to insert as much of your personal agenda as possible into paid work time. In an office setting, this could mean writing personal letters or generating lots of phone conversations with friends. If your workplace is mobile then you may be able to make social appointments or do personal errands during transit time. A tremendous time save is stealing resources from the workplace (especially typewriters, phone equipment, computers) that you would otherwise buy through the sale of your labor time. As has been suggested before in PW, why not demand that lunch and commuting time be paid just like the rest of the time on the job?

In isolation, such small pinpricks can only provide temporary relief for those assertive individuals fortunate

enough to be in a 'loose' workplace. One example of a more collective response happened at a Silicon Valley firm. Due to market pressure, one day management demanded a 10 hour day from salaried employees to keep the corporation on its feet. For only one person to have flaunted this dictate would have resulted in a punitive measure against them. But when everyone refused to comply, management had no choice but to agree the extra hours was a bad idea. Similarly, the leverage in the previous examples of time theft would usually be strengthened as more people at the workplace act in collusion.

The alternative, refusing to work altogether, usually means an impoverished lifestyle that may or may not be better than submitting to forced labor. Unless you possess the personal resources (both monetary and psychological) to transcend the money system and the normal drift toward an external time structure, withdrawing from wage work will not necessarily be liberating.

Broad, systemic solutions to this bind are hard to see for the immediate future. Historically, the struggle for a *generalized* shortening of hours with no drop in pay has been indispensable for working people. In the 14th century, the fight was to utilize mechanical time to define the work day as something less than the sunrise to sunset. When the industrial revolution came of age, labor began to demand a 10 hour day/60 hour week which came to fruition in the early

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Paula Gill, FCTX magazine

1800's in England with the passage of the Factory Act Laws. In the U.S., as early as the Civil War, the intense, often violent, fight for an 8 hour day began. By 1886 the 8 hour day movement organized the only nationwide General Strike in U.S. history. Over 400,000 workers struck across the U.S. and Chicago became the flash-

point of militancy with the infamous Haymarket Massacre. However, it wasn't until the 1930's that the 40 hour week became broadly established. Without success, the turn of the century Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the World) pushed a much wider and sharper vision with their '4 by 4' slogan: "4 hours a day, 4 days a



week!"

Contemporary struggles are quite pale in comparison. One of the few, recent collective action by workers to change time relations, quantitatively at least, started in May, 1984. In West Germany a number of trade unions (metal workers, mass transit, printing, auto workers, etc.) initiated selective strikes in key industries for a generalized 35 hour work week at 40 hours pay. Among several of the strike's shortcomings was the union leadership's ostensible goal — shor-

ten the work week to *increase employment*. Key to undermining the clockworking of consciousness is the realization that high unemployment is here to stay and could be part of a desirable social policy. Only when we realize that the time brokers (whether bosses, bureaucrats, commodities, or union leaders) cannot be allowed to own *any* of our time will the possibility emerge for a truly free, humane time.

— Mead-O

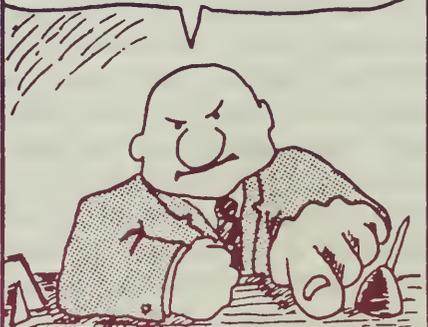
timeclock blues

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LET'S GET IT STRAIGHT FROM THE START...YOUR TIME IS WORTHLESS, OF COURSE...WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T WORKING FORTY HOURS A WEEK? SLEEPING, OR DRINKING BEER AND STARING AT THE TELEVISION, NO DOUBT...



YOU'RE LUCKY TO HAVE A JOB! AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT! WE COULD REPLACE YOU ANYTIME! SO YOU'D BETTER KEEP YOUR NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE! YOU'D BETTER LOVE THIS COMPANY, BY GOD, OR WE'LL FIND SOMEONE WHO DOES!



...AND IF YOU LOVE THE COMPANY, YOU SURELY WON'T MIND A LITTLE OVER-TIME...SAY 50 OR 60 HOURS A WEEK INSTEAD OF 40...WHAT'S THAT? TIME-AND-A-HALF? OH, NO, NO, WE'LL DO BETTER THAN THAT! WE'LL PUT YOU ON A SALARY!



...OF COURSE, WE DO EXPECT A LITTLE MORE FROM OUR SALARIED EMPLOYEES...BUT YOU WON'T MIND MAKING GOOD USE OF YOUR SPARE TIME EACH NIGHT WRITING REPORTS, RIGHT? HEY, IF YOU'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO, GO AHEAD...& STARVE!



TALE of TOIL

IT TAKES A JANITOR TO TELL THIS TALE

— *Anonymous*



I'm a janitor in a downtown San Francisco Financial District building. I've been a janitor for about three years, since I was laid off my last job in industry. I have been a production worker most of my life, went to college for a year, but it just seemed like such a waste of time. I was older than the other students (the Vietnam era intervened in my life some) and they were mostly into getting a career and getting all set in some corporation. Today they are called Yuppies. Back then they were just hungry for money. I chose working in a shipyard over sitting in a classroom; nobody was counting on the industrial sector of the American working class being kicked out in the cold back in '74.

I've had occasion to regret not choosing a white collar profession, especially in the last couple of years. It's getting harder and harder to make a living as a janitor. The pay is a living wage if you don't mind living in an apartment for the price of a house with a yard, riding Muni to work crammed into a car full of strangers and eating a sandwich out of a brown paper bag to save money because you can't afford the prices of a decent restaurant or tolerate the stuff they turn out as food at McDonald's. It's the same story all over. Life in the City is disappointing and dreary, but

there's no work in the outlying areas that pays enough to live.

The last place I worked paid less than scale (\$10.24 an hour) because it wasn't covered by the Building Owners and Managers contract. Since I worked there less than the six months necessary to be considered "permanent" personnel, I got laid off when they reorganized the night janitors to cut maintenance costs. The "reorganization" involved adding work that was once the responsibility of "floaters" to the already speeded-up schedule of the station janitors. As a floater, I had been assigned to scrubbing bathrooms (why they call a room where you go to smoke, shit or wash your hands a bathroom, I do not know). Sometimes I vacuumed furniture or cleaned air convectors in offices. All of these jobs are more or less undesirable, but better than being unemployed. At least, more lucrative.

Sometimes, when a station janitor was sick I would have to do two complete floors. We all get sick a lot, probably because we're exposed to everybody's garbage and because they cut off the air conditioning at 6:30 p.m. to save money, meaning we breathe the stale, dust-laden air all night.

The Union

Everybody says the Union is gutless. The president of the local (Service Employees Union International, Local 87) Wray Jacobs, is perceived as a real adversary by the bosses. He promised to clean up the job-selling and favoritism in the Local, but it still goes on. Used to be that the secretaries and assistants up at the union office were all related to the Business Agents; their wives, girlfriends, whatever. It was commonly believed that Jacobs had hired his own wife or something to a newly created position in the office. Union politics are perceived as the personal

Kong. They also stick together, but they are a very conservative influence on the union. Only the new guys from Hong Kong, the Vietnamese or the other Southeast Asians are very rebellious. The old Chinese are scared for their jobs, and hardly ever say anything to anybody.

The smallest minorities are whites and blacks. Where I worked we had about twenty-five guys, two whites, two blacks, and the rest were Asian, Central American, or Arab. The other white guy used to tell me that now he knew what it was like to be black. The foremen were Spanish-speaking. They favored CAs from their own

It's impossible to really ever accept the job of scrubbing shitters.

domain of those people on the "inside." If you try and talk about it, look into what the recent history of the local is, you get a lot of vague answers from everyone involved. Jacobs was removed from office once for squandering union funds on an expensive telephone system and a computer to keep track of dues, etc. Dues doubled to pay for it.

There are a lot of immigrant janitors. Central Americans, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, they tend to stick together and are a big force in the union. The janitors from the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, North and South Yemen, Iran, Iraq stick together too, because they speak a language almost nobody else can understand. They can talk about the Supervisor with him standing right there, call him names, insult his mother, whatever — he understands nothing. A supervisor that speaks Farsi tends to be a two-edged sword, he acts like a defender to the Arabs and ridicules them to the boss.

The other major group is the Chinese, US-born, older immigrants, and new immigrants from Hong

country (Nicaragua) and always saved the real shit work for the whites and blacks.

The job market for janitors is so over-loaded with unemployed production workers that I have seen fist-fights at the Union Hall for a place in line to get on the sign-up roster. They changed the rules so as to eliminate that competitive aspect of job assignment, but there is always a crowd of people with that desperate I-gotta-get-a-job look in their eyes.

I'm waiting in line to pay my dues. The phones in the office haven't stopped ringing since I arrived. The secretaries and assistants and Business Agents are apparently all gone somewhere. One young woman wearing a skirt and looking harrassed keeps answering them and saying "Local 87, hold please" "Local 87, hold please." As soon as she puts the phone on hold, the light goes out as the caller immediately hangs up and begins to re-dial.

The woman running the dues computer looks like she sincerely wishes she had a job somewhere else. "Name and Social Security number."

I tell her. "Yah. You owe for January and February." I asked her if she would take a check. "Yah." I pay and go sign up on the roster. The young college kid behind the counter tells me that dispatching will be at 3:00 p.m. at the picket line at such-an-such a place, where the Union contractor was recently replaced by a scab outfit from Washington State that exclusively employs Korean immigrants. We look at each other.

"You run a buffer?"

"You bet."

"See ya at three."

I have an unspoken understanding. I run a floor maintainer machine. He needs an operator, maybe I'll get the job, maybe he's bullshitting me.

ON THE JOB

When we start work at 5:00 p.m., usually there are still secretaries and executives in the offices. Some of the offices have people working a swing shift using computers or Wang word-processors. Compared to ours, their job seems really free. They spend a lot of time talking on the phone and can drink coffee or a Coke whenever they feel like it. Day shift people are really condescending compared to swing shift office workers. They wear typical office clothes, little suits,

the Mail Room but there is a limit. Sometimes we get around to how-much-do-they-pay-you-guys-anyway and some are shocked to find out they make less "than a janitor, for god-sakes!" But still and all, they are a hell of a lot nicer than even the most sympathetic executive-type.

We can't use the phones at night — ten thousand phones and we have to go to the basement to make a phone call and race thirty other guys to be first. Personal emergencies have to wait — only hysterical calls with screaming children in the background get a foreman to take the elevator up to your floor and tell you to go down and call your old lady. And if you leave to take the kid to the hospital, they bitch.

I used to have a set routine, every night. I had figured out how to make a job look like 7½ hours of work when I could do it in a pinch in less than six. *If I busted ass. If I did a crummy job.* On a normal night I dumped trash for a couple of hours. It is one of the more disagreeable aspects of janitorial work, along with scrubbing shitters.

People put all kinds of horrible stuff in their trash cans. It really offends the janitors. "How can they put *coffee* in a trash can? Don't they *realize* it gets all over us when we empty the can?" I hate those Cuppa Soup things

“Guys who wouldn't attend union meetings were willing to stab a foreman over a Walkman radio.”

heels, nylons. The night shift wears blue jeans and has less of a status-oriented attitude towards janitors. I guess they figure we aren't all that much below a Wang operator when all is said and done. But there is still this attitude of geez-I'm-glad-I'm-not-scrubbing-commodes-for-a-living that sort of lets you know that they might go out for a beer with the boys from

and take-out Chinese most. It's sticky and messy, and after four or five hours (or over a weekend), it stinks.

Trash tells a lot about people. Smokers are the worst, the can stinks like hell and it's real dirty and dusty. Our whole job would be easy and relatively clean without coffee or cigarettes in the office environment. Of course, without coffee and cigarettes,

Jesus Wants to Return As a Janitor

He's going to clean this place up!

To the Toilets of the Nation
Spreading Words of Defecation

His Words of Rodo-Rooter Wisdom
Will Flush Your Problems
From His Kingdom

Other Reasons

Why Jesus Wants to Come Back:

To Have Sex

to walk on toilet water

To Jog

to Interface

To Have Hot Fudge Sundaes

First Church of Rodo Rooter

most offices couldn't even function. While I dump the trash, I use a feather duster on the desk to snap off the worst of the dust and cigarette ashes and little round punchouts from loose-leaf binders and computer print-outs.

I hate attorneys' offices. They treat their help terrible and as a result the whole office is a disaster every day, butts all over the place, papers and books piled everywhere. There's no satisfaction in cleaning an office that is still totally screwed up when you finish. Sometimes I find porno magazines and those girls! Girls! GIRLS! newspapers in the trash in big shots' offices. Janitors get unshockable after awhile. We see everybody's dirty laundry.

I read the trash, too. One major national company here in San Francisco has its Customer Relations Department in its national headquarters. Basically it's a complaint department for the company's mediocre products, produced overseas by Third World

wage slaves. The standard word-processed form letter is a real ass-kisser. "We're *so* sorry you were displeased with our blankety-blank, and *sincerely* regret blah blah blah. Please accept a case of our mixed blah-de-blahs with our sincerest apologies etc., etc." The second letter, in case this bozo writes back, is substantially less apologetic, especially if the complainant demanded money. The third letter states flat-out "We're turning over your letter to OUR ATTORNEYS and fuck you very much..."

After I dump the trash another janitor picks it up in a freight elevator and hauls it down to a collection point in the sub-basement where the garbage truck comes to get it via the Sidewalk Elevator. A foreman always supervises this so the garbage guy doesn't run off with a couple of Selectrics or something.

After dumping trash it's time to scrub the shitters. It's impossible to really ever accept this job. I've scrubbed a million of them, and I still





zoe noc

find it distasteful. People smoke in the shitter, so there is a film of tobacco smoke all over the walls and mirrors. The foreman comes around and rubs a towel over all the vertical surfaces and if he finds grease, smoke or whatever you get a slip, or at least he bitches at you and you have to clean them again.

For some reason the women throw paper on the floor around the commodes. There is always water all over the place, too, and of course hair from hairbrushes thrown on the floor, make-up, etc. The little "sanitary" boxes in the stalls are rarely anything *but*, with all manner of junk in there besides sanitary napkins neatly wrapped in toilet paper. This means that the box has to be cleaned of mayonnaise, Coca-Cola or whatever else is spilled all over the inside. I can take Tampax, that's what the box is *for*, but I resent all the damned lunch-room garbage that requires extra time and effort to clean up. What kind of person eats their *lunch* in a toilet booth???

The men are no better. They piss on the floor around the urinals and it never enters their heads that it is *their* fault and they should bend down

and wipe it up. Who trained these people in how to use a public restroom anyway? Is every man and woman in San Francisco a total slob in public restrooms? The last stall in line in every men's room is always the one with the Sports section of the *Ex-Chron* and usually the one with the sticky copy of *Club* magazine. How a grown man can masturbate in a public restroom *during working hours* is beyond me. I couldn't even do that as a kid, much less now. I always wonder who these guys are. Director of Marketing? Vice President in Charge of Bent Paperclips? The Mail Room kid? And of course, the butts. Always cigarette ashes and butts on the floor, sometimes booze bottles in the hand towel trash can. And why do men crap on the seat and fail to wipe it off? The women do, so what's wrong with the men?

Does this strike you as a gross subject? Well, hoss, I deal with it every night in the flesh, and I'M FUCKING TIRED of nasty, inconsiderate "superior" people shitting on the seat and then acting like there is something wrong with the service people who clean up their little "accidents." Believe me, if I fail to

clean up their little problem I definitely hear about it!

After lunch we usually vacuumed the rest of the night. You start in one corner of the office block and just pick a direction and start vacuuming. My arm used to hurt like hell from the muscle cramps. Once I got tendonitis from it. My wrist hurt like the dickens, and I could vacuum. They put me on garbage detail, hauling the heavy paper sacks of garbage thrown down to the pick-up area.

While you're vacuuming you can hardly hear anything. Sometimes I used to turn around and find the foreman, *watching me vacuum*, with his arms crossed. I'd cut it off and ask him if I was doing a satisfactory job of running a damned vacuum and he'd just walk away. If you got caught sitting down, you'd be fired. If you got caught talking on the phone, reading, looking out the window, etc., you'd get suspended.

Once, when we were buffing the hard floors in a transportation company I opened a door to an office and caught two executives (one male, one female) making it on the desk. I just said excuse me and closed the door. They came out of there like a shot, staggering drunk and in disarray (she was patting her hair and murmuring over and over "You little bastard, you little bastard..."). I looked at the Central American guy with me and we both were thinking "Uh-oh, these guys are going to try and cover their asses by reporting *us* for something."

The guy came back after a few minutes and tried to give us money. We wouldn't take it. The next day I expected to be fired for some bullshit story, but nothing happened. Of course, if anything like this had happened the other way around — Bam! we would have been fired in a heartbeat.

I vacuumed straight, two and a half or three hours a night. Every night, five days a week. My forearms got quite strong. My ears rang from the noise because Commercial vacuum cleaners are built without any noise-reducing insulation. I understand that Hoover once marketed a *soundless* vacuum cleaner and it crashed because people associate power with noise and thought it was wimpy.

Janitors where I worked were once prohibited from wearing Walkman-type radios. They said it was too distracting and slowed down the work. After a while though, everybody was wearing them anyway and the Foremen were having some fairly hostile conversations with people so they got off that trip. It was building towards some genuine militant union activity, so they dropped it. I was surprised. Guys who wouldn't even attend union meetings were willing to stab a foreman over a Walkman radio. Well, they were willing to *threaten* to stab a foreman over it anyway.

There is rarely any way to get a decent meal on the night shift. First we had a little coin-operated lunchroom, but it seems like the goddam



change machine was always out of order or there was nothing but sawdust sandwiches in the sandwich machine. Then there was the Pto-mainie Truck. One of the best deals in town is the M & M Cafeteria that takes lunch orders by phone. If you really beat feet, you can get down to the M & M, wolf down your chow and get back within the lunch period. Dave lets you run a tab for meals and beer (he doesn't care if you drink your lunch).

About a quarter of the guys I worked with were alcoholics and they drank everywhere. The guys with passkeys to various "secured" areas were the worst about stashing booze there or in telephone connection boxes. Most janitors had to make do with swilling down a six-pack on a thirty minute lunch period and then coasting until they could get off. I saw guys breaking out a pint on the way to their *car*, for crissake. The kids smoked dope. Stick your head out into the fire escape staircase anytime, and the fumes would dilate your eyes right there.

Out of high school, no money for college, the kid gets a "good job" (i.e. one that pays a living wage) and when he looks up five years later he's locked in. It takes a tremendous effort to go to school and work full-time as a janitor. Everybody was doing about three or four different things at the same time, trying to start their own business, going to City College part-time, going to Auto Mechanics School at John O'Connell, something.

People's personal lives were usually talked about only when someone had a baby or a death in the family. If the person was popular, a collection was always taken up. If nobody liked the person, no collection — no matter what disaster befell him. Sometimes I felt like people's personal lives were better left undiscussed.

One woman was happily describing her new boyfriend to me. They had a "nice, new apartment near Bayview"

and he was a swell guy, "he's got a job and *everything*." I couldn't think of much to say to that — where the measure of a potential male spouse was whether or not he had a job. What about the other men in her life? They presumably sat around drinking Mad Dog 20/20 and talking about what kind of "ride" they was going to have, when the big break came. Down the line, you know?

We had a few janitors who used to "be somebody" and were now sort of in "reduced circumstances." Some of the women janitors were divorcees who had been out of the office environment too long to be able to cut it, some just preferred to spend time during the day with their kids and left the rugrats with their husband or their mother while they worked at night. They had a tough deal, mainly working with men, isolated most of the time. It gets spooky in those buildings at night. They were jumpy and I don't blame them. Almost everybody carried knives for "scraping carpet stains," and the Supervisor used to bitch like hell. If he caught you wearing a Buck knife in a belt pouch he'd make you take it off. He was scared of getting cut if he harrassed people too far and they went off on him.

I had a couple of daytime jobs. I was relieving some older guy who had a ton of seniority and had worked his way (at last!) to a daytime job with the contractor and was on vacation or something. You can't be a day janitor and maintain a bizarre appearance. Some places have uniforms for the janitors, some do not. If the employer requires uniforms he must provide them at no cost. He must also provide work gloves and some other clothing associated with the job. Try and get them! You'll immediately get laid off if you persist. Some places even frown on beards, or long hair or whatever.

I always kind of liked the Bicycle Messengers since they are a crazy

continued on page 35



SILICON VALLEY TOURS

OUR LADY OF MISSILES

United

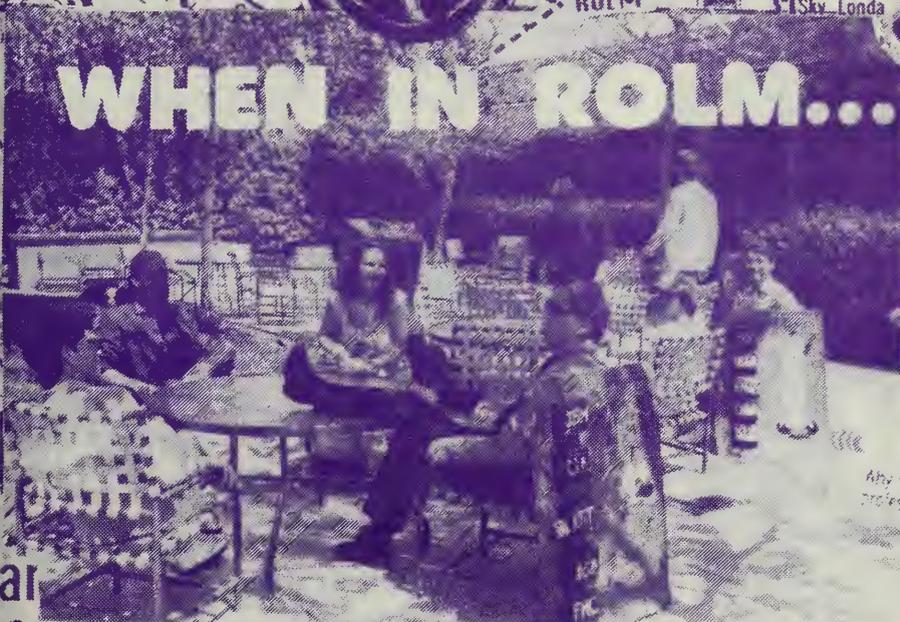
Blue Cube

Bored in the city? Try Silicon Valley — Processed World did. We toured the sun-chip peninsula, home of defense art religious monuments, weapons control centers, fascion parks, and the people who made it all possible. Like the luxurious Rolm Corporation.

The Blue Cube — U.S. Air Force military satellite control facility.

...Do as the "Rolm*Droids" dont!

WHEN IN ROLM...



SECURITY MANAGER

Why wait for tomorrow to bring you closer to your professional future when...
The Future is ROLM. NOW.



What Did You Wear?

IT'S THE
THE
OF THE FAI
WOI

very
important
senseless
data

PRISONERS OF DAILY
LIFE

THOUGHT
POLICE

STOCK
OPTIONS

Welcome

Francesca





MAY 12, 1984

TERMINALS

PROCESSED
WORLD

HAVE EARS

NO REVISION

SECRET
SERVICE

'TIL DEATH
DO WE
SHOP

SUPERVISOR
SHREDDER

HOMOGENIZED
MILK
OF AMNESIA
HALF ALIVE

What Would You Have Worn?

The LATEST IN
Pest Extermination
for the Office!

Zoe Noe

than outside — with several tiled fountains and large plant-like decorations. We paraded

inside the mall was even nicer
The environment

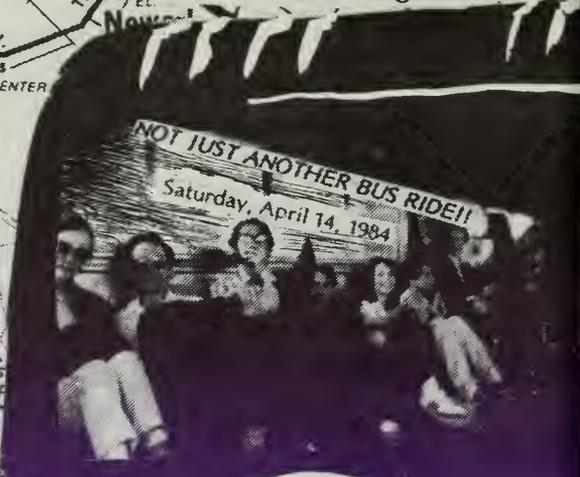
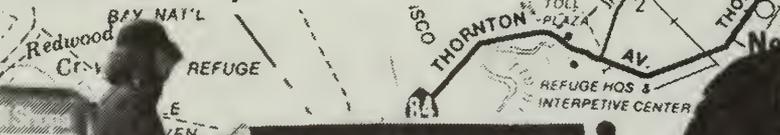
This is your chance to be a Bad Example in Silicon Valley!



around the glassed-in displays in slow motion, pausing to stop and contemplate each like the locals. We dressed for the festive occasion to fit in to local custom — as large computer heads and oversized office supplies. Several of us, dressed as young professionals, handed out leaflets to the dazed crowd, which said "Why Work?"

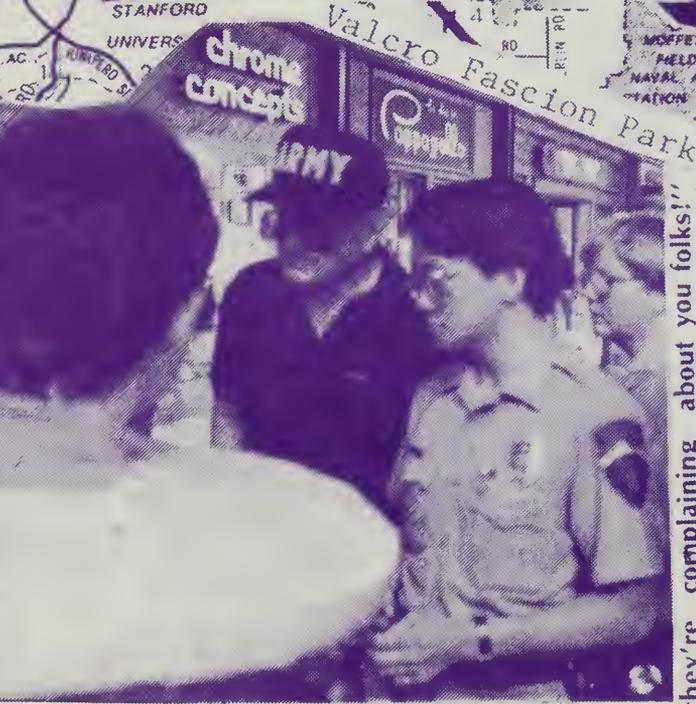
Several Mall security employees joined the gathering. Some kindly told us we were violating the dress code, and suggested we should call in advance for reservations before we came again.

HI! My name is:



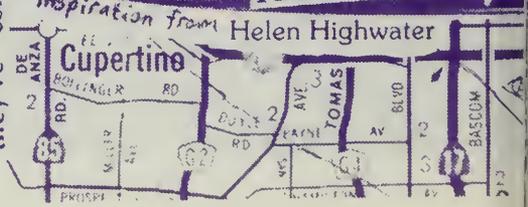
Up Against The Mall

One shopper wasn't pleased that we were being asked to the door — "All the crazy fashions they're showing in the stores these days, and



they're complaining about you folks!!

Graphic intervention by ancy newcomer
Tour Guide: Melquiades
Photos by Kelly Girl
inspiration from Helen Highwater



they're showing in the stores these days, and

continued from page 30

element in a uniformly dull world. But I have a message for all Bicycle Messengers from the Janitors: "Please stop writing graffiti where Bosses can see it. We have to clean it up, and usually it's not even very interesting graffiti. If you *must* write things in the elevators, hallways, etc., do it in indelible ink, so I won't have to scrub it. Pencil, crayon, and paint are no good. Use Marks-a-Lot. Thanks."

Usually everybody ignores the Bicycle Messengers if at all possible, but when I work days we always have something to say, hello, howzit goin' or whatever. Occasionally I get a negative response, but most acknowledge our common oppression with a

nod or a grin or something. Even if pierced noses do freak me out a little, I still have more in common with a sweaty bicyclist than I do with some asshole who makes his living manipulating other peoples' lives.

All of us, the Wang operator, the VDT jockey, the receptionist, file clerk, temp, janitor, engineer and even the bicycle messenger (hey, buddy, he's *radio* dispatched. Do you need a radio to stay in minute-by-minute communication with where you work?) are all victims of / vital components of / supporters of / plotters against the system of modern business life (if you can call this shit a life). I'm up for it. Unplug the fuckin' system.



I'm in the shit business
I work for the sewerage department
I analyse experiments
I draw graphs and flow charts
and conclusions
today I was sitting at my desk
trying to explain
the dissolved air floatation process
where streams of little bubbles are released
into a tank full of sewerage
to float the suspended solids up to the surface
to be skimmed off
but what I was really thinking about
was lunchtime
the canteen cook
caters to the ethnic multitudes
by putting on Italian eats most days
I was thinking of ravioli
with meat sauce
but I was writing things like
"The sludge produced by this process
is grey-brown in colour
and does not produce
offensive odours
provided anaerobic conditions
can be prevented"
the sludge is really composed of
my used ravioli
and the Boss's used steak
and your used hamburger
and the vegetarian's used brown rice

all mixed up together
and when it gets in this state
no one wants to know about it
except me
I don't find shit offensive
most people do
they can't wait to push the button
or pull the chain or something
and then they think the shit has vanished
into the centre of the earth
it hasn't really
it just floats up somewhere else
However
it's all biodegradable
I reckon most people think
that shit is the most deadly poison
on the face of the earth
they'd rather face ten tons of plutonium
than half a bucket of shit
even their own
no curse in the English Language
is complete
without "shit" included in it somewhere
lunchtime arrived
I ate my ravioli
I had a shit
it was brown in colour
I felt a lot better

by Jas H. Duke

(reprinted from 925, a now-defunct
Australian workers' magazine)



Robots Unionized by Company

Should robots pay union dues? This question came up recently among union members at Fujitsu Fanuc, one of Japan's leading robot manufacturing companies.

After losing many of its members to robots at a plant in central Japan, the union announced that it faced bankruptcy. Then management came up with a novel idea: it would pay union dues for each robot and keep the union on its financial feet. The union readily agreed.

The idea quickly spread to other unions in Japan. But soon the government axed the idea on the grounds that the dues amounted to corporate donations to unions — illegal in Japan. A Ministry of Labor Spokesperson said, "robots are not considered to be human. As a result, if fees are paid to the union's funds on behalf of robots, this would be defined as financial assistance from

management."

The government decision displeased the union. "There are now only 700 union members, and our finances are in trouble," the union chairperson said. "We would like to see parliament change the law. We want to see robots join the unions."

— from *Business Asia* 3/12/82

On July 7th, 1983, I learned to make this symbol on a Xerox 860 word processor:

⌘

It is the symbol of mystery incarnate, of mystery riding drunk down a tree-lined road in autumn at 100 miles an hour,

Jean Rhys behind the wheel, Isadora Duncan dragging along behind the red Ferrari, singing Bessie Smith songs.

by David Steinberg

SABOTAGE

It's important to keep in mind that all data storage systems are based on electromagnetic techniques, including the ubiquitous disks. Commonplace electromagnetic fields are quite capable of destroying the data on them, fields such as those emitted by cathode ray tubes, refrigerators, stereos, etc., etc. Wouldn't it be handy to keep those floppies on top of the VDT for a nice long period? Or how about keeping them on top of the fridge? Not to mention what a little folding, bending and mutilating can do.

Some other tried-and-true methods of dealing with the greater powers include program lines (in BASIC here, though I can supply the machine language for those who want it), such as: "IF xxx = yyy THEN PRINT CHR\$(4);" "DELETE (or INIT) filename" ". That one can be used as a time bomb, for example, if xxx is the number of files, and yyy is the top number of those that can be stored. That way the file isn't deleted until it is completely full.

Connecting and disconnecting parallel and serial cables and interface cards with the power on is always fun for the kids, too.

Reset buttons can provide a lot of amusement. Try hitting one while booting DOS sometime. On some, though not all machines, the results can scramble DOS and the internal monitor. It's even more effective if you take out the disk when you do this, 'cause when the drive resets to Track 0 and finds nothing there, you have the added possibility of wiping it out, too.

The true saboteur never wears rubber soled shoes to work. Good old static electricity discharged from the fingertips probably accounts for close to half the disks and computers wiped out or down every year.

Be sure to write on the label on the disk with a ball-point pen. That hard point, with just a leetle pressure, can do the job.

There is also a huge number of taboo commands available in the CPU depending on which one is used, Withe the 6502, for



A
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example, you can make listing invisible, make listings repeat the initial line infinitely, hide the catalog, make the running of a program cause the computer to reset, and many other fun projects to numerous to list here. One of my personal favorites is the one that limits the video display to the right or left half of the screen.

The truly dedicated antiworker who isn't afraid to take some risk can always bring a charged electromagnet to work, or plug in some version of the Tesla coil at work, and have loads and loads of fun — with the disks, the VDTs, and the computers themselves.

Most business installations have external clocks attached to either the individual units

or the networks and are left on continuously. That has a great potential for internal register instructions pegged to off-hour settings to shut down the equipment during runtimes, delete files, insert bugs, etc.

Those strange keys in different colors with names like F1, F2, etc., are grand potential allies. They are programmable function keys, and can be set to do a variety of things with only a minimal knowledge of programming.

That's a few suggestions to play with, maybe giving you some further ideas of your own. Good luck.

Power to the Processor.
Igor

KID CONTROL

In May and June a local college radio station in San Francisco, KUSF, repeatedly played "Public Service Announcements" encouraging parents to "protect their children" by having their kids fingerprinted by the local police. In response to these idiotic messages, sponsored by such upstanding members of SF's business community like "Strategic Design Consultants" and others, PW sent in this counter-message. For reasons unknown, KUSF refused to play it,

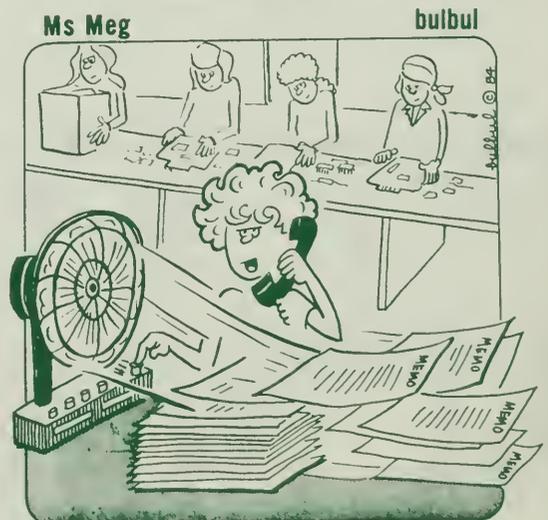
The folks at *Processed World* magazine would like to register their disapproval of the many public service announcements advocating the fingerprinting of small children. If you have a child who disappears, the truth is that no amount of documentation — be it fingerprints, voice prints, or brain wave patterns — will get that child back. At best such records might help identify a dead body. The creators of these ads are exploiting parents' fear of losing their children to encourage enrollment of children in the ever-expanding data network. This information in the hands of any police or government bureaucracy will ultimately be used *against* the people it is supposedly helping.

The best protection against kid

stealers is to educate children not to readily obey the demands of strangers, or any arbitrary authority, as well as developing a network of family and neighbors to share the safeguarding of our children.

Fingerprinting, and other biometric systems which measure unique biological characteristics, are not a solution, and only serve to numb people to the reality of government and corporate surveillance and control of our personal lives.

**DON'T FINGERPRINT
YOUR CHILDREN!**



YES SIR, YOUR MEMO: (WE'RE ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY... NO NEED FOR WOMEN TO ORGANIZE) IS BEING CIRCULATED.

Your favorite gay leaders invite you to:

A NITE AT THE BATHS

Acquired Surveillance-System Efficiency Syndrome (ASSES) is sweeping our community with guilt and repression. Spread by intimate contact in the seedy backrooms of politicians and bureaucrats, **ASSES** threatens to deprive us of our civil rights. Its victims — typically promiscuous politicians — are overwhelmed by delusions of superiority and the need to police other people's behavior. There is no known cure for **ASSES** once it strikes.



Experts on **ASSES** will be available to answer questions like:

- "What do I do when they declare my apartment an official health hazard?"
- "When the baths become 'health' clubs who will make sure the only thing we pump is iron?"
- "How can I buy condoms without my friends thinking I'm straight?"
- "Do I need to take my bodily fluids to a toxic waste dump?"

Lick ASSES before it licks us!

(P.S. Wondering what it all leads to? You don't have to swallow it. Laws, regulations, vice squads, and politicians never solve problems, they are the problem. We can make our community a safe and healthy place to live **without** their help. If you're concerned, speak up — a message from Housewives for Safe Sex, P.O. Box 11622, San Francisco, CA 94101.)

Fortunately, we have all the answers and know what's best for you. At this intensive one-night workshop, your favorite gay leaders will offer their own lives as models for you to follow. You can survive sex in the age of Big Brother:

Mental masturbation — the hands-off approach
Phone sex — anonymity with safety, the best of both worlds

Coping — feel better by guilt-tripping others
Obey authority — who needs S/M?... the bureaucrats and politicians will give you all the discipline you need

PLUS: "Getting Off by Getting Votes" — an alternative to sex from SF's favorite gay supervisor.





On Thursday 29th March the 2nd Stop The City demo took place all over the City of London... a protest against war and arms profits, exploitation and rape of the earth, of women, and of animals. It was a protest against Capitalism itself.

Although 444 people were arrested and many beaten up most people agreed it was a good demo, full of life and action. The media portrayed it as masterminded by sinister 'black-clad anarchists'. Certainly it was anarchist in its form of organization. There were NO leaders, each group and person was self-responsible... the 'coordination group' saw their role merely as to publicize, organize legal briefings, etc.

• During the night hundreds of banks and other businesses had their locks glued up. Banners were put up

proclaiming the event. Graffiti was quickly removed. A statue of Queen Victoria at Blackfriars was paint bombed, etc.

• A woman pig threw back an orange smoke bomb but hit another cop. A photo of her throwing it hit the front page of *The Evening Standard*, and later most national papers.

• Many hundreds of cars were damaged, most of them punctured with awls and home-made tire stabbers. A Rolls Royce got smashed up when punks began dancing on it.

All day long people kept throwing themselves in the street.

(Excerpted from CROWBAR... the full text is joyfully descriptive, well worth reading, and is available through Processed World, 55 Sutter St. #829, SF 94104)



london
'84



FREEWAY INCIDENT

SIRENS

Reveille me from my morning thoughts
 As they proclaim an accident ahead
 Some minutes later traffic slows
 We almost stop to watch
 The twisted metal, glass and blood
 As men with torches extricate
 Those hurt and killed
 Inside their metal cages.

I share my sadness in the traffic
 With the people
 Who are all tied up and late for work.
 Somehow we're quite removed from this dramatic incident
 And one another
 As we look and see.
 Our brothers
 Dead here on the freeway
 They were just like us
 A part of morning traffic
 Now they're gone

As we the living gaze about us
 On our way to work
 We're numbed
 And slowed by fate
 Not even birds to sing out here
 Above the concrete.

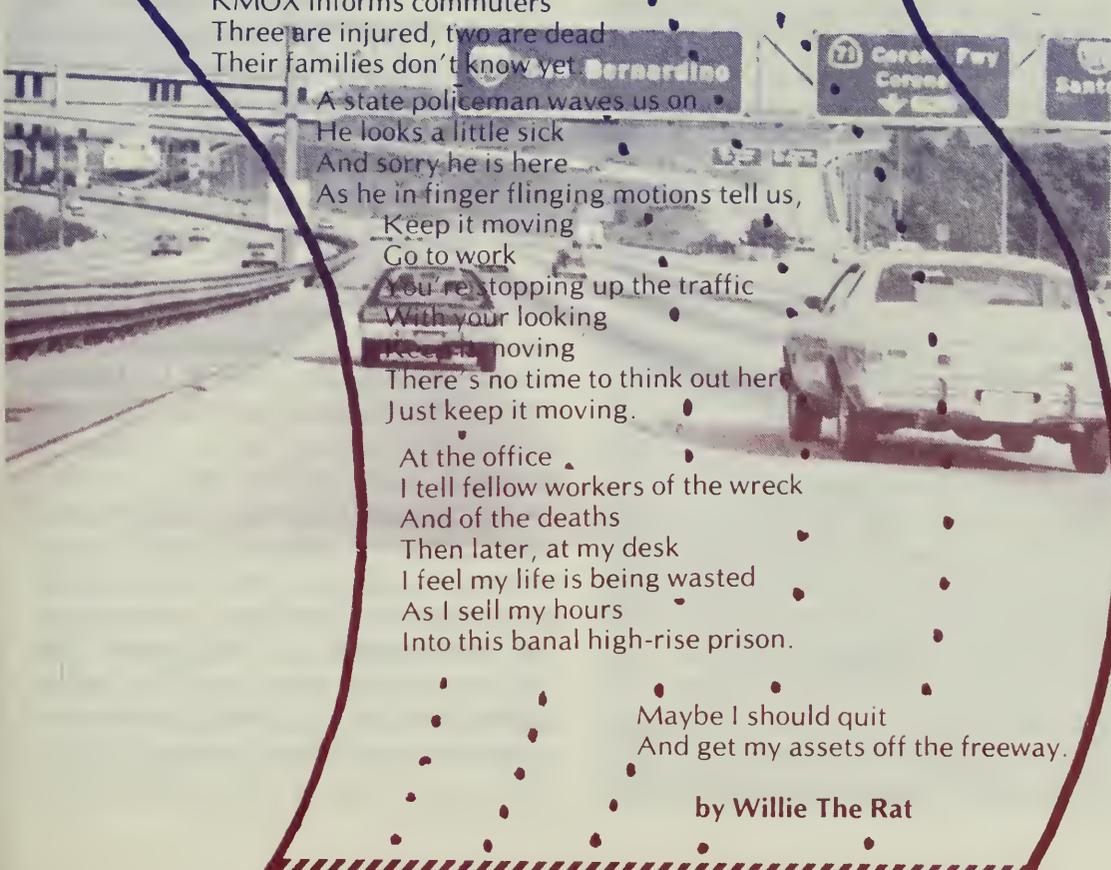
The incident's an hour old now.
 Helicopters overhead
 Survey the scene for local morning news
 KMOX informs commuters
 Three are injured, two are dead
 Their families don't know yet

A state policeman waves us on
 He looks a little sick
 And sorry he is here
 As he in finger flinging motions tell us,
 Keep it moving
 Go to work
 You're stopping up the traffic
 With your looking
 Keep it moving
 There's no time to think out here
 Just keep it moving.

At the office
 I tell fellow workers of the wreck
 And of the deaths
 Then later, at my desk
 I feel my life is being wasted
 As I sell my hours
 Into this banal high-rise prison.

Maybe I should quit
 And get my assets off the freeway.

by Willie The Rat



FOR WOMEN, THE CHIPS ARE DOWN



MICHAELSON

They're selling women the high tech revolution the same way they've sold us previous industrial revolutions:

1) New technology is gender blind: computers don't discriminate against the sex or race of their user. Likewise, computerized production removes physical strength barriers-to-entry into certain occupations.

2) Women can *get* new jobs in high tech industries if we overcome our mathphobias, cyberphobias, and train ourselves for a high tech occupation.

3) The application of high tech to household appliances will mean a reduction of housework for women.

4) High tech (via teletravail, or "home computer outwork") can enable women to resolve the difficulties of juggling labor market work with household work (our classic double burden): a computer terminal in the home eliminates the need for costly commuting, costly child care, costly clothes for going to work... The pitch ends with a thinly veiled threat:

If women miss the boat this time, it's second-class citizenship for another century, since low-tech jobs are

going to be exported to the lowest wage countries and overall rising unemployment will mean jobs for only the most qualified workers in the market.

It's all wrapped up in that rhetorical question, "why fight progress?" But this is not really a rhetorical question. The desire for *progress* is a basic human desire. Yet we must be critical about what it actually means. Despite the *appearance* of progress, high tech represents, more than anything else the *reconstruction of domination*: new technology bears the sexist/classist imprint of its designers. (Recall the story of Robinson Crusoe — stranded on his island, he "invents" technology and *re-invents* his old system of domination as well (if we remember Friday.)

For women, the high tech revolution means a return to the household, with its traditional, as well as some new, methods of control. We're promised progress — liberation from housework and some sex-role flexibility in the work that remains. What we seem to be getting, however, is new technology that is designed to keep

women doing just as much housework as ever. There will be higher standards for some of the old tasks (planning the family diet, budget) new work in the care and upkeep of the new technology, more self-service work. There will be more “caring” work as safety issues arise — the chemical and electrical hazards in the home are compounded with more devices and with more time spent in the home using the devices by various family members. Since most housework historians agree that “increased family size” has the largest impact on the increase of housework, the increased use of the home by all family members for educational, recreational and work activities (on the home computer, for example) will probably have the same effect on housework as having a larger family. The “electronic cottage” will need a lot more upkeep than the “empty nest.”

Likewise, given the limited scale of production in housework, it is absurd to suggest there will be efficiency gains from microprocessor-equipped domestic appliances (recall the washing machine in *El Norte...*). Instead, housework history repeats itself: we are not *supposed* to use the new technology to do *less work*, but to do “better” work. Consider the Sanyo ad:

“With a Sanyo she can cook meals till the cows come home, never mind the rest of the family... Preparing three or four different meals a night is simply a pleasure with Sanyo. Everyone can eat what they want, when they want, with perfect results every-time.”[1]

Or take the case of Japan’s “latest leap forward”: the talking microwave oven. This blatantly useless innovation *does* carry on the old sexist structures — it gives instructions in a male voice. As a company exec explains, “Matsushita Electric ovens have male voices... because women resent other women telling them what to do.”[2]

Sure.

Or we can consider that ultimate fantasy — the housework robot. Now industry analysts have emphasized that this won’t be a cost-efficient innovation in the foreseeable future, so we can shelve that fond hope, but the prototypes they *have* built are ominous. “One such machine, described by the *Guardian* in 1978, comes ‘complete with a skirt’ and is ‘made small so as not to be intimidating’.” I am suggesting that new technology offers no progress for women in housework *reduction* but it *will* mean a cementing of sexist stereotypes of women and perhaps sharpened class differences in modes of housework.

But let us move on to the “final solution” to the woman question: the “electronic cottage” scenario (paid labor via computer terminal in the household) or teletravail, as the French call it. Here’s the idea: employers will rent computer terminals to women workers to use in their homes, so they can save on commuting costs, childcare costs, clothing



costs — and can juggle in the housework with the childcare and the paid work. Since it's computer work, it can be paid on a piecework basis, with the worker paid only for the hours she's logged on, by accounts processed, etc. The ideologues of the electronic cottage scenario (Toffler, for example) refer to it as sex-neutral, but every country that has experimented with teletravail has done it with female workers primarily or exclusively.[3]

One decent thing about pink collar jobs is that you spend your time around other women. But the electronic cottage scenario aims to plant women back in the isolation of the nuclear family. No wonder it is part of the New Right agenda in America — I refer to Georgia Republican Gingrich's Family Opportunity Act giving tax credits to families buying home computers "which would strengthen neighborhoods and allow mothers with pre-school children to earn a living while staying at home." Ac-

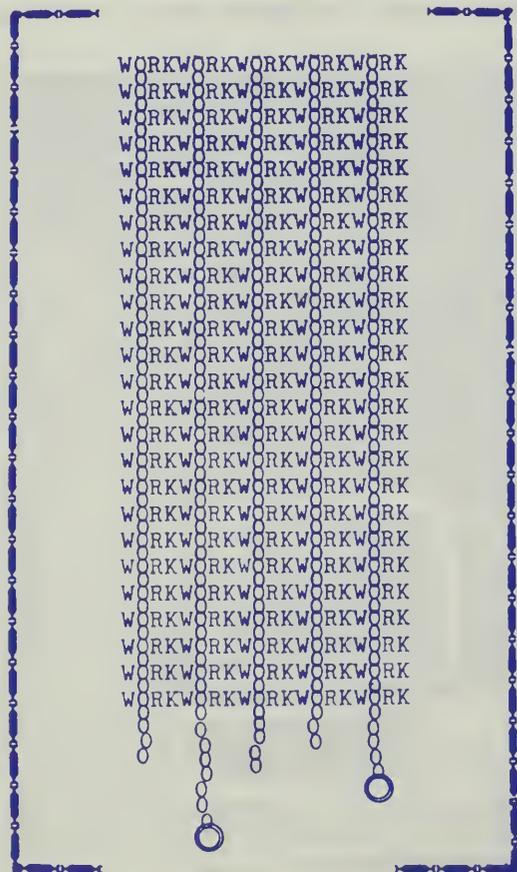
ording to Mattera, the Moral Majority praises home work "as a way for women to earn some money without neglecting their families." [4]

How much money? Mattera cites figures for a Blue Cross "cottage keyers" program, where a women nets \$100 for a fifty hour work week, with no fringe benefits.[5] Here the real meaning of the electronic cottage scenario emerges: By eliminating the need for a shared workplace, businesses can disperse the workforce in order to strengthen control over it. Alone in their homes, ignorant of each others' existence, workers can hardly compare wage rates or build solidarity with each other.

Far from representing "progress," new technology reconstructs sexism and refines class domination in a way completely consistent with its performance for the last century of capitalist control. Women have to take these historical constants into account in order to tear off the figleaf of the myth of progress. For women, technological change has always been sold as a means of opening our entry into fields where we'd been excluded, due to "physical handicaps": the linotype was going to bring us equality just like the word processor is supposed to. Housework technology has always been sold to us as a way of reducing housework: washers and vacuum cleaners were promoted as labor-savers, just like food processors and microwave ovens — but time spent in housework never declined. Now it is a measure of our *desperation* that we are so ready to believe each new proclamation of progress, but we will always be disappointed if we forget *who* has designed our new technology and what *ends* they had in mind.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

The first step is essential and complicated but can be stated simply:

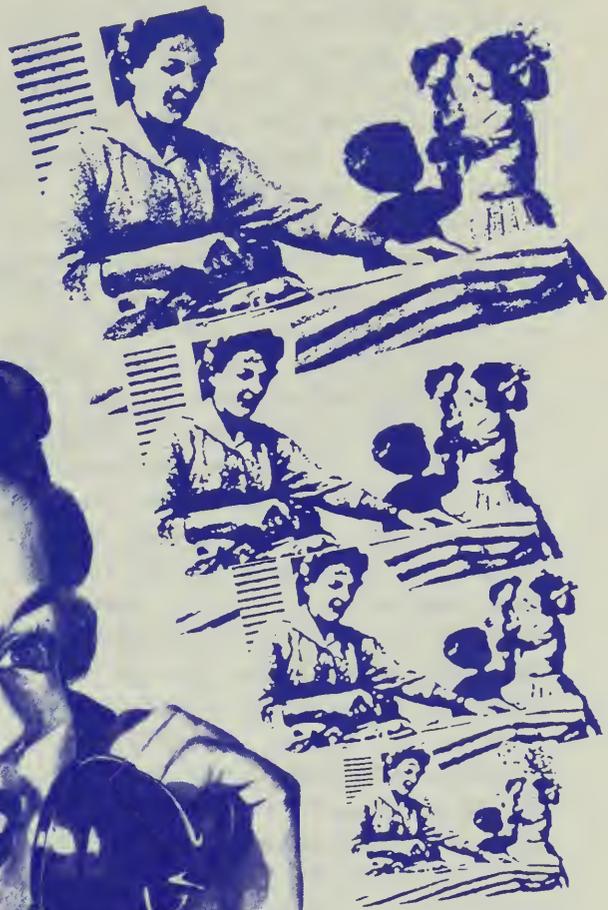


WILLING WORKER

ALERT, efficient household servant to run errands, order supplies, deliver messages to a large and growing list of people.

OTHER DUTIES: Stand guard for an emergency. Be ready to summon doctor, police, fire department. Make it possible for many other people to keep in touch with you.

FAST, completely trustworthy and willing to serve twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. No vacations. No time off. Pay — less than a cent an hour.



**Who Could This
Wonder Worker Be?**

**THE WIFE,
of course!**

through technological change. This is especially important for women: since we need improvements so badly, we are much more easily conned. But after the loss of innocence, it is important to avoid the excesses of cynicism that seem to inform the trade unions and the left liberal economists who advise them. Berkeley's Stephen Cohen lays out the issues:

"It's a nasty little choice. Factory automation will result in a net loss of factory jobs. But if we don't automate, then there will be a massive hemorrhaging. If we lose the ability to be efficient manufacturers, then we've blown our economic future."[8]

And the union response? Here's Murray Seeger, informatin director for the AFL-CIO: *"We're not Luddites. It would nice to have 20 people*

working in a shop instead of five, but to have five people earning a good American union wage is better than having none.”[9] And if there’s only five jobs to hand out, you can imagine how many Mr. Seeger would allocate to his “male breadwinners.”

Or consider Bluestone’s comments on the 90% automated MacIntosh plant in Fremont, California: “The people in Fremont are at least spending money here. The typical Taiwanese worker doesn’t spend a lot in the Fremont McDonald’s.”[10]

While the leftist economists are resurrecting their multiplier theories of spending and union leaders are re-igniting protectionist battles to hold onto plants that’ll be 90% automated anyway, none of them are capable of admitting that there *are no* viable solutions to the high tech problem. Instead of getting even defensive strategies we get what could be called “gallows humor”: the *Times’ Employment Outlook in High Technology* ran articles with titles like, “As Pollution Widens, Need for Specialists to Fight Grows.”

If we find that the unions and the academic types aren’t giving us leadership on this question, we can think about more traditional recourses of the powerless, particularly sabotage. This is not only the classic response of those with no other options, it may also be the effective and appropriate response to the type of technological revolution *we* face. The old Luddites could never *stop* the automatic technologies by smashing the ones they got their hands on — but “hackers,” “raiders,” and data processors *can* challenge this new technology. They *can* limit the accuracy and effectiveness of computer control systems, either in their design or implementation of programs. Through information-trespass and time-theft they *can* attack the profitability of these systems (in ways the Luddites never could...). While this is reported in the media as either

adolescent game-playing or heavy white collar crime, the head of one computer disaster company states frankly: “Direct vandalism is a big problem.”[11]

Sabotaging high tech won’t suffice, however. We will need to address this still unfulfilled desire for progress, which can only happen if we can begin to reconstruct the utopian imagination for ourselves — taking back our futures.

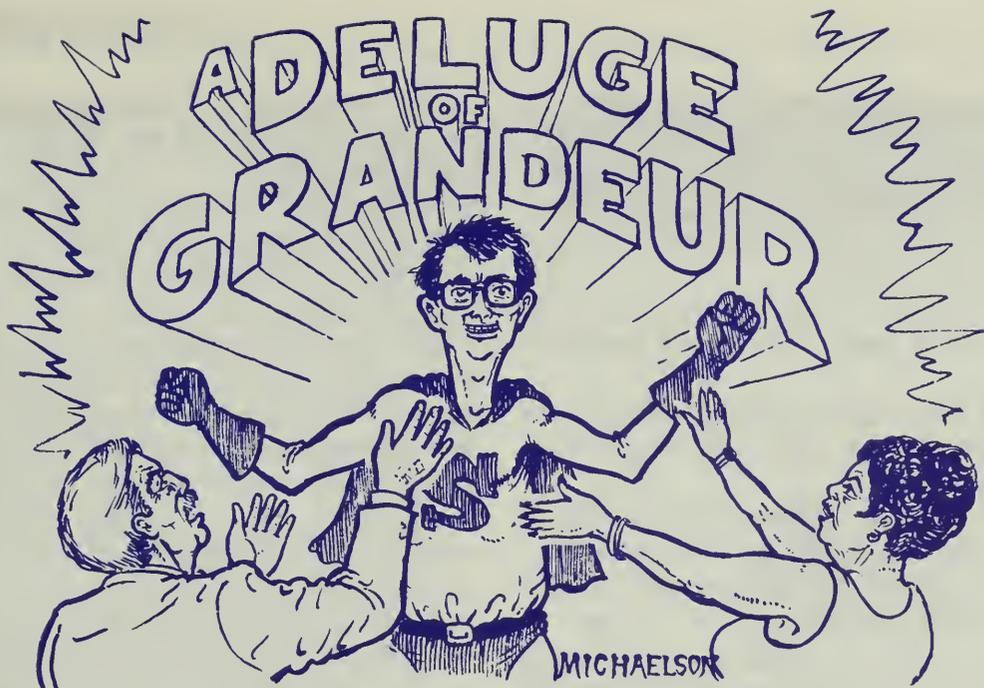
— B. Berch

This is excerpted from a longer article.



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The sun shone in love upon Me as I sprang from the bus, dietary sandwich in hand, lean, muscular shoulders back. My intense blue eyes frying away the early morning mist.

It was My last day under the employment of Crown Plumbing Supply. As I bravely walked the half-block to work, the wind whipping My red silk cape behind Me, I pondered over the deep significance of My Clerkship with Crown Supply. My keen, photographic memory returned to the end of My first day there, three days earlier.

“My God, what have you done!?” Colin Lavage, My supervisor, had cried when he beheld My sublime accomplishment.

What I had accomplished was the total refileing of all Crown Company records into one single series of drawers; billing invoices, cash sales slips, receipts, freight bills, delivery tickets, Dun and Bradstreet credit ratings, shipping registers, miscellaneous scratchings, all in one simple A-Z series of file cabinets. With this *New System* (My name) I had saved space and unified the business of the whole Company in one Cosmic Expression of Universal Love. The only exception to this was the customer complaints, which I had displayed in a large open box, right next to the front

entrance.

“Burchfield!” Colin spluttered. “How are we supposed to find anything if You’ve put it all in one stack of drawers!?”

“That’s *your* problem,” I countered cleverly. “If you cannot see the Great Thing I have accomplished, then I must number you with the blind... oh, by the way, the name is Clerk. Clerk Kent.”

“You won’t get away with this!” Colin bleated, moving towards Me in his puny threatening manner.

“Oh yes!?” I retorted. “Remember Crane Iron Company!”

I had outflanked Colin. He stiffened up like a plank, as two more inches of his receding hairline leaped to its death. He had heard how Crane Iron had burned to the ground after tampering with My filing system.

“Come on, Colin!” I cried triumphantly. “Admit it! You’ve never had it so good!”

That and other great memories flashed through My brilliant perceptive mind that day. Courageously, I burst through the front doors. Unfortunately, one of them snapped off its hinges, but such are the risks in hiring the Strong, the Brave and the True!

I benevolently gazed down upon the rumple-chested switchboard-recept-

ionist and intoned:

“Good morning, Ms. Fleshchest!”

“Good morning,” she replied, just glancing over My handsome features. I knew it was hard for her to look at Me for too long.

“Nice day!” she murmured in awe.

“Thank you!” I returned graciously.

On My way to put My lunch in the refrigerator, I ran into Roger Largesse.

“Ah, Roger!” I said loudly. “Good morning! Going to the bathroom!?”

My sharp probing question caught him off guard.

“Ah yeah... guess so....” Roger was a little man with a moustache that collected mold in wet weather.

“Have a happy toilet!” I cried, patting him indulgently on the head as he scurried away. When you’re as wonderul as I am, you don’t have to go to the bathroom!

My lunch stored away, I strode authoritatively back to the office to seek My replacement. Colin Lavage greeted Me with a curt “Good morning” to cover his awe and adoration of Me. Reverently, he handed Me a stack of computer print-outs to be filed in a place secret to all but Me.

“Tad — I mean Clerk! *Please* tell me where You file these print-outs! I can’t find them!”

“That’s just the point,” I said. “It’s bad enough Me knowing where they are, without letting the whole world in on it!” Colin sighed petulantly. “I’ve noticed Colin,” I continued, “that you are going totally bald. Have you considered wearing a wig?”

Colin whined, whirled and marched indignantly to the men’s room. I pitied him. I knew he had come a long way down from assistant to the assistant manager at Woolworth’s lingerie department. At one time he had been proud of his virility, until he discovered it was the result of a prostate infection.

His secretary, Elvira Mudd, waddled out to hand Me a batch of freight bills.

“You know, Elvira,” I said confidentially, “if you didn’t eat so much the others wouldn’t call you a fat tub of guts behind your back!”

She burst into self-indulgent tears and lumbered to the ladies room. Some people just can’t take the Truth! Whenever I give them a dose, they always hide in the bathroom!

I easily zapped the freight bills into the file and turned to see My replacement coming in the front door. It was eight-oh-five. By eight-thirty she reached my desk, twenty feet further on. By her posture, I could tell she was into bondage. She walked like a three-legged turtle and possessed the face that sank a thousand ships. She was so slow, she collected dust wherever she went.

“Don’t bother telling Me your name,” I said. “I can’t be bothered with remembering it anyway. Mine’s Clerk Kent! Don’t forget that now!”

She started out in her new position by filing My fingernails in one of the drawers. Not one to let such assaults go unnoticed, I subtly reached down the front of her turtleneck sweater, ripped out her bra and decoratively draped it around her neck. I then set her to filing away a few credit notices.

Knowing that would take her a few hours, I visited Lenore Drudge, Crown’s token black typist. Our relationship was particularly intimate. I casually suggested some skin treatments she could look into.

“It would lighten you up!” I said cheerfully, “Because you know dear, you don’t match the office decor!”

“Honky,” she said calmly, “why the hell d’Ya have a big ‘S’ in the middle of Your chest?”

“Because I’m wonderful!” I replied.

“And those leotards... blue and red... are You gay?”

“Lenore,” I said gently, “if I told you anymore, I don’t think you could



“URBAN JUNGLE: The snakes are living the most unbridled technology” — R. Maggi take it!”

She handed Me a shiny, sharp letter opener. “Here honey, just slip that up Your dirt road and wiggle it a bit, huh?”

Though it meant ripping a hole in My tights, her advice was well taken.

The President of Crown Plumbing

joined us. I do a fantastic impersonation of him and I performed it right there for the very first time. He got so mad, his teeth rattled right out on the floor. Wow! Hairlips are sensitive people!

Finally, it was time to go. I, in My Godly fashion, had done all I could to

 RESUME

John Pyros, 139 Maple Avenue, Palm Coats, Florida, USA

Born: to Caucasoid-ethnic slaves; Anastasia Kalograpkos and Andreas Pyros January 19, 1931, Hartford, CT USA

Education:

Chauncey Harris Public School for Gifted Slave Children (CT) 1936-45
 Long Island City (NY) High School for Slave-children, 1945-49.
 Brooklyn College Institute for House Nigger Studies, (NY) 1949-53, Baccalaureate House Nigger (BHN.)
 New York University for Advanced Studies in House Niggerism, (NY) 1957-63, Master of House Niggerisms, (MHN.)
 New York University for Higher Advancement in House Niggerisms, (NY) 1967-73, Doctor of House Niggerisms (Hn.D.)

Work Experience – Field Nigger:

Clean-up Boy, Hillary's Ice Cream Parlor, (Phil. PA) 1976.
 Life Guard, Bayville (NY) Public Beach for Niggers, Summer 1952-53.
 Stock Boy, John Dough Manufacturing Company (NYC), Summer 1950.
 Stock Boy, Speigles, (NYC), Summer 1949.

Work Experience – House Nigger:

Instructor, Pasco-Hernando College for House Niggers, (FL) 1977.
 Associate Professor, Cumberland College (NJ) for Field and House Nigger Trades, 1971-73.
 Assistant Professor, University of Alabama for White Niggers, 1970-71.
 Assistant Professor, Lincoln University (PA) for Black Niggers, 1968-70.
 Assistant Professor, Southern University (OA) for Black Niggers, 1966-67.

Awards:

Southern Fellowship Grant for Deserving House Niggers, 1968.
 The Michael Jones Memorial Foundation for Aspirant Nigger Playwrights, Summer 1963.

Publications:

"The Work Ethic Credo Among Field Niggers," **Bi-Atlantic Monthly**, May 1983.
 "Transitions from Field to House Nigger," **Commentarey**, April 1980.
 "Contrasts and Comparisons of Concentration Camp Life in Urban and Rural Environs," **New York Diemes**, August 11, 1970.
 "House Nigger Careers as Lawyers, Doctors and Teachers," **American Association of Nigger Education**, June 1978.
 "Upward Mobility Within the Concentration Camp," **Washington Posed**, June 2, 1978.
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 "A Study of Selected House Nigger Courses at the Harvard School of Business," **Bulletin of House Nigger Education**, March 1976.
 "Protocol for House Niggers Among Plantation Masters," **House Nigger Beautiful**, January 1976.
 "Careers in Concentration Camps While Awaiting the Gas Chamber," **Happy Solutions**, July 1975.
 "Gold and Tennis: the House Nigger's Foot in the Old Man's Door?" **Sports-Nigger**, May 1975.
 "Subtle Ways to Mime the Master," **Nigger-knees**, July 1973.
 "The Art of Shuck and Jive," **House-nigger Arts-Culture**, November 1973.

save Crown Plumbing Supply and now they were on their own. Sadly, tragically, it was over. By their granite faces, I could tell the others felt the same profound loss. I turned to bid a final adieu to them all... but there was a catch in My throat. My peanut butter and horseradish sandwich had been a bit dry. I just could not do it! And I knew they could not take it! When you have to say good-bye to Me, words are inadequate!

I lifted My head, squared My shoulders and, whistling an upbeat *Burchfield Uber Alles*, departed.

I go from clerk job to clerk job, each

one different yet each one the same. But, in My big heart, there is still a soft spot for Crown Plumbing Supply. Walking along the city streets, kicking senior citizens and other weirdos who step on My cape, I often come upon freight trucks from the very shipping firms who, through Crown Plumbing Supply, I had saved from bankruptcy. When I see them, it is revealed to Me that Crown Plumbing Supply deeply misses Me and have sent the trucks out just to be sure that I am safe!

— Thomas Burchfield

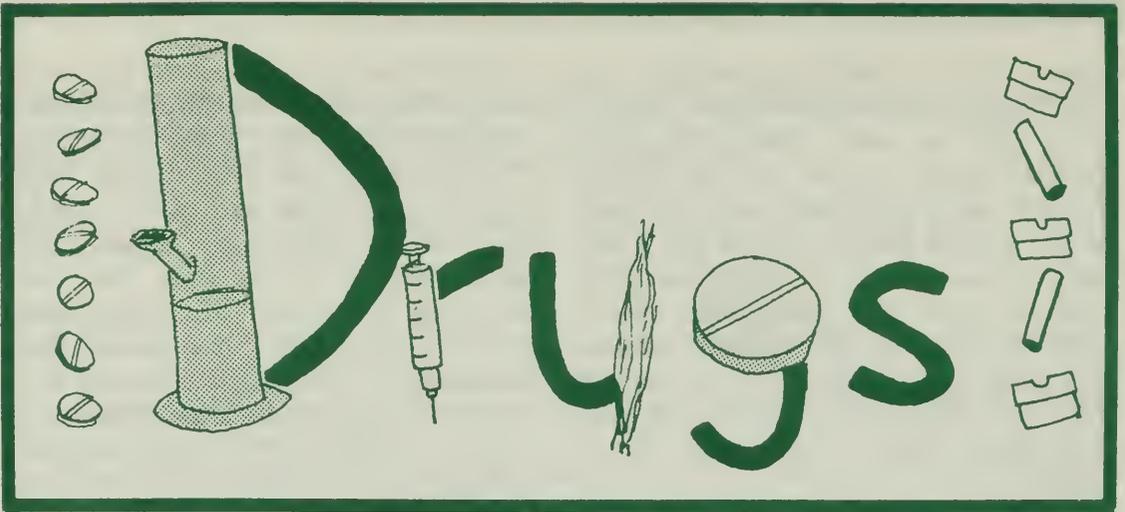
On the 43rd floor...



Look out that window!

OH WOW! It's the president of the company!!





A CORROSIVE SOCIAL CEMENT

"There are more junkies on Wall Street than most people realize," says Jack, a trader at a brokerage house who is on methadone to deal with his heroin habit. [NYT 5-20-84]

Businesses could not be profitable without constant and regular infusions of drugs, both legal and illegal, into their workforces. Drugs are a vital ingredient in the successful management of any workforce, even if management itself only provides access to coffee, candy and cigarettes.

The provision of illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin is a multi-billion dollar global industry which operates in a very flexible, efficient and decentralized fashion, in spite of strong central control at the syndicate level. Taken as a whole, the drug industry is a vital cement holding this society together.

The industries which produce drugs present many contradictions. The vast consumption of legal caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol, and billions of doses of prescription drugs such as valium, librium, etc., fuel major above-ground industries. Simultaneously, the illegal drug trade in marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin provides economic activity for several million people otherwise classified as "unemployed" or "unemployable" — in addition to producing a *nouveau riche* of gangster millionaires.

Drug use is probably more wide-

spread today than ever before. In analyzing recent trends, a doctor who heads the largest private drug rehab program in the NYC area, said that 20 years ago less than 4% of the population had used any illicit drug. "Today, more than 35% of the population has used an illicit drug. It is no longer a phenomenon of the minority poor, the underclass. Over 20 years, there has been a de facto decriminalization of drug use. Our culture has said, you want to get high, then get high." [NYT 5-23-84]

WHY TAKE DRUGS?

It is difficult to generalize about drugs. One person might take a sedative to quiet inner anxiety, another takes 'speed' to write an article or go dancing, while still another takes some mushrooms to explore a relationship with a close friend. Meanwhile, a heavy cocaine user isn't having much fun with it anymore and has become increasingly nervous and paranoid, so he starts snorting heroin to calm down and mellow out. After a while the heroin becomes a habit, and the cocaine is used (unsuccessfully) to avoid "coming down."

The most positive reason to take drugs is to expand one's mental processes to include other types of perceptions than merely those we are

trained to see. At least initially, marijuana, hallucinogens, and the harder drugs can provide stimulating alterations of thought and perception. Especially in a materially and emotionally impoverished world, finding a realm of wonder and amazement inside one's own head is an exciting experience. It's also fun!

Taking pleasure in one's own thought processes, perceptions and feelings can be a genuinely subversive experience. The use of drugs in the face of prohibition is itself a mind-expanding experience vis a vis the state and the law. When you can be busted for a harmless act such as smoking a joint, a new awareness of authority and the law is gained. This in turn can produce a subversive consciousness if acceptance of authority and law is rejected because experi-

ence has delegitimized the system.

Drug use had this effect on me. Of course I used lots of prescription drugs for colds, asthma, etc., as I was growing up. Then I was taught to fear and despise illegal drugs in elementary and junior high school. Late to become interested in experimenting with drugs, I finally started smoking pot when I was almost 17. A high school English teacher encouraged me to read Herman Hesse's classic *Steppenwolf*, and the Carlos Castaneda books. These stimulated my desire to try LSD, mushrooms, and speed. I also read Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* which further encouraged my intellectual curiosity about hallucinogens:

"In the [hallucinogenic] experience . . . place and distance cease to be of much interest. The mind does its per-



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The anti-germicide

GRANCOL CARB
The anti-germicide

HEROIN-HYDROCHL.
The substitute for morphine

HEROIN
The sedative for
coughs

LYCETOL
The uric acid solvent

FERRO-SOMATOSE
The iron supplement

SOMATOSE
The anti-oxidant solvent

PHENACETIN
The substitute for morphine

HEMICRANIN
The substitute for morphine

SULTONAL
The anti-germicide

INDOTRYPTINE
The anti-germicide

SYCOSE
The substitute for morphine

TRIONAL
The substitute for morphine

SALOPHEN
The antirheumatic and
antineuralgic

FARBENFABRIKEN OF
ELBERFELD CO.

40 STONE STREET.
NEW YORK.

Yale Alumni Magazine, January, 1972

Bayer Advertisement

from *The Politics of Heroin in S.E. Asia*

*ceiving in terms of intensity of existence, profundity of significance, relationships within a pattern. . . Not that the category of space had been abolished. When I got up and walked about, I could do so quite normally, without misjudging the whereabouts of objects. Space was still there, but it had lost its predominance. . . And along with an indifference to space there went an even more complete indifference to time: 'There seems to be plenty of it,' was all I could [tell the investigator who asked me my feelings on 'time'].'' — *The Doors of Perception**

Cultures in all times have employed drugs to explore consciousness. Peyote and psilocybin mushrooms have been commonly used in Native American religious rituals. Even alcohol had a largely religious application several centuries ago. Only in modern society have addiction and drug abuse become common phenomena. In each case (coffee, tea, opium, tobacco, chocolate, mushrooms, pot, coca, etc.) a foreign substance was removed from its native context and abused by modern society.

The problems we associate with drugs are not caused by the drugs themselves, but by the attitudes and intentions people bring to their use.

Nearly any kind of drug can be useful and pleasurable if taken in full knowledge of the benefits and the drawbacks, and if the drug is consciously used for specific purposes and not as a mindless habit. For example, I've used hallucinogens to explore my brain, 'speed' to drive long distance and to stay up late at night, pot to relax after work. Most people agree that a little alcohol on a semi-regular basis is not a bad thing. Many drugs can be used recreationally, e.g. I've danced on Percodan (synthetic narcotic pain killer) and had quite a good time.

People have plenty of good non-hedonistic reasons to want to "get high," too. The basic institutions and relationships of our society are based on authoritarian and hierarchical organization and the buying and selling of human time. People use drugs to numb themselves to the hypocrisy and stupidity of these basic facts.

It is the rare neighborhood or workplace where people are genuinely friends and offer each other support and pleasure. Loneliness is tragically common in the modern U.S. Drug use is a (frequently self-destructive) way to "get back" at a world in which life has been belittling and painful. Drugs can seem to eliminate, at least tem-

porarily, people's need for the social support and love which are not there. It is easier to assuage loneliness, anxiety and pain through drugs than it is to change the circumstances which produce those feelings.

In a world where "feeling good" is for many a fleeting experience, drugs produce a variety of pleasurable if short-term euphorias. Unfortunately, too many people have so few "regular" experiences that charge their mental sensibilities, that drugs become their only way to get "high." They lose contact with their own desires and no longer want to do much. Ultimately they replace the daily ups and downs of their lives with the cycle of buying and consuming drugs, getting high and coming down. Drug euphorias (from coke and heroin especially) come to *replace* the pleasures derived from social experiences. In tying users more closely to the drug network and the consumption cycle than to friends, family or

neighbors, drugs reinforce the social atomization that produced so much misery in the first place.

The most important reason people use drugs is that they can see nothing better to do. A 42-year old heroin addict, recently paroled: "*When I got out of prison last October, three days after I got home I started using heroin again. I was bored. There was nothing to do and I couldn't resist it. . . I've been on methadone since December, and that takes care of my heroin problem. But I still need something, so I'm using coke. I'm shooting it. Coke allows me to escape momentarily. . . It's something to do, instead of sitting around, thinking of my miseries. . .*" [NYT 5-20-84]

In an atomized urban society, drug contacts provide a ready-made circle of "friends" with whom to socialize. But their socialization tends to revolve around the buying, selling and consuming of drugs. For those without close friends, or perhaps new in town



Sometimes I feel as passionate as a potato. . . D. Dumand/84

and without any contacts, drug circles provide the form, without the content, of friendship. These superficial friendships are easily betrayed if a better deal is to be made. Still, being with warm bodies in front of the TV, even if they're conversational zombies, is preferable to a lonely night in a one-room with your own small set.

Illegal drug use also continues to enjoy a certain mystique and status, in which one is "cool" for using drugs — the more conspicuously they are consumed, the "cooler" the user. This mystique crosses all kinds of social and racial barriers. Just about any sub-group of the population has its own sub-group of regular illegal drug users. And this generally includes all types of drugs, for nearly any kind is readily available on the streets of North America.

DRUGS AND JOBS

We know how crucial are our little breaks to surviving the eight-hour day. For most of us those little breaks are spent taking in some combination of legal and illegal drugs: Coffee and cigarette to try to wake up from the tedium of the morning's tasks, or perhaps a joint followed by donut and coffee to put a little spark in the feelings and perceptions, or maybe a nice cup of tea and a valium to calm down after a bad morning at the copier, or a couple of lines of coke to get through 4 hours of overtime. . . . Some even sneak out to an isolated spot where they can take a shot of heroin. And let's not forget the most ubiquitous and debilitating drug of all, alcohol — acceptably ingested in massive quantities near every work-site, especially downtown offices, at every lunch hour.

The extent to which drug use represents a "taking back" of one's own time and thoughts and erodes the work ethic is corroborated by some statistics about drug use and job performance taken from a *Newsweek*

cover story on August 22, 1983:

Joseph Lodge, a former Drug Enforcement Agency official, now running a drug consulting firm in Miami, has come up with a computer profile of a "typical recreational drug user in today's workforce": He or she was born between 1948 and 1965, *is late three times more often than fellow employees, requests early dismissal or time off during work 2.2 times more often, has 2.5 times as many absences of eight days or more, uses three times the normal level of sick benefits, is five times more likely to file a workmen's compensation claim.* They are also more likely to have accidents, since attention is not always focused on the boring work at hand. All of these methods of taking back time and money from employers are indicators of the willingness to take back mental space from the work itself, as well.

Not surprisingly, many companies think drugs are the *cause* of lost productivity and lost profits, with estimates ranging from \$16-26 billion annually. Drug abuse counseling services within corporate Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) are becoming common. The point of these programs is only incidentally humanistic — the primary reason is obviously to restore employees to a profitable status for the company.

Employee Assistance Programs fail because they can't even acknowledge one of the prime motivations for *selling* drugs in the first place: low wages. Messengers, mail clerks, VDT operators, and all the low-wage grunts of the Information Army can double and even triple their income, tax-free, by dealing pot and coke to their co-workers. The same holds true for factory workers.

Nor can these programs cope with the *causes* of the stress which drive people to drugs, namely intense work paces, boredom and bosses. The EAP's job is to fit the "maladjusted" workers to the company's norms, not

...THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANYTHING
BETWEEN US BUT CHANCE..
..DEAR NEIGHBOR!



J.F. Batellier

to campaign for lighter workloads or socially useful work. Even *Newsweek*, in its story on "Drugs in the Workplace," concluded that the real roots of drug abuse lie in the fact that "many jobs are. . . like torture, . . . these people bring mind-altering drugs to ease the boredom, the tension and the stress of doing their job."

Once an "abuser" agrees to seek help for a substance problem, the usual "treatment" is a new, legal drug, e.g. methadone, darvon, valium. Individuals are then coached in how to go on living with just the right amount of drug use, and are offered prescriptions for new drugs.

Mark, an investment counselor, and his wife, Louise, an executive for a public-relations company, both heroin addicts, arrive together twice a week for their methadone at the clinic on Wall Street. "I know I might have to use it for a long period, or the rest of my life, but that's just like medi-

cation for a heart disease," Louise said. "That's how I look at it." "Methadone offers me stability," her husband said. "I have so many pressures and worry that I can't kick it. I'm not afraid of the physical pain, but the emotional pain of being without it." [NYT 5-23-84]

Methadone is one of the biggest legal drug rackets in the country. Federally funded, the program administers daily doses of methadone to tens of thousands of heroin addicts in most major cities. Heroin was originally introduced as a cough suppressant, then advertised as a "curative" for morphine addiction around the turn of the century. Now methadone, another sickeningly addictive narcotic, is offered as the legal alternative to heroin. Instead of checking in with your dealer every day, you check in with the government bureaucracy. Methadone allows some addicts to stay drugged and still be socially functional, i.e. to keep work-

ing. But others simply add the methadone dose to their repertoire of possible drug deals, as they continue to use heroin and whatever else they're into.

Unfortunately, the existing methods of "rehabilitation" are dubious at best. They are characterized by two basic kinds of "treatment": a new drug to replace the illegal one, or going cold turkey in a halfway house. The regimen in the halfway program usually involves breaking the addict's individual spirit and reimposing respect for outside authority (we can imagine that there might be another type of halfway program in which people genuinely helped each other out and created a new community of affection and support, without the crutch of authority). Following these prerequisites the reformed junkie is trained to work (or look for work) instead of using drugs. . . unfortunately, most jobs lead one right back to a desire for drugs, and a desire for the big money to be made from selling drugs.

HYPOCRISY AND REPRESSION

The differentiation between one drug's legality and another's illegality is arbitrary. The same government which keeps marijuana illegal by classifying it as a dangerous drug, continually allows violent carcinogens and mutagens to be used on our food and in routine industrial processes. Even then banned chemicals are frequently exported to other countries, and come right back to us in imported foodstuffs.

But the government doesn't keep drugs illegal for our own good. The real reasons for maintaining illegal drugs seem to be to guarantee big profit margins to the successful importers and dealers and to provide a pretext for social control. Since certain drugs have a negative effect on "good working attitudes" the suppression is also partly motivated by a

desire to control the workforce.

The gigantic criminal justice industry needs illegal drugs to exist. Otherwise it would have to cut its budget, and many powerful people with vested interests in the status quo would find themselves cut out of a lucrative arrangement. The DEA and all government anti-drug forces are dependent on the drug industry to be the always-elusive foe — and of course the source of fat kickbacks, friendly real estate deals, and the graft that is part of importing drugs into the U.S. Most likely, the thousands employed in the spook bureaucracies are involved not in stopping drug imports, but in seeing to it that the *right* cocaine, heroin and marijuana get in to the right people.

Recent newspaper reports indicate that record amounts of high-grade cocaine are flooding the nation's streets, and that the *wholesale price of cocaine has dropped by 33% since the anti-drug programs were formed two years ago*. Very efficient importing to meet the enormous demand must be part of the reason for this drop in price. In fact, the US has the **biggest anti-drug bureaucracies in the**

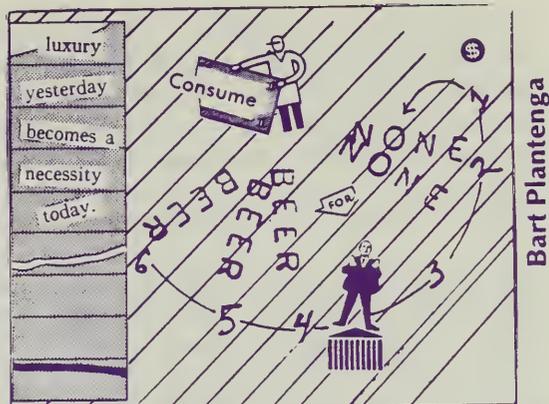


world, and yet continues to be one of the biggest illegal-drug-using countries in the world. It doesn't take a great deal of imagination to see that there is a symbiotic relationship between the importers and the law. Even if we could assume the DEA is an honest organization, it wouldn't be able to live up to its mandate. "To stop all the drugs coming into New York, I'd need a Marine division," says Bruce Jensen, head of DEA in NYC and suburbs.

As a pretext for hassling people, illegal drugs are popular excuses with authorities everywhere. Whether crossing borders or just sitting in "People's Park" in Berkeley smoking a joint, ingesting or carrying any of a number of drugs invites conflict with the law. Most urban dwellers have observed a cop who took a dislike to someone's looks, race, clothes, whatever, searches them, and ends up busting him/her for carrying weed or pills.

More recently, the pursuit of illegal drug use in the workplace has provided a rationalization for totalitarian behavior on the part of employers: undercover investigations of workers, blood, urine and lie detector tests, dog searches, etc. The overall impact of this is to intimidate workers, and to deny even the most basic rights of privacy, reinforcing management's hand against workers' self-organization.

Illegal drug use is an ambiguous social adhesive. It does contribute to an expanded awareness for many, and can play an important role in stimulating the subversive spirit. But this society needs ways for people to be apparently against it, even when they are actually *under control*. Drug use is a regular indulgence in illegal behavior but is entirely consistent with the rest of daily life: consuming various types of food, entertainment, and travel commodities. The mystique of illegal drugs also reinforces the common advertising myth that



one can find happiness and satisfaction through the consumption of merchandise. In spite of legal repression, the drug industry serves an important validating role in today's society.

THE DRUG INDUSTRIES

Drug production is a dominant industry in many countries. A major part of the economies of Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, etc. is fueled by cocaine money. Pakistani, Iranian, Afghani, Mexican, Burmese, and Thai peasants cultivate vast acres of poppy for processing into heroin. There are millions of acres of coca, poppy, and marijuana producing fields and thousands of drug processing factories throughout the world, exporting to lucrative urban markets in vast quantities.

If the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) is right, the value of the 1983-84 pot crop in the U.S. was \$13.9 billion — a figure it characterized as "conservative." That would put it ahead of corn as the #1 U.S. cash crop.

Legal pharmaceuticals constitute a gigantic world-wide industry. In the U.S. alone, tranquilizers comprise 25% of the total \$8 billion annual drug market. Many prescription drugs in the U.S. are sold over the counter in 3rd World countries (e.g. Darvon in Mexico), and produce enormous profits for a few giant drug multinationals: Ciba-Geigy, Hoffman-LaRoche, Eli Lilly, Sandoz, Smith Kline & French, etc.

shit has finally come down on me for being late to work on a daily basis. I was in connie's office adding up the change drawer and she came in and closed the door as she was preparing to go home. immediately my mind started cataloguing all incriminating activities and preparing provisional responses in the two seconds before she laid it on me. and it's always the same, these slimy tactics.

come to work on time. it's beginning to bother kathy.

sure. kathy could give a shit. she's a co-worker. it's like, why don't you just tell me to come on time without trying to blame your neurotic adherence to petty rules on other people. my response to this was to simply say nothing and stare at her. I think it's a good counterploy, because you don't get the shaft for being abusive. At the same time, they don't get what they want from you, which is oh yes, it won't happen again, uh, parking space . . . it's my car . . . haven't been getting enough sleep . . . alarm clock . . . I know how unfair it is and I'm so sorry. instead you just stare back in silence and they're left with this really heavy atmosphere that they've created, and you leave it to them to defuse it.

I arrived this morning my usual 10 minutes late and went immediately to the word processor to plug in the hard core. plugged in the headphones, turned on the machine, loaded the disks, and watched the following message roll over the screen:

GOOD MORNING.

YOU'LL BE SPENDING THE NEXT EIGHT HOURS HERE. YOUR ASSIGNMENT, IN BROAD TERMS, IS TO TYPE ON DEMAND, MAKE COPIES, AND HELP RUN THE OFFICE BY ANSWERING THE PHONE, HANDING OUT KEYS AND MAKING CHANGE. YOU WILL HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE TASKS YOU WILL BE PERFORMING, THOUGH YOU WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE SMALL DECISIONS, SUCH AS THE TYPE STYLE YOU WILL USE FOR PRINTING DOCUMENTS OR CHOICE OF COLORED PAPER FOR THE MIMEOGRAPH.

ALL TASK ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE PREFACED BY THE WORD 'PLEASE.' PEOPLE WILL BE CORDIAL AND WILL CONTINUOUSLY THANK YOU FOR WORK WELL DONE. YOU WILL BE ALLOWED CASUAL FRATERNIZATION WITH THE STAFF AND VISITING POLICE OFFICERS, BUT YOUR FRIENDS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE OFFICE. YOUR INDEPENDENT MOVEMENTS WILL BE LIMITED TO A 42-MINUTE LUNCH BREAK AND BRIEF TRIPS TO THE BATHROOM AND VENDING MACHINES, WHICH YOU MAY TAKE ONLY AFTER NOTIFYING CO-WORKERS.

THIS IS A WHITE COLLAR POSITION, AND AS SUCH YOU WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO PUNCH A TIME CARD, BUT YOU WILL RECORD YOUR HOURS DAILY, AS WELL AS YOUR IN AND OUT TIMES. YOU WILL NOT BE UNDER CONTINUOUS DIRECT SUPERVISION, BUT YOUR PRODUCTION WILL BE MONITORED CAREFULLY BY FREQUENT SPOT-CHECKS. AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU WILL LOCK UP ALL KEY CABINETS, COUNT THE MONEY IN THE CASH REGISTER AND CHANGE DRAWER AND LOCK IT IN THE SAFE BEFORE YOU GO. YOUR COUNT WILL BE DOUBLE-CHECKED IN THE MORNING. YOU WILL BE GIVEN KEYS TO EVERYTHING BUT BE TRUSTED WITH NOTHING.

HAVE A GOOD DAY.

POT

Thousands of people have found marijuana farming an escape from wage-labor, and a way to be self-employed. In fact, marijuana farming is so big in the U.S. that strides in botanical and genetic research into the weed are being compared to the "pioneer corn breeders [who] worked feverishly in the 30's to develop tougher, better-yielding hybrids." [S.F. Chronicle, 4-5-84]

Thomas Byrne, head of DEA's cannabis investigation section is quoted in the paper: ". . . we don't dispute that a large percentage of the population uses marijuana. . . and there is a tremendous amount grown for home consumption." The DEA estimates that only about 10 to 15% of the annual national crop is seized. That leaves upwards of 35 million pot plants being harvested and smoked each year.

With so much marijuana being grown and sold, it can only get into the hands of millions of consumers through an effective and flexible distribution network. Being a local marijuana merchant has become a common way for people to "start their own business" with very little capital up front. Middlemen in dope deals can net \$20,000-40,000+ a year easily, as long as they don't squander their money on drugs! And best of all it's tax free. . . the only tax is the Anxiety Tax, which comes from the possibility of being ripped off or busted.

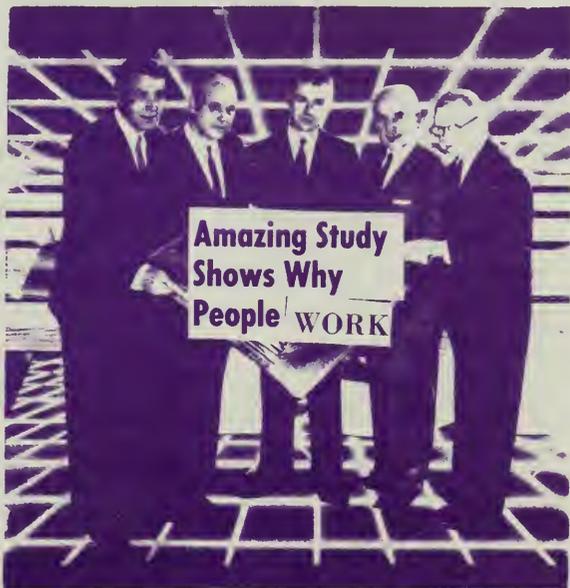
Significantly, neither the marijuana farmer, nor the marijuana dealer is engaged in dangerous behavior (for capitalism). Each is successfully avoiding wage-labor by having a small business. They are following the time-honored American tradition of free enterprise, in some cases even reviving an agrarian lifestyle. The illegality of the industry means they can enjoy a wide open, unregulated and untaxed market, without any formal government intervention, be-

yond token efforts at suppression. It also means that there is no legal protection for the private property known as "the crop." As a result, heavily armed pot farmers often live through anxiety-ridden months of guarding their crop against thieves.

The exception to bourgeois pot farming, which also prevails among some other illegal drugs such as mushrooms, is found in the "grow your own movement." No one knows how many people participate, but this is the only way for people to enjoy the mental explorations from drugs without having to engage in commodity relations.

COKE & HEROIN

With the exception of alcohol, cocaine and heroin addiction produce more visible human casualties than any other drug. I had a close friend who went from being a charming, vibrant fellow (albeit insecure) to first a serious coke user (everyday for over a year). As he became more paranoid and insecure from the heavy coke use, he started snorting heroin recreationally. Within about 6-9 months, if not sooner (he may have hidden it for a while), he had increased his daily habit from \$25 to \$75. Then he converted to injections to increase the ef-



out of kontrol data institute

fectiveness of the dose and decrease his daily habit to about \$50. Throughout this time he became wrapped up in the cycle of getting money, usually through selling coke and heroin to other users, and then squandering it on his own habits. By this time his former vibrancy was reduced to a superficial friendliness, as he withdrew into his room and his world of smack and speedballs. A Catholic child of the well-off Bay Area suburbs, he is a typical New Junkie of the late 70's and early 80's.

Coke and heroin have become readily available in any neighborhood. As many a mechanic or underwriter has discovered, drugs are more lucrative than any salaried or waged activity. *"There is so much money to be made that average middle-class people are going into coke and heroin dealing,"* reports Sterling Johnson Jr., New York's Special Narcotics Prosecutor. *"They know the odds are on their side, that most dealers who take care of friends and neighbors don't get caught."*

The illegal drug industry also provides a unique chance to cross class lines in the current range of economic "opportunities." Poor street kids can grow up to get a piece

of multi-million dollar heroin and cocaine markets. The city of Oakland California has a population of 350,000, of which an estimated 20,000 are heroin addicts. Based on a \$50 a day habit that works out to a \$360 million a year heroin market in Oakland! Six gangs are shooting it out to control it. *"Oakland dealers are now often in their teens, and their leaders are in their early 20s. . . many dealers employ youngsters as young as 12 or 13 to serve as lookouts and yell if they see cops or other enemies. Those jobs are in such demand that some gangs have waiting lists of youngsters eager to go to work. 'When you're 13 and somebody offers you \$50 a day to hang out and watch a street corner, you're not going to get a paper route,' said an Oakland narcotics officer."* [San Jose Mercury News, 5-1-84]

The plain logic of this situation reveals the blatant hypocrisy of capitalist society. The successful entrepreneur, who "finds a need and fills it," is extolled as the role model. But in the midst of the squalor of urban ghettos in every U.S. city are wildly successful practitioners of this credo who are thought of as criminals, "hardcore unemployed," and eco-

THREE ARGUMENTS FOR THE REPEAL OF MONDAY AS A GESTURE OF GOOD FAITH

by Kurt Lipschutz

I MY LIFE AS A CUT-UP

Studying the Jumble
over scrambled eggs,
my brain still a blender drink
from the night before.

II AFTA WERK

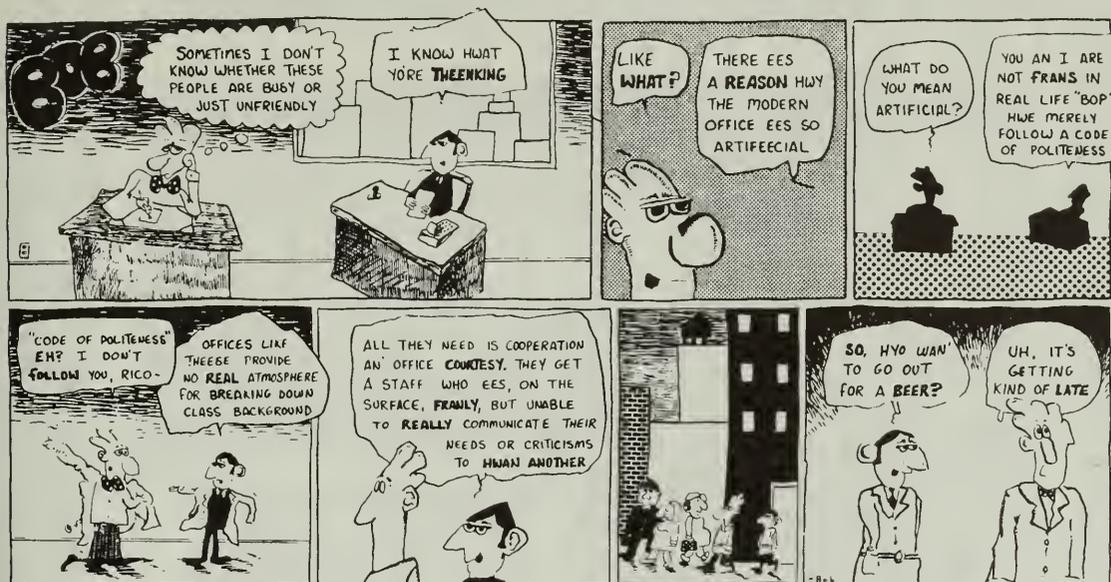
I was debating
whether to run or not.
I lost.
I won.

III soesheeh-ehkunommick stratification rag

ya gotta be where ya gotta be—
anyway that's what they want us
to believe:

that we
fit inside our lives
like a record does a sleeve,
that it's
dangerous Out There, so it's
better not to leave,
that someone
somewhere's got it worse—
be glad it's not you in a hearse—
so cut out your bellyaching:

you wouldn't be here if you weren't meant to be



nomically inactive.

CONCLUSION

The "drug scene" is a violent, alienated and manipulative arena of life. But the scene is largely defined by its repression. Were illegal drugs decriminalized, and had we access to complete drug information, we could make intelligent decisions about what drugs to use and in what circumstances they might be useful or pleasurable. The free, moderate use of drugs in a supportive human environment could be a widely shared pleasure.

However, drugs are a commodity, uniquely capable of altering moods, thoughts, perceptions, but nevertheless a commodity. This means that the production and distribution of drugs is an alienated and money-coerced activity. The industry is producing both small businesspeople and millionaires. It is part of the cash economy, providing a buy-and-sell lifestyle for economically "marginalized" people. Paying for drugs is also a continuing reason for people to work at useless and painful jobs. At the same time drugs are the means for making such work physically and emotionally tolerable. Although drugs are useful tools in self-exploration and psychic experimentation, the drug

culture co-opts these pursuits into money-making activities.

Illegal drugs are a remarkably effective institution for turning poor communities against themselves and producing an atmosphere of isolation and terror. So long as drugs are kept illegal, people are impelled to prey on each other to be able to pay the high prices.

Illegal drug use also provides people with the illusion of being "outside the system" even when they are reinforcing it through self-induced passivity, escapism, and consumerism. Ultimately the lawbreaking through drug use reduces rebellion against the law's authority to the consumption of commodities.

As for the real problem of widespread addiction, the only hope for most addicts is a genuine social upheaval, and even that may not be enough to break through the passivity and despair of many junkies. Anything short of a strong reassertion of human community and a newfound delight in social activity will fail to turn the junkie back on to the pleasures of social intercourse. The cure for addiction will not be a technical fix, a new drug, or the right program. It will come when life is too exciting to simply get high.

— Lucius Cabins

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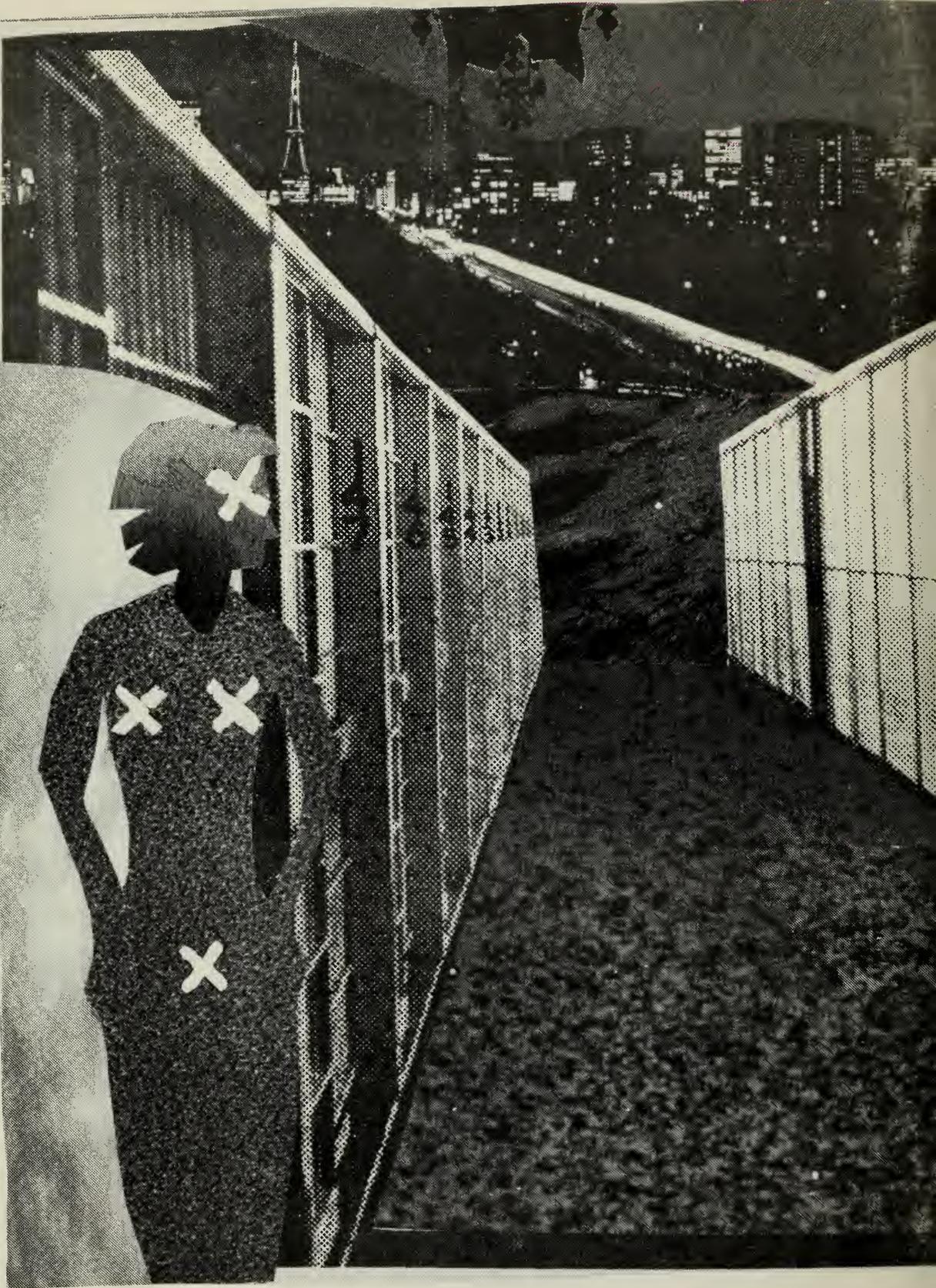
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