

Garden Issue #1

Freedom From Technological Slavery

Various Authors

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**G A R D E N
ISSUE 1**

**ANTI-TECH
KACZYNSKISM
NEO-LUDDISM
DEEP ECOLOGY**

Mission Statement

Our mission is to organize coherent political action against the global techno-industrialist system. With this publication, we aim to disseminate ideas relevant to this cause in order to inspire others like us to stand in opposition to a force which we have judged to be ethically, philosophically, and practically irredeemable.

It is our view that the techno-industrialist machine is a violent, destructive, and irreparable system of subjugation, and because of this we do not support any social or political efforts to rehabilitate it. It is on these grounds that we repudiate reformist and environmentalist sentiments, which we believe serve only as distractions that do nothing to counter the true goal of techno-industrialism; that is, the total enslavement and annihilation of Wild Nature.

More pressing still, it is our belief that the techno-industrial system presents an absolute and urgent existential threat to all life on earth. Thus, we are not a partisan movement, nor do we have any interest in furthering the ideologies of any movement on the left-right political spectrum. We reject the call to engage with issues such as social justice, feminism, anti-racism. If you believe these issues are the most pressing issues facing society today, stay away.

We vehemently oppose racism, nationalism, ethno-nationalism, any form of fascism or defense of the rule of law. It is our opinion that the pursuit of any one of these values will be meaningless on a dead planet. If you identify with any of these viewpoints, stay away.

Finally, we do not advocate that anyone consider this publication an exhortation for violent or illegal action of any kind. We denounce violence as a matter of pragmatism, not a matter of principle. It would be anathema to a nascent anti-tech organization to openly incite violence, which would prompt law enforcement to hinder our ability to spread our message. We hope only to exercise our right to freedom of speech in order to present our personal views authentically and honestly.

Always for Wild Nature, Garden

**The big problem is that people
don't believe a revolution is possible,
and it is not possible precisely because
they do not believe it is possible.**

1. The Road To Revolution

By Theodore John Kaczynski

“Above all, a revolutionairy movement must have courage.”

-TED

The revolution is not a dinner party...¹

-Mao Zedong

A great revolution is brewing. What this means is that the necessary preconditions for revolution are being created. Whether the revolution will become a reality will depend on the courage, determination, persistence, and effectiveness of revolutionaries.

The necessary preconditions for revolution² are these: There must be a strong development of values that are inconsistent with the values of the dominant classes in society, and the realization of the new values must be impossible without a collapse of the existing structure of society.

When these conditions are present, there arises an irreconcilable conflict between the new values and the values that are necessary for the maintenance of the existing structure. The tension between the two systems of values grows and can be resolved only through the eventual defeat of one of the two. If the new system of values is vigorous enough, it will prove victorious and the existing structure of society will be destroyed.

This is the way in which the two greatest revolutions of modern times—the French and Russian Revolutions—came about. Just such a conflict of values is building up in our society today. If the conflict becomes sufficiently intense, it will lead to the greatest revolution that the world has ever seen.

The central structure of modern society, the key element on which everything else depends, is technology. Technology is the principal factor determining the way in which modern people live and is the decisive force in modern history. This is the expressed

¹ “Report on an investigation of the peasant movement in Hunan,” in selected readings from the works of Mao Tsetung [=ze-dong], Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1971, page 30.

² As used in this article, the term “Revolution” means a radical and rapid collapse of the existing structure of a society, intentionally brought about from within the society rather than by some external factor, and contrary to the will of the dominant classes of the society. An armed rebellion, even one that over-throws a government, is not a revolution in this sense of the word unless it sweeps away the existing structure of the society in which the rebellion occurs.

opinion of various learned thinkers,³ and I doubt that many serious historians could be found who would venture to disagree with it. However, you don't have to rely on learned opinions to realize that technology is the decisive factor in the modern world. Just look around you and you can see it yourself. Despite the vast differences that formerly existed between the cultures of the various industrialized countries, all of these countries are now converging rapidly toward a common culture and a common way of life, and they are doing so because of their common technology.

Because technology is the central structure of modern society—the structure on which everything else depends—the strong development of values totally inconsistent with the needs of the technological system would fulfill the preconditions for revolution. This kind of development is taking place right now.

A revolution in the modern world...will be deadly and brutal.

Fifty years ago, when I was a kid, warm approval or even enthusiasm for technology were almost universal. By 1962 I had become hostile toward technology myself, but I wouldn't have dared to express that opinion openly, for in those days nearly everyone assumed that only a kook, or maybe a Bible-thumper from the backwoods of Mississippi, could oppose technology. I now know that even at that time there were a few thinkers who wrote critically about technology. But they were so rare and so little heard from that until I was almost 30 years old I never knew that anyone but myself opposed technological progress.

Since then there has been a profound change in attitudes toward technology. Of course, most people in our society don't have an attitude toward technology, because they never bother to think about technology as such. If the advertising industry teaches them to buy some new techno-gizmo, then they will buy it and play with it, but they won't think about it. The change in attitudes toward technology has occurred among the minority of people who think seriously about the society in which they live.

As far as I know, almost the only thinking people who remain enthusiastic about technology are those who stand to profit from it in some way, such as scientists, engineers, corporate executives and military men. A much larger number of people are cynical about modern society and have lost faith in its institutions. They no longer respect a political system in which the most despicable candidates can be successfully sold to the public through sophisticated propaganda techniques. They are contemptuous of an electronic entertainment industry that feeds us garbage. They know that schoolchildren are being drugged (with Ritalin, etc.) to keep them docile in the class-

³ Karl Marx maintained that the means of production constituted the decisive factor in determining the character of a society, but Marx lived in a time when the principal problem to which technology was applied was that of production. Because technology has so brilliantly solved the problem of production, production is no longer the decisive factor. More critical today are other problems to which technology is applied, such as processing of information and the regulation of human behavior (e.g., through propaganda). Thus Marx's conception of the force determining the character of a society must be broadened to include all of technology and not just the technology of production. If Marx were alive today he would undoubtedly agree.

room, they know that species are becoming extinct at an abnormal rate, that environmental catastrophe is a very real possibility, and that technology is driving us all into the unknown at reckless speed, with consequences that may be utterly disastrous. But, because they have no hope that the technological juggernaut can be stopped, they have grown apathetic. They simply accept technological progress and its consequences as unavoidable evils, and they try not to think about the future.

But at the same time there are growing numbers of people, especially young people, who are willing to face squarely the appalling character of what the technoindustrial system is doing to the world. They are prepared to reject the values of the technoindustrial system and replace them with opposing values. They are willing to dispense with the physical security and comfort, the Disney-like toys, and the easy solutions to all problems that technology provides. They don't need the kind of status that comes from owning more and better material goods than one's neighbor does. In place of these spiritually empty values they are ready to embrace a lifestyle of moderation that rejects the obscene level of consumption that characterizes the technoindustrial way of life; they are capable of opting for courage and independence in place of modern man's cowardly servitude; and above all they are prepared to discard the technological ideal of human control over nature and replace it with reverence for the totality of all life on Earth—free and wild as it was created through hundreds of millions of years of evolution.

How can we use this change of attitude to lay the foundation for a revolution?

One of our tasks, obviously, is to help promote the growth of the new values and spread revolutionary ideas that will encourage active opposition to the technoindustrial system. But spreading ideas, by itself, is not very effective. Consider the response of a person who is exposed to revolutionary ideas. Let's assume that she or he is a thoughtful person who is sickened on hearing or reading of the horrors that technology has in store for the world, but feels stimulated and hopeful on learning that better, richer, more fulfilling ways of life are possible. What happens next?

Maybe nothing. In order to maintain an interest in revolutionary ideas, people have to have hope that those ideas will actually be put into effect, and they need to have an opportunity to participate personally in carrying out the ideas. If a person who has been exposed to revolutionary ideas is not offered anything practical that she can do against the techosystem, and if nothing significant is going on to keep her hope alive, she will probably lose interest. Additional exposures to the revolutionary message will have less and less effect on her the more times they are repeated, until eventually she becomes completely apathetic and refuses to think any further about the technology problem.

In order to hold people's interest, revolutionaries have to show them that things are happening—significant things—and they have to give people an opportunity to participate actively in working toward revolution. For this reason an effective revolutionary movement is necessary, a movement that is capable of making things happen, and that interested people can join or cooperate with so as to take an active part in preparing

the way for revolution. Unless such a movement grows hand-in-hand with the spread of ideas, the ideas will prove relatively useless.

For the present, therefore, the most important task of revolutionaries is to build an effective movement.

The effectiveness of a revolutionary movement is not measured only by the number of people who belong to it. Far more important than the numerical strength of a movement are its cohesiveness, its determination, its commitment to a well-defined goal, its courage, and its stubborn persistence. Possessing these qualities, a surprisingly small number of people can outweigh the vacillating and uncommitted majority. For example, the Bolsheviks were never a numerically large party, yet it was they who determined the course that the Russian Revolution took. (I hasten to add that I am NOT an admirer of the Bolsheviks. To them, human beings were of value only as gears in the technological system. But that doesn't mean we can't learn lessons from the history of Bolshevism.)

An effective revolutionary movement will not worry too much about public opinion. Of course, a revolutionary movement should not offend public opinion when it has no good reason to do so. But the movement should never sacrifice its integrity by compromising its basic principles in the face of public hostility. Catering to public opinion may bring short-term advantage, but in the long run the movement will have its best chance of success if it sticks to its principles through thick and thin, no matter how unpopular those principles may become, and if it is willing to go head-to-head against the system on the fundamental issues even when the odds are all against the movement. A movement that backs off or compromises when the going gets tough is likely to lose its cohesiveness or turn into a wishy-washy reform movement. Maintaining the cohesion and integrity of the movement, and proving its courage, are far more important than keeping the goodwill of the general public. The public is fickle, and its goodwill can turn to hostility and back again overnight.

A revolutionary movement needs patience and persistence. It may have to wait several decades before the occasion for revolution arrives, and during those decades it has to occupy itself with preparing the way for revolution. This was what the revolutionary movement in Russia did. Patience and persistence often payoff in the long run, even contrary to all expectation. History provides many examples of seemingly lost causes that won out in the end because of the stubborn persistence of their adherents, their refusal to accept defeat.

On the other hand, the occasion for revolution may arrive unexpectedly, and a revolutionary movement has to be well prepared in advance to take advantage of the occasion when it does arrive. It is said that the Bolsheviks never expected to see a revolution in their own lifetimes, yet, because their movement was well constituted for decisive action at any time, they were able to make effective use of the unforeseen breakdown of the Tsarist regime and the ensuing chaos.

Above all, a revolutionary movement must have courage. A revolution in the modern world will be no dinner party. It will be deadly and brutal. You can be sure that when

the technoindustrial system begins to break down, the result will not be the sudden conversion of the entire human race into flower children. Instead, various groups will compete for power. If the opponents of technology prove toughest, they will be able to assure that the breakdown of the technosystem becomes complete and final. If other groups prove tougher, they may be able to salvage the technosystem and get it running again. Thus, an effective revolutionary movement must consist of people who are willing to pay the price that a real revolution demands: They must be ready to face disaster, suffering, and death.

There already is a revolutionary movement of sorts, but it is of low effectiveness.

First, the existing movement is of low effectiveness because it is not focused on a clear, definite goal. Instead, it has a hodgepodge of vaguely-defined goals such as an end to “domination,” protection of the environment, and “justice” (whatever that means) for women, gays, and animals.

Most of these goals are not even revolutionary ones. As was pointed out at the beginning of this article, a precondition for revolution is the development of values that can be realized only through the destruction of the existing structure of society. But, to take an example, feminist goals such as equal status for women and an end to rape and domestic abuse are perfectly compatible with the existing structure of society. In fact, realization of these goals would even make the technoindustrial system function more efficiently. The same applies to most other “activist” goals. Consequently, these goals are reformist.

Among so many other goals, the one truly revolutionary goal—namely, the destruction of the technoindustrial system itself—tends to get lost in the shuffle. For revolution to become a reality, it is necessary that there should emerge a movement that has a distinct identity of its own, and is dedicated solely to eliminating the technosystem. It must not be distracted by reformist goals such as justice for this or that group.

Second, the existing movement is of low effectiveness because too many of the people in the movement are there for the wrong reasons. For some of them, revolution is just a vague and indefinite hope rather than a real and practical goal. Some are concerned more with their own special grievances than with the overall problem of technological civilization. For others, revolution is only a kind of game that they play as an outlet for rebellious impulses. For still others, participation in the movement is an ego-trip. They compete for status, or they write “analyses” and “critiques” that serve more to feed their own vanity than to advance the revolutionary cause.

To create an effective revolutionary movement it will be necessary to gather together people for whom revolution is not an abstract theory, a vague fantasy, a mere hope for the indefinite future, or a game played as an outlet for rebellious impulses, but a real, definite, and practical goal to be worked for in a practical way.

2. Against Mass Society

BY CHRIS WILSON

Many people desire an existence free of coercive authority, where all are at liberty to shape their own lives as they choose for the sake of their own personal needs, values, and desires. For such freedom to be possible, no individual person can extend his or her sphere of control upon the lives of others without their choosing. Many who challenge oppression in the modern world strive toward their conception of a “free society” by attempting to merely reform the most powerful and coercive institutions of today, or to replace them with “directly democratic” governments, community-controlled municipalities, worker-owned industrial federations, etc. Those who prioritize the values of personal autonomy or wild existence have reason to oppose and reject all large-scale organizations and societies on the grounds that they necessitate imperialism, slavery and hierarchy, regardless of the purposes they may be designed for.

People rarely enter mass organizations without being coerced...

Humans are naturally sociable, but are selective about who they wish to associate with. For companionship and mutual support, people naturally develop relationships with those they share an affinity with. However, only in recent times have people organized themselves in large-scale groupings composed of strangers who share little of relevance in common with each other. For over 99% of human history, humans lived within small and egalitarian extended family arrangements, while drawing their subsistence directly from the land. The foraging bands and shifting horticultural communities of past and present are known to have enjoyed extensive leisure time, and have rarely required more than 2–4 hours daily on average to satisfy subsistence needs. Famine and war are extremely rare in these societies.

Additionally, physical health, dental quality and the average lifespan of small-scale communities are markedly higher than that of agricultural and early industrial societies. If leaders exist, they are usually temporary, and hold no power beyond their ability to persuade. While hunting/gathering and slash-and-burn gardening do indeed alter local environments and are sometimes wasteful, they have proven themselves to be ecologically stable adaptations.

Foraging served humanity for 3 million years, while horticulture has been relied upon by many societies in the Amazon basin for approximately 9,000 years. The small-scale cultures that remain today generally prefer their traditional way of life, and many are currently waging impressive political resistance against corporations and governments who wish to forcibly assimilate them so that their land and labor may be exploited.

People rarely enter mass organizations without being coerced, as they lead to a decline of freedom and health.

The rise of civilization was made possible through compulsory mass production. When certain societies began to prioritize agricultural productivity as their highest value, they began to forcibly subject all life within reach of their cities to that purpose. Communities of people who wished to forage or garden on the land for subsistence would be mercilessly slaughtered or enslaved, and the ecosystems they inhabited would be converted to farmland to feed the cities. Those engaged in the full-time facilitation of crop and animal production would reside in the nearby countryside, while public officials, merchants, engineers, military personnel, servants, and prisoners would inhabit the cities. The task of creating a surplus to feed a growing specialist class caused the duties of the food producers to intensify, while simultaneously creating the need for more land, both for agriculture and for the extraction of materials for construction and fuel. Humans were forced into servitude for the benefit of their culture's institutions of production as a prerequisite for continued survival, and non-human life was either harnessed or eliminated for the sake of completing human projects. To occupy land, one would be mandated to continuously pay tribute in the form of a tax or tithe (or and more recently, in the form of rent or mortgage), hence requiring one to devote most of one's time and energy to a politically accepted mode of employment. Upon being required to satisfy the demands of landholders or employers in exchange for personal space and commodities, it becomes impossible for people to make their living through subsistence hunting or gardening. Although small-scale self-sufficient communities would resist or flee the intrusion of military and commercial forces, those that failed would be assimilated. Subsequently, they would quickly forget their cultural practices, causing them to become dependent upon their oppressors for survival.

Capitalism is civilization's current dominant manifestation. The capitalist economy is controlled mainly by state-chartered corporations; these organizations are owned by stockholders who are free to make business decisions without being held personally accountable for the consequences. Legally, corporations enjoy the status of individuals, and thus an injured party can only target the assets of the company in a court case, not the possessions or property of the individual shareholders.

Civilization, not capitalism... was the genesis of systemic authoritarianism.

Those employed by corporations are legally required to pursue profit above all other possible concerns (e.g., ecological sustainability, worker safety, community health, etc.), and can be fired, sued, or prosecuted if they do otherwise. As a technologically advanced form of civilization, capitalism encroaches upon and utilizes even greater territory, causing further reduction of the space available for life to freely flourish for its own purposes.

Like civilization, capitalism conscripts both human and non-human life into servitude if regarded as useful, and disposes of it if regarded as otherwise.

Under capitalism, most people spend the majority of each conscious day (typically 8–12 hours) engaged in meaningless, monotonous, regimented, and often physically

and mentally injurious labor to obtain basic necessities. Privileged individuals also tend to work intensively and extensively, but typically to respond to social pressure or to satisfy an addiction to commodified goods and services. Because of the dullness, alienation, and disempowerment that characterizes the average daily experience, our culture exhibits high rates of depression, mental illness, suicide, drug addiction, and dysfunctional and abusive relationships, along with numerous vicarious modes of existence (e.g., through television, movies, pornography, video games, etc).

There are no historical examples of production economies that do not expand.

Civilization, not capitalism per se, was the genesis of systemic authoritarianism, compulsory servitude and social isolation. Hence, an attack upon capitalism that fails to target civilization can never abolish the institutionalized coercion that fuels society.

To attempt to collectivize industry for the purpose of democratizing it is to fail to recognize that all large-scale organizations adopt a direction and form that is independent of its members' intentions. If an association is too large for a face-to-face relationship between members to be possible, it becomes necessary to delegate decision-making responsibilities to representatives and specialists in order to achieve the organization's goals. Even if delegates are elected by consensus or by majority vote, the group's members cannot supervise every action of the delegates unless the organization is small enough for everybody to monitor each other on a regular basis. Delegated leaders or specialists cannot be held accountable to mandates, nor can they be recalled for irresponsible or coercive behavior, unless held subject to frequent supervision by a broad cross-section of the group.

Such is impossible in an economy based upon a highly stratified division of labor where no given individual can focus upon or even view the actions of the rest. Additionally, elected delegates are allotted more time and resources to prepare and present a case for their objectives, and are thus more likely to gain further power through deception (impossible when specialized knowledge is required), and delegates are only assigned the duties of enforcing them, they will still act independently when they disagree with the rules and are confident that they can escape punishment for ignoring them. Democracy is necessarily representative, not direct, when practiced on a large scale — it is incapable of creating organization without hierarchy and control.

Because mass organizations must increase production to maintain their existence and to expand, they tend to imperialistically extend their scope of influence. Because cities and industries rely upon outside inputs, they aim to seize the surrounding areas for agricultural and industrial use, rendering it inhospitable to both non-human ecosystems and self-sufficient human communities. This area will expand in relation to any increase in population or specialization of labor that the city experiences. One could argue that industrial production could be maintained and yet scaled down, leaving ecosystems and non-industrial peoples some room to co-exist.

Firstly, this proposal invites the question of why civilization should determine its own boundaries, instead of the victims of its predation. Secondly, there are no historical

examples of production economies that do not expand, mainly because they must expand after depleting the resources available to them at any given time.

The structural complexity and hierarchy of civilization must be refused, along with the political and ecological imperialism that it propagates across the globe. Hierarchical institutions, territorial expansion, and the mechanization of life are all required for the administration and process of mass production to occur. Only small communities of self-sufficient individuals can coexist with other beings, human or not, without imposing their authority upon them.

“the structural complexity of civilization must be refused”

3. An Interview with David Skrbina

David Skrbina is a professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (UM-Dear-born). He has written extensively on technology's role in modern life.

David Skrbina has excused the actions of domestic terrorist Ted Kaczynski — known as the Unabomber because— “deplorable though they may have been,” Kaczynski's bombings “led directly to the release of his infamous Manifesto, and to forcing the problem of technology into the public eye.”

Skrbina received his Ph.D. from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom in 2001. He graduated from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1993 with a master's degree in Mathematics.

An Interview with David Skrbina

Q1: How did you come to the anti-tech movement?

A1: 1. First, I should say that I'm not so sure there is an “anti-tech movement” per se. There are tech critics of various stripes, and tech skeptics, and anarchists, but it would be a stretch to call such people a movement. This suggests some kind of coordination or organization, which I am quite sure does not exist. Certainly there should be an anti-tech movement, but I think we are still quite some way from that.

But as to how I came to be a technology critic: I suppose it started years ago, when I studied computers and programming in college as an undergrad. On the one hand, I was fairly good at it and found it interesting, but on the other, I had a feeling that it was a kind of waste of time, and that there were better things to do in life. About the same time, I happened to encounter a prominent anti-tech philosopher, Henryk Skolimowski, who was teaching at my school (the University of Michigan). Henryk was one of the first major philosophers to question the role and meaning of modern technology, which he did from the early 1970s. I had never come across such ideas, and was definitely intrigued. They just made intuitive sense to me.

Henryk's work got me reading other tech-skeptics like Jacques Ellul (“The Technological Society”), Lewis Mumford (“The Megamachine”) and Ivan Illich (“Energy and Equity”). They all made compelling points: tech was a vast and dynamic system that was detrimental to humans and nature, and was rapidly growing beyond our control. The solution to this problem would not be easy. Thus, by the mid-1980s, I had a relatively good grounding in tech-critical literature.

So I was fully onboard the anti-tech train well before anyone had heard of a Unabomber, who did not make the news explicitly until the early 1990s.

Q2: What is your assessment of the anti-tech movement in the present day? Could you touch on both the immediate and long term goals the movement should have?

A2: As I said above, there really is no anti-tech movement in existence today. Rather, there are scattered groups and individuals that are promoting various strains of anti-tech thinking. Some of my former students are organizing themselves; one such group, the Anti-Tech Collective (www.antitechcollective.com) has been quite active in promoting serious tech-critical ideas, and another former student has established an interesting Twitter site, Machine Lies (twitter.com/liessmachine). But these are small groups, just starting to build followers.

The mainstream press is filled with what I like to call “fake critics”: people who claim to be tech-skeptics, but take such a mild stance as to be utterly ineffective, or who do not really even understand technology at all. A good example is Sherry Turkle, a social psychologist at MIT. Her books betray a truly superficial understanding of technology and its dangers; she functions as little more than ‘controlled opposition’—a “safe” critic who doesn’t overstep her bounds. Jaron Lanier is much the same; a nominal critic but with a highly limited understanding of the phenomenon who never really challenges the system. Such people offer neither useful analysis nor a sufficient path forward.

As to goals, any tech-critical movement, group, or person should (a) be well-informed on the long history of tech skepticism. My anthology *Confronting Technology* would be a good place to start. Then (b) be well-grounded in the classic anti-tech readings: Ellul’s *Technological Society*, Illich’s *Energy and Equity*, Kaczynski’s *Technological Slavery*, and perhaps my own work from 2015, *The Metaphysics of Technology*. And then (c) be prepared to seriously entertain the most “radical” solutions, which would include a dramatic roll-back of industrial technology (as I have argued) or even some sort of outright “revolution” against tech—as has been suggested by Ellul, Mumford, Illich, and Kaczynski.

In other words, the short-term goals should include getting educated, getting knowledgeable, and knowing what you are talking about. Medium-term, start to speak out, to educate others, and to organize. Long-term, we have to grapple with the very real possibility that modern industrial society will not survive until the end of this century, and to be prepared for what comes next.

Q3. When Ted was doing his work in Montana, the world obviously looked very different than it does today, both in terms of technology and the public attitude towards it. How do these changes affect the anti-tech movement? What are the biggest obstacles to the anti-tech movement today? How could an organization work to overcome those obstacles? Conversely, what today could benefit the anti-tech movement that may not have been a factor in the past?

A3: I don’t know exactly when Ted wrote his manifesto, but it likely was over several years, probably beginning in the mid-1980s, and presumably complete by the early 1990s. At that time, tech was much less obtrusive; there were simple home comput-

ers, office computers, but not much more—no email, no cell phones, only specialized Internet usage, certainly no social media. “Screen time” was limited to television and the occasional motion picture. Children and youth had almost no interaction with computers apart from a few computerized video and arcade games.

Despite all this, Ted’s analysis—which drew in many ways from Ellul—was sufficiently general to capture the central problems of technology and to make valid predictions about the future. He could see its growing power, growing pervasiveness, and increasing tendency to dehumanize humanity and to make life trivial and pointless. The advances in tech since, say, 1995, when the manifesto was first published, have been dramatic. A whole variety of physical, psychological, and moral harms can be directly linked to extensive technology use, especially among children and youth. And for those (like me) worried about the environment, nothing is more destructive to nature than a high-energy, high-throughput system of industrial technology. Climate change, species loss, and all the rest are directly correlated with advanced technology.

On the “positive” side, the Internet and other communications options allow people to disseminate information quickly and to organize across large distances. But these advantages don’t begin to offset the losses incurred. Every advance in technology is a net loss for humanity; we gain in certain small ways, but the power of the system gains by a factor of 10 or 100. We go one step forward but the system goes 100 steps forward, and thus we fall ever further behind. As long as anything like the present system exists, every day is another net loss for humanity and nature.

So, if there is a benefit today, it is, first, a slight advantage in communication, but secondly and more importantly is the fact that many more people are feeling the pressure from tech. They know it is bad for them; they know it causes stress; they hate the dependency and addiction. This makes for a lot more potential “recruits” for any nascent anti-tech movement.

Q4: There is a noticeable surge in interest in “off-grid” or self-sufficient living closer to nature. This is evident not only explicitly on social media, but in the market for “tiny homes”, solar panels, etc. In your opinion, is true self-sufficiency outside of the system even possible anymore? Is it a worthwhile goal?

A4: If and when the tech system collapses, there will be a large initial loss of humanity because few are prepared to live without high tech. This is regrettable but not necessarily a bad thing, in the larger picture. The planet has far too many people for both our own good and for that of nature. There are now almost 8 billion people on a planet that evolved to hold perhaps 100 million.

Without fossil-fueled or nuclear energy, people will revert to living in the old ways—on basic human and animal power. Certain bioregions could sustain fair numbers of people, but many areas will be utterly depopulated; think of all the people today who live in deserts (Phoenix, Las Vegas, etc) or in relatively inhospitable northern climates (much of Canada and northern Europe). Surviving humans will need to re-learn how to live off the land, and obviously “off the grid”. Without electricity, oil products, or

natural gas, life will get a lot simpler and a lot more direct. And this is fine—this is how people evolved to live, and it is the life that is best suited to us. It still allows for plenty of culture, arts, education, and civilization; we need only recall what was possible in ancient Athens at the time of Socrates and Plato, circa 400 BC.

Simple technologies combined with the elementary scientific and biological knowledge that we have today (basic germ theory, use of soap and alcohol, basic human physiology) will allow for a very satisfying, and truly sustainable, human existence.

Bottom line is, yes, best to start now to learn how to live a simple agrarian life. Wouldn't hurt to practice in a rural region, even if only for short periods in the summer. And anyone who can make a fulltime switch now should do it. (Transportation is a tough one. Everyone will still want their cars, but those will be the first things to rot after the collapse. I guess I would say: use your car now, if you must, but be ready to do without.)

Q5: As I type these questions out, the world seems poised on the brink of potentially catastrophic violence. Russia has invaded Ukraine as political destabilization continues both in American domestic politics and in other developed countries around the world. Words like “nuclear war” and “civil war” are now part of the mainstream rhetoric. Is widespread violence like this something the anti-tech movement should seek to take advantage of? Or is it merely a way for the system to advance its own goals?

5. A high-tech global system that depletes and pollutes its environment is intrinsically unstable, and is highly prone to disruption and eventual collapse. It further produces too many people, who then must fight over land, food, and resources. From a tech-collapse perspective, such things as wars (civil or otherwise) and pandemics are to be expected, and are furthermore good signs that “the end is near.”

The “end,” though, could come in two forms: either collapse and then reversion to a neo-Hunter-Gatherer society, or, as technological victory, such as by super-AI or runaway self-replicators. I take it as obvious that we prefer the former end to the latter. (Utopian scenarios such as transhumanism or other Kurzweilian fantasies are absurd and scarcely worth considering.)

As various crises appear, technology benefits through all the new investments and experimentation that occurs in the attempt to solve newly-emerging problems. Thus, tech grows stronger even as the crises increase in severity. In a sense, we are in a race to see if the system collapses before tech can gain mastery over the planet.

This is where the singularity idea comes into play. If Kurzweil is right and it occurs around the year 2045, that would be the point of no-return: if collapse occurs before then, industrial tech will collapse as well. After that date, tech may survive autonomously, with or without human beings around. If tech (or networks, or the Internet, etc) becomes superintelligent around 2045, then it is very difficult to imagine a benign future after that point. At that point, sci-fi becomes reality, and likely humans and much of nature will be obliterated.

This is why Ted suggests that we should heighten social stress now—in the attempt to accelerate collapse, before further damage is done, and before any potential singularity event (though he did not know about this when he wrote the manifesto). In principle, this is a logical and rational course of action, although it is unclear how precisely individuals or small groups might proceed along this line.

Q6: What advice would you give to anyone looking to get involved in the anti-tech movement? What are practical steps they can take?

A6: Regarding advice, I would suggest people do as I mentioned above: read the basic anti-tech literature, get knowledgeable. Learn how fake critics operate and then work to ‘out’ them. And join up with like-minded people—check out antitechcollective.com, or [twitter/liesmachine](https://twitter.com/liesmachine), for example. Or form your own group. Practice serious, intelligent writing. Learn how to communicate. Learn how to develop a stiff spine and thick skin. Speak the harsh truth.

Anti-tech advocates are not the enemies of society; we are the true friends of humanity and nature. We are trying to save a vital core of this planet before tech does something truly catastrophic. We are the opponents of the tech elite, who will do everything in their power to perpetuate the present system. But they are bound to lose in the end, and I suspect that they know it. In this sense, we are their biggest threat and biggest nightmare: we speak the harsh truth about our likely technological future. The elite will try to censor us, but again, they will eventually lose; here, the truth will prevail. There is no conceivable, viable future with a global, high-tech industrial system ruling over humanity. It simply cannot happen. Either it or us will vanish in the long run. If you disagree, the burden of proof is on you to describe how, exactly, such a situation can exist in the real world—that is, how a dignified humanity and vibrant natural world can coexist with a global high-tech system. I’m quite certain that this cannot be done, but I leave to others to prove me wrong.

Personally, I would like to see a small core of humanity surviving amidst a thriving nature, rather than a planet overrun with technology and devoid of higher lifeforms. And anyone who agrees with me must necessarily be anti-tech. I don’t see any good alternative.

we will be free.
we will find peace.
we will have our revenge.

The Ted K Archive

Various Authors
Garden Issue #1
Freedom From Technological Slavery

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